



# **Aldridge Curriculum Policy**

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## 1. Our Vision

To offer all Aldridge learners the chance to have agency over their futures and transform their lives through a stimulating, enriching and enjoyable education, including the hardest to reach.

## 2. Our Ambitions

All our schools and learning providers have a strong and inclusive culture where every individual can thrive and where every individual feels safe. The culture described in documentation is exactly what you see in every corridor and every classroom (100%)

Staff are able to work smartly through the creation of high-quality and relevant curriculum materials that meet the Aldridge Standard. As a result, they can focus in on data-informed instruction, on responsive teaching and on adaptation of resources to meet both the learning needs and the specific gaps of individuals and groups of learners.

That every learner will discover things that interest them through our curriculum opportunities and leave with clarity about their desired place in our world, with the qualities of character to be successful and with great outcomes – all of which lead them to sector-best destinations in which they sustain their places and successfully achieve their aspirations.

## 3. Intent, Implementation, Impact

'The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against expectations (impact).'

*(Ofsted, Curriculum: intent, implementation, and impact. Dev. work for the new inspection framework, 2017)*

### 3.1 Introduction

The curriculum is all the planned activities that are organised to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only statutory requirements but ensures a "broad and balanced" provision, and a range of extra-curricular activities organised by schools in order to enrich the experience of pupils. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach pupils and learners how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

Aldridge Education endorses school curricula which are both **effective** and **efficient**.

This policy applies to all Aldridge Education schools and learning providers. The appendices to this policy are specific to each school and/or learning provider.

The school-specific content found in the appendices is appropriate to the nature of the school's individual provision and reflects the needs of its local community.

### 3.2 Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- The [National Curriculum \(2013\)](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach and which all Aldridge schools must be able to refer to when evidencing a "broad and balanced" curriculum
- The [Independent School Standards \(2019\)](#)
- The [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook \(updated 2020\)](#)

- The [Academies Act 2010](#)
- The [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework \(updated 2021\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education \(2021\)](#)
- [KCSiE September 2022](#)
- This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3.3 Aims

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils that's coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning that enables them to work towards achieving their goals
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils

### 3.4 Who was consulted?

Aldridge Education worked with school leaders to develop this policy. Local protocols found in the appendices to this policy have been determined in consultation with parents, pupils, and staff. This policy applies to all schools and learning providers across the Aldridge Education Trust whereas the appendices to this policy are specific to each school. The appendices set out how each school specifically implements the policy practically at a local level. This content is appropriate to the nature of each school and learning provider's provision and reflects the needs of their local community.

### 3.5 Scope and Publication

This policy is publicised to all parents, pupils, and staff. The policy is provided to staff on the Trust's intranet; is available on the Trust and school website, and upon request. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats as required.

The structure of the school's curriculum can be found [here](#). This covers the subjects taught and offered in each year group along with the amount of time allocated to each subject. This is available on the school website, and upon request.

This policy and its appendices also refer to and covers:

- Homework
- Cultural capital and extra-curricular experiences
- Reading

### 3.6 Curriculum Priorities

The CEO and LGC will also ensure that in all schools a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets. These will include the following Trust-wide priorities:

- We believe teacher subject knowledge is vital to strong education and expect to have subject specialist teaching in our schools. Wherever possible, staff teach their degree subject only and

a strong A level outcome (or equivalent) is a minimum to teach students up to and including GCSE level in the secondary phase.

- We avoid split classes for students except when teaching separate sciences or when sixth form teaching would benefit from two staff combining to cover the full content of a specification.
- We limit the number of 'preps' for teachers in the secondary phase with 2 being ideal and 3 being the maximum we intend to deploy. (By reducing the amount of separate year group and subject preparation a teacher has to do, we create more time for adaptation to the needs of each group and to a data-informed approach to teaching.)
- We create curriculum materials and resources to an agreed 'Aldridge Standard' and deploy our Trust Curriculum Review Tool to keep track of our curriculum work and to help shape future and ongoing resource development.
- We take a data-informed approach to curriculum planning and implementation, in line with the Aldridge Playbook in use across our Trust.
- All Aldridge schools work to a minimum aspiration of FFT20 (Fischer Family Trust targets) for student outcomes
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement
- Proper provision is made and adaptation in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses provided in secondary schools, for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and pupils from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

### 3.7 Curriculum Breadth

Aldridge Education is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for its learners at all phases of education. In mainstream settings, the National Curriculum will be followed. In atypical settings including Studio Schools and UTCs, this will not be the case. In these settings, all students will study and enter examinations in English Language and Literature, Maths and at least a double award (trilogy) in Science. Additional to this, students will study a set of specialist subjects, all of which will be approved by the Secretary of State. This menu of provision will be intended to offer the broadest range of next step opportunities for learners in these specialist settings, leaving as many career pathways open for learners as possible in their chosen field.

