

Shire Oak Academy



Curriculum Policy Statement 11-16

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Mr K. Hubery Chairman of Governors
Date: _____

Review

Main reviewers: The Principal and Vice Principal

Version 2.2

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1 General Note

As an academy, the statutory guidance and requirements of the National Curriculum do not have to be followed. However, the academy feels that the National Curriculum provides a sound basis for a broad and balanced curriculum.

2 AIMS:

The academy aims to:

- ensure that learners develop the essential literacy and numeracy skills;
- provide learners with a full and rounded entitlement to learning;
- foster learners' creativity and develop essential skills, including learning skills;
- promote a healthy lifestyle;
- inspire learners to a commitment to learning which will last a lifetime; and
- promote high standards in all learning and teaching;
- embed and achieve the 5 aims of the Every Child Matters agenda, which, although no longer a formal government initiative, continue to be aims towards which our work should be targeted:
 - **being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
 - **staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect
 - **enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
 - **making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
 - **economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

The academy's curriculum is balanced and broadly based and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our learners and of society and prepares our learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Learners are expected to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Learners will be provided with personal, social, health and citizenship education, reflecting the academy's aims and ethos. Religious education is also provided for all learners. Appropriate careers guidance and enterprise education is provided.

3 Equal opportunities

Entry to all programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief.

Disabilities: In accordance with the statutory requirements, the academy aims to make the curriculum accessible to all learners as far as is reasonably practicable. The academy has an accessibility plan which is available to parents on request.

4 Differentiation

A variety of differing teaching and learning methods and materials are used in all courses to suit learners' different needs.

5 The KS3 curriculum

A setting system operates in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students are placed in one of two parallel bands, Band S or Band O, and in each band, for each subject, there are, in the main, 6 sets, based on ability, although a number of subjects will have some sets of similar ability.

The timetable operates on a 2 week cycle with 5 one hour periods in the cycle. Students have 5 hours teaching time per day.

All students in Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) follow a common curriculum as shown below:

Core subjects

English and drama	7 hours per cycle	(14%)
Mathematics	7 hours per cycle	(14%)
Science	6 hours per cycle	(12%)
Creative Arts (Design & Technology, Art & Music)	6 hours per cycle	(12%)
Computing	2 hours per cycle	(4%)

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5	<u>Basic Subjects</u>		
	Religious Education	2 hours per cycle	(4%)
	<u>Foundation Subjects</u>		
	French	5 hours per cycle	(10%)
	History	4 hours per cycle	(8%)
	Geography	4 hours per cycle	(8%)
	Physical Education	4 hours per cycle	(8%)
	Drama	1 hour per cycle	(2%)
	<u>Other Subjects</u>		
	Personal and Social Education	2 hours per cycle	(4%)

6 **Teaching set sizes**

To ensure your child achieves to the full level of his or her academic ability, teaching set sizes are kept as small as possible. This enables the needs of all students to be met and ensures that the most able are stretched to their true potential.

7 **The KS4 curriculum**

Key Stage 4 (Years 10)

A large part of the curriculum in Key Stage 4 is common to all students. These are the compulsory subjects:

English	8 hours (16%)
Mathematics	8 hours (16%)
Science	10 hours (20%)
Religious education	2 hours (4%)
Physical education	2 hours (4%)

During Year 9, students and their parents or guardians, in consultation with senior staff, select the subjects to be studied for external examinations. An options booklet and talks by the Vice Principal responsible for curriculum and Directors of Learning are provided at our options evening.

Alongside the core subjects students are able to follow one of two pathways (Ebacc and Non Ebacc).

Depending on pathway students can select up to 3 subjects from the following list:

Key Stage 4 Open choice subjects <i>(GCSE unless stated)</i>		
Art	Health & Social Care BTEC	PE
Business BTEC	History	Performing Arts BTEC
Child Development	Hospitality BTEC	Photography
City & Guild (counts as 2 choices)	Creative iMedia (Cambridge National Certificate)	Psychology
Computer Science	Engineering design (Cambridge National Certificate)	Statistics
French	Music	Sport BTEC
Geography		Textiles
		Triple Science

Students opting to study the double award science option must choose either geography, history, French or computer science as one of their choices.

