

## RATIONALE

This statement deliberately does not seek to identify the skills required by a '21st century learner' or to second-guess the qualities that employers of the future will be seeking in our young people. Our aims are no less ambitious but, we hope, more realistic: to ensure all students gain the skills and confidence to become effective and resilient learners within a mutually respectful community that is caring and supportive of its members and considerate of the diversities of society more widely. Through such an approach, we aspire to encourage our learners to be adaptable to the evolving challenges of the 21st Century.

At Thomas Keble, we recognise that embedding effective curricular development takes time. We are determined not to be distracted by external accountability pressures and attempts to 'play the system'. Instead, we are committed to retaining a broad and balanced curriculum with equality of access for all; and to reviewing research into effective learning and its pedagogical implications to adjust our practice in order to maximise its effectiveness. Our approach is to modify what we know works, rather than embark on a series of fragmented initiatives.

We recognise that each subject is unique and so Heads of Department, as the experts in their areas, are empowered to develop and structure their curriculums with their department colleagues, all of whom have Qualified Teacher Status. From September 2019, a significant increase in subject Teaching and Learning Community (TLC) time is intended to enable departments to discuss and decide:

- **INTENT:** What elements of curriculum content they are teaching so that students can access each academic discipline and tradition.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - When they are teaching each element so that students can appreciate the relationships between them;
  - How they are teaching each element effectively so that all students can access and be engaged by the curriculum.
- **IMPACT:** How and when to assess what students know, understand and can do.

Sequences of learning across all five years should be underpinned by:

- Consistent challenge for all;
- The embedding of subject-specific skills alongside the coherent layering and spiralling of subject-specific knowledge;
- Explicit teaching of each aspect of the TK Learning Process: Understanding – Transforming – Reviewing – Applying.

## Responsibilities

### The Trust Board

- 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.
- To provide support and challenge to middle leaders so that any necessary curriculum adaptations can be made in order to maximise student achievement, learning and progress.
- 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 member of SMT 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.
- To use the Professional Development Journal to trace their own implementation practice, using research-informed approaches.

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-minute tutorial period followed by five 50-minute subject lessons. These periods enable discrete time to be allocated for a tutorial programme that includes delivering the new Relationships and Sex Education curriculum as an early-adopter school, as well as our nationally recognised Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. This adjustment on tutorial days allows the flexibility to invite external speakers into school, as well as enabling the preservation of an entitlement of two hours per week of core PE for all students at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. 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 – 8)**

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 (7), 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 (MFL) (5).

**MFL: On entry, students are asked to express a preference for studying either French or Spanish. By focusing on one language (rather than two in previous years), it is hoped that students will gain a deeper knowledge, develop greater confidence and be more inclined to choose a language at GCSE. In this way, the school aims to significantly increase the number of students opting to study a language at GCSE. A small cohort of students will have a reduced number of MFL lessons in Years 7 and 8 to undertake a programme of study to support literacy progress: 'Read, Write Inc.' This provision is considered on a cohort by cohort basis after consultation between the SENCo, Headteacher and Timetabler. Parents will be informed of this curriculum adjustment by the SENCo. In Year 9, these students will study a bespoke package of MFL-related work to reflect the high value we place on this wider cultural awareness.**

### **Key Stage 3 (Year 9)**

At the end of Y8, students are given some limited opportunity to choose to prioritise some subjects (4 from DT – two options, Art, Drama, Music and Computing) in order to deepen their learning in these areas by increasing the curriculum time to 3 hours per fortnight. This choice offers students equal exposure to potential option subjects, giving them a fuller experience and understanding of each; this in turn has led to far fewer subject changes at the start of Year 10. All students (including those in the Intervention set in Years 7 and 8) have access to these mini-options, ensuring aspirational choice and challenge for all. If a student has chosen not to study one of the options in Year 9, this does not prevent them from selecting it at Key Stage 4.

### **Key Stage 4 (Y10 and Y11)**

Curriculum planning considers learning as a 5-year progression model, rather than it being compartmentalised into Year Groups or Key Stages and so preparation for Years 10 and 11 is implicit in earlier years. However, these subjects start their GCSE programmes explicitly in Year 9:

Science: Bridging work to GCSE begins from January in Year 9. Pathways are not decided until Year 10:

- The majority of students study Trilogy. The cohesive and consistent sequence of this course enables movement to or from the Triple Science pathway if necessary.
- Triple Science for those students able to cope with the volume and depth of the course. This is taught within core curriculum time as opposed to being offered as an option so that students retain access to a broad and balanced curriculum that maximises choice, particularly for the most able.
- Where appropriate, students who find Science especially difficult may complete an Entry Level Certificate in Year 10, followed by GCSE Biology in Year 11.

RE (which also gains an additional lesson – to 3 hours per fortnight – in Year 9): other than those choosing the full course GCSE option, the majority of students are entered for the RE short course GCSE at the end of Year 10. Practically, this has enabled Maths to gain 2 lessons in Year 11 per fortnight due to the additional and more challenging content of the new GCSE. This early entry has also helped lay crucial foundations for students' future exam preparation, as well as producing very creditable results: the proportion of students achieving grades 9-4 in 2019 was 11% above the national average.

Within Key Stage 4 students follow a core curriculum including:

English, Maths, Science, PE and RE.

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

#### GCSEs

- Art & Design
- Art & Design: Textiles
- Computer Science
- Drama
- DT Food
- DT Graphics
- DT Resistant Materials
- French
- Geography
- History
- PE
- RE full course
- Spanish

#### Vocational

- ASDAN
- Employability Skills
- Imedia
- OCR Sport
- RSL Music

The responsibility for selecting the precise GCSE courses which are available to be studied lies with the subject leader in consultation with the SMT timetabler. Options will be offered on the basis of attracting viable student numbers. The minimum number of students required for a viable course is 18 and is dependent on financial constraints. 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 school's approach to deciding tiers of entry in applicable subjects (Maths, Science and MFL) can be found in Appendix A.

