

RATIONALE

Curriculum development is on-going to reflect the needs of our students cohort by cohort. All stakeholders understand the principles which underpin decisions around the curriculum. The policy reflects the aims and values of the school and is based on a set of principles that lie at the heart of a learning centred school:

- All students are entitled to a broad, balanced, coherent, relevant and personalised curriculum which meets their individual needs and provides them with appropriate qualifications in the future.
- The learning process should be engaging, motivating, exciting and allow students to achieve, as well as developing lively, imaginative and enquiring minds.
- All students will be given the opportunity to be creative and take risks with their learning, in a supportive yet challenging environment.
- All students should have full access to the curriculum, irrespective of gender, SEN, ethnicity, academic ability, social or cultural background.
- The curriculum should develop active citizens, both within the school and the wider community.
- Students should be well prepared for their future careers through the development of independence of thought, self-reliance and a questioning approach which challenges prejudice.
- The curriculum should encourage high expectations and aspirations.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body:

- To review regularly the school curriculum and make amendments which reflect students' needs.
- To have an overview of local and national developments which affect the curriculum.
- To understand the necessity for strong progression routes. This should include effective transition from primary school and progression within Key Stages 3 to 4 and beyond.
- To have an understanding of the curriculum model and the impact this has on student progress and achievement, as well as staffing and the school budget.

The Headteacher and Senior Management Team

- To review the curriculum annually making changes in response to any local or national initiatives that will maximise student learning and achievement.
- To keep abreast of local and national changes and apply these judiciously.
- To ensure the curriculum allows clear progression through all key stages.
- To monitor curriculum impact on achievement, learning and progress and adapt as necessary in order to maximise these.
- To have a broad understanding of the curriculum in the subjects they line manage. To ensure that the curriculum model leads to a timetable which supports learning.

Subject Leaders

- To monitor curriculum developments in their subject area and implement these in discussion with SMT line managers.
- To design and implement a curriculum that ensure students' progression within the subject and meets the principles set out in this policy.
- To monitor the impact of the curriculum on standards of student learning and progress.
- To keep abreast of changes which impact on the curriculum at a local and national level.
- To support the devising of the timetable within their subject by liaising with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for timetable design.

Teaching Staff

- To deliver the curriculum in line with the Thomas Keble Teaching and Learning Policy.
- To differentiate and personalise the curriculum to allow all students to access the learning at the appropriate level.
- To plan lessons which support all students to make at least expected progress.

In line with our Equality Policy, we aim to provide all students with a curriculum which meets their needs, and to ensure that access to the right curriculum does not depend on a student's prior attainment, gender, ethnicity, social background, sexual orientation and/or religion. In designing the curriculum we consider all students equal.

Principles of Curriculum Design at Thomas Keble School

Thomas Keble School will provide a curriculum for all of our students which meet our statutory obligations under the law. Our timetable spans ten days. Each day consists of five sixty minute periods with the exception of tutorial days when students will have one 50 minutes tutorial period followed by five fifty minute subject lessons. We operate a flexible system of allocation to teaching groups that is designed to cater for both the abilities of individual students and the differing requirements of subjects.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 – 9)

Within Key Stage 3 students follow a broad and balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum for England. The following subjects are taught discretely in Key Stage 3 (number of hours per fortnight shown in brackets):

English (6), maths (6), science (6), ICT (2), art and design (2), design technology (4), music (2), drama (2), history (3), geography (3), physical education (4), PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) (2); RE (2) and modern foreign languages (6). There is a strong focus on cross curricular approaches to learning which allow students to gather key learning skills such as investigation, analysis and evaluation that can be applied to all subject areas. A small cohort of students will be disapplied from modern foreign languages in Year 7 to undertake a programme of study to support literacy progress, 'Read, Write Inc.' Parents will be informed if this is the case by our Learning Support team.

Key Stage 4 (Y10 and Y11)

The vast majority of subjects begin preparing students for the rigours of KS4 courses whilst in Y9. Several subjects actually begin studying the GCSE syllabus in Year 9. The subjects that start the GCSE programme explicitly in Year 9 are RE and science.

Within Key Stage 4 students follow a core curriculum including:

English, maths, science, PE and RE.

There are a range of optional subjects available to students. Each optional subject is studied for five hours per fortnight. The optional courses are as follows:

- Art
- ASDAN (Modular skills based qualification)*
- Catering
- Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- Graphics
- History
- Horticulture (National Open College qualification)*
- ICT
- Media Studies
- Music
- PE (GCSE and BTEC*)
- RE
- Resistant Materials
- Spanish
- Textiles

The responsibility for selecting the precise GCSE courses which are available to be studied lies with the subject leader in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher (Examinations). Options will be offered on the basis of attracting viable student numbers. The minimum number of students required for a viable course is 15 and is dependent on financial restraints.