8 **Disapplication**

In accordance with the law, the academy has the right to respond to individual needs by modifying the National Curriculum programmes, or disapplying the National Curriculum for the duration of Key Stage 4, to:

- allow a learner to participate in extended work-related learning;
- allow a learner with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum area; and
- allow a learner making significantly less progress than other learners of his/her age to consolidate his/her learning and progress across the curriculum.

Decisions about any of the above will only be made after discussion with the learner and parent.

9 **Religious education**

Religious education is available to all learners. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from

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religious education.

10 Collective Worship:

All learners are expected to take part in a daily collective worship. The academy has a programme of collective worship involving some year group assemblies, house assemblies and thought for the day, delivered in form groups.

11 Sex and relationships education

The academy provides sex and relationships education in the basic curriculum for all learners, in which learners are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life.

A full statement of the academy's sex and relationships education policy is available to parents. It has been drawn up in consultation with staff, learners and parents and takes into account the views of representatives from the community. It has regard for the government's guidance in *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (0116/2000)*.

In accordance with the law, the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all learners, but parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons.

12 Political education

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the academy is forbidden by law. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner.

13 Physical education and games:

All learners are expected to take part in the academy's physical education and games programme. Learners can only be excused from PE and games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the academy.

14 Extra-curricular activities

The academy has a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. All learners are expected to take part in the programme.

15 Homework

The academy has in place a system of homework to promote the importance of an individual pupil's ability to learn, research and study independently. The academy expects tasks to be set, as appropriate.

16 Special educational needs

The academy has a special educational needs policy for statemented and non-statemented learners. The academy will determine the appropriate courses in consultation with the parents.

17 Concerns and complaints

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the learner's tutor. If the issue is not resolved parents should make an official complaint in writing to the Principal.

18 Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the Vice Principal, who will report to the Principal on its implementation on a regular basis. The Principal will report to the governing body on the progress of the policy and will recommend any changes.

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In line with Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

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The curriculum policy statement which follows meets with the statutory requirements. It is updated annually and in governors' consideration of it they would bear in mind the views of the local community, including the local Chief of Police. The curriculum policy statement is available for inspection within academy.

This curriculum policy statement reflects the values of governors and of the staff of the academy. The priorities it itemises are presented within the context of additional legislation and show a firm commitment to equal opportunities, race equality, community education and to social inclusion in its widest term.

This policy is intended for readership by all those associated with the academy: parents, learners and the local community it serves.

Introduction

The curriculum offered within Shire Oak Academy is composed of all the opportunities for learning 11-16 which a academy can offer. This encompasses the overt curriculum in terms of the formal programme of lessons on the time-table, the extra curriculum and out of academy activities which are supported and promoted, and the climate of relationships, attitudes, styles of behaviour and the general quality of life established in the academy community as a whole.

Educational aims

The academy believes the following two aims reinforce each other.

- 1) **Provision of opportunities for all learners to learn and to achieve by :-**
 - a) Developing learners' enjoyment of and commitment to learning.
 - b) Encouraging and stimulating the best possible progress and the highest attainment for all learners, including those with special education needs, children in care, minority ethnic children, travellers, young carers, those from families under stress, pregnant academy girls and teenage mothers, and the 'gifted and talented'.
 - c) Building on learners' strengths, interests and experiences
 - d) Developing learners' confidence in their capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively.
 - e) Equipping students with the essential learning skills of literacy, numeracy, and information technology capability.
 - f) Promoting an enquiring mind and a capacity to think rationally.
 - g) Providing rich and varied contexts for students to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding.
 - h) Facilitating learners having the capacity to think creatively and critically to solve problems and make a difference for the better.
 - i) Providing the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership.
 - j) Developing learners' physical skills and encouraging them to reinforce the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe.
 - k) Contributing to the development of learners' sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages and of the local, national, European and international dimensions.
 - l) Encouraging learners to appreciate human aspirations and achievements in aesthetic, scientific, technological and social fields and prompt a personal response to a range of experiences and ideas.

