



# Curriculum Policy

**Approved by:** Mr Robert Knell - Vice Chair of Governors

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## 1. Intent

At Rushden Academy we provide opportunities for our pupils to gain knowledge and skills so that they can succeed and be highly successful citizens in modern Britain. We endeavour to make their learning experiences fun and relevant to real life situations. We aim to reach out to our community and beyond to celebrate local traditions and explore all possibilities to enrich their lives.

We believe that it is essential for pupils to master the basics, to make connections between topics and across other subjects. Our pupils revisit their work and learn new material well, they are expected to apply their learning in unfamiliar situations. New pupils to the academy have an opportunity to accelerate in English and Maths when they join Team Rushden so that they can excel in their lessons. We cater for pupils' needs and work closely with pupils that are underperforming whatever their backgrounds.

We ensure that our curriculum provides skills under these 3 headings:

### **Aspire**

Pupils are taught to aim high, to appreciate the world of work and hold onto dreams and ambitions. We do this through our successful learning for life days and through our enterprise and careers activities. We set high expectations in lessons and throughout the school. Here at Rushden Academy we nurture a can-do attitude and it is okay to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them thus building resilience and independence.

### **Explore**

Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work, to share ideas and listen to other people's views. Pupils explore their own heritage and that of other cultures so they have a diverse and rich understanding. Pupils actively explore and evaluate their strengths and take action to improve. The curriculum provides opportunities to develop explorative skills, for example to formulate questions, to analyse concepts and justify decisions. Pupils apply their skills to debating, presenting and performing so that learning is not only enjoyable but active.

### **Succeed**

Pupils are expected to set goals, to do the best they can through hard work and determination so that they achieve their goals. Pupils build their knowledge and skills throughout key stage 3 so that they can accelerate their progress in year 10 and year 11 in preparation for their next stage of learning. They are provided with opportunities to succeed in many different aspects of school for example for their leadership skills, their community work, their creative skills and their debating skills.

**Pupils at Rushden Academy are part of a holistic team, we call ourselves Team Rushden. Staff, governors & pupils work together for a common goal and that is to provide the best education and be the best we can be.**

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#), and the [National Curriculum programmes of](#)

[study](#) which the school has chosen to follow. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, and science, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Pupils from year 7 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

#### **3.2 Principal**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements

- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### **3.3 Other staff**

- Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Heads of Department are responsible for leading all elements of the curriculum effectively. It is their responsibility to ensure that all colleagues understand the demands of the curriculum and that these demands are met in classrooms within their department.

## **4. Organisation and planning**

### **Setting policy**

All teaching is in mixed ability groups for every subject apart from English, Maths and Science. For the 'core' subjects, when there are 6 classes in a year group there will be 2 top, 2 middle and 2 lower ability sets. We believe that having these levelled groups allows for greater collaboration between different ability pupils and will lead to better progress for all pupils over time. To eliminate the stigma attached to having a low number next to your set name some departments have called them after famous people associated with that subject.

### **Set changes during the academic year**

Any set changes that happen during the academic year should only take place after an Assessment Point, except in exceptional circumstances. This is to avoid pupils being in a constant state of flux with different subjects moving pupils throughout the year. All set changes should be discussed between the Head of Faculty and their Line Manager and then should be approved by T Billam prior to the changes happening.

### **Collapsed Timetable Days**

Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 follow a programme that includes careers, citizenship, spiritual, personal, social and health education which is delivered through faculties, form time and collapsed timetable days. These days take place throughout the year for all year groups. These days allow pupils to look at areas of the extended curriculum for longer periods of time. Pupils study topics including Sex and relationship education, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, British values and Careers guidance.

### **PSHE**

Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 follow a programme that includes careers, citizenship, spiritual, personal, social and health education. Pupils study topics including Sex and relationship education, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, British values and Careers

guidance. In KS3 this is delivered as a one hour lesson each week and in KS4 the content is delivered through form sessions per week, each of half an hour in length.

