

## **What we are; what we do**

The Canterbury Academy is a comprehensive school 'for all the talents'. We are determined to provide closely for the needs and talents of every individual student, and at a very high standard.

To achieve this, our curriculum, inside and outside of timetabled lessons, is overflowing with opportunities to try something new and develop new skills. We listen carefully to each student, and their parents, to provide something which is right, special and highly motivating for them, if we can. Every effort is made to do this, and it happens in myriad ways. Academic learning is very important. We focus carefully on it, not least through our close partnership with Simon Langton Grammar School. But we believe that there is more to a great education. As well as ensuring our students succeed academically, we believe that many students have gifts in the performing or visual arts, or in sport, or in practical learning. We are extremely proud of all our students' achievements across our pillars of excellence in academic learning, sport, performing arts, practical learning and our area wide work in youth, community and extended service.

The Canterbury Academy offers all students a broad curriculum. Students have a very wide choice of subjects throughout their time here. All students have access to the full curriculum, irrespective of gender, SEND, ethnicity, academic ability, social or cultural background.

Everything that students learn in school – the taught subject timetable, the approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, provision outside lessons and the classroom, the ethos, values and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – forms the curriculum.

Our students enjoy educational visits abroad or various residentials, university visits, talks by inspirational speakers, as well as countless opportunities to collaborate with their peers from other schools across the region. Throughout their time at The Canterbury Academy students are expected to contribute to our community and to society. We want students to try things they cannot do, to persist in the face of difficulty and to become resilient in overcoming obstacles. We want our students to approach life with a can-do attitude.

## **Our core beliefs**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and encapsulates students' whole learning experience during their time in school and is underpinned by our core beliefs:

- Every child is good at something (all children walk with genius.)
- We offer 'as much as possible, as often as possible, for as many as possible.'
- Every learner matters.

- The Academy exists for its children and its community.
- We aim to treat people 'not as they are but as you want them to be'.

### **Our key strap lines:**

- The Campus – a wealth of opportunity.
- Schools for all the talents.
- Working in partnership with Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys to provide a grammar stream for boys and girls in a comprehensive school for all the talents.
- Learn, live, laugh.
- Pride in ourselves and our school. Respect for others and the environment.

### **Our key values**

- Courtesy
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Equality
- Respect
- Morality

### **Philosophy and Principles of our Curriculum Design**

Our intention is to provide an excellent education, which enables all students to be successful learners and successful in life. Our curriculum, then, is designed to provide students with the core knowledge they need for success in education and beyond, to maximise their cognitive development, to develop the whole person and the talents of the individual, and to allow all students to become active and economically self-sufficient citizens.

The curriculum is founded on these key principles:

1. We have high expectations for all and believe that all students have a right to learn what is in our curriculum; we have a duty to ensure that all students are taught the whole of it.
2. By drawing on the best that has been thought, said and done in each subject, our curriculum enables students to appreciate and participate in the full richness of the human experience, developing positive lifelong values. We expect our pupils to experience and increase their cultural capital each day.

3. We want all students to achieve a deep understanding of the knowledge specified in the curriculum for each year, and that teaching secures this for all students. In each subject therefore, as appropriate to that subject, the content is carefully planned and sequenced so that it builds students' knowledge and understanding systematically.
4. We want all students excel from the moment they join us. Our curriculum will ensure continuity between primary, secondary and post-16 phases, so that it complements the work being done in other places to support student progress, ensuring continuous improvement for all.
5. Our curriculum ensures that concise knowledge, skills and content is taught and learned; it is for faculties and teachers to decide how to teach and bring it to life, developing both mastery and character in our students.
6. The design.
7. The curriculum is made bespoke, as far as possible, to each individual student. (See, for example, the section entitled 'Pillars' below).
8. Our curriculum includes key life skills, such as money management and relationships education, necessary for our students to become independent young adults. Our curriculum also includes education for civics and an essential understanding of government and politics, without, of course taking any party-political stance. (This is explained further in the section entitled 'Core', below).

### **How the curriculum is implemented and managed**

This section explains how pupils make options, and why these are organised as they are. At the outset, it is important to say that these provisions can always be overridden, adjusted or added to, for individual or groups of students, if it is in the students' interests to do so. Students' individual needs, and providing for their talents, come before the convenience of the system, as long as the law and the necessity for a properly balanced curriculum is met.

Key Stage 3 is delivered over 3 years to facilitate deeper learning and mastery. It provides a firm basis for future success. It is a time of both physical and emotional growth, when our students increasingly define their own discrete identities and aspirations.

In Years 7 and 8 all students have access to a wide curriculum. Every student studies mathematics, English, science, geography, history, RE, languages, computing, PE, dance, drama, music, art, technology and food. Students are set for English Baccalaureate subjects and in mixed ability classes for foundation subjects. There are also carefully selected and flexible 'Star Groups' for our most high attaining students in particular subjects. In Years 7 and 8, students' curriculum experience is enhanced by weekly 'Pillars' lessons. These enrichment activities allow our students to sample and select from a wide range of different subjects, such as, forensic science, photography, hair and beauty and musical theatre. The

options come from across of our Four Pillars of Excellence and allow students the additional time to develop their gifts and talents. They select an option three times a year, so they can broaden their experience with a variety of different subjects, or, study one subject in depth for the whole period. Many of the subjects on offer through pillars are not part of the standard Key Stage 3 curriculum but are Key Stage 4 options. The students benefit from having the opportunity to get extended experience with these less-familiar subjects before potentially having to study them for a qualification.