- 2) **Preparation of all learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by:**
 - a) Passing on the enduring values of society.
 - b) Developing learners' integrity and autonomy.
 - c) Helping students to become responsible and caring citizens, capable of contributing to the development of a just society.
 - d) Promoting equality of opportunity, and enabling learners to challenge discrimination and, stereotyping.
 - e) Promoting learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - f) Developing learners' knowledge and understanding of different beliefs and cultures, including an appreciation of their diversity. and of their influence on individuals and on societies.
 - g) Developing students' awareness, understanding and respect for the environments in which they live and securing their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level.
 - h) Promoting students' self-esteem and emotional well-being.

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- i) Helping learners to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships based on respect for themselves family members, peers, work-mates and members of the community.
- j) Developing students' ability to relate to others and work for the common good.
- k) Encouraging and enabling students to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities and to cope with change and adversity.
- l) Preparing learners for the next stage in their learning, training and employment, and equipping them to make informed and rational choices at academy and throughout their lives.
- m) Enabling students to appreciate the relevance of their own achievements to life and their society outside academy, including leisure, playing an active role in the community and in employment.

The academy commits itself to fostering the above aims endeavouring to be realistic, matching the above educational aims to individual needs, and at all times promoting high expectations.

The National Curriculum

The curriculum offered to all students aged 11-16 (Key Stages 3 and 4) meets statutory requirements. Reporting complies with legislation in all respects. The Principal and governors of the academy will ensure the academy meets with all requirements relating to the National Curriculum.

Planning the curriculum

- a) **Content:** This will focus on areas of experience which are essential to the educational development of the student. In some areas these may be planned as subjects or cross-curricular themes.
- b) **Process:** Methods and assessment and the recording of achievement affect learning and are included in the process of learning itself.
- c) **Context:** Experiences within individual classrooms must be compatible with the ethos of the academy. In Shire Oak Academy that ethos will be to foster a respect for the individual and to ensure that high expectations are the norm.
- d) **Continuity:** Within Shire Oak Academy there is a recognition that continuity of learning takes place where there is rational progress in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge and that such continuity of learning must be fostered between and across phases of formal education and training.

The academy recognises that its whole curriculum must define clear rational rules of progression which are consistent with the needs of the learner. It similarly views continuity between home, community, work and academy as equally important.

A **broad** curriculum is offered within the Shire Oak Academy which recognises that each individual learner is entitled to experience with understanding a wide range of knowledge and skills. Students are afforded experience of all areas of the curriculum and care is taken to avoid undue specialisation, particularly at Key Stage 4.

Balance in curriculum time is viewed as being important and there is a conscious effort to ensure each part of the curriculum is given sufficient time to make sure that students receive a broad learning experience. A wide range of teaching and learning approaches which facilitate students working individually, in small and large groups and including teacher led and learner generated activities is encouraged.

Relevant learning within the curriculum offered will assist in the preparation of students for adult life and changing employment opportunities. There is a conscious commitment to encouraging students to progress in education after the compulsory period of schooling, and training is encouraged.

Differentiation within the curriculum ensures that what is taught and how it is taught is appropriate to the individual needs of each student. To develop a learner's full potential in all areas appropriate tasks are set for class based and independent work e.g. Homework.

Coherence is achieved in the curriculum by an acceptance that it is a whole range of experiences and areas of learning, not just a series of unrelated subjects.

Organisation. The grouping of students has a profound effect upon not only the formal learning process, but also upon the ethos of the academy and likewise the self-esteem of individual students. Specialist teaching in Shire Oak Academy is supported by a caring pastoral structure where flexibility avoids a false distinction between the pastoral and the academic aspects of academy life.

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The academy recognises that the ethos within it has a major effect upon the development of its students. All will:-

- a) work towards maintaining an aesthetic appearance with respect to the academy and its surrounds.
- b) monitor and encourage students to maintain a high level of attendance and uniform.
- c) monitor the way students behave.
- d) create a pleasant and industrious working atmosphere.
- e) apply rules, rewards and, where required, sanctions.
- f) value and display students' work and recognise their achievements.
- g) ensure male and female students have access to all aspects of the curriculum.
- h) encourage and welcome parental and community involvement and support.
- i) play an active role via the mechanisms invoked to feel they have a right to contribute to the way decisions are made.
- j) work towards ensuring there is a quality of relationships within academy.

Students are encouraged to respect the care and fabric of the building and to take a pride in their general appearance and their academy uniform. They are expected to attend regularly and on time with any absences being accounted for by parental contact. Lateness and truancy are not condoned.

