



Alderman White School

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

Curriculum Policy

March 2026

Statutory or non-statutory:	Non-statutory
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Approved by Governors:	
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Overview:

Our curriculum is ambitious and designed to give all students the essential knowledge and cultural capital they need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

Our curriculum is broad and rich, and follows the National Curriculum. Students are expected to study a strong academic core of subjects. We carefully consider the content in each subject that will be most useful, within the framework of the National Curriculum and Key Stage 4 course specifications.

Principles:

Our curriculum is:

- Planned – to prepare students for the next stage of their education, training or employment
- Relevant – to develop capable, resilient learners and employability across the key stages
- Developmental – building knowledge and skills incrementally over time
- Coherent – fitting together in a logical sequence and consistent manner
- Ambitious – to secure strong outcomes in all subjects
- Inclusive – to provide equality of access and opportunity for all students to learn and make progress

1. Curriculum Planning (Our Intent)

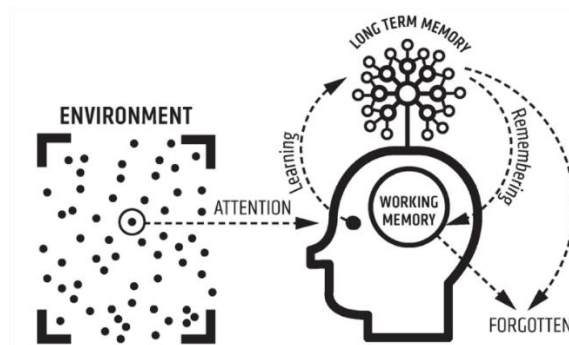
Learning is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

Our curriculum reflects our local context by addressing typical gaps in students' knowledge and skills.

The curriculum is designed and taught so that students read at an age-appropriate level. This includes use of the Accelerated Reader programme and regular library lessons in Year 7-9, daily DEAR time in Year 7-10, and a focus on disciplinary literacy in each subject.

The curriculum is designed, developed, and where necessary adapted, to be ambitious and meet the needs of all students, including those with SEND needs, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. Wherever possible and appropriate, students follow the full curriculum. In a small number of cases, the curriculum may be adjusted. Any decisions with regard to an adjusted curriculum are carefully considered on an individual basis to ensure the best possible learning and qualifications.

Working Memory and Long-Term Memory



Learning is a lasting change in our capabilities and understanding. By remembering, retrieving and recapping in the days and weeks following the teaching of new material, the knowledge is encoded and stored in our long-term memory and is less likely to be easily forgotten. It is essential, therefore, that we create the best conditions for knowledge to reach long-term memory.

Attention: We create the right conditions for the learner by focusing the learner's attention on the important things they need to learn and respecting the limits of working memory by presenting new information in small, manageable steps.

Appropriate challenge: Teachers identify their students' stage of learning (from novice to expert) and provide an appropriate level of challenge, support and practice, and clear knowledge goals for each learning sequence. These can relate to part of a lesson, a full lesson, or a series of lessons.

Link to Prior Learning: Students learn effectively by building an accurate schema or model of their knowledge and how it fits together. This develops over time. Teachers think carefully about how to help students to build accurate schema and link new learning to prior knowledge. This helps students to store accurate information in their long-term memory.

Memory: The subject curriculum is designed and delivered in a way that allows students to transfer key knowledge from their working memory to their long-term memory. We create opportunities, for example lesson tasks, that cause learners to think hard about the important knowledge and skills they have been taught and to practice using the material independently.

Retrieval practice and fluency: Once knowledge has reached the long-term memory, we need to continue to strengthen it. Teachers provide regular opportunities for students to revisit knowledge and skills through practise and retrieval. This increases fluency (students being able to apply their learning) leading to automaticity (being able to use knowledge automatically) by reducing cognitive load and creating more capacity in the working memory for new information and problem solving.

This is the process of learning. It should be effortful, and it takes time to achieve.

