

The Studio West School Curriculum

2023/2024



Learning that Connects

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Mission Statement

Students are at the centre of everything we do. Through collaboration, every aspect of our work is of high quality. Our academies deliver an ambitious and inclusive curriculum. This enables all students to have high aspirations and to excel academically and socially.

One Trust Rule

Every student and adult is expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people and their wellbeing at all times.

Intent

Studio West, in keeping with the One Trust Rule, aims to offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is ambitious, coherently planned and appropriately sequenced.

The Studio West curriculum builds on the knowledge and skills taught by our primary colleagues at Key Stage 2. We expect departments to teach every element of the National Curriculum in their subject area to all of our students, and to take opportunities to go beyond the National Curriculum and exam specifications in order to broaden students' experience and understanding. Physical Education is taught in years 7-11 and Religious Education in years 7 to 9 - both are complemented in all years by a comprehensive personal development (PD) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme, which includes age-appropriate relationships and sex education.

We set great store by our students achieving excellent examination results, whilst also developing intrigue, independence, creativity, resilience and individual talents. We deliver a curriculum which focuses on expanding cultural capital and wider world knowledge, on developing our learners as readers, and on building an appreciation of the arts. The revised KS4 options process at Studio West now means that every student will complete a GCSE from the arts suite of subjects.

Our goal is to ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills required of the next stage in their education and that they are well prepared to be positive contributors in their local and global communities. We hope that for the great majority of our students, the next step in their education will be to continue their studies. The curriculum and an ongoing careers programme are designed to widen the aspirations of, and the options available to, our students.

Our school is comprehensive and diverse. Our curriculum leaders aim to meet the needs of all students by identifying the core knowledge students need to learn, and developing a detailed and expertly taught curriculum plan. Our curriculum planning aims to help all pupils achieve, supporting those with high prior attainment and those with SEND equally.

Leaders ensure that the elements of the national curriculum and exam specifications are well sequenced so that topics are covered in depth and there is a progressive accumulation of knowledge. We believe that a strong knowledge base, built alongside a considered hinterland to develop cultural capital, is essential to support student understanding and appreciation of the worlds of arts, literature and science. Fluency and rapid recall of that knowledge free up the cognitive load to facilitate higher order thinking.

We recognise the research demonstrating the relationship between vocabulary and both educational and life outcomes. As such, we explicitly and systematically teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary in lessons. We

value reading, providing opportunities to do so in lessons and ensuring that all students have access to books they can read at home. All students have a handheld device which allows them to access books at home.

Our curriculum is taught by subject experts who, when appropriate, make links between different aspects of their subject to deepen student understanding. Systems are in place to ensure that that knowledge is learnt by students and not subsequently forgotten.

Students with lower-than-expected standard Key Stage 2 scores on entry are targeted for “catch-up,” including a range of literacy and numeracy interventions, which assist in raising skill levels and self-esteem.

The Studio West curriculum ensures that pupils have the necessary subject knowledge and personal qualities, such as self-reliance and resilience, to access Further and Higher Education or the world of training and work through apprenticeships. As part of a rounded and quality offer, our curriculum provides many opportunities both within and beyond the classroom to further develop cultural capital and readiness for work. This is especially important given the high levels of social deprivation and unemployment both locally and regionally, which are significantly above national norms. We are proud to offer work placement opportunities to our students in Years 9 and 10.

We are mindful of our local context at each stage of our curriculum development. Our children come from a variety of wards across Newcastle upon Tyne, where the school deprivation indicator is much higher than national at 0.32 (national = 0.20). In Newcastle the increase in child poverty between 2015 and 2020 was the largest in the country, with 41.2% of Newcastle’s children now from homes with below 60% of the median national income after housing costs.

Given our aim to ensure that our students become well rounded citizens, well placed for their life beyond school, our curriculum is designed to overcome barriers that are presented to many of our students in the local community. The increased challenges that children face in areas of deprivation mean that it is imperative that they also achieve good academic outcomes.

