

Sir James Smith's School Curriculum Policy

1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and framework for the design, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum at Sir James Smith's School.

Our curriculum:

- reflects our values of **Committed, Connected, Creative**
- ensures that all students are challenged to be the **best version of themselves**
- prepares young people to thrive as **global citizens** with the knowledge, skills and perspectives needed in an interconnected world.

2. Vision and Values

At Sir James Smith's School, our curriculum is driven by our shared values:

- **Committed** – we set high expectations for learning and behaviour; all students are encouraged to aim high and persevere.
- **Connected** – by our 10 Commitments that ensure the delivery of our curriculum is consistent and at the highest standard. This is aligned through a centralised Teaching and Learning Framework that runs through WeST.
- **Creative** – we foster curiosity, independence and innovation through problem-solving and imaginative approaches to learning.

We believe that every child has the right to a high-quality education that develops character, broadens horizons and unlocks future opportunities.

Academic Curriculum

What is curriculum?

In its broadest sense, curriculum is perhaps helpfully described as the 'daily lived experience' of a child. This experience will vary, often considerably, between children based on their personal circumstances. The national curriculum document cites: 'the school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils'. Curriculum is a process rather than a product. A curriculum is never finished. A curriculum is the product of thinking and discourse and is developed through careful design of content and sequence – it is a blueprint for process and action. The thinking, planning and investigation into the fundamental questions about what we teach and how we sequence and represent it for students to learn is a significant responsibility given the impact that curriculum can have on the life chances of children.

A high-quality curriculum is based on proactive thinking that will be the product of clear consideration of the sequence of content necessary for children to make progress. A high-quality curriculum will provide children with the knowledge they need for subsequent learning – transferable knowledge that builds deeper understanding and the capacity for skilful performance. Knowledge is 'sticky', so the more you know, the easier it is to learn.

3. Curriculum Intent

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that we, as a school, plan for and provide for our pupils. Our vision is to deliver on a curriculum that excites young people and helps them to see the world in new ways, beyond the sometimes-limiting confines of their own experience.

Our curriculum is designed to:

- Provide a **broad, balanced and ambitious education** for all.
- Build deep **subject knowledge**, disciplinary skills and cultural capital.
- Prepare students for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Embed a **global perspective** across subjects, helping students to understand sustainability, diversity, and international issues.
- Develop literacy, numeracy, and oracy across all subject areas.
- Promote personal development through PSHE, RE, and careers education.
- Encourage students to take pride in their work through **PROUD presentation expectations** (Presentation, Remember to, On the line, Use a pen, Draw in pencil).

4. Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum design at subject level conforms to what we already know about human cognition and how people learn. Principles of curriculum design such as scaffolding, interleaving and retrieval practice are embedded, aiding pupils to know more and remember more.

We implement our curriculum through our:

- **Teaching and Learning Model** – lessons follow the *Teach, Check, Practice* cycle, providing explicit instruction, systematic checking for understanding, and structured opportunities for independent practice.
- **Curriculum Design** – subjects plan for progression from Year 7 to Year 11, with knowledge sequenced for retrieval and interleaving.
- **Literacy and Numeracy Across the Curriculum** – reading, writing, speaking and mathematics are embedded across disciplines.
- **Enrichment** – students access a wide range of clubs, trips, creative opportunities, outdoor learning and cultural visits.
- **Global and Local Connections** – curriculum themes integrate issues such as climate change, sustainability, migration and human rights.
- **Personal Development** – statutory PSHE and RE are supplemented with careers education, leadership opportunities, and assemblies.
- **Behaviour for Learning** – routines and expectations (including our school's *Warn and Remove* system) ensure classrooms are calm, safe and focused.
- **Our 10 Commitments** – Our ten high leverage techniques; a shared teaching and learning framework. This provides clarity and consistency for all stake holders, a shared language and a focused approach to classroom practice.

