



# Anthony Gell School

## CURRICULUM POLICY

	Date	Minute No.	Review date
Approved by Governors	8 July 2021	1548/21	July 2024
Reviewed by Governors			

# Our Curriculum Intent

Anthony Gell School is a community where everyone, whatever their role, works hard to create a learning environment which includes a rich and varied curriculum; this curriculum is evident throughout all of the different aspects of the school's life. It is a curriculum which provides us with opportunities to explore, learn more about the world in which we live, and equips us well for future learning and employment.

In order to do this, we believe it is important that everyone involved develops the skills and knowledge necessary to become self-motivated, independent and confident learners, with the social awareness to make a difference and care about ourselves, others and our environment.

Through the breadth and depth of our curriculum, we continually endeavour to create opportunities that will highlight and enhance the important skills we value, including literacy and numeracy.

We constantly strive to improve our ability to work as a team, by developing our sense of empathy and understanding, as well as knowing when and how to lead.

Encouraged to be creative, and confident to take risks when learning, we are not afraid to make mistakes and aim to be resilient in the face of difficulties. We support one another and celebrate our own successes as much as we celebrate those of others.

We endeavour to be more self-aware and make good decisions with regards to our mental and physical health. We work, as part of a larger community, to develop a careful awareness, understanding and acceptance of others' beliefs, opinions and individuality.

We set ourselves ambitious goals and work hard to achieve these.

# Rationale for our broad and balanced curriculum offer

Our curriculum offer is vital – it is the sum of the whole student experience. It is not solely about qualifications and courses, though these play a vital role at its heart. Our curriculum must be broad and bold, ambitious and rich, in order to meet our core aims which include inspiring every individual to Care, Aspire and Achieve.

At the heart of our curriculum is a strong focus on ensuring that students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum to enable them to have strong foundations on which to build their futures. As students progress through the school there are increasing opportunities for flexibility and choice – thereby meeting the interest, needs and aspirations of all.

All students follow a common curriculum in years 7 to 9 (our Key Stage 3), providing full coverage of the National Curriculum as one of the baseline considerations in the development of this curriculum. All students follow a full programme of Citizenship and Religious Education (CR) alongside a centrally set but flexible tutor time curriculum that aims to build cultural capital, global awareness, British Values, mental health awareness and cross-curricular skills. There is some teaching towards accredited GCSE courses in a small number of subject areas in Year 9, but these are not examined until the end of Year 11.

In years 10 and 11, the number of compulsory courses is reduced and choice is expanded with a wide range of options that are tailored each year to fit the cohort. Our CR and tutor time programme continues along with a dedicated programme of Careers opportunities to prepare our students for their transitions.

Many of our students choose to stay on at Anthony Gell in the Sixth Form and choose from a wide programme of predominantly 'A' level subjects. We also have a One-Year Pathway available for students who wish to study Level 2 qualifications alongside lessons in English and Maths if necessary. Our students thrive on the rigour and challenge of the Post-16 curriculum and achieve excellent outcomes.

## Extra-Curricular offer

Our curriculum also includes a full and varied programme of opportunities and activities outside of lessons. Activities range from paired reading to the debate club, from sports teams to dance and drama, from involvement in our student parliament to robotics in addition to a wide range of trips and visits. We are passionate about sport, recreation, leisure and physical activity. We aim to involve all our students in enjoying sport and to help them understand the advantages of a healthy lifestyle. Participation in sport develops crucial personal and life skills, such as leadership, teamwork and mutual respect. Competitive sport provides opportunities for many of our students to excel. Our Sports Leadership programme provides a range of opportunities for students to become involved in sport as coaches and officials, as well as leading activities within our wider community with younger children and in a nationally recognised project which included working with and supporting residents of our local care home.

# The 'Science of Learning' within our Curriculum

It is a vital part of the role of a teacher to increase knowledge in a student's long term memory and 'make it stick'. In order to do this we need to be clear about what students need to know and clear about how to help them build that knowledge.

