

Curriculum Intent

The below statements encapsulate the intent of the curriculum in each of our subject areas. The Key Stage 3 Curriculum is designed to provide students with an excellent education through the study of a broad range of subjects. Each subject provides the children with the core knowledge, skills and habits needed for them to be successful both in and out of school.

English

The aim of the English curriculum is to build and grow a wide-ranging interest and passion for English by studying a diverse and inclusive range of texts which foster a love of reading and reinforce the schools' values. The passionate student will be able to develop their literary, analytical and critical thinking skills through independent verbal and written tasks. Moreover, students will engage with the construction and evaluation of arguments whilst demonstrating tolerance towards the opinion of others. Underpinning this academic goal, the curriculum will focus on key aspects of character and allow the students to cultivate a strong set of British values to inform an understanding of the world we live in and their own place in it.

A strong and inclusive Key Stage 3 curriculum will enable students to analyse a range of diverse and inclusive texts that foster a love of reading and reinforce the school's values, looking at concepts which link together thematically. It will provide students with opportunities to enhance their literacy, analytical and critical thinking skills, and well as giving them time to write extended creative pieces where they demonstrate their ability to implement exciting language choices for their intended impact.

At Key Stage 4, the curriculum will expand on the skills and topics studied at Key Stage 3. Topics such as Power and Conflict build on from the theme of War studied in year 7 and develop students understanding of poetic techniques and the traumas experienced by those facing conflicts whether that be in war or within the classroom as in 'Checking Out Me History' by John Agard. The curriculum will focus on understanding a wider aspect to life other than their immediate community by exploring a range of unseen texts. In response to this, students will be encouraged to construct and evaluate arguments allowing them to cultivate a strong set of British values to inform an understanding of the world we live in and their own place in it.

These units are further enhanced at Key Stage 5 where students study, 'Othello', which explores racial injustices and builds on from the year 8 unit of work surrounding the theme of social injustice, a theme which is also heavily featured on our Key Stage 4 curriculum, thus developing their knowledge and understanding of key issues in the world and allowing them opportunities to respond to said issues. Moreover, the Key Stage 5 curriculum aims to build reflective resilience skills and to develop independent reading and research in preparation for their onwards journeys into university, or the working world.

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Mathematics

The Northampton Academy curriculum enables all of our students to thrive and to enjoy learning mathematics. When students start in year 7, we ensure they have the building blocks needed to successfully access and succeed in the secondary curriculum. We prioritise developing students' proficiency in number, geometry and algebra. Topics are regularly revisited and built upon throughout Key Stage 3, for example algebraic manipulation is taught in year 7 and then extended in years 8 and 9 through solving equations and further again when applied to angles problems which require students to create and solve equations.

Students develop an appreciation for the wider uses of mathematics. Not only are they exposed to concepts that they will apply in other subjects in school, but they will also develop the financial and literacy skills required to function successfully in the modern world. Students will be able to read and interpret statistics, they will consider the validity and reliability of the data and be able to question and form a logical argument based upon it. We also aim to show students the historical and cultural influences that maths has had on the world around them.

At Key Stage 4 we aim to add to the foundations that pupils have laid during KS3 by developing both their subject knowledge and the skills needed to solve complex, multi-faceted problems. For example, ratio is introduced in year 8 but revisited in year 10 where students are encouraged to apply this knowledge to increasingly difficult problems.

Students develop their confidence and resilience by being taught difficult concepts in depth, they experience a high volume of practise of these difficult concepts and embrace the fact that they will go wrong at times and will learn from their mistakes. We aim to develop ambitious learners who want to study the subject at Key Stage 5 and beyond.

Students who choose to study Mathematics at a post 16 level have different options including Maths Studies, A Level Maths and A Level Further Maths. Whichever option is chosen, students will learn advanced skills and become increasingly independent mathematicians capable of applying their knowledge in increasingly complex and varied situations.

