



CURRICULUM POLICY

Dormers Wells High School

**Maths, Computing and Applied
Learning Specialist College
& Leading Edge School**

Ratified by Governors	September 2025
Review Date	June 2026
SLT Responsible	Mr D Fenlon

1. Vision and Rationale

Dormers Wells High School's ethos "opening the door to success" and four core values embedded in our name DWHS (determination; wisdom; honesty and service) together drive our intent and vision for curriculum provision and delivery.

We have a diverse curriculum which ensures that all our students always receive a high-quality learning experience. In confirming our commitment to the broad and balanced principles of our curriculum we celebrate our expertise in mathematics and computing to drive excellence and innovation.

Our curriculum is the vehicle to allow our students to become:

- confident, resilient individuals, who aspire to excellence and whilst enjoying their learning, make outstanding progress leading to high quality qualifications.
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society including their local community and the wider international world in which they exist thereby embedding our core values of respect and co-operation.

It should also enable students to:

- achieve high standards and make excellent progress.
- have and be able to use high quality functional skills, including key literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills.
- be challenged and stretched to achieve their potential.
- celebrate achievements in creative arts, science, sport, technology and computing, literature, languages, and the humanities.
- understand and value the interdependence of individuals, races, religions, and countries.
- prepare for adult life.
- develop self-respect, a tolerant attitude, a set of moral values and beliefs that includes respect for others.
- have a sense of adventure and purpose and an ability to deal with failure and success.

At Dormers Wells High School, the governing body, the Headteacher, and staff aim to provide a secure but challenging learning environment where each student can aim for the highest standard in whatever he or she attempts to do. The school has students of diverse talents, needs and interests. Within the school and wider community, we hope all our students will learn to be aware of other people's needs, to be tolerant towards others and to develop their own self-confidence, self-judgement and self-discipline.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Literacy Policy

2. The School's Beliefs

A students' learning journey involves a combination of entitlement and choice that involves a breadth of study and personal relevance. In order to maintain the continuum of learning for all students, we believe close liaison with feeder primary schools is essential. To add value to the learning journey, we believe in the provision of personalised learning where appropriate. To this end we are committed to the principles and practice of assessment for learning.

3. Curriculum Intent

The curriculum should inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future. The school's aim is to develop a coherent and challenging knowledge rich curriculum that values the contribution of all races and cultures, builds on students' experiences in the primary phase and that helps all students to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The curriculum aims to give students an ambitious, broad, and balanced learning experience, through the development of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and creative skills. Wherever possible, the curriculum aims to support the teaching of the values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance, and individual liberty.

At Dormers Wells High School, it is expected that the curriculum will:

- lead to qualifications that are of worth for employers and for entry to Higher Education.
- fulfil statutory requirements.
- provide challenge for all.
- enable students to fulfil their potential.
- meet the needs of students of all abilities.
- provide equal access for all students to a full range of learning experiences beyond statutory guidelines.
- prepare students to make informed and appropriate choices at the end of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, and beyond.
- ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education.
- ensure parity in the achievement and progress of disadvantaged students when compared to their peers.
- provide teaching and learning opportunities relating to careers and labour markets in subjects across the curriculum (Gatsby Benchmarks 2 and 4)

4. Curriculum Implementation

The whole school curriculum encompasses a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, computing and technology, religious education, citizenship, at least two foreign languages, geography and history, the arts, drama, music, and physical education. Each student is taught for 25 hours during a normal school week. Students are taught in set or mixed ability groups. Extra help is given where appropriate to those who need it, to those whose first language is other than English and to those with learning difficulties. Some students are withdrawn for additional tuition from some subjects.

Personalised attention is also given to those students assessed as more able. Those students whose abilities develop at a later stage are also given personalised attention. To continue to encourage high achievement and a rigorous programme of challenging work, the school runs a system of accelerated groups in core subjects. These are designed for those who have already demonstrated the ability to work faster or the need to work at a higher level earlier in their school career.

- The curriculum is delivered in well planned and engaging lessons which challenge all students whatever their starting point.
- Assessment is integrally linked to our curriculum planning and is both formative and summative recognising student progress is not always linear.
- Mastery and metacognition are both fundamental to our curriculum planning preventing "cognitive overload" and developing strategies for breaking down and recalling prior learning.

