



St Ives School

Curriculum Policy

CONFIDENTIAL



School Name: St Ives School

Dissemination: Website and T: Drive

Date policy to be approved by Governors: Curriculum and Standards 23/01/2020

Date policy becomes effective: Immediately

Review date: October 2020

Person responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: Assistant Headteacher

Links to other relevant policies: Teaching and Learning Policy, Homework Policy, Feedback and Assessment Policy

Introduction

Our aims: Students leave St Ives School with valuable achievements and life skills that provide a platform for future success and happiness. We are inspired to work together to research, design and implement highly effective and sustainable solutions to develop and maintain our thriving school community. Continuous improvement is achieved through a whole school culture and commitment to Creativity, Engagement and Professionalism.

At St Ives School, we share high expectations with all members of our learning community: students and staff, parents and carers. We know that effective teaching and learning is the key to unlocking our students' abilities and potential and we support each other and strive to improve our daily practice. St Ives School is committed to ensuring that all our students achieve their full potential. All lessons are designed with clear outcomes and strategies to engage students in learning and encourage independence and resilience.

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POLICY

1. Curriculum Intent

The St Ives School Curriculum ensures that all our students have the opportunity for academic and personal development across a broad range of subjects and experiences. Acquisition of knowledge and transferrable skills are the cornerstones of our students' progress and we place a high value on building their understanding of community, place and social justice. Lessons and other learning experiences are carefully sequenced to build on students' prior knowledge, and to ensure that students deepen their understanding of each subject, the interconnection between subjects and how their subjects fit into the global context.

Our curriculum is the foundation to achieving our Core Principles:

- Students leave St Ives School with highly valued achievements and the life skills and resilience that provide a platform for future success and happiness.
- We are inspired to work together to research, design and implement highly effective and sustainable solutions to develop and maintain our thriving school community.
- Continuous improvement is achieved through a whole school culture of and commitment to creativity, engagement and professionalism.

Our curriculum encapsulates St Ives School's educational offer and it is through our curriculum that we deliver our promise of 'inspiring learning' for every child in our school.

Students will experience a breadth of learning

Our curriculum provides all our students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in an extensive range of learning experiences which include a rich variety of subjects, learning opportunities and programmes to develop learning skills and key understanding.

- Students study a broad range of subjects within their curriculum: English, Maths, Science, Computer Science, French, Geography, History, Music, Drama, Art & Graphics, Design Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition, PSHE and PE. There are planned opportunities to develop recall and retrieval skills to build and reinforce previous learning so that knowledge is fully embedded. The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 ensures the key skills from the National Curriculum are secured.

- Many students have a clear understanding of subjects in which they are most engaged and successful. Offering some choice in Year 8 engages students as partners in their learning. We enable students to spend more time on four chosen areas of interest in Year 9 to develop the mastery of skills required to complete the subject in Year 10 and 11. Our courses are carefully planned to ensure that content is systematically revisited, preparing students for external examinations at the end of year 11.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips offer students the opportunity to extend and deepen their knowledge and skills, and to share in new and different experiences which help shape their understanding and perspectives of the world around them.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, Ten Tors, and other outdoor learning programmes are offered to all our students with specific programmes to encourage less socially confident students to participate and succeed.
- Our "Be Inspired" programme provides an extensive range of enrichment and extension experiences within the school day so it is accessible to all. Students may select from over 70 different activities across the school year to broaden their learning experiences and develop their social and life skills.

Students will receive personalised learning

- We group activities that form our extra-curricular enrichment programme using the concept of 'The Academy'. Academic, Sporting and Creative areas ensure students are challenged with opportunities to broaden and extend their learning and experiences both within school and by working with our local partners in the community.
- Accelerated Reader provides all students in Year 7 and 8 with daily dedicated time to read. Careful assessment of students' reading levels ensures that they are encouraged to read literature which challenges and extends their vocabulary and fosters a love of reading.
- Students who arrive with below expected literacy and numeracy skills are supported to catch up through expert teaching and incisive intervention.

Students will develop their learning skills, confidence and aspiration

- The St Ives Growth Mindset Academy (SIGMA) and Learning to Learn programmes run in tandem to embed a culture which celebrates learning and

values the challenge of academic and personal progress. Students are taught about the six key aspects of Growth Mindset, encouraged to embrace challenge without fear of failure and to have high personal aspirations and resilience. A specific strand of SIGMA is the Learning to Learn programme where students are guided in techniques and strategies which will help them memorise knowledge and deepen their understanding with increased confidence and independence.