All students in Sixth Form who enter without English and/or Maths GCSE will be expected to have timetabled lessons in these subjects and to enter resit examinations.

Aldridge Education acknowledges the government's national ambition for 90% of students to be starting to study EBacc GCSE qualifications by 2025 and that this is an ambition, and not a target for any individual school. The Trust understands the value of the Humanities and Languages and also seeks to encourage students towards this study. We hold this understanding in partnership with a wider sense of value for so many additional subjects including, but not exclusively, the Arts, sports, Social Sciences, creative, business and technology subjects. We recognise the importance of all of

these areas in human existence and thriving, in the economic success of this country and in the individual talents and interests of our learners.

Leaders in Aldridge Education hold the following priorities as curriculum decisions and opportunities are made:

1. We believe students succeed best when they are studying a subject they love and want to engage with
2. A key role for school leaders is to bring interest and engagement to less popular subjects in the years before option choices are made so that myths and popularly-held beliefs about some subjects are debunked and students choose to study those subjects without undue coercion
3. No barriers should ever be imposed on any student or group of students choosing an EBacc route in our mainstream provision
4. School leaders will have a plan in place for active development of progressively larger cohorts entering and being successful in EBacc subjects
5. All students should have sufficient choice in their Key Stage 4 education to ensure they are stimulated by education and enjoy what they learn
6. School leaders will regularly review curriculum structures to ensure that time is used in an optimal way to balance both breadth of choice and sufficient time per subject to ensure successful outcomes

### 3.8 Homework

Leaders at Aldridge Education believe that homework has intrinsic value alongside a well-taught timetabled curriculum. It is used to:

- Consolidate learning and allow opportunity for deliberate practice
- Revisit prior learning and ensure it is being committed to long-term memory
- Provide an opportunity for pre-work or pre-reading in advance of a lesson
- Provide an opportunity for extension activities
- Develop the ability to self-regulate and become an independent learner

Whilst homework may sometimes be used for completion of work not finished in a lesson, this should not be its primary or regular purpose.

Homework set should always be purposeful and receive appropriate feedback. There is no expectation about how homework will be set and this could include the use of learning platforms such as Century Tech, Hegarty and other platforms which provide automated feedback generation. When these are used, the teacher setting the homework is still responsible for reviewing this feedback and using it to inform next steps.

The setting of homework should be thoughtfully planned to enhance learning whilst keeping the workload of teaching staff manageable and reasonable.

In the primary phase, homework will be set as follows:

- Daily reading
- Weekly spellings
- Weekly multiplication tables practice
- Weekly Century Tech
- Weekly Phonics Play
- Weekly Timetable Rockstars



- Weekly CGP work in Maths and SPAG
- Project work as appropriate linked to topics being covered in the curriculum

In the secondary phase, homework will be set as follows:

Key Stage 3:

English, Maths and Science set weekly

Other subjects set fortnightly

Key Stage 4:

All subjects set weekly

Key Stage 5:

For every hour of timetabled lesson, there should be an expectation of a further hour of independent learning and work set.

### 3.9 Cultural Capital and extra-curricular enrichment

Aldridge Education recognises that a learner's core timetable, whilst vital, does not encompass the whole of the curriculum offered to any learner. We seek to build cultural capital both through the quality of exposures made within the taught timetable and through additional opportunities provided by our schools through extra-curricular timetables and through other additional experiences, trips, visits and events.

All of these opportunities combine with the interactions learners have with staff on a daily basis to form part of our curriculum provision, designed to introduce students, as described by Ofsted, to "the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement". This means that these opportunities need to be:

- Available to the many, not the few
- Free of financial constraint for those unable to pay
- High-quality and showcasing the best of human endeavour
- Offer a route to higher levels of pursuit in an area of interest
- Regular and frequent, wide-ranging and diverse

All of this must be balanced against the budget envelope within which any school operates and the constraints of the time available for such additionality.

To support this work, Aldridge Education schools all co-create a '100 Wall' where staff and students create a set of 100 experiences they would like to engage with during their time at the school. These are informed by local context, contributed to by staff and designed to be simply achievable. They draw on staff experiences of family life and things that they have valued doing as children or with their children and are designed to feel accessible to all, including the parents of our learners. These walls form a common baseline for our ambitions around enrichment opportunities in partnership with our extra-curricular timetables.

Both extra-curricular engagement and completion of 100 Wall activities are tracked and monitored by school staff and are given a high priority and a high profile within our schools.

Information about these activities can be found in appendix D.

### 3.10 Reading

Aldridge Education recognizes the vital requirement for every learner to have strong literacy and the importance of being a fluent reader. Trust schools commit to ensuring that this is a priority for all

learners and to providing intervention, as required, at the earliest opportunity for individual learners and for groups of learners, where appropriate.

Trust classrooms recognize the need to both support and improve reading as part of quality first provision, enabling all students to engage with the lesson content.

