



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Curriculum Policy

Approved by the LGB, February 2021 (updated Oct 2021)

Principles:

“Academically-Ambitious and Accessible to All”

Queen Mary's Grammar School believes that the Quality of Education experienced by students is driven by a curriculum in its broadest sense: the entirety of a student's learning experience, in lessons and beyond. We aim to design and embed a curriculum that is planned and sequenced to develop in our highly academic students the knowledge and skills necessary for their future roles in society, while ensuring that the balanced curriculum offer is accessible to all.

The curriculum will promote the spiritual, moral, social, physical and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, fostering a sense of identity and place within the broad range of cultural contexts represented by members of our community. It will encourage pupil engagement in a wide range of co-curricular and enrichment opportunities and the broadening of subject-specific knowledge and skills beyond the classroom and into the wider community, nationally and internationally.

Trust Curriculum Intent Statement (November 2020):

We are a family of schools committed to helping each other increase opportunities and improve outcomes for students throughout Walsall and the West Midlands conurbation.

Because of our schools' commitment to providing an expertly-delivered, ambitious curriculum our students will enjoy developing their knowledge, understanding and skill. We prioritise our efforts to address the social mobility generational failings for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

As a result of our commitment to improvement and innovation students in Mercian schools will be the highest academic achievers who will secure places at the very top universities, conservatoires and specialist colleges. Those with the greatest practical aptitudes will secure technical vocational awards that are valued by employers and prepare them to progress onto apprenticeship pathways with flagship employers.

As a result of our commitment to each other, both staff and students will be physically and mentally healthy with the resilience, adaptability and values required to make good life choices and build successful personal and professional relationships. They will be the first to welcome people new to our local community and embrace opportunities to learn from different cultural experiences and from people with different religious faiths and beliefs.

Put simply, the staff and students in Mercian schools will live life to the full in the pursuit of what is good, right and true. In doing so they will realise their potential and make a positive contribution to their families and the local, national and international community.

Curriculum Intent:

In pursuing the above principles, the School aims to:

- Provide learning opportunities (both in and out of the classroom) which promote breadth, balance and relevance. We subscribe to the National Curriculum's definition of 'Cultural Capital': '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.'
- Ensure that pupils reach the highest possible standards of academic achievement while developing knowledge and skills, values and attitudes for life
- Provide a variety of learning experiences and teaching approaches which foster both a sense of challenge and enjoyment in the classroom, at home via blended and remote teaching & learning, and through the wide range of enrichment opportunities on offer
- Provide all pupils with the highest achievable levels of literacy, numeracy and other key skills
- Allow departments to 'personalise' their curriculums and assessment pathways in order to best represent and deliver their subjects by staff and to students.

Curriculum Implementation:

In realising the above aims, the School will:

- Supplement the full range of academic subjects with enrichment activities
- Operate a challenging and rigorous three year Key Stage 3 and a two year Key Stage 4 Programme of Study
- Provide regular formal assessment of the achievement of each student in each curriculum area as an integral part of the learning process.
- Provide clear information about the curriculum and the achievement of pupils to staff, pupils, parents, governors and others in accordance with national requirements
- Maintain schemes of work and curriculum pathways in all subject areas which identify required learning outcomes, possible teaching methods and assessment opportunities
- Encourage learning beyond the classroom through homework, independent study skills, signposted wider reading and, increasingly, blended and remote platforms for learning such as Microsoft Teams.
- Provide clear information and pertinent advice to students and parents about GCSE and A Level option choices
- Provide, where appropriate, a cross-curricular approach to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

The Timetable:

- The school operates a two-week timetable. Each week comprises of a 30-period week. There are six periods per day, each of which lasts for 50 minutes. This allows time for developed and rigorous learning.
- Daily form periods or assemblies constitute an important part of the broader ethos of the curriculum at Queen Mary's. Students and staff are offered the opportunity to engage with and reflect upon a wide range of topics and issues that contribute towards the SMSC curriculum.

Key Stage 3:

- Students in Years 7-9 follow a three-year programme at KS3 that delivers and goes beyond the National Curriculum across the subject areas.'
- The curriculum model can be seen in Appendix 1.
- All students sit base-line tests in literacy and numeracy at the start of Year 7, as well as an externally-benchmarked online assessment, MIDYIS, which is set by CEM. Additional support is provided where necessary,
- All subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.
- Year 7 students follow a Science curriculum in the first year. This is then separated out into the distinct science subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics in Year 8.
- Our broad and balanced Key Stage 3 curriculum provides the opportunity for our Key Stage 3 pupils to study the following throughout a 3-year programme: Design & Technology, Art, ICT, Geography, History, PE and swimming, RPE, Music, PSHE and Games. All students learn to play either a woodwind or brass musical instrument in Year 7 and many continue with these into Year 8 and beyond.
- All students study either French or Spanish in Year 7 as well as Mandarin. At the end of Year 7, students choose to study either Mandarin through a 'fast-track' MEP or a conventional GCSE route, or a European Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish), which they will then take from Year 8 through to GCSE in Y11.
- The MEP Mandarin group studies the subject for two hours a week after school and on six Saturdays through the school year. Opting for this MEP route is a considerable commitment, as it is part of an intensive language programme supported by University College London's Institute of Education. We are proud to provide curricular and teaching & learning support for other local schools as a lead 'hub school' for this programme.
- PSHE is timetabled in one period per fortnight and is supplemented through Form Periods and cross-curricular programmes of study, particularly in RPE.
- A significant number of students join the Combined Cadet Force at the first opportunity in Year 9, along with an extensive range of other extra-curricular opportunities available to all Key Stage 3 students, including: music performances, sport, House competitions, a variety of trips. We are also very proud that all our Year 7 students spend a week in the Summer term at our Welsh Activity Centre, Farchynys.

Key Stage 4:

- All students study Maths, English Language, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry and Physics (as separate sciences) and RPE (which incorporates a compulsory GCSE in Religious Studies. Maths groups are setted, while all other subjects are taught as mixed ability form groups
- All students also study PSHE as a timetabled subject, along with compulsory PE and Games (which is timetabled for Year 11 alongside the Sixth Form games afternoon, every Wednesday and is labelled 'Senior Games'. All students have five hours of statutory PE/Games per fortnight, which is above the statutory expectation and a core part of our intent to encourage students to enjoy living healthy lifestyles, work collaboratively as part of a team and develop self-motivation and skills beyond the classroom.
- It is compulsory for every student to study one core language from French, Spanish or Mandarin.
- Students can choose any combination of a further two subjects at KS4 from Art, Business, Computing, Design Technology, Geography, History, Music, and it is our intention to offer PE as an option from September 2021.
- It is not, currently, our policy to make choosing either Geography or History compulsory in order to meet EBacc requirements. However, this will be kept under review. This freedom is to encourage students to choose subjects that they enjoy and will set them on their preferred chosen future pathway to higher study and career.
- All option subjects are taught in mixed ability groupings. Students and parents are supported through the options process via a programme involving the CEIAG (Careers Education, Information and Guidance) Lead, the Careers Advisor, Form Tutors, one to one conversations and information sessions/meetings and events, including Year 9 Parents' evening.
- Engagement with the Combined Cadet Force continues to be very strong in Year 10-11 students as they take an increasing role in the leadership of training and activities for the younger cadets. The wide range of extra and co-curricular opportunities is complemented by the chance to take part in international trips and expeditions in Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 5:

- The school offers a traditional academic curriculum to its Sixth Form student body. Typically, all or nearly all, Year 11 boys will continue into the sixth form where they are joined by approximately 100 candidates (boys and girls) from other schools from across the midlands.
- All students choose three options from the following choices: Art, Design & Technology: Product Design, Economics, Business, Spanish, French, Geography, History, Mandarin, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Computer Science, English Literature, English Language & Literature, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- We are also pleased to be able to broaden our curriculum offering of A Level subjects to include those delivered by our partner schools in the Mercian Trust. Students opting for these courses will study two subjects at QMGS and the third at a partner school. They include: Ancient History, Drama & Theatre Studies, German, Music, Photography, Politics, Photography.
- At the end of the two-year programme students will sit exams in these A levels. All subjects are studied for 11 periods a fortnight.
- Students are also expected to follow another academic option. This may be Further Maths, the EPQ or a range of other courses which includes: Beginners or Advanced Mandarin (HSK2 / HSK3), a Personal Finance qualification accredited by the London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF), The Institute of Leadership and Management Leadership course, Core Maths, The 'CREST' Award in DT and Chemistry, Sports Leadership Award, Foreign Language Leaders Award and the Gold Arts Award.
- We are also proud of the 'home-grown' extended curriculum opportunities that are offered alongside externally-assessed qualifications. Students can opt to participate in the 'Change Your Mind' scheme, which involves working with local primary schools to deliver Mental Health programmes of study, there is also a Creative Writing course designed by the English department.
- We will also expect students to take on an element of mentoring or volunteering during their time in the sixth form. This may be within the School (such as a STEM ambassador. working with younger students) or with a range of our partners, including local charities.
- The final expectation is that students become involved with an extra-curricular activity in order to develop key employability skills, such as leadership, teamwork and organisation. This may be in the established activities (such as sport, CCF or on an international trip) or they could run an activity that, as yet, doesn't exist. The crucial aspect here is that we expect our sixth form students to become an integral part of our School community.
- The vast majority of our Sixth Form students go on to undergraduate study at university, with an increasing number exploring other post-18 routes through apprenticeships and overseas study. They are supported to make appropriate choices through an extensive programme of advice involving the CEIAG (Careers Education,

Information and Guidance) Lead, the Careers Advisor, the Sixth Form pastoral team (including a specialist team of Group Tutors with specific experience and expertise in supporting UCAS applications) one to one conversations and information sessions/meetings and events, including a 'Future's Evening', a Higher Education Fair (we regularly welcome 15-20 exhibitors to the school). Year 12 students also embark upon a Work Experience week in June each year.

