



# NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

## Curriculum Policy

This policy relates to Newcastle-under-Lyme School, including the EYFS. This policy is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website.

### 1. Introduction

Newcastle-under-Lyme School is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable pupils not only to make progress in their learning and achieve high academic standards but also to enjoy learning for its own sake and develop the skills and understanding to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

The curriculum aims to develop through this broad education pupils who are well-educated, aware of their social responsibilities and with an appreciation of the heritage, traditions and developing nature of the society of which they are part, to enable pupils to take their place in society.

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time, supervised education, in which they experience a range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects appropriate to their age and aptitude, including those children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, a statement or EHC plan. All pupils acquire speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

The School works hard to ensure that programmes of study are suited to all of its students and takes into account the age, aptitude and needs of all. Differentiation and variation in teaching ensures that there is access and opportunity for all students to learn and make progress. The school has increased its emphasis on the process of learning, helping students consciously to develop study skills and to understand how they learn; for example with the introduction of study skills seminars in Years 10 and 11.

The syllabus in each subject is designed to offer continuity and progression of learning. Pupils participate in a Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education

scheme appropriate for their age and experience and which reflects the School's aims and ethos, giving them the skills necessary to manage their lives and guide their physical, moral and emotional wellbeing and development. They are encouraged to think about their own behaviour, their moral compass, and how they live a tolerant and respectful life. There is an emphasis in all that we do to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

Those of secondary school age receive impartial careers guidance which enables them to both select courses at GCSE and post-16, and to consider the impact of their decisions upon their futures.

Schemes of Work are appropriate for the pupils, allow for progression through the school, and are reviewed regularly.

Where children admitted to the school have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Educational, Health and Care Plan [EHC] agreed by the local authority, the School undertakes to provide the curriculum in accordance with the terms of the statement and participates in an Annual Review.

In the Senior School, Sixth Form students above compulsory school age are provided with a programme of activities that are appropriate to their needs. Students have the freedom to specialize, though even then the School does its best to ensure that broader learning and development of personal skills continues. The School has a wide range of co-curricular activities which complement the skills and knowledge learned in the classroom.

The principal language of instruction used in all lessons is English. A pupil is not regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which they are or will be taught. All our pupils have been assessed in English as part of the School's selection processes. Where there are pupils in the School whose first language is not English, the staff are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and the school arranges appropriate support, as necessary.

## **2. Aims**

Throughout the School, the curriculum is designed to fulfil the following aims:

- Provide a smooth progression from primary stage, through secondary and beyond.
- Allow all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- Build on pupils' prior experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Offer both support and challenge to all pupils, including those with SEND

- and those identified with Advanced Educational Needs (AEN).
- Encourage pupils to recognise and develop individual skills and enthusiasms.
  - To address aspects of social, economic and emotional education according to pupils' needs, and according to the "Every Child Matters" agenda.
  - To support children and young people in making increasingly informed independent decisions.
  - To promote pupils' SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development.

### **3. Junior School Curriculum**

In the Nursery and Reception classes the curriculum follows the guidelines set out by the Early Years Foundation Stage [See Early Years Foundation Stage Policy]. The curriculum in the Pre Prep (KS1 Infants) and Prep (KS2 Juniors) is influenced by the guidelines given by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the National Curriculum.

The subjects taught in the Pre Prep and Prep are:

Art, Design and Technology, English, Games (Prep only), Geography, History, ICT, Mathematics, French, Music, Physical Education, RE, Science, Swimming and Well-being.

PSHE is taught in form time by Class Teachers. The PSHE programme is designed to reflect the aims and ethos of the school and the needs of pupils, and is based closely on the National Curriculum guidelines.

### **4. Senior School Curriculum**

Curriculum content and delivery is led by the Deputy Head [Academic]. The Deputy Head [Academic] chairs Heads of Department meetings. Within this structure the responsibility of devising Schemes of Work and delivering the Curriculum lies with the Heads of Department. Department Handbooks describe the emphasis in each year group and Schemes of Work guide the day-to-day work of colleagues. The work of Heads of Department is line managed by the Deputy Head [Academic].

The following subjects are taught or offered to pupils of compulsory school age (Years 7 to 11) in the Senior School and provide pupils with the range of types of experience indicated. (The table summarises the principal subjects through which the seven experiences are provided, whilst not being exhaustive):

Subject	Experience Provided for Pupils						
	Linguistic	Mathematical	Scientific	Technological	Human & Social	Physical	Aesthetic & Creative
Art / Ceramics							✓
Biology		✓	✓				
Chemistry		✓	✓				
Classical Civilisation					✓		
Design Technology				✓			✓
English	✓				✓		✓
French	✓						
Games						✓	
Geography		✓	✓		✓		✓
German	✓						
History					✓		
Home Economics			✓	✓			
ICT		✓		✓			
Latin	✓						
Mathematics		✓					
Music				✓	✓		✓
Physical Education						✓	
Physics		✓	✓	✓			
PSHE					✓		
Religious Studies					✓		
Spanish	✓						
Swimming						✓	
Textiles							✓

Pupils in *Year 7* follow a compulsory curriculum incorporating all of the above subjects (except Classical Civilisation), with a choice of one foreign language out of French, German and Spanish. Art, Ceramics and Textiles are taught through an Integrated Art course. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are taught through an Integrated Science course.

