

Curriculum Policy

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Intended Audience

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AMENDMENT TRACKER

Name of reviewer: Martin Higgon

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Summary of all changes being proposed in this policy review:

- P.4 Updated list of KS3 report attributes
Updated dates from 2019-20 to 2020-21
Adjusted year groups PSHEE is taught in to Y7-11 and Y12-13 Tutor Time.
- P.5 Removed references to the Community System.
- P.7 Updated list of GCSEs offered for Options Two and Three
Updated list of A level and Applied/BTEC courses offered
Adjusted reference to Sigma Sixth partnership offer
- P.8 Updated list of A level and Applied/BTEC/Vocational courses offered
Updated reference to second year of sixth form hairdressing course (Level 3)
Added reference to the Blended Route in the Sixth Form
- P.10 Appendix A updated to reflect Curriculum weightings for 2020-21.

Curriculum Policy

The Intent of our Curriculum

At Harwich and Dovercourt High School we are ambitious for our students, and our curriculum is designed to maximise the opportunities available to them when they leave us after five or seven years in our school. It is founded on the important principle of providing all of our students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in their lives.

We offer a broad curriculum throughout the five or seven years our young people spend with us. Each subject discipline has carefully planned how their curriculum progresses from students' starting points at the end of Key Stage 2 during the time they spend in our school.

Both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of reading are fundamental cornerstones of our curriculum design. Consequently, during our students' time with us much emphasis is given to developing their reading, both for purpose and for pleasure, in addition to providing abundant opportunities for them to embed knowledge into their long-term memory, supporting their personal development as learners as well as equipping them to succeed in their lives, including in the next stages of their education and in employment.

The implementation of our curriculum

In order to best support the successful implementation of our curriculum for 2019-20 we moved to a school day with four 75 minute lessons. This has allowed the development of a more rigorous approach to Key Stage Three, including the use of reading for purpose and focussed study activities during each lesson. The amount of curriculum time given to each subject across Years 7-13 is shown in Appendix A.

Key Stage Three (Years 7-8)

Our KS3 curriculum is knowledge rich. It is designed to foster a love of reading and learning in our young people and also to equip them with the foundations they need in knowledge and skills to successfully navigate the challenges of studying a full set of reformed 9-1 GCSEs in the future.

Subject leaders have carefully considered the design of the curriculum in their areas to ensure that students learn the most important subject content and this is securely embedded through the use of retrieval practice-based activities. The two years of Key Stage 3 are strengthened further with carefully planned curriculum-enhancement trips in Years 7 and 8, including a whole Year 7 trip to London, which is supported with and followed up by our PSHEE curriculum, affording opportunities to develop literacy, cultural capital and oracy. Our Opportunity Curriculum enhances this even further by encouraging and rewarding students for undertaking life enhancing activities during the holidays, such as visiting art exhibitions, watching meteor showers, or writing a song.

In addition to reading for purpose in each lesson students are also encouraged to read for pleasure by being provided with books carefully chosen by the school to be both challenging and interesting to them. Opportunities to experience the pleasure of silent reading are built into the school week, for example during assembly.

Although we believe that reading is a vital skill for life it is clear that it also underpins success in vital external examinations in Years 11 and 13. Therefore we assess all of our students' reading ages regularly and, where necessary, offer a range of reading interventions.

Depending on need and students' starting points, these interventions are led through one of a number of avenues, including via our SEND department, tutor time and during English lessons. Our aim is to ensure that our students' reading ages catch up to their chronological age as soon as possible. During lessons, all students are expected to read for purpose and our Teaching and Learning Team regularly provide training to staff in successful research-based strategies to lead reading successfully in their classrooms.

Academically, we use prior attainment data from year 6 SATs to organise students into sets in the majority of subjects, with the notable exceptions of PE where students are generally grouped by gender and in technology where students are taught in smaller groups.

The importance of a range of key skills has been recognised in the development of our reporting system, which now reports three times a year on the following attributes in Years 7 and 8: respect/preparedness and behaviour, out of school learning, acquiring knowledge, attitude to learning, engagement with reading, developing writing, developing oracy.

These three tracking points in each year also allow the Heads of Year and Subject Leaders to:

- Identify students causing concern;
- Produce a clear and digestible overview of students' knowledge acquisition, engagement with reading, developing writing, developing oracy and attitude to learning, for staff;
- Meet with the relevant staff, including the SENCO, to put appropriate and well-informed interventions in place;
- Celebrate endeavour and hard work moving forward.

