



SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON  
ACADEMY

## CURRICULUM POLICY

October 2024

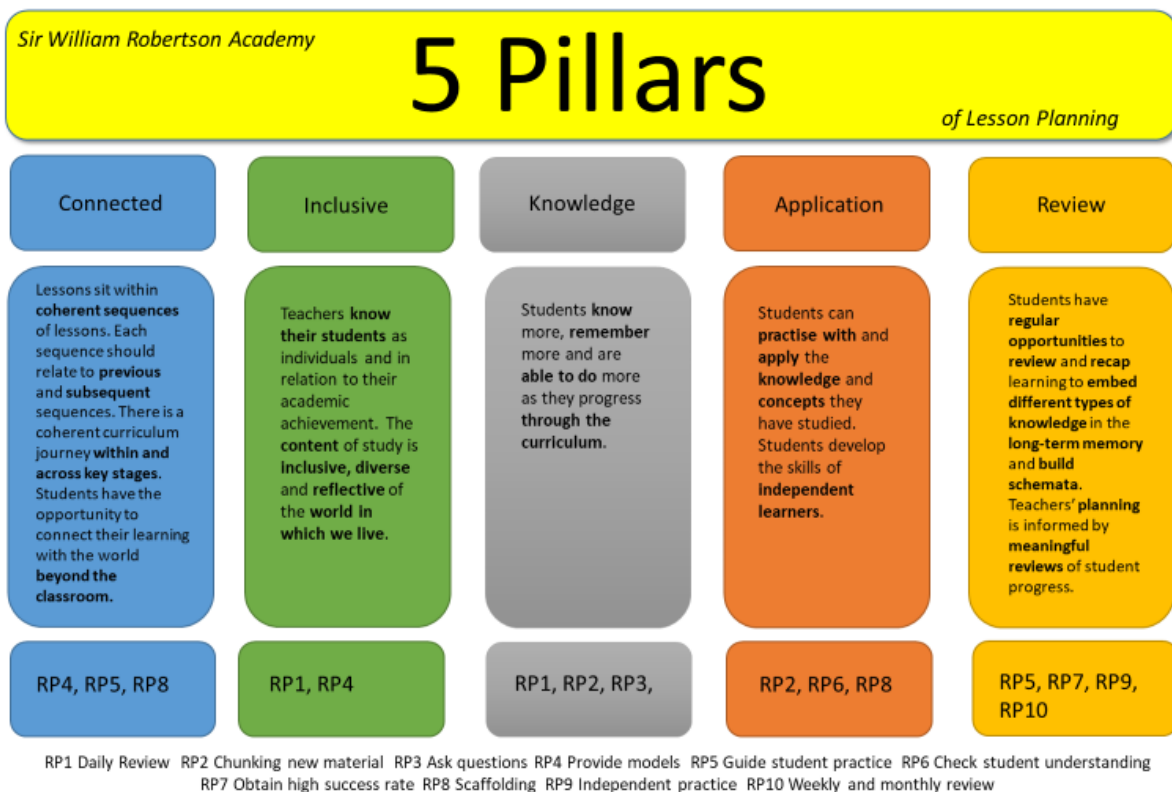
## CURRICULUM POLICY

### 1. Our Curriculum Intent and Our Curriculum Values

Sir William Robertson Academy's aim is for all of our pupils to **Aspire** to be the best that they can be and this core principle drives our vision for curriculum content, sequencing and delivery.

Our broad and balanced curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum and is designed to be challenging, ambitious and accessible for all of our pupils, whilst also responding to the local and national agenda (including EBacc at the heart of the curriculum for those pupils for whom it is judged to be appropriate).

Our lesson planning is focused around the Five Pillars (derived from [Rosenshine](#)) outlined below:



We place great value on the importance of carefully selected subject knowledge as a basis for developing competence and an informed understanding of the world. We value the qualifications that our pupils achieve, but we also want to ensure that we expand the knowledge and skills that pupils possess beyond those needed to pass external examinations.

Quality First Teaching is the school's central priority as the medium through which to develop pupils' knowledge, with the curriculum as the progression model (see [Christine Counsell](#)).

We believe in the breadth of learning; the right of students to study maths, literature, history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, art, design and technology, music, drama, religious education, languages, computing, and PE. We believe in developing their literacy and their physical and artistic skills and talents alongside building empathy within a social and moral societal framework.

Our curriculum actively promotes spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development alongside creativity and academic work. Our curriculum encourages students to develop transferable knowledge and to make connections between subjects.