We have designed a curriculum intended to support students in overcoming the poverty cycle, raise aspirations for our students and ultimately reduce deprivation in Newcastle. Our city also has lots of opportunities; it is a city with two hugely successful universities, an international airport, and a thriving quaternary industry. It is a gateway city for refugees and international new arrivals, so now has a rich mix of cultures and communities. Newcastle needs a large labour force as the city continues to expand. There is a bright future ahead for our students whether they stay in Newcastle or travel further afield. Our students are exposed to a wide range of subjects and careers advice which will support them in finding their place and role in this growing and vibrant community.

Implementation

All departments are required to teach a curriculum that is appropriately challenging for all. All Heads of Department follow a diligent process for deciding core knowledge and required vocabulary, and for planning a sequence of learning to build understanding for students and provide clarity for teachers. They produce curriculum maps that build on Key Stage 2, provide access to Post-16 and prepare students for study and employment beyond that.

Key Stage 3 Overview

At Studio West School we operate a three-year Key Stage 3 and a two-year Key Stage 4.

Students have a broad and engaging Key Stage 3 in Years 7 to 9 which builds on the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum and the work our feeder schools have undertaken. We aim to develop cultural capital and a love for learning so that students can make informed decisions about the subjects they wish to take in KS4.

Curriculum time across a 50-hour fortnight is currently divided as follows:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English Language and Literature	8	8	8
Mathematics	8	8	8
Science	8	8	8
French	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	3
Religious education	1	1	1
Physical education	3	3	3
PSHE and CEIAG	2	2	2
Computer Science	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Technology	3	3	3
Leadership, Community, British Values	5	5	5

Students with lower-than-expected reading ages on entry receive interventions, which assist in raising skill levels and self-esteem.

Key Stage 4 Overview

During Key Stage 4 the knowledge and skills established at Key Stage 3 are revisited and built upon, meaning there is depth to both student thinking and their understanding of each of the subjects they take.

Students make decisions about their Level 2 choices during Year 9 in order to start KS4 in Year 10. Academic subjects in the EBacc are at the heart of our Key Stage 4 offer. In Humanities, students choose History or Geography, with some opting to study both. All students can choose to continue studying French and we are keen to increase the number of young people who opt to do so.

Curriculum time across a two-week timetable is currently divided as follows:

Subject	Year 10
PSHE, RSE, British Values, RE and CEIAG	5
English	10
Maths	10

Science (combined or triple)	8
Geography or History (can study both through Options)	5
Physical education	2
Art or Sport option	5
Option A	5
Option B	5
Subject	Year 11
PSHE, RSE, British Values, RE and CEIAG	5
English	10
Maths	10
Science (combined or triple)	10
Physical education	2
Art based option	4
Business Studies	2

Curriculum time across a two-week timetable from September 2024:

Subject	Year 10 and 11
PSHE, RSE, British Values, RE and CEIAG	5
English	10
Maths	10
Science (combined or triple)	8
Geography or History (can study both using options below)	5
Physical education	2
Art or sport option	5
Option A	5
Option B	5

Assessment and feedback

Assessment in all its forms sits at the heart of our curriculum delivery. Students are regularly assessed in class through retrieval activities, questioning and low-stakes quizzes in order for teachers to address misconceptions and plan next steps in learning. Formative feedback is provided after key pieces of work either individually or using a whole class feedback sheet.

For students in all year groups, we measure the extent to which students have learnt the core declarative and procedural knowledge our teachers have identified in their departmental curriculum. Progress is defined as understanding, retention and ability to apply that core knowledge. Each half-term and for each student they teach, teachers answer the question “Has this student made the progress that could reasonably be expected of them?”. Classwork provides the basis of this decision and termly assessments assessing understanding of recently taught material and retention of previously taught core knowledge triangulate these judgements. Where a child is judged not to have made reasonably expected progress, teachers indicate a classroom-based intervention to support them in their learning.

Question Level Analysis (QLA) of assessments is one form of evidence used to inform topics to be revisited in retrieval activities, to identify topics for targeted interventions and for future curriculum refinement.

Year 10 students sit assessments designed to prepare them for their final GCSE examinations and to measure their progress towards these. These papers assess their learning so far and students are given a

“working at” GCSE grade as well as a predicted grade for the end of the course. The third formal assessment in Year 10 is a Pre-Public Examination (PPE) assessing all content covered on the course so far.

