

The Quest Academy – Coloma Trust

Curriculum Policy

Curriculum Provision

The prime aim of the curriculum is to provide the opportunity for every student to pursue the highest individual achievement.

The organisation of the curriculum at The Quest Academy is the responsibility of the Principal and the staff working in collaboration with the Governing Body.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with other key policies.

The Academy provides a curriculum that:

1. Enables students to feel confident, valued and successful, respecting themselves and others as learners whilst also promoting spiritual awareness, moral and cultural values.
2. Enables students to work and learn together in a high quality teaching and learning environment with a very strong technological emphasis.
3. Is broad, balanced, flexible, relevant, inclusive and well planned; matching the needs of the individual, irrespective of gender, race or background.
4. Enables students to make a significant contribution to their Academy community and the wider world.
5. Provides continuity, supporting progression and successful transition whilst promoting the lifelong learning skills necessary to live a full, flexible and rewarding life in the diverse cultures of the modern world.

This policy has been written explicitly with the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda in mind.

1. A curriculum that:

Enables students to feel confident, valued and successful, respecting themselves and others as learners whilst also promoting spiritual awareness, moral and cultural values.

- 1.1. The Academy promotes innovative and challenging approaches to teaching and learning. We appreciate that every child is unique and therefore has very different needs. At the heart of what we do is the feeling that we must engage and motivate all students both inside and outside the classroom. Approaches to teaching and learning are promoted through Team Leaders.
- 1.2. Effective learning takes place in well established learning environments. These learning environments must be based on mutual respect. It is the responsibility of staff and students to ensure that all members of the Academy community are engaged in learning. This is achieved through clearly defined expectations regarding students' behaviour and attitudes as well as the provision of a well planned and inclusive curriculum that engages and motivates all students.
- 1.3. All students follow a programme of Personal, Health and Social education with Citizenship.

The PSHCE curriculum enables students to:

- Learn to develop safe and healthy lifestyles;
- Learn to build and maintain relationships.

- 1.4. The Academy recognises that to best show we value students we must find appropriate ways to celebrate success. Subject areas identify students who make outstanding contributions or outstanding progress and recognise this through a mixture of whole Academy strategies. In addition to this, curriculum areas will recognise achievement through letters home, classroom displays and referral for good work. This enables students to recognise, share and celebrate their own and others achievements, strengths, talents and expertise.
- 1.5. All curricular areas endeavour to promote spiritual awareness through the planning and delivery of lessons. The curriculum encourages spiritual growth by:
 - Asking questions about existence and purpose;
 - Creating a sense of wonder;
 - Creating a sense of fulfillment;
 - Creating time for reflection and contemplation.

2. A curriculum that:

Enables students to work and learn together in a high quality teaching and learning environment with a very strong technological emphasis.

- 2.1. There is an emphasis on all staff to maintain teaching spaces in such a way that they engage students and provide appropriate stimulation. The Academy recognises that the organisation of teaching spaces contributes to the way students learn.
- 2.2. E-learning is seen as a way to bring even greater creativity into classrooms as well as putting an emphasis on the use of multimedia resources. E-learning helps Teachers more fully engage a range of learning through varied stimuli.

E-learning:

- enhances the quality of teaching and learning, leading to accelerated learning by all;
- students of all abilities;
- supports or enriches traditional teaching methods;
- is an effective aid for the teaching of differentiated lessons;
- allows students and parents to remotely access the Academy curriculum and other information, thereby promoting and encouraging independent learning.

- 2.3. Students are grouped in ways we feel are most appropriate to their age and ability.

In Year 7 students are taught in:

- **mixed-gender, mixed-ability groups** for all subjects except PE;
- **single-sex groups** for PE.

In Year 8 students are taught in:

- **mixed-gender, mixed ability groups** for Drama, French, Geography, History, Music, PSHCE and RE;
- **single-sex groups** for PE;
- **mixed-gender sets** for English, Maths and Science.

In Year 9 students are taught in:

- **mixed-gender, banded, set by ability, groups** for core subjects;
- **single-sex groups** for PE;
- **mixed-gender, mixed ability** for Option subjects.

In Year 10 students are taught in:

- **mixed-gender, banded, set by ability, groups** for core subjects;
- **single-sex groups** for PE;
- **mixed-gender, mixed ability** for Option subjects.

In Year 11 students are taught in:

- **mixed-gender, banded, set by ability, groups** for core subjects;
- **single-sex groups** for PE;
- **mixed-gender, mixed ability** for Option subjects.