- All our students participate in a daily tutor programme, linked to our thriving House System, which develops social skills, awareness of local, national and international issues and team identity. This enables our students to develop their understanding of active citizenship and community, and to appreciate their own and others' contribution to this. Our tutors are key adults in every student's school life: they provide academic and personal support and guidance and work with the pastoral team to ensure that each child makes the most of the opportunities available to them.

Students will thrive academically and develop as future citizens

- PSHE, SMSC and Fundamental British Values are championed at the school in order to develop students both culturally and academically and ensure that they are fully prepared for life in modern Britain. Students are able to envision 'The Bigger Picture' and understand that their learning is linked to the real world and to their experience in the real world. Students are encouraged to take part in a range of sporting, cultural and charitable activities. Links with local and national business enrich the curriculum offer and help to contextualise learning.
- It is our intention at the school to ensure students have secure foundations for progression into further education and apprenticeships. From Year 7, students receive careers information with a clear focus on the Gatsby benchmarks and this is supported through focused careers sessions in PSHE lessons and tutor time. Over the course of 5 years, students receive a rigorous and bespoke aspirations program which exposes them to to a huge range of voices and experiences.

Closing the Gap

Our curriculum is the foundation on which we base our endeavour to ensure the highest quality of education for every child. Through our curriculum, we ensure that

inequality, from whatever cause, is challenged and repaired. Fundamental to planning, implementation and evaluation of impact, is the school's commitment to achieving the highest quality of education for every child so that, regardless of starting points, income or disability, every child makes outstanding progress and achieves their full potential.

2. Curriculum Structures

Students' development of knowledge and skills is scaffolded by the careful sequencing of lessons within and between subjects to link topics, build on prior learning and to provide contextualisation and relevance. Students are supported to develop a clear understanding of what and why they are learning, how topics and concepts link and when or why they might need to use them for life skills or future academic application. Sequencing of learning is led by specialist teachers who have access to local and national learning hubs, and ensures that lesson content is well matched to students' starting points, learning goals, and qualifications.

Our Curriculum combined with our Teaching and Learning approaches challenge our students to achieve their best and to explore their learning and personal skills beyond their comfort zone. Our curriculum is responsive to students' needs and reviewed each year to ensure it continues to build on prior learning, and to provide a platform for post-16 success. Our Curriculum is designed to regularly and frequently revisit topics, and to make explicit and build on links to past and future knowledge. Lessons are planned to enable students to 'over-learn' via repetition, revision and opportunities for application and reasoning. This leads to development of deeper, sustained understanding and the ability to communicate learning. Our students are challenged to look and think beyond the immediate topic of the lesson: they have opportunities to apply their learning to different contexts and situations without fear of failure and as a result, they are confident and keen to learn.

Foundation Stage Learning (Years 7, 8 and 9)

Students follow a broad course of study in Years 7 and 8 including a strong emphasis on Creative and Technical learning linked to our rich community heritage. This focus reflects the strong creative and artistic nature of our community, and encourages self-expressive and creativity. Students select two of their GCSE options in Year 8 for study in Year 9 and decision-making is supported by a carefully planned Options Programme involving subject teachers, parents, tutors, post-16 providers and

independent careers guidance. The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is designed to build skills, fluency and knowledge needed for success in the next stage of learning.

As an integral part of the curriculum, lesson time is dedicated to reading at an age-appropriate level, supported by regular use of the Accelerated Reader programme.

Transitional Stage Learning (Years 10 and 11)

The majority of our students will take between nine and ten GCSE qualifications as well as continuing their PE, PSHE and Be Inspired studies. The curriculum is designed to provide flexibility so that students, if they choose to, can maintain a strong Creative, Performing and Design Technology element, matched to local culture and employment. Students are encouraged to take the EBACC suite of qualifications as a foundation for accessing Further Education. Where students decide not to follow this path, their entitlement to link their learning choices to their future pathways and talents is respected. In this way, students' breadth of learning continues throughout their time at St Ives School and is further enhanced by Be Inspired and the strong emphasis we place on learning beyond the classroom. The proportion of students continuing to study the EBacc to GCSE level continues to rise year on year, and from 2022, the school intends to meet the DfE benchmark of 75% of students studying the EBacc suite, rising to 90% by 2025. Our curriculum is designed to reflect the high value placed by the Russell Group universities on academic subjects, balanced with student choice and aspiration for the future.

