



The Polesworth School
ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Title of Policy:
Curriculum

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	QUI
Approved at SLT	December 2022
Approved by the School Standards Committee (SSC)	December 2022
Policy review cycle	Annual
Policy review date	October 2023

Principles and values

At The Polesworth School we believe that the curriculum consists of all activities which have an effect on students' learning, development and achievement as individuals. Therefore, we see the curriculum as including:

- The formal programme of timetabled lessons;
- All extra-curricular and out of school activities;
- The way students and teachers treat each other;
- The organisation, management and leadership of the school.

We are absolutely committed to delivering a curriculum with the individual student at the centre, which is right for them, inspires them to learn and ensures that they acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need for success within our school, for their next steps and for life.

The curriculum which we offer and the intent behind it are underpinned by a core set of principles that shape and define the way we work with the students in our care and the community we serve.

We believe in achievement in three main areas:

Social: Students have developed and sustained excellent friendships and an ability to build mutual respect with others. Students know how to behave and conduct themselves so that they are ready for the next stage in their lives.

Academic: They have developed intelligence and a broad range of knowledge and skills that equip them for the next stage in their lives.

Personal: They have personal attributes and talents that have been nurtured at school often beyond the day to day planned curriculum. They have pride and confidence in who they are and what they can achieve. They have developed essential character virtues and a crucial sense of pride.

Aims of the curriculum

Deliver a curriculum with breadth, balance, coherence and progression for all students in order to:

- Pass on the **essential knowledge and skills** needed to be well-rounded and well-educated individuals who are able to make a difference to the society in which they live
- Create **autonomous and ambitious** learners as preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life
- Develop their **potential** through personal development, positive relationships and the development of individual talents

Curriculum principles

At the Polesworth School we believe that a well-structured and carefully planned, sequenced curriculum alongside high quality teaching and learning is the foundation upon which our student's achievement is built. Heads of Department and Subject Leaders, who are experts in their subjects, carefully construct a curriculum that is clearly built upon prior learning within our school and within primary school, so that students make progress by moving through it. Thus a deep understanding of a wide range of topics is developed. Our curriculum principles are balanced; rigorous and challenging; coherently sequenced; vertically integrated; appropriate; founded upon core knowledge; relevant (for the aims) and include intellectual architecture. (Adapted from William, D (2013) Principled Curriculum Design, SSAT and (Myatt, M. 2018, The Curriculum Gallimaufry to coherence.)

Teachers plan learning that allows pupils to embed and recall knowledge through techniques such as interleaving of topics and spaced retrieval practice. This builds a firm foundation for progression and achievement. Our curriculum is under continuous review to ensure that it thoroughly meets the current and future needs of our students.

Curriculum organisation

Years 7, 8 and 9

In Years 7, 8 and 9 the curriculum is broad and thoroughly grounded in the National Curriculum with the addition of Dance within the PE curriculum and Drama as a stand-alone subject. The curriculum is broken down within each subject area into topic areas in which the core knowledge is explicitly identified to ensure that students are developing a deeper understanding. There are many opportunities built into lessons to make explicit links to previous learning through retrieval activities and set current learning into context so that knowledge becomes embedded. There is provision for students who require additional support through our nurture group (See Curriculum developments section) and through specific interventions.

The options process

In Year 9, students go through an options process which allows them to choose up to three subjects to study in greater depth as well as continuing to study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies. As a school we adopt a student led curriculum model with no predetermined option blocks. Instead, we allow students a free choice from the list of subjects available for their pathway and build option blocks based upon their choices. Students are supported through the options process by their Tutors, assemblies, taster sessions and an open evening for parents/carers. Students in Year 9 are also able to move between subjects within the Autumn term thereby ensuring that they are satisfied with their options choices. **(Pathways in appendix 2)**

Years 10 and 11

Options are structured along pathways (T,P and S). The pathways are tailored to meet the needs of the students on them including through some adjustment of the curriculum time allocated and class sizes. In addition to this, students are able to personalise their curriculum within their allocated Pathway through the choice of subjects; and the balance between academic GCSE courses, GCSE courses with practical elements and a range of vocational courses. Each student is allocated to a recommended pathway which we believe will maximise their achievement and help them to reach their absolute potential. The recommended Pathway is reviewed on an individual basis taking into account feedback from each student's tutor and Head of Year and our English, Maths, Science and Languages departments. The students reading ages as well as prior attainment at the End of Key Stage 2 and progress within our school to date are also used to form a recommendation. Students and parents are invited to contribute to the decision of the recommended pathways.