GCSE Options

We strongly believe that a good set of GCSE results is crucial for future career success for our students. With the introduction of content heavy 9-1 GCSEs including more terminal exam papers, in order to allow our students to achieve their very best at the end of Key Stage Four we begin the process of choosing GCSE options during Year 8. This then leads into a Transition Year in Year 9 where students start their GCSE studies. The majority of our students then study those courses for three years, allowing them to develop mastery of their subjects ready for the increased rigour of a full set of 9-1 terminal exams in the summer of Year 11.

We are mindful of the need to ensure our students do not miss out on a broad curriculum during Year 9. In order to carefully balance the need to support success at Year 11 with the need to develop a wide range of knowledge at Key Stage 3, we ensure the following during Year 9, which we consider a Transition Year between Key Stages 3 and 4.

Transition Year (Year 9)

The Transition Year (Year 9) allows students to re-evaluate their options choices whilst continuing to acquire a rounded knowledge of key world issues and events outside of their examined subjects to develop lifelong learners. It is supported with a full programme of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). This is achieved through our PSHEE, Careers and Citizenship programme which operates throughout the 11-19 school and has been enhanced for 2020-21 in recognition of the importance of this area.

In addition, curriculum-enriching trips, activities and assemblies continue to run throughout Year 9 ensuring all students continue to learn about a broad range of subjects.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

PSHEE is delivered through a weekly taught lesson in Years 7-11, Tutor Time in Years 12-13 and is supplemented by a range of exciting days spread throughout the year for the entire 11-19 school. During each of these days (typically taking place in November, February and July), each year group focuses on a dedicated theme relevant to their age group during that point of the school year, for example healthy living (Year 7), democracy (Year 8), careers (Year 11) and preparing for university (Years 12 and 13).

In school, students are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities and experiences across and beyond the curriculum, contributing fully to the life of the school and the wider community. PSHEE aims to enable students to:

- Value others and feel valued
- Respect others and be respected
- Be independent, but also interdependent
- Behave responsibly
- Have a concern for justice and uphold the rights of others
- Understand the consequences of actions
- Treat others the way they wish to be treated

Further information regarding PSHEE can be found in our PSHEE policy.

Careers, employability skills and pathways to success are emphasised from day one. A culture of aspiration permeates everything we do. We have high expectations and promote a growth mindset. As per the HDHS careers policy, we endeavour to make a major contribution to preparing our young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, in order to help them make a successful transition to adulthood.

Further information regarding CEIAG can be found in our careers policy.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

At Harwich and Dovercourt High School we recognise that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students plays a significant part in their ability to learn and to achieve their full potential. As such, SMSC is integral to the school's ethos. We believe that students cannot and will not learn effectively unless they are both happy and secure; unless their individuality is respected; their differences celebrated; their difficulties understood; their interests extended and their talents developed. For that reason, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is as important as their academic development. As a consequence of this belief we aim to provide an education that gives students the opportunity to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, to engage with their spiritual lives; to develop positive and caring attitudes towards others; to develop an understanding of their social and cultural roots and to hold an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures.

Students are given the opportunities to explore the SMSC aspects of their personal development through school pastoral activities, themselves designed to foster and cultivate the values above; through collective worship, delivered in year group assemblies, which provide rich opportunities for personal and collective reflection; and through all curriculum areas, each making a contribution to students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within their particular context.

Further information regarding SMSC can be found in our SMSC Policy/British Values Statement.

Key Stage Four (Transition Year (Year 9) plus Years 10-11)

In Key Stage Four, it is important to ensure that students receive an education that is broad, balanced and relevant, and equips them for the next stage in their lives, be that further education or employment with training. Our Key Stage Four curriculum is made up of compulsory (core) subjects and chosen subjects that will enable students to follow courses appropriate to their interests and abilities. Students will follow a total of four option choices in all. We offer a range of qualifications, namely GCSEs, BTECs, NCFE Certificates and Cambridge National Certificates.

Firstly, our ambition is for all of our students to achieve to the maximum of their potential. This means that we would expect a significant proportion of them to be able to go on to study academic courses when they finish Year 11. Academic success in Year 11 is therefore highly important, as it allows our students to progress to an appropriately challenging route at Sixth Form, from traditional A levels to vocational, classroom-based options, to employment-based routes including apprenticeships.

