

The Link Secondary School

Curriculum Policy

For review November 2024
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CURRICULUM POLICY

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Introduction:

Professor Michael Young describes the curriculum as an entitlement to ‘powerful knowledge’ and asks if schools offer this entitlement to all¹. At The Link Secondary School, we believe this entitlement is for every student on our role. As a specialist provision for SLCN and ASC needs, we must reflect upon what powerful knowledge means for our students and ensure they can access this fundamental entitlement. Our curriculum is designed to provide ‘powerful knowledge’ for all students as both learned academic information and an acquired set of social and life skills. Whilst for some, knowledge and skills are two separate yet inextricably linked concepts, for our students they are more often one and the same thing. For many, social skills are not something naturally, gradually acquired through life, but are something which must be learned the way one may regard the learning of algebra or grammatical structure.

Intent:

Our vision is for all students to leave our school with enriched and developed **wellbeing, independence, communication and achievement**. This is what drives everything we do at The Link. Our curriculum is designed with a view to help students develop each of these aspects over their time here and ultimately we want to see:

- Students gaining up to nine external accreditations including English and Maths
- Students equipped with skills to enable them to look after themselves in the wider community

- Students leaving with the ability to complete straightforward aspects of everyday living
- Inclusive curriculum content to provide all with academic knowledge in formal and physical expressive curriculum areas
- Inclusive curriculum content to provide all KS5 students with a robust external independent curriculum offer with elements of choice
- An extensively researched and fully embedded appropriately tailored SRE curriculum which meets all new DfE requirements

All teachers are trained in their subject specialism and deliver high quality subject-knowledge driven content. In a collaborative approach to curriculum aims, all teachers have collectively reflected upon and developed a robust sense of curricular direction; demonstrated in measured long term plans and subject specific statements of curriculum intent. These statements consider how the curriculum promotes school values and in turn British values, as well as noting any rationale behind the sequencing of topics, learning, skills and ideas.

Implementation:

Our curriculum structure is tailored to each pathway:

Three classes in KS3 in which both year 7 and year 8 students are taught together:

Yates – a nurture based class who stays with the same tutor for most subjects.

Weir – a nurture based class who stays with the same tutor for most subjects, with a slightly lower level of support than Yates.

Tomlin – a class with a greater level of targeted support.

KS4 and 5 are taught together in three ‘core groups’ for subjects including English, Maths, ICT and PE. They are then taught separately in their tutor groups for all other subjects, including KS5 college placement.

Fuller – a nurture based class who stays with the same tutor for most subjects.

Rowsell – a KS4 group with more targeted support.

Wood – a KS4 group with less targeted support.

Johnson – a KS5 group of mixed ability.

Core Rowsell (CR) – a mixed group of KS4 and 5 with more targeted support.

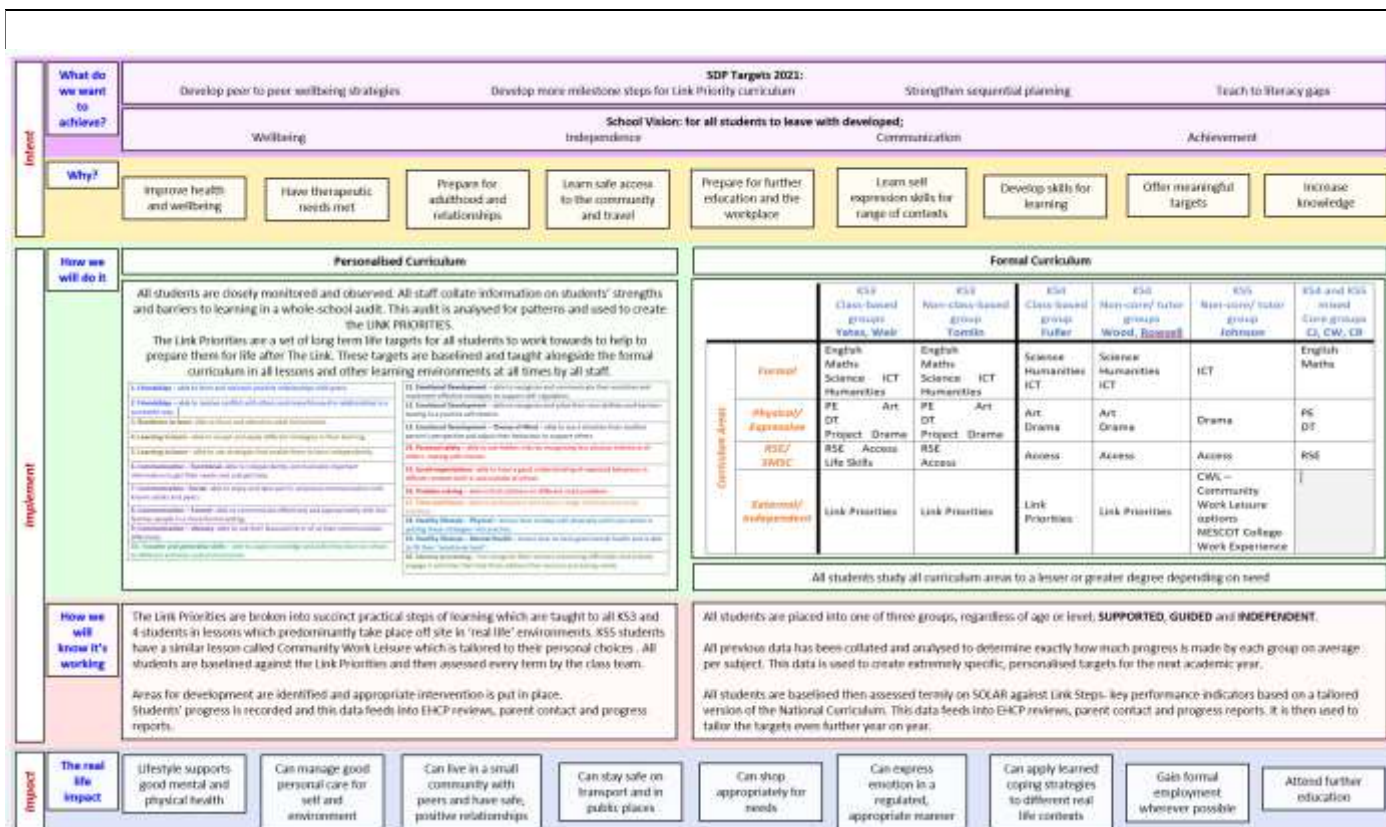
Core Wood (CW) – a mixed group of KS4 and 5 with less targeted support.