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Science

During KS3 pupils will develop an appreciation for the fundamentals of how the world works. Students will develop their scientific thinking and curiosity through theory and investigation. Their factual knowledge will cover a wide range of scientific topics, allowing them insight into the three main subject areas: Biology, Chemistry and Physics, focussing on key ideas. In Biology this ranges from understanding of cells and microscopic level of life through to large scale understanding of life processes in ecology. Chemistry focuses on the study of the atom and the importance of how atoms interact through to the macroscopic effects on the atmosphere and key resources. In Physics, students study key ideas around Energy, Forces and waves to explain the underlying processes of the Universe. Students will develop and apply basic mathematical skills to a range of scientific contexts. Pupils will be introduced to a variety of new terms and will learn to effectively use these to better communicate scientific ideas. Overall this curriculum will give students the knowledge, skills and character to excel and spark their curiosity to learn more. Students will also be exposed to careers and learn about the types of careers that would use the knowledge they will learn about in each of their topics.

By the time students reach KS4 they will have a strong foundation of understanding and appreciation of the scientific world and will continually work on their competence in all aspects of science, building a better understanding of how the world around us works and our place within it.

In Science at KS4 pupils should be able to develop the independence, resilience and character traits required to prepare them to be able to critically analyse information and apply these traits to their everyday lives. In Science the skill of processing information and data can be used in problem solving, planning, and strategising when required. Students will also be exposed to careers and learn about the types of careers that would use the knowledge they will learn about in each of their topics.

When students opt to study sciences at KS5 they opt to choose specific disciplines of either Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. Students will enter KS5 with a good appreciation of the scientific world and its operation through competency achieved in KS4. The curriculum for each discipline is designed to deepen students' understanding of fundamental topics and to expand horizons to those which are both technically more demanding and scientifically current. Throughout KS5 there is an increased focus on developing students' technical skills to design, record and report on practical work. This allows students to develop their fluency in this area such that they are well prepared to continue to higher education or industry.

Throughout their studies, students will be exposed to the diversity within the current and historic scientific community with specific examples of successes by scientists belonging to minorities being showcased. Thus, ensuring that they can access and acknowledge the importance of the study of science regardless of background, heritage, or ability.

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History

The aim of the history curriculum is to build and grow a wide-ranging interest and passion for history by studying the past so that pupils can understand the world they live in today, which will show progress at each key stage. The passionate and engaged student will be able to foster and develop their written, oral and analytical skills through independent, logical and inquisitive thinking, combined with a tolerant approach to contrasting opinions. Underpinning this academic goal, the curriculum will focus on key aspects of character and allow the students to cultivate a strong set of British values to inform an understanding of the world we live in and their own place in it. A strong and inclusive Key Stage 3 curriculum will enable the students to analyse primary source material, looking at the concepts of reliability and usefulness before making judgements on the merits of the sources. It will provide students with opportunities for reasoned debates, to listen to other people's arguments and provide reasoned counterpoints in a respectful manner. The curriculum has recently been updated to provide a more diverse, wide-ranging and thought-provoking series of lessons including a range of black and women's history across the world. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum will expand on the issues and some of the topics studied at Key Stage 3. Topics such as Elizabeth I and the Cold War will be studied to provide students with an understanding of both British history and the wider world. The curriculum will focus on understanding a wider aspect to life than their immediate community, realising that other people think differently and believe different things. Furthermore, these units are enhanced in the Key Stage 5 curriculum where students will study the origins of British democracy and build on their knowledge gained during KS3 and KS4 to assess the development and change in Russia and the USSR. They will gain the facilitation skills, including how to write academically, how to reference resources and how to work independently, alongside resilience and character traits required to successfully attain places at university, including some of the top universities in the world. Underpinning this academic goal, students will be tolerant of the views of others and be able to respectfully articulate their points to others.

