

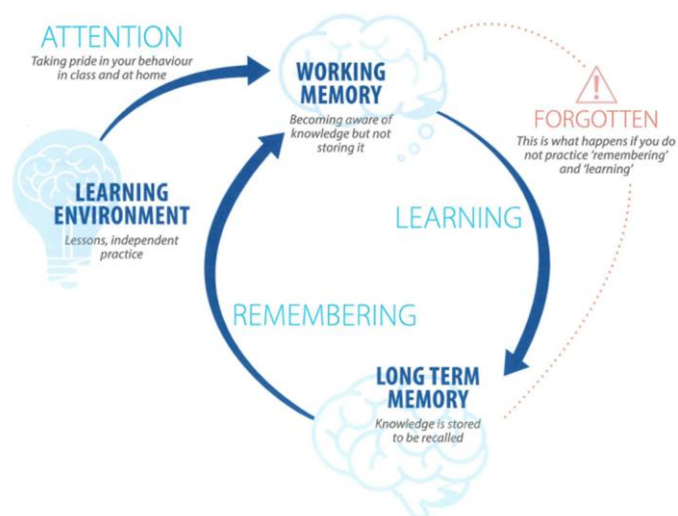
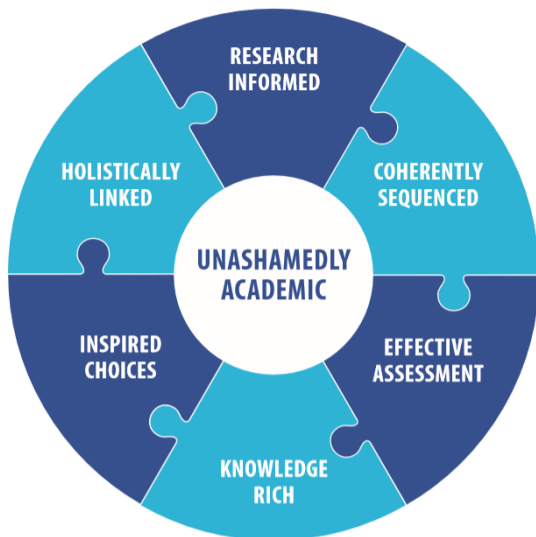


# West Exe School

community • opportunity • success



## The West Exe Curriculum September 2025





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## 1. Our curriculum vision

The central principles underpinning our approach to the curriculum at West Exe School are

- Proudly academic
- Research informed
- Coherently sequenced
- Effectively assessed
- Knowledge rich
- Culturally responsive
- Offers inspired choices.

Through a curriculum which encompasses every aspect of School life we are developing our community of young people to have deep agency with their learning: they are **curious** about the world around them and **proud** to be learning with us.

Our curriculum is one of our **ambitious** pillars of our Framework of Excellence for Education, which also includes Pedagogy & Practice, Assessment and the Learner. The Framework of Excellence is the core of our West Exe Offer, which encompasses all that our students will experience during their time at West Exe School from year 7 through to year 11.

This holistic approach ensures our students connect their learning across the whole body of the school, from English to History, from electives choices, our **adaptable** careers programme through to the West Exe Literary Canon.

Our curriculum is underpinned by our community beliefs of compassion, courage and citizenship. Through their time with us, students learn to want to make a difference in the world, with **kindness**, and to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired wisely. Our culturally responsive curriculum gives time to previously marginalised experiences and people, and voices to those who have been silenced and enhancing **resilience**. We encourage our students to question and examine real life incidents, helping us and them to understand why people behave in the way that they do.

Every area of the school systematically provides opportunities for students to further develop their attributes and through this, our students know what success looks like. Thus, they leave us as...





## 2. Our subjects

At the core of our ambitious learning culture is a knowledge-rich curriculum that is cohesive, cumulative and highly sequenced. Our curriculum is based on the understanding that students arrive with significant prior knowledge, a foundation that we build upon from day one. By planning with the end in mind, we consider our students' career pathways and aspirations, as well as the context of our local community when making the painstaking text selections for the Canon, and when debating the merits of particular case studies in Geography.

### Reading

'Reading is at the heart of the curriculum' Ofsted, May 2022.