- All Sixth Form students are invited to apply for a position as Captain of School, Head Girl, the Pupil Senior Leadership Team, or Silver and Bronze prefects. All students in these roles make a vital contribution to the pastoral care of other students; support the day-to-day running of the school; and support the logistical management of major school events, such as Speech Day and Open Evenings.

The Equality Act 2010:

- This curriculum policy ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that no student or potential student is discriminated against or excluded from accessing any aspect of the curriculum or extra and co-curricular opportunity, or any benefit, facility or support outlined above.
- The ethos of the curriculum at Queen Mary's Grammar School is to provide the best educational opportunities for all. Students will engage with a full range of issues, ideas and materials in the curriculum, and they will be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging, which reflect the diverse identities, cultures and individual backgrounds that make up the wider Queen Mary's community. The curriculum is designed to recognise our wider duty to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.
- Implementation of the curriculum will ensure that the way in which issues are delivered does not subject individual pupils to discrimination.

SEND Regulations 2014:

- The broad and balanced curriculum at Queen Mary's Grammar School ensures that all students have access to education that is appropriate to individual students' needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.
- All students will be provided with equal opportunities to: achieve their best; become confident individuals living fulfilling lives; and make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training.
- In ensuring equal opportunity to access the curriculum, the Special Educational Needs of all students will be identified and addressed. We will use our best endeavours to make sure that any student with SEN gets the support they need and can engage in the full range of activities of the school alongside pupils without SEN.
- All reasonable adjustments will be made to prevent any student being put at a substantial disadvantage – this needs to be anticipatory and we will give thought in advance to what disabled students might require to remove potential barriers to learning.
- We will actively involve parents and the student throughout the process, when making special educational provision for that student
- In implementing and going beyond The National Curriculum, teachers at Queen Mary's Grammar School will set high expectations for every student, whatever their prior attainment. They will use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious. Potential areas of difficulty will be identified and addressed at the outset. Schemes of Work and individual lessons will be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to student achievement. It is always the intent that such planning will mean that students with SEN and disabilities will be able to study the full national curriculum.

Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board will annually review the curriculum model and the effectiveness of this policy to meet the evolving needs of our students in light of relevant educational recommendations and guidance

The Teacher responsible for overseeing curriculum matters is:

Mr M E Lax (Deputy Head); who can be contacted for more information on matters relating to the curriculum

Curriculum Model – Academic Year 2021–22

	Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Key Stage 5	
	Year 7 (6 forms)	Year 8 (6 forms)	Year 9 (5 forms)	Year 10 (5 forms)	Year 11 (5 forms)	Year 12	Year 13
1	Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths (6 sets)	Maths (6 sets)	Block A (11) Art Biology x2 Chemistry Design English L&L Geography Physics x2 Psychology	Block A (11) Art Biology x2 Business Chemistry x2 Geography History Maths x4
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8	English	English	English	English Lit	English Lit	S.Study	S.Study
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15	Science	Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology	Block B (11) Biology x2 Chemistry x2 Computing Economics English Lit Maths x4 Physics Philosophy	Block B (11) Biology Chemistry x2 English Lit Maths x4 Physics Philosophy
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22	MFL	Physics	Physics	Chemistry	Chemistry	S. Study	S. Study
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29	Geography	Geography	Geography	Physics	Physics	Block C (11) Biology x2 Business Chemistry x2 History Maths x4	Block C (11) Biology Chemistry Computing Design Economics Geography History Physics x2 Psychology
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
35							
36	History	History	History	MFL (6) French x2 Spanish x2 Mandarin x2	Option A (6) French x2 Spanish x2 Mandarin x2	Block D (11) Biology Chemistry x2 Economics Maths x4 Physics Philosophy Spanish	Block D (11) Biology x2 Chemistry x2 English L&L Economics French Physics
37							
38							
39							
40							
41							
42							
43	DT	DT	DT	Option A (6) Art, Businessx2 Computing Geography History PE	Option B (6) Art, Businessx2 Computing Design Geography History	MAT Subjects	MAT Subjects
44							
45							
46							
47							
48							
49							
50	Art	Art	Music	Option B (6) Business Computing Design Geography x2 History, Music	Option C (6) Business Computing Design Geography x2 History, Music	Block E (8) Further Maths EQO Alt. Curriculum	Block E (8) Further Maths
51							
52							
53							
54							
55							
56							
57	Games (7 sets)	Games (7 sets)	Games (6 sets)	Games (6 sets)	Senior Games		
58							
59							
60							