Behaviour is at all times expected to be courteous and civil reflecting that which is synonymous with a maturing responsible and responsive citizen.

Students are encouraged to give their best within the classroom environment where a working ethos pervades.

By having the rules explained to them students and their parents, upon admission, accept that which is designed for the smooth running and efficiency of the academy as an educational institution. Praise is given for good work and praise points awarded. Sanctions, where necessary, are applied and any student subject to such receives advice and support to encourage a more positive outlook and or attitude in the future.

Students are expected to give their best and strive to the highest level of potential. Work is displayed and notable achievement publicised.

No student will ever be prevented from having access to all aspects of the curriculum and wherever possible, at Key Stage 4, option blocks will continue to meet students' first preferences.

Parents and members of the community are made to feel welcome and a part of the academy and their involvement and support will continue to be actively encouraged.

Factors influencing learning

Within Shire Oak Academy education is viewed as a partnership. Having developed and actively encouraged close liaison with parents it has been recognised that our learners are happy and more likely to learn effectively because their parents understand the academy's aims and objectives and have confidence in them.

Governors and the Senior Leadership Team have an appreciation that students achieve more of their true potential when a rich learning environment is provided. To this end there will continue to be a commitment to ensuring there is effective deployment and provision of resources within the constraints of the finite budget.

The academy recognises that the medium of language is the vehicle through which much of the learner's learning occurs. All staff have a commitment to valuing students' own language, ensuring that the language used in books, worksheets, and other resources is clear and comprehensible to students, and all recognise that in the learning process talking and listening are at least as important as reading and writing.

Learning within the academy is recognised as a highly personal activity. Experiences therefore aim to facilitate learning, absorb students and encourage them to be committed to and gain enjoyment from their tasks.

The academy firmly believes that at all stages of a student's learning, learners should know why they are performing a task and have some element of choice in how to achieve this objective.

Recognition, acceptance and support of a student's efforts and achievements encourage them to feel valued and spur individuals on to achieve to their full potential.

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Approaches to teaching

All staff recognise the need to support students' learning by employing a range of teaching strategies to match the abilities and experience of all students with respect to knowledge and the development of concepts, skills and attitudes.

Within the classroom there is evidence:-

- a) activities planned by the teacher and those initiated by the student.
- b) direct and indirect experiences
- c) individual, group and class teaching
- d) direct instruction, investigation and creative expression.

Employing such a range meets the fundamental aim of recognising the individuality of each student. The ability to use appropriate teaching approaches, including management, deployment of materials and resources enables the needs of students to be met.

Re-appraisal of skills in the above and the opportunity to engage in systematic and regular updating via INSET is recognised by the Senior Team and the Board of Governors and such has their support within the constraints of time and finance.

The promotion of good relationships with students is a vital factor in effective teaching and this is encouraged at all times.

Many valuable skills and attitudes arise from the teaching process - a respect for others' opinions, the ability to communicate and relate successfully to other people, to co-operate and contribute positively in group situations and to solve problems. These will continue to be employed within the teaching environment.

Assessment, particularly with respect to the National curriculum is vital, but assessment is also inseparable from the teaching process. The enhancement of learners' motivation is of paramount importance and staff are encouraged in their reporting procedures and in the compilation of students' Records of Achievement to be open, positive, recognise, acknowledge and give credit for what students have achieved and experienced.

Equal opportunities

Shire Oak Academy is committed to ensuring there is equality of opportunity in all areas of academy life. Its whole curriculum is available to everyone irrespective of race, sex and disability, and the academy fervently believes that to achieve the highest level of learner achievement it must promote standards of excellence for both learners and staff.

Racial equality

The Race Relations Act 1976 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on all institutions and bodies to stop racial discrimination and to promote good relations between black and white.

Shire Oak Academy declares that at all times it will set its face against racial discrimination and aims to promote good relations between all with whom it comes into contact.

A. We aim to achieve this by:-

- Treating all those within our whole academy community (learners, staff, Governors, parents and community,) as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experiences.
- Creating a academy ethos which promotes race equality, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices.
- Encouraging everyone within our academy community to have a positive self-image and high esteem.
- Having high expectations of everyone involved with the whole academy.
- Promoting mutual respect and valuing others' similarities and differences and facing equality issues openly.
- Identifying and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are discriminatory and replacing them with practices which are fair to all.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all of the above to secure continuous improvement on all that we do.