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Geography

The geography curriculum aims to inspire curiosity in pupils about the world and its people, developing a passion for the subject and the fascination to explore relevant, topical issues further. Geography provides pupils with a knowledge of natural and human environments through a broad and varied curriculum and a deep understanding of the Earth's physical and human processes. The geography curriculum prepares students for each stage of their academic journey, but also the world beyond the classroom by ensuring that they are able to think like geographers, using geographical knowledge to make sense of the world around them.

We also aim to develop character values within the students through teaching about diverse cultures and topical issues that require a tolerant approach to investigating contrasting opinions. With the issue of sustainability more significant in our world than ever, and a key thread throughout geographical topics, students learn to respect the importance of the world we live in and the need to protect it.

A strong geography curriculum will include the development of knowledge and key skills including the use of maps, numerical and statistical skills and fieldwork opportunities. This is developed throughout Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5, building on prior learning in each stage. The geography curriculum takes a thematic approach to introduce pupils to a variety of places, concepts, processes and issues, using up to date case studies as examples of what is happening in the world. The curriculum has been carefully sequenced to ensure the progression of knowledge. See below for some examples:

Year 7:

- We begin Year 7 with a topic on Geographical Skills. This enables students to develop the skills that are required later in the year and throughout the geography curriculum. These skills include the use of a range of types of map, data, grid references and graphs and figures.
- We also study development as a topic early in Year 7. This introduces important ideas and concepts for later topics such as flooding (Y7) and tectonics (Y8) where students will make links between development levels of a country and the impacts/responses to a range of hazards.

Year 8

- We begin Year 8 with tectonics, which encourages students to make links back to development as we look at a range of contrasting case studies of tectonic hazards and their impacts.
- We also look at coasts in Year 8, which builds upon some of the processes that students studied in their Year 7 rivers topic, including the ideas of erosion, transportation and deposition for example. It also allows students to have some understanding of the impact of the sea on the coastline, linking to the climate change topic that is studied in Year 9, allowing students to consider the impacts of sea level rise on natural and human processes.

Year 9

- The first topic of Year 9 is climate change, not only a current geographical issue, but this topic also allows students to draw upon a range of prior learning including development and rivers from Year 7 and coasts, population and weather and climate from Year 8. It allows students to consider how impacts may vary depending on the common weather patterns in a country or its population density for example.

Throughout the KS3 curriculum, there are links to the later KS4 and KS5 curriculum, preparing students for the next stage. For those who do not continue with Geography post KS3, they have gained a broad understanding of the earth's processes and the relevance of this to them as global citizens.

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Modern Foreign Languages

The aim of the MFL curriculum is to inspire a love of languages and an appreciation for different cultures. We want to broaden pupils' horizons and educate them in the advantages of being globally aware, culturally sensitive and able to communicate with other nationalities. We teach pupils the importance of speaking more than one language in our increasingly global and technologically savvy community. The learning environment in the Spanish and French classroom motivates and encourages students to communicate, collaborate and be reciprocal, whilst encouraging them to take on challenges as well as risks with their learning. We teach pupils the importance of knowing where their strengths are, how those skills can be used in learning how to understand, speak, read and write a language and how to ensure they have all the knowledge and motivation needed to be able to thrive in a foreign country. The MFL department strives to create confident individuals, responsible citizens and successful learners. The curriculum currently focuses on understanding wider cultural aspects in Hispanic and Francophone countries and on the similarities and differences to their immediate community, helping them to realise that other people think and behave differently and have different priorities.