Year 9 is a very important year to the personalisation of the curriculum. A much wider range of subjects is made available in this year group. Students therefore make their first selection of subjects at the end of Year 8, with staff support. These are not GCSE options at this stage, and can be changed again at the end of Year 9 before GCSE and equivalent courses start. This allows students to consider their interests, and their talents, carefully with some flexibility. In Year 9, all students study mathematics, English, science, history and geography, PE, Core Learning. The choices for their five preferences include: sports studies, computing and ICT, business studies, social sciences, food studies, design and technology studies, textiles studies, child development, health and social care, hair and beauty, construction, art, photography, dance, drama, music, performing arts, production arts, religious studies, and modern foreign languages. Students remain in sets for English Baccalaureate subjects and in mixed ability classes for other subjects. 'Star Groups' also continue into Year 9.

Key Stage 4 starts in Year 10, and operates over 2 years. At the end of Year 9 students make their GCSE option choices ahead of transitioning into their Key Stage 4 study. These options include RE, languages, computing, dance, drama, music, art, design technology, resistant materials technology, food, sport, business and enterprise, social sciences, childcare, health and social care, hair and beauty, photography and construction. In order to give students the breadth of curriculum appropriate in the 21st century and prepare for the academic rigours of further study, all students undertake a core curriculum of English Language, English Literature, maths, statistics, science, history or geography, core PE and Core Learning alongside their options. This means that students work towards at least 8 GCSE, or equivalent, qualifications.

The school promotes the English Baccalaureate (EB) without insisting on it. This is consistent with our 'all talents' policy. The EB is available to all students, at all levels of ability. All students are expected to choose one English Baccalaureate subject within their GCSE options (although individual alternative requests from students and parents may be agreed by the school where particular learning needs, or aspirations, suggest this is most beneficial to the student). All students are encouraged, and have the opportunity, to take a language in order to complete the full EB. At the same time, the school prides itself on its flexibility of its curriculum, reaching the individual aspirations and talents of each child.

The development of students' personal and social skills and their spiritual and cultural development are nurtured specifically through our Values Education curriculum, 'Core Learning' and assemblies, as well as permeating the whole curriculum, both formally and implicitly.

## **Our Alternative Curriculum**

In some individual cases, student, parents and teachers agree that a student needs a different curriculum in order to enjoy and achieve. This is organised on an individual basis, so precedent should not be used as an indication of availability. Alternative measures may include extra support within lessons, opting for fewer subjects and instead receiving supported study time, application to external programmes of study or work-related study.

## **Post 16 Curriculum**

Post 16 education is, even more, a personal journey. We believe that every student should follow their own individual path to reach their goals. In Year 12 and 13 students belong to one of our four colleges; Academic, Vocational, Sport or Performing Arts and can study a vast range of courses in many combinations. Students can pick BTECs, A-Levels, City and Guilds, or Level 1 or 2 qualifications, in order to find the pathway that is most appropriate for them. We can be flexible and create bespoke timetables for our students, which allows students great choice and variety in their study. It is possible to study a range of qualification from across the colleges.

Our sixth form is hugely popular and is very large. Its size helps us to offer the vast array of subjects and course that we do. We are also able to offer specific programmes to meet individual and group needs. These include the academically very able, refugees, and those with special educational needs, for example.

Sixth Form students have more freedom and independence to develop and manage themselves as young adults. Teachers develop working relationships with them, with the expectation that students work increasingly independently, managing their own time to complete coursework and research.

Sixth form students are also encouraged and expected to participate in positive activities outside of lessons, and to take opportunities to serve others. Many such opportunities are available. Students are expected to continue to develop their cultural capital.

University is an appropriate destination for many students and increasing numbers progress there. For others, employment or further study is appropriate. All students are guided to a suitably ambitious destination that enables them to succeed.

## **Mentoring**

All students in Years 7-11 are assigned to a mentor group with a teaching member of staff. Their mentor not only meets with them every morning to 'check-in' but also reviews their progress in a termly, hourly meeting. The mentor focuses on the academic side of the school experience, but also liaises with pastoral staff, where necessary, to ensure our students are supported to enjoy, achieve and make progress.

Across the course of a week, during morning mentoring sessions, the students complete age-related numeracy and literacy tasks, as well as review the school newsletter and action any pertinent notices. In the hour-long mentor session - completed with every student in a small group once a term – students will get the opportunity to review and discuss their attendance, conduct points, progress and class and homework. They will set SMART targets that can be shared with subject teachers, where needed, and reviewed in future sessions.