We are committed to increasing the size of pupils' vocabulary - particularly their academic vocabulary - because vocabulary size is an effective proxy for a broad range of educational attainment abilities - 'Knowing more words makes pupils smarter!' (see our Literacy Guidance).

The curriculum subjects form the basis of the knowledge and skills that all pupils are entitled to learn. We believe that when we teach this knowledge the cultural capital of pupils grows (supported by a comprehensive programme of visits and enrichment activities) and we get to the key purpose of education; to help students become part of an educated and productive community of lifelong learners, thinkers, builders, designers, innovators and future educators.

The intent of our curriculum is therefore to maintain breadth and depth until the end of Year 9 and to bring in choice, supported by effective careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG), for GCSE, BTEC, NCFE and A Level study.

Further information about the curriculum and Curriculum Maps for each subject can be viewed within the Curriculum section of our website.

### **The Local Context for Our Curriculum**

Our local context has helped to shape and refine our curriculum and we recognise that the following factors must influence our curriculum intent and implementation:

<b>Key School/Local Area Factors</b>	<b>Some Example of our Curriculum Response</b>
<p>We are a non-selective school within an academically selective local authority. While we educate the full ability range of learners, the overall ability profile of the school does not reflect that of a typical comprehensive school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional literacy/numeracy input for those pupils who start Year 7 with a knowledge/learning deficit in these basic areas</li> <li>• A Year 7 curriculum to boost confidence and engage interest, particularly for those students who may not have achieved the Grammar School pass-mark in the 11 plus</li> <li>• High quality SEND support for all Year Groups</li> <li>• A Growth Mindset approach and ethos to build self-belief and a 'can-do' approach to learning regardless of starting point</li> <li>• University visits and work experience in Years 10 and 12 to engage and enthuse students, in particular those who might be the first generation of their family to attend university</li> <li>• A broad range of A Level courses and Vocational options to allow access to Higher Education for middle to high-ability pupils</li> </ul>

<p>Our pupils are predominantly from a White British background and a broadly Christian heritage and live within communities which typically lack the cultural and religious diversity of larger towns and cities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to learn about and engage with different faith communities across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4</li> <li>• Active teaching of British Values and the importance of Protected Characteristics</li> <li>• Visits to places of worship within a more ethnically/culturally diverse city (in recent years Leicester or Derby)</li> <li>• Holocaust education talks (through Holocaust Education Trust)</li> <li>• Pupils study RE at Key Stages 3 and 4.</li> <li>• Comprehensive Sixth Form Enrichment Programme that covers topics of equality and diversity, world news and cultural education</li> </ul>
<p>We are a rural school with a significant number of children joining SWRA from small village schools (typically in excess of 50 different Primary Schools are represented in each Year 7 intake)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to broaden our pupils' horizons and to experience a range of cultural capital visits and experiences, including opportunities to visit major cities in the UK and abroad</li> </ul>
<p>We are located in a socially and politically conservative part of the country with relative isolation from major population centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to experience first-hand the social and cultural diversity of the UK, Europe and the wider World</li> <li>• Weekly Personal Development sessions cover the democratic processes which operate at a local and national level and provide opportunities to articulate and challenge individual views and perspectives</li> <li>• Opportunities to reflect on the nature of our society and differing ideologies and belief systems as a prism through which to see the world</li> </ul>
<p>A large number of our families (often over many generations) have been employed within the local or regional economy with parents who may not have direct and/or recent experience of Higher Education or Apprenticeship opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadening horizons, promotion of national and international employment opportunities, Higher Education (in the UK and overseas) and Apprenticeships, foreign visits</li> <li>• <i>Aspire</i> and our 'No Borders, Just Horizons' (Amelia Earhart) message are central to our ethos and regularly provide a focus for assemblies and pupil challenges</li> </ul>
<p>Almost half of our pupils are from Nottinghamshire (Newark and Sherwood district). The Social Mobility Commission 'State of the Nation' Report (November 2017) identifies the East Midlands as the English region with the worst outcomes for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed Pupil Premium strategy which is regularly reviewed to ensure maximum impact</li> <li>• A range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to raise aspirations and ambitions</li> </ul>

<p>from disadvantaged backgrounds and within the East Midlands, Newark and Sherwood is the worst performing local area. Newark and Sherwood is ranked as 323rd of 324 authorities in England (<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42112436">http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42112436</a>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards events celebrating achievement and ambition led by positive and inspirational role models</li> </ul>
<p>A significant percentage of our pupils are Service children (typically around 10%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Children Premium is used to support a range of initiatives and bespoke interventions – see Pupil Premium Statements on school website</li> </ul>

## 2. Our Curriculum

Our curriculum has been thoughtfully planned, with knowledge selected and carefully sequenced to allow learning to build knowledge coherently and logically as students move through the school.

