



Gunnersbury Catholic School

Curriculum Policy

Approved by: Curriculum Committee	Date: 30/6/25
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Next review due by: July 2026	

Aims

This policy sets out how Gunnersbury Catholic School has developed the curriculum for students across all Key Stages and explains how each pathway allows students to maximise their potential and prepare for the future.

Curriculum Statement

Please see the Gunnersbury Catholic School Curriculum Statement in Appendix One of this policy document.

Curriculum Overview

We offer a broad, balanced, relevant, engaging and inclusive curriculum to all students. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, the curriculum reflects the National Curriculum programmes of study and all other statutory requirements.

Key Stage 3

Students joining Gunnersbury Catholic School in Year 7 follow a broad knowledge-based curriculum, which offers opportunities to explore a wide range of subjects. It allows them to develop a broad body of rich knowledge (factual information as well as taught processes and methods), prepares them thoroughly for their future lives and lays the foundations to succeed required to succeed at GCSE and beyond. More specifically, the features of the curriculum include:

- Inspiring, carefully planned and sequenced content based on the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum
- Providing a refined knowledge base supported by subject trackers in all subjects
- Clear identification and development of important methods and processes that enable all students to apply learning
- Strong connections between classroom-based learning and homework, independent learning and thinking (metacognition) skills
- Regular formative and summative assessment to test and monitor students' knowledge of subject content and depth of understanding, informing teachers' planning
- Frequent reporting and feedback opportunities

A Key Stage 3 curriculum map/journey for each subject, including the knowledge students will acquire, can be found in the Curriculum Areas pages of the school website.

Key Stage 3 extends across Years 7, 8 and 9 where students study all National Curriculum subjects. In addition to the taught curriculum, students are encouraged to capitalise upon the extra-curricular and wider enrichment opportunities that do so much to enhance and enliven their school experience and personal development.

Students study the following subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9, comprising compulsory and non-compulsory subjects:

ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	ART
COMPUTING	DESIGN TECHNOLOGY (INC. COOKING & NUTRITION)	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY
MODERN LANGUAGES (FRENCH)	MUSIC	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
LIVING FAITH (RSE / CITIZENSHIP / CAREERS)			

BTEC Enterprise								2	2
BTEC Sport							2	2	2
English					1*	1*			
		30	30	30	30	30	31	31	31

Y11	FO	MA	SH	LI	EV	TE	CL	HA
Living Faith	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maths	4	4	4	4+4	4+4	4+4	5+4	5+4
English	4	4	4	4	4	6+4	6 +4	6+4
Science	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6
RE	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sport & Physical Activity	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
French	3	3	3	3	3			
Option	3	3	3	3	3	3		
History or Geography	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
BTEC Enterprise							2	2
BTEC Sport						2	2	2
English				1*	1*			
	30	30	30	32	32	34	34	34

*These students are middle band but not in SH for Science or TE for English and so don't do Triple Science or BTEC Sport in Option E.

In addition to the Core Curriculum (set out in the table below), there are a broad range of options choices with conditions applied to these choices dependent upon the Curriculum Pathway onto which they are guided. During Year 9 students receive important information, advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their options subjects. The 'options courses' table below illustrates the breadth of courses offered which provide a good balance between academic and vocational qualifications and the opportunity for students to pursue subjects that suit their skills, interests and plans for future education.

KEY STAGE FOUR CORE CURRICULUM		
GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE & GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE	GCSE MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE (GCSE SEPARATE SCIENCES or GCSE TRILOGY SCIENCE)
LIVING FAITH (RSE) / CITIZENSHIP / CAREERS	GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GCSE FRENCH
SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY		

KEY STAGE FOUR OPTION COURSES			
GCSE BUSINESS STUDIES	GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE	GCSE ART	GCSE GEOGRAPHY
GCSE HISTORY	GCSE MUSIC	GCSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION	BTEC ENTERPRISE
BTEC SPORT			

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is taught over two years during Years 10 and 11, entitling students to receive the recommended hours of teaching in each subject.

Our formal curriculum offer is supplemented by a range of additional opportunities which aim to further enhance, stimulate and engage our students in new experiences. These include careers enterprise days, curriculum enhancement activities, field trips, educational visits and cultural events.

Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, students may follow one of two pathways which meet their individual needs, interests and aspirations. Each pathway has clearly defined entry requirements based on attainment at Key Stage 4. The curriculum offered at Key Stage 5 includes a range of academic A Levels and Level 3 vocational qualifications, and ensures that there are clear progression routes to enable students to continue their post-18 education in higher education, vocational training or by entering the world of work. The Key Stage 5 curriculum also allows for students to re-sit GCSE English and/or Mathematics if required.