At West Exe School we have created a literary canon, a collection of texts which hold significant value both in the style of writing and in their message. By the time they leave us, our students will have read 23 magnificent, thought provoking and hopefully, life changing texts: books that will bring depth, colour and culture to their lives; books that allow them to see the world from many varying perspectives and bring a greater understanding of the way the society works; books that will be a pleasure to read.

These texts sit outside of our curriculum, and, as such, are in addition to the texts studied in English. They develop the cultural capital of students through the shared experience of communal reading. In a time of political turmoil and increasing racial tension, it is important to provide students with a range of narratives and perspectives celebrating diversity. Our Canon includes voices from a range of ethnicities and religions, as well as narratives from a range of women and those who are LGBT, including the texts Refugee Boy, and I am Malala.

We feel passionately that children from all walks of life should have access to the finest literature and therefore, when each student embarks upon their journey at West Exe School, they are gifted with a book to read over the summer, to discuss upon their return within their tutor sessions. We are determined that our students have the very best quality of education, supported across the entire curriculum by culturally significant, excellent literature.

### English

Students will develop into critical thinkers, writers and readers who are able to articulate their understanding of the world.

**Reading:** Students read a range of diverse and ambitious texts: they are exposed to a range of voices in society and are taught to question what they read along with an awareness of texts as conscious constructs. Reading is celebrated and embedded throughout the students' school career. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum.

**Writing:** Students are explicitly taught the conventions of academic phrasing and are given frequent opportunities to reflect and improve their work. Extended writing is an expectation of all students: they are explicitly taught high level academic vocabulary.



**Speaking and Listening:** Students are exposed to the art of rhetoric and are encouraged to find and use their use. Students are given the opportunity to articulate their thoughts as part of the writing process and are consciously taught to be active listeners.

## **Mathematics**

Students will be confident mathematicians and creative problem solvers.

We reject the idea that some pupils 'just can't do maths'. We believe that through hard work all pupils can improve their understanding and be successful. Our aim is to support our pupils to develop a long-term, secure and adaptable understanding of mathematics. This is achieved through developing their fluency, mathematical reasoning and the ability to solve problems in unison.

In order to achieve this, we have introduced a 5-year scheme of learning which builds on KS2; provides coverage of the National Curriculum and GCSE Curriculum; and prepares them for Mathematics Post 16. It is a spiral curriculum that focuses on depth before breadth, sequenced using interleaving that ensures students:

- Are presented with consistent methods and key layouts to aid understanding and reduce cognitive load.
- Are always equipped with the prerequisite knowledge required to effectively approach new problems.
- Are constantly provided with opportunities to recall, retrieve and interweave their knowledge and skills.

Our scheme of learning moves from the simple to the complex within and across the 5 years, and following a spiral curriculum enables pupils to master concepts and ideas, revisiting topics to ensure that a greater depth of knowledge is gained. Students who grasp concepts rapidly are provided with rich and challenging tasks to deepen topic understanding before any acceleration through new content is considered. Those who are not sufficiently fluent consolidate their understanding before moving on.

Each lesson begins with a review of previous learning, of varying recency, designed to strengthen recall and develop well-connected mathematical knowledge. Students are regularly assessed through no and low stakes quizzes and feedback is provided promptly to allow effective re-teaching and ensure that every student knows where to improve.

## **Statistics and Further Mathematics**

Strengthen and deepen understanding to strive for excellence.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for those interested in excelling at Mathematics to learn more about and enrich their understanding of the various strands of the subject: Statistics and Probability, Geometry, Number and Algebra.

GCSE Statistics gives students a thorough understanding of the rationale and reasoning behind statistical data collection, processing and analysis. Students develop their understanding of



statistical content both within and beyond the GCSE Mathematics course. This gives students a real advantage in their GCSE and beyond to A level and they sit the GCSE Statistics at the end of year 10.

The Further maths qualification is the focus in year 11 with the aim of developing the higher end algebra, number and geometry skills for these students. Much of the course complements their GCSE Maths learning and really deepens their understanding of the topics in Higher GCSE Maths. As well as complementing their GCSE Mathematics course, Further Maths introduces students to other topics that would otherwise only be seen at A level. Matrices and binomial expansion are both accessible and engaging parts of the course for all students. The exposure to higher level mathematical concepts encourages students to take Maths courses as a post-16 option.