Core Johnson (CJ) – a mixed group of KS4 and 5 with greater level of independent learning practice.

All subjects come under one of the four curriculum areas:

Formal, Physical Expressive, SMSC and External Independent

How we organise learning (larger version named as Curriculum Overview):



All students study all curriculum areas to a lesser or greater degree depending on pathway.
 All students have lessons called 'Access' run by the therapy team as well as lessons dedicated to offsite application of learning called Link Priorities, or WCL (Work, Community Leisure) for KS5.

	English	Maths	Intervention Time	PE / IB	DT / IL	RSE	Access	Drama	Humanities / IS	Science / LS	Art / IH	Link Priorities	Life Skills	ICT	Project	CWL	College	Working total
Yates	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	4	1	2			30
Weir	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	2			30
Tomlin	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	3		1	2			30
Fuller	4	4	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	4	1					30
Rowell							1	1	3	3	2	4	1					15
Wood								1	3	4	4	2	1					15
CR	4	4	1	2	2	2												15
CW	4	4	1	2	2	2												15
CJ	4	4		4	2	1												15
Johnson							1	1						1		6	6	15
Total	28	28	6	16	14	10	6	7	15	18	14	17	6	7	Jx3	6	6	

Impact:

The impact of our curriculum is measured and evidenced in both formative and summative forms of assessment. Using assessment monitoring software SOLAR, we use a series of levels called 'Link Steps' loosely based around National Curriculum, however using far more personalised criteria. This criteria is in the form of written key performance indicators created by our own subject specialists. This system is updated by teachers as an ongoing process and each term a progress report is generated and sent home

to parents. Alongside this report is a Link Priorities report, this is a way for us to measure the progress our students make, not only in academia but in moving closer to securing the aim we hold for all our children as set out in our whole school vision of **wellbeing, independence, communication and achievement**. We believe that student progress towards this vision is also underpinned by the work they do with our therapy team. Our therapists annually report the progress made by all students and this is also reflected in the updated annual reviews.

Overall, each individual student is closely monitored by all staff, whether this is in the form of subject based criteria, therapy reports, annual reviews, intervention progress or just the verbal discussions which form part of everyday life at The Link, particularly in structured professional and team meetings. One of the strongest indicators of the impact of our curriculum is the fact that one hundred percent of our students go on to further education.

How we are ensuring our aims are achieved:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing assessment and progress reporting • Increasing number of external accreditations per pupil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting on Link Priorities progress • Strong personal relationships between staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key performance indicators based on NC • In depth individual therapy reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful work placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate pace to the lesson; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking time before answering questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended, thought provoking, challenging questions of the children; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students go on to further education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reviews of EHCP targets

SMSC and SRE:

Our SMSC curriculum area is comprised of RSE and Access. The RSE course has been designed to cover all national requirements and build on the existing knowledge of students to varying degrees. Students explore the notion of ‘identity’ and a ‘personal action plan’ which allows them to immediately relate the topics to themselves and their own lives moving forward. This is then built upon by topics covering ‘risk and safety’ and then ‘emotional well-being’ to identify how well-being may be compromised and in turn how it can be developed. This is extended further in the following topic of ‘healthy lifestyles’ which gives a practical application for the knowledge gained so far throughout the course. At KS4 this also incorporates direct learning in relation to college courses and applications. The idea of wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle both physically and emotionally is then developed further in the next topic of relationships. After looking at relationships the students go on to study personal finance and managing money, this ties into the functional numeracy learned in maths and links back to risk and safety.

Students also explore Britain and British values, looking at how the ideas they have studied fit in with our democracy, rule of law, personal liberties, rights and responsibilities etc.

The topic of SRE was redesigned in response to the statutory government guidelines which came into place in September 2020. A team of staff including the Executive Principal, Head of Site and Lead for Teaching and Learning, Teacher of Humanities and RSE (Formerly Life Skills) and Science Teacher/Post 16 Tutor received external training and met regularly to collate the results of a parent audit and co-produce an RSE curriculum with cross curricular links. As our students have social needs and a high degree of vulnerability, we have ensured the program is as effective and appropriate as possible. We aim for all students to be appropriately prepared for ‘real life’ scenarios without increasing existing anxieties.