The range of subjects and types of courses on offer is designed to give as wide a range of opportunities as possible and equality of access to each subject area. The Pathways are designed so that they will allow a student to maximise their achievement and so give them the opportunity to progress onto any further study from any Pathway. Where appropriate for needs and ambitions students from September 2023 may apply to study on a practical vocational course at South Staffordshire College instead of one option within school.

Years 12 and 13

Students in The Polesworth School Sixth Form follow Level 3 programmes of study. We offer courses at full A Level and some vocational courses as well as a limited number of Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS) (or equivalents) such as Core Maths. Full A Level and vocational courses involve two years of full-time study while AS courses (and equivalent) are usually taken after one year of full-time study. The vast majority of students choose to study three courses from the wide range that we offer, however some students are allowed to study four courses after careful consideration and discussions with the Director of Sixth Form. Each Level 3 course is designed to be of maximum benefit to the students and planned in a way that explicitly builds upon prior learning while sympathetically introducing new content. **(Full list of Level 3 options in appendix 3)**

A small number of students in the Sixth Form take the opportunity to retake GCSE English Language and/or GCSE Maths. These courses are delivered through two hours per fortnight of timetabled lessons with a subject specialist teacher as well as directed independent work.

Curriculum developments

In 2020 we adopted a strategic approach to fundamentally reviewing and updating our curriculum. This is summarised in appendix 1. This approach has enabled each department to review, thoroughly plan and coherently sequence their curriculum.

In September 2021 we launched a nurture group known as our Aspire group as a response to an increasing level of need identified through transition liaison. The Aspire group is a small group of students with high level needs who would benefit from a more phased transition into secondary school. These students cover the threshold knowledge in English, History, Geography and RS through a thematic curriculum delivered by a SEND teacher. They are also taught in this distinct group for MFL, IT, Maths and Science while they join other Year 7 students for PE, Technology, Art, Drama, Music and Tutor time. Formal review periods are calendared when each student is reviewed and where appropriate a transition plan to move them out of the Aspire group is put into place. Our aim is for this programme to be successful in supporting all of the students to move out of the Aspire group by the end of Year 7. Following a review of the effectiveness of this programme it has been continued for the September 2022 intake.

In September 2022 we developed the provision of PSHE delivered during tutor time by utilising a thematic approach to enable a more coherent curriculum. In September 2023, this will be further developed by having PSHE as a distinct taught subject within the curriculum which will be coordinated by a Head of PSHE/RSE (new post).

We are developing a partnership with South Staffordshire College to enable our students who wish to pursue courses such as Construction and the Built Environment and Hair and Beauty to be able to do this for one morning a week during Years 10 and 11 as one of their options. We hope that this will be in place for September 2023. We are also developing an alternative curriculum programme for students who require additional bespoke support during Years 10 and 11 using the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

The seven-year curriculum model 2022/23

As previously outlined our curriculum is carefully sequenced to enable learning to be built upon prior knowledge.

Year	Key curriculum points
7	<p>A broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon the knowledge embedded from Key Stages 1 and 2.</p> <p>National curriculum delivered with some curriculum adaptations to meet specific high-level needs.</p> <p>All students regardless of reading age engaged in the Accelerated Reader Programme with some also allocated to PiXL Code programme or Corrective Reading.</p> <p>Students taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects.</p>
8	<p>A broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon the knowledge embedded from Year 7 as well as Key Stages 1 and 2.</p> <p>National curriculum delivered with some curriculum adaptations to meet specific high-level needs.</p> <p>All students regardless of reading age engaged in the Accelerated Reader Programme with some also allocated to PiXL Code programme or Corrective Reading.</p> <p>Students are taught in mixed ability groups for Humanities, Technology and PE and are moved into ability banded groups for Science, English, Maths and Languages.</p>
9	<p>A broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon the knowledge embedded from Years 7 and 8 as well as Key Stages 1 and 2.</p> <p>National curriculum delivered (with some curriculum adaptations to meet specific high-level needs) leading to knowledge which overlaps with level 2 studies.</p> <p>Students are taught in mixed ability groups for Humanities, Technology and PE and are taught into ability banded groups for Science, English, Maths and Languages.</p>
10	<p>All Level 2 formal courses begin.</p> <p>Students continue to study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies as well as three options (plus Languages for T pathway)</p> <p>Work experience provided for one full school week.</p> <p>Students are taught in ability banded groups within their allocated pathway for English, Mathematics, Science, Languages and Religious Studies. Options subjects are taught in mixed ability groups although, where multiple classes of the same subject appear in an option block, departments can group students in the way that they feel would benefit their subject and student achievement.</p>
11	<p>Students continue to study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies as well as three options (plus Languages for T pathway).</p> <p>Careers interviews for CIAG this year.</p> <p>Students are taught in ability banded groups within their allocated pathway for English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies. Options subjects are taught</p>