Our curriculum:

- Is broad for all students, including those with SEND
- Provides stretch, challenge and appropriate support for all pupils
- Builds knowledge incrementally through an on-going process of connecting new knowledge with existing knowledge
- Develops skills through applying knowledge in a range of different contexts. Regular assessment helps pupils to embed knowledge, develops their ability to use knowledge fluently and supports future teaching
- Provides expert, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented impartially and gives our pupils access to the best information available to schools
- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils.
- Promotes the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Develops our pupils' understanding of Protected Characteristics within the Equality Act 2010
- Prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of their life beyond school and provides them with the necessary skills to be lifelong learners

We ensure that the needs of our pupils drive our curriculum provision. Whilst confirming our commitment to the broad and balanced principles of the National Curriculum, we also celebrate a range of pupil achievements and use our collective expertise to drive excellence and foster innovation. The legal scope for our curriculum is set out as per the Funding Agreement available on our website.

We consider it critical that equal opportunities are promoted and realised at all levels of curriculum provision and that this is integral to outstanding practice. Whilst we provide extensive individual and small group withdrawal support where necessary (see below), our curriculum is one which celebrates inclusion at all times (we teach to the top and scaffold down) and we firmly believe that our commitment to realising the potential of pupils of all abilities ultimately enriches and enhances our curriculum and our school for the benefit of all.

### **3. Literacy & Numeracy**

We believe wholeheartedly that in order to access a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils need to be confident and proficient in the basic skills of reading, writing, oracy and mathematics and these are given the highest priority at all times. Literacy and numeracy form the cornerstones for successful learning and we ensure all students are given the best chances to continually improve in these areas.

We have a large, well-stocked Library and a full-time Librarian to help guide pupils with book choices. Accelerated Reader enables us to track pupils' reading development and to signpost literature which will excite and challenge our pupils.

Proficiency in literacy and numeracy is mainly developed in English and Mathematics but also in other subjects where opportunities will be provided across the curriculum for students to increase confidence and competence with numbers, mathematical techniques, reading and writing. Specific interventions are also delivered to meet individual need.

### **4. Options and Key Stage 4**

In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue following the National Curriculum Subjects in English (English Language and English Literature), Mathematics, Science (with large numbers entered for Triple Science), PE, and RS/PSHCE. We begin our options process in Year 9 where pupils are guided carefully onto a range of option courses in which they show both interest and aptitude. These courses start in Year 10.

Our comprehensive Key Stage 4 provision offer is set out in our Options Booklet, available on the school website and by hard copy. Specific Key Stage 4 examination specification information is also set out in the booklet. The majority of students will study either GCSE History or GCSE Geography (or both) and a significant number of pupils will continue with a modern foreign language to GCSE (typically around 40% of each year group), enabling them to gain accreditation in all five subject areas within the English Baccalaureate. Our EBacc entries are high as a consequence. All of the EBacc subjects are examined at the end of Year 11 following a coherent five-year programme of study.

We never narrow our curriculum, with pupils maintaining curriculum breadth through studying all of their Key Stage 4 subjects throughout years 10 and 11. Part-time timetables are only initiated in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests (generally in response to a mental health issue to meet individual needs). However, a part-time timetable will be in place only for the shortest time necessary and will not be treated as a long-term solution. This is made clear to both the pupil and their parents from the point at which it is introduced.

GCSE courses offered at Sir William Robertson Academy are:

- Art and Design
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Design and Technology: Timbers
- Drama
- English Language

English Literature  
Food Preparation and Nutrition  
French  
Geography  
Graphics  
History  
Mathematics  
Media Studies  
Physical Education  
Religious Studies  
Science (Combined and Triple – separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

Other Key Stage 4 vocational courses offered at Sir William Robertson Academy are:

BTEC Technical Award in Sport, Activity and Fitness  
BTEC Technical Award in Music (current Year 10)  
NCFE Technical Award in Music (current Year 11)  
NCFE Technical Award in Business and Enterprise  
NCFE CACHE Technical Award in Child Development and Care

School life is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities. A broad range of sporting, musical, arts and other activities are offered regularly and detailed on our website. Students enjoy success in an impressive range of creative and sporting activities throughout their school life.

