

Washwood Heath Academy Curriculum Policy

Rationale:

At WHA we believe an outstanding curriculum will enable all students to: achieve excellent results in good qualifications, gain wider personal development and enable our pupils to become good people-moral, spiritual, cultural, independent and responsible to each another.

Curriculum ethos and principles

The future curriculum will in many respects be characterised by ensuring that pupils continue to learn and realise for themselves the personal qualities and attitudes that are of enduring value: intellectual curiosity, self esteem and discipline, resilience, honesty, integrity, commitment, spirituality, inner well-being and concern for others – many of which this school conveys through the ideas of the ‘family’ and the ‘team’. The wide variety of learning methods that have been developed to teach all aspects of our curriculum encourage students to think and learn for themselves with a clear emphasis on personal responsibility. It is interesting to note that employers emphasise these qualities as being equally critical for success in the present and future world as academic and technical qualifications.

A Curriculum for a Changing World

The challenge we all face in our rapidly changing society and the ‘global village’ in which we live is to identify the kind of future society and business environment in which we are preparing our pupils to participate. Fortunately we can be confident of key areas of knowledge, understanding and skills that will be essential: mastery of language and communication, mathematics, science, an understanding of our place in time and space and of others. In addition our pupils have their own unique gifts and talents, interests and aspirations – which in partnership with parents and community we must inform and develop - so that they can find work and fulfilment and become useful citizens.

Maximum Benefit of All

The above principles give us firm ground upon which to organise our future curriculum. We need to ensure that the planned pattern of learning experiences has a common and relevant core whilst accommodating individual differences and aspirations and the world beyond school and college. A common core can be developed into increasing specialisation along individual learning ‘pathways’ including:

- Realistic aspirations supported by carefully guided subject choices
- Variety of breadth and depth at every key stage, including a good range of both academic and technical qualifications and experiences
- Opportunities for work-related learning and apprenticeships, including an emphasis on specialist technology subjects, business and enterprise through WHA partnerships
- An emphasis on teaching methodologies that encourage and sustain teamwork, opportunities to think independently, practise academic rigour and be creative

Curriculum Offer

Key Stage Three:

The two-year Key Stage Three curriculum is designed to prepare students effectively for Key Stage Four. For students who need support in their literacy and numeracy development or are learning English as an additional language, there are integrated programmes of study across English and Humanities subjects as part of the ‘Skills School’ (and EAL Skills School) nurture programmes. A small number of students may not study Modern Foreign Languages in order to provide more time to develop their literacy/English skills. Subjects with the most curriculum time in KS3 are English and Maths however, all national curriculum subjects, including Religious Education, are allocated between one and four weekly lessons.

From September 2016 PSHE will be taught through RE to enable students to discuss and explore a range of issues in context.

Key Stage Four

Students study compulsory core subjects of English language and English literature, Maths, Science, PE and RE in Key Stage Four. In addition students choose from a range of options subjects along 2 pathways: the EBACC and Open pathways. The majority of students follow the EBACC pathway, enabling them to study a humanities subject and a Modern Foreign Language. They are also allowed to choose from a range of other GCSEs and BTECs including Sport, Music, Construction, Media studies, with the most able given appropriate advice and guidance to enable them to choose options like Triple Science or Computer Science.

For a select number who may have additional needs, the EBACC pathway is not appropriate. These students are also allowed to choose from the same range of good GCSEs and BTECs as well as an ESOL qualification and additional practice in English language. This course is primarily aimed at newly arrived and very low ability students.

Information, advice and guidance is provided through assemblies, options evenings, taster days and form tutor support, in which data is used to ensure students make the right choices at the right time. This guidance begins with Year 7 careers activities and continues all the way through to Year 13 work experience and UCAS guidance. Flexible provision is provided for students whose need is to focus on one or more aspects of the curriculum.

Wider curriculum

PSHE and British Values

The school has a programme of PSHE in which British Values, PSHEE, Citizenship, Careers, Work Related and Enterprise Learning, Relationship and Sex Education (see separate draft policy) and, at Key Stage Four, Religious Education (for all, in addition to that taught in the options) is delivered. The programme makes a significant contribution to the SMSC development of students.

The programme is reviewed, using student and staff feedback, on an annual basis (see appendix two). The programme is taught and delivered through form time, assemblies, through RE and in as well as to whole year groups where appropriate. The programme also creates the flexibility for partners (such as businesses) to contribute to the curriculum in a more meaningful way. In 2015-16 we introduced the Loudmouth Theatre Radicalisation Workshop to raise awareness to a targeted group of vulnerable students.

Year 10 students have one week of Work Experience, as the Academy believes this to be an important part of preparing them for adult life. Businesses and community partners, like the local vicar, play an active role in the wider life of the school, promoting harmonious relationships between school and the local community. The school provides independent information, advice and guidance through WEX/IAG co-ordinator

All students have assemblies that promote areas of SMSC. This includes one religious multi-faith assembly per week. In previous years this was a mainly of an Islamic nature but the school feels that it is important to promote an understanding of other faiths through assembly so the context of faith assemblies is now much wider. In addition, the programme of House assemblies offer moral, social and cultural opportunities for students to reflect on life in democratic Britain as part of a global society. Topics explored include promotion of British values of democracy and rule of law, local and international charity events, e-safety in partnership with local police officers, the importance of keeping healthy including mental

health and the importance of preventing and tackling all forms of bullying and harassment. (see appendix three)

In 2015, WHA introduced a PSHEE programme in form time, exploring themes based along Headstart's 'PATHS' mental health and well being curriculum. Other themes include British values topics like democracy and the rule of law, centred around the WHA school council; Head boy/girl elections and E-Safety and how to protect yourself in the virtual world.

