



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

Agreed by Governors: 2 December 2014

Reviewed: Every 3 years

Rationale:

The whole curriculum is concerned with the holistic needs of our students focussing on developing knowledge and understanding whilst embracing a growth mindset to promote independence, confidence and resilience. At Hitchin Girls' School our aim is to ensure we retain the best of our historic practice, whilst ensuring we provide a curriculum which is modern, relevant, purposeful and balanced. Our curriculum needs to be capable of responding to the changing needs of our intake and be sufficiently inclusive to meet the requirements of all our students. This has been summarised succinctly as being a curriculum which provides 'the best of the past and the best of the future'.

We aspire to have a curriculum that through its flexibility and breadth nurtures and develops skills and interests to promote high levels of success and enjoyment for all.

Aims of the secondary curriculum:

The new national curriculum, published July 2014, states the following aims:

- The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.
- The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

As an academy Hitchin Girls' School does not have to follow the national curriculum in its entirety though the above aims have informed our planning and development of the curriculum offering and this continues to adapt following constant monitoring and evaluation. The underpinning principles have been to ensure that our students have the opportunity to access a broad and balanced curriculum which includes English, Mathematics, Science, RE (delivered in-line with the Hertfordshire agreed syllabus), PSHE (Personal, social and health education) and SRE (Sex and relationship education) as the statutory components of the national curriculum. This is accompanied by effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helping to prepare our students for life in modern Britain, whilst simultaneously exploring the freedoms that being an academy affords us to develop curriculum opportunities to engage in learning and provide a clear pathway for progression, ensuring stretch and challenge for students as they move from one key stage to the next.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum (Years 7-9):

At Key Stage 3 students study the following subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Ancient Civilisations
- Art and Design
- Computing
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- History
- Latin

- Learning for Life (inc. Citizenship and PSHE)
- Music
- PE
- Philosophy and Ethics
- Spanish

Distinctive to Hitchin Girls' School is the opportunity for students to study Classical Civilisation, Latin, Spanish and Drama for part of the year throughout Year 7. Two of these subjects may be selected for study in Year 8 with students selecting just one for study in Year 9.

Students requiring a greater focus on developing 'literacy and language' and 'numeracy and mathematics' experience a reduced timetable to allow individualised support in these core areas. The 'Lexia' reading recovery programme and the 'Sound Training' programme are recent new additions to our programme of interventions.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is embedded at all transition stages to ensure appropriate choices are made.

A rich provision of extra curricular activities supports the Key Stage 3 curriculum (see extensive School Clubs timetable). Year 7 students are encouraged to access clubs during Induction Week when a 'Freshers' Fair' exhibits all the opportunities available.

Enterprise education is incorporated into the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum (Years 10 & 11):

All our students undertake the core curriculum of:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
- PE
- Philosophy and Ethics (GCSE study begins in Year 9)
- Learning for Life (inc. Citizenship and PSHE)

Thereafter students are given the chance to select a learning route appropriate to their aspirations and abilities:

- Route 1 (Blue Route) includes the core plus 4 more GCSE subjects from an extensive choice
- Route 2 (Green Route) includes the core plus 3 GCSE subjects and personalised support
- Route 3 (Yellow route) includes the core plus applied learning on a Level 1 course at college, plus 2 additional GCSE subjects and personalised support

Since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (announced in October 2010), students have been advised of the combination of subjects required to obtain this 'wrap-around' qualification. English, Maths and Science are already compulsory, however to meet the criteria students need to also select a foreign language GCSE and take either History or Geography at GCSE level. We regularly review the options' process and as such it will remain a free choice for the individual students to select the combination of choices which best suits their future aspirations. Choosing KS4 options is an important stage in our curriculum and all students receive 1:1 guidance on the choices they have to make. Parents are involved and guided with the process through attendance at the Year 9 options' evening and also through the GCSE information evening at the start of Year 10. Partnering this is our work with Connexions, through which we provide all our students with bespoke careers advice and guidance.

Students also have the opportunity to access Foundation Learning tier courses and undertake catch-up support and 1:1 tuition as required.

Enterprise education is incorporated into the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

The Key Stage 5 curriculum (Years 12 & 13):

The core focus of our offering at post 16 has been traditional A Levels, with a few applied choices e.g. Applied Science. We are, however, a member of the Hitchin Consortium which enables our students to have access to a wide number of Level 3 qualifications. We also work closely with North Hertfordshire College to ensure our students pursue the appropriate routes post 16.

Our students are guided to take the appropriate number and combination of Level 3 courses using a 'pathways' approach, which is similar to that adopted at Key Stage 4:

- Route 1: Students with a minimum of 356 points will be guided to take 4 AS Level subjects plus an enrichment option
- Route 2: Students with a minimum of 344 points will be guided to take 3 AS Levels plus enrichment, study skill support and mentoring
- Route 3: Students with a minimum point score of 332 will be guided to take 3 AS Levels plus study skill support and mentoring
- Route 4: Students with 320 points will be encouraged to take a BTEC route, consisting of a double award with 1 AS Level and study skills support

Enrichment:

Opportunities and experiences beyond the classroom are an important aspect of the curriculum at Hitchin Girls' School. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs for students to join and take part in complementing and extending upon the entire breadth of the taught curriculum.

School trips, both day visits and longer residential trips, are also a feature of our curriculum. These provide students with the experience of learning in a completely new environment whilst developing skills and their relationships with peers and teachers alike.

Holding the British Council International School's Award our aim is to enable students to be active global citizens in order to engage with, and contribute to, the truly international world in which they live and will work. In addition to the opportunities afforded them through the every day curriculum, we pride ourselves in meaningful and proactive international work outside the classroom. As the only UK school to be part of the prestigious 'Student Global Leadership Institute' we are part of an extensive global network of 25 schools from 9 different countries including our partner school, 'Chapin' in New York. Each year the SGLI project has significant impact on our school and Hitchin communities. Students also have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of their global neighbours whether through creating artwork for orphaned and vulnerable children through 'The Memory Project' or our House system which sponsors 6 children in Ecuador to enable them to access education. As a community we also fundraise for the village we have adopted in Ecuador through the 'Free the Children' organisation.

All Sixth Form students are encouraged to take part in the school Ambassador Scheme by volunteering in school or within the wider community.

Additionally, whole-day enrichment activities are built into the school calendar to promote cross-curricular links and application of learning.

Relationship to other policies

The school policy on the curriculum links closely to our 'Assessment, Recording and Reporting' policy, 'Pupil Strengths and Interests' policy, 'Special Educational Needs' policy, 'Target-setting for Schools' policy and 'Behaviour for Learning' policy.

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating matters relating to the curriculum, through bi-weekly line management meetings with Heads of Department.

The Deputy Headteacher, in conjunction with the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Data and Timetabling, work together to ensure that the offering meets with the requirements of our learners and that the time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate.

Proposed developments in the curriculum are outlined in Development Plans and follow consultation with appropriate stakeholders. The school has a strong CPD (Continued Professional Development) programme to ensure the appreciation of current developments is secure and that the curriculum can be responsive to change.

The procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements and the school has introduced on-line reporting in 2010 to ensure parents receive all required information. Pupil progress, monitoring against expectations within school and nationally and improvement targets are all regularly reviewed in-house and shared with parents/carers.

Annual reports on examination performance are presented to the Headteacher, who then cascades this information to Governors.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if needed, by the Deputy Headteacher and will be presented to the Governing Body for noting.