KEY STAGE 5 PATHWAYS	
PATHWAY ONE	Four A Level courses
PATHWAY TWO	Level 3 vocational course

KEY STAGE 5 COURSES			
A LEVEL ART	A LEVEL BIOLOGY	A LEVEL CHEMISTRY	A LEVEL ECONOMICS
A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE	A LEVEL FRENCH	A LEVEL FURTHER MATHS	A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY
A LEVEL HISTORY	A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY	A LEVEL MATHEMATICS	A LEVEL BUSINESS STUDIES
A LEVEL PHYSICS	A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES (PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS)	LEVEL 3 BTEC BUSINESS	LEVEL 3 BTEC SPORT
A LEVEL DT	A LEVEL COMPUTER SCIENCE	GCSE MATHS/ENGLISH (RESITS)	
CORE RE	A LEVEL POLITICS	LIVING FAITH(RSE) / CITIZENSHIP / CAREERS	

Distribution of Student Double periods per 2 Weeks:

	Y12 Academic	Y12 Vocational	Y13 Academic	Y13 Vocational
Option 1	6 Double periods		6 Double periods	
Option 2	6 Double periods		6 Double periods	

Option 3	6 Double periods		6 Double periods	
Option 4	6 Double periods		6 Double periods or N/A	
BTEC		18 Double periods		18 Double periods
Study	4 double periods	Up to 10 Double periods	Up to 10 Double periods	Up to 10 Double periods
Core RE	1 Double period	1 Double period	1 Double period	1 Double period
GCSE English or Maths		3 if needed		3 if needed
Living Faith	1 Double period	1 Double period	1 Double period	1 Double period
Total	30 Double periods	30 Double periods	30 Double periods	30 Double periods

In addition to the academic / vocational curriculum, our Sixth Form offer includes a programme of enrichment activities which includes The Aquinas Programme, Mental Health Ambassadors, Eton summer schools, Reading scholars programme, Sutton trust summer programme, Get into science programme, Kings subject taster days, Oxford Mentor scheme, Medic mentor and Law mentor programme with Medic programme, Routes to Success programme, Subject Spotlights

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Students receive a rich programme of Careers education during their time at Gunnersbury Catholic School through a curriculum that is designed and delivered to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks. Through this, students have the opportunity to engage in work-related learning, work experience, learn about different professions and career pathways, and meet professionals, enabling them to make informed and well-considered decisions about their future. Careers education is delivered through Living Faith lessons as well as through a wide range of curriculum enrichment, including a Careers Fair, visiting speakers / professionals and off-site activities.

Curriculum Support and Personalisation

Support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those for whom English is an additional language, is provided by our team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants with additional support from external providers if required.

Students with SEND pursue the full curriculum and have their needs met through High Quality Teaching in class. We have several support programmes:

Support Programmes KS3- Lexia Learning Programme, Guided Reading: Toe by Toe, Cogmed,,Rapid reading, one to one/small group TA support, Speech and Language therapy, Social Skills Group, Attendance and Wellbeing Group, Nurture Group, use of a lap top, counselling, Touch Typing/Handwriting support, Lucid Assessment and Homework support.

Support Programmes KS4 -Rapid Reading, Study Skills, use of a lap top, Social Skills, Attendance and Wellbeing Group, Speech and Language Therapy, one to one/small group TA support, counselling, Nurture Group, Touch Typing/Handwriting, Lucid Assessment and Homework support.

In Years 10 and 11, a handful of students follow a reduced curriculum (they do not take French) and receive additional support in English.

Many opportunities exist to ensure students are adequately stretched and challenged, both during lessons and through the curriculum enrichment programme. Examples of opportunities for this cohort of students include, UKMT Maths Challenges, Reading Challenges, masterclasses and university visits.

Learning and Pastoral Care Reviews

Lesson Observation, student voice activities, Learning Walks and work sampling are used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of care, teaching and learning at Gunnersbury Catholic School. Teachers will be seen teaching as part of the Appraisal process, which, together with CPD, forms an essential evaluation of the quality of provision.

There are 3 Learning & Pastoral Care Reviews throughout the academic year—one per term. Each review will ideally span circa 3 weeks thereby enabling sufficient time for all aspects to take place.

