



Wallington County Grammar School

Curriculum Statement

Wallington County Grammar School is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.
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Wallington
County Grammar School

Curriculum Statement

Curriculum Intent

Wallington County Grammar School is a highly academic but pastorally minded school which delivers a curriculum that enables all students to embody our motto - *Per Ardua ad Summa*, Through Difficulties to the Heights.

Each Subject Leader has autonomy over their own curriculum and its intent, i.e. its subject content, skills content, sequencing and assessment schedule. This is vital to ensure the academic curriculum is designed by highly qualified subject experts. Senior Leaders will provide regular challenge and support to ensure each subject provides a curriculum of exceptional quality.

The intentions behind whole school approach to curriculum design taken by senior leaders are to provide:

Breadth - We intend to provide a broad, academic and liberal curriculum that equips students with the body of human knowledge and different ways of thinking necessary to succeed in and enjoy their education, careers and wider lives. Accordingly:

- we commit highly qualified subject specialists to deliver 20 different subjects in Key Stage 3, with suitable time allocations to ensure the National Curriculum, or equally challenging content, is taught and explored fully. Over two years this includes: 144 hours of history and classics; 126 hours of geography; 73 hours each of drama, art, music and computer science; 144 hours of design and technology including food and nutrition; and 18 hours of government and politics. All other subjects are continued into Year 9;
- almost all of our students will do at least 11 GCSEs including mathematics, English language and literature, biology, chemistry, physics, religious studies and four options including a language;
- All students are taught PE, PPE (philosophy, politics and economics), wellbeing and Computing (through either the GCSE or programming club) at KS4.
- we structure our GCSE options blocks around one language, one 'humanities' subject (history, geography, economics or classics), one 'creative' subject (art, music, drama, design and technology, physical education, or computer science) and one free option;
- the School provides a broad curriculum for *all* students, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs;

- we have a strong focus on the co-curriculum which includes the delivery of the Extended Project Qualification, Duke of Edinburgh (bronze, silver and gold), an exceptionally strong house system, school productions, fundraising weeks etc;
- Clubs and Societies time is timetabled into the school day for all students to provide enrichment outside of the core curriculum. By the end of year 11, all students will have experienced 209 timetable clubs and societies sessions and a further 282 sessions are available in the Sixth Form.
- all Sixth Form Students participate in an enrichment programme on Wednesday afternoons.

Depth - we do not want our students to simply study the national curriculum and examination specifications with grades being our sole focus. We aim for our students to become true scholars of the disciplines that they are learning so that they achieve a deep and sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding. Accordingly:

- where appropriate, lessons will include Deep Thinking Challenges to push students out of their comfort zone and engage them in the value of scholarship;
- there is a strong pedagogical focus on long term learning with opportunities for retrieval practice built into lessons and assessments regularly;
- subjects at KS3 are not taught on carousels but delivered by subject specialists as separate, academic disciplines;
- we provide students with a three year Key Stage 4 so that they can go beyond the already challenging GCSE specifications to truly explore the subjects that they love through enrichment topics and tasks;
- we encourage acceleration in subjects such as mathematics so that most of our students will sit GCSE Further Mathematics or Level 3 Additional Mathematics;
- we ensure all students have at least five hours of PE and Games a fortnight so that students are exposed to a wide variety of sports and physical activities in PE that meet the aims of the national curriculum, but can specialise in core sports like rugby and cricket in Games. All students are assessed on their level of skill, curriculum knowledge (including healthy participation) and qualities including leadership, teamwork, resilience etc;
- we offer only highly academic A Levels;
- we encourage a large number of departmental educational visits;
- we provide a wide range of academic clubs and competitions including Crest Award, Physics Olympiads, Maths Challenges, Debating Tournaments, Oxbridge Essay Competitions etc.

Values - we aim for our students to develop our four core values: commitment, courage, compassion and creativity. Accordingly:

- structure our entire praise policy around these qualities;
- report on them regularly to parents;
- use them as the basis for our assembly schedule and our pastoral curriculum delivered through form times alongside our six pastoral pillars educating students in drug/alcohol awareness, sex and relationships, eSafety, mental health, careers and diversity;
- provide Challenge and SMSC (social, moral, spiritual and cultural) Drop Down Days in all year groups throughout the year;
- have a strong focus on the co-curriculum as described above.

Democracy - we aim for all our students to have the necessary knowledge and confidence, not just to participate in the democracy of the United Kingdom, but to lead it. Accordingly:

- deliver a dedicated PPE (philosophy, politics and economics) to years 8, 9, and 10;
- offer government and politics at A Level;
- run a full range of politics related activities and trips during activities week;
- have such an active school council;
- promote such strong politics and debating societies.

