

# CURRICULUM POLICY

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## Introduction

At Falinge Park High School, our objective is to create a compelling learning experience. This applies to pupils and staff. We define it as this:

**Compelling Learning is:** *engrossing, irresistible and creative. It is like a book you can't put down. It is gripping, riveting, enthralling, absorbing and thrilling. It is characterised by curiosity, relevance and rigour.*

*Those involved work collaboratively in a positive environment. We are given the opportunity to express opinions and learn in a respectful, curious and reflective manner. We are encouraged to take calculated risks to improve learning in an environment where we are trusted and valued.*

*We are persistent in our learning – even when it is difficult. We know we will be given the techniques to improve.*

*Our learning is supported and scaffolded but not so much that it holds us back. We are recognised as individuals. Our learning takes account of where we are, where we want to be and what we need to do to get there. We celebrate diversity and promote equality of opportunity in our approach to learning. Our sense of agency, commitment to excellence and the language we use unlocks our individual and collective potential.*

The curriculum is the vehicle which delivers this for our children. At Falinge our big aims for the curriculum are the same as the learning behaviours we want to promote. These are to:

- Show kindness
- Show empathy
- Be curious
- Be responsible
- Take positive action

We provide and design opportunities for these behaviours to be caught, taught and sought.

We do this through:

- **The intended curriculum** – national or local curriculum
- **The achieved curriculum** – the substance of the school's vision, subject and year group mapping
- **The real curriculum** – the lived daily experience of young people

This policy sets out how we achieve this.

## Our values

Everything we do is underpinned by our values as a school.

**Ensuring Equity** – this links to the fact that we are starting from a position whereby we know that there is inequity in our school when the pupils arrive. This can come from socio-economic issues such as poverty; trauma in childhood with at least a tenth of our cohort experiencing trauma, neglect, abuse before they come to us; religious and cultural inequities which are being played out nationally and globally; academic inequity which plays out in terms of exposure to vocabulary, cultural capital, cognitive and learning difficulties and EAL. With regards to EAL a key piece of thinking is that our pupils may be bilingual – but they are often not academically fluent in any of the languages they speak. Ironically, our success as a school is making these inequities even more apparent to us as a **community** as we really are a true comprehensive with pupils representing a full range of identities – academically, ethnically and socio-economically. Whatever we do, we have to remember that we are driven to make improvements through a strong sense of social justice. When we talk about equity therefore it encompasses all aspects of school life.

**Building Community** – we believe that as a school we should serve the community and that a school plays an important part of any community in terms of regeneration, equity building and social cohesion. We have many communities in school (year groups, friendship groups, ethnic groups, gender groups, disability groups, LGBT groups, staff team groups, staff friendship groups) and we are part of a local, national and global community. When we think about community we have to think of it in the small sense and the wider sense. When we are talking about community we are talking about identifying how we want our community to be and what can be, fostering a sense of connectedness which builds social capital and ensures equity.

**Securing Communication** – improving communication is the cornerstone of addressing equity and supporting community cohesion. Improved communication orally, written, academically, socially builds the positive relationships which is how we bring about the change. The building of the positive relationships we make with our **community** and between professionals means that we can create a sense of connectedness and work on a strength finder approach rather than a deficit model. The fact we take time to reflect on our practice and we believe 100% that people have the capacity to improve demonstrates itself as well in our leadership behaviours and actions as well as impacting positively on our children. We cannot bring about the improvements unless we look at our own communication.

**Celebrating Diversity** – Maya Angelou wrote, “In diversity, there is beauty and there is strength.” As a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural school the celebration of diversity is central to us achieving a harmonious culture in school and within our wider communities. We see people as individuals and celebrate their strengths as opposed to working on a deficit model. In order to celebrate diversity fully, we have to ensure that our environment is safe and calm and that there are clear boundaries for adults and children to thrive in. We know that we cannot achieve this if our wellbeing as individuals is compromised as this is when we build up barriers around ourselves. We cannot ensure equity if we are not secure in ourselves and our communities and if we lack the communication skills to express ourselves in an increasingly complex world. As one of our Year 7 eloquently expressed it, ‘wasn’t possible to change the world if you’re not feeling emotionally healthy and secure’.