The Academy provides a range of regular and as well as one-off trips and out-of-hours activities. These will include a range of sporting and artistic activities, activities to develop students' skills, visits to places which will support learning in the curriculum or broaden student horizons and activities to support students in their learning. The gender and ethnic make-up of those students who participate in these areas are monitored to ensure any issues of equality of opportunity are effectively responded to.

The school audits SMSC at whole school and subject level.

iRead

WHA also offers all students the opportunity to read to adults as part of the iRead initiative. Twice a week, the entire school separates into reading groups set on the basis of Reading Age assessments. Student leaders guide readers through the group's chosen book with adults listening to and correcting reading errors and misconceptions. All form tutors lead an iRead group, from support staff to Senior Leaders and this whole scale approach has significantly prioritised the development of reading for all students.

Post-16 curriculum

From 16- 17 we significantly changed the nature of the post-16 curriculum and introduced a significantly wider curriculum with breadth and depth where students have the opportunity to study 3 pathways: A level, L3 vocational, or for a very small group of low ability students, L2 retake courses. To support RPA, we are also offering more depth and breadth in core subjects, with a curriculum offer of GCSE English and Maths for those students who have not yet achieved a C grade at GCSE as well as opportunities to study and resit GCSE Science.

As part of the wider post-16 curriculum, we offer an in depth enrichment programme, focussing on citizenship, careers, financial skills, Duke of Edinburgh qualifications and SMSC development. Post 16 students participate in voluntary schemes like peer mentoring, charity events, as student leaders for iRead and within local community events.

Homework:

Washwood Heath Academy believes in the importance of reviewing, revisiting and extending learning through independent study, outside of school time. Homework is set for core subjects on a weekly basis and for non-core on a minimum of once per fortnight basis. However, some subjects will set more substantial project-based homework over a longer period. Homework must be relevant and linked to the learning in the classroom and promptly marked and returned to students.

The Academy has introduced an online homework system called 'Show My Homework' in September 2015 to promote the quality of homework set and the completion and the marking of the work.

Curriculum Review and Stakeholders:

The curriculum is under constant review. This involves stakeholders in consultation and opinion-gathering, often through surveys on the VLE. The Local Governing Body and the MAT Board of Directors play a vital role in this process. The impact of such annual reviews is contained in Appendix 1 of this policy and is evident in the development of the post 16 curriculum for 2016-17.

Where students chose or change options or where there is a change to a student's provision, parents are always immediately informed and, where necessary, meetings take place to ensure the best provision for each individual.

Each subject area's curriculum, including their contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students, is monitored through exam analysis reviews and an annual audit of SMSC.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Developments 2013-15:

Key Stage Three:

Following the 'Dream Curriculum' review in October 2015 the number of groups in English and Maths has been extended to provide more targeted provision. There are groups for students, in Year 7 whose baseline data shows to be at risk of operating below that level, either through ability or because they are at the early stages of learning English. These lower attainers form a programme across English and Humanities known as Skills School. The Skills School curriculum is now more focussed on acquiring skills in literacy and numeracy with a particular emphasis on 'closing the gap' between more vulnerable students, including those supported by the Pupil Premium, and other students. Some of these students do not study Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) a decision supported by their parents. Skills School was expanded in 15-16 to include a second group for EAL or newly arrived students separate from low ability students in order to support more rapid language acquisition.

In September 2016 we also decided to introduce aspects of PSHE through RE at KS4, encouraging students to discuss and explore issues of what it means to be an active British citizen as well as other key topics and areas.

Key Stage Four:

Evidence from the 'Dream Curriculum' review in October 15, resulted in a vast majority of stakeholders requesting more breadth and depth in the curriculum with more opportunities to study academic as well as vocational qualifications. These discussions have led to the following changes at Key Stage Four:

- Increased teaching time for English and Maths as well as an increase in the number of classes allowing for smaller class sizes.
- The introduction of the new Combined science qualification, compulsory for all.
- Opportunities for students to gain the triple GCSE science qualification rather than vocational Science qualifications. BTEC Science is no longer offered at WHA.
- Increase opportunities to gain good GCSE qualifications including those in EBACC subjects
- Provide broad and balanced diet of qualifications at both academic and vocational level for all learners
- Develop suitable range of qualifications for low attaining or newly arrived students including the ESOL qualification at both L1 and L2, vocational qualifications with

clear progression routes into further education or employment as well as the opportunity to study relevant and suitable GCSE subjects.

Appendix Two

Proposed Enrichment Weeks and PSHEE programme

There are five key areas, which form the basis of the programme. The areas are taught in individual lessons or are taught within the curriculum in other areas.

In the 2015 curriculum review it was decided and agreed that we would no longer run the Enrichment weeks.

The five key areas:

- Healthy Lifestyles and Keeping Safe, to include: anti-bullying; e-safety; street safety; diet
- RSE to include issues relating to forced marriage.
- Enterprise to include careers, finance and CREST award.
- Parliament and democracy.
- Global Britain; Global Citizens to include: environmental issues, human rights, diversity, fair trade; community involvement.