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# CURRICULUM

## POLICY

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This policy will be kept up to date and will be reviewed once per year as part of the company's Quality Assurance arrangements.

**Review Period**  
1 Year

**Approved by**  
Directors/Governors

**Review Carried Out By**  
Quality Team

**Date of Approval**  
November 2020

## Curriculum Policy

### Introduction

Our prime objective at Orion School is to enable each individual, regardless of ability, to develop his or her maximum potential through a stimulating and challenging curriculum and by carefully monitoring each student's academic and social progress.

At Orion School we have high standards and expectations of all of our students. We are aware that we are responsible for ensuring that our students leave us as confident, skilled and moral citizens ready to be successful in an ever-changing world. We want to maintain a community where all at Orion feel valued, cared for and where they respect those around them. We go about achieving this through our core ethos of ambition, determination and success which is embedded in the rationale for our curriculum at all Key Stages.

With all our students, no matter what their start point we want to drive ambition, foster self-determination; and inspire success and it is our intention through the curriculum that all students will:

#### Be Ambitious

- Be confident, happy and self-aware
- Be able to realise their own potential and have plans for the future
- Have high-expectations of themselves and others
- Have greater choice and opportunity
- Have the chance to be creative
- Have freedom and independence

#### Be Determined

- Be dedicated and hardworking
- Believe they can achieve
- Have 'grit' to keep trying and bounce back from challenges
- Have enquiring minds with the ability to problem solve
- Be challenged and stretched

#### Be Successful

- Achieve their academic and vocational learning goals
- Have sound literacy, numeracy and essential skills for life
- Be equipped for further study and the world of work
- Have the ability to communicate and interact with others
- Be responsible citizens with strong British Values

Everything we do starts with the student, a thorough knowledge of them and a determination to meet their needs in the most meaningful way. We work within the school community and beyond to develop our students' confidence so that they believe that anything is possible if they work hard enough. By providing a range of opportunities, we enable all to achieve personal excellence in everything that they do. Our primary purpose is to support our students to make the most appropriate choices for life beyond school.

### **What We Intend to Teach**

We want to provide young people with access to the experiences and skills necessary to equip them for life. To achieve this, we have two distinct but interrelated curriculum strands to teach our students knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects as well as personal and wider work and life skills. The strands are:

1. Academic Development
2. Character Development

#### **Academic Development**

The main aim of the academic strand to the curriculum is to achieve:

- Knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects
- Achievement of recognised qualifications (mostly GCSE's but also vocational and alternative courses)
- Opportunity to develop skills, attitudes and qualities which motivate and enable students to learn beyond school and for the rest of their lives.

#### **Character Development**

The main aim of the character strand to the curriculum is to:

- Develop student's values of positivity, integrity, curiosity, empathy and resilience
- Develop social skills which value and respect others in order to form positive relationships
- Teach students how to self-regulate their behaviour and conduct
- Provide the right knowledge and skills to help students to move to the next stage in their education
- Prepare students for the world of work and ensure they become economically independent and successful
- Ensure students become active citizens who participate in their local, national or international communities
- To ensure students are physically and emotionally healthy and safe and are able to make informed decisions about their wellbeing
- To improve attendance and behaviour

## **Curriculum Design**

### **Teaching Backwards Approach**

We have used a teaching backwards approach when designing the sequences of learning across our curriculum. In each subject we begin planning with the end goal in mind, so we know exactly what levels of knowledge and skills we expect our students to achieve. This helps our teachers design a sequence of lessons more effectively, resulting in students achieving the goals of a course or unit - that is, actually learning what they are expected to learn.

In motor vehicle studies for example, the teacher begins by reviewing the learning outcomes students are expected to meet by the end of the course. A cross-curricular unit is created that provides students with a range of meaningful learning opportunities, enhancing their understanding of each topic. A list of essential knowledge, skills and concepts that students need to learn during a unit is developed and using this information the teacher creates a final assessment. At the end of each term, this final assessment is used to measure progress and identify gaps in learning.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

The curriculum for each subject is divided into six half-term 'cycles'. Each cycle contains a discrete body of knowledge and, at the end of each cycle, knowledge is tested through formal written assessments. Parents receive reports on their child's progress at the end of each full term, three times per year.

