

Curriculum Policy 2019/20

Rationale

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the curriculum intent and implementation at Great Barr Academy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students, regardless of starting point or barriers, excel academically and their lives are enriched by being a student at Great Barr due to our outstanding curriculum.

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| Staff Responsibility: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribute to the reflective development of a knowledge rich curriculum• Ensure there are clear objectives and success criteria in lessons which the students understand• Provide regular feedback which informs the next steps in students learning• Give students opportunities to reflect on their learning through target setting• Plan lessons which have pace and structure• Provide a working environment where expectations are high• Provide appropriate resources and support materials• Continue to widen their subject knowledge and developments in education• Use differentiation and groupings to enable all pupils to learn effectively• Provide effective assessments and keep accurate records which inform planning• Communicate effectively with parents, keeping them informed on student progress |
| Student Responsibility: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect other students and all adults; be considerate and thoughtful• Respect the school environment and equipment• Be punctual and organised with appropriate materials/kit• Be ready to learn and engage in the learning experience• Be positive and eager to make use of all opportunities• Have pride in their work, their peers and Great Barr Academy• Take responsibility for their learning, work hard and do their best at all times |
| Parents' Responsibility: (Home School Agreement) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure their children attend regularly and punctually• Support the ethos of the academy• Share responsibility for their children's learning, be realistic and offer encouragement and praise• Attend curriculum review meetings• Support the children in the completion of all home learning• Encourage independence in their children• Communicate with staff any concerns about their children• Respect all members of the school community |
| Review Date: | July 2020 |

1. Key Principles

Our Academy Vision is "Enriching Lives", this is underpinned by 4 core principles: Engage, Enquire, Explore and Excel. We believe that students' lives will be enriched, and be better, in every way because they came to Great Barr Academy. We want our staff and students to be highly successful and proud of our school and the key driver for this ambition is our curriculum.

Intent: Our clear intention is to deliver a curriculum that enables every student to pursue and develop their talents, academic interests and skills enabling them to progress onto positive destinations and fulfil their high aspirations. We want our students to develop a 'Love of Learning for Life'. It is our intention to develop enquiring minds that will give our students a wealth of opportunities in their lives, be given the opportunity to explore in depth a wide range of academic and vocational subjects as well as their own interests and talents, and by engaging in this, with the support of Great Barr Academy, they will excel.

Implementation: To ensure this is the case we provide a broad, balanced, challenging and relevant curriculum across all subjects, as well as appropriate levels of expectation and genuine challenge along with relevance, continuity and progression in learning to ensure every student can aim high and maximise their learning potential. Each department within the Academy has their own specific aims linked to our overall intention and are committed to enabling the greatest of success for all our students. We have a strong personal development programme that helps to give our students the 'Edge'. The programme is designed to develop their personal, social, moral and cultural awareness. The activities undertaken support students by building their independence and developing a sense of responsibility. We provide courses of study and teaching methods that promote engagement and enquiry, are tailored to the wide range of needs, interests and aspirations of our students. No student at Great Barr Academy will be denied access to any part of the curriculum on grounds of race, faith, or gender.

Impact: We understand that the quality of our Curriculum will impact on a broad range of student indicators, therefore we monitor achievement data, student behaviour in lessons, attitudes towards learning, social time behaviour/relationships, attendance and destination data. We believe that students, staff and parents all have an important voice in ensuring our Curriculum is high quality and meets the needs of all students.

We believe that children learn best when they:

- Are interested and motivated
- Achieve success and gain approval
- Are clear about expectations in their work
- Develop independence and use initiative
- Participate in enrichment activities and cross curricular learning

Learning will take place in a stimulating learning environment that:

- Is welcoming, happy, inclusive and caring
- Challenges students to achieve the highest standards and supports them to do this
- Celebrates success and encourages children to realise their full potential
- Expects mutual respect
- Is well organised, safe, tidy with well-presented displays
- Has resources that are appropriate, high-quality, attractive, and accessible
- Has an agreed code of behaviour 'owned' by the children: 'Ready, Respectful and Safe'.

We expect our curriculum to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all students
- Provide subject choices that support students' learning and progression and enable them to work towards achieving their goals as children and as they become adults

- Develop students' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment
- Enable students to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside developing their personal skills
- Promote a positive attitude to learning and a love of learning for life
- Ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Give the students opportunities to thrive, follow their dreams and develop new talents

This policy reflects the requirements for Academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in 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.

2. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all students. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able students and students with low prior attainment
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with SEND
- Students with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that students with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. Teachers will also take account of the needs of students whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned 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 statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEND policy. For example, we have an "over and above" approach to Pupil Premium students, this means that staff should be aware of any historical gaps in opportunities or learning PP students may have and where this is the case, staff are expected to make reasonable adjustments to address any issues.

3. Student Organisation

Students join us in Year 7 and are assigned to a Mini School. We have a outstanding pastoral system to ensure that every student has a nurturing and supported experience throughout their time at Great Barr Academy. In year 7 students are initially taught within their assigned tutor groups then, following NGRT testing the students will be streamed in the core subjects.