In Science all students follow the same curriculum path in Year 8 prior to deciding whether to opt for Combined or Separate Sciences for their GCSE from Year 9 onwards. Further Maths is available to students who show strong, emerging mathematical skills.

In Year 9 students continue to study History, Geography and French alongside two additional option choices. Initiating GCSE study from Year 9 means that our students are given the time to deepen and broaden learning and build high level skills in their chosen fields. Teachers utilise the additional time to reinforce connections to future education and employment, A-level links, and a breadth of study beyond the GCSE curriculum. We attribute, in part, our track record of securing good progress, high value achievements and strong aspirations for the future to this additional time invested in GCSE study. At the end of Year 9 students make two additional option choices.

Included within our GCSE programmes are opportunities to learn beyond the GCSE specifications and to promote readiness for the next stage of post-16 education and employment through A Level, Technical or Apprenticeship qualification routes.

3. Organising Students' Learning: Our Timetable Structure

Our timetable is structured around four 75 minute lessons per day, on a fortnightly cycle (Weeks A and B). There is a daily tutorial session of 25 minutes each morning.

Foundation Stage Learning, Years 7 & 8 (New model for 2020/21 – 75 minute lessons)

	English	Maths	Science	Geography	History	French	Music	Computing	Drama	Art & Graphics	Product Design	Food Technology	PE	PSHE	Be Inspired
Year 7	6	6	6	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	1
Year 8	6	6	6	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	1

Students follow a broad course of study in Years 7, 8 and 9. As an integral part of the curriculum, lesson time is dedicated to reading at an age-appropriate level, supported by effective use of the Accelerated Reader programme.

Students choose two options in Year 9 which allows them to become a partner in their learning journey. In their chosen subjects students benefit greatly from the increased time allocated which supports their development of key foundation knowledge and skills upon which they can build in Years 10 and 11.

Options choices for students to study in Year 9 will include Art, Music, Drama, Design & Technology, Food & Nutrition, Graphics, Computer Science, Creative Design, Film Studies and Sport. The final suite of options will be based on student preferences and numbers.

Year 9 Curriculum (New model for 2020/21 – 75 minute lessons)

	English	Maths	Science	Geography	History	French	Option X	Option Y	PE	PSHE	Be Inspired
Year 9	6	6	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1

As our Year 9 students process into Years 10 and 11 they will all follow a course of:

- Core Subjects: English, Maths

- EBACC subjects: Science, French and Geography or History
- 2 Option subjects (usually continued from Year 9)
- PE, PSHE and the 'Be Inspired' programme

Students wishing to study both Geography and History will have the possible opportunity to change one of their Year 9 option choices in favour of the second humanities subject.

Legacy Year 10 and 11 Curriculum (New model for 2020/21 – 75 minute lessons)

	English	Maths	Science	PSHE	PE	
Year 10	6	6	7	2	2	4 Choices – 4 lessons each
Year 11	6	6	7	2	2	4 Choices – 4 lessons each

In addition, students in Years 10 and 11 have one Be Inspired session a fortnight.

New Year 10 and 11 Curriculum (New model for students starting Year 10 in 2022/23 – 75 minute lessons)

	English	Maths	Science	EBacc 1	EBacc 2	Option X	Option Y	PSHE	PE
Year 10	7	6	7	4	4	3	3	2	3
Year 11	7	6	7	4	4	3	3	2	3

In addition, students in Years 10 and 11 have one Be Inspired session a fortnight.

