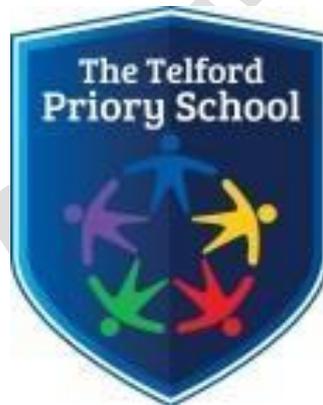


THE TELFORD PRIORY SCHOOL



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Date for Policy Review	On-going

Curriculum Policy

The Telford Priory School Curriculum Policy

“Powerful knowledge for global citizens”

1. Ambition - Vision and Approach

At The Telford Priory School, we are committed to:

A curriculum that both offers academic reward and builds cultural capital; a curriculum that prepares our students for whatever career they choose, at the highest level they choose; a curriculum which will allow our students to join and lead the highest levels of debate in current affairs and community as informed global citizens; a curriculum that brings students in to participation and appreciation of the most beautiful, fascinating and exciting areas of culture and human endeavour; a curriculum to empower.

It is through a commitment to research, reading, and looking out beyond our own school that we have arrived at this vision, and we continue with this commitment as we move forward on our journey. We engage with the wider community through Twitter, books, blogs, the Chartered College of Teachers, and conferences such as researchED, and we have built links with subject specialists for all of our departments.

2. Achieving our vision

Several strands throughout the school form the realisation of our vision. At the heart of our practice is an ambitious, knowledge-rich curriculum, informed by Prof. Michael Young’s work on Powerful Knowledge. The content of the curriculum is ambitious and balanced across substantive and disciplinary, with careful attention paid to the interplay between the two. The curriculum is expertly sequenced so that later knowledge builds on earlier, and to allow links to be explicitly made and practised. A key question when planning our curriculum has been, and continues to be, “How can our students access and succeed at this curriculum, given the context of the school?” This question has been answered with explicit teaching of tier two and three vocabulary, expert sequencing to include all requisite prior knowledge, and expert explanations planned in advance through booklets or other means. In some subjects, notably the humanities, the context of the school has also been taken into account in the choice of curriculum to help students understand and appreciate diversity in the area; for example the RS curriculum includes Sikhism and Islam, partly to reflect the context of the school.

The strategies for the enactment of the curriculum in classrooms and in home learning are chosen to maximise the learning of all students. Retrieval practice in every lesson strengthens memory and informs future teaching. Teaching follows the gradual release model (GRM), allowing for expert explanation from the teacher, checking for understanding, and large amounts of high quality practice from students. High expectations of conduct, oracy and work rate mean that students can make rapid progress, even from comparatively low starting points. Where students join the school with significant gaps in literacy and/or numeracy, they are taught in small groups using Engelmann’s Direct Instruction programmes.

Through staff interactions with students on duty (deliberate acts), tutor time, PSHE and in general, explicit teaching of mindset, character and behaviour are the final part of the provision to bring to our students *“Powerful Knowledge for Global Citizens.”*

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3. Three pillars of curriculum

We consider curriculum as three separate but crucially linked pillars:

- **Ambition:** The curriculum we intend to teach
- **Enactment:** Where curriculum comes to life in the classroom and beyond
- **Evaluation:** Gathering information on the effectiveness of our enactment through internal assessment, student focus, curriculum journey (book monitoring), critical friend reviews, and ultimately external exam results.

4. The attributes of great curricula

We consider the following to be necessary components of great curricula:

- **A vision for the subject in its own right.**
The subject specialisms are crucial for the Powerful Knowledge approach, and it is vital that staff have clarity around the character and intrinsic value of their specialism.
- **An explicit model of progression, informed by knowledge profiles.**
If we use “the curriculum as the progression model” (Counsell, 2018), we can say that to get better at our subject is to learn more of our subject – but an analysis of the types of knowledge within the subject, and what progression exists within and across the types, is vital for a model of progression that allows us to say in detail, what progress looks like in our subject.
- **Ambitious goals and content including an appropriate balance of substantive and disciplinary knowledge.**
We believe that with hard work and great teaching informed by cognitive science, all students can access and remember incredibly ambitious knowledge. The knowledge in our subjects is not just a series of disconnected facts, but an intricate web of statements, descriptions, explanations, relationships, techniques, methods, and skills. A rich curriculum represents all of these elements.
- **Intentional sequencing for progression.**
The curriculum is sequenced as a whole so that knowledge feeds and builds, so that students are taken on a meaningful journey, and so that progression is achieved. Effective sequencing allows for a strong schema to be built.
- **Expert explanation.**
Following Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006), we are putting expert, planned, teacher explanations at the heart of our teaching, to allow for ambitious knowledge to be taught, free of misconceptions, to be accessible and memorable for all students.
- **Carefully planned practice.**
Since “Memory is the residue of thought” (Willingham, 2009), we commit to spending as much time as possible on independent practice, on tasks that force student thinking to focus on the knowledge we want them to learn.
- **Challenging texts (core and hinterland).**
We see reading as pivotal in a child’s academic success, both for the knowledge gained from reading and because of the fluency and vocabulary that accrue from doing so. Thus we include reading of challenging and academic texts in as many lessons as possible. These texts present both the core knowledge and the hinterland: the foreground and the background of the richness of the curriculum.
- **Cultural curriculum enhancement.**
We subscribe to and develop Bordieu’s definition of cultural capital (see below part 12) and see trips and other activities as playing a key role in the induction of students into culture and appreciation. Trips are planned to enhance and work with the taught curriculum in order to derive the most value from these experiences.

