

Curriculum Policy 2021-22

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to allow parents and carers to have a clear overview of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 curriculum on offer at Ashton on Mersey School. In this document there is also reference to a number of other supporting policies which offer important information regarding assessment, literacy and homework.

1.1. Intent

There are four interconnected and equally important values that shape our curriculum. The curriculum is designed and delivered with the intention that all Ashton on Mersey pupils become: Powerfully knowledgeable; Global citizens; Healthy in mind, body and soul; Ambitious and aspirational.

Knowledge is at the core of the curriculum offer which aims to keep breadth and depth throughout KS3 before pupils pick their KS4 pathway from a healthy variety of optional subjects. This offer has the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Sciences at the centre but also heavily promotes the English Baccalaureate subjects of Geography, History and Languages. This is then continued into KS5 where our Sixth Form provision occupies a niche in the local area by specialising and excelling in vocational and applied learning. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and communication are promoted in every lesson; high standards in all three are promoted by all teaching and non-teaching staff.

The school also ensures that the curriculum intent is balanced with the responsibility to furnish our students with the qualifications they will need to be a successful part of society. Each pupil

is encouraged to think of themselves as a 'Global citizen' by developing respect for themselves, their environment and employing good manners to treat the environment and others how they would like to be treated. Each pupil is encouraged to be healthy in mind, body and soul through making healthy and safe lifestyle choices, developing confidence and resilience, adapting to changing circumstances, managing emotions, attitudes and behaviours appropriately and investing in personal relationships. The intent of the curriculum offer is ambitious and aspirational by challenging expectations and 'the status quo' and recognising that every individual has huge potential. Curriculum planning has gone through a diversification process so it best represents our school community and culture; the curriculum is underpinned by 'Threshold Concepts' in essential knowledge and skills and closely aligns to National Curriculum guides in KS3 and exam specifications in KS4 and KS5.

Implementation

Teachers provide high quality delivery of the curriculum. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced towards all pupils gaining cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills. All teaching staff engage in regular training, Data Informed Teaching, and Professional Learning. The approach is cumulative, measured, context driven and takes reference to current and up to date research. The quality of lessons is closely monitored through an extensive and supportive quality assurance programme. The quality of pupil work is also closely scrutinised throughout the year.

Teachers are committed to the ongoing delivery of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The development of learner independence, resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity as well as metacognition programme delivered via weekly activities by form tutors. The use of the online learning platforms Show my homework and Google classroom develops pupils to be confident in organising their own learning. Implementation is well communicated to our parents and carers through a multi-platform approach.

2. Curriculum Overview

2.1 Key Stage 3

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced, providing skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects helping pupils identify where their best interests and achievements are. Pupils receive 30 lessons a week, each comprising of 50 minutes. The table below displays the current curriculum overview.

Year 9 - Pathways

At the end of Year 9, pupils are asked to pick up to 4 option subjects to continue study into Years 10 & 11. Pupils in sets 0,1 and 2 in both bands are required to continue with Spanish as a compulsory GCSE option.

2.2 Key Stage 4 - Year 10 & 11

Every pupil will study at least 8 Level 2 qualifications in KS4. The compulsory subjects comprise of GCSEs in English, Maths, Science with statutory lessons in RE, PSHE and Core PE. Pupils in sets 0,1 and 2 must follow the English Baccalaureate pathway and choose History or Geography along with Spanish. Pupils will then pick a further two or three options

depending on what set they are in – options include Business Studies, Construction, Design & Technology, Engineering, IT Creative Media, Child Development, OCR Sport, Music, Drama, Sociology, Psychology, Triple Science, Performing Arts, Photography, Art and Graphic Design.

In total, pupils work towards achieving a minimum 8 qualifications at Key Stage 4. There is also opportunity for pupils to study an extra subject after school in some subject areas if they wish to do so.

Statutory Religious Education and PSHRE is taught within the curriculum and supported by PSHRE workshops in form time twice per week.

