



**High Storrs School**

**Learning 1:**

**Curriculum  
Principles**

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Minor Amendments:

## CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES

This document should be read in conjunction with eight other key documents in school:

- Teaching and Learning Principles
- Homework Policy
- Assessment Principles
- Feedback Principles
- Behaviour Principles and Practices
- Attitude to Learning
- Target Setting and Progress Tracking Policy
- Equality Statement and Accessibility Plan

### Minerva Learning Trust Curriculum Principles

The Trust will ensure a curriculum that:

- Is broad, balanced, ambitious and diverse, recognising individual needs and talents within and beyond the formal curriculum.
- Enables students to build skills, knowledge and understanding for study and life, leading to outstanding outcomes.
- Is responsive to individual need, through support, challenge and extension and through appropriate pathways.
- Has clearly structured progression routes to specific and ambitious goals.
- Is adaptable, reflecting the changing needs of the schools and our communities.
- Provides a range of opportunities that will enhance students' life chances and choices.

### The High Storrs Curriculum Principles:

#### At High Storrs we aim:

- To enable all students to develop their full potential and acquire skills which will help them to relate successfully to others and to function in a modern world.
- To enable all students to be emotionally and physically healthy, to be responsible, active citizens who respect themselves, others and their environment.
- To infuse our students with a passion for lifelong learning, and encourage them to value learning as a journey to be enjoyed.
- To instil in our students and staff a sense of pride in their own ability and worth.

#### All students are entitled to a curriculum which:

- Reflects key 2 of our whole school 'Keys to success': Success secured through outstanding teaching, celebration of achievement and developing self-confidence and independence.
- Is broad, balanced, ambitious and creative with opportunities for extension and enrichment.
- Is inclusive, challenging, experiential and diverse.
- Is responsive to individual need through support, extension, differentiation and alternate pathways when and where appropriate.
- Has a wide choice of options subjects to study.
- Includes a strong core of numeracy, literacy, Science, RE, ICT, PE and PSHCEE.
- Is relevant to today's society e.g. political awareness, economic astuteness citizenship, social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.
- Values and celebrates diversity and embraces cultural heritage and awareness.
- Fosters a sense of identity and community spirit.

**NB:** Parents have the right to withdraw students from statutory RE for all or part of the curriculum. If this is under consideration, parents should contact the school directly.

### **We guarantee that to uphold these principles we will:**

- Put the needs of individual students above any external accountability pressures.
- Have co-ordinated progression routes which form a continuum of learning through a two-year KS3, a Y9 transition to a flexible KS4 Curriculum and a Post 16 Curriculum.
- Consider individual student needs to inform different pathways and groupings, including making the curriculum accessible for SEND students (See 'Equality Statement and Accessibility plan')
- Work in partnership with parents and students, providing a structured and supportive programme to provide clear guidance on the courses available to students.
- Ensure that alternate courses are equally valued and that there are opportunities to review and change courses if appropriate.
- Offer a vertical system of care and guidance which enables our principles to be met through mentoring, academic tutoring and careers guidance.

### **Specifically:**

In our two-year KS3 and Y9 transition year we will:

- Provide a smooth and coherent transition from KS2.
- Expect all students to follow a programme that meets the demands of the National Curriculum (with the rare exception of individuals who may be dis-applied on the basis of specific educational needs).
- Be challenging, well-paced and ambitious, avoiding 'the wasted years' notion.
- Offer foundations for further choice at KS4.
- Offer entitlement to one or more Modern Foreign or classical Languages.
- Offer opportunities for intervention, support and enhancement in key areas according to individual needs.