In *Year 8*, pupils again follow a similar curriculum to that in *Year 7*, but they study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate subjects.

In *Year 9* pupils have a choice of Language and Creative Subjects. All pupils continue to study their first modern foreign language, but have the opportunity to add a second one. In addition to their first foreign language, all pupils opt to study at least one of Latin/Classical Civilisation or a second modern foreign language, and they may choose to take both. Depending on the language option chosen, pupils

will take between one and three of the Creative Subjects on offer (Art, Ceramics, Design Technology, Drama, Home Economics, Music, Textiles). The other subjects in the list above remain compulsory for all.

In Years 7, 8 and Year 9 the Curriculum aims to incorporate within Schemes of Work a foundation for further academic study and also develop each subject's unique way of looking at the world, which pupils can then take forward into their adult life. The Curriculum is designed to allow focus on subject areas, to reflect developing personal interest, whilst protecting against early specialisation and narrowing of future study and career options. It is possible that, by allowing choice, some pupils might not engage implicitly with aesthetic and creative options, although the increasing range of creative options and wide-ranging co-curricular provision in these areas reduces the number of pupils not participating in this type of activity.

In *Years 10 and 11* pupils take 9 subjects to GCSE (or IGCSE). Mathematics, English, English Literature and the Sciences are compulsory. Within their selection, pupils must choose at least one Humanity subject and at least one Modern Foreign Language. PE, Games and PSHE form a compulsory part of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, as non-examined subjects. Some pupils complete a programme leading to an additional Maths qualification in Year 11.

#### *The Sixth Form*

Students above compulsory school age who attend the Sixth Form at Newcastle-under-Lyme School choose three mainstream A Level subjects, alongside an additional qualification (EPQ, ITQ, Level 3 Mathematical Studies or AS Level Photography).

A Level courses available for students to choose include: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English Literature, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Geography, History, Politics, Economics, Business Studies, Physical Education, Art, Ceramics, Textiles, Design Technology, Psychology, Philosophy and Music. Students are given a free choice of subject, and variations on the normal Sixth Form curriculum are arranged in cases where this serves the needs of the student. For example, a student may study four A Levels (in particular, where Further Mathematics is being studied).

Sixth Form students also have a weekly timetabled Games afternoon and a weekly lesson of PSHE.

#### **Personal, Social and Health Education**

All pupils in the Senior School, including those above compulsory school age, receive a weekly timetabled lesson in PSHE. In general, these lessons are taught by the pupil's Form Tutor and are taught in accordance with the PSHE Schemes of Work. The exception to this concerns Sex and Relationship Education (which is taught by a nurse from the Local Authority). A range of external speakers are also used to enrich the study of particular topics.

The PSHE Schemes of Work (which are published separately) are designed to reflect the aims and ethos of the School and to provide for the needs of its pupils. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to fulfill these requirements. In the Sixth Form, the Schemes of Work are designed to provide a programme of activities that are appropriate for students above compulsory school age.

The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum is designed to assist in the full development of each individual student at Newcastle under Lyme School. It covers three areas: **health education, social and personal development and citizenship.**

Overall, PSHE aims to:

- encourage the development of thoughtful, well-rounded and sociable citizens, who will take their place in the world aware of the role they can play;
- develop in our pupils the power to question and argue rationally and the qualities needed for decision making and leadership, thereby fostering their ability to resolve conflict within their own environment, among friends and within the classroom;
- equip each pupil with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices to enhance and enrich their own and others' lives;
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own learning and achievements and identify their own personal development targets;
- develop skills of enquiry and communication;
- engender in pupils a sense of responsibility towards themselves, their peers and their surroundings;
- help pupils develop respect for the needs of others, particularly those of different religions and cultures;
- provide necessary health education in a manner appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students;
- equip pupils with the organisational and study skills which will enable them to succeed in their work;
- promote pupils moral, social, spiritual and cultural development, increasing their self-confidence

Newcastle under Lyme School is committed to ensuring all PSHE and Citizenship provision is relevant to our pupils, and appropriate to ability, social and cultural background, religion, sexual orientation as well as physical and emotional needs.

