

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School and Sixth Form College

Curriculum Policy

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School and Sixth Form College seeks to be one of the country's finest secondary schools and post 16 providers, providing an outstanding education which prepares our learners for a changing world.

HCCS Curriculum Guiding Principles

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School and Sixth Form College is committed to providing a rigorous academic and intellectual education, which will challenge and engage students, offer continuity and progression of learning to foster a lifelong love of learning for its own sake, and provide them with a secure foundation on which to continue into Higher or Further Education, apprenticeships and/or the careers of their choice.

The curriculum, together with our ethos and values are our key drivers in achieving our vision of **'preparing learners for a changing world'**.

Key principles: The curriculum at HCCS:

- Is about developing the whole individual
- Ensures equality of opportunity in learning
- Provides personalised pathways and ways of learning
- Inspires drive, passion and commitment
- Promotes high standards, success and achievement
- Embodies responsibilities, entitlements, safety and wellbeing
- Develops respect, tolerance and courtesy
- Reflects learners' places in their communities

Ethos

At the core of the HCCS ethos is a genuine ambition for the students in our care to be the best that they can be. We are keen to celebrate the achievements of our students whenever and wherever they occur and encourage them to share their extra-curricular achievements with us. HCCS also places considerable emphasis upon examination success (most students will obtain 8 or 9 GCSEs. The majority of students choose to enter Holmes Chapel Sixth Form

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College for their post 16 education, where the majority of students will study 3 A Levels, or equivalent qualifications. It is important to the school that as much attention is given to those who find academic work challenging as to those who achieve high academic success.

We are a progress focused school and all colleagues monitor academic performance closely and deploy intervention strategies appropriately and promptly in the case of students who are not performing as well as they could or should. At this school and college, the success of all students is celebrated, including those who find the work challenging. All students are expected to give their best and are encouraged to develop their natural talents to the full.

All students engage with our target setting and tracking process to ensure they are appropriately challenged and are performing at their best. This also allows the school to identify potential underachievement and/or lack of progress and to provide support and intervention if required. Learning intervention is facilitated through the LIM (Learning Intervention Manager) team and pastoral support and intervention provided by the Head of House and Student Services Team. In addition, any child with additional needs may have those needs addressed through the Learning Support Team.

We maintain a strong focus on mathematics, English and science, and to help ensure that students are supported in achieving their best, we employ Core Intervention Support Specialists to help provide bespoke support to students who are underperforming in these curriculum areas.

We believe that the success of our learners ultimately depends on their ability to develop the key attitudes and habits of autonomous learners. In order to achieve this, we strive to create a learning environment and culture that highlights the importance of attitudes such as perseverance, enthusiasm, cooperation, pride, respect and ambition and habits such as reliability, reflection and responsibility. We endeavour at all times to engage learners actively in a two-way dialogue about their progress and support this through whole-school structures and routines that enable feedback and the acting on feedback by learners to form the cornerstone of their progress over time. So that our learners can receive the best possible deal from the school in terms of their day-to-day learning experiences, we work hard to ensure that our teachers actively engage in action research and continuing professional development relating to their classroom practice. Our current whole-school focus on

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feedback, autonomy, challenge and engagement indicates how the school places high quality independent learning at the heart of our curriculum.

Main School

All students of compulsory school age receive a broad and balanced education. This education ensures that the students gain experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative aspects.

In Key Stages Three and Four, the curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire core (key) skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy, enquiry and investigation . These, together with subject specific content and skills, are further developed in their other core and option subjects. Students are taught 50 periods per fortnight (60 minute periods), together with 8 (30 minute) tutorial lessons per fortnight. The timing and allocation of lessons on Friday's is slightly modified.

All students in Key Stage 3 study a core curriculum of mathematics, English, science, ICT and PE. In addition they study humanities, arts, design and technology and at least one modern foreign language. At the end of Key Stage 3 the students take part in the Options Process. Our option blocks are set up to favour the choice of English Baccalaureate subjects, whilst retaining an appropriate degree of choice within a broad and balanced curriculum.

For a small number of students a full diet of GCSE courses is not appropriate and a bespoke timetable will be devised to address their individual needs. This is done in consultation with the student, parents/carers and Learning Intervention Managers to arrive at the most appropriate pathway for the individual.

The school aims to run any optional course for which there is sufficient demand.

All curriculum subject matter is appropriate for the age and aptitudes of the students in each school year. The curriculum is designed to support students with special educational needs and/or permanent or temporary disability. Teaching assistants work with teachers to ensure that the curriculum for these students is appropriately differentiated where necessary. Data capture points and the publication of Interim Reports are an established part of the school calendar and the needs of all students are reviewed regularly. Following analysis of the data,

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interventions are employed. The intervention programme is extensive, considers students in all sub-groups and operates throughout the year.