**Curriculum sequencing and intent:** Our programmes of learning are carefully sequenced. Each subject has a '*curriculum map*' that plots the journey of students through their curriculum, which is carefully sequenced and planned to build up knowledge and skills throughout and across the Key Stages. These are not designed in common formats as they reflect the style and varying nature of the broad range of subjects we offer. Each subject has a '*curriculum statement*' that lays out the intent of our curriculum, this is then used to build our topics and programmes of study around (see appendix 1 for an example). Identified within our medium term planning, each topic has a clearly planned intent with clear end points laid out.

**Retrieval:** we need to practise our ability to recall things from memory and apply them. We use a dual-coding symbol to remind staff and students when we are practising this and retrieving our learning. Staff have access to a wide range of proformas that they can use to plan retrieval activities but we encourage teachers to experiment and use a wide range of techniques beyond the available proformas.

**Spaced learning / practice and interleaving:** Learning needs to be re-visited on a regular basis – it needs to 'hurt a bit' to ensure we are learning and that our curriculum is appropriately challenging. In lessons we often revisit earlier topics to refresh, re-new and consolidate prior learning. Some but not all of these activities are planned within schemes of work/programmes of study, but teachers are encouraged to respond to the needs of students and adapt in order to re-visit key concepts as necessary and to the greatest benefit of the students. We also plan to mix topics up and give students the opportunity to work on multiple linked topics at the same time; this is often done through homework and retrieval tasks.

## A personalised approach to Curriculum

We have high expectations of all of our students not only in their academic pursuits but also in the growth of their characters as they develop to become young adults in the time they are at Anthony Gell School (AGS). Our curriculum is designed to grow young minds, so they are well prepared for their many and varied pathways beyond their time at school. In order to do this we aim to be a highly inclusive school with person-centred approaches at the core of our vision and practice.

High-quality classroom teaching is imperative. We develop our staff to have a wide toolkit of teaching and learning strategies to help them deliver their curriculum in the most appropriate way. We do not expect curriculum delivery to happen in a one-size-fits-all way. Teachers make use of information about students' learning needs to consider key issues surrounding curriculum delivery such as: seating plans, questioning choices, the prioritisation of personal support, Teaching Assistant (TA) deployment and the use of additional resources to both support and challenge students.

Our curriculum offer is broad and balanced throughout. We do not remove students from lessons on a long-term basis except in exceptional circumstances and we do not narrow choice of options.

We provide a three year Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure that all students have access to the full breadth of subjects until the end of Year 9. This maximises their exposure to the diversity of our curriculum and ensures that sufficient knowledge has been built to enable success in exam courses in Key Stage 4 and 5.

We offer a broad curriculum in KS4 through our Guided Choices programme including a full range of academic and vocational subjects as well as Prince's Trust qualifications and highly challenging subjects such as triple science and Further Maths. We also maintain a core PE offer and a fully planned tutor time programme and timetabled Citizenship and Religious Education.

Our KS5 curriculum each year is built around student choice and we regularly review our curriculum offer. We have recently introduced Applied Psychology, Criminology, Government and Politics and Sociology in response to student demand. Our students can also opt to complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in Year 12 and we operate an extensive enrichment programme alongside a fully planned tutorial programme and Year 12 work experience offer for all students. All of this curriculum work in KS5 is supported by a specialist Learning Mentor who work full time with the sixth form.

We provide a programme of additional support such as extra literacy and numeracy intervention delivered by highly trained teachers, HLTAs (Higher Level Teaching Assistants) and bespoke specialist Learning Mentors to enable students to access a challenging secondary curriculum and in some cases to equip students with vital life skills for their future pathways.

We have a full programme of specialist Learning Support interventions that cover a wide range of needs, including dyslexia support and a handwriting programme as well as literacy and numeracy interventions. This programme is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of our students. We are also currently investigating a Year 7 and Year 8 'nurture' provision (see appendix 2 for further detail), to better ensure that all our students make the best transition to secondary school and are well equipped for the rigour of a secondary school curriculum.