Trust principals ensure that support for reading improvement is prioritized. They use evidence-based approaches to achieve this and regularly monitor the impact of strategies and interventions being used, working on the basis that if improvement is not tangible and measurable, the strategy is an ineffective one.

Please refer to the Trust's protocol on improving reading.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 The Governing Board and Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Local Governing Committee (LGC) will monitor (see monitoring arrangements) the effectiveness of this policy and hold the principal to account for its implementation.

### 4.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the school curriculum meets the requirements outlined in this policy and that there are recorded, routine, procedures in place for reviewing and approving this curriculum policy and implementing it in the school. (See monitoring arrangements)

The principal must ensure that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school is required to offer, and chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met (Individual subject statements & outline schemes of work can be found in the curriculum section of the [school website](#))
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the CEO/CAO
- School job descriptions clearly state "curriculum" and "curriculum leadership" responsibilities
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The CEO and Local Governing Committee are fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Targets are agreed with the CEO (usually FFT20) and used across the school
- Proper provision is in place and adaptation made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### 4.3 Other Staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

Additional information regarding the duties of individual staff members who have specific responsibilities pertaining to the curriculum, such as heads of department, or Key Stage or curriculum leaders can be found in the [curriculum policy](#) and appendix C. These positions will include monitoring responsibilities.

### 4.4 Parents

Parent involvement helps extend teaching outside the classroom including understanding and homework. Parental knowledge of the school curriculum creates a more positive experience for

pupils and helps pupils perform better when they are in school. It is essential for parents to support the learning that happens in school.

## 5. Monitoring Arrangements

### 5.1 The Governing Board and Chief Executive Officer

The Governing Board & Chief Executive officer monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through:

- Reviewing Together visits to each school
- Formal external reviews commissioned by the CEO
- Desktop review work including review of the school's Curriculum Review Tool
- Engagement with Curriculum Trust Leads and feedback from them
- Annual survey data
- Review of SEF, improvement plan and implementation of the Trust Playbook
- Shared data review

### 5.2 The Principal

The Principal ensures regular and recorded monitoring of departmental/subject/curriculum leadership. This provides evidence, through formal monitoring, of the way a subject is taught throughout the school. Monitoring may include:

- Implementation of the Trust Playbook and its range of activity
- Learning walk-throughs
- Co-planning meetings and other professional development activity
- Line management meetings
- Work scrutiny
- The way in which resources are allocated and managed
- Shared data review

### 5.3 Heads of Department/subject leaders/curriculum leaders

The heads of department/subject leaders/curriculum leaders ensure regular and recorded monitoring of subject teaching. This provides evidence, through formal monitoring, of the way a subject is taught throughout the school. Monitoring may include:

- Activity undertaken through power meeting cycles
- Learning walk-throughs
- Work scrutiny
- Curriculum resource review
- Shared data review

## 6. Inclusion

### 6.1 Inclusion

Teachers across Aldridge Education schools set high expectations for all pupils. They use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Teachers will plan and adapt learning so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.
- Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned and adapted so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.
- Further information can be found in our Equality Policy and in our SEN policy and information report.

This policy will be formally reviewed every 2 years by the CEO. The appendices will be reviewed annually by the Principal. After every review, the policy will be ratified by the Education Standards sub-committee of the Trust Board.

## 7. Links to other policies

- [Aldridge Education Assessment Policy](#)
- [Improving reading protocol](#)
- [Relationships and sex education and health education](#)
- [Child Protection and Safeguarding](#)
- [Equality Policy](#)

**Commented [RC1]:** @Lauren Price please can you link this to the new assessment policy?

## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix A: The School Curriculum (School Specific) How the curriculum is organised and delivered.

#### Curriculum vision/rationale

##### **School vision:**

*For all students to achieve beyond their personal expectations and prior attainment, and to experience an enjoyable and outstanding education*

##### **What are we trying to achieve?**

##### **Why are they learning what they are?**

We have spent time as school leaders contemplating what our students need to know to be successful in life. Our vision is for all students to achieve beyond their personal expectation and prior attainment and to experience an enjoyable and outstanding education. This vision has been carefully created to raise aspirations. We want our students to aspire to go to university if that is appropriate for them, and if not for them to choose a career that is challenging, fulfilling and economically secure and develop the knowledge, skills, and qualifications to be successful in that career. Blackburn with Darwen historically was a prosperous region with textiles and mining forming most of the job market. This market has declined and resulted in Blackburn with Darwen being one of the most deprived local authority districts in the UK. There are significantly less economically active citizens in BwD than the UK average, 12.4% of the Authority's population have no qualifications compared to 7% nationally, and the average weekly salary is much lower than the National average. There are opportunities however, the building of the M65 motorway in 1997 has brought business and investment to the town. One of the problems for Blackburn residents in recent years is that they have not been sufficiently qualified to take advantage of these opportunities. Only 22.9% of BwD residents hold qualifications at NVQ level 4 or above (Degree level) compared to 31.6% nationally. In addition, a culture of worklessness (16.3% workless households compared to 14.3% nationally) can mean for some student's education is not always seen as a viable route to a better future. The evidence is clear, this lack of qualifications on average in BwD residents means that the average percentage of BwD residents employed in Group 1-3 jobs; managers, professionals, technical is 37 compared to a national average of 47%. We want to change this for our young people. Our curriculum is based on 6 curriculum touchstones:

- An emphasis on the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. We must ensure that our students are literate, numerate and understand how the world around them works.
- A strong emphasis on an academic core including the ebacc subjects that develop cultural capital and prepare students for life in a modern democratic country. The ebacc subjects have been shown to have several benefits including being essential to study at degree level and improving access to university. Russell group universities favour facilitating subjects (Ebacc subjects). Research has also shown that the study of these subjects has a direct impact on performance in English and Maths
- A belief that the curriculum should be as broad as possible for as long as possible. We want to develop rounded individuals. We want to develop students who want to make the world a better place. To do this our students need to learn knowledge, skills, concepts, and attitudes in areas such as mathematics, literacy and linguistics, science, and technology but also aesthetic and creative, human, and social, moral, and physical. To not involve pupils sufficiently in all these areas and elements is to leave their education lacking in some respects.
- A commitment to giving students the opportunity to study the arts and technology for as long

as possible but with a commitment to allow students to personalise their diet as they move through the school. The arts are good for the soul. We promote creativity across the curriculum but within the Arts there exists the opportunities for students to experience the sheer joy of creating a piece of music, a painting, or an expression in the form of dance or drama. The study of the arts is good for the mental wellbeing of our young people. Technology has a value way beyond providing young people with a career path into manufacturing. We are an increasingly technological society and technological literacy is essential for our young people to understand the world around them. The study of technology also helps students to relate subjects such as maths and science to the real-world giving relevance to the whole curriculum.

- To develop students personal, social and health and health education including high quality careers advice and independent guidance.
- To develop student's entrepreneurial skills and qualities

This policy links to our policies on Equality, Teaching and Learning, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and our procedures regarding Homework and Assessment.

### **What do we want for them by the time we leave? What destinations and next steps are we preparing them for?**

Any research of employability skills reveals that employers want a range of soft skills and hard skills (actual subject specific knowledge and skills achieved through qualifications)  
In terms of those hard skills, we are committed to preparing our students for the world of work or employment. There is growth in the employment market in the North of England but there is also additional competition for jobs. Analysis of growth indicates that half of jobs will be managerial, professional, or associate professional. These will require candidates to hold relevant qualifications at Level 4 or above. Technology will pervade the job market and boundaries between sectors will begin to break down requiring flexibility in candidates. 40% of employers prefer students to hold a degree in STEM (Science, Technology, engineering, and Maths) subjects and 19% expressed a preference for candidates with a Business-related degree. We are committed to raising aspirations and supporting our young people to go to university where that is appropriate. Through this we will facilitate their route into those jobs. Students will need, and we will provide access to those facilitating subjects at GCSE (Ebacc) to increase their chances of going to and staying at university. We will also offer a broad and relevant suite of qualifications at KS4 that give students the opportunity to continue their study of the Arts but adding the opportunity for our students to gain qualifications in technology and business qualifications.

The world economic forum has identified 16 core skills that it has split into 3 different areas:

#### **Skills**

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Scientific literacy
- ICT literacy

- Financial literacy
- Cultural and civic literacy

#### **Abilities**

- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Collaboration

#### **Qualities**

- Curiosity
- Initiative
- Perseverance/grit
- Adaptability
- Leadership
- Social cultural awareness

Further to this recent employer surveys have indicated that literacy and numeracy skills are vital. A weakness in these skills can affect performance in everyday tasks. For example, the ability to draw out information effectively from written texts and instructions, produce written communication, or work through calculations and make sense of numerical data.

### **What are our student's needs?**

With these factors in mind, we have formulated our curriculum touchstones. The touchstones form our strategic aims for curriculum underpinned by research. Our curriculum directly supports these aims. We know this because we have deliberately designed our KS3 and 4 curriculums with the touchstones at the forefront of our thinking. You will see from our curriculum map on page 4 that the curriculum is based directly on the 6 touchstones; 1. The core of maths and English, 2. The Ebacc subjects, 3. Breadth, 4. A focus on the Arts and technology, 5. Personal, social and Health education and 6. The entrepreneurial skills and qualities that an Aldridge school prizes. In addition, we have looked carefully at our cohort of students. We are a truly comprehensive school that draws students from a wide variety of backgrounds and with different ability profiles. We are committed to preparing these students for the next phase of their lives and we actively encourage the aspiration to go on to Higher education. We are proud of our tradition as the former Darwen Grammar school and an emphasis on high academic standards will always be at the heart of what we do. We recognise that some of our young people need support with:

- Having high aspirations for themselves
- Ensuring that they have a good standard of literacy
- Developing resilience, self-discipline, and initiative
- Developing a growth mind set
- Developing confidence

**How does our curriculum specifically prepare students for their next steps? How does it deliver the curriculum touchstones? How does it address the needs of OUR learners?**

**Key stage 3 curriculum – subjects and allocation of hour-long periods (except Vale Values @ 45 min)**

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	4	4	5
Maths	4	4	4
Science	4	4	4
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
MFL	2	2	1
Art and Design	1	1	1
Design Technology	1	1	1
Performing Arts	1	1	1
RE	1	1	1
PE	2	2	2
Computing	1	1	1
Vale Values - SRE/Citizenship/PSHE	3.75 hours during tutor time	3.75 hours during tutor time	3.75 hours during tutor time
	25	25	25

#### Key Stage 4

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
English	5	5
Maths	5	5
Science	5	5
Option A	3	3
Option B	3	3
Option C	3	3
PE	1	1
Vale Values - SRE/Citizenship/PSHE/RE	3.75 hours during tutor time	3.75 hours during tutor time

### The touchstones in practice:

#### Touchstone 1

*An emphasis on the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. We must ensure that our students are literate, numerate and understand how the world around them works.*

The curriculum touchstones shape our curriculum at Key Stage 3 and 4. We are committed to a strong focus on the Core. We give more time for English Maths and Science at Key Stage 3 and 4. This is intentional as we are seeking to prepare students for life after they leave us considering the views of those in further education and employers.

To support our aim to develop students who are literate and effective communicators we explicitly provide more time for English. Students have four-five periods of English each week and in Key Stage 3 follow the ARK Mastery curriculum. This curriculum has been developed in line with DfE (Department for Education) aims and has been proven to enhance student progress. Students who follow Ark Mastery make four months more progress than students not following the programme. The curriculum is knowledge based and teaches grammar and vocabulary acquisition explicitly. It is unashamedly focused on the study of classic high-quality texts such as Shakespeare's "The Tempest", Jane Eyre, and Oliver Twist. The English curriculum is designed so that every child can achieve challenging



goals. Our lessons include explicit definitions of key learning that students must be proficient in before they move on. The key knowledge and skills are sequenced carefully, and students practice and apply new learning in different contexts. The English Mastery programme is rooted in the latest cognitive and educational research.

At Darwen Vale High School, we recognise that fluent reading skills is essential to developing a learner with fully realised potential. However, we also understand that not all of our students have the literacy skills to effectively access our curriculum. To identify students who need catered support in improving their reading ability, we test all students using both the NGRT GL assessment and the Hodder reading test. By triangulating the data across these two tests, we have the most accurate picture of our student's ability and can identify areas of need. From this, we sort our students into four cohorts of intervention where each cohort undergoes a bespoke course of intervention, delivered by trained members of staff. At the end of each course of intervention, students are retested to assess their progress. To support our student's literacy proficiency within the classroom environment, all teachers undergo frequent literacy training which directly links with what students are taught in intervention. This creates a supportive bridge from intervention to our mainstream curriculum. Since introducing this approach last year, we have seen a significant increase in our reading test scores and are looking at ways at how we can push this even further. Even when students aren't in need of extra intervention, classroom teachers still build adapted reciprocal reading techniques into their classroom and pre plan key vocabulary with standardised vocabulary explicit teaches into their curriculum which ensures that all students are always learning essential literacy skills. Alongside the work done in interventions and the classroom, we have a wonderful library space open to our students which is overseen by our school librarian.

To develop students who are numerate and prepared for further study or employment and life we invest a considerable proportion of curriculum time into maths. Students study maths for 4 hours in KS3 and for 5 hours in KS4. In Year 7 and 8 students follow the Mathematics Mastery curriculum and in Year 9, 10 and 11 students follow a curriculum which has been designed by a range of Maths specialists working at DVHS, in schools across the Trust and overseen by the Trust Leads for Mathematics. The curriculum is fully aligned with National Curriculum expectations, with years 7, 8 and 9 aligning with the KS3 curriculum and year 10 and 11 aligning with the KS4 curriculum and the Edexcel specification.

The curriculum design at all years carefully maps out the development of cumulative sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. We believe that students need to develop both knowledge and skills throughout all learning to truly master that topic. We believe in the theory of using a spiral curriculum based on cognitive theory advanced by Jerome Bruner (1960) which has three key features: students revisit topics themes and subjects several times throughout their school career; the complexity of the topic or theme increases with each revisit (aligned with the expectations of the National Curriculum) and that new learning has a relationship with old learning and is put in context with old information. The benefits ascribed to this approach include that the information is reinforced and solidified each time the student revisits the topic, the spiral allows for logical progression from simplistic ideas to complicated ideas and that throughout their educational experience, students are encouraged to apply early knowledge to later course objectives.

