



# Ravens Wood School

(Part of the Impact Multi Academy Trust)

## Policy Document

Policy Name	Curriculum Policy
Date of Last Review:	Spring 2025
Date of Next Review:	Spring 2026
SLT Responsible:	Deputy Headteacher
Other staff:	

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## Curriculum Policy

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### 1. Introduction

At Ravens Wood School, our curriculum is at the heart of our mission and purpose, choosing what we teach, when we teach it and why we teach it, is subject to rigorous discussion and ongoing reflection.

A truly excellent curriculum cannot be designed in isolation, so in 2018/19 we embarked upon a broad curriculum dialogue amongst our school community. The conversation was informed by extensive research, which led to: bold decisions; starting a proactive process of collaborative curriculum planning; interlinking subject narratives; considering the sequencing of lessons and placing a fresh emphasis on our teaching and learning being rooted in awe and wonder. The work around curriculum development has continued with our department leaders and curriculum designers being given the time and space to reflect and review their own curriculum journey's every year.

Our collaborative curriculum of awe and wonder will be a constantly evolving dialogue within our school, but our roadmap has been set out below, to give our own curriculum design a narrative. We believe that it is a powerful, broad and inclusive curriculum, steeped in awe, wonder and mutual respect. The curriculum provision maps that are in place continue to be reviewed each year, as curriculum design is 'a never-ending story' (Mary Myatt, 2021).

### 2. Aims:

Following significant consultation during our Curriculum Review, our curriculum intent is:

- To develop students' characters as successful leaders through the study of a **broad** range of **powerful** knowledge.
- To provide an **inclusive** education for all RWS learners, through a taught curriculum of **awe and wonder**.
- To ensure that the curriculum models, at every opportunity, a culture of **mutual respect**, enabling students to contribute as global citizens

Our vision is embedded in our wider School ethos:

- To develop a **Culture** which fosters a love of learning and intellectual curiosity within a strong and supportive community.
- To deliver a rich and varied curriculum which leads to high academic performance and provides our students with the **Currency** to open doors to the future.
- To equip students with the tools to develop their individual **Character**, in an environment which promotes dignity, integrity, self-discipline and self-esteem.

The curriculum offers a broad and balanced education suited to students of all abilities and across the full age range. The curriculum is accessible, flexible, challenging and inclusive and ensures entitlement for all learners offering continuity and coherence and secures high standards. Students are offered choices at KS4

and 5 which enable them to follow personalised learning pathways within a framework of equality of opportunity.

### 3. Curriculum Review:

Reviewing our curriculum has involved significant collaboration with all staff members. Our method of curriculum planning that was introduced and is now well established, is underpinned by extensive research.

#### a) Curriculum Planning Model

Our curriculum planning is organized around three different planning stages – critical, core and pinnacle.

##### **Critical:**

- The basic skills and fundamental knowledge of each subject discipline. **Without mastery of these skills or long-term retention of this knowledge, progress within the subject will be limited and undermined.**
- **Will require significant time spent on quizzing and retrieval** - ensuring that fundamental knowledge is successfully transferred from a student's working memory to being stored in their long-term memory.
- **The greatest risk to students in this stage is cognitive overload** – lots of information being processed in working memory, but not being sufficiently embedded for future retrieval and use. **Critical knowledge/skills should be restricted to the content that is truly central.**
- Mastery of critical knowledge enables further learning to take place in the core and pinnacle stages.

##### **Core:**

- The broad lines of enquiry for each module. The main body of knowledge and the deliberate modelling of skill/technique which enable students to gain a broad and deep understanding of key concepts.
- Should be unique to Ravens Wood School students and 'desirably difficult'. (*Robert and Elizabeth Bork*). Powerful knowledge is cognitively superior to that needed for daily life – it's not common sense.