We strongly believe in giving our students the best possible chance of achieving their potential in Year 11, and to that end in 2018-19 added a transition year (Year 9) to our existing two-year Key Stage Four. We believe that this affords students the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills needed to thrive within the curriculum they have chosen, leading to the best possible outcomes for the student at the end of the three years, and providing the best possible preparation for the next steps in their academic careers as they move into Key Stage Five.

We recognise and promote the importance of studying a Modern Foreign Language both for individual development and for potential future university applications, and encourage all of our more able students to continue with French at Key Stage Four. However, it remains their choice, and whilst it is in their best interests to consider very carefully all of the advice they are given, ultimately, they should and must, decide. For this reason, the study of a language is not compulsory.

In core subjects and, where possible, in history and geography, students are taught in sets, organised by prior attainment. In history and geography, setting does depend on the other options chosen by the individual student, as the majority of options subjects are taught in mixed attainment classes.

Compulsory (Core) Subjects

GCSE English language and literature (2 GCSEs)

GCSE mathematics (1 GCSE)

GCSE science – the majority of our students study the “trilogy” science GCSE (2 GCSEs), although a small number of our more-able scientists study separate GCSE sciences instead - biology, chemistry, physics - (3 GCSEs). In addition, a small number of students each year study the “synergy” science GCSE course (2 GCSEs) instead of the trilogy.

Option One: English Baccalaureate Subjects

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) recognises those students that have studied a core of academic subjects – English, mathematics, sciences (which includes computer science), history or geography, and a language. EBacc subjects are becoming more important with employers and universities, therefore all students at HDHS are required to choose one EBacc subject from the following list:

- computer science

- French
- geography
- history

Options Two and Three

Students have a free choice from the following, although we recommend that they take advantage of the wide range of subjects on offer to make choices from different subject areas:

- art & design (fine art or graphic design)
- business studies
- child development
- computer science
- design & technology
- drama
- engineering
- food technology
- French
- geography
- history
- media studies
- music

Option Four: Core Sport or Dance

All students finally make a choice between studying BTEC Sport or BTEC Performing Arts (dance) during their core physical education time.

Key Stage 5

Academic Offer (Level 3)

At Harwich and Dovercourt Sixth Form College, students choose the courses which best suit their interests and abilities and which offer them appropriate opportunities for progression. Initial course choices are made via the application form and all applicants have a counselling meeting to give advice and guidance on their choices. The General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE Advanced Level or A Level) courses offered focus on academic subjects. In 2020-21 the local offer, based at HDSFC was as follows, although this is now significantly broadened through our partnership with Sigma Sixth Tending, which offers a complementary suite of A level and Applied/BTEC qualifications which students can opt to study alongside their course(s) at HDSFC:

Either one double award plus one single award, or three single awards from the following:

Double Awards (BTEC National Diploma/OCR Level 3 Technical Diploma):

- Health & social care
- Sport

Single Awards (A level/RSL L3 Diploma/OCR L3 Technical Extended Certificate):

- A level art
- A level English literature
- A level geography
- A level history
- A level psychology

- A level sociology
- OCR L3 Technical Sport
- RSL L3 Performing Arts

Extended Project Qualification

All students have the opportunity to study the Extended Project Qualification (Level 3) or the Higher Project Qualification (Level 2). EPQ is a free-standing qualification offered by AQA, and involves choosing a topic and carrying out research into that particular area, then creating either a 5,000 word report or a 'product' and a 1,000 word report. After that, students deliver a small presentation to a group of non-specialists about their topic, lasting from 10 - 15 mins. It allows students to develop their understanding of a topic they are personally interested in. Plus, it helps when applying for University as it demonstrates commitment to a subject, and allows students to develop the independent research skills needed for successful undergraduate study.

Vocational Offer: Hairdressing

Our successful hair salon offers level 2 qualifications in hairdressing which, alongside an organised industry-specific work experience programme, enables our students to move onto either further study at Level 3 or apprenticeships in the industry. Many of our graduates have gone on to successful careers in the hair and beauty industry at the end of Year 13. For 2019-20, we introduced a Level 3 qualification in hairdressing, meaning that students who successfully completed the Year 12 course are now able to complete Key Stage 5 with us before moving into the world of work full time.

