

Curriculum & Assessment Policy

Date of Policy: September 2015

Date of Review: September 2017

1. Aims

- 1.1. The curriculum at Thomas Gainsborough School is designed to provide all students with opportunities to pursue personal pathways, suited to their ambitions and developing skills. Decisions on which pathway to follow and subjects to study are taken by parents and students with the school's advice and guidance arrangements at ages 11, 14 and 16.
- 1.2. Our assessment systems are designed to support outstanding outcomes for all students by recognising achievement, progress and most importantly identifying next steps for improvement.

2. Our curriculum

- 2.1. On entry to the school in year 7 students and their parents choose from three pathways, Grammar, STEM and Broad. These pathways contain different elements to allow students to develop expertise in a range of subjects. The exact proportion of time spent on each subject changes slightly from year to year, but essentially the Grammar pathway provides more time to develop languages, classics and humanities. The STEM pathway provides more time to develop skills in science and technology. The Broad pathway provides access to a typical secondary school curriculum with breadth through inclusion of discrete Humanities, Arts, MFL and Technology. For a few students a curriculum rich in social and emotional support as well as the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, known as Access is provided. Each of the main three curriculum pathways contains a number of classes that are grouped by ability, thereby ensuring students of all abilities can follow the curriculum pathway of their choice at an appropriate level.
- 2.2. All three pathways prepare students to make further choices at age 14. Some students **may** refine their curriculum at the end of Year 8, depending on the pathway that they are following.
- 2.3. Choice of pathway is not dependent on prior attainment, although the information advice and guidance provided by school will take prior attainment, and future ambition into account when advising about the appropriateness of a particular pathway for a particular student.
- 2.4. At age 14 students will then be able to choose from a range of courses to be combined with Maths, English, Triple or Double Science (dependent on teaching group) and PE. Students will also be required to take at least one subject from History, Geography, Computer Science or Modern Foreign Languages.
- 2.5. Sixth Form: The majority of students in year 12 take three A levels plus EPQ. A small number of very able students are allowed to take four A levels. Some students in Year 12 study a mix of A levels and Level Three Vocational subjects. Some students who have a lower academic profile, study three Level Three Vocational subjects.
- 2.6. In year 13 the majority of students continue with their three subjects to A level plus EPQ, or A level/Level Three Vocational, or Level Three Vocational combinations. A very small number of students continue with 2 full subjects.
- 2.7. Year 12 students prepare for the EPQ in July and continue this into Year 13, with most completing their EPQ in the Spring term. Students not studying an EPQ complete a period of relevant Work Experience to support their application Post 18. In year 12 the time after the final AS exam in May is used for UCAS preparation, with most students completing this process during the Autumn term.
- 2.8. Personal Social Health Education, RE, Citizenship and Careers Education is delivered in a variety of ways:- explicit Philosophy lessons at Key Stage 3; Philosophy & Ethics option at GCSE and A Level; Enrichment Days; Tutor time and assemblies based on a fortnightly theme; regular guest speakers; cross - curricular mapping and the Careers Hub.

3. Assessments

- 3.1. Annual examinations for each year group are planned in the school's assessment calendar. These include mock exams for students in the school year that they are due to take public GCSE, BTEC and A level examinations.
- 3.2. Regular assessments are also planned by each subject leader to support preparation for public exams, recognise student achievement, demonstrate progress, provide feedback to students and to assist in planning further learning.

3.3. **Assessment for Learning (AFL)**

AFL has been identified as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. AFL forms part of effective planning and assessment opportunities and will be integrated into all Schemes of Work. Teachers will consider prior attainment of all pupils when planning lessons. Teachers will generally share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils as a way of ensuring students are involved in assessment procedures. Further guidance for staff as well as examples are available in the Teaching and Learning Guidance handbook.

4. **Feedback**

5. Feedback to support further progress is provided by teachers through:
 - In class questioning
 - Detailed formative marking
 - Learning conversations
 - Summative grades given for particular pieces of work that will inform regularly collected progress gradesFeedback will be sensitive and constructive, reflecting what has been done well and what is needed to be done in order to improve. The Thomas Gainsborough School Learning and Teaching Policy Guidance states that core subjects should be attempting to provide feedback weekly and all other subjects fortnightly. In practice, the minimum expectation for written feedback is every three lessons.

