



Governors' Policy Statement on the Curriculum

Issue No	Author/ Owner	Date Written/Revised	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1	EY	November 2011	30 November 2011	
2	BJH	January 2017	11 January 2017	

1 Introduction

Backwell is a comprehensive school with a non-selective intake of students at age 11 which aims to enable and ensure that all its young people become successful, independent learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. By setting and sharing high standards we work to ensure that all students have aspirational goals and that these goals are fulfilled.

The school's curriculum is made up of a wide range of personalised learning experiences that we plan for our students, such as: internal lessons, events, routines, extended hours learning; external clubs, activities, work, and active contributions to the local and wider community.

2 Content

When Backwell School became an academy in 2011 the governing body set out the principles for the curriculum (Appendix 1). Above all, the school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum where every student regardless of ability can succeed in achieving their potential along personalised learning routes. This enables students to make positive contributions to modern Britain when they leave school.

3 Procedures

The curriculum is delivered through a two-week 60 period timetable. Although curricular provision can be divided into three broad stages: Key Stage 3, 4 and 5, we seek to ensure continuity and progression between each stage. The organisation of Backwell School's curriculum is shown in Appendix 3.

Students with learning difficulties are offered a curriculum containing variations which provides support for their identified need (for example, withdrawal support at Key Stage 3 and appropriate courses at Key Stage 4).

Cross-curricular themes are delivered in a variety of ways, as shown in Appendix 4. They appear within assemblies, tutorials, the Year 7 Breakout days, Enrichment Week or are included within other subjects as part of the curriculum. Appendix 5 details the school's commitment to and value of extracurricular activities.

Work related learning is developed within all curriculum areas as well as discreetly in line with careers, information advice and guidance (CIAG). All Year 10 students complete a five-day work experience placement.

4 Monitoring

The policy is subject to regular review within school and at the Governors' Curriculum Committee. Information Meetings are held in September for parents of students in Year 7, Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12. An Options Evening is held in February for the parents of students in Year 9; these meetings are provided as a means of informing parents and obtaining comments on the curriculum. Student progress acts as a key indicator as to the effectiveness and suitability of the curriculum for each student.

5 Evaluation

The School Leadership Team Curriculum group annually evaluates the provision and effectiveness of the curriculum and works with the Curriculum Leaders to make changes to the curriculum. For example, aspects such as subject time allocations, number and type of subjects studied by each student is reviewed on a regular basis.

Appendix 1

Aims of the School

In May 2011, Backwell School became an Academy. The Governing Body, staff, parents and students worked together to create a Backwell School Charter that states the aims and principles of Backwell School and ensures that Backwell School remains a school at the heart of its community. The Charter is shown below:

The Charter

Backwell School is committed to maintaining a comprehensive school status with a non-selective intake of students at age 11 which aims to enable and ensure that all its young people become:

- Successful, independent learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve.
- Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their local, national and global communities.

The school will:

- Support the individual needs of all students.
- Provide an excellent education to all students and give them the opportunities to use and develop their individual skills and abilities.
- Maintain a broad, balanced and appropriately challenging curriculum that addresses the needs of all students.
- Encourage students to take pride in their school and to contribute to its development.
- Recognise and reward the achievements of students.
- Provide and maintain a safe, caring and stimulating physical, social and learning environment.
- Respond to and serve the needs of the local community.
- Work with parents, the community, other schools and local and national services for children and young people.
- Value the contribution of all staff.
- Be committed to the professional development and wellbeing of all staff.
- Employ all staff under terms and conditions that are fair and reflective of their individual roles and responsibilities, taking into consideration relevant national and local terms and conditions.
- Consult staff on matters relating to their terms and conditions of employment, recognising the role of trade unions and professional organisations.

Appendix 2

Specific Aims of the Curriculum

- To personalise the learning of all students, where:
 - students engage in activities and courses that are suited to their ability, aspiration and learning needs;
 - opportunities are given to students to be entered for external exams at the most opportune time;
 - students are enriched by the opportunities offered.
- To ensure that students know the progress that they are making by ensuring opportunities for assessment for learning strategies.
- To ensure equal opportunities in terms of access to personalised learning activities.
- To create a curriculum which:
 - motivates, challenges and engages all learners and helps them to succeed;
 - ensures students gain key skills, knowledge and understanding;
 - enables a smooth transition from primary, through secondary and beyond;
 - develops successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
 - demonstrates and emphasises connections between subjects and other learning experiences;
 - enables students to achieve positive and supportive peer relationships, underpinning and supporting social and emotional development.
- To create a curriculum in which all students become:
 - successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
 - confident individuals who are able to live safe and healthy lives;
 - responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society by actively promoting British values.
- To allow depth to be reached in the knowledge and skills content of particular areas and lines of learning; while benefiting from the broad and balanced nature of the curriculum, students are encouraged and facilitated to develop expertise in areas in which their talents lie.
- To maintain the engagement of students with their own learning, whilst ensuring rigour and setting high standards of achievement.
- To encourage appreciation of, and concern for, the environment.
- To recognise the importance of the emergence of technologies and respond to the role they have in shaping society and the world of work.
- To pursue the aims and follow the guidelines outlined in the school's Teaching and Learning Policy.
- To celebrate achievement by promoting displays of students' work throughout the school, in classrooms, in reception areas, and in performance.