RE is taught as a discrete subject within Humanities and at KS3 the curriculum reflects the locally agreed syllabus as well as non-statutory national guidelines. To fulfil our legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, the school engages all learners in a daily act of reflection and discussion (in the form of a `Thought for the Day`) during tutor periods. These, along with our whole-school assemblies, are prepared by our Head of RE. All colleagues at the school understand that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our learners is a whole-school concern and opportunities to develop citizenship and an understanding of British values are exploited wherever possible and appropriate both in lessons and through the day-to-day life of our school. These qualities and skills are also nurtured through our flourishing Personal Development Curriculum which helps to prepare our learners for all aspects of their lives by focusing on areas such as personal health and hygiene, work and finance, sex and relationships education and democracy and the rule of law.

To gain a complete understanding of the curriculum offer at the school it is necessary to read this document in conjunction with the following associated documents:

- Teaching and Learning
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Equality **SEND**
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education. With specific reference to “British Values”
- PDC Curriculum
- Subject specific material and setting policies
- Literacy and Numeracy policies

Key Stage 3 (Year 7 – 9)

In Year 7, all students receive a broad introductory curriculum which gives them experience in all of the aspects outlined above. In addition to mathematics, English, science, IT and PE, they study, history, geography, religious studies, art, music, drama, design and technology and food

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preparation and nutrition subjects. They are also able to study up to two modern foreign languages, chosen from French, German and Spanish.

Key Stage 4 (Year 10 & 11)

In Years 10&11, the curriculum offer is:

- English language and English literature
- Mathematics
- Science – Combined Science - Double Award Pathway = 2 GCSEs or by top up in **Block 1** of the option blocks - Triple Award Pathway (Separate: Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- PE (GCSE or Core) or GCSE Dance

The students are then free to choose from four option blocks.

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Separate sciences 3 GCSEs	Art	Drama	Business
Geography	Design & Technology	Film Studies	Computer Science
German	Drama	Food Nutrition & Preparation	German
History	Geography	French	History
Spanish	Health & Social Care	History	Music
	ICT	RE	Psychology
	Spanish		

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The Options Programme

Option information documents are available on the HCCS website to help the students and their parents to make informed choices. An options evening takes place during the autumn term where parents and students are encouraged to ask as many questions as necessary. Curriculum leaders deliver information sessions to the members of Year 9 during timetabled lessons. If a subject is not part of the Key Stage 3 offer, these sessions are delivered during an assembly.

GCSE examinations are taken in all subjects.

Year 11 Trial Examination and Masterclass Programme

Year 11 students have two trial examination seasons, the first during the last week of November and the second during the first week of March. The purpose of these trials is to allow them to gain an understanding of how it feels to revise, prepare for and sit a set of rigorous examinations. These examinations allow each student and the school to have a clear view at that point in time about strengths and areas for development. This means that students are able to focus on working on their key areas of challenge during the next phase of Year 11. In English and maths, the school participates in the PiXL Wave programme whereby our results in the trial examinations are mapped against other schools across the country, enabling us to benchmark the quality of our student responses against 1000's of others. PiXL analyses the data and provides the school with materials to use with the students that target specific areas of development.

Following the November trials, teachers in English and maths will submit the student marks to PiXL and analyse the performance of each student in detail to identify strengths and areas for development. Using this information, as well as assessments from across Year 10 and the first part of Year 11, we re-group students in maths and English classes so that each child is in the best group to address key areas for development and to maximise their progress and achievement. The tighter focus and 'masterclass' approach that this allows in these two key subjects means that each child will have access to a more bespoke approach to exam

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preparation. For some students, this may mean a change in teacher, a change to the group that they are in or both. This means, therefore, that the grouping of students in maths will take into account a variety of factors alongside ability and exam performance. Students are not moving sets in the traditional sense, but are being placed in groups to best suit their needs and knowledge gaps as we move closer to their GCSE exams. English groups have always taken a mixed ability approach to teaching and learning, and the movement of some children into different groups will also take into account our ongoing assessment and progress information which we have about each child.

The process of re-grouping according to need will be refined after the March 2018 trial examinations to further work on areas of challenge. Finally, in the weeks leading up to the start of the GCSE examinations, students will be grouped again into masterclasses in order to fine tune their examination performance.