## Business

Students who study GCSE Business become equipped with a work-ready tool kit of skills and applied knowledge preparing them to embrace and understand the world economy.

Helping students to develop an understanding of the psychology behind the advertising, spending habits and pricing strategies of major companies to running a startup, this course will have students confidently standing up and delivering convincing pitches with passion.

Students will learn about the purpose of business activity and the role of business enterprise and entrepreneurship, alongside the dynamic nature of business. Students will know how to calculate and predict success using industry standard proven methods of breakeven, design and marketing mix.

## Science

Students will be inspired to be curious about the world around them, develop a strong understanding of scientific concepts built upon key knowledge and skills, appreciate the value of science in their everyday lives and to make a positive impact in their community.

Our KS3 Science curriculum is sequenced around the big ideas in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. A spiral learning journey has been created which enables students to regularly revisit key concepts and also expand their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum is intelligently sequenced over time so that these big ideas develop through the course and more challenging abstract content is saved until students are confident of the prior knowledge. Students also develop their working scientifically, investigative and problem-solving skills and are encouraged to critically question the facts they are presented with.

During year 9 all students start studying the Edexcel Combined Science course, with the option of studying Separate Sciences in year 10. Students take their GCSE Science exams in the summer of year 11. Students are also able to take part in a range of extra-curricular enrichment activities, including STEM and science experiment electives.



We aim for all students to leave West Exe with a detailed understanding of the main scientific issues affecting our planet today, and know that by sharing our passion and scientific knowledge for our subject we inspire the next generation of scientists.

## Geography

Studying Geography fosters curiosity and empathy about the world around us providing students with the means to (and knowledge to) question and debate, such that they have the skills to be active participants in the local and global community.

Students at West Exe develop skills to 'think like a Geographer'. We foster lifelong skills and attributes prepare our students for the world around them. The KS3 curriculum aims to build on large scale global issues that will help our students to consider their place in the world. It helps them to develop 'themes' of understanding including sustainability, inequality, development and climate change as well as large scale physical geographic systems and the impact these have on place and people. We revisit these themes throughout the curriculum to support students understanding of these concepts and to ensure they are embedded into the long-term memory. This style of learning is an intrinsic part of our Geography curriculum.

The KS4 curriculum builds on prior knowledge as well as introducing more complex analytical and geographic skills. Students use current and diverse case studies to exemplify the geographic theory and to encourage them to continue to foster curiosity about the world. Additional work on the concept of geographic scale is integrated into the content to support understanding of local, regional and global scale concepts and issues. Students also experience geographic fieldwork where they get to overlay geographic theory with real world findings.

The Geography curriculum is accessible to all students through the use of adaptive teaching approaches and implementing high expectations. We aim to deliver a Geography curriculum that supports students understanding of the importance of sustainable futures for all.

## History

History aspires to instill children with a love of the past, developing a fascination with its stories and characters.

The subject is based upon the principle of *using the past to understand today and to shape a brighter future.*

West Exe students who study History will develop life-long critical thinking skills and the ability to form reasoned opinions and arguments based upon evidence. By learning about the past, they will garner a deeper appreciation of the present (why the world today is as it is) and prepare to play their own roles in forging a positive future. In short, we want History lessons to be the 'go to' answer to the classic question, "Did you learn anything interesting in school today?"

The curriculum encompasses almost 3,000 years of World History, ranging from the founding of Ancient Rome to modern medical breakthroughs such as the COVID-19 vaccination.



Year 7 takes students through a largely chronological study that incorporates The Roman Empire, The Norman Conquest and life in the Tudor and Stuart ages. Year 8 focuses on broader World History, looking at the impact of The Silk Roads, Slavery and The British Empire, as well as the evolution of the United States of America and its impact upon the world today. In year 9 students focus upon the 20<sup>th</sup> century including both World Wars. We are proud of the fact that *all* students at West Exe School study History in their first three years with us.

The GCSE History course is taught in years 10 and 11, during which students will cover the 4 examination topics of Medicine Through Time, Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918-1939), Early Elizabethan England (1558-1588) and The Cold War.

## Languages

"Talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart." Nelson Mandela.

Our curriculum is designed to cover both the linguistic and the cultural aspects of language learning and as such will ensure that students have enjoyable language learning experiences in and outside of the classroom, develop a solid understanding of grammar which will support their understanding of English and become curious and open-minded about the world beyond.