### **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 lessons, assemblies and an 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 is designed to maximise the number of students who can study all of their first four choices.

## **The English Baccalaureate**

The English Baccalaureate is an accreditation awarded to any student achieving 9-4 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. Instead, students are encouraged to select a rigorous, broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their interests and aptitudes. This freedom of choice leads to positive behaviour, excellent attendance and very few students becoming NEET.

## **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 Health and Safety 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 SMT.

## **Setting Policy**

When students arrive at Thomas Keble at the beginning of Year 7, they are setted in some areas and taught in mixed groups in other subject areas. Details as follows:

- Mixed Groupings: Art, Design Technology, Drama, English, Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Music and PE.
- Setted Groupings: Maths, Science, RE, Computing and CPHSE.

In recent years, an increasing number of subjects have chosen to use mixed groupings, ensuring aspirations remain high for all students and allowing for learning being a fluid and sometimes unpredictable process. This has resulted in high levels of consistency across the curriculum, with all GCSE subjects being above the national expected rate of progress.

Students with very weak literacy and numeracy skills are taught within an Intervention group for all subjects except Science, Maths, DT and PE. In these groups, they are taught as part of a whole year block to maximise mainstream integration whilst allowing targeted support in literacy which can present as a significant barrier to progress in other subjects.

By Year 9, Maths and Science will set across the year group ensuring students can be placed in sets that stretch and challenge students appropriately.

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 Pastoral Leads / 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 class 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 class allocations, 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 / Pastoral Lead 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 Headteacher. 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
- Induction of new pupils

## APPENDIX A

### Thomas Keble School: Guidance on tiers of entry

There are tiers of entry for students in Maths, Science, French and Spanish. If your child is studying these subjects then the school will determine the best tier of entry based on their results in classwork, homework and assessments. **Parents will be informed in writing of the likely tier of entry in January of Year 11 once the mock exam results are published and before the parents' evening in term 3.**

The two tiers are

- Foundation: Grade outcomes from 1 to 5 (where a 4 is a standard pass and 5 a strong pass)
- Higher: Grade outcomes from 4 to 9. Students who do not achieve a grade 4 will receive an unclassified (U) grade.

Decisions on entries will vary slightly for the different subjects; however, if a student is consistently performing at a grade 5 or above they will be considered for the Higher papers. Those students who are performing on the cusp of a 4/5 will likely sit the Foundation papers in their mock examinations. If they achieve a grade 5 in the Foundation papers, then the department concerned may choose to try them on a Higher paper to see if they are able to cope with the Higher content. At this point a change in tier may be appropriate.

It should be noted that some pupils aiming for grade 5 may find the foundation tier papers more accessible and perform better at this level. If, based on the above evidence, this is the case, they will be entered for the Foundation tier to enable them to achieve their best possible grade.

Entry decisions will be made by the school. If parents have concerns about any of these decisions, the relevant Head of Department should be contacted in the first instance. If agreement cannot be reached, the Deputy Headteacher will make the final decision, following a meeting to share the evidence base for entry.

#### Subject-specific details:

##### Maths

Decision point	Decision and evidence base
End of Y9	GCSE sets compiled based on end of Y9 exam results and other available data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sets 1 and 2 aiming for Higher Tier</li><li>• Set 3 nominally Foundation but more fluid where some students may eventually be Higher Tier</li><li>• Sets 4 and 5 aiming for Foundation Tier</li></ul>
Easter Y10	Based on Y10 exam results and other available data, there may be some set moves. <b>Parents will be informed of any moves.</b>
End of Y10	Students complete a further set of exams. <b>At this point, parents are informed of students' likely Pathway, as well as any set moves.</b>
January Y11	For most students a final decision on tier of entry is made in response to the Y11 mock exams and other available data. This includes whether students will be dual entered for GCSE and Entry Level. <b>Parents will be informed of that final decision.</b> Flexibility remains until the final exam board entry date as student performance and personal circumstances can change.



## French and Spanish

Decision point	Decision and evidence base
Y10 exams	Due to the incremental nature of MFL, all students sit the Foundation Tier exam. Those achieving at least a strong grade 4 will be entered for the Higher Tier in the Y11 mock exams.
January Y11	Y11 mock results and other available data are used to make final tier decisions. <b>Parents will be informed of that final decision in writing.</b> Flexibility remains until the final exam board entry date as student performance and personal circumstances can change.

## Science

Decision point	Decision and evidence base
Start of Y10	Students placed on initial pathway and tier sets as a result of Y9 exams. <b>Parents will be informed in writing of their child's initial pathway and tier of entry.</b>
Y10 exams	There may be tier and set moves in response to these exams. <b>Parents will be informed if this happens.</b>
Y11 Dec mocks	Foundation set students may be given the opportunity to sit Higher Tier papers if assessment data suggests they are working close to grades 5-5. Y11 mock results and other available data are used to make final tier decisions. <b>Parents will be informed of that final decision in writing.</b> Flexibility remains until the final exam board entry date as student performance and personal circumstances can change. Some broad guiding principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Combined and Triple students will be entered for the Foundation Tier, unless they are working at a secure grade 5.</li> <li>• Consideration will be given to students moving from Triple to Combined Science if they are working significantly below their estimated target grade.</li> </ul>
Early term 4 Y11	Students sit a second set of mock papers. <b>Parents will be informed in writing of any final changes in response to these exams.</b>