Topics within PSHE aid progression of key themes; a change in focus in each year group supports further engagement of pupils. Citizenship themes are developed within the curriculum across the school. Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and learn about their rights and responsibilities. As active and global citizens, pupils are given the opportunity to take a role in the life of

the School and to be prepared to take a role in wider society. The PSHE programme supports SMSC development in the following ways:

- Through well-being days, pupils develop their self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Pupils learn about social and moral dilemmas as well as personal safety, allowing them to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the rule of law;
- Pupils consider aspects of citizenship and voting rights, family planning and financial responsibility, giving them an understanding of the institutions and services in England which actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, support for the democratic process, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Throughout the programme, pupils learn an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures by discussing, for example, issues of disability, racism, sexism and homophobia, taking particular account of the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act.

As a general rule in PSHE, a child's confidentiality is maintained by the member of staff concerned. The school has a separate Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and those involved in the delivery of PSHE are aware of what to do should any concerns be raised during a session.

### **Careers Education**

The careers programme at NULS ensures that all students receive advice, support and information suited to their age group and stage within education. This inspires them to make informed decisions about future pathways, whether that be university, an apprenticeship or a Gap Year. The provision relates to the nationally recognised "Gatsby Benchmarks."

### **5. Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

There are a number of pupils in school who require SEN support. There are currently 4 broad areas of need that should be planned for. They are:

- Communication and interaction;
- Cognition and learning;
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties;
- Sensory and/or physical needs.

Most of our pupils requiring support are in the second category, as they have specific learning difficulties which affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

All pupils are screened for dyslexia during their first term in the School, and where the results of the screening give rise to concerns, parents are provided with

appropriate advice regarding further investigation. All pupils' spelling ages are determined during the first term at school, and this information is shared with all senior school staff.

Members of staff are provided with advice about the classroom needs of pupils with Learning Difficulties through a strategy card and the staff are responsible for working with the child and supporting their particular needs on a daily basis. The School has two Learning Support Assistants who go into lessons to provide support in the classroom, as well as meeting one to one with pupils to improve specific skills as required. Each pupil's strategy card is reviewed annually by the Learning Support Coordinator and the Learning Support Assistants, with input from the pupil themselves and their parents. Any changes are agreed by all parties.

The School makes reasonable adjustments in managing the timetables of pupils with Physical Difficulties to enable them to have as complete access as possible to the full curriculum.

Provision for pupils with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties, including access arrangements for external examinations, is coordinated by the Learning Support Coordinator. This is in line with the SEN and Disability Code of Practice. A full separate policy, Special Needs and EAL Policy, is available on the School website.

## **6. Advanced Educational Needs (AEN) Pupils**

There are a number of pupils who demonstrate high levels of ability, specific gifts and particular talents. It is our aim to make sure that these needs are met.

In the Senior School age range, a list of AEN pupils are identified and updated annually. The decision on who to include on the list is based on baseline data at Year 7 and Year 12 entry and is school wide. The baseline data in use includes MidYIS data, scholarship information and Reasoning Test data which is generated as part of the entrance tests into the Senior School. At Year 12, use is made of ALIS data in addition. At no point is a pupil removed from the list.

Within many lessons there are opportunities for some differentiated tasks which provide stretch for the most gifted learners. In some subjects where it is seen as beneficial, setting is introduced and different groups work at different speeds and undertake more work beyond that outlined in syllabus materials.

Supporting the work in lessons, many departments arrange clubs which focus on developing the interests which are generated within lessons. For example, some clubs include more advanced practical activities, investigations off syllabus and reading groups for more advanced pupils. In some subjects, more gifted students help with pupils in younger years who may be struggling with that subject. Some departments provide clubs which work outside of year group boundaries to help the most able and gifted to develop.



## **7. Homework**

The setting of homework is a key part of the academic curriculum, and all staff are expected to include the setting of appropriate homework in their lesson planning.

Homework is set for the following purposes:

- To reinforce classwork;
- To extend work covered in lessons;
- To prepare for the study of new work;
- To revise classwork in preparation for testing;
- To develop study skills and independence.

When planning the homework to be set, staff should give careful thought as to how the work fits with these objectives. Homework should be planned so as to be possible for pupils to complete within the time allocations summarised below. For tasks that are more open-ended, guidelines should be given to pupils to assist them in knowing when they have done enough.

### **Junior School and EYFS**

Throughout the Junior School the emphasis is on English and Mathematics, with reading and phonics along with spellings, tables and Key Instant Recall Facts (KIRFs) forming a consistent part of homework requirements. A more specific homework timetable is provided at the start of the year for each age group. All homework is set on Firefly from Year 3 to Year 6.

