



# Holbrook Academy

## Curriculum Rationale

### Our Values & Aims

#### **Holbrook Academy's aims include:**

- To be a strong community school; providing clear and effective communication and support to all parents and carers.
- To set and monitor personalised support for all groups of learners including those who are Disadvantaged or have Special Educational Needs.
- To ensure that all students experience a rich range of cultural and sporting activities.
- To raise standards and strengthen student progression through professional collaboration
- To deliver a broad and rich curriculum offer with a thriving EBacc at its core. To sequence learning to promote mastery and fluency; ensuring homework is consistent and ambitious.
- To maintain high expectations regarding behaviour and conduct and to introduce a new restorative approach.
- To establish and promote the "Holbrook Characteristics" throughout our school; including promoting key characteristics like kindness, ambition and resilience.
- To promote healthy lifestyle choices for all our students. To promote genuine interest in the welfare and wellbeing of all people who work in our school; including managing staff workload effectively.
- To deliver C21 facilities and resources for all students.

#### **Holbrook Characteristics**

- Determination
- Kindness
- Respect
- Resilience
- Tolerance

Holbrook Academy's curriculum is designed ensure that every student we teach is equipped with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital required to succeed; students at Holbrook Academy receive an education that allows them to attain the highest levels of academic success, whilst promoting our core characteristics of kindness, tolerance, respect, resilience, and determination.

Historically, our student profile is typically mixed ability and broadly average prior attainment on entry when compared to national average. The school has introduced testing of students using MIDYIS to address any current gaps in KS2 data.

We have strong links with our primary feeder schools and a well-established induction programme which begins early in the academic year with visits to schools from key staff members. This continues with induction days where Year 6 students experience life at Holbrook Academy. During these days, students are introduced to the key areas

of the curriculum and preliminary work for each student is gathered in Maths, English and Science lessons.

Our curriculum uses a progression model. Its basis is in the National Curriculum but also takes into account the GCSE framework and requirements; we start with Year 11 and map backwards, ensuring that key skills are embedded in Year 7 and are revisited in each year group afterwards.

In Key Stage 3, students study the following subjects:-

- Art
- Accelerated Reader (Year 7/8)
- Computer science
- Drama
- Dance (Year 7)
- DT – Food
- DT – Workshop
- English
- Enrichment
- Geography
- History
- Likeskills
- Maths
- MFL French / Spanish
- Music
- PE
- RE
- Science

All years are taught in sets of 5 across all departments.

Students in Years 7 and 8 are in mixed ability classes with the exception of Maths and Science in Year 8. Students in Year 9 are also set for Science and Maths; using a combination of KS2 data, subject assessment data and group dynamics. Differentiation is employed by teachers to ensure that students in these groups feel both supported and challenged.

In GCSE Science, the department makes judgements about which students are entered for the double and triple award; this is a 3 year process which culminates at the end of KS3 and ensures that students are entered for the GCSE that is the most appropriate and suited to their needs and academic ability.

Our Options Programme is broad and balanced; we currently offer a range of different subjects to suit the interests and needs of our learners. Our *Options Pathways* set no limits for students and they are strongly encouraged to find the path that is suitable for their interests and needs. We recognise the value of the English Baccalaureate and are actively increasing student entrance for this qualification year on year.

A very small number of students follow a more bespoke KS4 pathway which is tailored to suit their needs, such as the ASDAN qualification and AQA Project Qualification.

Citizenship is also introduced at KS4 and is designed to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education fosters pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Lessons equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. We also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

Through Life Skills lessons, students are encouraged and supported to develop into self-aware decision makers able to sustain independent, responsible and fulfilled lives. Through discussion and participation they will be equipped with the skills to consider how they might make effective contributions to the communities in which they live. Our aim is to build self esteem and a feeling of personal worth, encouraging students to look after themselves and respect others. We aim to equip all students with the skills to enable them to 'learn to learn' and understand the responsibilities of being a citizen, parent, consumer and employee. Students are encouraged to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and to engage in discussion and debate. Students learn about rights and responsibilities, duties and freedoms, laws, justice and democracy. Students are encouraged to become active participants and understand the basis of ethical decision making and the importance of having moral courage.