In Year 8 students are taught in X/Y bands. 2 mini schools are placed in either X or Y. Students are then grouped by ability in the Core subjects, MFL and PE. There is common setting in Humanities (Geography, History, Religious Studies) and Art. Mixed ability setting is used in Technology and Performing Arts.

In Year 9 students are supported in making option choices which reflect their unique talents and abilities. There are 8 options pathways which are preselected for students to guide them towards subjects in which they will be able to gain the most success and which will lead to appropriate destinations. Aspire offers separate sciences, a language and at least one humanities subject and one free choice. There are also combinations that include trilogy science rather than separate science and an additional free choice or no

language or humanities subject. Inspire encourages 2 free option choices. The Engage pathway is suitable for students who may need Entry Qualifications and includes life skills and a Princes Trust qualification. Students may be chosen to participate in the ACE curriculum which is separate provision for students who require a learning experience in a specialist environment which also facilitates high quality work experience placements. In addition to the choices made pupils will continue to participate in Physical Education as a vital aspect of health and well-being.

4. Home Learning

We recognise the importance and value of home learning. This operates as an extension of classwork and it is a vehicle to practice skills, acquire new skills, develop good study habits and develop more independent learning. At KS3 there is the expectation that students will complete either a Research, Respond or Reflection task as set by their class teacher at least once every 5 lessons and often more. KS4 students will undertake independent study of at least 1 hour or more per subject per week. KS5 students are expected to complete independent study of at least 2 hours per subject per week.

5. Personal Development Curriculum

We have a strong personal development programme that helps to give our students the 'Edge'. Developing their personal, social, moral and cultural awareness. Building their independence and sense of responsibility. PDC is promoted through a variety of ways including the tutorial programme "Edge" as well as in many subject areas (e.g History, Geography, RS, English and Business). We seek to promote good relationships throughout the school community and genuine tolerance and understanding of all cultures. We actively promote opportunities for students to work together, in a variety of situations both within and beyond lessons. Students have extensive opportunities to take responsibility through activities such as the school council, EAL ambassadors, Year 9 and Year 11 prefects, representing the school on interview panels, sports leadership and assisting at parents' evenings. PDC throughout Years 7 - 13 contributes to a number of cross-curricular areas, including personal organisation and study skills, health education (including drugs education, relationship and sex education and personal safety), environmental education, economic and industrial awareness, knowledge of key dispositions within religious studies and careers education. The PDC is taught by form tutors within a dedicated 'Edge' session within year groups, supported by specialist staff and outside speakers.

6. Careers Education and Work-Related Learning (The Next Steps Hub)

Students have access to specific careers advice in every year group. This is delivered through PD days (3 annually) and through the Edge programme. There are opportunities for students to meet with employers and attend careers fayres and University visits. All students in Y9, Y11 and Y13 have 1:1 interview to inform destination planning and applications. We have a dedicated team of Careers and work-related learning specialists who plan organise and facilitate a wide range of experiences for all students in every year group. In year 12 all students are encouraged to participate in work experience week.

7. Curriculum Pledge

All students will be encouraged to participate in activities within the Curriculum Pledge. These are a range of activities that develop extra-curricular enrichment opportunities such as visiting museums and taking part in charity events. Outward bound accreditations such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and participation in Performing Arts events or being part of sports teams, which represent the Academy.

Students have the opportunity to apply for key roles such as form captains and prefects and develop their skills in a wider life-long context as rounded individuals with a range of interests and achievements.

8. Curriculum structure 2019/20

Timetable in operation is based on a 25 period week. There are 5 periods of 60 minutes each day.

Key Stage 3

Our personalised KS3 curriculum offers all pupils in Year 7 – 9 the opportunity to experience English, Maths, Science, Art, Drama, Dance, Computer Science, at least one Foreign Language, Religious Studies, Music, Technology, Geography, History and Physical Education. We believe that students need to study a broad range of subjects at this stage so at no point are their opportunities for the future narrowed.

Key Stage 4

Moving into KS4 allows our students to specialise in subjects in which they have a keen intellectual interest or talent. Our offer here is broad to ensure that we meet the needs and demands of a rapidly changing world. We ensure a personalised offer via our curriculum pathways that are suited to the needs of all our students. Some students will be encouraged to follow subject choices that comprise the English baccalaureate suite of subjects and others will have a bespoke tailored curriculum offer that facilitates their learning needs. Each student will take one of 8 pathways which are suited to their abilities and learning styles.

Sixth form

Students choose from a wide range of subjects including academic, technical and vocational courses. In addition, students who have not achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English and Maths are required to re-sit. All sixth form students follow a tutorial programme which includes UCAS preparation and financial awareness. Students attend a weekly assembly/tutorial session and are encouraged to become subject ambassadors supporting staff and students in younger years.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Curriculum is monitored through drawing on information such as achievement data, student behaviour in lessons, learning walk snapshots, review of schemes of work and teacher planning. The quality of the curriculum impacts on all of these areas. In addition, we will take student and staff voice into account to ensure triangulation and accuracy and may include both internal and external personnel for Quality Assurance purposes.