Computer Science

The Computer Science curriculum provides students with the knowledge and skills they would need to develop into confident digital citizens. It is vital that young people have a solid understanding of how to stay safe online, as well as the huge positives that come with using the internet properly. The main aim of the Computer Science curriculum is to give students a deeper understanding of the technology they use every day. Rather than just playing games, using social media applications and using devices for research, students gain an insight into how computer systems actually work. This all starts from how text, images and sound are represented, to how data is sent across the internet, to how computer systems impact the environment and society. In KS3, students look at how computer systems represent data, how to create digital artefacts like images and webpages to meet a brief, and how technology has changed the world with a focus on big data and AI. We also teach basic programming skills using sequence, selection and iteration in a popular programming language which not only is used at GCSE and A level, but also university and in some work places in the IT industry too. Students that study Computer Science at key stage 4 will enhance the computational thinking skills through practical programming lessons as well as studying more about the principles of computer science. This includes topics such as internal hardware and software, protocols and cybersecurity. In KS5, the NEA is a real highlight for students as they get to complete a project of their choice on something they are interested in. This really allows the students to enhance their independent study skills, planning and organising their time and objectives to create something to be proud of. On top of the project, students continue to progress in their application of computational thinking skills, coding with more complex concepts such as object orientated programming. We link our schools character values into each and every lesson. The passionate students will use their ambition and determination to learn the more complex and technical programming skills which ready them for GCSE, A level and beyond. The Computer Science curriculum not only offers students the chance to study and apply computing skills in the classroom, but there are also many opportunities to take outside of the classroom too. The students who take on challenges and want to learn more independently are given opportunities to do so through our STEM and enrichment programme. We are also keen to provide students with plenty of information and events on careers in IT, and do this through external volunteers and workshops to engage and motivate our pupils to consider careers in computing.

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Dance

BTEC dance will provide an engaging and stimulating introduction to the world of performing arts. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of styles and repertoire in order to stimulate and inspire them into the dance realm. Students will be able to show their creative abilities in order to express themselves as an individual and as a dancer as well as show their bravery, confidence and talent when performing. Students will gain a range of skills, both personal and subject specific, enhancing their character as well as their knowledge of performing arts to help them excel onto further performing arts pathways.

Learners will gain a wider understanding and appreciation of health-related fitness, sports and exercise through developing a range of skills and techniques, personal skills and attributes essential for successful performance in working life. This is underpinned by our core values which seek to enhance an individual's character:

- Ambitious - to exceed their minimum expected grade and strive for distinction;
- Confident - to participate, perform and lead;
- Creative – in their decision-making and by working independently to find solutions in order to meet deadlines and the success criteria;
- Respectful – of themselves, all of their peers and all adults involved in their academic and sporting life;
- Enthusiastic – about engaging in all elements of their BTEC course in and outside of school;
- Determined – to complete their work to the best of their ability and persist in improving their work by using feedback effectively.

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Design and Technology

The Design and Technology department are committed to delivering a curriculum accessible to all which provides the broadest possible range of opportunities for students. One which will allow students to become self-motivated and confident learners, who can work independently and as part of a team and develop the character of each individual. We aim to ensure that learners develop technical and practical competencies as well as the wider skills valued by employers along with essential life skills. Our main priority is for students to become intrinsic learners and problem solvers who are not afraid of making mistakes.

Aims:

- To establish a safe learning environment which is conducive to learning, is stimulating, imaginative and relaxed where students feel supported and secure.
- To link to many different curriculum areas in order to develop a set of transferable skills they can enjoy in school and use in their future working lives.
- To enable students to combine their designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding, in order to design, make, analyse and evaluate products of high quality.

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Drama

Our drama curriculum looks to expose pupils to the wonderful world of theatre, building enthusiasm for the subject and refining the skills gained to provide a platform for a successful future.

The curriculum aims to celebrate the joys of the theatre, in both creating and performing. By engaging fully with the drama curriculum pupils will experience the fulfilment of realising their hard work and efforts as part of a group pay-off, building strong relationships based on trust. Pupils are given an opportunity to be creative, expressive and imaginative, they participate in and study a range of conventions, styles and genres of theatre as well as developing an understanding of imaginative set, costume, lighting, make-up and prop design. Students grow in confidence and are given an outlet to really express themselves.

Pupils will improve their understanding of people and the world around them by exploring situations that differ from our everyday experiences. In Key Stage 3 students develop their analytical and evaluative skills and the knowledge of how drama and theatre are created and performed. This is enhanced further in key stage 4, enabling them to write at length embedding evaluative skills and subject-specific language.

