

## Secondary Curriculum Principles

We know that a highly effective curriculum has the power to unlock the ever-changing world for all of our students, regardless of background. In order to excel beyond our schools, students must leave our trust with diverse and well developed schema. Through our focus on a high quality curriculum that creates these diverse and well developed schema, we aim for all of our students to be armed with the knowledge, skills and confidence to flourish as they engage with new opportunities and challenges throughout their lifetime.

The secondary curriculum within each subject and across the three schools is continually developed to challenge, inspire and meet the needs of students in each school and within their unique contexts. Through our previous work, GCSE exam boards have now aligned. When considering KS3 and on-going curriculum development, our approach is towards intelligent curriculum alignment and not standardisation. We encourage teams to think deeply and creatively about specific aspects of the curriculum and take the time to powerfully collaborate. Therefore, curriculum principles are agreed, shared and best practice is disseminated, but our schools and their teachers retain the creativity to consider decisions in the best interests of their students and context. These curriculum principles are translated into the architecture of our curriculum, in terms of both its design and delivery.

Whilst our secondary schools have similarities, we acknowledge their different contexts. As such, the curriculum intent within each school differs so that it is designed to meet the needs of the children the curriculum serves. We expect leaders at all levels to understand our trust wide curriculum principles but have the ability to shape their own school and subject curriculum intent.

- **Focus:** The curriculum identifies specific and achievable objectives, whether it be skill or knowledge based. As a Trust, we know that curriculum development is never complete. We recognise the need to consistently reflect and collaborate in order to evolve a highly effective and diversified curriculum.
- **Coherence:** The sequencing of the curriculum is clearly reasoned and articulated showing a clear narrative overtime. This narrative secures interplay between components.
  - All students benefit from the intentional planning of both taught and untaught curriculum with concepts mapped from the prior Key Stage and backwards from subsequent Key Stage.
  - Learning is broken down into discrete units and delivered in a logical and systematic order, which intentionally builds on prior/prerequisite learning.
  - Links are explicitly made between learning.
- **Relevance:**
  - Student context is crucial in ensuring students feel connected to and can effectively access their learning. Within the classroom, student experience is used to shape the delivery of the curriculum so that our curriculum is ambitious for all:
    - **Rigour** & challenge is appropriately and ambitiously designed for all students
    - **Scaffolding and support** ensures all students are able to reach the specific and achievable objectives.
- **Literacy:** To ensure our students leave our trust as highly literate young adults, we have a deliberate focus on and the teaching of reading, writing and oracy. Within this, the teaching of vocabulary is explicit so that students are armed with multiple, precise prototypes which are reinforced by experience. Students are therefore secure with and confident in articulating subject specific technical language and are able to make associations within their learning. As a result of the ability to read age appropriate texts and their security with subject specific vocabulary, students are able to communicate effectively with those around them.
- **Pedagogical Content Knowledge:** The translation of the curriculum into the classroom is research informed and continuously reconsidered and refined, so that students embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently.

- **Subject Specificity:** The interplay between substantive content and disciplinary knowledge differs in each subject. The intricacies of each subject **must** be understood by teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders. In particular, subject teachers are our experts and are given time to engage with subject discourse and with experts both within and beyond our Trust, ensuring all teachers maintain links with the evolving content and teaching of their academic field.
- **Creativity:** Within the trust we are ambitious to ensure that our students develop their creativity, we value music and the performing arts, recognising that it supports students in their development of cognition, discipline, confidence and understanding of the world and other cultures.

As a result of our principles and our desire for students to excel as they engage with new opportunities and challenges, we expect students leaving our Trust to have the confidence in:

- Holding confident and fluent conversations about wide-ranging academic topics/subjects
- Forming and asking effective questions
- Articulating their views in a clear and compelling way
- Participating in debates effectively and respectfully
- Assessing the accuracy and validity of information that is shared with them, for example in the news and on social media
- Having the ability and motivation to read widely
- Being able to collaborate effectively with others
- Demonstrating effective leadership skills
- Demonstrating personal integrity
- Expressing themselves creatively and confidently, either through music or the arts
- Being activists for social change.

The following research/academics have been used to inform the Cathedral Schools Trust curriculum principles

Christine Counsell  
Ashbee, R., (2021), Curriculum: Theory, Culture and the Subject Specialisms  
Kennedy, M., (2016), Parsing the Practice of Teaching  
Wiliam, D. (2013), Principled curriculum design, SSAT