The Options Process

Students selecting their Key Stage 4 courses are provided with course details via the 'Options booklet' which is distributed at the start of the Spring Term of Year 9.

Responsibility for providing additional advice lies with subject leaders and is given to students via classes; assemblies and via information evening arranged to enable parents and students to find out more about what each course involves.

All students in Year 9 complete an options choices form identifying their preferences for Key Stage 4 subjects. At Thomas Keble, we offer free options choices outside of the core curriculum. Students choose any 4 courses (subject to combination limitations as outlined on the options form). The aim of this free choice is to enable students to choose the programme of study most suited to them, thus ensuring high levels of engagement with the curriculum. Guided advice is given to students who may struggle to choose independently

via the Learning Support team.

Student choices are used to construct timetable blocks. The number of classes (in each subject) and range of subjects in each block are designed to maximise the number of students who can study all of their first four choices.

We would normally expect 15 students to choose a course in order for it to be viable. However, wherever possible, and to support the study of minority subjects, we will run courses where suitable staffing and resources can be provided without additional cost.

The English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate is an accreditation awarded to any student achieving A*-C grades in all of the following: Maths, English Language, Science, one or more Modern Foreign Languages, History or Geography. Whilst students and parents are made aware of this accreditation when deciding Year 9 options, we do not insist that students must achieve this combination of subjects.

Class Sizes

Wherever possible, we will seek to maintain KS3 class sizes at around 27 students, with group sizes based on ability and the need for ratios to provide adequate support and intervention. Maximum class size will be 30 students in non-practical subjects. In practical subjects the size of the room and availability of resources will determine the maximum class size. All relevant national recommendations for maximum safe class sizes will be adhered to. Any decision to raise a class size above 30, even in a completely non-practical subject, will be taken by the Headteacher in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher.

In KS4, we will allocate additional teaching groups in the core subject areas to maintain a class size of around 25. Options classes will be capped at 25 students unless exceptional cases are agreed between the Headteacher, subject leader and Assistant Headteacher (Timetable).

Setting Policy

When students arrive at Thomas Keble at the beginning of Year 7, they generally work in mixed ability settings for a short period of time to allow for a smooth transition process both in terms of learning and pastoral care. Once benchmark assessments have taken place (before October half term) students are placed in sets according to literacy aptitude. The exception to this rule is in Maths where students are placed in fine sets according to ability across the whole year. By Year 9, English, Maths and Science will set across the year group ensuring students can be placed in sets that match their ability in each of these core areas. This ensures the curriculum stretches and challenges all students appropriately in all core areas. Some reorganisation of sets also takes place in modern foreign languages from Year 8 (timetable permitting.) This enables students to opt into specific language pathways including dual languages (French and Spanish); French only and Spanish only.

The responsibility for placing students into the correct sets lies with the subject leaders. Where two or more subjects are grouped together when we design the timetable, meaning they have to operate the same setting arrangements, subject leaders will liaise to ensure suitable setting can be achieved in each subject area.

Set changes can occur within the academic year and Heads of Year / Subject Leaders will communicate directly with parents where this is felt to be necessary. The school undertakes regular reviews of student progress and these will be used to inform such decisions.

Parents who are concerned about the placement of their child into a particular set should contact the subject leader in the first instance. The issue can be referred to the appropriate member of the SMT who line manages the subject for review. If parents remain dissatisfied, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher who will review the information presented and make a final judgement with regards the setting placement.

In Year Admissions (students transferring from other schools)

When accepting 'In Year' admissions we will make every reasonable effort to match the curriculum which the student has studied in their previous school. Any inability to do so will only occur if we do not run a specific course (or subject); if all of the classes for a subject have reached a limit based on safety or if we have strong pastoral concerns about interactions with specific students.

When deciding on the student's sets we will take into account information from their previous school and from tests conducted on entry to Thomas Keble. We cannot guarantee to match their previous set if some classes are already full, but every effort will be made to ensure that their curriculum meets their needs.

Complaints Relating to the Curriculum

All concerns relating to the curriculum should be directed to the relevant tutor in the first instance who will involve the relevant Subject Leader / Head of Year if appropriate. If concerns cannot be resolved at this stage, the matter will be referred to the appropriate member of the senior management team, normally the Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum and Timetable.) They will confer with the Headteacher in such cases. If a matter remains unresolved despite this process being followed, the school's complaints policy will be used as a framework to resolve the issue. A copy will be made available should this be necessary.

Related Policies:

- Equal opportunities
- Teaching and learning
- SEND Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Complaints Procedure