By seizing the opportunities provided in drama, a student can flourish, becoming a more confident version of themselves and finding the performer within.

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Economics

Sixth form Economics aims to guide students through a challenging and engaging course designed to grow an interest in the economy intertwined with a passion for current affairs and current world economic phenomena. Examples from recent times include the impact of COVID-19 and the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on the World Economy. By studying economic theory of the past, present and future students should make progress in applying this to their own lives, technically analysing economic occurrences and becoming more well-rounded global citizens. Economics students will develop core skills in independent learning, organisation, critical analysis, and evaluation of policies whilst combining their education with economics-based enrichment, for example talks, trips and Economics and debate club. Character education underpins the curriculum in Economics allowing students to have a growth mindset when delving into issues such as the disparity between income levels, the unequal distribution of wealth and the issues of wage discrimination. Students are actively encouraged to be respectful and tolerant of the views of others when articulating their points of view. Our mission is for all students to pursue higher education after A level. Students will have their eyes opened wide to issues they may have previously taken for granted, but which are fundamental to their life-long learning and preparation as young Economists. Economics is well regarded by universities as being academically rigorous and KS5 Economics aims to guide students onto any career path of their choosing with a sound basis in business culture, creative thinking, rational thought, data interpretation and interpreting the world around them.

The world is a place with infinite wants and limited resources, thus the economic problem is defined. Economics is the study of how individuals, business and governments behave when faced with this problem. This course includes opportunities for students to challenge this core issue and interrogate their own beliefs through two distinct strands: primarily studying microeconomics to understand the foundations of individual contexts of economic agents; and to broaden their understanding with the macroeconomic discipline of government policy locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Learners will appreciate the differences the market structure makes to price setting and resource allocation followed by reviewing the international economic context and a comparison of the UK's Economic position to other nations. Students can critically analyse the benefits and downsides of economic policy in all contexts in terms of allocating resources.

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Food and Nutrition

The food department hope to promote independent learners who have the ability to think on their feet to solve problems as they arise whilst providing them with skills for life to prepare, cook and present quality food to a good standard.

Our curriculum explores the Eatwell Guide and what a balance of good health looks like. We also investigate the food science that occurs when ingredients are used in different conditions, this is then followed by a range of practical lessons where students learn how to organize themselves to prepare, cook and present food.

In food we encourage all students to have a can-do attitude and that nothing is impossible. Students will develop a better understanding of where their food comes from and how our food choices are influenced by lifestyle, diet, cost, culture, religion, environmental factors and animal welfare.

Students will also learn how ingredients work. What happens during preparation and cooking processes when ingredients are combined in different conditions.

Students will learn a wide variety of practical skills that will provide them with the ability to cook food from scratch and adapt existing recipes to suit their own dietary preferences.

Students are also exposed to what possible post 16 pathways and career opportunities studying GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition could lead them to.

Music

The aim of the music curriculum is to build an enthusiastic, broad and creative understanding of the subject and as a tool for positively enriching the lives of young people. This will progress through each key stage, whilst building students' independence and drive to succeed.

The creative and passionate student will engage with all aspects of music, both in and out of lesson time, whilst growing their confidence and understanding of musical career opportunities. Parallel to the curriculum, there will be inclusive opportunities for solo, ensemble and whole class engagement, including the potential additions of peripatetic music lessons and diverse enrichment from network professionals, to enhance the varied and artistic curriculum.

The curriculum focusses on the three core aspects of musical opportunities: composition, performance, and theoretical knowledge. The curriculum has recently been updated to ensure a more positive progression through the key stages, ensuring that through practical music making we effectively intertwine important theoretical knowledge. The updated curriculum chronologically includes: musical elements, the creative musician, programmatic music and ensemble performance, which all aim to seamlessly transition the student into KS5. Furthermore, the updated curriculum aims to develop sustained musical ideas, discussions, and performances, alongside a growing passion for the subject.