## Our big aims

### Show kindness

It can be as small as opening the door for people, saying thank you and please, recognising when others need support, exhibiting care and concern for others. It can be developed through small acts of kindness or through wider acts of charity demonstrating a commitment to serving others. It means not using derogatory language which hurt, humiliate and wound; it means showing compassion for others in a difficult situation and ensuring that we do not intentionally or subconsciously isolate others. It means showing respect for and tolerance of others who are different to us, whether that is race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability; it means listening to and engaging in dialogue with those with whom we do not agree. It means that we do not think solely of our own rights and we respect the rights of others. This applies as well to all staff in school – no one comes to work for pupils to be verbally abusive or defiant to them, it is about being kind to all staff. Most importantly, it is about being kind to yourself, seeking help when you are struggling, seeking support in times of anxiety or stress, recognising that you have the self-determination to get better.

In the classroom, it manifests itself as ensuring that others have a right to speak and a right to learn and that our behaviours do not prevent others from the right to an education.

### Show empathy

Empathy is the most important characteristic we can develop in order to become positive citizens and active bystanders. It means seeking to understand others; recognising our differences as individuals yet finding a common ground. In a small way, it is making sure that we act when language is used to hurt and addressing it immediately with our peers before conflict develops. It means understanding how others around the world live and believe and accepting that whilst we are different, we are all entitled to the same human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It means knowing enough to be able to be an active bystander when others are treated unfairly and learning the skills to be able to do this. To show empathy requires a high degree of critical thinking – to be able to discern between how things are presented and how they actually are; to recognise bias in people's actions and words and crucially that we think objectively in order to put ourselves in other people's shoes. For example, we might look at someone who is being teased and see something in that person we don't like or that their background, culture and way of being represents something that is different to our own experiences. It is easy to brush off the teasing therefore that that person might be facing and to ignore it. To be empathetic is to think critically and objectively about what is happening, why it is happening and to then think about how we might respond and feel in the similar situation. Being empathetic is the first step in "putting ourselves in someone else's shoes" and consequently in taking action to uphold our human rights. Being empathetic means that we can tackle the language of "us" and "them" and it can be developed – it is not an inborn trait. By being empathetic, we can make sure that divisions whether in school or in the wider community are not exacerbated.

In the classroom it means engaging with our Ripples of Hope programme and seeking to reduce conflict before it occurs and when it occurs. It means having a strong sense of fair justice and taking positive action to make a difference. We teach empathy through showing different points of views, creating safe spaces for dialogue, focusing on dialogue and not debate – it is not about winning an argument but finding a common ground – we look at communities, cultures and beliefs that are different to our own and seek to understand human behaviours and when they trespass on our human rights. It also means that we "sweat the small stuff" –through showing empathy we can take positive action over the smallest issues before they become much bigger.

## Be curious

We want Falinge pupils to be able to ask, to be inquisitive and to do this in a way which is respectful and evokes positive dialogue rather than heated debate and conflict. Being curious can demonstrate itself in a number of ways, developing our practice beyond the classroom, researching topics which interest us, participating fully in MyFPHS challenges, reading, learning and asking questions that can help drive the learning on. Being curious is key to develop as a learning behaviour as it helps you to be reflective and resourceful and to make sure you are taking the right action in the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding.

In the classroom, it is clear that curiosity can be taught. Strong teaching helps spark a light of curiosity and it is important that we give children the space to be curious. This means that we ensure our behaviour in the classroom is responsible enough so that teachers can teach and learners can learn. It is about knowing that learning is an intellectual virtue in itself and something to be proud of.

