Humanities Department

List of actions in the Humanities Department since September 2019

Curriculum

**Year 7 Opening Minds**

* A new curriculum was written for 2019-20.
* Opening Minds will now only be taught in year 7 and the students in year 8 – 11 will study within the discreet subjects this will allow for subject specific skills and knowledge to be taught by a Humanities specialist.
* Within building our new curriculums we have taken into account the NC and skills needed not only to achieve at the end of year 11 examinations but also preparing them for the world beyond.

In book scrutinies and learning walks there were concerns about the rigour in Opening Minds in terms of subject knowledge and the progress of students in Year 7 – as the books did not easily demonstrate/show clear progression. It was also felt that the exercise books did not easily identify learning in the 3 subjects. The quality of feedback was also questioned.

As a result of a range of book scrutinies and learning walks it was decided to rewrite the OM curriculum with a greater focus on individual subjects and the knowledge and skills needed in Year 7 as a building block for the rest of KS3 and for KS4. Also to bring our Year 7 curriculum more in line with the knowledge and skills that Year 7 in other schools will experience – to create equity.

2020-2021 the OM curriculum is chunked in to 2 weeks of RE, Geography and RE. There is a common theme for the term e.g. Autumn term – our place in the world. Assessments have been adapted/created to focus more on the progress ladders in each subject and core knowledge.

We do not want to lose the essence of Opening Minds and the good things that it provides our students with – one teacher, developing thinking skills, cross curricular links, experiential learning opportunities. However, this has been difficult this academic year because of the COVID 19 protocols and currently learning is mostly didactic to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

**KS3 History, Geography and RS**

* 2019-20 students in year 8 – 11 will have studied the discreet subjects this will allow for subject specific skills and knowledge to be taught by a Humanities specialist.
* The new SOW have taken into account the NC and skills needed not only to achieve at the end of year 11 examinations but also preparing them for the world beyond.
* Knowledge organiser have been created/collated for each topic.

The SOW need to be reviewed and adapted and embedded. Assessment is an area that we will focus on carefully in 2020-21. Work scrutinies and learning walks showed progress I learning and that students were building up their core knowledge and skills. They also identified actions for 2020-2021.

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**KS4 History, Geography and RS**

* A lot of planning and work had been completed in preparing knowledge organisers, retrieval practice and inter-leaving were incorporated into SOW and lesson planning.
* GCSE exams were cancelled in 2019 and replaced with CAG and therefore we do not know how successful those actions were.
* A chunk of the current Year 11s learning was done remotely and to varying levels of success.

Since September we have been trying to cover outstanding topics and identify gaps in students learning and skills – in a way that is not over-whelming for the Year 11 students.

This academic year because of the COVID 19 protocols and currently learning is mostly didactic to keep students and staff as safe as possible. Year 11 and 10 have generally responded very well to this approach.

Year 11 have responded well to live lessons.

The key to success with this cohort will be to secure their knowledge and understanding, help them to develop effective revision strategies, decode exam questions and develop their resilience and motivation. For history and RE extended writing and moving from simple explanation (L2) to developed explanation (L3) and for some to complex explanation (L4) – is a priority.

**Behaviour and ethos**

219-2020 was a tricky year as there were 4 new members of staff in the Humanities department, including a new HOD and a promotion to 2nd in department. The focus at the start of the year was to settle in the staff and to establish them with students and within the department and school.

All Humanities staff are specialists and very committed and hardworking – over the year all have established themselves and developed positive working relationships with students. These relationships were built in school and during lockdown. I feel that the new staff are well established within the school.

We followed the school’s behaviour and rewards system and HOD had regularly detentions and also worked with students identified as needing intervention because of their attitude and behaviour in Humanities lessons.

**Leadership**

HOD was new in September 2019 and spent the bulk of the first term establishing herself and the other new members of the team. Work scrutinies, reviews of SOW, etc were carried out to identify strengths and any areas that needed focus.