Year 11 Masterclass Programme

All examination preparation is catered for in school with students attending a programme of masterclasses and revision sessions right up to the start of their GCSEs. Students no longer stay at home in the weeks leading up to their exams on what was traditionally known as 'study leave'.

During the weeks leading up to the actual GCSE examinations, students benefit from bespoke 'masterclasses' that are delivered during the school day so that they could be as prepared as possible. The masterclasses are highly successful in terms of providing the right input from the right teachers so that students are able to gain their best possible grade in the final exams. We aim to provide a masterclass within a 48 hour window preceding the examination.

Year 13 Trial Examination Programme

Year 13 students also have two trial examination seasons, the first during the last week of November and the second during the first week of March. The purpose of these trials is to

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allow them to gain an understanding of how it feels to revise, prepare for and sit a set of long and rigorous examinations. These examinations allow each student and the school to have a clear view at that point in time about strengths and areas for development. This means that students are able to focus on working on their key areas of challenge during the next phase of Year 13.

The Alternative Curriculum

At Holmes Chapel, the vast majority of students follow a GCSE curriculum following the options programme made up of the 'core curriculum' including maths, English, science and core PE plus a number of GCSE subject choices. For a small number of targeted students, we may occasionally create an 'Alternative Curriculum'. This is designed as a more bespoke curriculum tailored to a child's individual needs. Students may be offered access to this pathway for a number of reasons including Special Educational Needs and Disability as well as emotional, welfare, social or behavioural considerations. The Alternative Curriculum exists for the few students for whom a mainstream full GCSE provision is unlikely to meet their needs.

Students who follow the Alternative Curriculum will take GCSEs or appropriate levels of qualification in English, maths and science but, depending on their needs, take on fewer or no GCSE options compared to mainstream provision.

The purpose of Alternative Curriculum is to give these targeted students an appropriately challenging, educational experience which is more appropriate to their specific needs and which supports learning in the core curriculum whilst offering a reduced number of GCSE subjects. The Alternative Curriculum allows for a degree of personalisation within a framework of options. Students within this programme will receive additional and supplementary provision to support their progress and attainment. For example, the Alternative Curriculum may include additional numeracy and literacy, perhaps social and life skills as well as offering, where possible, appropriate levels of accreditation, qualification and experience.

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Transition

At HCCS we work carefully with the members of the HCDCP (Holmes Chapel and District Community Partnership) to collect all relevant transition information. The HCDCP consists of HCCS and the seven local primary schools that mainly feed into our Year 7.

On entry to HCCS

Each Year 7 student receives relevant information and support so that they are able to learn effectively and become a fully active member of the whole school community.

Key information is disseminated effectively to ensure the students and their parents are supported throughout the transition programme.

On entry to the school, Cognitive Assessment Tests (CATs) and transition tests are conducted, providing a baseline measure from which EAP pathways are determined. Further tests and checks on progress are conducted to enable the students to secure expected academic outcomes. Students with low levels of literacy and numeracy are identified and intervention implemented. Further programmes of intervention are deployed if necessary.

Our Extended Transition Manager, a key member of our Learning Support Team, visits each of our feeder primary schools and gets to know the students. This enables us to be fully informed of any students who have SEND, so that we can adequately prepare for their transition and future at our school. Where necessary, additional transition activities are established. This may involve an extended transition programme for our most vulnerable students. New students are screened for learning difficulties and disabilities during the first half term after their entry to the school; the school also acts upon any information passed on by a student's previous school. This screening highlights those students who are gifted and those who have specific additional learning difficulties.

Students who have been assessed as having a learning difficulty and/or disability or those with specific Special Educational Needs have their needs considered individually by qualified specialist staff and appropriate interventions are delivered to support these needs. Gifted children are provided with opportunities to extend their knowledge in extension work in the classroom or small group activities. There are also a number of clubs that stretch and challenge. The provision for a student with a learning difficulty depends on a student's need

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having been formally diagnosed, and may include such help as group support within the classroom. Teaching staff are well informed, have up to date knowledge of effective learning and teaching strategies, and are skilled at teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with particular special educational needs.

Whole School Transition Team and Key Actions	
Admissions Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use SAM system to illustrate timeline for applications/ admissions - March: final confirmation of cohort for September (220 students). Information shared with curriculum planning team. - Admissions packs sent to parents/ carers. - Letters sent to invite students to taster days. - Admission information shared with LS, HofH and LIM.
Director of Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LAC students identified through application process. - Meeting with Year 6 teachers and agencies. - September: safeguarding information sent by primary schools via CPOM documents.
Learning Intervention Mana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of CATs and core curriculum transition testing. - Identify key students for early intervention programmes. - Implement the Accelerated Reading/ STAR Reading tests. - Update the parental handbook to share key information to support eff transition. - Lead the Year 7 tutor team through the transition process. - Lead parent information evenings and act as a key contact for parents throughout the academic year. - Lead Curriculum and Pastoral Year 6 transition days. - Lead the whole school transition team to ensure information is shared effectively coordinated.