Our year 7 curriculum launches students into a linguistic and cultural journey of 5 years, aimed at fostering a life-long love of languages. Year 8 sees the development of understanding of tenses, building on the year 7 work and preparing students for the GCSE. The GCSE themes are explored in the lower school and the vocabulary and grammar are re-visited and built upon throughout. Our GCSE course has 12 topics which are looked at in real depth with an emphasis on the key grammar and vocabulary which will enable students to experience success not just in exams but in real-life experiences.

## The Creative Arts

This faculty is a collaboration of subjects; Art and Design, Performing Arts, Music, Photography, iMedia and Design and Technology. Students will explore creativity whilst deepening and enriching their global cultural capital and literacy.

## Art and Design

Students who study Art and Design at West Exe develop curious minds that have a passion for creativity.

Students are encouraged to take risks, be ambitious and reflect of the world around them through an Art lens. The Art curriculum is led by all students learning through making and finding personal and meaningful ways to express their ideas.

Students will learn about a breadth of mediums, techniques and artists, that form a diverse backdrop for learning. Foundational skills in drawing, painting, printing, colour theory and elements of 3D design will all be established in years 7 and 8 to give students confidence to explore and make individual choices. Project work is all completed in sketchbooks. At the end of





each cycle a final realised piece representing the practical and knowledge-based skills gained, will be completed.

Through years 9, 10 and 11 students have the chance to find their own visual language. The Art curriculum during these years of study is underpinned by the assessment objectives, develop, record, refine, present. Within these overarching themes students research and analyse artist work, record insightful observations about personal outcomes and discoveries, advance knowledge in a wide range of mediums that are then refined throughout each project, develop drawing and observational skills, participate in class workshops and evaluate and reflect upon outcomes and source materials. Students are encouraged to be ambitious, take pride in each piece of work and push all their ideas as far as possible.

## **iMedia**

Creative iMedia course is a level 2 vocational course which enables students to understand how moving and still images are used to influence people in the modern world. Students study traditional and new media and explore the technical, creative and senior roles of people who work in the media industry. They learn about media codes and how they are used to enhance meaning and impact of scenes in films, animations and still images. They learn to use sophisticated industry standard software to create both animation and graphical images and in their Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) they apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to create original work to satisfy a client's requirements.

This course is aimed at creative students who might wish to pursue a technical or creative career in some aspect of the modern media industry.

## **Music**

The Music curriculum at West Exe School enables students to develop a broad musical knowledge, which they will be able to apply to a number of different musical contexts – both practical and theoretical.

During their five years at West Exe School students will develop their understanding of music performance, composition and music technology. They will also study different genres and styles of music from a wide range of scenarios giving them a broad overview of music of the past, the present and how this might look different in the future. In years 7 and 8 students will be introduced to the fundamental skills needed in Music such as singing and rhythms; performing on different instruments alone and in groups and the basics of composing their own, original musical ideas both through performance and whilst learning to use Digital Audio Workstations.

Throughout years 9 and 10 students will deepen this knowledge through targeted study of key musical genres with a focus on identifying, understanding and demonstrating how key musical characteristics, artists, composers and technological innovations shaped the sound associated with these genres. They will also begin to develop their individual skills in the areas of Performance, Composition and Production. Students will apply this knowledge to produce a wide range of practical pieces such as; Live Performances, Original Compositions and Fully Produced Recordings. The vocational nature of the course will mean that they will look at these areas from a real-world perspective, using the theoretical knowledge that they have gained to produce pieces of work such



as blog posts, podcasts, educational videos, reviews and articles, allowing pupils to gain a greater insight into how the skills they are learning can be developed into a career in music.

In their final year of study students will undertake a project that brings together all the skills that they have learned in responding to a specific musical brief. Throughout year 11, students will use their knowledge base to plan, develop, arrange and perform or produce a musical product that showcases everything that they have learnt. Students will leave with a wide range of skills and an ever-growing understanding of music and the endless career opportunities within the music industry.

## **Performing Arts**

Drama and Dance inspires and develops creative, well rounded individuals who have a love for the arts in all their forms.