##### **Pinnacle:**

- The rich, rewarding ability to comprehend, process and generate a **unique** response to deep and meaningful controversies, challenges or opportunities. Reaching pinnacle learning allows us to **"think the unthinkable and the not yet thought"**. (*Basil Bernstein*).
- **Key features:**
  - Inflexible knowledge has been sufficiently mastered to become flexible – applied to a variety of situations or propositions – beyond the age-appropriate, rigid specification.
  - Must be specifically planned – moving to pinnacle requires consideration of **'threshold concepts'** - what are those portals within a topic, which are able to open up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking? (*David Didau, 2018*)
- **Pinnacle thresholds can be described as** (*Meyer and Land, 2003*):
  - **Integrative** – once learned, they are likely to bring together different parts of the subject, which the learner hadn't previously seen as connected.
  - **Transformative** – once understood, they change the way you see the subject.

- **Irreversible** – they are difficult to unlearn, once you have passed through it's difficult to see how it was possible not to have understood before.
- **Troublesome** – they are likely to present you with a degree of difficulty and may sometimes seem incoherent or counter-intuitive.
- **Discursive** – the student's ability to use the language associated with that subject changes as they change. It's the change from using scientific keywords to talking like a scientist.

In order to plan curricular at KS3 in line with the Critical – Core – Pinnacle model, all subject areas use RWS Curriculum Provision maps. These are all published for Year 7 and Year 8 on the Ravens Wood School website.

This policy has been developed following consultation with the Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and Teaching Staff and therefore should be read in conjunction with:

- a. Professional Growth Policy for teaching staff.
- b. Homework Procedure
- c. Review Plan Teach
- d. Examinations Procedures
- e. SEN Policy
- f. Equal Opportunity Policy
- g. Home/School Agreement
- h. The Sex and Relationship Education Policy
- i. Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy.

#### 4. Parental Feedback and Engagement

As part of our Curriculum Review, we consulted with a sample group of parents/carers. We also seek parental feedback through our regular surveys, which contain curriculum-related questions. The results of these engagement initiatives shape the School's priorities and actions.

#### 5. The RWS Curriculum

##### **BROAD**

- All Year 7 and 8 students study a wide range of subjects, with 18 different subjects taught.
- 'Oracy and Epics' is taught to Year 7 and 8 in recognition that 'writing floats on the sea of talk' (*James Britton*). Students study Ancient Epics such as the Trojan wars, mythical creatures such as Heracles and the Hydra, Odysseus and the Cyclopes, and through exploration of these epic tales they are able to develop their oracy skills.
- Over 90% of KS3 students study both French and German, immersing them in the beauty of two languages and cultures.
- KS4 students study 10/11 subjects, keeping KS4 broad and enabling them to further their passions across multiple subject disciplines.
- We have a three year KS3, to enable students to have time to learn the range of subjects that they study, enriching and broadening their knowledge and helping them to make informed GCSE subject choices.
- The School's traditional focus on promoting STEM, Music, Performance and Sport has been retained, reflecting the passions of our students. Vertical Tutor Groups exist for STEM, Music and

Performance. For example in STEM building robots and flying drones, in Music and Performance, working on their performances for the annual school production.

- The KS4 subject offer is broad, with students selecting from 15 possible courses beyond our core offer of English, Maths, Science and PRE.
- At KS5 the offer is wide-ranging and students can choose their courses from 33 different subjects
- The enrichment curriculum allows students to explore in depth areas of interest, enabling them to develop their talents and skills beyond the classroom.

