

# Curriculum and Qualifications Policy

### **The aims of Woodlands School are:**

- to encourage every pupil to pursue excellence
- to create opportunities for all individuals to succeed

### **To achieve our aims we must:**

- Provide opportunity and access to major areas of learning and experience, including aesthetic and creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological;
- Encourage pupils in their learning through active learning, differentiated teaching, effective assessment, feedback and target setting;
- Enable pupils to develop the skills needed to learn and achieve, including oracy, literacy, numeracy, information technology, problem solving, collaboration, negotiation, self-assessment, critical reasoning and independent learning;
- Extend pupils fully by encouraging perseverance and aiming for maximum success and excellence in all things, especially public examinations, and by continually monitoring their progress;
- Support pupils in developing a sense of right and wrong, through example, fair and clear rules and discipline, behaviour for learning and an understanding of moral and social issues;
- Prepare pupils for a positive role in the world beyond school through education in equal opportunities, political understanding, economic awareness, health , careers, community affairs, the environment and personal development;
- Provide a professional workforce of teaching and support staff who in turn are supported in their work by sound management, consistent INSET and staff development and adequate resources.

***Clearly these aims are the focus of all our curriculum activities.***

All schools must place the taught, daily timetabled curriculum, at the heart of its work. Woodlands is no exception and therefore our central aim is to ensure that, through effective teaching and learning, we raise and maximise pupil achievement. A central feature of the school is that we engender a work-orientated ethos which encourages pupils and staff to strive for excellence.

Clearly the National Curriculum forms the foundation of our curriculum offer but we also value and promote non-statutory experiences, in particular the cross-curricular themes and our extra-curricular programme. It must also be stated that our School Development Plan is centrally focussed on ensuring that all the learning activities of our pupils are effectively planned, well taught, adequately resourced and are evaluated.

### **Principles**

Woodlands School recognises that pupils are entitled to a curriculum which is characterised by breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, differentiation and progression. The curriculum should also ensure that pupils have appropriate spiritual, moral, cultural, physical and social experiences. These curriculum principles are explained below.

## **Progression**

The curriculum and its teaching must ensure that pupils are given opportunities to progress on to the next stage of their learning. This should be in terms of courses as well as skills, concepts, knowledge and attitudes. Woodlands believes that education and learning are a lifelong process in which one of the main prerequisites is having a positive attitude towards education and pursuing excellence in all aspects of school life.

## **Differentiation**

The curriculum has to allow for differences between children, even of the same age and within the same class. Differentiation involves matching tasks to pupils, balancing challenge with likelihood of success for each pupil across the ability range. It implies a need for variation in teaching approaches and classroom organisation.

## **Breadth**

A broad curriculum will ensure that students' experiences are based upon the elements of learning (knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes) and also the areas of learning and experience (aesthetic/creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological). These elements of learning and areas of learning must be central to our curriculum offer and clearly evident within individual lessons and activities.

## **Balance**

A balanced curriculum will ensure that each area of learning and experience will be given appropriate attention in relation to the others and to the curriculum as a whole. It is our intention at Woodlands that pupils have a balance of experiences which will then enable them to make appropriate choices at age 14 and age 16.

## **Coherence**

A coherent curriculum will be planned as a whole and will embrace the different areas of learning and experience, so these do not appear as discreet and unconnected but as contributing to overall progress and achievement. Pupils should be able to see the links between and within different learning experiences.

## **Relevance**

A relevant curriculum will take account of the previous learning of pupils and their readiness for new experience. All our curriculum activities should be seen by pupils as pertinent to them, as individuals, and to their future. In other words all learning experiences should have clear objectives. The streaming structure of the curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to follow a relevant course designed to allow them to strive for excellence and meet or exceed their potential. The target pathways are similarly designed to offer lower ability pupils a curriculum matched to their potential and long term aspirations.

## **PRACTICE**

How Woodlands School will attempt to achieve its aims is set out in the introduction to this policy. The rest of this section amplifies our practice.

