



# Curriculum Policy



Date agreed: January 2019

Review Date: January 2020

COMMITTED TO  
EXCELLENCE

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GREENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL

# Greenshaw High School Curriculum Policy

For the purpose of this policy the curriculum describes everything taught at Greenshaw High School. The term 'curriculum' includes the lessons we teach, and the schemes of work and curriculum outlines that these flow from. Furthermore, it includes the virtues we seek to establish in our pupils such as tolerance, self-regulation and hard work. These can be found in many aspects of pupils' experience when attending our school. These include the assembly programme, our expectations of behaviour, peer relations, and the quality of homework.

Decisions about our curriculum at Greenshaw High School are made in the light of the three guiding principles below about young people and learning. These principles are woven into the fabric of our curriculum; they are reflected in what is included and the order in which it is structured.

## The Three Key Principles

### 1. Powerful knowledge should be made known for all

All students, regardless of their background, educational ability or motivation, have an entitlement to powerful knowledge. Powerful knowledge is distinct from knowledge acquired through everyday experience because it is not limited by, or dependent on, context. The big ideas of each subject have rules and conventions that make it possible to form generalisations and make predictions beyond specific cases or contexts. This knowledge is empowering as well as valuable in itself.

### 2. Language unlocks the world

Students who are confident readers and writers are likely to have more choices open to them and make a positive contribution to society. A secure understanding of language enables individuals to understand their world and be in a better position to define their place within it. Those who read and have a wide vocabulary are part of a community of people who have ever thought, dreamt or written in the same language. In this way, language connects individuals to something large and meaningful outside of their lives.

### 3. Personal and collective responsibility is central

Students who recognise the impact of their actions on their own lives and on the lives of other people are more likely to develop meaningful relationships and to experience a sense of purpose. They understand the importance of kindness, integrity and compassion and try to embody these virtues through the things they do and the things they say. They thrive in a society built on mutual respect and tolerance. Personal responsibility includes looking after yourself, and being able to look after other people as part of a collective responsibility.

## Our Curriculum Organisation

### Key Stage Three (Years 7 and 8)

We have designed a rigorous two year Key Stage 3 programme. This provides the foundations for future studies in that subject, and also important knowledge that helps our pupils understand the world around them better.

The majority of our students follow a broad programme of twelve subjects. This contains an English Baccalaureate core, and a further 20% is dedicated to the creative and performing arts subjects. Our students study English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, history, geography, RE, art and technology, music, drama, PSHE and PE.

Before joining Greenshaw, students make a choice to study either French or Spanish. A small minority of students are part of a direct instruction class to accelerate the learning of students at risk of under attainment in English and mathematics.

Students in our speech and language base have additional input, rather than learn a European language.

The taught Key Stage 3 curriculum is supplemented by our tutor reading programme and our homework activities, known as 'The Big Ideas That Shape the World'.

#### **Key Stage Four**

Since GCSE reforms were introduced in 2015, we have regularly reviewed the provision we make for our students, and considered the impact it has on their education and wellbeing. Each GCSE has been designed to be more challenging, with increased content, which is tested almost exclusively by end-of-course examinations in Year 11. One of our first responses was to reduce the maximum number of qualifications our students take from eleven to ten. Pupils no longer take Statistics GCSE, as well as Mathematics. This reduced the workload for our students, while not compromising our broad curriculum offer. To further reduce the burden of exams taken at the end of Year 11, pupils will sit their Religious Studies GCSE during the summer of Year 10.

At Key Stage 4 students are given a free choice of options from a wide array of subjects. Our option pathways ensure our students study an appropriate curriculum. All pathways prepare students to continue their study post-16, either at Greenshaw or at alternative institutions. We offer a broad range of academic and vocational subjects.

**Core qualification subjects:** English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science<sup>1</sup>, Religious Studies

**Core non-qualification subjects:** Physical Education, PSHE

**Options subjects** (students choose four): Art, Child Development, Biology/Chemistry/Physics, Dance, Drama, Economics, Fashion, Food, French, Geography, Graphics, History, Latin, Media Studies, P.E. (GCSE), Product Design, Spanish, and Sociology.

A small group of students follow a Prince's Trust programme instead of taking a tenth GCSE.

#### **Key Stage Five**

The majority of students take three A Level qualifications, with a small number choosing to take four. Many students choose to complete the Extended Project Qualification as a fourth qualification. There is also a GCSE resit in English and/or Mathematics as needed.

The sixth form team ensures that students are on the most appropriate courses – there is a period of three to four weeks at the start of Year 12 where students can reconsider their subject choices. There is additional supervised study for each subject and timetabled assessment hours that are used to support students and track their progress. We continue to balance study requirements with enrichment, tutorial, PSHE and PE allocations on student timetables.

Students at Key Stage 5 have an opportunity to study: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Economics, English Literature, Fashion, French, Geography, Graphic Design, History, Mathematics, Mathematics (Further), Media Studies, Photography, Physical Education, Physics, Product Design (3D), Psychology, Philosophy & Ethics, Sociology and Spanish.

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<sup>1</sup> All pupils take a minimum of two GCSEs in science, with about half opting for three separate awards in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.