



## Curriculum Policy

Revision No	4
Date Issued	12/2/2026
Authorised by	Governing Board
Date approved	12/02/2026
Minute number	33/25
Implementation Date	13/02/2026
Review Date	February 2027

### The key to a great quality of education

#### **Our curriculum is underpinned and shaped by our Core Purpose:**

To be an inclusive, happy community that values every individual and inspires them to achieve their full potential

#### **Our ambitious curriculum Intent: A curriculum which engages and inspires so that all students enjoy a great education**

The curriculum is everything – it is the sum of the whole student experience. It is not solely about qualifications and courses, though these play a vital role at its heart. Our curriculum must be broad and bold, ambitious and rich, in order to meet our core aim of inspiring every individual to be the best they can be.

The Highfields curriculum is designed to engage and challenge all students to achieve their fabulous potential. We aim to inspire confident, considerate, knowledgeable and creative young people, who enjoy and appreciate the value of learning. We seek to develop young people who are equipped to live happy and fulfilling lives in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. Highfields students should be ready to make positive contributions as responsible citizens within our vibrant and diverse society

#### **Our curriculum seeks to deliver and develop**

- Opportunities to learn, to lead, to create, to participate, to contribute, to be enterprising, to enable all students to find something that they enjoy are good at
- Excellent experiences – inside and outside the classroom
- Strong, embedded knowledge and understanding across a spectrum of areas
- High levels of literacy and numeracy – so that all students able to communicate fluently and apply key skills across all areas of learning
- Confident, independent learners – who value learning and who are
  - Resilient - seeking challenge and able to deal with set-backs, seeing them as opportunities
  - Responsible - able to manage their own learning, whether working alone or in a team
  - Reflective - responsive to feedback, continually seeking ways to improve

Resourceful - Creative, able to approach problems in different ways

Reasoning - able to think things through and reach well supported conclusions

- Sensitive awareness of current issues, and ability to contribute to them through thoughtful discussion and well-judged action
- Young people who model values of respect and tolerance, who value democracy and rule of law
- Strong, sophisticated understanding of, and engagement with, equality and diversity in modern society
- An appreciation of beauty, a sense of awe and wonder. Intelligent engagement with spiritual and moral discourse

### **A broad and balanced curriculum**

At the heart of our curriculum is a strong focus on the core subjects that provide the foundation for success in all learning. As students progress through school there are increasing opportunities for flexibility and choice – thereby meeting the interests, needs and aspirations of all.

#### The Key Stage 3 curriculum – Years 7-9

All students follow a common curriculum in years 7 to 9, providing full coverage of the National Curriculum. Students have lessons in maths, English, science, design technology, computing, history, geography, music, art, drama, dance, physical education, a modern foreign language, philosophy and religious studies (PRS). A second modern foreign language can be taken from year 9. Students follow a full programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes citizenship. (Please see further information below on spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of education)

All departments have a clearly planned curriculum: In each subject this is underpinned by careful thought about what students need to know, understand and do and what stage, and how learning should be sequenced so that these goals can be met most effectively. This thinking is synthesised on 'Programmes on a Page' summaries. At KS3 the knowledge, understanding and skills students are expected to develop through the curriculum in each year are defined as 'benchmarks'. These are set at 'Advanced' 'Core' and 'Developing' standards – with 'Core' representing the standards of attainment expected of most students. Curriculum Benchmark standards are published on the school website along with a Key Stage 3 Curriculum Guide which outlines the main content learned in each subject in Years 7, 8 and 9.

## Teaching time allocations at KS3 and setting arrangements

Subject	50min periods a week Y7 Y8	50min periods a week Y9	Setting
English	4	4	
Maths	4	4	Yes
Science	4	4	Some loose at Y9 if appropriate
Art	1	1	
Dance	1	In Y9 Dance is an option and can be taken instead of 1 period of PE	
Drama	1	1	
Computing	1	1	
DT	2	2	
History	2	2	
Geography	2	2	
MFL	3	4 – Most students will do two languages	Yes whenever enough classes are timetabled in Y8/Y9
Music	1	1	
PE	2	2	
PRS	1	1	
PSE	1	1	

Additional support is provided for students who are identified as potentially finding it hard to access the curriculum due to literacy barriers.

### The Key Stage 4 curriculum – Years 10 and 11

Teaching towards accredited GCSE courses begins in science and maths in year 9, but these are not examined until the end of year 11.