## POWERFUL

- Teachers decide on what subject knowledge is powerful and enriching for students to know as part of their entitlement. In so doing, teachers decide what we teach and when we teach it, with careful consideration given to the sequencing of learning to build towards pinnacle learning opportunities.
- KS3 Subject provision maps detail **critical – core – pinnacle** knowledge and skills, mapping students' journeys through each subject.
- Curriculum Learning Journeys clearly show the knowledge and skills acquisition of students throughout their time studying a subject, showing the end points of each academic year of learning.
- Students in KS3 and KS4 have Curriculum Book Wrap Arounds on their exercise books in all subjects displaying the Curriculum Journey
- Writing is given dedicated time in all lessons to ensure that writing is embedded and developed across the curriculum with 10 minutes of silent focused work in every lesson
- The careers curriculum aims to give learners opportunities to see and experience different careers and how their curriculum links to professional pathways.
- Planned 'pinnacle' learning enables students to develop their understanding beyond specifications or mark schemes and to establish links between their subjects and understanding. This is only possible because of the successful embedding of selected knowledge by subject specialists who are informed by up to date research and CPD through departmental memberships to subject associations. Examples of Pinnacle: in science looking at the relationships between adaptations of animals below the ocean's surface and the pressure that animals are living at and considering how cells are different to particles. In Maths, being exposed to challenging problems, for example, those from the website [nrich.maths.org](http://nrich.maths.org) or from Don Steward's blog. Several aspects of the curriculum are considered pinnacle concepts for example understanding the proof of circle theorems or why the process of iteration actually works to solve equations. In English, pinnacle examples of learning include, looking at the Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin's term 'Carnavalesque' and the effect it would have, using jazz and lyrics by singers such as Billie Holiday alongside texts dealing with racism and oppression to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Black Americans.
- Through our PSHE curriculum, we enable our students to become citizens of the world by ensuring that all students are taught tolerance, Relationship and Sex Education, mental and physical well-being and how to keep safe in the real world and online. Our KS5 students receive a bespoke 'Keeping Safe in 6<sup>th</sup> Form' curriculum. Our students also learn how to keep their hearts healthy and how to start a heart in an emergency.
- Student Leadership contribute to the creation of the PSHE curriculum through student planned segments within our Ready to Learn slides focusing on aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Powerful experiences are shared with students through trips and visits which enrich and support their learning, such as theatre trips, Magistrates Mock trial trip, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions for Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards, the annual football tour to Dallas for the Dallas Cup and trips for students during the Summer Term Values Week.

## AWE AND WONDER

- KS3 schemes of work are designed to spark interest and curiosity, developing a passion for the subjects being taught at KS3 (*Tom Sherrington*).

- Awe and wonder is embedded in our curriculum through the sharing of expertly chosen resources, such as our own RWS poetry anthology in KS3 English, a bespoke statistical analysis programme in KS3 maths and using microscopy to investigate plant cells and multi-cellular live organisms in science.
- Creative and practical subjects allow students the opportunity to get involved with designing, making creating and performing through the range of subjects studied – Design and Technology, Music, Performing Arts (Dance and Drama), Art, PE, Media, Film, Photography.
- Opportunities for cross-curricular links are proactively sought, explored and created, for example Oracy and Epics ‘Mythical Creatures’ topic linking with English’s ‘Monstrous and Magical Imaginings’ topic.
- At KS5 the Academies program supports students to flourish in the areas of music, media, rugby and football by providing a programme of professional training. Academy students receive weekly coaching sessions and tour and compete at the highest level nationally and internationally.
- Awe and wonder cannot occur in a culture of chasing targets, therefore targets are not set until the Summer of Year 10.
- Students are encouraged to reach pinnacle stage in their learning, enabling them to create a unique response to fascinating and inspiring resources, artefacts and information.

## **INCLUSIVE**

- ‘High challenge/low threat’ (*Mary Myatt*) teaching environments ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students, informing effective instruction through ‘responsive teaching’ (*Dylan Williams*)
- Setting in Maths and Science only at KS3, and Maths, Science, English and PE at KS4, with regular opportunities for students to move between sets to ensure that they can access the curriculum effectively. This allows teachers to plan for the appropriate level of ‘desirable difficulty’ (*Robert Bjork*) – the optimum level of challenge appropriate for their students at that time.
- The identification of ‘more able pupils’ is fluid, reflecting our belief in students’ academic acceleration occurring at different points, not simply in KS2 in Reading and Maths. Endeavour is valued more highly than KS2 data.
- Students with SEND needs (EHCP/PRA) receive support within lessons and alongside the curriculum – they enjoy the same access to the curriculum as all students. Disadvantaged students are catered for equally and are not restricted from any section of the curriculum. To support this, PP funds are used to ensure access throughout the curriculum for disadvantaged students.
- All students receive high quality PSHE provision, and this is adapted and differentiated for students who are more vulnerable.
- We provide bespoke support to students when selecting options to ensure they are empowered to make their own curriculum choices in order to meet their aspirations
- Our Oxbridge programme which begins in Year 11, aims to widen participation from all backgrounds in applying to Oxbridge and Russell Group universities, with support in the application process and interviews