## Be responsible

It means coming to class with the correct equipment, completing home learning, being ready to learn – Focus, Prepare, Habits, Silence. It means arriving on time, getting to lessons on time, being honest and owning up when things have gone wrong. Responsibility is key and comes alongside our rights – it is not about individual rights but about our individual rights and shared responsibility to others. This means being positive role models and helping to influence the social norms in school – not pushing in queues, recognising that school is a place of learning and whilst there are a number of freedoms in our school, these freedoms come with a responsibility to others. It means not littering, clearing tables at lunch, helping staff and other pupils maintain a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere.

In the classroom, this responsibility is for the individual – knowing that you can achieve and persisting even when it is difficult; and also for others – being a compassionate pupil who contributes effectively to the environment in the classroom and in the wider society. It is about knowing that learning is hard but understanding yourself how best to learn and accepting the support from your teachers and all other staff who are committed to helping you learn.

## Take positive action

All of the above learning behaviours mean nothing if you are not prepared as an individual to play an active role in your own learning and that of others. If you stand at the side whilst others are hurt, you are a passive bystander and not showing kindness, empathy or responsibility. If you say that you will improve but don't take steps to make a small difference to yourself, your peers, the school, the wider community then that is not taking responsibility. If you are saddened when you see human rights abused globally, yet do nothing to make a difference in our community in and out of school then you are not taking positive action.

We want our pupils to take positive action so that we flourish as individuals and as a community – to develop intellectual virtues such as autonomy, critical thinking, good judgement, reasoning, reflection and resourcefulness; moral virtues such as compassion, courage, gratitude, honesty and humility, integrity; civic virtues such as citizenship community awareness, neighbourliness, service, volunteering; performance virtues such as confidence, determination, motivation, perseverance, resilience and teamwork.

All of this will develop over time – but at Falinge we will plan so these are ‘caught, taught and sought.’ These are our big aims, our learning behaviours and we will make sure that we can achieve this by planning carefully for it and not assuming they will appear through chance or at random.

### The intended and local curriculum

We follow the National Curriculum for all subjects and the locally agreed curriculum for Religious Education.

We also have our local in-school curriculum for:

- Design, Engineering and Construct award – this links to the Northern Powerhouse priorities to develop in the areas of advanced manufacturing, energy, digital and health innovation. Piloted during the academic year 20-21.
- Alternative in school provision – for pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 led by Manchester City in the Community.
- Additional Needs provision – pupils with additional needs whether in **Communication** and interaction; Cognition and **learning**; Social, emotional and **mental health** difficulties; Sensory and/or physical needs follow either a Full, Partial, High Support or Supplementary curriculum. This is based on need and includes, where necessary, functional skills and ASDAN units.
- EAL – there is additional small group provision for pupils who are Band A/B in English fluency. Pupils follow a Full, Partial, High Support or Supplementary curriculum based on the levels of proficiency of pupils.
- Reading – Accelerated Reader is used for pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 with all pupils undertaking focused reading and library sessions.
- PSHE – whilst we follow the guidance for PSHE it is also contextually responsive to issues arising both in and out of the school in relation to Safeguarding and evaluations of pupil voice.

Pupils in Key Stage 3 up to Year 9 are taught in equal bands of 90. The population design is based on the Singaporean model with equal numbers of ethnicity, additional needs, gender, previous primary school in each band. These are refined throughout the years if and when there are any unintended consequences of the groupings which are having a negative impact on learning and/or the atmosphere for learning.

Pupils choose from a broad range of options in Year 9. In Key Stage 4 they are taught in sets in core subjects. A small group of pupils will undertake an ESOL qualification, these are usually pupils at Band A/B levels of fluency or international new arrivals. A small group of pupils undertake LifeSkills qualification which consists of ASDAN units.

### The achieved curriculum

Our objective and the learning behaviours/big aims of the curriculum emphasise what we want to achieve at Falinge. Whilst ambitious, we believe these can be met and should be ‘caught, taught and sought.’

The substance of the curriculum within subject areas has been worked on since September 2016 within subject teams. We seek to ensure that pupils do see the benefits of subject disciplines,

recognising interdisciplinary knowledge where appropriate, but that the subjects are seen as rigorous in their own right. We focus within subject disciplines on the **acquisition of knowledge** and the application of **specific subject skills**.