The Governors' Policy Statement on Students with Special Educational Needs gives more information on personalising the curriculum to meet the needs of each student.

Appendix 3

Organisation of the Curriculum

At Key Stage 3 students are mainly taught in mixed-ability groups but there is some setting in maths, languages, PE, geography and science. In Year 7, all students study a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish), some study a second foreign language from Year 8 onwards.

The allocation of teaching periods per two week cycle for every subject is shown below:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	7	6	7
Maths	6	7	7
Science	6	7	9
1 Modern Foreign Language	6	3	4
2 Modern Foreign Languages	n/a	4	3
Art	4	4	4
Breakout (inc Drama)	6	n/a	n/a
Design Technology	4	4	4
Dance	1	2	n/a
Drama	n/a	2	3
Geography	4	4	5
History	4	5	4
ICT	2	1 or 2	1 or 2
Music	3	3	2
Philosophy & Religion (inc PSHE)	3	4	3
PE	4	4	4

Year 7 breakout days

One day in every fortnight, students break away from the traditional timetable and take part in alternative learning activities. The Year 7 Breakout days are tailored to develop students' personal, learning and thinking skills; the Breakout programme aims to allow all students to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- confident individuals who are able to live safe and healthy lives;
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

The learning activities are designed to develop the following key themes:

- Identity and cultural diversity.
- Healthy lifestyles.
- Community participation.
- Enterprise.
- Global dimension and sustainable development.
- Technology and the media.
- Creativity and critical thinking.

Time is also reserved specifically for the delivery of Drama, Dance, PSHE, SMSC and IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance).

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 students have as much freedom as possible to choose the courses they want to study, within a process that provides strong and directed information and guidance. Students are encouraged to pursue a 'broad and balanced' curriculum, and the subjects required for the English Baccalaureate are made explicit; students are expected to pursue a language at Key Stage 4 unless they are specifically guided otherwise by senior staff.

The majority of students study GCSE courses, usually taking nine or more subjects. All students take English Language, English Literature, and at least a double award in Science (approximately half of our students take all three separate sciences) and History or Geography. Some students are guided to take Level 1 courses in either the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) or Prince's Trust XL programme,

There is the opportunity for students to opt for additional GCSE subjects which are run after school currently in music and Dance.

The Sixth Form

At Key Stage 5, students choose either four or, in most cases, three two-year Level 3 courses. These courses are mainly A Levels but there are also more vocational style courses on offer in Media, Business, Performing Arts, Health and Social Care and Applied Science. Those students taking four subjects will have particularly high prior attainment at GCSE level. Those taking three courses will take an additional qualification at the end of Year 12: for most students this will be the Extended Project Qualification, however is still possible to sit an AS examination in a small number of subjects: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, French, Spanish and German. Students who are yet to reach the required threshold in GCSE Mathematics and English (Language) will join res-sit classes and be re-entered for the examination(s) in November and June until they reach the necessary standard (in 2017-18 this is Grade 4).

Detailed curriculum information

More detailed curriculum information can be found in the School Prospectus, the Year 7, 8 and 9 Curriculum booklets, the Year 10 Options booklet and the Sixth Form Prospectus. They are available on the school website.

Appendix 4

Cross-curricular issues

There are a number of unifying factors which permeate the curriculum in all three stages:

- Teaching programmes encourage active and differentiated approaches to learning.
- Lesson Objectives and the use of success criteria form an integral part of the teaching and allow all students to receive individual and personalised feedback on a regular basis.
- Schemes of monitoring and evaluating students' work are based on the principles of Assessment for Learning.
- All students are guided through different stages of their schooling ensuring that they make appropriate choices for next steps at Year 9, 11 and 13. Programmes of CIAG are developed within tutorial sessions with groups of students also receiving independent advice and guidance as required.
- There is a personal and social development programme including health and sex education.
- Political, economic, financial, and environmental awareness is promoted and developed through a range of curricular opportunities.
- The school seeks to make use of the environment and the resources of the community, including industry and commerce, in its educational programmes. In Key Stage 4 work experience is used as a means of enhancing the curriculum and the personal development of the student.
- In addition to learning which takes place in school, all students are expected to complete learning tasks outside of school. See Backwell School's Home Learning Policy for more information.

Appendix 5

Extra-curricular and community activities

The school promotes enthusiasm, interest, wider skills and involvement through a wide range of club activities at lunchtime and after school which is overseen by the Extended Schools Team and includes drama, dance, music, photography, creative writing, debating, sports, ICT and outdoor pursuits.

Furthermore, the school is committed to taking on a leading role in developing cohesion within the community, specifically through offering learning experiences to local young people and adults. These learning opportunities are educational, recreational and sporting in nature, allow local people to share in the school's facilities and equipment and give young people and adults joint learning experiences where possible.