## **MUTUAL RESPECT**

- The School’s ethos of committed to excellence anchors all teaching and learning in a culture of mutual respect. Without this culture, enquiring minds do not have the freedom or opportunity to enjoy deeper learning.
- Through our wider curriculum we reinforce our Impact Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which includes the acceptance and celebration of diversity within our school and the wider community.

- Our curriculum choices are rooted in mutual respect and opportunities are sought to ensure that all students, whatever their background, can 'see and be seen' within the curriculum
- The school's well-established Ready to Learn in the morning, focusses on students leading discussions and debates around dilemmas of a RWS student, local and national news and how to deal with difficult situations – developing into global citizens showing mutual respect and understanding of the diverse world around them.

## **6. Key Stage 3:**

From Year 7, students will spend three years in Key Stage 3 in most subjects and two years in Key Stage 4. For the first term, all classes for all subjects are mixed ability, based upon information received from primary schools. The Year group is split into two halves for timetabling purposes R and W.

The following informs streaming in Maths and Science only, which comes into effect after the Christmas holidays: KS2 SATS, Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), Snapshot assessments, Book reviews, Performance in class.

Comprehensive monitoring and assessment ensures that sets are reviewed regularly, and changes made where necessary in specific 'set change' weeks. Learning needs are identified and addressed, including those of the more able student. With a clear focus on literacy and numeracy across the key stage, the curriculum and timetable provides a degree of flexibility to accommodate individual needs. A comprehensive literacy programme is delivered across the curriculum enabling students to see links between areas of learning. Students will learn two languages - French and German from Year 7, before specialising into one at the end of Year 8.

## **7. Key Stage 4:**

The GCSE Options process takes place towards the end of Year 9. This bespoke process includes all students in year 9, with the exception being the sole choice between French and German at the end of Year 8.

At Ravens Wood School, we have implemented and developed a new options process, seeking to broaden students' learning experiences in KS3, and ensuring that students are better prepared and informed ahead of their GCSE options. Key principles of our options process include:

- Having widened students' KS3 study of modern foreign languages to include both French and German in our 2019 curriculum review, we believe that students do require additional time to specialise into a chosen language in Year 9, so students make this choice at the end of Year 8.
- For the small number of students not continuing a language, Citizenship is offered as an alternative course. This could then lead to the study of GCSE Citizenship as part of the options process in Year 9.
- All remaining options will be made at the end of Year 9, ensuring that students benefit from a rich and broad curriculum for longer, with all students continuing to study music, performance and the arts in Year 9.
- However, the School firmly believes that Ebacc subjects do require additional time to deliver their GCSE specifications, so Ebacc subjects will deliver GCSE content to all students from the start of Year 9. Ensuring that Ebacc teachers have three years to deliver content enables them to teach 'beyond the specifications'.

We aspire for over 70% of our students to complete the Ebacc. This means that they need to study a broad range of GCSE subjects, requiring timetabled lessons to be spread amongst a higher number of subject choices. As we don't offer a narrow, densely timetabled GCSE, we need time to deliver the broader range of subjects to the high level that we aspire.

The core KS4 curriculum consists of:

- GCSE English Language and Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Science and Geography or History
- PE (non-exam course)
- Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) – leading to GCSE Religious Studies

The options process allows students to choose from a variety of academic and/or vocational subjects based on their individual interests and aptitude. Student data is carefully analysed and specific pathways created to support the needs of year group. The provision is regularly reviewed and the curriculum currently enables the majority of students to meet the EBacc criteria. The curriculum is underpinned by a robust system of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) across the school, particularly in Year 9, where it is being explicitly built into schemes of work. This includes a programme of training for all staff, careers advice, SMSC and citizenship guidance through the pastoral system.