In our Key Stage 4 structure we will:

- Expect all students to follow a programme which meets the demands of the National Curriculum.
- Provide the opportunity for all students to follow a programme which meets the criteria of the English Baccalaureate.
- Through one-year vertical courses in Y10 & Y11, offer a varied and flexible Curriculum which will be designed to meet the needs, abilities, talents and interests of all students whilst maintaining viability.
- Offer students the chance to review and alter choices every year.
- Manage a diverse curriculum by ensuring that students receive effective guidance and support when making decisions about their KS4 curriculum.
- Maintain breadth and balance within the KS4 curriculum; including regulating individual choice patterns that are too narrow and may limit choice beyond the KS4 curriculum.
- Occasionally recommend dis-application from specific national curriculum or EBacc subjects to enable a student to follow a more individually appropriate curriculum route where needed.

At Post 16 the school will also endeavour to provide a curriculum that seeks to:

- Offer progression and continuity through appropriate routes from KS4.
- Enable individual choices to be made from a wide and varied selection of courses available.
- Ensure appropriate guidance is available to support student curriculum choice.
- Support students' access to the curriculum in a range of ways as outlined in the Post 16 Policy
- To support student access to appropriate transition routes at 17, 18 or 19 through specialist guidance and support.

## Further detail:

- A broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum is central to achieving our aims of being an inclusive community that inspires everyone to achieve their full potential.
- Our curriculum structure is based on a 2-year KS3 and a hybrid Y9 as part of a flexible 3-year model in KS4. KS5 is a 2-year model, with very few AS Levels being taken. However, the 'Key Stage' timings are somewhat arbitrary as we see our provision as a 5-year journey, or a seven-year journey for those continuing to our sixth form.
- The KS3 Curriculum includes all National Curriculum statutory subjects as well as a rich arts and classical offer.
- The Y9 curriculum includes some choice and specialisation, but retains breadth and variety for as long as possible. For subjects that are taken by all students in Y9 that lead on to exam courses, courses will overlap KS3 NC with GCSE style content, knowledge and skills. These include Maths, English, Science, Humanities and Languages. For NC subjects that students can choose not to continue into Y9, the KS3 course covers the full KS3 NC content in Y7 & Y8.
- Students study linear courses in Maths, English, Science, Humanities and Languages completing GCSEs for these subjects in Y11. They also take one intensive 1-year exam option of their choice in Y10 and one in Y11. There is also a variety of non-examined courses to sustain breadth.
- One-year exam courses are not 'accelerated learning' they have the full quota of guided learning hours, they are just arranged more intensively over a shorter time period.
- One-year exam courses are taught in mixed age Y10/Y11 classes. This model allows greater variety of choice since subjects can sustain viability by being offered in alternate years where needed. The Y10 exams also provide an opportunity to experience exam pressure on a small scale, protecting students' mental health and building resilience ready for the larger volume of formal testing undertaken in Y11.
- There is a very diverse range of courses available in KS4, so that all students can choose subjects that inspire them and in which they can excel. We offer both Vocational and GCSE courses as well as courses that do not contribute to performance measures, but are right for some of our students, for example ASDAN, Entry Level courses and enrichment courses.
- Our offer and expectations of what students will engage with in KS4 is ambitious and inclusive; all students have the opportunity to study for the Full EBacc (approximately 75% do so each year), and can also study technology and arts subjects alongside this.
- Our curriculum has some prescription, but this is applied flexibly and no student is limited by specific curriculum pathways.
- We have dedicated RE, PE, IT and PSHCEE time within the core curriculum in KS3 and KS4 which contributes significantly to well-being and to an understanding of modern Britain, as well as personal, moral and spiritual development.
- Subject level curriculum planning is very well developed with significant attention to rationale of content and sequencing across the key stages, each has a 'Rationale Statement' on which to hang their wider planning. Almost all subject teachers are specialists. Subject Leaders are clear about why we teach what we teach and when. Curricula are designed to inspire and reach beyond exam success and programmes of study have also been deliberately structured to include opportunities for spaced learning, interleaving and retrieval practice to ensure genuine long-term learning.