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Learning Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review applications for statemented students.- Visit to feeder primaries to observe and meet with SEN students.- SFP drawn up prior to students starting in September.- Fresh Start implemented into timetables for students needing additional support with literacy.
Medical Needs Administrative Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify medical needs students from returned admission packs.- Lead care plan meetings for students with medical needs.- Share and update information onto SIMs/ Mintclass.
Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Visit Primary Schools to HCCS, standards and expectations.- Vulnerable students identified and disseminate information to LIM.- Attend PEP/ CIN and multi agency meeting for Year 6 students.- Safeguarding files transferred via CPOMS.

The Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, a similar open policy applies to students' choice of A Level and other level 3 qualifications including BTEC subjects. Students have a choice of three subjects. The exception to this is if students wish to take Maths and Further Maths they can choose four subjects. This however is dependent on students achieving a minimum of a grade 7 in Maths at GCSE. Other four A Level combinations may be possible and are considered on an individual basis. In addition, students who are needing to resit Maths or English may be able to access a two subject pathway alongside work experience, ensuring that we are able to meet the needs of all of our students wishing to study here. The school will consider running any course where numbers are economically viable. All of the subjects offered at GCSE are available at A Level, as well as Further Mathematics, BTEC Applied Science, Economics, Photography, Sociology, BTEC Health and Social Care, Design Technology, Level 3 Diploma in Food Science and

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Nutrition and BTEC IT. Advice and guidance are provided to all students regarding their post-16 choices and this advice includes at least one interview with each Year 11 student by the Headteacher, Head of School or Deputy Head, together with the option of a meeting with a Careers Advisor. Most students applying to HC6F will also be interviewed by the Director of Sixth Form. Most students will be offered a place in the Sixth Form based on their first interview. Option sheets are provided (again via the website) to help students and their parents to make informed choices. A Sixth Form Open Evening, together with a programme of taster lessons, allows them to experience (“taste the flavour of”) A level study before committing themselves to specific subjects. In addition to this, our student representatives (Sixth Form ambassadors) and the Sixth Form team will work with Year 11 students throughout the year to offer guidance and support to ensure this is a seamless transition in to the Sixth Form.

Sixth Form Study Programmes are comprised of examination subjects and non-qualification activity. Non-qualification activity includes an innovative information advice and guidance programme, including expert-led lectures and seminars on topics such as drug abuse, sexual health, safe driving, preparation for higher education and apprenticeships, as well as UCAS support and guidance. For Oxbridge candidates the school provides the opportunity to participate in a mock interview. The school also tries to provide an additional subject-specific interview. A weekly enrichment programme allows students to develop skills not explored in their A level subjects. They can choose from a range of options such as: Extended Project Qualification (EPQ); Study Skills; Work Experience; Primary and Secondary Placements; Core Maths as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Silver award. Taken as a whole, Sixth Form Study Programmes are designed to prepare students for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

Careers

Careers guidance is provided by a careers advisor. She will provide support and advice as well as organising additional visits by outside agencies, speakers and advisers. Work related learning is an integral part of PDC and of the school’s provision to Year 10 students and will usually include an element of work experience. For university application, there is a rigorous process which is led by the Director of Sixth Form.

Modular Examinations

A level courses have gone through a process of reform, the final changes came into effect in

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September 2017. The changes mean that all A Level course and other Level 3 qualifications will be run on a linear basis with all external assessments being taken at the end of 13.

The implications of this is that students will select three subject (in the main) and will be required to continue with these subjects over the duration of two years.

Studying in the Sixth Form

Sixth Form students have provision for private study which includes use of the Sixth Form Centre, the Learning Resource Centre and the numerous computer facilities located in departmental bases. All students will have a minimum of four Supervised Study periods in which they are required to sign in for. The only exception to this is if students are studying four subjects. In some cases, the Sixth Form Team may insist that a student attends additional Supervised Study periods.

Alternative Learning Week (ALW)

During one week in the summer term of the school year the normal curriculum is suspended and an alternative curriculum is put in place. This week enables Faculty areas to organise learning experiences for students away from school - including sporting and musical tours - without having an adverse impact on our mainstream provision. Those students who remain in school during ALW also receive a rich and cross-curricular alternative learning experience that places a heavy emphasis on teamwork, challenge, creativity and fun.