### **Deeper Learning**

Our schemes of work have been designed so that students retain and build knowledge (concepts) and skills overtime to enable them to independently apply this to a range of contexts. To achieve 'deeper learning' teachers plan a range of learning opportunities for students to make deep connections between learning and understanding. This leads to students connecting taught knowledge and skills to the world they live in with action and purpose.

We use Bloom's Taxonomy to help us identify higher levels of thinking and in establishing appropriate levels of challenge and pitch. It also provides a shared language to describe where a student is on the learning journey towards deep understanding of the concept or skill.

Our students study fewer topics in greater depth, with the expectation that we don't move on to the next topic until all our students have a secure understanding or 'mastery' of the current topic. Students are provided with the time and space to gain this secure understanding. In our lessons you will typically see all students grappling with the same challenging content, with teachers providing additional support for students who need it. Rather than moving on to new content, our higher attainers are expected to produce work of greater depth and flair.

## Instructional Strategies

We have used Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction (2012) and our own experience of what works in the classroom to develop our teaching and learning approach, to allow the mastery method to be effective. These include:

- Beginning each lesson with a review of previous learning
- Presenting new material in small steps with student practice after each step.
- Asking large numbers of questions and to all students.
- Providing models and worked examples
- Practicing any new material – allowing more time for guidance, questioning and repetition of processes 'practice makes progress'.
- Checking for understanding frequently and correcting errors.
- Teaching for mastery – ensuring all obtain a high success rate, ensuring all student's in class are ready to move on.
- Providing scaffolding for difficult tasks – providing students with a framework that easily allows them to progress - as competency grows scaffolds can be removed.
- Independent practice
- Monthly and weekly reviews

## Assessment

Our assessment system is based on forecasting end of year attainment for students and on understanding that student's progress at different rates. It does not try to measure exact progress made but broadly determine whether a student is on track to achieve their forecast or not. As we have used a teaching backwards approach when designing the sequences of learning across our curriculum, we know what to expect students to know by certain points in an academic year. At the end of each half term we carry out an assessment of the learning during that term to indicate whether a student is working securely, keeping pace, or not. We therefore have six assessment points per year.

Students are graded at each assessment point using the grading framework as follows:

| Score %   | Grading | Narrative   |
|-----------|---------|---|
| 91-100 %  | P*      | Making significant progress to improve on target/forecast |
| 81-90%    | P+      | Making progress to improve on target/forecast             |
| 61-80%    | P       | Making progress to achieve target/forecast                |
| 50-60%    | P-      | Making progress but not enough to achieve target/forecast |
| Below 50% | N       | Not making progress                                       |

End of term reports on progress are sent home to parents at the end of each full term (3 reports per year).

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

We recognise that the personal development of our students plays a significant part in their ability to achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full. As such, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) enrichment of our students is at the heart of the school's curriculum.

Through the curriculum we will promote a broad set of values which will include valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the diversity in our society and the environment in which we live.

These common values will permeate all aspects of the curriculum and school life at Orion. Our aim is that by instilling and developing these values in our students, they will leave us thoughtful, responsible, engaged members of society.

Subject areas such as English and personal and social development will have more explicit roles in the delivery, however all subjects will contribute to SMSC providing positive opportunities for students to:

- Explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.
- Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views and have an appreciation of British Values.
- Investigate and moral issues; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the fundamental values of British democracy.
- Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

Through perception and sensitivity, tolerance and respect for others as individuals and in groups we will also expect students to develop questioning, enquiring minds and learn how to express their ideas appropriately. SMSC themes will be embedded in all subjects areas, delivered in personal and social lessons as well as be enhanced through pastoral work, through the use of SMSC spotlight topics for discussion and extra-curricular activities.

## **Literacy and Mathematics**

We consider literacy and mathematics to be life skills and are developed not just in English and mathematics, but across the whole curriculum. We want all our students to have the confidence to read, write, speak and listen competently and clearly. Similarly, mathematical skills will also be developed across the whole curriculum. This involves students having the confidence and competence to use numbers and measures effectively. We will create opportunities for reading each day and promote the importance of literacy and mathematics for future careers and life beyond school.