5. Curriculum Impact

We measure the success of our curriculum by:

- Monitoring **student progress and attainment** through assessment and data analysis.
- Evaluating the quality of work, including pride and presentation (PROUD standards).
- Listening to **student, parent and staff voice**.
- Tracking student destinations to ensure readiness for further education, training or employment.
- Observing students' ability to articulate their learning, demonstrate curiosity, and engage with global issues.

The impact of curriculum intent and implementation from the previous year is assessed using collaborative data systems (SISRA) and this information is shared with WeST, PTSA and SWIFT South to allow for Trust, local and regional comparisons as well as comparisons with the national dataset when this becomes available. Subject reviews conducted by middle leaders in conjunction with their SLT department links seek to identify areas of the curriculum which are contributing to performance being above expectations, in line with or below so that these can be recognised to inform ongoing curriculum review and development.

Across the academic year, curriculum impact is assessed 'live' using internally generated data based upon a mixed constitution of assessment through two data collection points, both of which are staggered to support staff workload. These data collections are designed to gain maximum information from minimal teacher input and in turn inform stakeholders of the progress of each pupil in the school. The data gathered seeks to reflect a learner's journey through the curriculum through its focus on current working levels. We use nationally benchmarked data to support our understanding of learner progress through the curriculum and to diagnose areas in need of development/support compared to expectations such that these can be addressed through time-limited interventions which are assessed for impact. The tests include NGRT and PASS.

All staff have access to SISRA to support their analysis of the progress of their class, the pupils in a curriculum area and individuals across the school and guidance is given as to how to access this information and how it should be used to inform planning and teaching.

Academic Curriculum Structure for 2025_26

Allocations are in hours per fortnight (hpf) unless otherwise stated

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Core 1					
Maths	7	7	7	10	8
English	7	7	7	10	8
Science	7	7	7	10	9
EBacc					
Geography	4	4	4	3x Option 5 hpf	4x Option 5 hpf
History	4	4	4		
MFL	5	5	5		
Open					
Comp. Sci	2	2	2	3x Option 5 hpf	4x Option 5 hpf
DT/ Ct & A	4	4	4		
Drama	2	2	2		
Music	2	2	2		
Core 2					
RE / PD	2	2	2	2	2
PE	4	4	4	3	3
	50	50	50	50	50

Curriculum as an entitlement for all pupils

A school's curriculum should be broad and balanced and is more likely to be if the full intent and extent of the national curriculum is taught. A school curriculum should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; it helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

Schools must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage. All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE – now incorporating Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.

The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

Key Stage 3

Compulsory elements of the national curriculum at key stage 3 for both Core subjects and Foundation subjects are delivered in curriculum Years 7, 8 and 9. Planning by curriculum leaders in foundation subjects is focused on ensuring that pupils have access to the range of experiences and knowledge that follow the intent of the national curriculum at their core, building on foundations laid during key stage 2. English, Maths and Science deliver a 5-year journey developing knowledge supported by skills, also building on learning during key stage 2. We offer one language at KS3 which is German.

Progression to key stage 4

Pupils and their families are supported in making choices for GCSE courses through: CIAG delivered through tutor contact and support and our developing in-house carers support;

- options events/information materials that are complemented by a parents' evening;
- written and presented information and guidance provided by the school including DfE information.

Independent advice and guidance is provided through strong links with Careers 4U, as well as our own internally developing provision.

Option 'blocks' are formed in such a way to allow all pupils access to an EBacc curriculum, to allow pupils to specialise and build on the broad foundations laid in Years 7, 8 and 9. This allows pupils who wish to do so to pursue a love for the arts, technology or sport alongside an academic core of subjects.

6. Inclusion and Equality

- Our curriculum is accessible to all students regardless of background, ability or need.
- Provision is adapted to support SEND, disadvantaged and EAL students.
- We believe in **"teaching to the top"** – scaffolding is provided to ensure all learners can access ambitious content, without lowering expectations.