Additional funding for disadvantaged students is used to ensure equal access to resources and extra-curricular activities as well as bespoke learning mentors. More detail of this can be found in the 'Pupil Premium Policy statement'. [https://www.anthonygell.co.uk/docs/policies/Funding - Pupil Premium Strategy 2019-20.pdf](https://www.anthonygell.co.uk/docs/policies/Funding_-_Pupil_Premium_Strategy_2019-20.pdf)

## **Nurture Curriculum Statement**

### **History of Nurture**

Nurture groups in Derbyshire were started formally in 1999 in response to the increased referrals to Behaviour Support Service and the increased number of school exclusions of vulnerable children. Nurture groups have been proven to be an effective approach in reducing children's social, emotional and behavioural difficulties while strengthening their academic performance.

The Six Principles of Nurture are:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of well-being
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

### **Aims of Nurture Groups**

To provide a carefully routinised day, where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere (Nurture UK).

To provide an opportunity for children to experience a structured, supportive programme that helps develop early learning skills (Derbyshire Nurture Team).

### **Nurture Groups**

Nurture groups are in-school, teacher-led, focused interventions for small groups of children who have particular social, emotional and behavioural needs and at Anthony Gell School each group is staffed by two supportive adults. They support children who have not had strong early nurturing experiences, by providing a safe and structured environment where children are encouraged to develop positive and trusting relationships with both teachers and other students.

Nurture groups offer a short term, focussed, intervention strategy, which addresses barriers to learning arising from social / emotional and or behavioural difficulties, in an inclusive, supportive manner. Children continue to remain part of their class group and usually return full time within four half terms. Central to the philosophy is attachment theory: an area of psychology which explains the need for any person to be able to form secure and happy relationships with others in the formative years of their lives and our on-going knowledge of neuroscience.

### **How do nurture groups work?**

Trained staff create an attractive, safe, structured environment within the context of our mainstream educational setting, with a number of areas and resources designed to bridge the gap between home and school. Building trusting relationships are core to the approach. The children are carefully selected according to their individual holistic profile of needs, identified using the Boxall Profile, whilst also ensuring the establishment of a cohesive nurture group. Individual and group plans are then formulated, with all targets thoroughly discussed with all involved including the students themselves with their parents/carers. Staff then provide a variety of experiences, opportunities, approaches and resources to address these needs within a culture of trust, understanding and knowledge incorporating the 6 principles of nurture, with progress closely monitored.

## Examples of Subject Curriculum Intent Statements

### Geography

We study Geography at Anthony Gell School to develop a sense of place, including some of Earth's most inspiring locations; from the bustling cities of Asia to the devastating power of the Pacific Ring of Fire. The world is rapidly changing and our challenge as Geographers is to understand how to ensure the sustainable future development of our planet, from the threat of climate change to the opening of local food banks.

Together we will develop your skill set so you become confident and competent Geographers. We will handle Geographical information from a variety of sources using GIS, traditional maps through to how to substantiate a strong, balanced argument. We will bring Geography alive by taking part in fieldwork during every year at Anthony Gell School; from you investigating small-scale local issues to exploring the awe-inspiring environments that our planet has to offer.

The world is our classroom and together we will journey from Wirksworth to the far corners of Africa to the poles in search of learning and solutions to be part of an enduring, sustainable future.

### Drama

*Drama teaches us how to be human, it allows us to reflect on our stories and learn from them.*

We study Drama at Anthony Gell School to develop our understanding and ignite our passion for the art form that we access on a daily basis when we watch television, theatre and films. We also study Drama to develop ourselves as human beings. The world of work needs transferable skills which Drama focuses on and helps to develop at all times.

Drama aims to develop confident presenters, good team players and leaders, co-operative and creative thinkers who can think outside of the box, people who are emotionally intelligent, self-disciplined and resilient problem solvers.

We do that through creating our own work from both scripted and improvised starting points. Performing our work by developing our use of technique, genre and use of physical and vocal acting skills. By reflecting on our own and others' work, we are able to examine the structure and use of all elements of drama, to improve the effectiveness of a piece of work.