Each area of the curriculum is allotted sufficient time to make its specific contribution, but not so much that it squeezes out other essential areas. The amount of time allocated to each subject is reviewed annually. There are 50 one hour lessons in a two week timetable and 25 in a one week timetable. As far as possible, provision is made within the school for all pupils with special educational needs. Additional support is provided for pupils within the classroom and within the Learning Development department's own facilities. The provision of two foreign languages and the

three separate GCSE science subjects, along with the progressive introduction of setting, stretches the brightest children and enables them to take up to 9 GCSEs in Year 11.

**Years 7, 8, 9** all pupils in the first three years meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, studying English, Mathematics, Science, French or German, History, Geography, Religious Education, I.C.T., Art, Drama, Dance, Music, Physical Education and PSHE. Technology includes Food, Textiles and Resistant Materials. Support is given to those with particular special educational needs.

**Years 10 and 11** pupils continue to follow the requirements of the National Curriculum, whilst embarking on public examination courses leading to GCSE and other qualifications. The main cohort will be split into **streams A&B**

**From September 2015 pupils will be following a 3 year Key Stage 4 curriculum.**

In addition pupils in **streams A&B** have the option of studying:

**Option A:** French or German, BTEC Art, Photography or BTEC PA

**Option B:** History or Geography, RM, BTEC PE or Graphics

**Option C:** BTEC PA, DIDA, Art, BTEC Music, Drama, Photography, Media Studies, RE or Music. (Pupils taking Double or Triple Science will have to opt for these subjects in this option block as well)

**Option D:** History, Geography, French, German, BTEC PE, ICT, RM, Music, Media Studies, Citizenship, Art, Performing Arts, Dance, DIDA, BTEC Engineering, GCSE PE, Graphics or DE.

Pupils in **Target Pathways** will take English, Mathematics and BTEC Science

In addition pupils have the option of studying:

**Option A:** BTEC Technical Engineering or BTEC Drama (Recommended not to take languages)

**Option B:** RM, Art or BTEC Drama (Recommended not to take History/Geography)

**Option C:** BTEC PE, ICT, GPE, RM, Graphic Products, Photography, Media Studies, Dance or Music Tech. (Recommended not to take Sciences)

**Option D:** BTEC PE, ICT, GPE, RM, Music, Media Studies, Citizenship, Art, Drama, BTEC Dance. (Recommended not to take History/Geography/Languages)

### **Vocational Programmes Years 10 and 11**

We also offer a limited number of pupils at Key Stage 4 Vocational Programmes. These pupils are decided upon on an individual basis and are placed on the programme as their needs are best met by some vocational provision. This will be on site from March 2015.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural and Physical Development**

The teaching within the curriculum should ensure the aims listed below are achieved:

- That pupils are provided with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs which enable them to reflect on their experiences in a way which should develop spiritual awareness and self-knowledge;
- That pupils are taught how to distinguish right from wrong;
- That pupils are encouraged to relate positively to others, take responsibility, participate fully in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship;
- That pupils appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures;
- That pupils are aware of the value of physical fitness and good health and encouraged to take responsibility for their own physical well-being;
- That all subjects give pupils the opportunity to explore aspects of spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical issues.

## **Extra-Curricular**

Woodlands School aims to make a range of trips and activities accessible to all pupils, which enhance their learning experience without affecting their academic success. We believe that extra-curricular activities are necessary to support the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. We offer Saturday morning extension activities, sports clubs and teams, charity events, competitions, drama and music performances, Easter Revision School and a variety of lunch-time and after-school clubs per week.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The curriculum is constantly monitored and evaluated. This takes place annually when the school development plan is evaluated and during a number of INSET evenings/days during the year. This is a vital process to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, accessible for all and provides pupils the opportunities to succeed.

In addition, there are workshops, review and sub-review groups, and designated staff are timetabled for curriculum development time, all involving an element of monitoring and evaluation; senior staff observe lessons on a regular basis and submit a report to the Teaching and Learning team; one department is reviewed each term; and there are regular homework reviews. We also encourage department self-review and reviews by Heads of Year.