The curriculum has been designed in subject areas from teams identifying the big aims of their subject – not what the GCSE syllabus states – and identifying key concepts. This is then broken down by each year group and Scheme of Learning. We ask subject teams to complete a standardized document and these are reflected upon following individual staff completing reflection sheets which can be found at Appendix One.

The Subject leaders, along with their teams, are expected to identify the curriculum constructs in each year group and to build on these blocks throughout the five years. They should pay attention to what has been learnt before and what constructs need to be taught in order to move onto more complex, multi-structural and abstract knowledge and skills. The granular assessments throughout the teaching of the curriculum, should enable teachers to identify any misconceptions and, importantly, to reteach or reframe the way they taught it so pupils are able to **acquire the key knowledge** and **apply the specific subject skills** that the curriculum is designed to elicit from pupils.

Assessment design is as important to us at Falinge as the curriculum design and the dimensions and elements of teaching. We define our approach below:

*Teachers make choices about the best ways to teach their subjects. These choices are evidence enriched. Along the way they assess at a granular level. This means that they choose the best tools to diagnose where the children are in their learning of the subject. They choose the most appropriate time to do this based on their knowledge of the anatomy of learning in their subject.*

*At various points during a scheme of learning, some of these granular assessments may be in the expert books. There may also be a synthesis of learning in the expert books. The expert book assessments are defined in a scheme of learning and are standardised across subject teams.*

Within the expert books we would expect subject teams to give consideration to the design so that pupils develop the interdisciplinary skills in writing for a period of time under pressure, or completing a series of questions in a set space of time which progressively test different skills of complexity. This helps subject leaders and teachers to see the progression over a period of time.

At the end of a Scheme of Learning teachers are asked to fill in a reflection sheet, an example of which can be found at Appendix Two. These are not for Senior Leaders to use for monitoring, they are for teachers to use in order to identify how effectively children in their class have been able to acquire key knowledge or apply subject specific skills. They use the information from the granular assessments and the expert assessments to identify where each pupil is on the continuum. This enables teachers and subject leads to re-teach knowledge or plan for the development of skills in future schemes of learning. There may be times whereby a teacher needs support to teach a particular area of the scheme of learning and subject leaders should identify and work with teachers if a particular concept has not been understood by the majority of the pupils in their group.

Subject leaders focus solely on the areas of curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment. They are best placed to support and help develop teachers in their practice. Subject leaders are professionally developed through meetings, engagement with subject associations and opportunities to ‘test’ the expectations of their disciplines externally.

Teaching across the school is supported through incremental coaching, a weekly focus on the Science of learning, professional learning hubs and engagement with external practitioners. This focuses on helping teachers to choose the right tools or elements to deliver the curriculum. We seek to become highly effective leaders of the curriculum through a shared language which supports the subject leaders and through our engagement with practitioners in other schools and those working in academia. Whilst we may not be experts in particular subject disciplines, we have a commitment to supporting the experts in those areas through sourcing SLEs and excellent practice. Our self-evaluation is strong and takes in a range of inputs and benchmarks on our outputs.

Overall, we commit to the achieved curriculum through using the principles of curriculum design by Dylan Wiliam:

- 1) Balanced in its breadth of subjects and topics
- 2) Rigorous to the disciplines taught
- 3) Coherent within and across subjects
- 4) Vertically integrated to promote progress over time
- 5) Appropriate for the stage of pupils' learning
- 6) Focused in its choice of content
- 7) Relevant to the young people in our school

### **The real experience**

Beyond the formal language of the intended and the achieved curriculum sits our belief about what the curriculum is about.

It is more than a series of lessons: we see the curriculum as the moment a child gets up in the morning and puts on their uniform. It is the way they arrive at school, the interactions they have with others on their way, if they demonstrate the learning behaviours in their interactions with others, their curiosity and responsibility in lessons, the positive actions they take both in the classroom and outside. The curriculum is the cornerstone of the school; it is the heart and soul.