Inclusion: Teachers keep in mind that this model is based on a neuro-typical learner. For some people, learning may look slightly different or take longer. For example, some people will not be able to hold as much in their working memory or for as long which may lead to them forgetting more frequently. Some people will need to revisit information more frequently to help them remember it. This might apply to some people with dyslexia. Similarly, trauma can affect part of the brain which in

turn affects memory. Teachers will ensure that curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all learners in the class, including and especially PLAC/LAC students and those with SEND needs.

The Curriculum Planning Process

Curriculum development is an ongoing process led by Curriculum Leaders and involving the whole teaching team. Curriculum plans are live documents which are regularly reviewed. Each subject should have:

- A statement of intended end points for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- A curriculum map which shows the knowledge that is taught and the order it is taught in
- An overview of each unit of work outlining the curriculum sequence, core knowledge, links to prior learning, key vocabulary / disciplinary literacy and resources
- For Key Stage 3, a National Curriculum map to show how the curriculum intent links to the National Curriculum.

Subject teachers are expected to continue to develop and refine their expertise in curriculum planning and to contribute to professional discussion about curriculum intent in their subject area(s). This should draw on evidence-based best practice, as well as in-school evidence/experience. Curriculum Leaders should encourage a collaborative approach to planning that promotes sharing of activities, resources and approaches (both within and beyond our setting) but also enables teachers to adapt shared resources or activities to the needs of their own group and their own schema.

2. Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Implementation)

Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach and how learning takes place. Teachers enable students to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and encouraging appropriate discussion.

The work given to students is demanding and content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all students to acquire the intended knowledge and skills.

Teachers plan their lessons to ensure that lesson time can be used effectively by all students and to avoid wasted time for students waiting for others to catch up or for the next learning activity.

Strategies that are used include:

- Providing a series of increasingly challenging tasks (with different start points)
- Providing a metacognition extension or challenge task such as explaining a technique or skill, identifying how they could improve their work, simplifying their answer to 3 ideas then 3 words
- Access to a challenge task mat or board
- Helping and teaching other students something they have already grasped (explaining supports fluency and building schema in long term memory)

The teaching materials that teachers select reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study. These materials clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

Teachers check students' understanding effectively, identify misconceptions accurately and providing clear, direct feedback. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.

Over the course of study, teaching is designed to help students to remember long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. Feedback, retrieval practice and assessment are embedded in order to check and accelerate learning. Teachers ensure that students embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently.

Teachers monitor students' engagement and communicate effectively with parents and colleagues if there are concerns.

Teachers are expected to utilise the following strategies skilfully and appropriately to maximise learning:

Reviewing Material	Questioning
Sequencing and Modelling	Stages of Practice

2.1 Reviewing Material

Retrieval practice builds our long-term memory and our level of fluency in recall. It is important to engage students in a variety of forms of retrieval practice, recalling and applying previously learned material.

The principles of effective reviewing activities are:

- All students have to check their knowledge
- It is easy for students to check their answers with accuracy and see what they know and where they have gaps
- Students know the set of knowledge the retrieval exercise will be based on in advance
- The activity must be generative - students have to think for themselves
- The activities are varied
- The review stage is time efficient
- The task is workload efficient – with self or peer checking

2.2 Sequencing and Modelling

Teachers analyse their curriculum material to see how it can be broken down into small steps for novice learners, to avoid cognitive overload. They then ensure students have the opportunity to practice each step.

They may also sequence learning by moving from the big picture down to a detailed area of focus and then back up again, to help students to form a clear schema and locate an area of learning in relation to others.

Models will be used by teachers as part of their explanations. This could involve:

- Linking abstract ideas to concrete examples
- Linking abstract knowledge to experiential “tacit” knowledge – this needs to occur in the most appropriate place to maximise learning
- Narrating the thought process while completing a task

- Demonstrating how to organise complex sets of information
- Providing exemplars of a completed task or part of a task, such as worked examples

Modelling should be used to anticipate common errors and explicitly challenge misconceptions. This could include providing a list of common errors so that students can self-check and correct.