In years 10 and 11, the number of compulsory courses is reduced to a common core of subjects and choice is expanded with a wide range of options, including in vocational areas such as travel and tourism and engineering. Most students take 4 option subjects in addition to the common core. The common core of subjects includes examined and non exam courses. Examined courses accredited by GCSEs are: English Language, English Literature and a combined Science 'Trilogy' course which covers Biology, Chemistry and Physics and accredits with 2 GCSEs. Non-examined courses are 'core' PE, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Philosophy and Religious studies (PRS). (Please see further information below on spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of education). Both PE and PRS can also be taken as examined option subjects by students who have a specific interest in these subjects and want to take their studies further.

We stress the importance of students taking a broad and balanced curriculum at this stage. This will typically involve combining courses which cover a wide variety of areas – humanities, languages, creative / artistic, technological, physical and vocational. As such we acknowledge the English Baccalaureate as a foundation of a high quality, broad education for 14-16 year olds. The EBacc comprises English, Maths, 2 x Sciences, History or Geography and a foreign language. There is a minimum requirement for all students to take 1 subject from History, Geography or a language. This

requirement may be waived at the Headteacher’s discretion in exceptional circumstances. Interviews take place with students when selecting their options with the aim of ensuring that all students follow a curriculum that is broad, balanced and meets their interests, aspirations and needs.

Further information about the Key Stage 4 curriculum including the Year 9 options process can be found on the school website

#### KS4 curriculum time allocations

Subject	50min periods per two week cycle	Setting
English	10	Some loose setting
Maths	8	Yes
Science	12	Some loose for Combined science if appropriate
PE	4	
PRS	1 per fortnight	
PSE	1 per fortnight	
Option 1	6	
Option 2	6	
Option 3	6	
Option 4	6	

#### The Post 16 curriculum – Years 12 and 13

Many of our students choose to stay on at Highfields School in the sixth form and choose from a wide programme of predominantly ‘A’ level subjects. Our students thrive on the rigour and challenge of the post 16 curriculum and achieve consistently excellent outcomes.

The post 16 curriculum meets the requirements of the DFE Post 16 learning goals. In addition to chosen option subjects students follow a tutorial programme which includes aspects of citizenship, personal social and health education, a wide range of volunteering opportunities, work experience and careers education, information advice and guidance.

Full details of 6<sup>th</sup> form curriculum options can be found on our website (see the 6<sup>th</sup> form prospectus under ‘Curriculum and Support’ and further information under the Sixth Form tab)

#### Ensuring access to the curriculum

We aim to enable all students to access our curriculum making reasonable adjustments and adaptations to teaching where required.

#### Support for Literacy development

One of the most significant barriers to accessing an ambitious secondary curriculum is difficulties with literacy, and in particular with reading. We have a multi-tiered approach referenced in our reading strategy that supports all students to develop as able, confident readers:

1. Intervention: Closing the gap through testing and targeted intervention: All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have reading assessed through nationally developed tests. Reading ages are monitored and continually assessed through lessons with our plan for reading. Students

requiring additional support access this through a variety of interventions which can include an on-line learning package, buddy reading with 6<sup>th</sup> form students or additional reading practice in small taught groups. Additional resources are provided for students who have English as an Additional Language.

2. Reading across the curriculum: All subjects have a responsibility to develop the reading skills and confidence of our students. We promote a planned approach to reading in class, favouring reading texts together rather than individually. We recognise that students are exposed to a huge variety of academic words (sometimes known as 'Tier 2' and 'Tier 3' vocabulary) throughout their lessons. Being able to understand and use these words fluently is a key to success. We aim to help our students become confident with this vocabulary through the explicit teaching of subject specific terminology in lessons and through a weekly session in form time which focuses on academic literacy.
3. Promoting a love of reading: We have two well stocked libraries and run numerous events including World Book Day, Book Buzz.

### Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is essential to the development of our students as informed and respectful young people, in line with our overall curriculum aims. All curriculum areas contribute to this programme, alongside specialist provision within Philosophy and Religious Education and through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme which focusses on areas including sex and relationships, careers, health, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Across the whole school our tutorial periods and assemblies reinforce and extend these themes, with regular exploration of current issues. Tutor periods also provide time for independent reading, literacy and numeracy enhancement.

### The wider curriculum

Our curriculum also includes a full and varied programme of activities outside the classroom. We encourage all of our students to explore and develop their interests through such opportunities. These include trips and visits, clubs linked to specific subject areas, artistic pursuits including music, dance and drama performance and sport – including competitive sport and our acclaimed sports leadership programme. Participation in such opportunities has significant benefits in terms of deepening and extending interests, developing crucial personal and life skills, such as leadership, team work and mutual respect, and in providing enjoyment. It is very important to us that as many students as possible benefit from wider curriculum opportunities. Securing high uptake is a key focus of our Director of Student Engagement and is supported by our 'Life Skills Award'.