7. Professional Development

- Staff receive ongoing CPD in curriculum design, teaching strategies and behaviour management.
- Instructional coaching is embedded to ensure teaching is continually improving.
- CPD is evidence-informed and linked to whole-school priorities.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development at Sir James Smith's is based around a belief that *"Students deserve better than simply being lucky if their teachers know the best way to meet their needs. Teachers deserve better than having to guess how to do the best for their students."* Clay and Weston 2018, *Unleashing Great Teaching*.

At Sir James Smith's School:

- Professional development will have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
- Professional development will be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
- Professional development will include collaboration and expert challenge.
- Professional development programmes will be sustained over time.

All of this is underpinned by, and requires that:

- Professional development is prioritised by school leadership.

To this end, this CPD programme, which takes us through the 2025-26 academic year, should be viewed as a toolkit and a springboard for teachers' own professional development. It is not to be seen as restrictive in terms of access. In simple, it can be conceived of as *"a product of both externally provided and job-embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and help them change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning"*. Darling-Hammond et al (2017).

The focus of CPD at SJS is understanding and improvement focusing on the core aspects of the school's development plan and the embedding of quality first teaching across the school to ensure the very best opportunities for all of our learners. To this end, our staff partake in a wide range of professional development activity as individuals, within their subject departments and as part of the whole school staff body. Our staff continuing professional development is under constant review for adaptation and improvement as we seek to ensure our staff are provided with the best educational research in order to provide continually improved teaching and learning experiences for our students.

8. Monitoring and Review

- Middle leaders and senior leaders review curriculum intent, implementation and impact through learning walks, book looks, data reviews and student feedback.
- Governors monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and its alignment with school values.
- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to local and global contexts.

Curriculum review

- Each Subject Leader is monitored by the WeST Subject EDOS (Executive Director of Subject). This is in the form of six half termly 'T visits' that have a specific agenda to ensure that subject delivery is aligned across all WeST Secondary Schools.
- There are four HoD (Head of Department) meetings spread across the academic year that comprise of all HoD/SLs of each subject from each WeST school. Agendas are aligned and curriculum planning are view are standing agenda items.

Quality-assuring the curriculum

The following checklist is applied when quality assuring our curriculum. This checklist is applied through the forum of Line Management meetings where the SL meets with the SLT lead of that subject and via our programme of Subject Leader meetings.

Intent – Curriculum Design

- Curriculum is sequenced logically (knowledge & skills build cumulatively).
- Clear rationale for what is taught and why.
- Coverage meets/exceeds national curriculum/exam specifications.
- Ambition is high for all learners (SEND, disadvantaged, high attainers).
- Links between topics/subjects are explicit (coherence across the curriculum).

Implementation – Teaching & Learning

- Lesson visits show teachers are following the intended curriculum.
- The Ten Zone task and interleaved spaced retrieval practice are used to help pupils remember content.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and pedagogy.
- Curriculum resources (booklets, slides, assessments) are consistent and aligned.
- Pupils are engaged in tasks that reflect curriculum goals, not just activities.

Impact – Learning & Outcomes

- Assessment checks core knowledge/skills (not just exam practice).
- Work scrutiny shows progress over time and coverage of curriculum content.
- Pupils can articulate what they have learned and how it links together.
- Data shows pupils are making expected progress (or better).
- Gaps between groups are monitored and strategies are in place to address them.

Consistency & Systems

- Department has schemes of learning/pacing plans/curriculum plans accessible to all staff.
- SOPs/routines for curriculum delivery are used consistently.

Review & Improvement

- Evidence from QA informs curriculum updates.
- Staff have opportunities to feedback and co-construct improvements.