	7	8	9	10/11 (0-2)	10/11 (3-4)	10/11 (T)
1	English	English	English	English	English	English
2						
3						
4						
5						
6	Maths		Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths
7						
8						
9						
10	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science	Biology
11						
12						
13						
14	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Option A	Chemistry
15						
16						
17	History	History	History	Spanish	Option A	Physics
18						
19	Geography	Geography	Geography	Option A	Option B	Spanish
20						
21	Technology	Technology	Technology	Option B	Option C	Option B
22						
23				PE	PE	PE
24						
25						
26	Art	Art	Art	PE	PE	Option C
27	CS	CS	CS			
28	Drama	Drama	Drama			
29	Music	Music	Music	PE	PE	PE
30	RE/PSHRE	RE/PSHRE	RE/PSHRE			

2.3 Key Stage 5 – Year 12 & 13

Ashton on Mersey School has a reputation for delivering an innovative and effective curriculum to suit the needs of all learners. Our Sixth Form builds on this to provide a seamless transition through our 16-19 curriculum.

Students are advised to focus on subjects they enjoy and are good at. However, if a student has a specific career path in mind it is important to select the required courses to enable this to happen. Information, advice and guidance meetings which, are personalised to each student, take place before enrolment is confirmed. Level 3 qualifications on offer are BTEC Extended Diploma, BTEC Diploma, BTEC Extended Certificate and A Level. All pathways offer access to higher education qualifications. Universities either use grades or point scores to allow access to degree courses and all qualifications can combine to give suitable scores for entry. A BTEC Extended Diploma is equivalent to three A Levels, a BTEC Diploma is equivalent to two A Levels and the BTEC Extended Certificate is equivalent to one A Level.

Subjects currently available include:

- BTEC Extended Diploma, BTEC Diploma and BTEC Extended Certificate
- Business | Construction | Creative Digital Media | Sport | BTEC Extended Certificate only: Applied Psychology
- Additional Level 3 qualifications Accountancy | Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The Sixth Form offers a choice of three pathways, to ensure that students achieve your full potential. All our pathways at Level 3 provide a platform for access to university, apprenticeship or employment. If a student already has a career in mind they can select a pathway to match their career choice.

- **Pathway 1 BTEC Extended Diploma**
Focus on a core subject, extending and deepening knowledge in a subject they have a passion for, or a career they're aiming for.
- **Pathway 2 BTEC Extended Diploma plus Additional Level 3 qualification**
This option enables them to focus on a core subject but also widen their opportunities by linking it with an additional subject.
- **Pathway 3 BTEC Diploma plus BTEC Extended Certificate**
Combine two subjects which they have a passion for developing a wider understanding and knowledge towards their chosen career.

2.4 Work Related Learning

Ashton on Mersey School understands the importance of preparing our young people for the world of work and the value of experiences in a vocational setting. There are a range of vocational subjects including Engineering, Child Development and Construction. BTEC qualifications also provide an insight into different sectors of employment. Links with employers are used to enhance our academic facilities.

2.5 PSHRE

Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) is combined with Citizenship and Careers education in specialist sessions throughout Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. This includes appropriate sessions on a range of sensitive issues at appropriate points during Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural guidance is embedded throughout the whole school curriculum and contributes to our holistic approach to individual pupils and their wellbeing. Statutory PSHRE is taught within the curriculum and supported by PSHRE workshops in form time twice per week.

2.6 Religious Education

All pupils study Religious Education through Key Stage 3 and 4. Ashton on Mersey school follows the Greater Manchester SACRE curriculum. The right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education (RE) lessons is set out in section 71 of The School Standards and Framework Act 1998

(School Standards and Framework Act 1998: regulation 71, - [legislation.gov.ukhttp://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/section/71](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/section/71)).

2.7 Careers Guidance

Careers education, information, advice and guidance is provided to pupils from Years 7-13. This is studied in the form of distinct lessons, the use of pastoral time, lunchtime drop ins 1:1 interviews and various events. There are strong links with Further Education Colleges, Sixth Forms, Training Providers and Universities. Work experience placements are also completed for one week as a key part of our Key Stage 4 programme towards the end of Year 10 as well as practice interviews and careers appointments in Year 11. Ashton on Mersey employs a dedicated careers advisor to who coordinates such activities.

3. Assessment

Please see the separate document entitled 'Assessment Policy' and 'Teaching & Learning Policy' to see more details on feedback and assessment.