### **Years 7-11**

A homework timetable is published at the start of the School year, outlining which subjects are to have homework set on which evenings. Staff adhere to the published timetable when setting homework. Whilst it is recognised that it may, on occasion, be inappropriate to set work (e.g. test last lesson, member of staff has been absent etc.), the norm should be that if the subject appears on the timetable then work should be set. It is not acceptable for a member of staff to set homework on a day when that subject does not appear on the homework timetable.

The homework timetable is sent to all parents at the start of the School year. All homework is set by staff on Firefly; staff should aim to do this before the end of the school day and by 17:30 at the latest. Pupils are expected to monitor their Firefly account and ensure that all work set is completed. Parents are encouraged to monitor this through the Parent Portal of Firefly.

### **Sixth Form**

There is no published homework timetable; tasks set are of an extended duration and pupils are expected to take responsibility for managing their own time in such a way as to complete tasks by the deadlines set. Students have work set in each

subject to be completed in their own time over the course of the week. This should take approximately 5 hours per week per subject. Where a Sixth Form set is shared between more than one member of staff, this time allocation must be shared out between the staff involved. Sixth Form homework should be set at a regular time each week, for handing in by a regular deadline. When the work is to be set and when it is to be submitted is at the discretion of the teacher, but consistency is important so that there is some predictability for pupils concerning their workload pattern for the week. At least 4 days should be given to complete a Sixth Form homework task; "next-day" deadlines are unacceptable at this level.

### **8. Missed Work**

When pupils are unable to attend school as a result of illness, the School does not normally expect them to carry out school work at home whilst ill. The School acknowledges that, in circumstances of illness, pupils are unlikely to be able to complete work to their normal standards and in any case may be unable to do so as a result of missing crucial aspects of a lesson.

It is school policy that pupils who have missed work are expected to take it upon themselves to catch up this work after their return to school. This includes copying up missed notes, and asking the teacher if there is anything in them that they don't understand.

In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils are not normally expected to do homework assignments missed through illness after their return. In Years 10 and above, there may be homework that could usefully be attempted retrospectively, but teaching staff will give guidance on this upon return of the pupil to school.

In cases where a pupil is absent through illness for more than 3 school days, the Form Tutor will contact teaching staff for any work that the pupil can usefully attempt in order to lessen the amount of catching up that needs to be done upon his/her return.

Short-term absence (less than or equal to 3 days) through illness is very common and affects a large number of pupils during the course of the year. It is not practical for teaching staff to set work for these pupils on every such occasion. Parents are therefore advised that we will only ask staff to set work for pupils to do at home when the absence through illness exceeds 3 school days.

If a pupil misses a deadline, staff may (at the discretion of the policy established in their department) give the chance to hand the work in within a couple of days, or by the next lesson.

## **9. Monitoring Progress, Issues with Academic Work and Homework**

### **Monitoring Progress in Years 7 to 11**

It is vital that the standard of a pupil's work is monitored carefully, so that appropriate support, or challenge, is offered as needed, and that parents are made aware of any problems via the reporting and progress grades system, or personally, as soon as possible. Clearly it is not acceptable that a weakness is not discovered until summer examination or public examination results are known, hence regular assessment is essential. Teaching staff use the notification and sanction system, which involves the Form Tutor, to support the monitoring of progress which the pupil is making.

Full written reports are reviewed by Form Tutors, Heads of Year, and by a member of SMT. Pupils identified as underperforming, particularly against baseline measures (such as a pupil's MidYIS results) will be invited to discuss their reports, prepare, discuss and agree targets with the Headmaster or a Deputy Head. Form Tutors and Heads of Year may also be involved in target-setting and monitoring. Interim Reports are reviewed by the Deputy Head [Academic], Form Tutors and by Heads of Year. In addition, for pupils named in the SEND/ LDD Register, the Learning Support Co-ordinator reviews grades and monitors progress.

### **Monitoring Progress in the Sixth Form**

To aid the transition towards self-directed study at university, students are expected to spend some of their non-taught periods working in the Library, or more informally in the Donaldson Hall, the Sixth Form Centre or in one of the Departmental Sixth Form study areas. There is a dedicated computer room for sixth formers in the Sixth Form Centre. Some students in Years 12 and 13 who have shown that they need a disciplined framework for their private study periods may also be required to work under supervision.

Full Sixth Form written reports are reviewed by Form Tutors, the Head of Sixth Form and by the Headmaster or a Deputy Head. Students identified as underperforming, particularly against baseline measures (such as ALIS results) discuss their reports, prepare, discuss and agree targets with the Headmaster or Deputy Head [Academic]. This review and copy of agreed targets is provided for Form Tutors, and Head of Sixth Form who monitor subsequent progress. In addition, for students named in the SEND/ LDD Register, the Learning Support Co-ordinator reviews grades and monitors progress.

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