Travel and residential trips are an integral part of broadening pupils' experience. We offer educational visits to:

Chateau de Warsy – French immersion visit  
Ski Trip to Courmayeur, Italy – PE  
Second World War Berlin visit – History  
Ardèche, France - Outdoor Adventure Trip - PE  
Naples, Italy – Geography  
World Challenge/Outlook Expeditions – recent trips to Thailand, Croatia, Iceland  
London – West End Theatre Residential - Performing Arts  
Auschwitz Visit, Poland - History (Sixth Form)  
New York, USA – Performing Arts

Yorkshire Wildlife Park – Science

Harry Potter Studio Tour – Art/D&T (focus on set-design, etc)

Thackray Museum of Medicine, Leeds - History

Places of Worship Visit, Leicester – Religious Studies

Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions (Bronze [Year 9], Silver [Year 10] and Gold [Year 12] levels)

## **5. Key Stage 5 – Sixth Form**

We offer a wide range of A Level and vocational Level 3 qualifications in our Sixth Form. In addition, we offer a comprehensive package of extra-curricular activities including work experience, sport, theatre, music, community activities, support for younger students and charity work.

In the Sixth Form students typically undertake study of three subjects at A Level or BTEC/NCFE Level 3.

Subjects are allocated to an Option Block system which is driven by the students' own choices. Any subjects may be chosen provided that the choice is made before the timetable is constructed. Offers of chosen subjects may, in some cases, be limited by timetabling and resource restrictions. However, all efforts will be made to ensure students are offered their subject choices. Each subject is taught for 4 or 5 periods weekly.

The requirement for entry into the Sixth Form is a minimum of five 9-4 grades at GCSE (including English Language and Mathematics), with specific grade requirements for particular courses (see Appendix 1). Students without these grades may be admitted in exceptional circumstances, subject to discussion and agreement with the Head of Sixth Form and the relevant Head of Department.

In addition to the study of A Level subjects, a full enhancement programme is offered which gives students the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. This is given through Sixth Form assemblies, enrichment, visits and visiting speakers.

Courses on offer in the Sixth Form are:

Applied Science (BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate)

Art & Design (Fine Art)

Art & Design (Graphic Communication)

Art & Design (3D Design)

Biology

Business Studies (NCFE Level 3 Applied General Certificate)

Chemistry

Computing (BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate)

Drama & Theatre Studies

English Language



English Literature  
French  
Further Mathematics  
Geography  
Health & Social Care (NCFE CACHE Level 3 Technical Certificate)  
History  
Mathematics  
Media Studies  
Physics  
Psychology  
Religious Studies (Philosophy & Ethics)  
Sport (BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate)  
Sport (BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma)

## **6. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)**

SMSC is promoted across the entire school curriculum and all aspects of school life. We ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop an understanding of right and wrong; the central beliefs and worldviews of different religions; an appreciation of the Arts in all their forms (see our Arts Policy) and provide regular opportunities to develop the essential knowledge and to practise the skills required for full participation in a democratic, multi-cultural society.

## **7. [Adaptive Teaching](#) and Personalisation**

The school seeks to ensure that its curriculum is delivered via well-planned and engaging lessons which challenge all pupils whatever their ability or starting point. Pupils are generally taught in ability groups from Year 7 through to Year 11. In accordance with the school's Setting Guidance, each student's progress is reviewed every half term and if necessary, movement to a more appropriate group will take place.

If we feel any student is falling behind or requires more specialist provision we put in place rigorous interventions which may be classroom-based or exist at other times in the school day/after school or at weekends/holidays. Our SEND policy sets out our approach to meeting more complex needs of pupils.

The school also has its own Pupil Intervention Team who work with pupils we believe may benefit from additional intervention. Identified pupils will receive targeted interventions (e.g. ELSA, Literacy, Numeracy, mentoring, attendance, etc) according to the need which has been recognised.

## 8. Beyond the Formal Curriculum

PSHCE (incorporating RSE) is taught through discrete, weekly, 50-minute lessons using the “Cre8tive Education” resource toolkit ([Cre8tive Resources - Home](#)) and a range of other high-quality resources. However, the school curriculum is not narrowly constrained within formal lessons, but extends to a vast array of extra-curricular opportunities through enrichment and regular Personal Development sessions.

All pupils take part in an extensive pastoral programme involving a range of outside agencies which seeks to extend their learning and widen their life experiences. We endeavour to use active partnerships with a range of organisations to support learning wherever possible and encourage students to interact with speakers and visiting groups/industries/organisations to extend their communication skills and wider knowledge.