3. A curriculum that:

Is broad, balanced, flexible, relevant, inclusive and well planned; matching the needs of the individual; irrespective of gender, race or background.

- 3.1. Throughout the Academy we work hard to deliver our curriculum vision. This states that: At The Quest Academy we are passionate about creating a curriculum and teaching and learning experiences that enable every student to excel and make rapid progress towards their personal goals, always achieving their potential.

As a professional learning community we believe this is effectively done when:

- We develop a curiosity for **knowledge**;
- We build a range of **independent learning skills** and develop **enquiring minds**;
- We strive to achieve the highest **academic results** and to realise the potential of every student;
- We foster a sense of **personal identity** and self worth;
- We construct our curriculum to allow maximum **choice and flexibility**, so that programmes in Key Stage 4 have high **personalisation**;
- We create a climate that stimulates **excitement** about learning;
- We listen, to students, colleagues and expert practitioners from around the world to inform our practice;
- We work hard to **contextualise learning**;
- We recognise that the most effective learning is collaborative and social;
- We work towards building community – locally, nationally and internationally in order to develop **active citizens** of the world;
- We foster a life long love of learning and equip learners to cope with the rapidly changing needs of the technological world in which we live.

Ultimately, all these strands combine to give each individual the best life chances and allow them to make choices about their contribution to our community, because these are the ingredients for a happy and successful life.

We believe that this is most effectively achieved through a blend of traditional expectations and creative learning approaches; where learning is planned but space is left for unexpected and emerging ideas.

We believe that the essence of education is that Teachers know the young people they teach and what they need to know.

The overall result is a dynamic class room characterized by effective relationships and expectation of success and a high degree of challenge in all that is undertaken.

3.2. **Key Stage 3** - Students follow a compulsory curriculum in Years 7 and 8 consisting of:

English; Mathematics; Science; Art; Geography; History; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Modern Foreign Languages (French); Music; Physical Education; Design & Technology; Personal, Health & Social Education, Citizenship, Drama and Religious Education.

Key Stage 4 - Years 9, 10 and 11, all students study:

English, Maths, Science, Physical Education, Personal, Health & Social Education and Religious Studies.

All students have the option to study Languages, and the Arts and Humanities. Students will also undertake Enterprise activities.

Students follow **GCSE** (General Certificate of Secondary Education) courses. GCSEs are assessed using a grading system from A*-G. By the end of KS4 most students will have reached level 2. This means they will have gained 'C' grades or higher in at least five subjects.

Students may also follow **vocational** courses in Key Stage 4. These courses are mostly level 2 courses, equivalent to GCSE courses and will contribute to a student's overall points' score by the end of Key Stage 4. Some students will follow level 1 and level 2 courses offered in partnership with Croydon College.

Within the Compulsory Core Curriculum:

English – all students complete the AQA GCSE English course with some completing the AQA English Literature course; 40% of the award is coursework-based and 60% written-paper based; some students will complete the IGCSE Cambridge Award in English

Science – all students complete either a core GCSE in science followed by a double/ triple award, or a Level 2 BTEC Award in Science (equivalent to 2 GCSEs);

ICT – most students complete an OCR National Award (equivalent 2 GCSEs); some students will be entered for either a triple or quadruple award in Y11; some students complete a GCSE in ICT as an option subject

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

This course is started in Year 9. Assessment of GCSE is usually by both external assessment and controlled assessment/ coursework, with the balance towards external assessment.

The proportion of controlled assessment/ coursework is higher in some creative and practical subjects. All GCSEs are taught as:

- a full course leading to a single GCSE qualification;

Vocational Qualifications (BTEC, NVQ, City & Guilds, The OCR National First Award in ICT)

Vocational courses provide experiences and education relevant to working life. Students develop knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad vocational area as well as experience of work within that area.

Vocational courses are assessed through portfolio evidence (coursework). Most vocational qualifications are awarded at Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* grades. All students are assessed using GCSE or Vocational course grading, applying the assessment criteria contained within the course syllabus.

- 3.3. **Key Stage 3** - Students with learning difficulties receive support either in class or through withdrawal, depending on the degree of need. Students with low-level difficulties in either numeracy or literacy will follow a programme of intensive numeracy/ literacy coaching. Students with greater special educational needs will take part in regular literacy or numeracy support lessons.

Key Stage 4 - Students with learning difficulties can receive support in a number of different ways:

- Pathways that reduce the number of formally-assessed courses a student will follow;
- One-to-one support for students with statements of Special Educational Needs.

A programme of extension activities runs throughout the year aimed at stretching the most able students across year groups.