Students will leave West Exe School understanding the importance of the Performing Arts and their contribution to a civilised society. By sharing our passion for performing, it is hoped that students will be instilled with that same passion, and will carry it forward for the rest of their life.

In years 7 and 8, students will develop specific performing skills that are also transferable ones for life, such as confidence, teamwork, the ability to speak in front of an audience. In addition, students will learn about a number of different styles of and techniques in performing arts, and how to create work, and to interpret existing work.

In years 9-11 the emphasis is much more about understanding the role of the Performing Arts in Society. Students will be made aware of how a variety of professional works are created, and will develop their own skills as performers and designers. By learning about contrasting pieces of repertoire and different styles of Drama and Dance, students will gain a deeper appreciation for different forms and be well equipped to becoming more versatile in performance. They will be able to perform specific pieces of work from scripts, and to create work of their own based on a professional brief.

## **Photography**

The photography department's goal is for all students to become creative individuals, to feel comfortable taking risks, and work collaboratively to support each other.

The photography curriculum is built around a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding which progressively lead to greater levels of independence, decision making and individuality throughout the course. Students are encouraged to think and speak like a photographer as they explore and respond to a given starting point. They will use a combination of traditional and digital methods to develop techniques, processes and camera skills to facilitate imaginative self-expression, use industry standard software for editing and convey their ideas and opinions both visually and in writing.

In Year 9 students undertake a series of experimental projects based on the history of photography and creative control of camera settings, followed by a more in-depth project on architectural photography. In years 10 and 11 students build a portfolio. Students undertake workshops on the



themes of Natural Forms and Portraits, followed by a sustained project in response to a given stimuli. Four assessment objectives, research, experiment, refine and present, create the structure for student investigations.

Ultimately, we want students to leave our department well prepared for the next stage of their educational or work journey.

## Technology and Engineering Design

Over their five-year journey, students will develop a deep understanding of the wider influences on Design and Technology, which include; historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors, new and emerging technologies, developments in new materials and materials and their working properties.

The Design Technology curriculum at West Exe School provides students with a comprehensive technological knowledge base, which they will apply in a wide range of practical contexts situations and scenarios. Students will design and make products that solve real and relevant problems, within a variety of contexts, while considering their own and other's needs, external influences, and the application of a deep theoretical understanding of processes and techniques.

In years 7 and 8 students will be introduced to the design process, health and safety protocol, computer aided design and manufacture, tools and equipment in the workshop and renowned designers and design movements. Studying at greater depth through year 9 and 10 students will develop a deeper knowledge of materials and their working properties, industrial manufacturing processes, mechanical devices, sustainable energy generation and storage, ecological issues and new and emerging technologies.

The culmination of study will be, through either the Engineering or the Design Technology pathway, an independent design and make project, specifically focused on meeting the needs of a client. Throughout year 11 students will follow the iterative design process and apply their extensive knowledge from the previous four years of study, and design and manufacture a commercially viable product.

## Sport, Health and Nutrition

Teaching Sport, Health, and Nutrition in Schools is not just about teaching PE; it's about molding resilient minds, fostering lifelong habits of well-being, and empowering the next generation to lead lives filled with vitality, purpose, and the strength to overcome any challenge.

The SHN Curriculum at West Exe School develops students holistically through learning about the importance of healthy and active lifestyles and the impact on mental, and physical health and wellbeing. By offering a range of diverse and enriching opportunities, students can develop their skills and knowledge in both Sport and Nutrition. By understanding the benefits of adopting healthy, active lifestyles both regarding the activities they choose to do and the food they choose to eat, students can make **informed, positive choices** that help them lead healthy and active lifestyles beyond their school years. The curriculum aims to develop students physically, mentally, socially and ensures students have a greater understanding of health in order that they live life to the full.



The purpose of the SHN curriculum and enrichment programme is to provide opportunity for high quality teaching and learning, which immerses students in specialist knowledge, and inspires them to engage in a lifelong love of sport and healthy active lifestyles. We are proud to offer a wide selection of subjects for further study in years 9-11.

Within Key Stage 3, we expose our students to a broad and balanced curriculum which provides them with opportunity to master the fundamental skills which underpin sports performance across a wide range of sporting contexts, both within lesson time and within the extensive enrichment programme.

