



Department  
for Education

# **Exemplar academy curriculum policy 1**

**February 2014**

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This is an exemplar academy curriculum policy, based upon a real policy in use by an academy. It illustrates how academy freedoms can be used and can inform your academy's policy.

This policy was formulated for a sponsored secondary academy with a capacity of around 1150. It gained academy status on 1 August 2008, and in its most recent full Ofsted inspection the school was rated as Good overall.

# **[Insert school name] Curriculum Policy**

## **Document control**

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## **[Insert school name]**

[Insert school name] is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We promote care and respect and expect high standards in all aspects of Academy life.

Our aim is to meet the needs of young people in West Cumbria preparing them for adult and working life in the 21st century.

The educational vision and curriculum design for West Lakes Academy recognises that:

- The world of 2020 will be very different to the world of today
- The pace of change is increasing, hence the importance for flexibility.
- Young people have, and will have increasingly, greater access to information and learning material independently of school.
- Adulthood entails economic participation but more.
- 18+ year olds will still be at an early stage of learning.

- The current curriculum defined in subject terms is not always well suited to equipping every young person with the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need for a fulfilling adult life.
- Curriculum delivery should involve a greater use of adults other than teachers. These could include support staff, graduates, artists, sports people and people from industry and business to support curriculum delivery.

West Lakes Academy's curriculum policy is based on the following aims, to:

- Have students at its heart, putting their interests above those of the institution.
- Have a curriculum that is fit for purpose, offering differentiation and personalisation.
- Be a centre of excellence in learning and teaching.
- Prepare all students for a successful adult and working life in a 21st century global society.
- First achieve and then exceed national standards in achievement, attainment and progression.
- Be committed to excellence and continuous improvement.
- Value vocational and academic routes equally.
- Nurture the talents of all and celebrate success.
- Work with Primary Schools to ease transition.
- Involve the community.
- Involve parents/carers.
- Be in a learning environment that is above all else inspiring

## Curriculum

### 1. Curriculum aims

The curriculum should inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future. The academy's aim is to develop a coherent curriculum that builds on young people's experiences in the primary phase and that helps all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Specifically, the curriculum should help young people to:

- achieve high standards and make good/excellent progress.
- enable those not achieving age-related expectations to narrow the gap and catch up with their peers.

- move towards enabling students to more easily progress based on ability not age and to be able to enter students for public examinations when they are ready rather than dictated by age.
- have and be able to use high quality personal, learning and thinking skills (plts) and become independent learners.
- have and be able to use high quality functional skills, including key literacy, numeracy and ict skills.
- be challenged and stretched to achieve their potential.
- enjoy and be committed to learning, to 19 and beyond.
- value their learning outside of the curriculum and relate to the taught curriculum.

## **2. The curriculum outcomes**

West lakes academy's curriculum will:

- lead to qualifications that are of worth for employers and for entry to higher education.
- fulfil statutory requirements.
- enable students to fulfil their potential.
- meet the needs of young people of all abilities at the academy.
- provide equal access for all students to a full range of learning experiences beyond statutory guidelines.
- prepare students to make informed and appropriate choices at the end of ks3, ks4 and beyond.
- help students develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.
- include the following characteristics: breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, continuity and coherence.
- ensure continuity and progression within the academy and between phases of education, increasing students' choice during their academy career.
- foster teaching styles which will offer and encourage a variety of relevant learning opportunities.
- help students to use language and number effectively.
- help students develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races beliefs and ways of life.

- help students understand the world in which they live.
- ensure that the curriculum incorporates, and is improved and extended by, the academy's specialist status – science and the arts.
- develop a specific curriculum for key stage 3 (years 7 and 8) which will focus on the core skills of numeracy and literacy and develop the personal, learning and thinking skills of all students.
- design a key stage 4 curriculum which meets the needs of students, parents and wider society.
- design a post-16 curriculum which provides a “bridging year” between level 2 and level 3 qualifications. This will allow students an additional year of study to prepare more thoroughly in order to follow the post-16 courses on offer.
- design a post-16 curriculum which is not constricted by the curriculum offer from the academy alone but incorporates other schools/colleges which may be in partnership with the academy.
- benefit other secondary and primary schools in the area.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The principal will ensure that:

- all statutory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the academy chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the academy and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met. This will include how the subject will be taught and assessed.
- the amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governors' annually.
- where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from the national curriculum.
- the procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements and students and their parents/carers receive information to show how much progress the students are making and what is required to help them improve.
- the governing body is fully involved in decision making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- the governing body is advised on statutory targets in order to make informed decisions.
- The governing body will ensure that:
  - it considers the advice of the principal when approving this curriculum policy and when setting statutory and non statutory targets.