We want to develop students to be able problem solvers, logical thinkers, and lifelong mathematicians, by developing their reasoning, how they make connections and their ability to think mathematically. These three elements form a basis for the development of the Mathematics Mastery curriculum and is also replicated in the planning and curriculum in years 9, 10 and 11.

Throughout their time learning Maths at DVHS, we invest in ensuring that all students can achieve regardless of background. We want to level the playing field and ensure that no student is left behind. We use Data Driven Instruction to ensure that any gaps in knowledge are identified and closed every day.

We invest a considerable proportion of time into science to develop scientific literacy and an appreciation and understanding of the world our young people live in. In Science students follow a curriculum that we have developed as part of a collaboration project across our MAT. It goes beyond the national curriculum at KS3 to support our young people in their understanding of the world around us, scientific method and origins of life and the Universe. It teaches the knowledge, skills and understanding along with developing scientific schema around Wynne Harlen's Big Ideas of science. At Key Stage 4 students can opt to study separate sciences and are given an additional three periods each week to acquire the additional content and spend time exploring more challenging material to prepare themselves. All our students study the Core Science AQA combined option unless they have

chosen the separate sciences.

### **Touchstone 2:**

*A strong emphasis on an academic core including the ebacc subjects that develop cultural capital and prepare students for life in a modern democratic country*

We do not narrow the curriculum. We offer a broad and balanced 3-year key stage 3 that has the ebacc subjects at its heart. We give more curriculum time to the subjects we believe will develop cultural capital; History, Geography and MFL. Our understanding of the term cultural capital is taken from the national curriculum definition provided here; 'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.' History will play a significant role in providing students with that knowledge through its links to all other subjects; the study of ideas, concepts and thinking, the study of art and music and philosophy throughout history. We do however recognise the huge importance of the creative subjects in developing student's powers of imagination and self-expression and the confidence to believe that they can contribute to human creativity and achievement. We have evaluated our curriculum for all subjects. Our middle level leaders have audited their coverage of the national curriculum. They have identified the knowledge, skills and understanding students will need at the end of each academic year.

They have produced overview documents that outline this content and enable an evaluation of the curriculum in each key stage. They have used these overviews to break down that identified content and write mid-term plans that sequence the learning to enable students to build knowledge and skills progressively and logically. They have considered carefully how to dovetail KS3 and 4. Where we have identified that we need to develop our curriculum further we have worked with other organisations to ensure that our curricula are of an extremely high quality. This allows us to focus our internal continuous professional development on the implementation of those curricula, teaching and learning. To this end we have adopted the ARK Mastery curriculum for Key Stage 3 Geography. Where we have purchased appropriate commercial curriculums weekly planning time is built into each week to enable staff and leaders to consider how best to adapt them for the pupils at Darwen Vale.

### **Touchstones 3 and 4**

*A belief that the curriculum should be as broad as possible for as long as possible*

*A commitment to giving students the opportunity to study the arts and technology for as long as possible but with a commitment to allow students to personalise their diet as they move through the school.*

We are committed to developing our student's creative and technological abilities. We deliver a range of artistic and practical technology curriculum choices within our "creatives" lessons. These comprise art, food technology, graphics, textiles, design technology, and photography. We teach music and drama discreetly as we feel it is important for the development of cultural capital. We want students to appreciate the richness of the arts and recognise that this appreciation can help students know who they are, engage with the world around them and navigate choices in the future. Cultural capital can help young people to achieve their goals and it facilitates social mobility. This is particularly important for our young people. We believe that drama can play a vital role in developing student's confidence. In full appreciation of the different mediums of drama is important to equipping our learners with cultural capital that they may not ordinarily be exposed to.

### **Touchstone 5**

*To develop students personal, social and health and health education including high quality careers advice and independent guidance.*

We are committed to developing young people who know how to stay healthy both mentally and physically. We believe that participation in team sports and individual sports is incredibly important in teaching students about cooperation and determination. This is in addition to developing the knowledge and skills to participate in activities

that will enrich their lives whilst at Vale and beyond. Education needs to be about enjoyment, and we believe that giving students the time to play sports and games is fundamental to their development and growth.

We are intensely aware of the need for schools to provide students with outstanding personal, social and health education. The Vale Values programme we have developed is delivered in tutor time. Tutor time is 45 minutes each day, so our students receive over 3 hours each week of time dedicated to the explicit teaching of statutory Sex and Relationships Education, statutory citizenship, British Values and aspects of the PSHE (Personal and Social and Health Education) programme that we think our young people need to know.