Year 11 complete Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) in December and March. These are important steppingstones towards the final examinations and students are supported to master elements of the course in the build-up to each of these PPEs. Question Level Analysis of PPEs informs teacher planning, and “next steps” information is provided to students as well as foci for targeted intervention. Subjects provide other informal short-tests and extended response opportunities as part of their ongoing revision planning. Students are given a “working at” GCSE grade as well as a predicted grade for the end of the course.

Wider Learning and Careers

The development of well-rounded, responsible citizens who are equipped for employment is as important to us as examination success. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) aspects of life and British Values permeate the entire curriculum and life at school.

As a studio school we aim to provide our students with opportunities to develop practical work place skills alongside their academic studies. Students in years 9, 10 and 11 have the opportunity of a two-week work place placement. Students also develop essential employment skills through enterprise days built around the themes of:

- Media and Communication
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Visual Arts

PSHE is delivered through five half-hour form sessions each week, addressing the themes of

- CEIAG and aspirations
- Healthy body, minds and relationships including the compulsory elements of Relationships and Sex education
- SMSC
- Financial literacy
- Democracy and the rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance

Life choices and deprivation have a direct impact on life expectancy, which is significantly lower than the national average in many of the wards we serve. Our curriculum supports students in making better life choices. Deprivation is strongly associated with higher levels of obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, smoking and poor blood pressure control. All these factors lower life expectancy. Our curriculum has considered this carefully and, by providing physical education and high-quality Personal Development education throughout their time at school, our students will be able to make better life choices that will have a positive impact on their health and ultimately the communities in which they live.

Mental health is equally as important to us and our careful planning of mental health education in the curriculum and the high levels of pastoral support around it ensure that our students find strategies to cope with stress and mental health problems. The impact from the Personal Development sessions and the strong mental health and well-being messages that thread through everything we do at Studio West help to protect and support our students as they develop into young adults, prepare for the stresses of examinations and take the next steps in to higher education or places of work.

How students learn at Studio West

Northern Leaders Trust Learning Cycle

The Northern Leaders Trust Learning Cycle helps students identify the part of the lesson they are in and the learning behaviours associated with it. This structure supports all students with their learning, especially those coming from a disadvantaged background or those with SEND. The cycle provides a framework for teachers to plan lessons, although they are free to have multiple new learning and application episodes. We communicate with families so they understand the cycle, our teaching and learning strategies and how they can best support learners at home.

Connect

All lessons start with a connect activity. This written activity is typically in the form of a few short retrieval questions which encourage students to recall previously learnt knowledge, both from a recent lesson and from further back. These questions will often make a link between previously acquired knowledge and the lesson's new learning. Connect activities are completed in silence and without looking back at work in books. It is the "struggle to remember" and regular revisiting of core knowledge that consolidates memories and helps students beat what Ebbinghaus calls "the forgetting curve".

Creating connections between pre-existing knowledge and new learning strengthens students' understanding of the subject. Teachers explicitly make these links in learning and to careers or aspects of personal development by explaining "why this, why now?".

Learn

In the new learning part of the lesson the teacher, as the subject expert, passes on the core knowledge identified in the subject's curriculum. Teachers model using an I-We-You structure and directly address misconceptions. Students should be engaged listeners and ready to respond to questioning.

Apply

During this part of the lesson students work individually or in groups to apply their new learning, using the models provided as examples, and avoiding the identified misconceptions. Scaffolding of support enables all students to make progress in the lesson.

Review

In the final part of the lesson students complete an activity which reinforces and returns to the core knowledge intended to be learnt in that lesson. This activity can often be used by teachers as a feedback opportunity to refine their plans for the next lesson in a sequence.

Any time assessment

Questioning can occur at any point in the lesson to check and strengthen student understanding.

Teaching of vocabulary

Vocabulary is explicitly taught across the school. Tier 2 language, that is words that are common in written language but less so in spoken language, and Tier 3 language (subject specific words) is taught in a structured way in every subject across the school. Understanding these words is important for exam success and for fostering a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, a subject.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum offer on student outcomes and personal development is reviewed and reported regularly in Years 7 to 11. Impact is measured against all statutory measures and national standards. Academic performance within each year group is carefully monitored to ensure that students are making the requisite progress and that the impact of teaching and intervention is as it should be. This monitoring informs school improvement priorities.