Learning & Pastoral Care Reviews contribute to:

- The continued success of the school
- Raising achievement and school improvement
- Appraisal and management of performance
- Improved classroom teaching
- Determining teachers' own development needs (CPD)
- Identifying the future development needs of the school
- Curriculum development

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the planning and organisation of the curriculum, reporting to the Governing Body, and providing the strategic direction and development of the curriculum.

The role of the **Curriculum Deputy** (with responsibility for Curriculum) is to:

- Lead on the implementation and delivery of the Curriculum Policy across the school, ensuring the curriculum provides accessible opportunities for all students.
- Maintain up to date curriculum models reflecting the organisation of the curriculum across each key stage, providing detailed planning to the timetabler.
- Work with the Headteacher to ensure accurate and cost-effective annual staffing plans and projections, regularly reviewing the curriculum, courses and qualifications.
- Ensure the curriculum is accurately represented on the school website, with high quality documentation and communication to all stakeholders.
- Keep staff up to date with developments to national curriculum policy.

The role of **Curriculum and Subject Leaders** is to:

- Keep up to date and review developments in their subject, at both national and local level, ensuring development planning links to whole-school curriculum objectives.
- Regularly monitor and review the plans for all teachers, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the curriculum.
- Examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used and that planning leads to a broad and balanced curriculum which takes into account the needs of different learners.
- Ensure the curriculum is adequately resourced and monitor the way in which resources are stored and managed.
- Ensure that both formative and summative assessments are used to promote learning.

- Ensure that clear learning outcomes are identified in plans and that students receive consistent and developmental feedback on their work.

The role of the **Subject Teachers** is to:

- Keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level, ensuring lesson planning links to whole-school objectives.
- Plan and deliver lessons that meet the full requirements of the curriculum.
- Through high quality teaching, adapt the curriculum, using appropriate teaching strategies that take into account the needs of different learners.
- Use resources effectively in order to deliver the aims of the curriculum.
- Plan for and use both formative and summative assessments to monitor and track student progress.
- Ensure that clear learning outcomes are identified in plans and that students receive consistent and developmental feedback on their work and time to respond to this in lessons (TRIO).

The role of the **SENDCO** is to:

- Support teachers to develop their teaching and adapt the curriculum to ensure students with SEND receive their entitlement to full curriculum content.
- Ensure suitable curriculum plans are in place for the cohort of students with complex needs who require the delivery of a specialised and personalised curriculum.
- Engage with external agencies and work-related learning providers to, where necessary, supplement the provision delivered by teachers and teaching assistants in school.
- Monitor and adapt the curriculum plans if necessary to ensure students make progress and are prepared for life beyond school.

The implementation of this policy is monitored through whole school, departmental and pastoral self- review, and by the Governing Body.

Curriculum Intent

Gunnersbury Catholic School's curriculum intent and its realisation is founded upon our Mission Statement:

Gunnersbury Catholic School strives to educate all its pupils within an environment where the Catholic traditions of learning, truth, justice, respect and community are promoted. It encourages all to engage in as broad an interpretation of education as is possible, and one which is in keeping with the motto 'Ad Altiora' - 'To Higher Things.'

The curriculum is central to our efforts to maximise the potential of the individual within the school in academic, personal, physical, social and spiritual terms. An education of such quality enables Gunnersbury to shape young men and women who will take their exceptional values beyond school to promote a better, more just society.

Students require an education that effectively and appropriately furthers their knowledge whilst concurrently enabling the acquisition of new skills. In essence our curriculum seeks to enable our pupils to progressively know more and do more. The curriculum, its delivery and its receipt is underpinned by educational research. We consider the work of Rosenshine and the science of metacognition of great significance. We are clear that students should be engaged in learning that is planned and well sequenced. Pupils experience a knowledge-rich curriculum and value the importance of retrieval practice in every lesson. A deep pedagogical insight has informed our departments' development of learning journeys with aspects such as interleaving, chunking and TRIO effectively integrated into schemes of work. We are building awareness of cognitive load and practical solutions so as to ensure lessons are most effective and do not over-burden students' cognitive load.