4.1 Key Stage 3 - Years 7 and 8

All students have access to a similar course of study. The hours per subject per fortnight are as follows:

	Key Stage 3 25 period week over two weeks, 50 periods per cycle													
Subject	English	Maths	Science	PE	CPSHE	Comp	Tech	MFL	Hist	Geog	Music	Art	RE	Drama
Y7	8	7	7	4	2	2	2*	4	3	3	2	2*	2	2*
Y8	8	7	7	4	2	2	2*	4	3	3	2	2*	2	2*

* KS3 technology, art and drama are taught on a rotation in for one term at a time for six lessons a fortnight. This equates to two lessons a fortnight over a whole year.

A literacy-based curriculum is also offered for targeted students in KS3. These students study a core of English, mathematics, science, PE, CPSHE, computer science, the arts and technology. In addition, they follow an enhanced literacy course through the medium of foundation subjects with the aim of upskilling students in reading and writing to a level where they can confidently access the mainstream curriculum.

4.2 Key Stage 4 - Years 9, 10 and 11

During the spring term of Year 8 and Year 9, students in those year groups are given careful guidance in helping them decide which subjects they wish to study for the next year. Students in Year 9 receive similar guidance to decide their courses for Year 10 and Year 11. The guidance students receive on their choice of courses involves parents, teaching staff, tutors, and careers advisers. Students are given support that help them to balance the demands of preparing for examination courses, and for developing a love of live long learning. Most subjects lead to the GCSE examination, but there are some vocational courses at a comparable level.

Year 9 students study the core subjects of English language and literature, mathematics, science, geography, history, computing, PE, RE and CPSHE. In addition, they choose four from the following option subjects:

Art	Computer Science	Design and Technology
Food and Nutrition	French	Performing Arts
PE	Spanish	

Years 10 and 11 students study the core subjects of English language and literature, mathematics, science, PE, RE and CPSHE. In addition, the following option subjects are also on offer and students choose three of these:

Art	Business Studies	Computer Science
Citizenship	Design and Technology	Digital Information Technology
Drama	French	Geography
Health and Social Care	History	Music
PE	Photography	Religious Studies
Sport	Sociology	Spanish

Students are also given an opportunity to complete a GCSE in a home language.

The allocated hours per subject per fortnight are as follows:

Key Stage 4 25 period week over two weeks, 50 periods per cycle													
Subject	English	Maths	Science	PE	CPSHE	RE	Comp	Geog	History	MFL	Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Y9	8	8	8	3	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	N/A
Y10	9	7	10	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6	6
Y11	9	7	10	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6	6

4.3 Key Stage 5 – Years 12 and 13

Learners in the Sixth Form follow either A level or BTEC courses. Almost all learners progress from the Sixth Form to university and colleges of Higher or Further Education or to posts in commerce, industry, or to a variety of local or national services.

The subjects available at A level, which are taught in ten hour blocks, include:

Art and Design	Biology	Business Studies
Chemistry	Computer Science	Drama
Economics	English Literature	French
Further Mathematics	Geography	History
Mathematics	Photography	Physics
Psychology	Religious Studies	Sociology
Spanish		

Business studies and health and social care are offered as BTEC Level 3 courses. Planning is beginning for the new T Level courses that will eventually replace the BTEC Level 3 courses.

Students may also follow the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) course.

Subjects will only be run where there are sufficient learners to make the course viable, and where the staffing capacity exists to support the course.

4.4 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

SMSC is promoted across all aspects of school life and underpins our curriculum learning with additional opportunities for students to engage in broader skills relating to morality, health and teamwork. Opportunities to develop the SMSC education of students should be included in curriculum planning wherever appropriate.

4.5. SEND

Our curriculum ensures that students with SEND are fully supported by teachers:

- planning, teaching, assessing, and evaluating that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the students in class.
- devising strategies and identifying appropriate differentiated methods of access to the curriculum.
- setting clear progress targets for all students with SEND that focus on their potential to achieve at or above expectation.