We believe that literature unlocks the world, allowing an understanding of culture, history, society and politics that might otherwise be closed off. It is about people and emotions, unlocking feelings we might never have seen played out or felt ourselves. It allows humans to think deeply, and form an understanding about, issues that might never have been in their consciousness without it.

## **Curriculum Content**

All students study a wide range of core and foundation subjects through a secondary style model where students move around the school for all subject specific learning. In both KS3 and KS4 differentiated pathways linked to destinations are available to enable students to be challenged at the most appropriate level to them and to prepare them for adulthood and the world of work.

This model allows for total flexibility across subjects and levels, some students may be working at higher levels in some subject areas and lower levels in others. There is a range of qualification attainment levels available from Entry Level to level 1 and 2 as well as GCSE in all subject areas. All students will be able to move up levels and be adequately challenged and supported. More able students can move up levels quickly or complete qualifications in a shorter period of time, whereas students less able, or those with complex needs, challenging behaviour or SEN can be supported to achieve at entry level rather than at GCSE or level 1 or 2 until ready.

As well as the full range of core subjects, students will study Humanities, Technology, The Arts and Physical Education in a dynamic, creative and supportive environment. Orion's status as an Automotive and Engineering centre will reflect a commitment to technology-based study for our students with the provision of Motor Vehicle Studies and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workshops.

| <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Entry Level Pathway</b>       | <b>Level 1-2 Pathway</b>            |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| English          | Functional Skills E1 E2 E3       | GCSE or Functional Skills L1 and L2 |
| Mathematics      | Functional Skills E1 E2 E3       | GCSE or Functional Skills L1 and L2 |
| Science/ICT      | Entry Level Framework/ASDAN      | ASDAN Level 1 or GCSE Framework     |
| PE               | Entry Level Framework            | ASDAN Level 1 or GCSE Framework     |
| PSHE             | Entry Level and Cross Curricular | ASDAN Level 1 and Cross Curricular  |
| Creative Studies | Entry Level Framework            | GCSE Framework                      |
| Technical        | Motor Vehicle Entry Level (ABC)  | Motor Vehicle Level 1 (IMI)         |

### **Key Stage 3**

At Key Stage 3, all students follow English, Mathematics, Science, Art, History, ICT, Personal and Social Development, Physical Education, and Technology. The Key Stage 3 curriculum develops a strong foundation for these subject areas, strengthening skills and building knowledge required for further study, whilst striving to develop a passion and enthusiasm for learning.

### **Key Stage 4**

All Key Stage 4 students are taught the core subjects of English, Mathematics and science as well as their choice of foundation subject's pathways and physical education. Individual pathways are based on the interests, abilities and aptitude of students and they are supported at an individual level to help them choose the pathways that are right for them. They have choice of a range of GCSE and Vocational qualifications.

## **Personalised Learning and Inclusion**

We personalise learning by providing support and challenge so that students make the progress they are capable of. All students sit base-line tests in literacy and numeracy at the start of each year, along with assessments to establish personal, social and emotional needs. From base-line tests, student's strengths, needs and interests are used to plan their personalised learning and commitment is given to providing the best learning opportunities, including access to resources and learning programmes that link classroom learning to life skills for all students. Alongside the traditional curriculum, support will be provided to help students who have special educational needs or disabilities so that they can fully access learning.

## **Partisan Political Views**

The expression of partisan political views within our curriculum will be explicitly avoided, teaching and support staff will ensure that their personal views are not directly or indirectly imparted through the delivery of the curriculum and any visitors or guest speakers will be monitored in line with the schools 'No Platform Policy' to meet the Government's commitment to the Prevent Strategy.

Staff will take steps, in every aspect of their work, to ensure that when political issues are discussed or arise, students will be made aware that there are normally countervailing views and a balance will be struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed. This may be during lessons, or when extra-curricular activities within the school such as debates take place, or through the use of external speakers.

This does not mean that political ideas cannot be discussed. However, for our school to meet Independent School Standards, students should continue to learn about public institutions and services, including those of a political nature, and be introduced to fundamental values that have a political dimension.

