

Curriculum Intent

Following several years of consultation and discussion, the school curriculum changed quite significantly in September 2019.

The school curriculum is fit for purpose and purposeful. It supports high academic achievement and the wider development of knowledgeable, articulate, and confident young people. It includes the following areas of experience: aesthetic and creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, spiritual, and technological.

The programme includes all the requirements of the National Curriculum and contains additional opportunities to engage pupils in the wider pursuit of scholarship. Through its design, the curriculum seeks to equip pupils with the intellectual, cultural, and emotional means for life beyond school.

The curriculum is engaging, relevant, broad and balanced, fostering the acquisition both of subject knowledge and of skills. Sequenced thoughtfully and progressing at a suitable pace, it provides the necessary individual support whilst ensuring appropriate levels of challenge. At GCSE and A Level, the School offers a wide range of subjects and seeks to accommodate individual preferences and all pupils have access to similar learning opportunities and experiences. Lessons are taught by skilled and knowledgeable practitioners and faculties are sufficiently resourced and supported to allow a rich learning experience to be provided to every pupil.

Progression to the next stage of education or employment is enabled by the curriculum, which also seeks to educate pupils beyond the requirements of the examination specifications. All pupils are provided with a wide range of linguistic and creative experiences, including a core offer of three languages on entry, to ensure that they maintain balance in their studies. Curriculum enrichment opportunities are meaningful and carefully planned to support and enhance the core offer.

Curriculum development features prominently in school planning and its implementation is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is having the desired impact.

How is this intent exemplified in our curriculum?

It supports high academic achievement and the wider development of knowledgeable, articulate, and confident young people.

Our curriculum encourages and enables high academic achievement. Academic success is important but so too is the development of a wider body of knowledge and skills. At Ermysted's, we take the development of the whole child very seriously, and this includes educating pupils beyond the immediate needs of the exam specifications. This is a commitment that can be seen in the breadth of our programme, the ambition of our schemes of learning, and the proportion of our curriculum dedicated to non-examined courses.

The programme includes all the requirements of the National Curriculum and contains additional opportunities to engage pupils in the wider pursuit of scholarship.

Our core programme includes all the statutory subjects and many more besides. KS3 pupils study a broad curriculum of 18 different subjects, many of which will be entirely new to pupils. KS4 pupils take a higher-than-average number of GCSEs (at least 10) and follow additional non-examined courses which account for nearly 20% of the curriculum. KS5 pupils follow an academic programme of three or four A Levels, plus statutory courses in PSHCE, RSE, PE, and religious education. All KS5 pupils may choose to add the Extended Project Qualification to their programme of study. A weekly lecture programme caters for the wider needs of the Sixth Form students, and nurtures and informs their post-18 ambitions.

Sequenced thoughtfully and progressing at a suitable pace, it [the curriculum] provides the necessary individual support whilst ensuring appropriate levels of challenge.

We have designed our programme to offer suitable levels of challenge and pace ahead of transition to KS4, and appropriate extension and support ahead of transition to KS5 and beyond. The School aims to develop

all its pupils, be that through extension or support within the classroom, and by offering courses that interest them and provide the necessary rigour and relevance to their future careers.

Our careers programme begins on entry and supports the pupils throughout their time at school. It goes above and beyond expected requirements, including opportunities for work experience in Year 10 and Year 12. We ensure pupils receive independent advice and have access to a wide range of local employers, further and higher education providers, and industry insights from former pupils and parents. This ensures our pupils are well placed to progress at each stage in their education, and that they can make informed and ambitious decisions about their futures.

At GCSE and A Level, the School offers a wide range of subjects and seeks to accommodate individual preferences ...

The School seeks to offer courses that excite and engage the pupils and works hard to enable every child's preferred subject combinations. By constructing the options blocks in response to the pupils' requests, we aim to build our curriculum around the needs of our pupils.

... all pupils have access to similar learning opportunities and experiences.

As a selective school, all our pupils are highly able and possess great academic and individual potential. We are equally ambitious for all our pupils and take care to ensure that our curriculum provides access to similar learning opportunities and experiences for every pupil.

Lessons are taught by skilled and knowledgeable practitioners ...

Subject teachers are chosen for their extensive knowledge and educational expertise. The School has prioritised this aspect of its provision over the years due to the importance it places on the early acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Progression to the next stage of education or employment is enabled by the curriculum ...

The curriculum is designed to provide an academic pathway through the school and to education, employment, and training beyond. For example, the School teaches the three sciences separately in KS3 and offers additional mathematical content in KS4 to support the high numbers of pupils who wish to pursue science and mathematics at A-Level. Specialist support is provided to those interested in pursuing careers as dentists, vets or medics and different qualifications are available in technology to support those interested in design and those interested in engineering careers. Pupils are taught three languages from entry, to help them develop quickly as linguists and enable broader subject pathways from Year 9 and beyond. A tenth GCSE course was added to the standard KS4 programme to offer pupils more choice, and to support a broader and more diverse menu of subjects at A Level. In turn, the breadth of the A Level curriculum supports an increasingly diverse list of higher education, employment, and apprenticeship destinations. The careers programme supports pupils in making transitions and choices at key stages in their secondary education.

[The curriculum] seeks to educate pupils beyond the requirements of the examination specifications.

Our schemes of learning identify extra content that we choose to include in addition to the national curriculum and examination specifications. We do this to support the development of scholarship and intellectual curiosity, over and above the requirements of the examination hall, and to challenge our more able and aspiring intake.

Our programme of PSHCE and RSE is fully developed and delivered through a system of timetabled lessons, assemblies, lectures, form time, and specially arranged drop-down days. Provision is coordinated using weekly themes and retains the flexibility to respond to local, national, or global events, as necessary. Staff and pupils are encouraged to lead assemblies: recent examples include eating disorders, sexual identity, dealing with mental health issues, politics, and living with serious medical conditions. As an early adopter of the RSE curriculum, the school has ensured coverage of the statutory content and that its staff are well supported in its delivery. Whole school training on topics such as mental health, LGBTQ+ issues, self-harm, and mindfulness have equipped staff to better support our pupils, and where necessary external experts have been used to supplement this provision.

Enrichment opportunities are meaningful and carefully planned to support and enhance the core offer.

Enrichment is woven into our curriculum, implicitly, through the content and sequencing of our schemes of learning, and, explicitly, through the timetabled non-examined courses which form part of our universal provision to pupils. We believe that if enrichment is to be meaningful, it should be properly planned, adequately resourced, and thoughtfully sequenced. Our programme aims to do just that, supporting the pupils in the next steps of their education and giving them meaningful exposure to new subjects and experiences.

The wider curriculum at the school is a popular and well-developed resource. All pupils are encouraged to participate, regardless of their academic programme or background. Well established programmes, such as our extensive sports programme and the ever-popular Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, are supplemented by in-house provision, such as the various student clubs and societies, and the Ermysted's Award, which seeks to encourage the pupils' participation across a wide range of school-based and local community pursuits.

MJE

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