## **Touchstone 6**

*To develop student's entrepreneurial skills and qualities*

We are an Aldridge school and the values that we prize at Aldridge are amongst the so called "soft skills" that are prized so highly by employers. We encourage our teachers and our students to exemplify the Aldridge qualities in their lessons:

- Passion
- Determination
- Risk taking
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Creativity

We further support the development of these qualities through our pastoral system and through our curriculum and wider school life enrichment programme; the "vale offer"

At Key Stage 4 we provide increased curriculum time for our core subjects and parity across the core. We provide 3 periods weekly for the students to follow their passions. We believe that this approach is representative of our curriculum touchstones.

We offer the students to study additional GCSEs in:

- Triple Science
- History
- Geography
- French
- Music
- Drama
- Art
- Photography
- PE
- Hospitality & Catering
- Dance
- Business Studies
- Computer Science

We believe strongly that high quality careers advice and independent guidance is essential to ensure that our students are selecting option subjects that are appropriate for their ability and are preparing them for further education and employment that they have identified as being a preferred route for them.

### “The Vale offer”

We strongly believe that the wider curriculum must support the taught curriculum. We identify a series of encounters and opportunities that have been carefully mapped out and will support the taught curriculum whilst providing a rich diet of experiences which will develop cultural capital and are indicative of our curriculum touch stones.

AREA	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<b>Curriculum-Maths</b>	UKMT Junior Maths Challenge	UKMT Junior Maths Challenge Faraday Maths Challenge	UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge	UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge	Maths Bootcamp
<b>Curriculum-English</b>	Dickensian Trip to Ripon Museums, Yorkshire				English – Theatre Trip
<b>Curriculum - Science</b>	Manchester Museum	Jodrell Bank	Big Bang Fair	GCSE Science Live Event	GCSE Science Live Event
	Dinosaur Dome Visit	Skype a scientist	Skype a scientist		
	KS3 Science Live	KS3 Science Live	KS3 Science Live		
<b>Curriculum - MFL</b>	Lille Christmas Markets	Normandy Château Residential	Normandy Château Residential	Nice & Monaco Residential.	
	Onatti Theatre Visit	Sejong Institute Taster Visit	Sejong Institute Taster Visit UoM Viva Languages Day		
<b>Curriculum – Business &amp; Computing</b>	Computing and coding club  Innovate her challenge	Computing and coding club  Girls cyber security challenge	Computing and coding club	Computing and coding club  Business enterprise visit (dependent on coursework scenario)	Computing and coding club
<b>Curriculum – Art &amp; Design</b>	Lowry Visit	Lowry Visit	Lowry Visit	Ian Murphy - artist workshop	
	Yorkshire	Yorkshire	Yorkshire		

	Sculpture Park	Sculpture Park	Sculpture Park		
<b>Curriculum – Design Technology</b>		BAE Systems 3D Printing Workshop & Competition	BAE Systems 3D Printing Workshop & Competition  Warner Bro's Harry Potter Studios Trip – Lesson in set design/ prop design	Royal Navy Chef Visit	
<b>Curriculum – Performing Arts</b>	Theatre Trip	Theatre Trip	Theatre Trip	Theatre Trip  Workshop with a style of theatre practitioner	
<b>Curriculum - Humanities</b>	Royal Opera House Trip	Royal Opera House Trip	Krakov Residential Trip	GCSE Fieldwork/Historic Environment trip	
<b>Curriculum- Endeavour</b>	Outdoor Education Programme (Various Activities- Indoor rock climbing, Orienteering, Walking, Museum visits) Community Project Work (Maggie's Community Fridge, Darwen- Autumn Term 2023) Community Project Work (Active Lancashire- Spring/Summer Term 2024) Volunteer It Yourself project (Entry Level 3 Carpentry/Health & Safety or Painting & Decorating) Army residential (Spring Term 2024)				
<b>Team Building</b>			British Exploring Society x 3 trips	Lake District Residential	Bootcamp
<b>Careers</b>	DVHS Careers fair	DVHS Careers fair Go to work day (trip)	DVHS Careers fair Go to work day (trip)	DVHS Careers fair Blackburn is hiring Careers Event at BRFC (trip) Go to work day (trip)	DVHS Careers fair Mock interviews 1-1 Careers advice
<b>Sport – extra curricular</b>	Football,	Football, Rugby,	Football,	Football,	Football,
	Rugby,	Basketball,	Rugby,	Rugby,	Rugby,
	Basketball,	Cricket, Softball,	Basketball,	Basketball,	Basketball,
	Cricket,	Athletics, Fitness,	Cricket,	Cricket,	Cricket,