9. Policy Links

This policy should be read alongside:

- Teaching and Learning Playbook
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy and OAIP
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Home learning Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

10. Approval and Review

- Written by: Georgie Precious
- Date: September 2025
- Next review: September 2026

Research, Reports and Books – literature underpinning our curriculum thinking

Academic Curriculum

Teach to the top - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Mansworth-Megan/Teach-to-the-Top-Aiming-High-for-Every-Learner/9781913622756>

The what, why and how of assessment : a guide for teachers and school leaders - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Child-Simon/The-what-why-and-how-of-assessment---a-guide-for-teachers/9781529752540>

Middle leadership mastery : a toolkit for subject and pastoral leaders - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Robbins-Adam/Middle- leadership-mastery---a-toolkit-for-subject-and-pastoral-leaders/9781785835346>

Memorable Teaching : Leveraging memory to build deep and durable learning in the classroom - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/McCrea-Peps/Memorable-Teaching--Leveraging-memory-to-build-deep-and-d/9781532707797>

Symbiosis : The Curriculum And The Classroom - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Howard-Kat/Symbiosis---the-curriculum-and-the- classroom/9781913622084>

Christine Counsell – better conversations with subject leaders - How secondary senior leaders can see a curriculum more clearly. - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Sealy-Clare/The-researchED-guide-to-the-curriculum---an-evidence-info/9781912906383>

Ruth Ashbee – A culture of curriculum - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Ashbee-Ruth/Curriculum--theory-culture-and-the-subject- specialisms/9780367483777>

Ruth Ashbee – <https://www.ruth-ashbee.com/post/shake-up-school-thinking-professionalisation-and-the-schools-discourse>

Joe Kirby – <https://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/2021/08/28/scientific-revolution/>

Michael Fordham - <https://clioetcetera.com/2020/02/07/the-importance-of-subject-leadership-or-why-do-we-need-more-giles-fullards/>

Myatt and Tomsett – Huh Curriculum conversations between subject and senior leaders - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Tomsett-John/Huh-Curriculum-conversations-between-subject-and-senior-leaders/9781913622732>

Christine Counsell Blog (2018) [senior-curriculum-leadership-1-the-indirect-manifestation-of-knowledge-a-curriculum-as-narrative/](https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Myatt-Mary/The-curriculum--Gallimaufry-to-coherence/9781911382836)

Curriculum – Research Ed - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Sealy-Clare/The-researchED-guide-to-the-curriculum---an-evidence- info/9781912906383>

Gallimaufry to Coherence – Myatt: <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Myatt-Mary/The-curriculum--Gallimaufry-to-coherence/9781911382836>

The Lone SENDCo – Aubin - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Aubin-Gary/The-Lone-SENDCO-Questions-and-answers-for-the-busy- SENDCO/9781913622589>

Addressing Educational Disadvantage in Schools and Colleges: The Essex Way – Rowland - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Rowland-Marc/Addressing-Educational-Disadvantage-in-Schools-and-Colleges-The-Essex-Way/9781913622459>

The researchED guide to assessment: an evidence-informed guide for teachers - <https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Donarski-Sarah/The-researchED-guide-to-assessment---an-evidence-informed/9781913622138>

High challenge, low threat: finding the balance

<https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Myatt-Mary/High-challenge-low-threat---finding-the-balance/9781909717862>

Responsive teaching: cognitive science and formative assessment in practice

<https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Fletcher-Wood-Harry-Institute-for-Teaching-UK/Responsive-teaching---cognitive-science-and-formative-ass/9781138296893>

SEND huh: curriculum conversations with SEND leaders

<https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Myatt-Mary/SEND-huh---curriculum-conversations-with-SEND-leaders/9781398372733>

Motivated Teaching: Harnessing the science of motivation to boost attention and effort in the classroom

<https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/McCrea-Peps/Motivated-Teaching--Harnessing-the-science-of-motivation-/9781717367204>

A Culture of Quality: A Reflection on Practice (3rd Edition ed.)

<https://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/Berger-Ron/A-Culture-of-Quality--A-Reflection-on-Practice/9781683625629>