Feedback should also support whole school attempts to improve standards of literacy and written English, through the consistent application of the marking for literacy guidance (see Appendix 2)

In addition, students will be involved in the assessment process by:

- Being asked to respond to marking by completing an additional task/thinking/redrafting/correcting/reflection to ensure that they have understood and taken on board the feedback given.
- This may include peer and self marking activities. Different subject areas will adopt different practice within these broad principles. Teachers will also mark for literacy, using a standard school framework, set out below.

6. **Reporting**

- 6.1. Progress is recorded and shared regularly throughout years 7 to 11 using a unified scale showing outcomes at age 16.
- 6.2. Up to six times each year, on dates set in the school's annual assessment calendar, staff are asked to make a judgement, based on recent assessments of each student's current position and their approach to learning.
- 6.3. The student's current position is a teacher's judgement based on recent assessments in line with the subjects level descriptors and planned assessments. Planned assessments are reviewed each year with the Assistant Headteacher responsible for the curriculum area.
- 6.4. This information is shared with students, parents and tutors and forms the basis for conversations on Academic Review Days, during Academic Tutoring Meetings and at Subject Surgery appointments where applicable. These conversations are focussed on students progress and the next steps needed to support further progress.
- 6.5. Progress for students in the Sixth Form is judged against the outcomes which they are on course to achieve, based on assessments and work completed so far. Comments and next steps for students are recorded at 4 points each year, as identified in the school's annual assessment calendar.

7. **Targets**

- 7.1. All students are set targets at the upper end of a range that they might be expected to achieve when compared

to national rates of progress and attainment, to reflect the ambition that the school has for their outcomes at 16 and 18. These are based on a student's prior attainment - the school is ambitious for every student and therefore targets are set at one grade higher than might be expected when compared to national figures between the age of 11 and 16.

- 7.2. These targets for the end of their qualification are also reviewed each year and used to set targets for the end of each year. There may be some amendment made to these end of year targets to reflect the curriculum pathway that a student is on, especially when there is variation in the number of lessons taught.
- 7.3. Targets are set using a range of available information including students prior attainment, their recent progress and national standards set out by the Department for Education.

8. Approach to Learning Judgement

- 8.1. Students approach to learning is judged by each of their teachers to fall into one of five categories and also reported on at each point in the reporting cycle:

Exemplary	Always giving of your very best
Positive	Working well and trying hard
Inconsistent	Improvements needed
Unsatisfactory (parents & tutor aware)	Significant improvement required
Unable to comment (attendance)	Unable to comment due to attendance

9. Responsibilities

Assistant Headteachers for each of the three main curriculum areas (Modern Arts, Communications and Enterprise) will oversee the application and implementation of this policy through routine line management monitoring and evaluation activities, including work scrutiny, pupil voice and reviewing of progress being made.

9.1. Subject leaders

Setting curriculum in line with the TGS curriculum pathways and to ensure statutory coverage where applicable and reviewing periodically to reflect changes in priorities or methodology.

Setting calendar of assessments in order to inform school assessment cycle

Standardisation of assessments with other relevant members of staff in school and across applicable teams in the Samuel Ward Multi-Academy Trust

Regular work scrutiny to ensure consistent application of this policy in terms of feedback provided to students.

Reporting and planning actions

9.2. Subject teachers

Teaching the curriculum as set out by subject leaders

Ensuring that standardised assessments are carried out, assessed and fed back on in order to inform the school assessment cycle

Ensure that students are afforded regular opportunities to respond to feedback that they have received in order to make further progress.

Contributing to the development of assessment in the subject team(s) they are part of

9.3 Heads of House

Carry out regular work scrutiny for individuals and groups of students as part of the monitoring of achievement and progress

Monitoring achievement and progress through Academic Review Days and regular Academic Tutoring appointments.

Liaising with subject staff as appropriate to help address concerns over underachievement or below

expected progress.

9.4 Tutors

Monitoring achievement and progress through Academic Review Days and regular Academic Tutoring appointments.

Liaising with subject staff as appropriate to help address concerns over underachievement or below expected progress.

Referring ongoing concerns to the relevant Head of House

9.3. Students

Work hard, meet deadlines and respond to comments that teachers make to help improve further

Set weekly and termly targets as per the Academic Review Cycle to meet objectives set on Academic Review Day

9.4. Parents

Support their children by facilitating an environment where preparation tasks, revision and other home learning can be undertaken productively

Engage with Academic Review process by attending appointments three times a year.

Liaise with form tutor and subject staff as necessary

Appendices:

Unified Assessment Scale used at TGS

Marking for Presentation and Literacy Guidance