B. To this end, the curriculum provided in academy will ensure that:-

- Our inclusive curriculum reflects the multi-ethnic nature of our society.
- Racial equality and ethnic diversity are promoted and racism and discrimination are challenged in all areas of the curriculum.

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- Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, background and language needs of all learners.
- Subject leaders and departmental heads provide guidance and examples of good practice for colleagues.
- The academy monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for all learners.
- The allocation of learners to teaching groups and optional subjects as fair and equitable to learners from all ethnic groups.
- Assessment outcomes are used to identify the specific needs of minority ethnic learners, inform policies, planning and the allocation of resources.
- Teaching methods and styles take account of the needs of learners from different ethnic groups and encourage positive attitudes to ethnic difference, cultural diversity and racial equality.
- The academy takes active steps to ensure that resources in all areas of the curriculum are inclusive. It promotes a greater understanding of cultural diversity and racial equality. There is acknowledgement of the importance of challenging racism and racial discrimination in all areas of the curriculum.
- Resources available to meet the specific needs of learners from minority ethnic groups, including dual language resources where such may be required, are used appropriately.
- The academy makes full use of the resources available within its local ethnic communities.

Gender equality

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Equal Pay Act of 1970 placed duties on all institutions or bodies to stop sex discrimination and to ensure that any facilities for education are provided without direct or indirect sex discrimination.

Shire Oak Academy believes that good education is by definition non-sexist and that by eliminating sexism it benefits both sexes.

Within the academy the curriculum is so planned that:-

- a) there is equality of access in all learning experiences.
- b) it challenges stereo-typed images and in their place presents positive role models.
- c) it takes positive action to ensure the elimination of barriers and inequalities which result from any past discriminations.
- d) it takes action to ensure that the specific needs of girls and boys are addressed together with those who are at risk of disaffection whether this be attributable to a personal inclination or due to factors beyond their control.

Disability

Shire Oak Academy believes in the inherent equality of all individuals irrespective of physical or mental ability, and will within the spirit of "Accessible Schools" work towards delivering its short, medium and long term objectives as defined in its three year plan.

The curriculum offered within the academy will ensure that:-

- a) There is differentiation enough for the needs of all learners in mainstream classes, including those who are statemented.
- b) The use of available resources will meet the individual needs of learners with disability in terms of language, physical impairment and those with challenges including conceptual development.
- c) At all times there will be demonstrated positive images for learners with a disability.
- d) The curriculum contains contributions to work and community life by people with a disability.
The close links fostered with a local special academy will continue to be evidenced.

Work related learning

The academy appreciates that one of its aims is to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of working life.

In planning the curriculum the academy has ensured that:-

- a) students have a curriculum which within a broad and balanced framework relates Education to the world of work and Enterprise.
- b) students have the knowledge, competencies and qualifications which will be particularly useful in the context of working in a highly technological society which is part of Europe and the world market.
- c) learners have an understanding of economic awareness, of the significance of work and the way their education relates to working life through interacting with the world of work.

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- d) students have learning experiences across the curriculum which develop qualities and competencies which are useful in adult and working life e.g. initiative, personal effectiveness, problem solving and the ability to cope with change.
- e) young people are provided with guidance, counselling and information about future options which will assist them to make the best of their true potential.
- f) where applicable, the disapplication regulations will continue to be applied to enable students pre 16 to undertake alternative courses of study leading to recognised qualifications.

Effectiveness

Shire Oak Academy depends upon effective management, planning, teaching and learning underpinned by the values and relationships of the academy itself as it continues to provide quality of education. To ensure a system of monitoring, evaluation and review is essential if we are to assess our effectiveness and provide guidance for further developments. Evaluation will centre on:-

- a) the implementation of the whole curriculum policy.
- b) the implementation of the aims and objectives of the academy.
- c) the effectiveness of management in dealing with (a) and (b) including processes such as communication and consultation.
- d) the existence, encouragement and dissemination of good educational practice.
- e) the support for staff, including INSET, to implement (a) and (d) above.
- f) the deployment of resources.