Within Key Stage 4, we provide the opportunity for students to study a greater depth of knowledge through a wide range of examination courses, which provide a suitable route for all students whether it be the academic performance-based GCSE route (PE or Food Preparation and Nutrition) or a more vocational CNAT Sport Studies or BTEC Health and Social care. Across both key stages, knowledge is sequenced coherently so that students' appreciation of Sport, Health and Nutrition incrementally grows to specialist understanding term on term.

## **Sport Studies**

Sport Studies looks at topics connected to the different types of sporting and physical activity including how sport is organised and the different roles available within the sporting sector. Students will develop their knowledge regarding contemporary issues in Sport, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, drugs in Sport, Technology in Sport and the barriers to participation. Students will also develop their skills as a sports performer in two sports including their ability to plan and evaluate their improvement in performance. Students will also plan, deliver and evaluate a sports activity session for a sport of their choice. Finally, students will increase their knowledge, awareness and performance in outdoor and adventurous activities.

## **Food Preparation and Nutrition**

Food Preparation and Nutrition equips learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed choices about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire the knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life. Students will explore a range of topics including food preparation skills, learning about the importance of food safety, investigating and evaluating the effect of diet on health and exploring the impact of social factors on food choice. Students will also discover the world around us and the impact this has on food provenance and sustainability.

## **Health and Social Care**

The BTEC Tech Award in Health and Social care is designed to give our students the opportunity to develop their understanding of Health and Social Care and what that means in day to day life. The course allows students to develop their understanding regardless of their previous study in a number of different areas such as human development and the care values. The course provides an overview that can provide a basis for students wishing to pursue a career in the Health and Social Care industry whilst also providing broader knowledge and understanding for those who are unsure of which path they would like to take. Upon completing the course, students will have



developed an understanding of the Health and Social Care sector. They will have an understanding of the skills needed to work in this sector. The students will be ready to undertake a variety of different courses whether that is A-Levels, vocational courses or apprenticeships.

## **The World Around Us**

We take pride in providing a diverse range of subjects that encourage students to explore their self-awareness and role in the world. Courses such as Citizenship, Religious Studies, Economics, Sociology, and the West Exe Baccalaureate are designed to stimulate critical thinking and foster philosophical debates, empowering students to develop a deeper understanding of their surroundings.

## **The West Exe Baccalaureate**

Over 5 years of study the WEB curriculum prepares students for a “life in modern Britain by equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity”.

The overarching goal of the Baccalaureate has been the holistic development of West Exe students. “Community, Opportunity, Success” underpins the Baccalaureate as our motivation to develop students who are not only academically successful but are also emotionally strong and socially aware.

The West Exe Baccalaureate developed from a desire to create a programme of study that encompassed statutorily required subjects, such as Religious Education, and the skills and attributes that students will require to become successful and active twenty-first century citizens.

As such, the West Exe Baccalaureate embodies the School’s values of Courage, Compassion and Citizenship and provides opportunities for students to develop the attributes of being adaptable, ambitious, curious, kind, proud and resilient.

The West Exe Baccalaureate curriculum provides opportunities for students’ broader development, equipping them to develop new skills whilst learning about a range of different topics. As part of the wider character and culture of the School, the WEB curriculum supports students to develop their character.

## **Sociology**

Sociology studies how society works and how this influences important areas of our lives. It helps students understand how individuals fit into a wider social network, and encourages them to question beliefs about society which they may have previously taken for granted.

Students will develop their analytical, assimilation and communication skills by comparing and contrasting perspectives on a variety of social issues, constructing reasoned arguments, making substantiated judgements and drawing reasoned conclusions.

The GCSE Sociology course begins by examining key sociologists such as Marx and Durkheim and their theories of society. Students will investigate why sociologists conduct research and the



different methods for testing hypotheses and generating data. The four primary areas of the GCSE course are the sociology of families, education, crime and deviance and social stratification.

Whilst a challenging subject, Sociology is accessible to all students through the use of adaptive teaching approaches and a range of teaching activities, coupled with implementing high expectations. Through studying Sociology, students gain greater awareness of the world around them and their role within it.

## Classical Civilizations

The Classics course focuses on two elements of ancient history:

**Myths and Symbols of Power:** Students will explore a wide range of myths regarding the role of the gods and heroes in the founding of Athens, Rome and the importance of Heracles/Hercules to both these ancient civilizations. Students will also get the chance to go more in-depth with the ever-popular myths about the Underworld. They will also study the role of temples, festivals, death and beliefs of the afterlife in Greek and Roman society.