4. Evaluation of Curriculum Impact

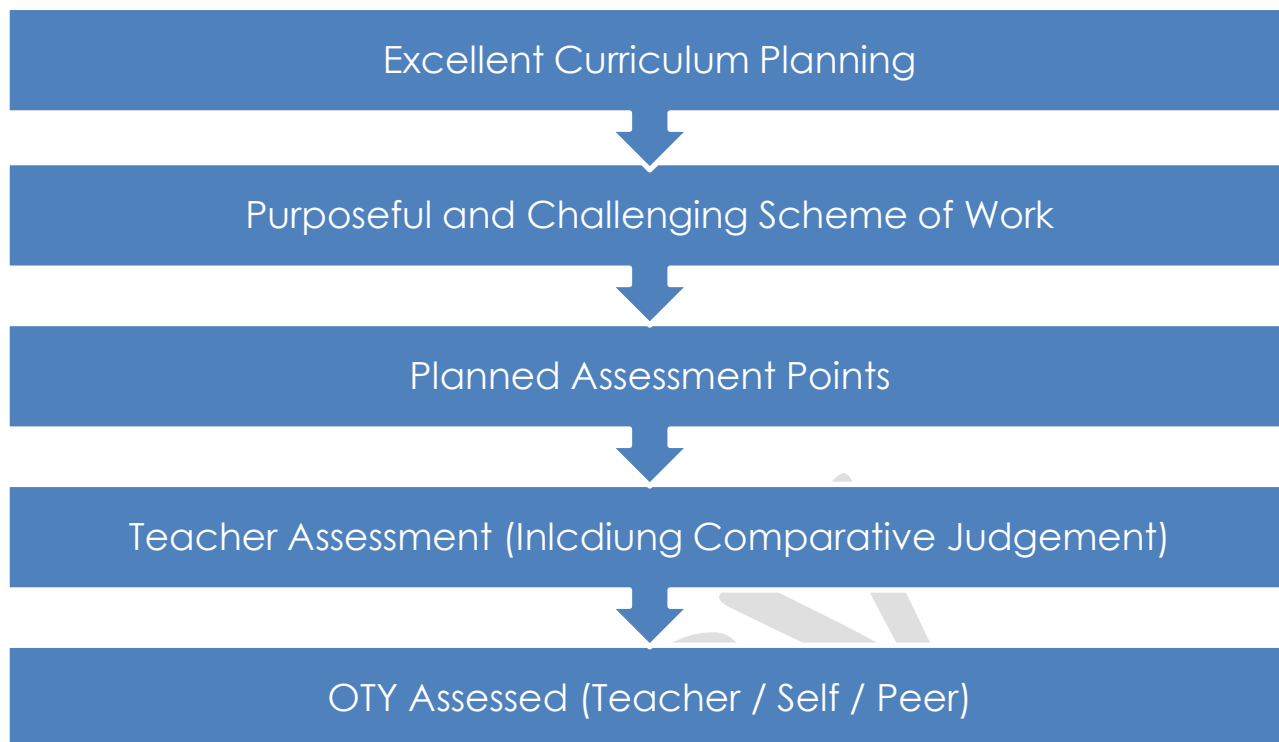
Assessment of the impact of our curriculum is achieved through a range of strategies: formal exams and in-class assessments, review of levels of participation, discussion, aspiration, community contribution, destinations and use of student voice to inform evaluation. Using a range of information to determine impact ensures that our evaluation is robust and rigorous, and that actions as a result are based on a sound understanding of our curriculum strengths and areas for development. Our assessment of impact includes:

- In class discussion and feedback; groups, peer-to-peer and teacher-led discussions allow students to identify their knowledge and skill strengths and be clear about their next steps in learning.

- Formative and summative testing, including frequent 'low stakes testing' allows students to demonstrate their progress. In addition, these assessments provide a valuable opportunity to promote revision and memory skills and exam techniques.
- Summative attainment and progress information is obtained from key assessment points including end of year, end of Key Stage and GCSE exams.
- Marking and feedback: students have the opportunity to practise, improve and extend their learning through specific tasks which are assigned to individual students from their teacher's marking of their work. All marking takes the form of 'Highlights, Next Steps and Over To You' (see Feedback and Marking Policy for more details).
- We monitor the confidence, engagement and resilience of our students via regular learning walks and lesson observations. In addition, regular student surveys (at least annually, e.g. Pass and Headstart) provide valuable insights into student well-being, confidence and resilience.
- Behaviour is carefully monitored through lesson visits and scrutiny of merits and behaviour points to ensure that our students develop with a confident, positive view of themselves and others and that our expectations for cooperation and participation are achieved in every classroom.
- Destinations of school leavers are evaluated to ensure that students are well prepared for their next stage of post-16 education and employment. This includes review of 16-19 qualifications chosen (apprenticeships, A-Levels and vocational learning) and longer term destinations of university education at age 18, as available from local colleges.
- Parents are encouraged to actively engage with the school and to provide feedback about their child's experiences. We place a high value on clear communication pathways to inform parents and carers about the development, progress and opportunities for their children and to listen to their views.

5. Assessment

The schematic below outlines our curriculum structure. It starts with the planning of the overall curriculum and then moves into how the curriculum is delivered. Finally, it outlines how the students are assessed in order to establish next steps for learning.



