



CURRICULUM POLICY – WHOLE SCHOOL

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Introduction

The school curriculum is the entirety of our planned educational provision. In addition to formal, timetabled provision, at Alton School, including the Early Years Department, significant parts of our curriculum are delivered through an extended range of opportunities and are embedded in the whole of the school's shared life through the outworking of our values and ethos. The focus of this document is the formal provision.

Aims

The planning and implementation of a politically unbiased school curriculum, including the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which strives

- to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn, achieve and make progress in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education according to their ability.
- to provide subject matter which is appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including any who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC).
- to promote pupils' spiritual, personal, moral, economic, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To ensure that the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs is not undermined and that teaching does not discriminate against pupils contrary to the Equality Act 2010.

In interpreting these aims within our school, we strive to ensure that each child shall make good progress and,

- fulfil her/his potential
- develop as a rationally autonomous, thinking individual
- is equipped to play a full and active role in the communities and society to which they belong
- is well prepared for the next stage of her/his educational journey (through the development of greater independence, self-esteem and a love of learning, as well as specific provision such as impartial careers guidance, exam preparation, mock interviews and advice on transition).

As a Catholic school, our concern goes beyond the development of each individual in our care and looks to the common good of the communities and society to which we aim each pupil will uniquely contribute.

Principles of the Curriculum

The school's educational provision is appropriate to the needs, age and ability of each pupil, with increasing complexity as pupils' progress through the school. Attention is paid to accessibility and challenge at each stage.

Through personalised support within the class and additional help as needed, and in the Lower School small group support, the individual educational needs of pupils are met. Where a child has a recognised SEND, further additional support will be in place and if she/he has an EHC plan, appropriate arrangements would be in place to meet the requirements listed. Additionally, support would be provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for pupils who have other particular needs such as those who perform a caring role at home. Teachers have the flexibility to tailor the educational provision to the needs of each child, whilst meeting his/her entitlement to a broad, accessible and challenging education. Within the Early Years Department through careful tracking, children's individual needs are met with individualised planning as required.

In the absence of other requirements, we aim that each pupil's individual aptitudes and enthusiasms are met, so even the youngest pupils will have the opportunity to choose from a range of tasks or toys. A wide range of co-curricular opportunities are on offer in the lower school, and senior pupils may choose from a range of GCSE options, with attention made to the requirements of the English Baccalaureate, and A level courses. We recognise the unique contribution that each child makes to the communities of our classrooms and to the school.

Our curriculum provision ensures the development of core skills, without which access to the rest of the curriculum would be limited:

- listening
- speaking
- reading
- writing
- numeracy
- computing
- physical

Our curriculum provides education within a comprehensive range of areas of learning and, beginning in the Lower School, is structured through the delivery of discrete, yet interrelated subjects covering:

- Language (English, with Spanish introduced at Year R and further languages on offer in the Senior School)
- Mathematics (including Further Maths being available at A-level)
- Science (as an integrated subject in the early years and Lower School, as Biology, Chemistry and Physics in the Senior School, and Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate A levels at KS5)
- Technology (though ICT in the Lower School, Computing in the Senior School, design and media work within the Art curriculum, lighting and sound work within the Drama programme as well as in the Senior School generally through pupils' use of Microsoft Teams, Show My Homework, and other online platforms)

- Humanities (Lower School Humanities encompassing History and Geography, taught separately on entry to Key Stage 2, with additional subjects such as Psychology and Business Studies being available at A level)
- Physical Education (provision for PE, including swimming for Years R-Y6, on the timetable, with additional co-curricular opportunities)
- the Creative and Performing Arts (Music and Art provided as timetabled subjects from Year 1 up; Drama from Year 5 up; Photography at GCSE and A level; Graphics, Textiles and 3D Design at A level; and extensive co-curricular provision)
- economic, human and social awareness and personal growth (PSHME and RS as timetabled subjects, Lower School and Reception circle time, early years family time and Wednesday activities time within the Sixth Form. All of which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.) The protected characteristics as listed in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are as follows: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) uses the KS3, KS4 and KS5 programme from EC Publishing 'Complete PSHE'. The Collins resource 'My Life' is used in the Lower School for relationships education and PSHME
- Within the PSHME programme, subject teaching and co-curricular provision pupils have access to impartial, accurate and up-to-date careers guidance which enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential

Running across the subject curriculum are a number of commonalities to our curricular provision:

- Further personal, social, health, economic and moral education is delivered through other subject areas, within the overarching context of the school's Christian ethos and aims
- The school's Catholic faith underpins our teaching, which thus may further promote pupils' spiritual and moral development, often in intangible ways. Indeed, the school's founding constitution states that "the knowledge which the pupils acquire of the world [and] of life is seen in the light of faith."
- Much of our pupils' learning takes place within a social setting, with classes, and indeed the school as a whole, seen as learning communities, further promoting pupils' social development and sense of responsibility to others
- In our teaching, we strive to inculcate a lifelong love of learning in our pupils, which effectively prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Our teaching also strives to foster in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves.
- A framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. (Details may be found in our Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy.)

In addition to the formal, timetabled curriculum, the school's extended curriculum plays a crucial role in meeting the above aims

- The co-curricular programme provides further opportunities for learning and opportunity for pupils to exercise a degree of autonomy
- A programme of educational visits and particularly the extensive residential programme (from Year 4 up) significantly extend the range of educational experiences available to pupils and provides for personal and social growth in ways relatively inaccessible within the confines of the classroom
- The Sixth Form activities programme provides additional educational opportunities and an important counterbalance of shared breadth to the specialism that characterizes A level work.

Basis

- Care is taken to ensure that provision, for those below the age of compulsory schooling, is appropriate to their needs. It is built on the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, with the curriculum structured according to the Early Learning Goals but is not limited to or restricted by these documents. Care is also taken to ensure that where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, there is a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.
- We acknowledge the National Curriculum but, as an independent school, we are able to go beyond its prescribed confines and offer a wide and varied curriculum. There is emphasis on core subjects and religious and moral education plus weekly time allocations for Humanities, Modern Languages, ICT, PE and the Creative Arts.
- Attention has been paid to the National Strategies, with the numeracy and literacy strategies being used as a basis for much of the mathematics and English programmes in the Lower School
- The Lower School's religious education provision follows the Catholic 'God Matters' programme; the senior school uses the Catholic 'Way, Truth and Life' series which is supplemented with other materials on World Religions.
- The detail of the formal curriculum in Key Stage 4 and at A-level is to a large extent determined by the specific requirements of each exam syllabus, although heads of department enjoy considerable autonomy in their choice of specifications and these are under regular review.

The delivery of the school's curriculum is described in further detail in the individual subject policies for the lower and senior schools, schemes of work and teachers' medium- and short-term planning.