PSHE is also delivered through our Life Skills programme. Personal Development is an essential part of our curriculum and students are taught about key topics such as healthy eating, sex and relationships, finance, staying safe online, mental and physical health and tackling racism and homophobia.

Careers education forms part of the curriculum for all students. It is structured to enable students to learn about themselves, their abilities, their strengths and weaknesses and to support them in making informed decisions regarding their own future. All students will have access to impartial advice and guidance to help them to make well informed decisions when choosing Key Stage 4 options and post 16 courses. Students will have the opportunity to undertake a period of work experience during Key Stage 4.

The Academy sets the curriculum to reflect local context and is currently developing a dual project on curriculum with an another coastal school. Due to the significant number of students who are out of catchment and therefore may be dependent upon school transport at the end of the day, we ensure all students experience an enrichment activity on a weekly basis as part of their school timetable. We are also using the curriculum to raise aspirations in both form time and life skills by utilising our strong alumni programme.

### **Excellent Teaching and Learning**

We believe that quality Learning and Teaching lie at the heart of the educational experience for all our learners. Underpinning this philosophy is the Teaching & Learning Toolkit - a shared set of values and expectations that make up an engaging and rewarding lesson at Holbrook Academy.

## Holbrook Academy

### Teaching & Learning Toolkit



**All** lessons at Holbrook Academy will:

- Be **well-planned** and have a relevant **learning objective** to promote a focussed learning environment
- Begin with an engaging and relevant **review-it-now** task to help students recap on their previous learning and to help them focus
- Use **Bloom's Taxonomy** to promote range of questioning
- Feature opportunities to **promote literacy**, either written or verbal
- Use **AFL strategies** at key points in the lesson to check understanding (with links to assessment focus where necessary)

**All** teachers at Holbrook Academy will:

- Be in **the corridors before lessons** and guide students through the door calmly
- Use a **seating plan** to promote a calm and productive learning environment
- **Sanction poor behaviour** for learning using Holbrook's Behaviour matrix and **reward excellence**
- Demonstrate **excellent subject and curriculum knowledge** by modelling sample answers
- Know the **strengths and weaknesses** of each student and deliver lessons to suit their needs accordingly

**All** students at Holbrook Academy will:

- Present their **work neatly**
- Respond to **feedback effectively**, both written and verbal
- Be **prepared for learning**, demonstrating resilience and determination
- **Follow all instructions** given by staff members
- **Complete their work** to the best of their ability

Staff expectations for the most able are high; we use Bloom's Taxonomy as the basis for setting challenging learning objectives, with evaluation being widely used for more able sets. Revision sessions for Year 11 students are also differentiated, with the most able receiving specialised stretch and challenge sessions.

'Quality teaching first' strategies are employed by all classroom teachers to ensure that student needs are met; whole school CPD has been delivered to all staff for this purpose and is an ongoing part of our programme. The school also utilizes the Student Success Centre to ensure that our weakest students are fully supported with literacy and numeracy skills; this begins in Year 7 using KS2 data and continues through to Year 11. Students are taught in small groups of 4/5 to fully support them.

Assessments at Holbrook Academy are constructive and purposeful, implemented in a variety of ways in order to increase the value of feedback. Assessment will judge whether the learning has been mastered, to truly ensure that skills have been learned and knowledge is deepened in long term memory; they are only used to 'improve learning' and to simply 'prove' it has taken place. Assessment is undertaken through a full range of AFL techniques including questioning, low stakes testing, planned formal assessment and students will be taught how to judge their learning for themselves. We have identified 'red weeks' every half term in which assessments take place and assessments are maintained in students progress folders. Our marking policy is developing from WWW/EBI to providing students with the 'Next Steps' to improve.

We have a dedicated literacy co-ordinator who is responsible for delivering our whole school literacy action plan. Students who struggle with fundamental literacy skills are identified early in KS3 and are supported with additional 'SSC' lessons where they receive small group intervention from specialists. Accelerated Reader has been introduced to the school and provides personalised goals to help students stay focused on the factors that matter most for reading growth — this also allows teachers to monitor their progress and provide feedback to keep learners on track. The Academy is always very proud to celebrate our word-millionaires!