	Softball,	Netball,	Softball,	Softball,	Softball,
	Athletics,	Rounders,	Athletics,	Athletics,	Athletics,
<b>Sport Trips/ Activities</b>	Manchester United Trip Manchester City Trip	Manchester United Trip Manchester City Trip	Manchester United Trip Manchester City Trip	Manchester United Trip Manchester City Trip	Manchester United Trip Manchester City Trip
	Lancashire Lightening Trip	Lancashire Lightening Trip	Lancashire Lightening Trip	Lancashire Lightening Trip	Lancashire Lightening Trip
	Sale Sharks Trip	Sale Sharks Trip	Sale Sharks Trip	Sale Sharks Trip	Sale Sharks Trip
	Wigan Warriors Trip	Wigan Warriors Trip	Wigan Warriors Trip	Wigan Warriors Trip	Wigan Warriors Trip
	Manchester Thunder Trip	Manchester Thunder Trip	Manchester Thunder Trip	Manchester Thunder Trip	Manchester Thunder Trip
	Manchester Giants Trip European Ski Trip	Manchester Giants Trip European Ski Trip	Manchester Giants Trip European Ski Trip	Manchester Giants Trip European Ski Trip	Manchester Giants Trip

## Curriculum development in Faculties

Our curriculum aims are aligned with those of the Multi Academy Trust and the position papers and philosophy behind an Aldridge curriculum – see Curriculum choice and architecture an Aldridge education position statement.

We have clearly set out our aims for the curriculum in this paper and we share these explicitly with our staff. This is very much big picture thinking and this work has been developed in significantly greater detail at Faculty level.

Those big ideas described in our touchstones are broken down in each curriculum area in the following processes and policies:

- Curriculum rationale – This is a much more detailed version of the school's curriculum rationale and policy. It outlines the collaborative thinking of leaders and teachers in each faculty area and describes the main concepts of each subject, the seminal content, and ruminations on the sequencing of delivery best suited to maximise student learning, understanding and mastery.
- KS2 – 4 Overview of knowledge, understanding and skills. This document in grid format lays out in overview the content to be delivered over 3 or 5 years of study. This document should complement the curriculum rationale.
- MTP overview sheets – These documents provide an overview of knowledge, understanding and skills in each unit.
- MTPs for each unit of work. - These documents in grid format lay out in a lesson-by-lesson format the content to be delivered over that unit of study. This document should complement the curriculum rationale and MTP overview.

These mid-term planning documents form the starting point for teachers in their planning of individual lessons.

That lesson planning is described in more detail in our handbooks (Teaching & Learning, Curriculum) and time is afforded for this process to be undertaken in a collaborative way in our weekly co planning sessions.

As a trust and as a school our standard is excellence, and we are seeking to enhance our curriculum unit plans in line with our focus on three school improvement levers. These levers are:

- Student culture
- Lesson observation and feedback
- Data Driven instruction

It is the last of these that we are principally concerned with here. At Darwen Vale and within Aldridge DDI is teaching and learning. No instruction or teaching should not be informed by data. This data does not always need to be numerical data but what we describe as micro data; the numbers of students who have not grasped a key learning point evidenced in an exit ticket activity, or the students who performed weakly on a low stakes quiz, indicating an insufficient grasp of knowledge on a particular unit or lesson.

In line with trust best practice, we are reviewing our curriculum plans against a clear rubric – The Aldridge Curriculum Standard - in a several key areas including:

- Sequencing
- Reteach opportunities
- Key learning activities
- Know – show

- Questioning
- Modelling and guided discussion
- Assessment/DDI opportunities
- Literacy, numeracy, and vocabulary entitlement
- Enrichment

The result of these audits form a major part of each departments development plan for the academic year. Working collaboratively to develop our curriculum to that standard of excellence.

### Additional Documents and Policies

Our policy documents and supporting documents are available for downloading [here](#).

#### 7.1 Appendix B: Individual subject statements & brief outline schemes of work (School specific)

The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#) and [The Independent School Standards 2019](#).

Please visit each curriculum area below for schemes of learning and further information for each individual subject at KS3 and KS4.

- [Create](#)
- [Computing & Business](#)
- [Drama](#)
- [English](#)
- [Geography](#)
- [History](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [MFL](#)
- [Music](#)
- [P.E](#)
- [Religious Studies](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Vale Values](#) (Tutor time information)

#### 7.2 Appendix C: Staff structure (School specific)

Mrs Cull – responsible for the whole school curriculum

Head of Departments:

- English – Miss Ashcroft
- Maths – Mr Bennett
- Science – Mr Tattersall
- Art & Design – Miss Ramsey
- Design Technology – Mrs Walsh
- Humanities and RE – Mr Hodgkinson
- MFL – Mrs Catterall
- Computing and Business – Mrs Kenyon
- PE – Mr Baines



Please visit the Curriculum areas above in Appendix B for further information on each subject area

### **7.3 Appendix D: Vale Offer and extra-curricular**

The Extra-Curricular offer at Darwen Vale is excellent. There are many wide-ranging clubs, some are student led and open to students from Year 7-11. We believe taking part in extra-curricular activities is a key part of students' education and key to the development of their wider self, as it helps them develop skills such as leadership, teamwork, resilience as well as confidence and commitment. It provides an opportunity to try new experiences whilst making new friends.

Please visit <https://www.darwenvale.com/club-zone> for the extra curricular timetable.