- progress towards annual statutory targets is monitored.
- it contributes to decision making about the curriculum.
- Assistant principal ks3, ks4 and ks5 will ensure that:
  - they have an oversight of curriculum structure and delivery within their key stage
  - detailed and up-to-date schemes of learning are in place for the delivery of courses within their key stage.
  - schemes of learning are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
  - levels of attainment and rates of progression are discussed with hod/ks coordinators on a regular basis and that actions are taken where necessary to improve these.
- Heads of department and key stage coordinators will ensure that:
  - long term planning is in place for all courses. Such schemes of learning will be designed using the academy pro-forma and will contain curriculum detail on: context, expectations, key skills, learning objectives, learning outcomes, learning activities, differentiation and resources.
  - schemes of learning encourage progression at least in line with national standards.
  - there is consistency in terms of curriculum delivery. Schemes of learning should be in place and be used by all staff delivering a particular course.
  - appropriate awarding bodies and courses are selected so that they best meet the learning needs of our students.
  - where necessary an appropriate combination of qualifications or alternative qualifications can be offered which best suit the needs of learners
  - assessment is appropriate to the course and the students following particular courses. There should be consistency of approach towards assessment.
  - they keep the appropriate key stage assistant principal informed of proposed changes to curriculum delivery.
  - all relevant information/data is shared with the sims team. This includes meeting deadlines related to exam entries etc.
  - student performance data is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any necessary changes in terms of curriculum delivery are planned and carried out in a timely fashion.
  - they share best practice with other colleagues in terms of curriculum design and delivery.
  - oversee cpd needs with regard to curriculum planning and delivery within their area of responsibility.



Teaching staff and learning support staff will:

- ensure that the academy curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- keep up to date with developments in their subjects.
- have access to, and be able to interpret, data on each student to inform the design of the curriculum in order that it best meets the needs of each cohort of students.
- share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in different schools and through external networks, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum.
- participate in high quality professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their students and how best to address those needs and engage them.
- work in partnership with other agencies to provide an appropriate range of curriculum opportunities.

Students will:

- be treated as partners in their learning, contributing to the design of the curriculum.
- have their individual needs addressed, both within the academy and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community through a curriculum which offers breadth, support and challenge.
- be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them get back on track quickly.
- receive co-ordinated support to enable them to make the appropriate curriculum choices at key stages 4 and 5.
- Parents and carers will:
  - be consulted about their children's learning and in planning their future education.
  - be confident that their child is receiving a high quality education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
  - be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.

#### **4. Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The governing body will receive an annual report from the principal on:

- the standards reached in each subject compared with national and local benchmarks.

- the standards achieved at the end of each key stage taking into account any important variations between groups of students, subjects, courses and trends over time, compared with national and local benchmarks.
- the number of students for whom the curriculum was disapplied and the arrangements which were made.

The governing body will review this policy at least once a year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy.

## Teaching groups, class sizes and grouping by ability

In year 7 students are placed in tutor groups of approximately 28 and work in these groups for all subjects other than maths, english and science where students are grouped by ability to allow for appropriate support and challenge.

In years 8-11 class sizes average 27 for higher ability students but are considerably smaller for those students for whom more support is required.

The academy day starts at 8.35 am and ends at 3.15 pm and consists of five 60 minute lessons split by two breaks one at 10.55 am (30 mins) and one at 1.25 pm (45 mins).

## Key stage 3

### Years 7 & 8

In their first 2 years of academy life students learn in a distinct area (the key stage 3 area) “a school within the academy”. This helps staff to develop the students’ skills at an appropriate pace and level. A dedicated team of teachers and specialist staff continue the best practice of the primary phase of education in a “familiar” environment whilst introducing students to the breadth of the secondary curriculum. The idea behind the ks3 curriculum is to develop the fundamental skills of numeracy and communication, including literacy and ict skills, through a project based approach around key themes onto which are mapped the national curriculum targets. Students will spend the majority of their curriculum time in the ks3 area, but will leave this area to access specialist facilities.

Currently years 7 and 8 students have the following number of periods per subject per fortnight:

### Year 7:

Subject	Periods
English	3
Maths	3
Science	3
Physical education	2
Technology	2
Art	1
French	2
Music	1
RE	1
Integrated	5
Stem (science, technology, engineering and maths)	2

**Year 8:**

Subject	Periods
English	3
Maths	3
Science	3
Physical education	2
Technology	2
Integrated	4
Geography	1
Art	1
History	1
Music	1
Performing Arts	1
French	2
RE	1

**Year 9:**

Subject	Periods
English	4
Maths	3
Science	4
Physical education	2
Technology	2
Arts	2
Geography	1
History	1
PD	1
RE	1
French	2
IT	2

**Key stage 4**

Eventually KS4 will be a 3 year key stage beginning in year 9. Students will follow a set of core courses all leading to a potential qualification. This core will be supported by a range of optional

courses. Within the combination of subjects available students will have the chance to study for the ebacc qualification if desired.

### Years 10:

Subject	Periods
Maths	4
English	4
Physical education	2
Science	3
RE	0.5
IT	2
PD	0.5
3 option columns: french, german, art, health & social care, btec engineering, btec hospitality, resistant materials, it, learning support, pe, performing arts, triple science, history, geography, electronics, photography, psychology, child development	3 lessons in each column

Music is available in two lessons drawn from it and pe. Some college provision is available.

### Years 11:

Subject	Periods
Maths	3
English	4
Physical education	2
Science	4
IT	2
RE	0.5
PD	0.5
3 option columns: french, german, art, health & social care, btec engineering, btec hospitality, resistant materials, it, learning support, pe, performing arts, triple science, history, geography, electronics, photography, psychology, child development	3 lessons in each column

## **The sixth form**

### **Years 12 and 13:**

The academy offers an expanding post-16 provision providing a range of academic and vocational qualifications such as a.s. levels, a levels, btec and gnvq. Every effort will be made to offer subjects in which students demonstrate particular interest as well as those that are enhanced by our specialist facilities.

All year 12 students have access to one lesson of pd per week. Access to general studies is also available.



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