Principles

Inclusion

We are committed to the principle that all students, regardless of ability, race, cultural background or gender have the right to the highest quality of education we can provide. This means that we seek to ensure:

- breadth and balance for all;
- appropriate, high levels of expectation and genuine challenge;
- relevance, continuity and progression in learning;

by providing courses of study and teaching methods which are tailored to the wide range of needs, interests and aspirations of our students. It also means that many features of the curriculum are common to all students. In KS3 no students are denied access to any part of the curriculum. The same is true for students in KS4, including when making their GCSE options choices, although the school will provide robust advice and guidance, including when students intend to choose subjects with which they may struggle. All students starting KS5, whether they were part of WCGS in Y11 or are joining the school for L6, have access to courses in the sixth form based on the same subject specific admissions criteria.

Access

The principle of entitlement presents us with a responsibility to find ways of ensuring that all students are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed. Teaching staff are expected to ensure that, wherever possible, students who are having difficulty or becoming demotivated are identified early and provided with appropriate support, encouragement, guidance and (if necessary) different teaching styles and work, so that they might continue to participate at the highest level possible. Staff, where appropriate will communicate with parents/carers to inform them of the support that is being put in place. The responsibility of finding means of access to the curriculum for all is a result of our stated intention to include, not exclude.

Ethos

The School has a distinctive ethos which is cherished and valued. The School seeks to foster a sense of community, promote personal qualities of honesty, tolerance and respect for others, and develop in the students a sense of moral awareness and an appreciation of the virtues of loyalty, duty and social responsibility. At its centre the School is one in which high expectations are the norm in a caring environment. The curriculum is at the centre of what the School sets out to achieve.

Choice of subjects

The School provides an education for students who have passed a demanding entrance examination, and seeks to challenge students throughout their time in the school and provide them with access to interesting, rigorous and well-respected subjects and qualifications.

At GCSE, and especially at A Level, students have a choice of subjects and we aim to provide a curriculum offer driven by student demand by choosing which classes to timetable according to the number of students signing up for them. For instance, in some years there will be three Geography classes and in some years there will be two, according to the requests made by students. More starkly, in some years there may be enough interest to run a certain subject at A Level, but in other years numbers may not be high enough. However there is a core offer of academic subjects and those which make well-rounded individuals which the school will always offer, even if student numbers are very low, as we strongly believe they should always be a part of a grammar school curriculum. These are indicated in the GCSE and A Level options lists. We will run an options process designed to ensure as many students as possible gain their first choices, or reserve choices, while recognising that it will sometimes be necessary to use reserve choices for some students.

Structure

Timetable

The School operates a two-week timetable with 25 one-hour periods a week. There are 5 periods per day (4 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon) with registration taking place at the start of morning session. The afternoon session varies per day and per year group, and includes Form Time, School Assemblies, Clubs and Societies, and extending the length of Games lessons. Teaching time is 25 hours per week, which is in excess of the Government's minimum requirement, before counting registration, pastoral and co-curricular time, and the extension to the games period.

Why do we have a two year KS3 and a three year KS4?

We aim to provide a broad and deep curriculum which informs our decision to maintain a two year KS3 and a three year KS4. Subject Leaders currently deliver and, in some cases, exceed the National Curriculum at KS3. Over two years students' timetables include: 144 hours of history and classics; 126 hours of geography; 73 hours each of drama, art, music and computer science; 144 hours of design and technology including food and nutrition; and 18 hours of government and politics. All other subjects are continued into Year 9 and our Civilisations curriculum is also taught in Y9.

Were we to revert to a two year KS4, teaching time in our GCSE options subjects would reduce from 202 hours to 128. Teaching time in the sciences would reduce from 202 hours to 165. Whilst in theory this would be enough time to deliver the GCSE courses (guided learning hours are 120), we would sacrifice the depth of the curriculum with there being significantly less opportunities for Deep Thinking Challenges, enrichment topics, drop down days etc.

To maintain the current level of depth at GCSE but with two rather than three year courses we would need to free up curriculum time for the options subjects and/or sciences by considering:

- Moving to a short course religious studies GCSE (leading to a more shallow curriculum)
- Moving to science dual award rather than triple (leading to a more shallow curriculum)

- Reducing options choices (in addition to a language) from three to two (leading to a narrower curriculum)
- Reducing curriculum time in mathematics meaning we could not deliver the Further Maths and Additional Maths qualifications (leading to a more shallow curriculum)

These four options reduce breadth and depth and none are appealing. The ultimate decision is therefore whether we would prefer curriculum depth beyond the National Curriculum at KS3 or beyond the GCSE curriculum at KS4?