In addition to the year-group mentor groups, we also have several 'specialist' mentor groups for academically able students, elite sportspeople and elite performing artists. These groups offer a slightly modified programmes designed to allow for flexibility and enrichment and to help the students balance the demands of extra-curricular and external activities with school-focused work. We always aim for a high standard. For example, the school is one of the 'Cricketer' magazine's top 100 cricket schools in the UK. We are one of only two comprehensive schools on this list.

## Core

Students in Years 7-10 complete weekly core learning lessons. These sessions are facilitated by senior staff and operate on a termly carousel. Students complete a range of modules, such as current affairs, life skills, British values and mindfulness, to give the further curriculum breadth and enhance their love of learning.

The core learning curriculum focuses on developing key skills, such as teamwork, research, presentation and problem-solving and employs a wide range of learning styles. In Key Stage 4, students also complete Level 1 NCFE qualifications in Sexual Health Awareness and Mental Health Awareness (though parents are given the opportunity to opt their children out from these sessions). These give them crucial knowledge and empowerment to keep themselves safe as they mature. Students in Year 11 are guided to additional intervention and support sessions across their curriculum to help them with final preparations for their GCSE examinations and coursework, though these are kept to a reasonable minimum. In addition, Information Advice and Guidance workshops and interviews are provided to help students consider Post 16 pathways and destinations.

Students in the Sixth Form follow a core programme which include topics such as; British Values, study skills, personal finance and volunteering. Safety is a common theme running through each term with topics such as sexual safety, risks associated with alcohol, drugs and promoting good mental health and wellbeing. The core sessions aim to prepare and support

students for their futures, we want our students to be able to leave sixth form able understand the political system, to be financially independent and to know how to live a healthy lifestyle. We invite a variety of guest speakers to enrich the core programme even further such as ambassadors from local universities, and leaders from the NCS programme.

Core teachers provide students with their termly school report and support the students in writing targets to enable them to reflect on their effort and progress in their subjects

## **Our Curriculum Delivery**

The curriculum in each subject can be accessed via the links specific to the year group. Subject specialism, led by well qualified and expert staff, is at the heart of our curriculum. There are differences in the ways that the curriculum is constructed and assessed in different subjects. Staff subject specialism is developed through internal discussions, training, through collaboration with external advisory and training bodies, including teaching school alliances.

With a mastery approach, students study topics in great depth, with a clear understanding that they secure knowledge and revisit misconceptions or gaps in learning.

Key Stage 3 provides students with the time and space to gain this secure understanding. In our lessons you will typically see all students grappling with the same challenging content, with teachers providing additional support for students who need it. Rather than moving on to entirely new content, our higher attainers are usually expected to produce work of greater depth, flair and ambition.

Our approach to teaching and learning supports our curriculum by ensuring that lessons build on prior learning and provide sufficient opportunity for guided and independent practice.

We use the principles underpinning The Canterbury Academy Teaching and Learning handbook, summarised here:

1. Planning – all students should be fully engaged in learning through exciting lessons.
2. Resources – must be inspiring, updated regularly and go beyond the walls of the classroom, incorporating, as appropriate, the latest technologies.
3. Differentiation – arranged generally as a three-tiered challenge of Gold, Silver, Bronze.
4. Students' Progress – students must engage fully in lessons and be rewarded for achieving.
5. Assessment – assessment must be meaningful, well planned and designed to inform planning for future lessons.
6. Questioning – Questioning must allow all students to reflect, think hard, analyse and create more questions for themselves.
7. Progress tracking – students' progress must be checked in accordance with policy.
8. Rewards in Years 7-11 students must be rewarded regularly for effort and progress through SIMS, postcards home, positive phone calls home and Heads of House newsletters. In Years

12-13 students are allocated a tier based on their effort and attainment, they receive letters home, rewards and sixth form leadership opportunities.

9. Stretch and challenge – stretch and challenge must be personalised and for all students irrespective of ability. Homework should be used to further stretch and challenge all students, matched to students' learning need.
10. Marking and feedback – Must be regular, meaningful and dedicated. 'Pupil Improvement Time' in Years 7 and 11 must allow students to address misconceptions. Linear progression must be demonstrated in books. Students in Years 12 and 13 are given feedback and predicted grade in their folders each term, in addition to marked classwork and homework.
11. Homework – must be set every week and allow students to explore topics in greater depth for both pre and post learning. Students must be given opportunities to submit Homework through differing formats.

In order to allow the mastery approach to be effective (i.e. students learn what they are expected to in the year they are expected to), early catch up is essential. We aim to identify and support promptly students who start secondary school without a secure grasp of reading, writing and mathematics so that they can access the full curriculum.

### **The Impact of our curriculum**

The impact of our curriculum is measured through several accountability measures, including those related to the bullet point list below. These contribute to the whole school self-evaluation. What matters most is the character our students build, their personal development, the contribution will they make, their independence, and what impact will they have as individuals in the community.

### **Accountability Measures**

- Outcomes for students, including in examinations and qualifications
- Progress and attainment in each year group
- Destinations
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Engagement in enrichment activities
- Student voice
- Progress towards the Gatsby benchmarks