Our broad curriculum from Year 7-13 serves to enrich and develop all our students, we aim to have an engaging and stretching curriculum that can be accessed by all students in their relevant year group. We aim for all students, regardless of social background or prior attainment, to make progress and engage in opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. Students joining in Year 7 embark upon a curriculum that individually effectively builds on their learning at Key Stage 2. Each department from Year 7-13 follows a clear, extensive, detailed progress map which sets out the knowledge to be acquired and the skills to develop alongside the planned opportunities for recall and revision of content and skills previously encountered. We enable students to leave with a high standard of academic achievement that empowers them to achieve much success within higher/further education and/or the workplace. Furthermore, we are passionate to ensure all students thrive and develop as healthy and good citizens within the wider community and by learning, living and celebrating our Catholic tradition. We ensure SMSC values are embedded into both our pastoral and curriculum plans. Our PSHE (Living Faith) programme complements and develops students' skills and knowledge.

Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is organised around a 34-period week with lessons each being 45 minutes in length. In Key Stage Three students are offered a broad curriculum including Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Languages, History, Geography, Computing, Design

Technology, Physical Education, Music and Art. Students follow an exciting Key Stage Three curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 which has been designed to stimulate and inspire students to build on the work covered in primary school, whilst enhancing and refining essential skills and making connection between subject matter. Our curriculum is intended to prioritise the growth of a broad and rich general knowledge through exposure to well-planned, age-related core content, factual information and powerful language. High quality teaching and vivid learning experiences, which are carefully and imaginatively sequenced, contribute to students' acquisition of knowledge. During Key Stage Three it is our ambition that students grow in confidence and develop skills of application and flexibility of thinking, capturing their creative imaginations and developing their talents. They also cover PSHE, RSE, British Values and undertake a comprehensive Careers programme.

From Key Stage 4 Business Studies, BTEC Sport and Business are also offered in addition to the subjects already in place. Furthermore; students are taught British Values, RSE, PSHE, as well as given a full careers programme. As they embark on a more personalised Key Stage Four curriculum in Years 10 and 11, students have laid solid foundations for study in a suite of subjects which they have chosen to pursue for GCSE. Gunnersbury Catholic School is fully inclusive, offering a curriculum that meets the needs of each individual and enables every student to succeed. Students will be inspired by their teachers and, through their learning in all subjects, will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to succeed in their courses alongside achieving a sense of personal fulfilment.

At Key Stage 5, students can continue with their subjects studied in the lower school – additionally Psychology, Economics, BTEC Level 3 Sport and BTEC Level 3 Business are available. From September 2024 we are also offering Politics in Year 12 as an A'Level option. Our Sixth Form students are also provided with the opportunity to join the Aquinas Programme. Our Sixth Form curriculum continues the learning journey with a greater emphasis on personalisation through, embracing a more scholarly ethos and promoting the value of independent learning and research, encouraging students to take on new activities, make a positive contribution to the wider school and community, and flex their leadership muscles in a range of diverse opportunities.

Excellent attainment and progress of students is of fundamental importance in preparing our young people for their education and employment beyond secondary school. Regular and robust formative and summative assessment provides opportunities for students to apply their learning and allows teachers to adapt teaching where necessary to ensure content is stored in the long-term memory. Careful planning of the curriculum seeks to support long term retention rather than short term performance, and students revisit and embed valuable skills across the key stages, re-engaging with content at a deeper level as they progress to reinforce prior learning and strengthen understanding and confidence.

The curriculum places high importance on the development of literacy and oracy skills for all students in all subjects, with the clear intention of enhancing their ability to communicate effectively. It is the responsibility of all teachers in all subjects to

help students develop their vocabulary as a way of improving the fluency of their writing and speaking. This is implemented through ensuring that in lessons, at all key stages, and for students of all abilities, exposure to extended written texts and speaking activities will be central to the learning experience, both with classwork and homework.

The wider school enrichment curriculum is intended to encourage belonging and a sense that wider opportunities, within and beyond the classroom, exist and are equally valued. A broad range of enhancement and extra-curricular activities are provided, allowing students access to opportunities that cater for all interests and abilities. These are implemented with a clear focus on the importance of giving young people a chance to shine and develop skills that are often not accurately measured in the classroom setting, such as leadership and teamwork. This will also help to improve students' 'mental wealth', promoting positivity, reducing levels of anxiety and providing a healthier work-life balance, all of which are important dimension of success.

Curriculum Impact

The overall impact of the curriculum at Gunnersbury Catholic School is sought to be sustained excellence in terms of knowledge acquisition and application, academic achievement and the development of rounded young people who are thoroughly prepared for life in a rapidly changing world – a world where transferable skills, including communication, technology, creativity and problem solving, will help succeed. Students' cultural capital, outcomes and the characteristics they develop will be a cause for celebration and there will be clear evidence of progression towards career-enhancing opportunities in employment, education and training.