We have a number of aims and expectations of what our curriculum will achieve:

- We expect all subjects to balance the need to prepare pupils for examinations with the development of skills and a broader understanding of how the subject fits into the wider world.
- We expect to see year-on-year improvements in the progress made by pupils in all subjects at all key stages.
- We aim to support all our learners to be able to read at age-appropriate levels and to develop a love of reading for its own sake.
- We aim to ensure that the diverse curriculum offer that we have strived to protect, enthuses and inspires young people to attend school regularly and reach their academic potential.
- We aim to foster a love for learning reflected in positive Attitude to Learning ratings for all of our students.
- Whilst we welcome many of our students into the Trust's Sixth Form at the end of Year 11, we understand that some pupils, following independent advice and guidance, will choose to further their studies or work-related training elsewhere.
- We want all our pupils, including those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds or with SEND, to be in education, employment or training when they leave us, either at the end of Year 11.
- We aspire for all Studio West pupils to be inspired by their education (inside and outside the classroom) at school and to seek out and follow a career in a field for which they hold a passion.
- We aim to recruit and retain the best available subject specialist teachers.

Glossary

KNOWLEDGE		
<p>CORE KNOWLEDGE The powerful knowledge we want students to retain in their long-term memory. It is on this that students build their understanding, creativity and enquiry.</p>	<p>HINTERLAND KNOWLEDGE The narratives, metaphors, analogies or anecdotes we use to frame core knowledge. It should be enriching and vital but should not become a distraction</p>	
<p>SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE Substantive knowledge is the set of facts, principles, laws, descriptions, claims, concepts or accounts of a subject. It will account for much of the core knowledge we teach.</p>	<p>DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE Disciplinary knowledge addresses how experts in a field generate and verify knowledge. The amount of this will vary greatly between subjects.</p>	
<p>DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE Declarative knowledge – is the “know that” element of substantive knowledge.</p>	<p>PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE Procedural knowledge is the “know how” or skills and techniques.</p>	
<p>THRESHOLD KNOWLEDGE “...a portal opening up new and previously inaccessible ways of thinking about something...a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress” (Meyer and Lland) Knowledge without which students will not be able to access new learning. Must be explicitly taught and collaborative planning and a common language around teaching it is crucial.</p>		
VOCABULARY		
<p>TIER 1 Everyday words familiar with most students and normally learned through conversation e.g. inside, yellow</p>	<p>TIER 2 Academic words that students might encounter across subjects. Less common in speech and more common in written language. e.g. indistinguishable, emerge <i>Taught in form, use encouraged in lessons during questioning</i></p>	<p>TIER 3 Academic words that belong to specific subjects e.g. equation, photosynthesis <i>Taught and used in lessons</i></p>
LEARNING SCIENTIST STRATEGIES		
<p>TESTING Silent and independent, without referring to notes. Prime new learning without creating unnecessary cognitive load – concentrate on core knowledge, not hinterland</p>	<p>SPACED PRACTICE Providing opportunities to revisit previously taught knowledge over a period of time to beat what Ebbinghaus called the forgetting curve e.g. through carefully planned and timed homework quizzes</p>	<p>INTERLEAVING Revisiting topics/knowledge in different orders or contexts, creating opportunities to create links between different ideas or help students choose the right strategy to solve a problem</p>
ASSESSMENT TO...		
<p>...CHECK UNDERSTANDING <i>High quality questioning in class</i> <i>Opportunities for self-assessment against clear success criteria</i> <i>Live marking during Apply activities</i> <i>Review at the end of the lesson focussed tightly on the core knowledge being taught</i></p>	<p>...CHECK RETENTION <i>Connect activity in the next lesson, later in the topic, etc</i> <i>Retrieval through well planned homework quizzes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>At regular intervals</i> - <i>Ahead of returning to a topic/theme to build</i> <p><i>Formal assessments – tightly focussed on retention and application of Core Knowledge</i></p>	