For it to work it has to be carefully designed and evaluated carefully.

The cultural experiences we give our children are far ranging, as are the opportunities to extend their spiritual, moral and social experiences. The policy does not capture all the opportunities but what is unique to our school and may not be replicated elsewhere is highlighted below:

- Partnership with Comino Foundation which provides experiences in digital media, cultural and digital designers in residence, design, theatres.
- Partnership with Rochdale Town Hall – DEC qualification used in real life scenarios as we work to renovate Rochdale Town Hall with monies from Heritage Fund.
- Partnership with Robert F Kennedy Foundation where we teach human rights throughout our tutor time.
- Direct vocabulary instruction with reading linked to our RFK work. □ Archbishop of York award.
- Proactive work in terms of Safeguarding with pilot projects running to raise pupils awareness of contextual safeguarding issues (honour based violence, youth violence, substance misuse, harmful sexual behaviour).
- MyFPHS – unique offer for all pupils.

- Beacon school for Holocaust Education.
- Partnership with Eton College.

The wraparound care for pupils is central to our practice and we engage with external bodies to evaluate our practice including, but not exhaustive, Centre for Education and Youth, Early Break, Well Schools, Educational Psychologists. We also work closely with other organisations such as Teacher Development Trust (Gold school for professional development), SSAT, Evidence Based Education, Schools of Tomorrow, Schools in Communities. All these organisations enhance our practice in school in relation to the content and delivery of the curriculum.

Our community wing of the school and our partnership with Action Together and other third sector organisations helps build our curriculum by providing opportunities for pupils and aims to use our unique place as an organisation to be a hub for social action projects.

We are proactive when faced with issues which need to be addressed within our local curriculum and have the structures in place to react quickly when appropriate. We evaluate thoroughly at various points in the school year through a variety of methods, using our external partners as critical friends.

## Summary

At Falinge, our curriculum is the cornerstone of our practice, everything revolves around this. It is far too complex and nuanced to give a full picture of our multi-modal work and multi-layered practice within a policy. What this policy does is lay out what we do to meet the intended curriculum, the achieved curriculum and the real curriculum.

Additional documents support this policy:

- Additional needs rubric and curriculum intent.
- SRE policy.
- Compelling Behaviour Policy.
- Compelling approach to well schools, harmful sexual behaviours, youth violence, substance misuse, derogatory language.
- CIEAG policy.
- Assessment and Feedback policy.

BIG PICTURE CURRICULUM PLANNING - KEY STAGE 3

The big aims of KS3			
Characteristic of a compelling learning experience			
Key concepts			
Key knowledge			
Key skills			

**WHAT ARE THE BIG AIMS OF YEAR 9?**

**WHAT WILL EXCELLENCE LOOK LIKE IN YEAR 9?**

**WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO THE PUPILS NEED TO ACQUIRE?**

- 

**WHAT SKILLS DO THE PUPILS NEED TO DEVELOP?**

- 

**WHAT MISCONCEPTIONS MAY THEY HAVE FROM PREVIOUS LEARNING?**

**WHAT EXPERT ASSESSMENTS WILL BE USED ACROSS THE YEAR TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE PUPILS HAVE ACQUIRED THE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPED THE SKILLS?**

**WHAT ARE THE BIG AIMS OF YEAR 8?**

**WHAT WILL EXCELLENCE LOOK LIKE IN YEAR 8?**

**WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO THE PUPILS NEED TO ACQUIRE?**

- 

**WHAT SKILLS DO THE PUPILS NEED TO DEVELOP?**

- 

**WHAT MISCONCEPTIONS MAY THEY HAVE FROM PREVIOUS LEARNING?**

**WHAT EXPERT ASSESSMENTS WILL BE USED ACROSS THE YEAR TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE PUPILS HAVE ACQUIRED THE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPED THE SKILLS?**