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- **Vocabulary.**

We follow Wittgenstein in his contention that words define thought: and so a sophisticated vocabulary is a requisite for sophisticated thought and knowledge of a subject. We identify and explicitly teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary using strategies from Beck *et al* (2013).

- Core questions for retrieval practice form a strong framework for well-remembered knowledge.

5. KS3 Curriculum

The Powerful Knowledge Curriculum at KS3 broadly follows the National Curriculum (2014). In some places for some subjects, there is a departure from the National Curriculum in order to either allow a more effective sequence or to include knowledge which is more ambitious and/or powerful. For example, in science, waves are not taught until KS4 in order to make room at KS3 for atomic structure which underlies so many other topics.

6. Year 9 and KS4

In year 8 students choose 5 option subjects to study in depth in Year 9 and KS4. This is a deliberate curriculum design to provide our students with the additional time to engage, enjoy and gain the in depth knowledge required to be successful. The curriculum is designed to allow students to choose 5 options in addition to maths, English language, English literature, science, PE and PSHCE. The options process provides a flexible model that allows some movement between option blocks to ensure students are completely satisfied with their option choices. The KS4 curriculum including options is designed to provide students with access to a rich curriculum that prepares them for the next steps. The options include a wide range of vocational and academic subjects that provide a broad and balanced curriculum, providing strong progression to post-16 options. Studying option choices from year 9 allows for a more ambitious curriculum offer notwithstanding the context of our learners, and provides the following:

- greater number of subjects to be taken (5 instead of 4); providing access to wider breadth in the curriculum
- larger number of students accessing the Creative and Performing Arts, including subjects such as GCSE Music
- increased opportunity to develop vocational skills through a rich and balanced curriculum e.g. Health and Social Care hosting a Community Tea Party, Sports Studies visiting Loughborough University for Sports Science in Action etc.
- opportunity to teach the foundational knowledge many of our students lack on arrival that is subject specific but lacking as a result of context e.g. the concepts of cities, populations, and economic migration in geography.

7. Curriculum Allocation (Hours)

- At KS3 students are divided into 3 ability bands, T, P and S. T and P follow the same curriculum, with S following a modified version, where the Nurture group follow a condensed version of some subjects to allow more time for Engelmann Direct Instruction Maths and Reading/Writing that allows students to catch up with their peers. This model also provides support for students who struggle with the transition from primary to secondary school.
- Whilst students in the S band will initially have deviations to their core provision to enable closure of gaps, the ambition for these students is still high and their entitlement to a high quality and broad curriculum considered carefully; this provision is reviewed regularly.
- Groups sizes are between 20 (for practical subjects) – 28 students.
- All lessons are 1 hour in length with 25 lessons per week, organized in a two week timetable.

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- All students have a 20 minute tutor time each day, this is used for the Deliberate Shaping of Character and delivery of PSHCE. The delivery of PSHCE is complemented with Enhanced Learning Days.
- At KS4 students are divided into 3 ability bands: T, P and S.
- Option groups are mixed ability, with some setting depending on the subject and student numbers.

8. Interim KS4 Curriculum

Historically the school has experienced significant turbulence with staffing and as a result a curriculum suitable for these out-going cohorts has been put in place. The below summarises the key aspects of this curriculum that is being phased out:

- Early entry GCSE Literature – the current Year 10 are taking early entry GCSE, this is primarily due to large gaps in student knowledge.
- Choices in Year 8 – students at the end of year 7 had a choice of taking 3 of 4 Performing/Creative subjects – this was to provide quality over quantity and develop a love for these subjects.
- The opportunity to study a modern foreign language has had to be significantly reduced due to staffing and quality issues. We are though committed to building this back up in our school and it forms part of our transitional plan.

9. Curriculum Enactment Tools

The 10 attributes that have been mapped into four tools that are a requirement for all subjects* are:

Curriculum Attributes	CIT1 – Vision Statement	CIT2 – Statement of Model of	CIT3 – Curriculum Road Map	CIT4 – Entitlement Booklet
1 – Subject specific vision statement	✓			
2 – Statement of model of progression		✓		
3 – Ambitious goals and content			✓	✓
4 – Intentional sequencing for progression			✓	✓
5 – Expert explanation				✓
6 – Carefully planned practice, inc. product				✓
7 – Challenging texts (core and hinterland)				✓
8 – Cultural capital			✓	✓
9 – Vocabulary				✓
10 – Core questions				✓

CET1 Subject vision statement – a statement describing what is wonderful about a subject: its place in human culture and understanding, its intrinsic interest, the opportunities it affords and the doors it opens

CET2 Model of progression – a description of what it means to get better at a subject. Based on the categories of knowledge: substantive, disciplinary and apprenticeship

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CET3 Curriculum Road Map – a map showing the headlines of everything that must be taught in the curriculum, allowing curriculum designers and teaching staff to see and plan for the sequential progression of knowledge and the explicit teaching and practice of links between the knowledge in the curriculum

CET4 Curriculum Entitlement Booklets – Booklets containing the knowledge that all students will be taught, and the optimal questions for practising thinking with that knowledge.