3.1. Key Stage 3 assessment

In Key Stage 3 pupils' knowledge and skills of key threshold concepts are assessed using one of the following descriptors:

- **Advanced** - used where pupils are demonstrating knowledge and skills well above expectations for the year group
- **Secure** - used where pupils are demonstrating knowledge and skills in line with expectations for the year group
- **Developing** - used where pupils are demonstrating knowledge and skills slightly below expectations for the year group
- **Foundation** - used where pupils are demonstrating knowledge and skills well below expectations for the year group

Key Stage 2 standardised scores will be categorised in the following way and will be used as a start point to measure progress.*

Score	Descriptor
110-120	Advanced
100-109	Secure
90-99	Developing
80-89	Foundation

* Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions and school lockdowns no KS2 tests took place therefore teacher baseline assessments and CATs have been used to inform entry points and judge progress.

A pupil who arrives with a standardised score of 115 will have displayed a high level of academic ability at Key Stage 2 and would therefore be categorised as 'Advanced'. To make expected progress and to remain on trajectory for success at Key Stage 4 they would need to maintain excellence throughout Key Stage 3.

3.2 Key Stage 4 assessment

Key Stage 4 assessment is against GCSE or Technical Award national specifications.

GCSE Qualifications use a 9-1 grading system.

Technical Award qualifications use a Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail grading system.

3.3 Key Stage 5 assessment

Key Stage 5 assessment is against A Level/BTEC specifications.

A-Level qualifications use an A*-E grading system.

Level 3 BTEC qualifications use a Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail grading system.

4. Pupil Groupings

4.1 Tutor Groups

Pupils are put into one of ten tutor groups. Tutor groups are split between two equal and mixed ability bands named 'A' and 'M' bands. These groupings are decided upon as part of transition work with primary schools.

4.2 Teaching Sets

Key Stage 3

Year 7

When pupils arrive at Ashton on Mersey School they are separated into 2 equal ability bands A and M. Pupils are initially taught in mixed ability form groups within these bands. Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) are conducted in the first half term. Setting will take place in Maths, Technology and PE; for all other subjects the pupils will be taught in English sets. In Year 7, this is driven by pupils average Key Stage 2 standardised score from their end of KS2 tests and combined with performance in the aforementioned CATs. Some subjects may supplement these with subject specific baseline tests. In PE, pupils are set according to their practical ability in the subject following a half term of baseline assessment.

Year 8

Mixed ability sets in Art, Drama, Music and RE. Setting will be in place in Maths, Technology and PE. All other subjects in the main teaching blocks in bands (A) and (M) will be set by English.

Year 9

Mixed ability sets in Art, Drama, Music and RE. Setting will be in place in Maths, Science, Technology and PE. All other subjects in the main teaching blocks in bands (A) and (M) will be set by English.

Key Stage 4

In Key Stage 4, pupils are taught in ability groupings for English, Maths and Science and where numbers permit this is the case in optional subjects.

At the start of Year 7, different standardised scores will be used to set appropriate baseline levels of which to measure progress from in Key Stage 3 and set targets towards for Key Stage 4.

The school will baseline and set targets across all subjects based on the following rationale:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Baseline Data</u>
English	Key Stage 2 Reading score
Mathematics	Key Stage 2 Mathematics Score
All other subjects	Key Stage 2 Average score of Reading and Mathematics

It is recognised in school that end of KS2 results are only a measure of academic ability in the core subjects, and cannot measure a child's flair, talent and practical ability in some subjects. For this reason, Art and Design, Drama, Music and PE, conduct baseline testing in the first half term of Year 7. These are used as the starting point for which pupils are measured from in Key Stage 3. Due to the nature of accountability measures in school targets in these subjects are set using the Key Stage 2 average for Key Stage 4.

4.3 SEND

The pupil support team works in classrooms, in small groups and on a 1:1 basis to meet the needs of all our pupils. This support continues throughout the Key Stages and is tailored to the age, ability and SEND of every pupil. Additional funding is spent supporting those with special educational needs, including Educational Healthcare Plans. Further details of this provision can be found in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

5. Literacy and Numeracy

Please refer to the separate Literacy and Numeracy policies for details on how these particular areas of focus are addressed across the curriculum.

6. Homework

Ashton on Mersey school uses an online VLE called Satchel to set homework and independent learning. For more detail on homework policy please refer to the Teaching & Learning policy.

At Key Stage 3 homework is set as follows:

- Core subjects: English, Maths and Science – one per week
- EBacc subjects: Spanish, History and Geography – one per week
- All other subjects - one every three weeks

Time required to complete homework can increase to up to an hour and a half each evening.

At Key Stage 4 all pupils are expected to spend at least one hour per subject, per week on homework as a minimum.

At Key Stage 5 students receive homework related to the particular qualification demands or phase of learning.