**WHAT ARE THE BIG AIMS OF YEAR 7?**

**WHAT WILL EXCELLENCE LOOK LIKE IN YEAR 7?**

**WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO THE PUPILS NEED TO ACQUIRE?**

- 

**WHAT SKILLS DO THE PUPILS NEED TO DEVELOP?**

- 

**WHAT MISCONCEPTIONS MAY THEY HAVE FROM PREVIOUS LEARNING?**

**WHAT EXPERT ASSESSMENTS WILL BE USED ACROSS THE YEAR TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE PUPILS HAVE ACQUIRED THE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPED THE SKILLS?**

What does excellence look like in this Scheme of learning?			
What knowledge do the pupils have?			
What skills do the pupils have?			
What misconceptions may arise in this Scheme of Learning?			
Where does this Scheme of Learning a) foster excellence like in this subject and b) interleave into other schemes of learning?			
Expert knowledge	Secure knowledge	Developing knowledge	Emerging knowledge
Expert skills	Secure skills	Developing skills	Emerging skills

Assessment hinge points – identified here the key assessments that will take place and when to see how effectively the knowledge and skills are being acquired and developed (Granular and Expert).

Example – short quiz at the start of the scheme of learning which builds in knowledge from Y7 SoL (use of Maps) and key contextual information they need for this Scheme of Learning (what do they know about sustainable environments)

Practical experiment on exploration of cells

Short assessment on different language techniques used in poetry (quiz) leading to essay on how the poet uses language.

Key questions the teacher may ask – note, there is a website called Diagnostic questions which is really useful for identifying key questions.

**WHAT WERE THE LEARNING AIMS OF THIS SCHEME OF LEARNING? – Pupils needed to understand the poem Dulce et Decorum Est and understand how the poet used language to depict the horrors of war.  
HOW HAVE PUPILS ACHIEVED THE KNOWLEDGE?**

<b>NAME OF PUPIL</b>	<b>Emerging</b> Has acquired some of the knowledge of the schemes of learning.	<b>Developing</b> Is developing knowledge although there are some areas which are stronger than others.	<b>Secure</b> Has acquired secure knowledge in the scheme of learning.	<b>Expert</b> Has acquired excellent subject knowledge in this scheme of learning and is able to relate this knowledge to other areas of the subject.
Umair		✓		
Charlotte			✓	
Bradley	✓			
Amna	✓			
Sadiyah				✓
Adam				✓

OTHER: Umair had significant time off school which has impacted on their acquisition of knowledge.  
Bradley found it very difficult. Need to spend some more time with his TA planning how we can help him understand key words and language techniques.  
His ASD made it difficult for him to understand the metaphors in the poem.

NOTES: There were aspects of this that I underestimated children’s knowledge of – for example, language and vocabulary were a limiting factor and I had to spend longer on figurative language. In teaching a poem next time I will spend longer at the start of the scheme of learning checking they remember what a metaphor is, what a simile is etc. I will do this by a simple quiz at various points in the schemes of learning.

**WHAT WERE THE SKILLS THIS SCHEME OF LEARNING WANTED PUPILS TO DEVELOP? – Pupils needed to be able to demonstrate they could select and edit quotations from the poem and evaluate the impact of the language.**

**HOW HAVE PUPILS DEVELOPED THE SKILLS?**

<b>NAME OF PUPIL</b>	<b>Emerging</b> At early stage. Support needed.	<b>Developing</b> Growing ability and independence (prompting needed)	<b>Secure</b> Exhibits skills independently.	<b>Expert</b> Exhibits skills spontaneously and with confidence.
Umair		✓		
Charlotte			✓	
Bradley	✓			
Amna	✓			
Sadiyah		✓		
Adam			✓	

OTHER: Sadiyah's knowledge was strong but in the essay writing she needed prompting and support.

NOTES: Pupils struggled with the essay writing although verbally their knowledge appeared to be strong. I need to spend some time going back over essay writing before I start the next scheme of learning. I'll look at providing a writing frame initially then taking that away.