**Roman City Life:** Students will focus on the everyday life of an Ancient Roman during the Imperial Period. Where did they live? What was family and education like? What was the role of slaves in Rome? As well as this, they will be given the chance to look into Roman entertainment. In particular, the harsh reality of being a gladiator, fighting for your life in the colosseum...

**Literature:** Year 1 also has a literature component which involves a study of four Roman authors who offer a unique insight into the Roman world. One of which is Pliny, who is renowned for his fascinating letters to his friends from roughly 70AD to 100AD where he does not hold back on the juicy details of life in Ancient Rome!



### 3. The Cycles System

The school year is divided into three cycles of twelve weeks. Each cycle comprises ten teaching weeks during which students cover new topics, each one building on knowledge of previous learning and cycles. The tenth week is an Assessment week when all students in Years 7-11 complete tests and other assessments in every subject to analyse their strengths and weaknesses in current and previous cycles. In the twelfth week, known as the Super Teaching week, teachers re-teach areas that students have struggled with in the assessments. The first lesson of every cycle is a contextual lesson where the teacher outlines what will be covered within the cycle and how it prepares students for final examination.

We deliberately structure our curriculum consistently across all subjects. This is done to make school structures as efficient as possible in developing students' knowledge and skills whilst developing a wider, more holistic school experience. This alignment in structures across subjects is designed to reduce the weight on our students' cognitive load – they are able to focus on the core learning in front of them as we remove the extraneous load.

Our curriculum aims to provide alignment between everything that our students learn and consistency across all subjects.

#### Context week

- The why - students understand what will be involved in their learning across the cycle and what the final assessment will require of them.
- Pre-teaching of tier two and three vocabulary to support learning later on in the cycle.
- Metacognition – where the scheme fits within the wider picture of whole school learning.
- Careers links - introduced in week one, linking learning to the world of work, fostering curiosity and ambition, empowering our students for an unpredictable future.

#### Weeks 2 – 10

- Weekly retrieval testing through extended practice - Consolidating the knowledge.
- Mid-cycle assessment to provide formative feedback for the students, and planning intelligence for the teacher.

#### Assessment week

The benefits of our formal assessment week are plentiful:

- Students practice the independent application of the knowledge. Through this, they build independence and resilience, whilst also developing focus and concentration.
- Students develop skills that enable them to work independently, draw on a schema of knowledge, synthesise the information and apply it in a range of contexts.
- Students develop stamina as writers, and high expectations of themselves and their performance at all levels.
- Students with SEND are provided with pre-agreed support to maximise opportunities for success.





## Super Teaching week

Students are reminded of the importance of reading backwards to read forwards – that all of our learning is built on prior learning. With their teachers' support, they address gaps and misconceptions in their learning, always re-attempting a section of their assessment to consolidate their feedback.

## 4. Curriculum Planning: *Preparing our students for the tests of life, rather than a life of tests.*

At the core of our ambitious learning culture, is a knowledge-rich curriculum that is cohesive, cumulative and highly sequenced. Our curriculum is based on the understanding that students arrive with significant prior knowledge, a foundation that we build upon from day one. By planning with the end in mind, we consider our students' career pathways and aspirations, as well as the context of our local community when making the painstaking text selections for the Canon, when debating the merits of particular case studies in Geography and when deciding upon the new digital pathway for our computer scientists of the future. We sequence lessons to build knowledge, skills and understanding to enable students to achieve great things in their subject area.

Our curriculum is always under the spotlight and under review. We believe that our high-quality curriculum ensures that our students learn both the **substantive knowledge** required to connect prior learning with new, as well as the contextual **disciplinary knowledge** which leads to their ability to connect learning between subject domains. Thus, our departments and faculties have developed a thematic planning approach, teaching areas of knowledge in real depth, through rich and exciting sources that students are then able to apply elsewhere. Our use of knowledge organisers across all subject areas is another tool for the delivery domain specific substantive knowledge<sup>1</sup> as well as the required subject vocabulary that is pivotal to students' success. At the heart of our planning and homework system, they contain most of the knowledge, both substantive and declarative, that our students will need to be successful across a cycle of learning.