	in mixed ability groups although, where multiple classes of the same subject appear in an option block, departments can group students in the way that they feel would benefit their subject and student achievement.
12	<p>The vast majority of students choose to study three courses, however, some students are allowed to study four courses after careful consideration and discussions with the Director of Sixth Form.</p> <p>Each Level 3 course is designed to be of maximum benefit to the students and planned in a way that explicitly builds upon prior learning while sympathetically introducing new content.</p> <p>Students are supported in accessing specific work experience and/or opportunities which will help them to access their next planned phase of education, employment or training.</p> <p>Opportunity to retake GCSE English Language and/or GCSE Maths.</p>
13	<p>All students continue to study three courses; however, some students are allowed to continue to study four courses after careful consideration and discussions with the Director of Sixth Form.</p> <p>Significant help and support in progressing to the next planned phase of education, employment or training including CIAG.</p> <p>Opportunity to retake GCSE English Language and/or GCSE Maths.</p>

Time allocations 2022/23

We operate a two week timetable giving a total of 50 periods of subject teaching plus 25 minutes per day for PSHE activities (see below), reading and assemblies.

Years 7-9

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Maths	7	7	7
English	8	7	7
Science	6	7	8
PE	4	4	4
MFL	4	4	4
Geography	4	4	3
History	4	4	3
RS	2	2	3
Technology	4	4	4
ICT	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Drama	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2

Years 10 -11

Subject	T pathway	P pathway	S pathway
Maths	8	9	9
English	9	9	9
Science	11	10	10

PE	3	3	3
RS	4	4	4
Option A	5	5	5
Option B	5	5	5
Option C	5	5	5

Years 12 and 13

Subject	
Option A	10
Option B	10
Option C	10
Option D (if applicable)	10
GCSE retake of English Language	2
GCSE retake of Maths	2

Literacy and numeracy

We recognise that ensuring that pupils are literate and numerate is fundamental in enabling them to flourish, thrive and access the next stage of their education, employment or training. The development of pupil language and oracy is a key part of our curriculum as we understand how vital it is for our students to build confidence in communication skills not only for their time in school but also to prepare them for working life and for making a difference in society. Students have opportunities to discuss, challenge and build on other points of view and to develop their formality of language to ensure they have the confidence to speak to different audiences. Tier two and Tier three vocabulary is a key part of the curriculum planning which is undertaken by our Heads of Department and Subject Leaders. Reading age testing of our students suggests that a significant proportion of our students on intake have reading ages below their chronological age and so the Accelerated Reader scheme and Reciprocal Reading session during tutorial time are built into our curriculum. Numeracy skills are embedded within the curriculum. Pupils who arrive with below expected maths skills are quickly caught up through expert teaching using Mastery pedagogy.

Futures

We intend an impact of our curriculum to be that we develop our students for later life including the workplace. Our curriculum is regularly reviewed against reports such as the Nesta/Pearson "The Future of Skills" and the Business in the Community Essential Skills Campaign to ensure that we are meeting, as far as well as are able to predict, the future needs of our students. Careers Independent Advice and Guidance (CIAG) is received by students in Year 7 through to Year 13. We employ our own in-house Careers Advisor who coordinates a number of programmes and initiatives including careers sessions delivered during tutor time, a careers fair, work experience (Year 10 and Sixth Form) and external speakers. Students in any year can request a careers interview and students in Year 11 and Year 13 are allocated an interview automatically. Our careers programme is regularly assessed against the Gatsby benchmarks.