- 3.4. In Year 8 students undertake an options process that helps them make the most appropriate choices of courses for Years 9, 10 and 11. Students will choose to follow one of the following pathways:

- GCSE courses in all their subjects;
- A mixture of GCSE and vocational courses;

- 3.5 Opportunities for the teaching of Numeracy and Literacy are planned into every curriculum area's scheme of work.

- 3.6. Differentiated work is provided to ensure that all students are challenged appropriately in class.

- 3.7. The Academy recognises that effective learning can take place in different environments. Applied learning takes into account different students' needs. Academy trips offer invaluable opportunities for students to understand and experience learning in a different context. Different environments stimulate their senses and allow them to apply knowledge to real situations.
- 3.8. All students in Year 7–11 undertake Physical Education as part of the Compulsory Curriculum.
- 3.9. Time is allocated to curriculum areas in the following way:

Allocation of time in Key Stage 3		50 minute periods per week
Subject	Year 7	Year 8
English	5	5
Maths	5	5
Science	4	4
PE	3	3
RS	1	1
Art	1	1
Food Technology	1	1
IT	-	-
Resistant Materials	1	1
Drama	1	1
French	2	2
Geography	1	1
History	1	1
Music	1	1
PSHCE	1	1
Project	2	2

Allocation of time in Key Stage 4

The numbers in brackets indicate the number of periods the subject is taught per week.

Subject	Choices/Information (Periods)
English	5
Maths	5
Science	5*
PSHCE	1
RS	2**
IT	2
PE	2
Art	3
Business Studies	3
Drama	3
French	3
Health & Social Care	3
Product Design	3
Sport	3
History	3
Music	3
Food Technology	3
Economics	3
Geography	3
College	6***

*Students at college have only 4 hours of Science per week

**Students at college have only 1 hour per week in Y10 and Y11

***Students at college spend one day a week off-site (equivalent to 6 teaching periods)

4. A curriculum that:

Enables students to make a significant contribution to their Academy community and the wider world.

4.1 In Key Stage 4 all students undertake work related learning as part of their PSHCE curriculum. They all have access to Enterprise activities in the form of immersion days.

All students have the opportunity to complete work experience and undergo a careers interview.

4.2. Within subjects such as Art and Drama, opportunities exist in Key Stage 4 for students to celebrate and share their learning through performance or display.

All curriculum areas look for ways to promote a positive learning ethos by identifying and celebrating high levels of achievement and rewarding success.

5. A curriculum that:

Provides continuity; supporting progression and successful transition whilst promoting the lifelong learning skills necessary to live a full, flexible and rewarding life in the diverse cultures of the modern world.

5.1. All Teachers have previous performance data for their classes. Students' progress is measured against this starting-point. Assessment is a means of measuring this progress consistently.

- In Key Stage 3 students are regularly assessed using National Curriculum sub-levels, non-National Curriculum subjects also use sub-levels to ensure consistency;
- In Key Stage 4 students are regularly assessed using GCSE grades, apart from vocational subjects where Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* are the grades used.

5.2. Assessment, both formative and summative, is seen to lie at the heart of good teaching and learning. Assessment for learning is an important strand of Academy improvement and is at the heart of student/Teacher dialogue about learning. There is an expectation that all staff use a wide variety of approaches to assessment and fully utilise a range of assessment methods to fully engage students and to communicate our expectations to them. Assessment helps students identify their personal aspirations and enables them to work closely with staff in order to set attainable targets.

5.3. Information about prior attainment is gathered from primary schools along with SATs data to ensure that students are placed in the most appropriate teaching groups for their particular needs when they arrive in Year 7.

Students are closely supported in Year 7 to ensure they manage the varied demands of secondary education.

Attainment data is used to target students for particular options as they prepare to transfer from Year 8 to Year 9. This ensures they select the most appropriate combinations of courses for study during Key Stage 4.

5.4. Previous performance data is used to measure the progress students make.

Parents are invited into the Academy to discuss their child's progress. Staff are asked to focus on improving the performance of all students.

5.5. Independent learning is seen as a very important element in raising student performance, as well as engaging students in the learning process. Homework routines established in Key Stage 3 prepare students for the demands of work in Key Stage 4, as well as the increasing levels of independence they must show in Year 11.

5.6. Homework is seen as an essential part of students' learning experience and helps promote:

- Reinforcement and consolidation - practising by doing;
- Developing research skills;
- Student/Parent/Teacher partnerships.

Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the learning process by monitoring the management and completion of homework by students.

- 5.7. Parents receive reports on their child's progress every term to ensure that no child is "left behind".