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Smithills School Curriculum Policy

1. Purpose and Rationale

At Smithills School, the curriculum is central to our vision of Success for All. It is designed to ensure that every pupil, regardless of starting point or background, is supported to achieve highly and to thrive academically, socially and personally.

We recognise curriculum quality as a key driver of strong outcomes, inclusion, personal development and effective teaching. The curriculum is deliberately ambitious, carefully structured and inclusive by design, ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and rich educational experience.

Our core values of Independence, Community and Excellence are embedded throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils develop not only secure knowledge and skills, but also character, agency and a sense of civic responsibility.

2. Curriculum Quality and Coherence

The curriculum at Smithills School is designed first and foremost to be high quality, ambitious and coherent, so that all pupils achieve well and leave us prepared for the next stage of their education and lives.

Our curriculum is carefully constructed to ensure that:

- All pupils experience a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, regardless of background or starting point
- Subject curricula are well designed and thoughtfully sequenced, enabling pupils to build knowledge and skills securely over time
- Teaching and learning is underpinned by clear expectations, strong subject expertise and purposeful classroom practice
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning, including resilience, independence and responsibility
- Personal development, wellbeing and character education are woven meaningfully through the curriculum

Rather than viewing curriculum as a standalone element, we understand it as the foundation that shapes pupils' learning experiences, outcomes and future opportunities. The quality of the curriculum is therefore central to securing strong academic achievement, positive behaviour and sustained engagement for all pupils.



3. Curriculum Intent

3.1 Whole-School Intent

The intent of the Smithills School curriculum is to:

- Deliver a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils
- Ensure clear progression and coherence across subjects and key stages
- Develop strong literacy, oracy and numeracy across the curriculum
- Build cultural capital, global awareness and respect for diversity
- Foster high expectations, curiosity, resilience and aspiration
- Prepare pupils effectively for the next stage of education, training or employment
- Integrate character education, wellbeing and personal development throughout pupils' learning

3.2 Curriculum Principles

All subject curricula are designed and delivered in line with the following shared principles:

- Coherence and progression: learning is carefully sequenced from Year 7 onwards, building on prior knowledge, revisiting core concepts and preparing pupils for future learning
- Depth and challenge: breadth is balanced with depth, ensuring misconceptions are addressed and pupils are stretched appropriately
- Access and adaptation: curriculum planning anticipates varied starting points, with scaffolding, challenge and responsive intervention built in
- Connection and relevance: cross-curricular links, enrichment, careers education and real-world contexts strengthen meaning and engagement
- High-quality assessment: formative and summative assessment inform teaching, support retention and guide curriculum refinement
- Enrichment and opportunity: learning is complemented by extracurricular experiences, cultural opportunities and community partnerships



- Continuous review: the curriculum is dynamic and regularly reviewed in light of evidence, research and pupil outcomes

4. Curriculum Implementation

4.1 Subject Design and Sequencing

- Each subject has a clearly defined curriculum overview, identifying essential knowledge, skills and end points
- Subject learning journeys set out what pupils will know, understand and be able to do at each stage
- Curriculum plans build deliberately on prior learning, including from Key Stage 2, and address gaps through revisit and retrieval
- Retrieval practice, cumulative review and interleaving are embedded to support long-term retention
- Reading, vocabulary development and oracy are explicitly taught across all subjects
- Numeracy is reinforced where relevant across the wider curriculum

4.2 Teaching and Learning

Curriculum implementation is supported by the school's agreed Teaching and Learning Framework, which sets out the shared expectations for classroom practice.

- Teachers are subject experts, supported through professional development and collaborative curriculum leadership
- Lessons are structured to support clarity, engagement, explanation, practice and reflection
- Adaptive teaching ensures learning is accessible while maintaining high expectations
- Targeted interventions address gaps in learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy

4.3 Assessment and Feedback

- Formative assessment is used routinely to check understanding and inform teaching
- Summative assessment provides regular checkpoints of progress and curriculum impact
- Assessment information is used by teachers and leaders to identify trends, gaps and priorities for improvement



- Pupils and parents receive clear information about progress and next steps

4.4 Enrichment, SMSC and Personal Development

- A dedicated PSHE, Session 0 and Character Education programme runs alongside academic subjects
- Careers education is aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks and Baker Clause requirements
- All pupils engage with work-related learning and guidance to inform future pathways
- Extracurricular opportunities, trips and leadership roles enhance engagement and cultural capital
- Participation is monitored to ensure equitable access for all pupils

4.5 Inclusion and Support

- All pupils are entitled to the full curriculum offer
- Curriculum planning anticipates barriers to learning and includes appropriate adaptations
- Pupils with SEND, EAL and those who are disadvantaged receive targeted support without narrowing curriculum access
- Inclusion is monitored to ensure equity of opportunity and ambition

5. Curriculum Impact

Through the effective implementation of this curriculum, we expect that:

- Pupils achieve the intended curriculum outcomes and retain knowledge over time
- Progress is sustained and secure across subjects and key stages
- Pupils develop confidence, independence and aspiration
- Personal development outcomes are strong, including social, moral and cultural understanding
- Gaps between groups narrow as all pupils access ambitious learning
- Evaluation activities demonstrate strengths and inform improvement priorities



6. Leadership, Monitoring and Review

- Senior leaders, subject leaders and governors maintain oversight of curriculum intent, implementation and impact
- Quality assurance activities focus explicitly on curriculum coherence and fidelity
- Curriculum review meetings support reflection, evaluation and refinement
- Curriculum pathways and time allocations are reviewed to meet pupil and community needs
- Professional development is aligned with curriculum priorities and evidence-informed practice

7. Review and Ongoing Improvement

This curriculum policy reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and to providing the best possible education for our pupils.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains:

- Ambitious and challenging for all pupils
- Well sequenced and coherent across subjects and key stages
- Inclusive and responsive to the needs of our school community
- Effective in securing strong outcomes and positive experiences

Leaders, subject teams and governors work together to evaluate the impact of the curriculum through a range of evidence, including pupil work, learning conversations, assessment information and pupil voice. This evaluation informs refinement and development, ensuring that our curriculum continues to improve and that all pupils are supported to succeed.

Safeguarding underpins all aspects of curriculum design and delivery, ensuring that pupils learn in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.