*Flexibility for talent/practical subjects

Where using booklets would be detrimental to the delivery of an ambitious curriculum, and SL have shown this to be the case, they will not be required.

Completion and production of the tools

Subject leaders will receive training through TLAF, supported by training materials in T drive – Subject Leaders – All Other – inc. Templates - Curriculum, for the production and refinement of the curriculum tools. The deadline (“Curriculum Drop”) for tools and Core Questions will be the end of the first week back after each half term. This will allow 1 week for QA by RAE, and then 4+ weeks for production by reprographics.

10. Curriculum Interim and Roll-Out

Of course our commitment to entitlement extends to all students in our school. Thus we are adopting a “curriculum-interim” approach with all year groups not yet experiencing the complete new curriculum. This entails asking staff to do the following:

- Apply the TPS and departmental vision statements to their own planning: planning and delivering curriculum of ambitious content for all year groups
- Apply the agreed T&L foci in all lessons
- Core questions and retrieval practice (low-stakes testing) every lesson for all year groups
- Write and draw any explanations and practice for all year groups and carefully save them for inclusion in CEBs to be written at a later date
- Centralise as much of this planning as possible within departments to reduce workload and free up time for subject enhancement

Departments are asked to plan bespoke “Curriculum Roll-Out” plans for bringing the new curriculum to all year groups by Sept 2022.

11. Staff roles and responsibilities

Staff	Roles	Responsibilities for Curriculum
Imran Iqbal	Deputy Head	To oversee the strategic development and implementation of the curriculum. Line manage RAE
Ruth Ashbee	Director of Curriculum	To lead the curriculum ambition and development of this at all levels
Nicky Blackford	Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning)	To lead on curriculum enactment through teaching and learning

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Jen Smith	Assistant Head (Assessment)	To oversee the production, QA, execution of and responses to summative assessments. To lead the production and use of models of progression.
Mike Brown	Lead Practitioner	To coordinate monitoring of enactment through the curriculum journey, and the enactment for long-term memory through core questions and home learning
Curriculum working group	Various	To read, discuss, and shape the curriculum development across the school, providing a research-informed, subject-specific, and critical view
Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum group (TLC)	Various	To read, discuss, and shape the enactment of the curriculum through research-informed pedagogy
Subject Leaders	Subject Leaders	To create the Curriculum Entitlement Tools for Autumn 2019. Later, to train and support other staff within the department in the creation of further Curriculum Entitlement Booklets. To engage proactively with CPD on Curriculum and its enactment through T&L. To identify CPD requirements within department, and, with the support of the TLC team, to prepare and deliver (in some cases arrange) CPD addressing these needs. To role model the TPS curriculum vision statement in ambition and energy for enactment, and a research-engaged approach to continuous improvement for all.
Postholders	Postholders	To support the SL in their curriculum responsibilities.
Teachers	Teachers	To engage in departmental CPD around curriculum

12. Cultural capital

We define cultural capital as:

“The accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that one can draw upon to participate in the higher cultural pursuits of society. Cultural capital can be both tacit and explicit: it includes the formal knowledge gained from academic study, the social knowledge about, for example, appropriate behaviours in different contexts, eye contact, voice projection, and the sense of ownership of, and belonging to, cultural experiences and heritage such as the theatre and museums that is built simply by participation.”

Cultural capital at TPS

A large part of our ambition at our school is that students’ institutionalised cultural capital is well provided for by their formal education in the specialist subjects. We also seek to equip our students with a refinement and composure through explicit teaching of soft skills such as voice projection and impeccable manners. In addition to these strands we plan cultural curriculum enrichment, to bring students into the great cultural experiences and to make links with the taught curriculum with a view to a powerful understanding, ownership and pride in a culture shared across our country and through the generations.

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Cultural curriculum enhancement

While cultural capital can be fed by *ad hoc* events such as visits to the theatre, museums, universities, great libraries, laboratories, studios and galleries, and by having expert visitors to the school, we feel that these experiences can be leveraged to provide more powerful schema for students by planning them into our calendar to coincide with meaningfully related taught curriculum. Thus students might visit Manchester University when studying atomic structure, to visit the laboratory where the atomic nucleus and proton were discovered. They might visit Bletchley when studying coding and the National Portrait Gallery during their study of portraiture. We ask for departments to suggest cultural curriculum enrichment when planning their curriculum road map, and then look to see what could be combined in a single trip, such as a trip to London. In this way we seek to feed our students' hinterland for their taught curriculum and bring them into the big conversations of the cultural heights which are, we believe, the entitlement of every young person, regardless of background or starting point.

Our evaluation of the curriculum is encompassed in our Assessment, Recording and Reporting document.

References:

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