

THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

At Key Stage 4, students will study a broad and balanced academic core of subjects at GCSE. These are: English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (either Combined or Separate), History or Geography and French. This suite of subjects forms the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Physical Education and Ethics complete the core requirement. The EBacc suite ensures that students are challenged and gain the knowledge, skills and cultural capital to become rounded, independent and caring citizens of the global community. In addition, these subjects provide students with opportunities to access the widest possible range of courses in Higher Education. Alongside the EBacc qualification, students also have the opportunity to study a range of other subjects such as RE, art, music, DT, drama, computing, psychology, PE and Health and Social Care.

All of our students deserve the opportunity to achieve across a broad range of subjects in qualifications which are meaningful to them and which offer progression to a range of pathways at Key Stage 5 and beyond. Students do not benefit from following more courses than they strictly need to in order to progress with students not entered for any examinations where course content may overlap with others they are studying and the majority of our students follow no more than 9 examination courses (GCSE or alternative) at Key Stage 4.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is designed to continue to build upon the foundations of knowledge students have learned at Key Stage 3 alongside the application of this knowledge to a broad range of increasingly complex problems. Where appropriate, skills will be explicitly taught and practised. Skills such as evaluation, analysis, synthesis and creativity are taught more explicitly at Key Stage 4 alongside the progression of core content.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is planned to prioritise knowledge-based learning. This gives our students three years to garner the requisite knowledge base before we begin to develop skills in a more specific way at Key Stages 4 and 5. Students opt in Year 9.

WIDER KNOWLEDGE

The curriculum aims to equip students for life-long learning and helps to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. Students' development is not limited to the examination syllabi and subjects at Key Stage 4 are not constrained by the terminal examination. Students are given the opportunity to develop a broader understanding of the subject over time, including a continuing emphasis on developing their cultural capital and knowledge of the wider content within each domain which is important to life-long learning. We endeavour to ensure our curriculum allows students to be able to do the following;

- Experience of beauty and meaning in the world
- Joining the 'great conversations of mankind'
- Understanding the disciplinary codes and the nature of truth-claims

- Ability to think well
- Sustaining and treasuring the disciplines

READING

It is vitally important to the development of all students that they have the necessary reading and literacy skills to access examinations at Level 2 and for them to be able to communicate effectively as adults. In addition to the Reading approaches used at Key Stage 3, we maintain a focus on developing reading skills, through vocabulary building and ensure that all students are exposed to increasingly challenging texts in lessons wherever appropriate. There is also a continued focus on developing students' cultural capital: the knowledge and values which empower social mobility.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Religious Education, Personal Development and Physical Education develop our students' social and personal wellbeing, whilst other subjects teach topics such as economic understanding and cultural understanding. This includes developing our students' knowledge and understanding of British Values and their place in 21st Century Great Britain and the world, as well as valued knowledge about mankind's technological, artistic and social development.

Religious Education is taught in the core offer through the ethics curriculum and is also available to students to choose as an option subject.

The Ethics curriculum follows the new Relationships, Sex and Health (RSHE) statutory curriculum and we have ensured a strengthened focus on an age-appropriate coverage of respectful relationships, sexual violence and peer-on-peer abuse.

Students are encouraged, through the wider curriculum, to take part in regular extra-curricular activities and are encouraged to take part in a range of student leadership activities. Our assembly programme is designed to provide students with appropriate information and challenge regarding a range of topical issues such as care for the environment and volunteering.

Our annual Activities Week provides students with opportunities to take part in activities which challenge and extend them. Activities include team building activities, outdoor adventures, visits museum and sporting venues, work experience and international visits.

CAREERS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

All students in Year 10 have a week of Work Experience during Activities Week. Students are encouraged to be focused on their future aspirations and we provide them with an up-to-date view of the labour market, both locally and on a broader scale. We help to facilitate this through expert advice and guidance provided during personal interviews as part of the Options process and during Key Stage 4.

THE TIMETABLE

The timetable for Key Stage 4 is based on a two-week cycle and comprises a 25 period week with 5 periods per day. Each period lasts 60 minutes and all lessons are single periods. The number of lessons allocated to each subject in Years 10 & 11 is shown in the table below.

Periods per fortnight	Y10	Y11
English	8	8
Mathematics	8	8
Science	9	9
History or Geography	5	5
MFL	5	5
Option 1	5	5
Option 2	5	5
PE (core)	3	3
Ethics	2	2