Curriculum Policy

Autumn 2019
Rationale

We believe the Academy’s curriculum offers a broad and balanced education, suited to students of all abilities. It provides a memorable experience with rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being.

The Academy curriculum aims to be at the forefront of innovative curriculum design, where the needs of the individual is at the heart of the entitlement. The curriculum aims to also meet the needs of groups of students, including support for Literacy and Numeracy, Special Educational Needs, Learners of English and Gifted and Talent students, where stage not age determines the pathway or route an individual is taking. To enable this, extended curriculum collaboration with other schools, colleges and the Federations within the City is vital.

Our curriculum provides a seamless transition from one key stage to the next where we build on students’ prior experience. Where students fall behind or need additional support, tailored programmes are designed to enable them to catch up or to make progress equal to that of their peers. All students from year 7 are supported by clear pathways that will enable them to succeed. The pathways are flexible to enable students to transfer between them at appropriate times.

2. Aims

The purpose of the curriculum is to enable students to:
- Develop lively, imaginative and enquiring minds
- Support and extend them depending on the stage they are at in their learning journey
- Acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and a world of rapid and continuous technological change
- Develop good levels of numeracy and literacy skills
- Develop personal and moral values, respect for shared values and for other cultures, religions and ways of life
- Develop an understanding of the world in which they live
- Appreciate human achievements and aspirations
- Take their place in society as informed, confident and responsible citizens
- Develop a sense of well-being and have at least two hours of physical activity a week

3. Breadth of the curriculum
Year 7 and 8
All students in Year 7 and 8 will study:

Social Science subjects and Art and Design subjects will be taught in blocks of time on a carousel basis to enable greater depth whilst studying in these areas.

Students whose standardised scores in Reading or Mathematics are below national average at the end of key stage two will receive additional Literacy and Numeracy support and may not study a Modern Foreign Language until they have caught up. Opportunities for studying Modern Foreign Languages will exist in the enrichment curriculum and in post key stage three choices.

All subject leaders and members of the Academy Leadership team regularly check their curriculum offer against the National Curriculum to ensure we offer equal or better breadth and depth.

We also offer EPQ at Level One as a qualification to gifted key stage three students.

Years 9, 10 and 11
Students embark on public courses leading to GCSE and other qualifications in year 9. These will be staggered across the three years where some are completed in year 9, others in year 10 and some in year 11.

During the three key stage four years, all students will study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Citizenship and PSHE/RSHE. Alongside these, they will have the option to study additional qualifications from a wide range of academic and vocational choices, including GCSEs, BTECs, Work Related Learning courses, and Young Apprenticeships. There will be entry requirements for some courses.

Students who are still below national standards may use some of this option time to continue to work on developing their Literacy and/or Numeracy. In year 11, some students may have extra curriculum time for English and Mathematics qualifications. This will depend on the individual students and their progress as well as their ambitions.
Students with Special Educational Needs and students Learning English as an Additional Language could also use this option time to complete the necessary units for Foundation Learning where they will develop the skills they require to be able to access level one and two courses either pre or post 16.

In addition, the most able students in Mathematics will be given the opportunity to study Further Mathematics.

Gifted and Talented students may also have the opportunity to start some post 16 courses such as AS levels when they are in year 11. This is likely to be part of our enrichment programme.

To increase flexibility and personalised pathways, students will complete many of the optional courses in one year and they will then be able to make new choices for the following academic year. There is also an option to study a qualification over the three years, depending on what suits the subject and student pathway best. For example, a student who wishes to study languages at A Level will be taught the GCSE across the three years to ensure continuity from key stage three and to prevent learning loss up to key stage five.

**Years 12 and 13**

Students who progress to 16+ will be able to follow a range of courses from AS and A level, level two and three BTEC courses and OCR Nationals. All courses will have entry requirements.

Students who do not pass English and/or Mathematics GCSE will be given opportunities and curriculum time to retake where appropriate.

All 16+ students will study PSHE, Citizenship and Physical Education and an enrichment curriculum will also be available for all students.

**4. Grouping and setting**

Students in years 7 and 8 are taught as a whole cohort for English and Mathematics in a combination of ability and mixed-ability setting. In the other subjects they are be banded into R core and D core, which are mixed-ability. Students begin year 7 in mixed ability sets
but this may change in some subjects as the year progresses where it is more appropriate to teach in ability sets.

Students in years 9 and 10 are taught as a whole cohort in English and Mathematics and are mixed ability and setted by ability respectively. In other subjects, they are be banded into two ability bands and grouped by ability/need within these bands, depending on the faculty policy. Options classes are usually, but not exclusively, mixed ability.

Students in Year 11 will be taught as a whole cohort for all of their subjects and will be grouped by ability/need/pathway within these bands, depending on faculty policy and what qualifications students have already passed in Year 9 and Year 10.

Option subjects are often taught as vertical teaching groups in year 9 and year 10.