Subjects such as history and citizenship studies will be taught more effectively with reference to the political context. But students will not be indoctrinated or unduly influenced by the promotion of partisan political views

## **Providing High Quality Teaching**

High quality teaching will enable students to enjoy their learning and ensure they are well prepared for future success in all aspects of their life. We aim to develop in all students:

- A sense of enquiry, the ability to question, solve problems and argue rationally
- A willingness to apply themselves and an aptitude for learning
- Knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a changing world
- Literacy, numeracy and competence and the use of information technology
- To develop their creative, critical awareness, empathy, and sensitivity
- A recognition of their own and others' achievement, in school and beyond
- Self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence
- The skills of working as an individual and as a member of a group or team
- Appropriate moral and spiritual values and tolerance of others
- To value each individual in an atmosphere of mutual respect.



## **Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance**

Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) will be provided to all students as part of the curriculum. Careers education in the curriculum will be a vital means of giving all students the skills, knowledge and understanding to manage their own lifelong learning and career development.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) will be an essential part of the support we offer to students at Orion. Effective careers support will help to prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; it will help them to make decisions and manage transitions as students and workers.

As options for students become more varied and complex, it is vital that we support them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices for their future. As a result, the careers programme will have a whole-school remit designed to complement the rest of the school curriculum.

To achieve CEIAG objectives, we will utilise the Eight Gatsby Foundation Benchmarks, ensuring we fulfil our legal duties to provide a framework for good careers guidance development ensuring the best possible careers education, information, advice and guidance on both academic and technical qualifications and routes for our students.

## **Pastoral Support**

The curriculum does not only consist of the timetabled lessons which students experience on a daily basis at school, but also of the pastoral time which they spend with their learning mentor; and other activities which supplement and enhance their learning.

## **Curriculum Impact**

How do we know whether our students have learnt what was taught?

We use regular and robust triangulated monitoring to evaluate the impact of our curriculum design. We review learning each term, talk with our children and provide feedback to move practice forward. We ensure that our children's attainment and progress are in line or exceeding their potential.

We measure this using national data (where appropriate), our curriculum schemes of work, awarding body assessment criteria and through termly monitoring evidence. Our curriculum ensures that we develop confident, skilled and moral citizens ready to be successful in an ever-changing world.

## **Challenges Due to COVID 19**

Curriculum enrichment has been limited by various Covid-19 restrictions. Due to the wider national issues, all off-site trips are currently suspended. We aim to bring them back for students as soon as it is safe to do so and in line with national guidance. In the meantime we will maintain in-class enrichment opportunities wherever possible and continue to offer both cross-curricular and 'stretch' opportunities as part of on-site and remote provision.

## **Responsibilities**

The Head of School has overall responsibility for ensuring the curriculum is implemented in line with this policy. The Deputy Head has responsibility for planning and monitoring the delivery of the curriculum.

Orion aims to ensure that:

- Lessons are challenging and have pace, rigour and direction for each of the students.
- A range of relevant teaching styles are employed to ensure that student's individual needs are met.
- On-going assessment informs planning.
- Students learning progresses smoothly and prepares them for life beyond school.

It is the teacher's role through implementing the curriculum policy and practices, to ensure that they provide a variety of relevant experiences for students in the classroom that serve to develop knowledge, skills and understanding and enable students to value themselves as learners.

Students will:

- Be treated as partners in their learning, contributing to the design of the curriculum.
- Have their individual needs addressed, both within Orion and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community.
- Be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them get back on track quickly.
- Receive co-ordinated careers education, information, advice and guidance to enable them to make the appropriate curriculum choices at Key Stage 4.

Parents will:

- Be consulted about their children's learning and in planning their future education.
- Be confident that their child is receiving a high-quality education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
- Be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.

The governing body will receive a termly report from the Head of School on:

- The standards reached in each subject compared with national and local benchmarks

- The standards achieved at the end of each key stage taking into account any important variations between groups of students, subjects, courses and trends over time, compared with national and local benchmarks.

The governing body will review this policy at least once a year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Orion.