Our feedback focuses on what the student is doing well, what they need to do to improve and then gives them a task so that they can immediately apply the feedback. This closes the gap between what the students know now and what they should know. During the teaching sequence, teachers plan specific assessment points. This allows teachers to gain feedback on student progress but also feed back on how successful their delivery of the curriculum has been. This is important because it means that teachers can adapt and refine their lessons.

6. Curriculum Review

Curriculum implementation will be reviewed and quality assured through line management, reviews across secondary schools in the Trust and lesson observations. The curriculum delivered in each subject is reviewed annually by senior leaders and subject leaders to ensure the sequence of delivery allows students to build on their knowledge and that students are sufficiently stretched and challenged. The curriculum hours and subjects offered will be analysed by the senior leadership team and governors on an annual basis. The senior leadership team will discuss curriculum content and delivery annually. Governors, parents and students will have the opportunity to review the curriculum content and delivery through governor meetings and visits as well as parent and student surveys.

Appendix:

Why do students make 2 option choices from Year 9 onwards?

- Students who choose to follow a practical course benefit greatly from increased time in Year 9 to develop specific, high-level practical skills in their chosen fields.
- Additional time is allocated in Year 9 to reinforce key foundation concepts, which will be built upon as a solid foundation for further studies in Year 10 and 11.
- Increased time to study at greater depth (beyond GCSE) will help to raise student aspiration and provide strong and secure progression to their next stage of education and beyond.
- Key activities can be spread throughout the 3 years more appropriately for each course e.g: field trips, competitions, DofE, Work Experience, careers. Spreading out these activities assists students to manage workload and therefore improves participation, impact and outcomes.
- Additional time for skills for life and social, moral and cultural opportunities enables students to prepare for the next stage and to learn more deeply about the world around them – developing our 'lifelong learners' for the future.
- Additional time is allocated to explore the subjects more fully and enables our curriculum to be expanded and broadened beyond "just teaching to the test".
- Students are fully prepared for exams with guided revision and taught strategies for long-term memory and recall.
- There is more time for extra-curricular opportunities. Our highly successful 'Be Inspired' programme during the school day is accessible to each and every student.
- There is opportunity to explore higher level content preparing students better for post-16 courses.
- The curriculum can be fully adapted to meet the needs of all learners and those with SEND all benefit from additional challenge and support.
- Additional time removes some of the pressure of exams – students feel better prepared, are calmer during exams and approach key assessment windows confidently.
- There is greater flexibility within the curriculum to run year group activities, such as visiting speakers, workshops and masterclasses without detrimental impact on progress.
- Our option process in Year 8 is carefully planned to motivate students and provide focus and drive. It stimulates engagement and promotes progress, independence and decision making.

- Years 7 and 8 are purposeful and challenging as students are taught at a pace with determination and a sense of purpose.
 - Students are able to choose between a wide range of KS4 options. DT and creative arts have high value and status in our school and community.
 - Starting KS4 in year 9 allows students longer to "secure success" at GCSE and to move on to AS courses if appropriate.
 - Our underlying motivation is breadth, quality of outcomes and wellbeing.
 - NHS studies repeatedly show that the major health concern of young people in many localities is mental health and anxiety. Our student feedback reflects high levels of positive wellbeing.
 - Careers education is strong and cohesive across Year 7 – 11. 'Choosing Futures' is a key part of this programme.
 - The school ensures students with SEND can access the curriculum and achieve their best. These students are offered tailored support to help them do so. Taking options earlier allows students with SEND to be fully supported. As a result, our outcomes for students with SEND are significantly above national average.
- Findings from the National Curriculum review

A condensed KS3 curriculum was recommended by the expert panel for the National Curriculum review. In its 2011 report, the panel said:

- A significant and rapidly increasing number of schools are already effectively reducing KS3 to two years.
- The expert panel says it believes a three-year KS4 would allow students to study a broader curriculum and avoid "premature further education pathways that might disadvantage students later". It also suggests that it would allow subjects to be taught in greater depth, "with access to specialist teaching and more motivated students".
- Students' academic progress is carefully planned in Year 7 and 8 where we foster a 'flying start' so as not to waste time repeating material already covered in KS2. This is evidenced by our 'Waster Years' student surveys in 2017 and 2018.

As a result, attendance is excellent, student feedback is positive, students are highly motivated and evidently 'love' learning, and outcomes and progress are significantly above the national average.