5. Curriculum Impact

The impact of the curriculum will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will include the analysis of GCSE, A Level and BTEC results. A termly analysis of in-school data will also take place in each year group to support in reviewing the impact of the school curriculum.

It is important to recognise that the impact of the curriculum is wider than just academic results. The impact of the curriculum can also be seen through participation in extra-curricular activities and events, through a wider contribution to the school and to the community, and through success in non-examined opportunities such as the DofE scheme, residential trips, house activities, and a range of extra-curricular activities that develop students' cultural capital. Integral to our development of cultural capital is our House System. We will use the analysis of students' successes in these areas to further review the impact of the curriculum.

Governors monitor the appropriateness and success of the curriculum, measuring the impact, taking into account the levels of achievement; engagement and student destinations at KS4 and KS5, both overall and by breaking down into groups.

6. Support for Students and Parents

It is important that all students are able to read and write well at the earliest stage possible. This is a significant predictor of examination success. Support is given as far as possible to those who need additional help. Counselling and mentoring are available for students with challenging behaviour.

There is a strong emphasis on home learning. Students carry a home learning diary to record home learning that has been set and to seek parents' comments. Home learning is an essential part of supporting student progress. It teaches and encourages organisational skills, personal development, independence and responsibility for learning. At Dormers Wells High School home learning is set in all years. Home Learning is recorded in each student's school diary and also on Microsoft Teams. Parents are required to sign the school diary each week. It may also be used for messages or comments to the form or subject tutor. This enables parents an opportunity to know what their children are working on in school. Parents are strongly encouraged to be interested and involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents are given a username and password for Microsoft Teams to enable them to monitor home learning set.

7. The Role of Curriculum Areas

Curriculum leaders and key stage coordinators will ensure that:

- long term planning is in place for all courses.
- there is consistency of curriculum delivery, schemes of learning should be in place and be used by all staff delivering a particular course.
- expectations within the department are clear on how the teaching and learning non-negotiables form part of the curriculum.
- monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning takes place throughout the year in line with whole school expectations.
- schemes of learning will contain curriculum detail on: context, expectations, key skills, learning objectives, learning activities, literacy, metacognition, prep learning, differentiation and resources.
- schemes of learning encourage progression at least in line with national standards.
- schemes of learning challenge all students from Year 7 to Year 13.
- appropriate awarding bodies and courses are selected so that they best meet the learning needs of our students.
- where necessary an appropriate combination of qualifications or alternative qualifications can be offered which best suit the needs of learners.
- assessment is appropriate to the course and the students following particular courses and there is consistency of approach towards assessment.
- students' progress is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any necessary changes of curriculum delivery are planned and carried out in a timely fashion.
- they oversee CPD needs with regard to curriculum planning and delivery within their area of responsibility.
- all members of the department will ensure that the curriculum rationale is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Teaching staff and learning support staff will:

- ensure that the Dormers Wells High School curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- keep up to date with developments in their curriculum area, with advances in pedagogy and with research evidence about learning (including cognitive, emotional, personal and social aspects).
- apply evidence from prior data and prior learning of students to support students' progress and the development of their critical thinking.
- have high expectations of themselves and take responsibility for the learning of all students in their classes.
- ensure that the DWHS non-negotiables form an integral part of every lesson.
- ensure they are confident in using online resources and platforms such as Microsoft Teams to support and extend students' learning outside of the classroom (where they are not confident, staff are expected to actively seek training and guidance).
- understand their own contribution to the development of students' key skills and attributes: namely, literacy and communication, including developing a lifelong love of reading, numeracy, ICT, working with others, problem solving and reflecting on their own learning and progress so they can become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in different schools and through external networks, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum.
- participate in high quality professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their students and how best to address those needs and engage them.
- utilise the individualised strategies for each of the SEND students that they teach.

Help and Queries

Parents and carers have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at parents' evenings for individual year groups. Should they want more information about any aspect of the curriculum; an appointment can be made with the appropriate curriculum or year leader, or the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum.

Reviews and Operation of this Policy

The Governors have overall responsibility for the operation of this policy and it will be reviewed annually.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Governors: Tan Afzal

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Headteacher: Róisín Walsh