- At High Storrs we understand that knowledge is important to all thinking and that new learning depends on connections to things students already know. This makes us especially aware of the need to build cultural capital in all students, but particularly those where the existing foundations may be more limited.
- Subject SoWs include clear links to well-designed appropriately timed formal assessments. Standardised results from these as well as on-going teacher judgement through AfL inform tracking judgements. Careful thought has gone into the frequency of medium-term summative assessments (typically no more than once per term) and tracking to balance the impact on teaching time and the usefulness of the outcomes in informing next steps.
- There is a rich extra-curricular offer beyond the formal timetable with high levels of pupil participation.
- Curriculum goals in Sixth Form are challenging, building upon the programmes at KS4 and KS3. The curriculum is well planned to ensure progression from KS4 programmes of study for internal and external KS5 students; we offer a very wide range of courses including A Level subjects and the Extended Project Qualification.
- All KS5 students are supported through a thorough application process, which ensures they undertake ambitious study programmes that provide challenge and progression.
- At KS5 the 'non-qualification' curriculum is designed to complement students' L3 qualifications and is taught with the same rigour as all subjects. This includes a weekly hour-long Tutorial programme for all students and an additional life skills hour that leads to a choice of skills pathways in Y13. All students sign up to careers pathways from the beginning of Year 12 to assure that their careers education is targeted and relevant to their next steps.

## Subject Level Curriculum Planning

Subject teams at High Storrs are encouraged to consider these big questions to aid their planning:

- What does it mean to be a successful student in this subject?
  - What is the purpose of our subject?
  - What does it mean to be a good mathematician/musician/historian etc? Is this what we are preparing students for?
  - What are the core knowledge and skills needed for success?
- What does progress look like in our subject?
  - How do we know when a student is making progress?
  - How might progress vary over time?

Each subject team has developed a rationale for their curriculum and set out aims for each Key stage. Those that teach their subject in both KS3 and KS4 have developed a progression framework that sits behind all SoWs. This identifies a pathway through the knowledge and skills they want to develop in students in their subject, highlighting the fundamental building blocks of the subject and sequencing through this foundation content to the higher order of skills and knowledge developed in KS4.

In each subject, the KS3 curriculum will:

- Include the right skills and content. It must have the right balance of:
  - Fundamental ideas, principles and building blocks of the subject, the **core constructs**.
  - Aspects that students will enjoy and be engaged with.
  - All the elements of the statutory National Curriculum where applicable.
  - Foundations for GCSE – exposure to an important knowledge base and opportunities to practice skills that will underpin GCSE.
- Have a well thought out order, sequencing content to build as well as re-visit and embed over time.
- Be realistic in the volume of content and skills covered, not be too rushed or lacking in depth.
- Challenge students at all levels to think deeply and master concepts.
- Provide an authentic experience of the subject - if students choose this subject for GCSE based on their KS3 experience, this will be fair.

In KS4, subject teams delivering exam courses use their progression framework and the exam specification as the basis for their curriculum planning to develop SoWs. These schemes will be also have content sequenced appropriately to build as well as re-visit and embed over time.

Non-examined KS4 courses include Core PE, Core IT, Core RE and PSHCEE as well as enrichment courses. The Core subjects meet all statutory requirements as well as responding to the needs and interests of our students in the High Storrs context. Enrichment courses are chosen by each student just for the love of learning, or as a stepping stone to a GCSE course in the same subject later, or as a taster to help make a final decision about a future GCSE option, or to add variety – students may choose something they enjoy, but can't fit in as a full GCSE later. The planning for these courses is therefore less rigid, and teachers are given license to really engage their passion for the subject and the curriculum can even evolve during the course to meet the developing interests of the students on the current course. All do, however, have an initial programme of study in place for the year when they begin.

In KS5, subject teams delivering exam courses use the exam specification as the basis for their curriculum planning to develop SoWs. These schemes will have content sequenced appropriately to build as well as re-visit and embed over time.