Work Related Learning is any planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in employment. Through work related learning activities and regular Personal Development Careers sessions, the school seeks to develop the employability skills of our young people, provide them with the opportunity to ‘learn by doing’, raise standards of achievement and encourage positive attitudes to lifelong learning. Opportunities are provided both within our various curriculum subjects and as planned activities within our enrichment programme. All students have the opportunity to take part in a formal work experience in Year 10. All year 11 students have a careers interview with an external provider. Year 12 students also have Work Experience as part of their curriculum. The school has been awarded Career Mark status.

The school believes the physical environment should reflect the creativity of our student body and our curriculum. We use displays to enhance our formal study and celebrate pupils’ work. Displays are updated on a regular basis.

## 9. Homework

Homework plays an important part in the school’s curriculum. It makes a vital contribution to the effective learning of our pupils and encourages the development of supported self-study.

Regular homework:

- Encourages independent study and self- motivation
- Develops perseverance and self-discipline
- Extends learning time beyond the formal school day and enables skills learned in the classroom to be practised and consolidated
- Helps both staff and pupils to assess learning and identify areas of weakness
- Promotes positive relationships between home and school
- Helps to keep parents and carers informed about the topics being covered in class, stimulating a dialogue about learning and the importance of knowledge

Homework is set on a regular basis for all pupils. Homework does not always have to be written work but it should always form an integral part of work that is being studied during lessons. Homework should be set very carefully and deliberately. All homework tasks are posted on *Show My Homework*.

Extended pieces of work may also be undertaken at home where this aligns to key topics within the subject curriculum.

Parents and carers are positively encouraged to take an interest in homework. It is recognised that parents and carers will be interested to read the work set. As with all work set, care should be taken to ensure the highest possible standards of written material leaving the school. The School Feedback Policy sets out guidelines on homework marking.

Base tutors should discuss homework and any barriers to learning with their pupils on a regular basis.

## **11. Monitoring and Reviewing**

The Local Committee monitors the appropriateness and effectiveness of the curriculum (including its Intent, its Implementation and its Impact) as its core function at Local Committee meetings.

The school will regularly audit its curriculum provision, seeking the views of stakeholders, including pupils, staff and governors.

All departments will review annually - as part of their self-evaluation processes - the delivery of their curriculum using the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, supplemented by internal Quality Assurance reviews and external reviews where appropriate.

## Appendix 1:

### SWRA Sixth Form Subjects & Entry Requirements

Students must achieve 5 GCSE grades at 4-9, **including a 4 in English Language and Maths** for entry into Sir William Robertson Academy Sixth Form.

Subject	Entry Requirements
Applied Science*	4 in GCSE Science and Maths.
Art or Graphics	4 in GCSE Art & Design. Where Art & Design has not been taken at GCSE, students will need to provide examples of work to ensure an appropriate skill level.
Biology	6 in GCSE Biology.
Business*	4 in GCSE Business and 4 in GCSE Maths. Where Business Studies has not been taken at GCSE, similar related subject grades will be considered.
Chemistry	6 in GCSE Chemistry and Maths.
Computer Science*	4 in GCSE Computer Science.
Drama	4 in GCSE Drama.
English Language	5 in GCSE English Language.
English Literature	5 in GCSE English Literature.
French	6 in GCSE French.
Further Maths	7 in GCSE Maths.
Geography	5 in GCSE Geography.
Health & Social Care**	4 in GCSE Health & Social Care, Child Care or similar related subject.
History	5 in GCSE History.
Maths	6 in GCSE Maths.
Media	4 in GCSE Media. Where Media has not been taken at GCSE, similar related subject grades will be considered.
Philosophy & Ethics	5 in GCSE Religious Studies.
Physics	6 in GCSE Physics and Maths.
Product Design	4 in GCSE Art & Design, Design & Technology or similar related subject, and 4 in GCSE Maths.
Psychology	5s in GCSE Maths, English and Science.
Sport***	4 in GCSE Physical Education or Pass at BTEC Level 2 Sport.

Subjects marked with an asterisk\* are Level 3 BTEC or NCFE courses. All other subjects listed are A Levels.

The Extended Diploma in Sport is the equivalent of three A Levels, and therefore can be selected as a lone course. We also offer Sport as the equivalent of 1 A Level which can be taken alongside other courses.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is launched each summer, when Year 12 students are invited to undertake the project. This is subject to them working at their MEGs in each subject, as well as meeting expectations in effort grades and conduct across Base Time, Personal Development lessons and Enrichment activities.