Teachers provide scaffolding for new or challenging tasks that is gradually reduced or removed over time to prevent reliance. Scaffolding could include a writing frame or paragraph structure, examining exemplars of different standards, or a knowledge organiser.

2.3 Questioning

Effective questioning lies at the heart of great teaching, and it should be highly interactive, dynamic and responsive.

“Learning is hidden, so we need to seek out evidence for it in a dynamic fashion during our lessons”. (Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction, Tom Sherrington)

Teachers are familiar with the following questioning strategies, and use them at appropriate times:

- Cold calling
- No opt out
- Wait time
- Say it again, better
- Think, pair, share
- Whole class response (eg show me boards, google form, choral repetition)
- Probing - extending responses by asking follow up questions

Teachers are expected to use these strategies appropriately and regularly to engage all students in responses to questioning and to check for understanding across the whole class.

Checking for understanding (CFU) is critical – “What have you understood?” is a much more useful question than “Have you understood?” Planning this helps the teacher to consider exactly what they want students to know and how to organise the lesson to maximise the depth of student responses.

CFU provides feedback about what might need to be revisited, re-taught or given more practice time. It also provides opportunities for students to strengthen their schema and improve long-term retention.

2.4 Stages of practice

Guided practice is used to minimise the chance of forming misconceptions. A high success rate at this stage fuels motivation and engagement during more independent work. Guided practice is especially important where students are less confident and have less prior knowledge. Guided practice can be verbal rather than written, and should involve repetition of a small step. As students gain in confidence or knowledge, the guided practice can become shorter or can cover a larger amount of material at once.

The ideal success rate during practice is about 80%. This improves fluency and confidence but also provides some challenge. If the success rate is too low, the teacher should go back and re-teach, re-explain or re-model; if it is too high more challenge should be introduced.

Independent practice is where students are able to complete challenging tasks without support. The success rate should still be high, and they should draw on their own resources, relying on recall from memory, building fluency through activities that reinforce connections and retrieval pathways. The teacher should provide the tools that enable them to do this, including teaching explicit strategies for checking their own work against a set of standards in a form they can understand, for example using exemplars or mark schemes.

3. Cross Curriculum Themes

3.1 Literacy

All teachers and Teaching Assistants are responsible for promoting and developing high standards of oracy, reading and writing, as well as disciplinary literacy and a love of reading.

This is achieved through:

- Library Lessons and Accelerated Reader Programme in Year 7-9
- No More Marking writing assessments and targeted teaching in Year 7
- Twice daily 10-minute DEAR (Drop Every and Read) sessions in Year 7-10
- Identification and explicit teaching of disciplinary vocabulary and literacy skills
- Regular marking for literacy

A TLR post-holder oversees the whole school Literacy Strategy and Library.

For more details refer to our Literacy Policy.

3.2: SMSC and British Values

All subjects will carefully consider how they can contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and culture development of students, which will also be supported through our tutor programme and assemblies, and enrichment programme, as well as our school values which underpin every aspect of school life.

Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

Provision for the moral development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, and to recognise legal boundaries and, in doing so, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues

Provision for the social development of pupils includes developing their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance of and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They will develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain

Provision for the cultural development of pupils includes developing their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities
- knowledge of Britain's democratic Parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

(School Inspection Handbook, September 2024)

3.3 Careers

While the majority of careers education is delivered through Personal Development and the tutor programme, as well as specialist input from a Careers Adviser, all subjects have a responsibility to make appropriate links between curriculum learning and careers education (Gatsby Benchmark 4). This may include:

- a careers display within the department
- making explicit links within the curriculum to careers using the subject
- visiting speakers or visits to higher education / workplaces
- supporting whole school careers activities
- Year 9 specialisms programme and post-16 information

3.4 Use of Information Technology (IT)

IT skills are explicitly taught in Computer Science at Key Stage 3. However, IT is used across the curriculum and we are committed to providing the tools to ensure this can be used effectively to support teaching and learning and homework and revision.