With a starting point of 'What do our students require in order to thrive?'<sup>2</sup>, our subject teams have carefully reviewed the national curriculum for their subjects and are clear where and why we diverge from the National curriculum, and when we teach well beyond its limits.

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<sup>1</sup> Christine Counsell

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Priestly





## 5. Curriculum Choices – Our Rationale

We believe that our students have the unalienable right to a five-year learning journey which is not just about an end-point of GCSEs but a time of discovery, a time of awakening a passion for subjects, and a time for acquiring knowledge and skills which will support their future studies and their working lives.

With this in mind, we provide a curriculum which is rich and varied and which follows the national curriculum in years 7 and 8. As we move into year nine, we allow students to specialise in their foundation subjects, fostering that passion early, whilst providing additional curriculum time for humanities, subjects pivotal to learning about our place in the world around us.

Students continue with the full suite of EBACC subjects throughout year 9, allowing teachers to teach beyond the limits of the national curriculum. All students continue to study both Geography and History until this point because these subjects teach us all that is known about the world around us and how it became that way. Therefore, they frame our understanding of our own position in the world in which we live. They are rich providers of cultural capital and thus are great equalisers; the knowledge that students gain in these subjects can be utilised in the wider curriculum as well developing their understanding of the world around them. This is why we ensure that all children study these subjects in such depth.

Our [Curriculum Choices booklet](#) can be accessed through our website.

| Curriculum time (hours per fortnight) |      |      |      |       |           |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|-----------|
|                                       | Yr 7 | Yr 8 | Yr 9 | Yr 10 | Yr 11     |
| English                               | 8    | 8    | 10   | 10    | 8         |
| Maths                                 | 8    | 8    | 8    | 8     | 10        |
| Science                               | 8    | 8    | 8    | 10    | 10        |
| History                               | 3    | 3    | 3    | 4     | 6         |
| Geography                             | 3    | 3    | 3    |       |           |
| Spanish                               | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4     | 6         |
| Art                                   | 2    | 2    |      |       |           |
| Drama                                 | 2    | 2    |      |       |           |
| Creative Tech                         | 2    | 2    |      |       |           |
| Music                                 | 2    | 2    |      |       |           |
| Choice P                              |      |      | 4    | 4     | 5         |
| Choice Q                              |      |      | 4    | 4     | 5         |
| WEB                                   | 4    | 4    | 2    | 2     | drop down |
| SHN                                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 4     | 2         |
| Electives                             | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2     | 0         |
| total                                 | 52   | 52   | 52   | 52    | 52        |



## 6. Curriculum Setting Rationale

At West Exe School, we operate a setting, rather than streaming, policy. Cohorts are grouped into two equal populations, W and E, and within those populations, they are then placed into the appropriate class for each of their subjects.

For English, Maths, and Science, students are placed into classes based predominantly on their academic ability. These classes are reviewed regularly, specifically at the end of each cycle, to ensure that students are in the right class for them and Heads of Subject will liaise with Heads of Year regularly to ensure that all students are in the right learning environment for them.

Across our Humanities, Languages, the Arts and Creative Technology, students are taught in mixed ability groups. This allows an opportunity to exchange ideas and view-points with a different group of students, and to hear a wider range of voices. This natural blending of our cohorts develops relationships across the whole school community, and fosters the community beliefs of compassion, courage and citizenship of which we are so proud.

In order to promote social equality and to close the gap between our disadvantaged students (DS) and our non-disadvantaged students (Non-DS), we positively promote DS in setting, commencing with top sets, which, wherever possible, should contain a least 30% DS where they are studying the subject. Teachers support their DS class members by planning for them accordingly, offering early targeted support in lessons.

Our most experienced teachers are placed with the groups that have the biggest journey to travel in their education, to give them the very best chance to close the gap with their peers. Wherever possible, students will follow the full range of curriculum subjects whilst taking part in catch-up interventions such as Lexia and Step up to English. Levels of challenge will be high across all classes with scaffolding in lower sets to allow students to access the curriculum and to reach expected outcomes. All students in Year 7 – 9, and those who require the additional intervention in year 10 and 11, are set weekly multiplication tables tasks as this is the bedrock to accessing the secondary mathematics curriculum.