Our preference is to add depth at KS4 to better prepare students for A Level which is more constrained in terms of curriculum time - at 9 hours a fortnight, we currently deliver 299 hours of teaching for courses that require 360 hours of 'guided learning'. This 'guided learning' includes 'teacher-supervised and directed study time' which we provide through our supervised private study sessions. By better preparing students for their A Levels through the KS4 curriculum we will enhance students' sense of scholarship and ability to access world class universities.

The Curriculum

Year 7

students register in House groups of 25, but will be taught in smaller groups for practical subjects, that is Design Technology, Food Technology, and Drama. For other subjects, the year group is divided into five forms of thirty students with some classes taking French and some taking Spanish (normally 3:2, with as many students allocated to a language based upon parental input as possible).

Art	English	Mathematics
Biology	Food Technology	Music
Chemistry	French or Spanish	Physical Education/Games
Computer Science	Geography	Physics
Design and Technology	History	Religious Studies
Drama	Classics	Wellbeing

Table 1: Subjects studied in Year 7

Year 8

Year 8 students register in form groups of 30 but will be taught in smaller groups for practical subjects, that is Design Technology, Food Technology, and Drama. Mathematics is taught in five groups with the students set by ability. Students continue learning the Modern Foreign Language they studied in Year 7.

Art	Food Technology	Mathematics
Biology	French or Spanish	Music
Chemistry	Geography	Physical Education/Games
Computer Science	History	Physics
Design & Technology	Latin	Religious Studies
Drama	Philosophy, Politics and	Wellbeing
English	Economics (PPE)	

Table 2: Subjects studied in Year 8

Key Stage 4: Years 9, 10 and 11

students are registered in five forms, which may be chosen to provide continuity from Key Stage 3 or to re-group students depending on pastoral leaders' views. While some subjects are still taught in form groups, many are set or blocked. All students follow a common core, as well as four additional options subjects chosen within a framework requiring at least one language (that studied at Key Stage 3), one creative subject and one additional (largely written) subject, with one completely free choice. The constraints of the timetable are such that not all combinations can be satisfied. The School, however, operates a policy of determining the timetable around student choice rather than asking students to choose from a fixed structure. This policy allows for a high level of student satisfaction but makes it more problematic when planning the staffing needs of the School.

The common core comprises:

- English Language and English Literature
- Mathematics;
- Science (all students are entered for Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately);
- Religious Studies
- Physical Education and Games
- Wellbeing, taken in all three years
- Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), taken in Y9 and Y10

students then make four further choices from a list of subjects, available subject to demand apart from those marked with an * which are always run:

- Art *
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Design Technology (Electronic Products) *
- Design Technology (Resistant materials) * (at least one DT option is always offered)
- Drama
- Economics
- French *
- Geography *
- History *
- Music *
- GCSE Physical Education
- Spanish *

The Sixth Form - 16-19 Study Programmes

The principle of organising the timetable around the needs of the students, while always offering a high quality offer also applies in the Sixth Form. Students choose three, four or five qualifications to study in the Lower Sixth from a wide range of subjects; those with an * are always offered, and others are run subject to demand. We recommend that all students start on at least four full A Levels but this is not compulsory.

The subjects on offer for 2024-25 are:

Art and Design *	Economics	History *
Biology *	English Literature *	Mathematics *
Chemistry *	French *	Music *
Classics *	Further Mathematics *	Philosophy *
Computer Science	Geography *	Physics *
Drama	Politics	Spanish *

Table 3: Subjects offered at A Level (Further Mathematics is available at AS Level as well)

The combination of academic qualifications with non-qualification activities such as assemblies, form time, enrichment and timetabled, supervised private study constitutes a 16-19 study programme, which in all cases substantially exceeds 600 planned hours a year. This includes pastoral care (including wellbeing lessons), work-related learning, careers guidance, and preparation for higher education and employment as well as the academic subjects. On entry to the sixth form students sign a learning agreement, detailing their specific study programme including the number of hours assigned. Students are offered careers interviews in addition to guidance on higher education, and students are strongly encouraged to undertake relevant work experience.

Other than the Extended Project Qualification, which is intended to run during just the Lower Sixth, and Further Maths which can be taken at either AS or full A-Level, these qualifications are all full A-Levels designed to be studied over two years. As many UCAS offers for university are based around three A Levels, many students will only take three A Levels through to their eventual examination, and how this is determined will depend on which pathway they have entered the sixth form; again see the admissions arrangements for the sixth form for full details.