Parents are given the opportunity to buy a subsidised Chromebook for their child, with an enhanced subsidy for students who have received Free School Meals in the last 6 years. These devices are

provided with a school Management Licence. When the student leaves the school they may keep the device and have the management licence removed; a buy back scheme is in place for devices less than 3 years old.

All students have a Chromebook or laptop that they are expected to bring to school, charged, every day so that it can be used to support teaching and learning. Students may bring their own device with parental permission and by agreement. School owned devices are provided where students do not have a device purchased from school and cannot bring their own device. It is our intention to continue to roll this scheme out in Year 7 each year; parents will have the opportunity to purchase subsidised devices from September and we will ensure all students in year 7 have a device as soon as possible after October half term.

All students have the opportunity to have a locker in school.

All classes in Year 7-11 should have a google classroom where resources to support remote learning are shared and homework is set. As far as possible, the google classroom should provide a library of resources that can support revision and relearning material.

IT should be used to supplement but not replace other teaching and learning approaches, and should only be used for extended activities lasting a full lesson where this accelerates progress. On occasions it may be appropriate for students to be given the option to use their device. When students are not required to use their device, it must be switched off, closed or put away.

The Chromebook expectations should be followed at all times.

4. Presentation of Work:

Students use the following places to complete work:

- a) Whiteboards – these are provided by the school and are used for quizzes, working out, drafting, practicing and any activity that does not require a record to be kept. No “roughwork” or drafting should be completed in exercise books.
- b) Online – in google classroom or on a website or app. A record can be seen of any work submitted on google classroom, and most websites and apps frequently used in school also allow a teacher to see students work, and/or keep an assessment record.
- c) Exercise books (or folders) – this is for any work that needs to be revisited or evidences progress. Some assessments may be completed separately.

It is expected that pupils and staff alike will highly value the presentation of work in exercise books and folders. The following expectations apply:

- Where exercise books (or folders) are used, they will be covered with key words/subject information.
- AW data sheets/stickers will be displayed or integrated onto the FRONT of books/folders and updated termly in line with the assessment calendar.
- The PROUD presentation and literacy guidelines sheets will be found inside all books and folders.
- Literacy codes will be used regularly in the margin to promote high expectations of literacy.
- Regular use of **Target Tackling Time** (at least once per half term) will be evident.
- All peer and self-assessment will be carried out in **green** pen.
- Key assessments or any pre/post tests will be evident in all books to assess starting points for topics and refine lesson planning.

5. Curriculum Impact

Our curriculum intent and implementation ensure that:

- ✓ Students develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in the work students produce.
- ✓ All students acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- ✓ Students make good progress in that they know more, remember more and are able to do more. They are learning what is intended in the curriculum.
- ✓ Students are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have the knowledge and skills they need and, where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the intention of their course of study. Students with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.
- ✓ Students read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. They are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age.

After each snapshot day, data will be reviewed in BROMCOM by a range of staff: classroom teachers, Curriculum Leaders, the Assistant Headteacher (Achievement), Progress Leaders and school leaders, with a particular focus on Pupil Premium students. This will form the basis of all student tracking and identifying where intervention strategies are need to combat underachievement.

6. Further Reading/References:

This policy draws from a range of educational findings and research. The following have been particularly influential:

- Education Endowment Foundation <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/curriculum-research-reviews>
- Rosenshine's Principles in Action (Tom Sherrington)
- Teach Like a Champion (Doug Lemov)
- [Teaching WalkThrus | Multi-Platform Teaching Tools & Resources To Support Teachers - Primary Schools - Secondary Schools - Further Education - Coaching Tools - Webinars | Oliver Cavigioli - Tom Sherrington | UK](#)

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed annually and approved by the Local Governing Body.