Wherever possible, classes are smaller than national average class sizes. Some English and Mathematics intervention classes are significantly smaller to allow students to accelerate their progress where they may have fallen behind the national expected level.

All sets and groups are reviewed on a regular basis, enabling students to be moved if necessary. Students will move group if the ability of the class is hindering their learning. Students will not be moved based on their own request or due to poor behaviour except for the most exceptional of circumstances.

Learning Support Assistants are deployed across the curriculum to work with students of a range of abilities, prior attainment and educational needs. This is in order to support students in making better progress.

5. Special Educational Needs

Students who are unable to access the full mainstream curriculum for part or all of the time can be taught in the Learning Support department, where they will follow a personalised curriculum, supporting them in gaining the necessary skills. The aim is for students to reintegrate into mainstream lessons where and when it is appropriate.

Some students who access mainstream lessons but have Special Education Needs will be supported by a Learning Support Assistant where appropriate.
Students who have Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia will receive one-to-one support for part of their curriculum time.

6. English as an Additional Language

Students who have developing English language skills may be taught by specialist teachers for some lessons in the Learning Support department until they have sufficient English to access the mainstream curriculum.

Students who have sufficient English to access the mainstream curriculum but are not proficient will have additional support in lessons where appropriate.

Some students may access mainstream lessons right away in order to acquire language. This will depend on the individual student and their proficiency in English along with their social development.

7. Cross curricular

Many subjects collaborate on joint projects such as careers events and citizenship days. All subjects collaborate on literacy and numeracy to ensure these skills are embedded across the curriculum.

Subjects that teach similar skills and topics do so in a joined-up way that maximises curriculum time. For example, texts studied in drama are taught in English where appropriate.

8. Information, Advice and Guidance

When students make their choices for key stage 4 or key stage 5, they will have access to the following:

- Assemblies
- Individual mentoring meetings with their tutor
- Options Parents’ Evening
- Detailed options booklets
- Taster sessions for Diplomas, Work Related Learning, and City College courses
- Cross-curricular careers days
- ‘A Week in the Life’ lessons and sessions on the transition between key stage 4 and 5
- Meetings with the Vice Principal for Curriculum, where necessary.
9. Enrichment Curriculum

There is an extensive enrichment curriculum, which runs after school for one hour for at least four evenings a week. All students are encouraged to participate but it is not compulsory.

The enrichment curriculum covers a range of activities, which includes but is not limited to:

- Sport
- Music
- Drama
- Creativity/Art
- Additional qualifications such as GCSEs or AS levels
- Hobbies
- Revision classes
- Talks from University staff and students or professionals
- Super-curricular activities

Last Review: Autumn 2019
Next Review: Autumn 2021

Additional information

Curriculum statement

Curriculum Statement

At Sidney Stringer Academy, the curriculum is centred around the individual pupil and their needs, whatever their starting point at each key stage. Different pathways are available to ensure pupils can deepen their understanding and enjoyment of topics and issues already studied but also have the confidence and resilience to broaden their learning by taking on new subjects. As well as traditional GCSEs and A Levels, pathways can include functional skills qualifications and work-related learning in conjunction with local colleges and universities.

By design, the curriculum intends to maximise learning by careful planning and placement of topics across the school. In addition, we take advantage of cross-curricular opportunities wherever possible to ensure that the knowledge students acquire during their time with us is applicable to more than just one subject in school. We value life-long learning and appreciate that knowledge and cultural capital are integral to the development of children as valued members of society. One of our
priorities for 2019 is the development of Knowledge Organisers to allow students to prepare for their studies and make connections across and beyond departments.

In addition to the wide range of subjects studied, our Academy values – determination, integrity and respect - are embedded in both academic and practical studies. These values are seen in teamwork, homework and everyday lessons. Furthermore, our comprehensive enrichment programme offers many opportunities for students to enhance and enjoy their learning in different contexts, including the community of Hillfields and Coventry.

Sidney Stringer Academy’s curriculum is committed to preparing students to achieve the very best qualifications and to use what they learn both outside of the classroom and in adult life. Each subject investigates social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues that are pertinent as well as teaching British values to ensure our pupils are well-rounded members of society.

An overview of our cohesive academic and pastoral curriculum offer over the seven years can be viewed on the curriculum page of the website. It includes careers, PSHE, RSHE and citizenship.

We review our curriculum regularly to ensure learning is relevant and challenging so students leave Sidney Stringer Academy with qualifications and characteristics of which they can be proud.

Our students consistently achieve positive progress scores and impressive attainment at all key stages, which demonstrates how students – no matter their starting point – make outstanding progress because of our personalised curriculum. We are particularly proud of our basics (English and Maths) attainment and progress from the 2019 GCSE cohort, where 42% achieved a grade 5 or higher and 65% a grade 4 or higher.

For subject-specific curriculum information, please visit http://www.sidneystringeracademy.org.uk/information/curriculum