Knowledge, Learning, Independence and Careers (KLIC)

We also offer a one-year Knowledge, Learning, Independence and Careers (KLIC) course. The purpose of this is to support students who fell short of the grades required for Level 3 study in developing their qualifications at Level 2, in order to prepare them for employment or further education in Year 13 and beyond.

Blended Route

We recognise that some students excel in one or two subjects but might not necessarily reach the entry requirements to study three at Level 3 in Key Stage 5, hence for 2019-20 we introduced our Blended Route. This allows students to study a mixture (or blend) of courses at Levels 2 and 3, depending on their interests, aspirations and prior achievements. Typically, students will study one or two Level 3 courses (e.g. Health and Social Care Double) alongside resitting English and/or maths, as well as a Level 2 course in the Prince's Trust Achieve Award. Some students will also add work experience or the EPQ to further accentuate their sixth form education. This route allows students to build a range of qualifications, skills and experiences which will prepare them to move into the next stage in their lives, often the world of work or a career-based university course. All students who enter our Blended Route will have a 1:1 discussion with the Head of Sixth Form to design a bespoke curriculum based around their prior academic achievement, interests and careers aspirations.

The impact of our Curriculum

Having followed our curriculum for five or seven years, our students will have developed the detailed knowledge and skills they need to achieve well in their public examinations in Years 11 and 13. They develop and nurture a love of reading which supports them both in their academic studies and in their development of cultural capital.

As a result of their studies and our programme of CEIAG, they are well prepared for the next stage in their lives, be that moving to sixth form provision at the end of Year 11 or higher education or the world of work at the end of Year 13. Indeed, the number of HDHS students in

education, employment or training after they leave us is as good as, if not better than, national averages.

Appendix A

The amount of curriculum time given to each subject during 2020-21 is shown below. This is based on 4x75 minute lessons per day and a two week timetable, hence 40 lessons per fortnight.

Year/ Lessons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
7	English						MFL	Project Talk	Maths						CS	Science						
8	English						MFL	Project Talk	Maths						CS	Science						
9	English						Maths						Science									
10	English						Maths						Science									
11	English						Maths						Science									
12 & 13: Purple Route	A Level/BTEC Option 1						A Level/BTEC Option 2						A Level/BTEC Option 3						GCSE			
12 & 13: Orange Route	A Level/BTEC Option 1 & 2 (Double Award)												A Level/BTEC Option 3						GCSE			
12: Green Route (Blended)	A Level/BTEC Option 1 (or Double Award)						A Level/BTEC Option 2 (or Double Award)						Prince's Trust Achieve Programme			GCSE Maths Resit*			GCSE			
12: Green Route (KLIC)	Prince's Trust Achieve Programme						GCSE Maths Resit*			GCSE English Resit*			Study periods & enrichment									
12: Blue Route	Level 2 College Course: Hairdressing												GCSE Maths Resit*			GCSE English Resit*						
13: Blue Route	Level 3 College Course: Hairdressing												GCSE Maths Resit*			GCSE English Resit*						

Abbreviations used

CS = Computer Science

EPQ = Extended Project Qualification

MFL = Modern Foreign Languages (French)

P&E = Philosophy & Ethics

PE = Physical Education

PSHEE, Cz, Crs = Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education, Citizenship and Careers

*Resits are required for any student who has not yet achieved a Grade 4 (or equivalent) in English or Mathematics.

22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
	PE & Dance		History			Geography			P&E	Technology		Art	Music	Drama	PSHEE, Cz, Crs				
	PE & Dance		History			Geography			P&E	Technology		Art	Music	Drama	PSHEE, Cz, Crs				
	Option 1: Sport/Dance			Option 2: English Baccalaureate			Option 3: Open			Option 4: Open			PSHEE, Cz, Crs						
	Option 1: Sport/Dance			Option 2: English Baccalaureate			Option 3: Open			Option 4: Open			PSHEE, Cz, Crs						
	Option 1: Sport/Dance			Option 2: English Baccalaureate			Option 3: Open			Option 4: Open			PSHEE, Cz, Crs						
GCSE Maths Resit*		GCSE English Resit*		Study periods, enrichment, EPQ, work experience															
GCSE Maths Resit*		GCSE English Resit*		Study periods, enrichment, EPQ, work experience															
GCSE English Resit*		Study periods, enrichment, EPQ, work experience																	
Two days per week work experience																			
Resit*	Study periods & enrichment		Two days per week work experience																
Resit*	Study periods & enrichment		Two days per week work experience																