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Politics

Politics is studied at KS5 with core elements taught at KS3 and 4 through the Character Development Programme. Politics provides a broad understanding of the UK political system and how government operates. It also enables students to contrast our political system with that of the USA giving students a global awareness of political institutions and how they operate. The study of Politics enables students to form views about what is happening in real time, at a range of scales and levels: local, nation and international.

Students will have knowledge of and be able to evaluate the effectiveness of government enabling them to actively participate from an informed position in local and national elections as well as have the confidence to pursue further study and/or a career in Politics. Students will be confident in the interpretation of the UK constitution and able to evaluate it against codified constitutions. They will understand the role of the media in our Political landscape and can listen to and engage in debates on current affairs. They will develop their own opinions about their role in society based on the ability to interpret a range of mediums and then make informed decisions about how their political views align to political ideologies.

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Religious Studies

Religious Studies intends to offer students a wholistic experience of what it means to function in a diverse society. We are keen to deliver an academically rigorous curriculum right from Year 7 based on academic study of the Bible and other religious texts and how these have shaped Britain and the world. High standards of academia are also applied to everyday issues that promote the tolerance of others and mutual respect of all within our multicultural society.

Knowing others beliefs will help students to shape their own opinions and identity; we study injustice and respect in order to shape the character of students in such a way that means they can express their own beliefs while also respecting those of others. Students engage within written debate to help them gain an appreciation of what it means to discuss controversial issues in a productive manner and develop their own authority in argument.

The RS curriculum challenges students from year 7 where they study the core beliefs of Judaism, students learn about their key beliefs and scriptures, they have their first lessons on one of the Abrahamic faiths and this will provide the foundation for their journey in Religious Studies throughout the academy. In Year 8 student investigations include, but are not limited to; the history of Christianity, the role of Constantine, the Great Schism and the Reformation. We teach a knowledge rich curriculum and students will study Islam and pre-Islamic Arabia, the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the importance of the Qur'an. Students will be accomplished writers and knowledgeable about the three Abrahamic faiths before they enter Year 9. Year 9 sees an opportunity to apply the knowledge that students have to themes, the arguments for and against violent protest, the toppling of the Colston statue is debated. Sanctity of life and euthanasia as well as the different perspectives on the creation of universe and existence of God. These are linked to the religions studied in the first two years.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum expands on the topics taught in Year 7, 8 and 9. The death penalty and different religious perspectives are debated, students must show an understanding of why theists have different views within their own religion. They will also research the beliefs of Christianity and Islam and practices. Beliefs are the 'thought' and 'practices' the actions of theists. An example of the links between the two areas is that students will be able to link the pilgrimage to Hajj with devotion to Allah, likewise with Lourdes or Iona and getting closer to God in Christianity.

At Key Stage 5 students study Christianity alongside Ethics and Philosophy. In the religious paper, Christianity students will analyse sources of authority, religious identity and moral principles alongside issues of gender and sexuality. The Ethics paper covers ethical theories and issues of both animal and human life, testing and euthanasia are analysed. Students are also introduced to meta ethics, Bentham and Kant. They will return to their KS4 studies to delve further into free will and how 'free' we really are. Philosophy involves complex arguments into the existence of God and the presence of Evil and Suffering and explanations for it as well as how it's presence can lead to atheism.

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Sport

Throughout Years 7 to 11 students will experience a broad range of activities that develops a student's knowledge, participation and experience of physical education and sport. This is underpinned by our PE core values which seek to enhance an individual's character:

- Ambitious – to excel: to be the best they can be in and through PE and sport;
- Confident – when participating, performing and leading;
- Creative – in all aspects of physical performance, decision-making and problem-solving;
- Respectful – of themselves, all of their peers and all adults involved in their sporting life;
- Enthusiastic – about engaging in physical activity and sport in school, out of school and beyond school life;
- Determined – to persist in overcoming obstacles, to lead healthy, active lifestyles and to achieve their best.