### **Extra-curricular learning**

Although academic lessons form a majority of a student's life in school, Rushden believes that opportunities for pupils to flourish in an extended curriculum are also important. We have an excellent reputation for developing skills and increasing participation in drama, music and physical education. There is an extensive programme of opportunities at lunch time and after school. Field trips and study experiences outside of school happen throughout the year, these are organised by individual faculties. The academy has been visited by both authors and theatre companies to deliver a range of experiences for pupils.

Drama at Rushden is a strength both in terms of the results that pupils achieve in their formal exams but also in terms of the experiences available to participate outside of normal school hours. Recent major productions have included 'Chicago' and 'We Will rock You'. During the past year there has also been the first production performed solely by pupils in Key Stage 3. The audience always comment on the high quality of these productions and the standard of student's performances.

Sport is an important part of many student's lives at Rushden Academy. The academy has outside basketball courts, tennis courts, Sports Hall, gym, fitness suite and a very large playing field. Pupils compete against other schools in various sports including football, netball, athletics and rounders.

### **Key Stage 3**

The school provides a curriculum that is balanced and meets the needs of Rushden Academy pupils. All pupils study English, Maths, Science, Information Technology, Physical Education, Humanities (Geography, History and Religious Education), Creative Arts (Art, Photography and Graphics), Performing Arts (Drama, Dance and Music) and Languages (French or German).

For pupils who have not reached the expected level of English at primary school we have introduced an extra Literacy strand to the curriculum. Identified pupils will receive 1 hour per week of catch-up lessons instead of studying history, to allow them to close the gap with their peers.

Pupils follow a one-week timetable and the allocation of hours per week is below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Hours per week</b>
Maths	3 or 4
Science	3 or 4
English	3 or 4
PE	2
Creative Arts	1
Drama	1
Dance	1
Food	1

PSHE	1
Music	1
MFL	2
Humanities	3
IT	1
TOTAL	25

### **Key Stage 4**

Pupils at Rushden Academy complete a two-year Key Stage 4, starting their GCSE/BTEC examination subjects in year 10. Pupils will build upon their knowledge and skills from Key Stage 3 when they enter Key Stage 4.

The Options process starts in March of year 9. Pupils are given guidance on the choices available and the appropriateness of courses for them through Parent's Evening, the year 9 'Taster Options' lessons and the Options Evening.

All pupils are given the opportunity to study EBacc subjects through to GCSE level. We offer French and German in both lower school and in Key Stage 4. Our languages department visit primary schools to provide support and teach lessons to pupils before they join us.

Pupils follow a two-week timetable and the allocation of hours per fortnight is below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of hours per fortnight</b>
Maths	8
Science	10
English	9
PE	3
Option 1	5
Option 2	5
Option 3	5
Option 4	5
TOTAL	50

- Heads of department and senior leaders work collaboratively to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place to deliver the curriculum effectively. Funding is provided to ensure that text books and other resources are available to support students in their learning. Resources needed for classrooms are also agreed, sourced and funded to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum.

### **5. Inclusion**

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

Governors monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes the required subjects, through:

- Meeting with senior leaders at each 'challenge' meeting
- Visiting the school to see the curriculum in action
- Holding senior leaders to account on the implementation and delivery of the curriculum.

Senior leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Regular line management meetings with Heads of Faculty to review the implementation and delivery of the curriculum
- Conduct termly Faculty Reviews with the HoF.
- Carry out review and follow up reviews to check the health of the curriculum in subject areas.
- Set challenging but meaningful targets to ensure the quality of the provision meets the aspirational goals we hold for our pupils
- Offer advice, guidance and support to Heads of Faculty to help them implement and deliver a first-rate curriculum for our pupils

Heads of Faculty monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Review the planning of colleagues in their department, this is aided by the introduction of Faculty joint planning time every Wednesday after school
- Carrying out learning walks when looking at specific elements of the curriculum or its delivery
- Formally observing teachers as part of the performance management process
- Carrying out student voice audits
- Carrying out work scrutinies

Heads of department also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

### **7. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Non-examination assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- Teaching and learning policy
- Pupil premium policy
- Sex and relationship policy

This policy was been approved by the board on: May 2025

Signature of LGB Vice Chair:



Name of Vice Chair of the LGB Board:

Mr Robert Knell

Date for renewal:

May 2026