## **8. Key Stage 5:**

The post-16 provision has been designed with the school's ethos at its heart. Students' progress through personalised learning pathways, with integrated daily supervised study sessions, to achieve the highest academic currency. Character and Culture are developed through a raft of enrichment options, elite academies and leadership opportunities.

The curriculum offers breadth of provision through collaboration with education partners, employers and work based learning providers to ensure that the Post 16 provision offers a wide range of A-level courses together with Level 3 vocational qualifications to meet the needs of all learners.

The sixth form curriculum provides clear pathways of progression with opportunities for students to progress successfully on to university, apprenticeship training, employment or further education.

## **9. Personal Development and Safeguarding Curriculum**

At Ravens Wood School, our students' Personal Development is an integral part of our curriculum. Staff and students work together at Ravens Wood to create a school with a culture of safeguarding and this is supported by our extensive PSHE curriculum provision across Year 7 to 11, and a bespoke 'Keeping Safe in 6th Form' programme. Our whole-school Personal Development and Safeguarding Provision can be viewed on our website at <https://www.ravenswood.bromley.sch.uk/curriculum/personal-development-curriculum/>

## **10. Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance:**

The Headteacher and the Deputy Head Teacher (responsible for Curriculum) have overall responsibility for the day to day organisation of the curriculum and reporting to the governing body. Department Leaders work with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to provide a strategic lead and direction on the curriculum to ensure Ravens Wood School delivers the policy's aims.



### **10.1 The role of Department leaders is to:**

- Keep up to date and review developments in their subject, at both national and local level ensuring development planning links to whole-school objectives through the SDP.
- Constantly review curriculum choices in their subject areas, ensuring the deliberate sequencing of topics and overarching narrative.
- Regularly monitor and review the plans for all teachers, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the curriculum, through the implementation of the provision maps.
- Examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used and that planning leads to a broad and balanced curriculum taking into account the needs of different learners.
- Monitor the way in which resources are stored and managed.
- Ensure that both formative and summative assessments are used to promote learning, they are moderated and used effectively to produce professional predictions of students' current progress.
- Ensure that their curriculum is well resourced in order to deliver the broad and powerful curriculum with opportunities for awe and wonder.

### **10.2 The role of the teacher is to:**

- Keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level ensuring development planning links to whole-school objectives.
- Plan and deliver lessons that meet the full requirements of the curriculum, with RWS curriculum provision maps clearly detailed and followed in Teacher Folders.
- Use appropriate teaching strategies that take into account the needs of different learners.
- Use resources effectively in order to deliver the aims of the curriculum.
- Plan for and use both formative and summative assessments to monitor and track pupil progress, in line with the School's Assessment and Reporting Policy.
- Ensure that clear learning outcomes are identified in plans and that students receive consistent and developmental feedback on their work.

The curriculum offer is constantly reviewed and appropriate changes made to meet the core aims of the school and statutory curriculum requirements as laid out by the Department for Education including the religious education, collective worship, sex education and careers education frameworks. The review is undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. The review takes two forms.

- An annual strategic evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the school aims and statutory requirements.
- An annual strategic evaluation of academic performance at whole school, department, teacher and student level. This includes analysis of specific groups such as Free School Meals, BAME, More Able, SEN, Children In Care and Ethnicity.

### **Related Legislation/Reading:**

- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Education Act 1996, 2001, 2011
- The Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities)(England) Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25, June 2014 (updated September 2024) (DfE )

- Teachers' standards, July 2011 (updated December 2021), (DfE- 00066-2011)
- Ofsted Framework 2019 (updated July 2023) and associated Inspection Handbook September 2024
- RWS Curriculum Booklet, 2019.