Homework and Independent Learning

We believe that homework, when used correctly can help students to achieve their potential more fully than if we simply relied on study conducted during the timetabled curriculum. There is clear evidence that successful students make progress when they embrace homework and where they take the opportunity to enjoy, consolidate and extend their learning. Through homework, students become flexible independent learners able to cope with the demands of a future working life. "Key Principles Extensive meta-research" conducted by the Educational Endowment Foundation reveals several key principles in the setting of homework which allow for that work to have the most significant impact and these have been adopted within our approach. Departments have the flexibility within Years 7-9 and choose to set either project based activities which are designed to encourage a degree of independence in the student or set regular short homework tasks which are clearly linked to the classroom learning. In Years 10-13 departments set regular homework tasks which are clearly linked to the classroom learning which may include research for forthcoming lessons or tasks linked to assessments and final exams. Many of our departments set homework using online platforms such as Hegarty Maths and Educake.

All of our students are also encouraged to undertake independent study and retrieval practice and this is reinforced through study skills sessions as part of the PSHE programme, parents information evenings and assemblies.

PSHE and Personal Development

PSHE is delivered by Form Tutors during tutorial time following a thematic approach suggested by the PSHE Association (of which the school is a member). Students have sessions based upon the themes of health and well-being, relationships and living in the wider world. This programme, along with off-timetable sessions meet the requirements of PSHE, RSE and Citizenship including British Values. The programme is adapted at times to put a stronger focus on local or emerging issues. We strongly believe that these activities along with the extracurricular opportunities (over fifty clubs/teams took place each fortnight at the last audit), leadership opportunities, enrichment and educational visits that our staff offer, contribute significantly to the personal development of our students.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of curriculum planning, implementation and impact is carried out in line with the school's Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule and takes the form of Deep Dives, subject monitoring and evaluation (learning walks, lesson drop ins, student, staff and leader interviews.) The curriculum of each subject and how progress within it is assessed will be formally reviewed annually by Heads of Department and Subject leaders to ensure the sequence of delivery allows pupils to build on their knowledge and that pupils are sufficiently stretched and challenged. The curriculum hours and subjects offered will be analysed by the Strategic Leadership Team and governors on an annual basis in consultation with departments.

Appendix 1

Curriculum development 2020-2027

Year 7 2018_19	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
	2018_19	2019_20	2020_21	2021_22	2022_23	2023_24	2024_25
16% of students had a scaled score of below 100 on entry	Current curriculum	Current curriculum	Level 1/2 curriculum	Level 1/2 curriculum	Level 1/2 curriculum	Level 3 curriculum	Level 3 curriculum
	NC	NC	Level 2 for most subjects	Level 2	Level 2	Post 16	Post 16
Year 7 2019_20	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
	2019_20	2020_21	2021_22	2022_23	2023_24	2024_25	2025_26
27% of students had a scaled score of below 100 on entry	Current curriculum	Possible adapted curriculum	Interim curriculum (possibly in-depth studies)	Adapted curriculum (because of interim)	Adapted curriculum (because of interim)	Level 3 curriculum	Level 3 curriculum
	NC	NC	NC	Level 2	Level 2	Post 16	Post 16
Year 7 2020_21	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
	2020_21	2021_22	2022_23	2023_24	2024_25	2025_26	2026_27
	New "Curriculum 2020" all subjects	New "Curriculum 2020" all subjects	New "Curriculum 2020" all subjects	Adapted curriculum (because of curriculum 2020)	Adapted curriculum (because of curriculum 2020)	Level 3 curriculum	Level 3 curriculum
	NC	NC	NC	Level 2	Level 2	Post 16	Post 16

	Current academic year
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Appendix 2

The Polesworth School options pathways 2023/24

T pathway

Area	Subject	Qualification
Core	English Language	GCSE
	English Literature	GCSE
	Mathematics	GCSE
	Religious Studies	GCSE
	PE	Non exam
	PSHE	
Science	Combined Science	GCSE
	Triple Science	GCSE
Languages N.B. only the language already studied can be chosen	French	GCSE
	German	GCSE
Humanities – choose one	History	GCSE
	Geography	GCSE
Options – choose one plus one reserve	Business Studies	GCSE N.B. only Business course can be chosen
	Child Development and Care in the Early Years	NCFE CACHE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	Classics	GCSE
	Dance	GCSE
	Design and Technology (Graphics)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Design and Technology (Product Design)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Design and Technology (Textiles)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Drama	GCSE
	Enterprise	BTEC Tech Award