## **Staff Development**

A comprehensive staff development programme supports the school's curriculum aims, School Development Plan and curriculum development as outlined in more detail in the Woodlands School Staffing Policy and Annual Staff Development Plan.

## **Resources and Environment**

We strive to provide relevant and worthwhile resources in order to support the curriculum. Departments review their resources each year and then are allocated by right certain funds but are also entitled to bid for extra resources. The allocation of resources is closely tied to identified priorities as articulated in the School Development Plan and Departmental Developmental Plans. Half the classrooms in departments are ICT rich, whilst specialist subjects have teaching environments and resources that meet the curriculum needs of that specialism. The display around the school aims to celebrate pupils' work and act as educational support for the curriculum.

## **Department Responsibilities**

Annually, departments, in consultation with SLT line managers, structure action plans for the development of their department priorities, in harmony with whole school priorities and aims. Departments have developed handbooks which contain a curriculum outline, curriculum statement, homework policy, schemes of work and assessment policy in line with whole school policy and practices.

The Learning Development Department is responsible for ensuring that individual pupils and departments are supported in developing effective learning activities and strategies for SEND pupils and has produced Learning Passports to ensure that teachers can plan effectively.

## **Heads of Year Responsibilities**

Annually, Heads of Year, in consultation with SLT line managers, lead their teams to structure action plans for the development of year team priorities, in harmony with whole school priorities and aims. Heads of Year play a part in curriculum development and evaluation and the monitoring of pupil achievement and progress eg. organisation of Year 7/8 Progress Reviews, Year 9 SMT interviews, Year 10/11 Work Reviews, Year 10/11 coursework Evening, parents evenings, Operation

Boost/Bonus, regular contact with parents via letter/interview/telephone/home visiting as part of guidance and counselling procedures, year group boost, homework support, rewards and sanctions (cause for concern/praise/Awards Evening).

### **Parents' Involvement in the Curriculum**

We promote the involvement of parents in the school and support them in their parenting roles. The ethos of the school is one of developing the home/school partnership and encouraging parents to play a full role in the education of their children. The following are some of the many support mechanisms in place: parents' evenings, reports, Woodlands Weekly, Pupil Planners, Parent Support Evenings, advice evenings e.g. drug awareness and coursework. The Headteacher is also available to meet with parents upon appointment.

### **Governor Involvement in the Curriculum**

The management board of Woodlands is a vital part of the education process and as such is actively involved in monitoring the work of the school. Their contribution is much appreciated. The board considers a wide range of curriculum issues and gives another stakeholder's perspective. In addition, the board regularly spends time in lessons and gives valuable feedback.

### **Cross Phase and Careers**

We aim to work in partnership with our feeder primary schools and local tertiary colleges in order to ensure continuity and progression within the curriculum.

The school works with the careers service and prospective employers through education industry partnerships e.g. Careers Convention, Work Experiences to try and ensure that the curriculum matches the demands of the work place.

The introduction of the Engineering and Hair and Beauty courses give individuals the opportunity to develop work-based skills and use industry professionals to deliver excellent practice

### **Outcomes**

We believe our curriculum will provide our pupils with the following:

- opportunities to strive for excellence and fulfil their potential;
- opportunities to develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills;
- a basis from which to make informed and realistic choices and decisions at all stages;
- an informed perspective about the role of the individual in the community, society and the world of work;
- a flexibility of attitude and willingness to learn, sufficient to cope with future changes in society, in particular to ensure that Information Technology and Careers Education are central parts of a pupils education;
- the ability to exhibit a set of personal values based on honesty and trust, tolerance, understanding, caring and respect for others which allow the establishment of effective personal and social relationships;
- an appreciation of the spiritual dimension of human existence;
- the ability to appreciate and the need to advocate the basic rights of others, particularly those who are not well placed to promote their own needs;
- the ability to appreciate and value the plural, multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of society;
- an understanding of the causes of inequality of opportunity and treatment afforded to many people on account of ethnicity, gender, social class or disability and the need to remove such discrimination;
- political and economic literacy sufficient to be able to contribute to the development of society and participate in it.

May 2015