		N.B. only one Business course can be chosen
	Film Studies	GCSE
	Fine Art	GCSE
	Food and Cookery	NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	Geography	GCSE (If not already chosen as Humanities option)
	History	GCSE (If not already chosen as Humanities option)
	iMedia (ICT)	Cambridge National Certificate
	Music Practice	BTEC Tech Award
	Photography	GCSE
	Sociology	GCSE
	Sport Science	Cambridge National Certificate
	Travel & Tourism	BTEC Tech Award

Additional opportunities

Students in any pathway can apply to be considered for a place at South Staffordshire College studying one of the following qualifications:

- City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Hair and Beauty Studies
- Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Construction and the Built Environment
- IMI Entry Level Award Introduction to Automotive Maintenance and Repair

Students who require additional bespoke intervention to meet needs may follow a programme based upon AQA Unit Award Scheme instead of one option.

P pathway

Area	Subject	Qualification
Core	English Language	GCSE
	English Literature	GCSE
	Mathematics	GCSE
	Religious Studies	GCSE
	PE	Non exam
	PSHE	Non exam
Science	Combined Science	GCSE
Humanities – choose one	History	GCSE
	Geography	GCSE
Options – choose two plus two reserves	Business Studies	GCSE N.B. only Business course can be chosen
	Child Development and Care in the Early Years	NCFE CACHE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	Dance	GCSE
	Design and Technology (Graphics)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Design and Technology (Product Design)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Design and Technology (Textiles)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Drama	GCSE
	Enterprise	BTEC Tech Award N.B. only one Business course can be chosen
	Film Studies	GCSE
	Fine Art	GCSE
	Food and Cookery	NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	French	GCSE N.B. only the language already studied can be chosen
	Geography	GCSE (If not already chosen as Humanities option)
	German	GCSE

		N.B. only the language already studied can be chosen
	History	GCSE (If not already chosen as Humanities option)
	iMedia (ICT)	Cambridge National Certificate
	Music Practice	BTEC Tech Award
	Photography	GCSE
	Sociology	GCSE
	Sport Science	Cambridge National Certificate
	Travel & Tourism	BTEC Tech Award

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Students who require additional bespoke intervention to meet needs may follow a programme based upon AQA Unit Award Scheme instead of one option.

S pathway

Area	Subject	Qualification
Core	English Language	GCSE
	English Literature	GCSE
	Mathematics	GCSE
	Religious Studies	GCSE
	PE	Non exam
Science	Combined Science	GCSE
Humanities – choose one	History	GCSE
	Geography	GCSE
Options – choose two plus two reserves	Child Development and Care in the Early Years	NCFE CACHE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	Dance	GCSE
	Design and Technology (Textiles)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Design and Technology (Resistant Materials)	GCSE N.B. only one Design and Technology GCSE can be chosen
	Drama	GCSE
	Enterprise	BTEC Tech Award
	Film Studies	GCSE
	Fine Art	GCSE
	Food and Cookery	NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award
	French	GCSE N.B. only the language already studied can be chosen
	German	GCSE N.B. only the language already studied can be chosen
	iMedia (ICT)	Cambridge National Certificate
	Music	BTEC First Award N.B. Qualification withdrawn so will be replaced
	Photography	GCSE

	Sociology	GCSE
	Sport Science	Cambridge National Certificate
	Travel & Tourism	BTEC Tech Award

Additional opportunities

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- Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Construction and the Built Environment
- IMI Entry Level Award Introduction to Automotive Maintenance and Repair

Students who require additional bespoke intervention to meet needs may follow a programme based upon AQA Unit Award Scheme instead of one option.

Appendix 3

List of Key Stage 5 options by subject group

Enterprise	Technology	Creative
Art Business Economics Government and Politics Law Mathematics Core Mathematics (AS) Travel and Tourism* Digital Media (ICT)*	Business Digital Media (ICT)* Media Product Design Textiles Mathematics Physics Health and Social Care*	Business Art Media Theatre Studies Music* English Literature Digital Media (ICT)*
Society	Science	People, Government and Public Service
Media English Literature French German History Religion, Philosophy and Ethics Psychology Sociology Classics Geography Law	Forensics and Criminal investigation (Applied Science)* Biology Chemistry Physics Digital Media (ICT)* Mathematics Core Mathematics (AS) Further Mathematics Psychology Physical Education Health and Social Care*	Law Economics English Literature Geography Government and Politics History Classics Sociology Health and Social Care* Travel and Tourism*

* Level 3 vocational qualification (BTEC National, Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate)