



The Joseph Whitaker School

An Academy specialising in Sport and Performing Arts

2026-28

Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Policy

The Joseph Whitaker School Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Policy

Teaching and Learning is the core focus of the school. GREAT teaching, which promotes learning, progress and enjoyment, is the key to raising standards. As such, we aim to ensure that every student has access to provision of the highest quality, which will allow them to achieve their full learning potential.

We recognise that to achieve this aim, we must pay as much attention to professional learning as we do to the processes of student learning. We seek to develop a school culture in which teachers are also inquisitive learners, constantly evaluating and developing their professional practice and being fully supported to do so.

SECTION ONE: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Aims

The Joseph Whitaker School aims to deliver high quality lessons through the GREAT teaching model. All teachers use this model in lessons to focus on the fundamentals of strong teaching which will produce clear progression and outcomes for the students. This model is based on guidance from academic research from the EEF and is intrinsically linked to the school's behaviour management ethos through Paul Dix's When the Adults Change.



Teachers are expected to deliver consistently high-quality lessons by:

- **Great Starts and Finishes.** Students should be met at the door with a positive ‘meet and greet’ to build relationships and settle students when arriving. This is key to relational schools and how we value that ‘Every Interaction is an Intervention’. Students should then complete a ‘Do Now Activity’ (DNA) to allow students to settle into the lesson. These DNAs should be planned to recap prior knowledge, build confidence and provide an active activity that the teacher can use to assess students’ knowledge and skills. E.g. quick recap quiz using mini whiteboards.
- **Reading.** Teachers should carefully plan reading activities to challenge and develop students’ reading skills. This could include pre and post reading activities. Teachers should be aware of the Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary (see Appendix) needed in their subject and explicit vocabulary instruction will be planned in to allow students to develop their vocabulary and access the reading given.
- **Engagement for all.** Students learn well when they work in a high challenge, low stakes environment where they feel safe and secure to take risks and ask questions. Teachers must use PIP and RIP (Praise in public, Rectify in Private) to help develop this climate for learning. When students make mistakes in their behaviour teachers will try to use emotion coaching techniques (see Appendix) to develop students’ interpersonal skills.
- **Adaptive Teaching.** We know that students arrive with a variety of academic abilities, and we believe that with appropriate scaffolding and modelling students can achieve their potential. Teachers will make micro-adaptations in lessons to support all students and provide the appropriate level of challenge. Questioning is a key skill that will allow teachers to assess the abilities and knowledge of their students. Staff will predominantly use the cold call method for questioning to increase participation for all.
- **Targeted assessment.** Students should be provided clear expectations for assessments and extended writing. Teachers will then provide specific targets which students will have time to reflect upon and make the necessary amendments to their work in green pen.

Continuing Professional Development

We aim to support colleagues to achieve these aims by:

- Providing regular school-based training focusing on specific aspects of teaching and learning and curriculum development. This includes a current focus on reading and vocabulary alongside supporting the learning of students with SEND and developing strategies to engage students and bridge the gap post-pandemic. Teachers’ professional development also encompasses training on behaviour management, mental health and subject specific CPD.
- Learning best practice from other colleagues within school or other schools by attending network meetings and visiting other schools within EMET. In departments where an EMET Director of Learning has been appointed, HOF/HOD will have the opportunity to meet and discuss ideas to strengthen their subject area.
- Allowing Heads of Faculty, the flexibility and time to provide bespoke subject training within their own subject area.
- Developing the teaching of Early Career Teachers by providing a blend of support and practical strategies as a beginning teacher. This is provided through the Ambition Institute and EMTP alongside supplementary bespoke training within school.
- Allowing colleagues to attend external training, which is specifically linked to their appraisal targets or Faculty improvement priorities including nationally recognised qualifications including the full suite of NPQs and the national SENCO award where time and costings are appropriate.
- Encouraging colleagues to access Virtual Learning programmes and Academic Research through a blend of in-house and national learning platforms.
- Providing coaching and mentoring where appropriate through a Supportive Appraisal system.

- Providing AST support to develop best practice across faculties and for individual colleagues; keep abreast of current teaching and learning initiatives and cutting-edge research; trial new ideas in the classroom, evaluate their impact and disseminate their findings to colleagues through CPD sessions.
- Working as an effective partner with the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University on the PGCE programme and through EMET on the SCITT programme
- Ensuring all staff complete training on Safeguarding and Prevent through The National College online provision and all staff are required to read the policy 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and are kept informed of any updates
- Ensuring the relevant staff have up to date first aid qualifications, which are required for their roles and responsibilities.

Quality Assurance

In order to ensure high quality teaching and learning, leaders at all levels within the school work collaboratively to constantly review our provision and practice, so that we are able to assure the highest quality of standards and to drive forward improvement. We aim to use the Quality Assurance process as a means of supporting colleagues in their personal improvement so that they excel in their role within the school.

Quality Assurance includes:

- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Student voice
- Data analysis
- Self-evaluation
- Robust line management
- In-house inspection of all Faculty areas at least once every two years.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers will conduct an on-going audit of all lesson observations and recommend specific colleagues or areas for targeted support. Where such targeted support is put in place it will be recorded on a formal support plan overseen by a specified member of SLT and reviewed after 6 weeks to ensure that it is having the necessary effect in developing the member of staff's skill set.

Quality Assurance procedures are detailed within the school's Quality Assurance and Self-evaluation documentation.

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM

Aims

The curriculum is designed to enable all our students to make outstanding progress, become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. They will leave us being aware of how to stay healthy and safe. They will enjoy their achievements, make a positive contribution to their communities and have the foundation from which they can sustain economic well-being.

Our Curriculum is underpinned by our core **values**

Ambition	Inclusivity	Excellence
Kindness	Resilience	Leadership

Structure of the curriculum

The 2014 National Curriculum in England provides the framework for schools to plan, implement and evaluate their own curriculum against national expectations. As an Academy The Joseph Whitaker School is legally able to determine our own provision in terms of curriculum. Each of our subjects have aligned their Programmes of Study to the aims and subject content of the National Curriculum. Full details of the subject curriculums for each year group can be found below by clicking on the links below.

The National Curriculum can be accessed by clicking on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationalcurriculum-in-england-secondary-curriculum>

Our Curriculum Experience

The Joseph Whitaker School has clear values and ambition for all our students both academically and in the wider curriculum. It is important that our students gain a variety of experiences and skills that will ensure our young people are ready to thrive in the world. We endeavour to achieve this through our formal and informal curriculum which runs in parallel to our extra-curricular offer.

Values	Formal Curriculum	Informal Curriculum	Extra-Curricular
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Ambition•Inclusivity•Kindness•Resilience•Excellence•Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•25 lessons per week•Broad and balanced•Catch-up & Interventions•Reading Focus•Lexia and Switch-on Reading•PSHE•On-line learning platforms e.g. Hegarty/Sparks•Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Student Mentoring•Leadership•Sports and Performing Arts Specialism•Assemblies•Careers•Well-being•SMSC•British Values•Celebration of Diversity•Remembrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•After school Clubs•School performances•Music Recitals•School Council•Student Voice•Trips and visits•Competitions•Anti-bullying Ambassadors•Charity Work•Prom and Rewards Evenings

Curriculum: Key Stage 3

Programmes of Study are delivered through timetabled subjects and provide a wide foundation from which our students can be successful at KS4.

We provide additional literacy and numeracy provision for those students whose basic skills require additional development; this happens from the September of Year 7 and continues until students have made progress sufficient for them to study the curriculum at the same pace as their peers. Our aim is to ensure that no students leave Year 8 without functional levels of literacy. Specialist nurture provision is available for students with very high levels of need.

Grouping of KS3 students

Based on prior attainment data and information supplied from primary schools, the cohort is divided into teaching groups. In EBacc subjects, students are set according to their intake data from KS2 and internal assessments or work in mixed ability groups. We ensure that there is an even mix of students in terms of gender and that those students eligible for Pupil Premium are placed in aspirational groups. Year 7 students are often taught in tutor groups with the exception of core subjects.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum hours (from September 2026)

Students follow a fortnightly timetable with 25 hours per week. The table below shows the number of hours per week for each subject during 2026/27-2027/2028:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	4	4	3.5
Mathematics	4	4	3.5
Science	3	3	3
Art	1	1	1
Drama	1	1	1
French	-	1.5	1.5
Geography	1	1	1
History	1	1	1
Computer Science	1	Part of DT rotation	1
Music	1	1	1

PE	2	2	2
PSHCE	1	1	1
RE	1	1	1
Technology	2	2	2
Spanish	2	1.5	1.5
Total	25	25	25

Planned Curriculum: Key Stage 4

The curriculum offer is designed to ensure maximum progress and excellent routes into either sixth form provision at school, local colleges or apprenticeships.

Each year we develop our guided choices process to offer the most relevant subjects to suit the abilities and interests of the particular year group. National changes to qualifications are also reflected in our offer but primarily we are focussed on giving our students the opportunity to gain qualifications and skills that will maximise their future prospects.

Since 2022 our students have been placed on one of three academic pathways:

Academic Enhanced – a pathway which offers additional support in English and Maths

Academic Blended – a pathway which offers a diverse mix of qualifications including GCSEs as well as other Level 2 qualifications. Students on this pathway are encouraged to study a Modern Foreign Language.

Academic Plus – a pathway designed to ensure all students study a Modern Foreign Language and develop the additional skills that go alongside language learning.

Students' pathways are selected from their academic data and in consultation with their classroom teachers. It is the school's responsibility to select the most suitable pathway for each student; these pathways are fixed to ensure the most appropriate broad and balanced curriculum for each learner.

In line with the guidance from the Department for Education the school aims to increase the percentage uptake of students completing the full suite of EBacc courses, year on year. The EBacc consists of English, Mathematics, Science (at least two qualifications), Geography and/or History, French and/or Spanish.

The school has a growing commitment to the mandatory studying of languages at KS4.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum hours (from September 2026)

Students follow a fortnightly timetable with 25 hours per week.

The table shows the number of hours per week for each subject or option during 2026/27 and 2027/28:

Subject	Year 10	Subject	Year 11
English	4	English	4
Maths	3.5	Maths	3.5
Science	5	Science	5
Moral Issues and Life Skills (some Y10 topics covered in tutor time)	0.5	Moral Issues and Life Skills	0.5
PE	2	PE	2
Option A	2.5	Option A	2.5
Option B	2.5	Option B	2.5
Option C	2.5	Option C	2.5
Option D	2.5	Option D	2.5
Total	25	Total	25

In KS4, provision for PSHCE and RE is made through units of work in the Life and Morals course as well as collapsed timetable days.

The large majority of students will study both English and English Literature. Triple science is offered via a combination of the core curriculum and the options programme, giving students a total 7.5 hours per week.

To download information on our current Key Stage 4 options, Year 7 curriculum, Year 8 curriculum and Year 9 curriculum, please refer to our website at www.josephwhitaker.org.

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Getting students onto the right options is essential. Students receive high quality information, advice and guidance through:

- PSHCE
- Tutors
- Subject staff
- Futures Careers Service
- Guidance interviews with senior staff.
- Assemblies
- Booklets

The Deputy Head (curriculum Intent and Implementation) manages the Guided Choice process.

Parents and students are invited to a Guided Choice evening and a Year 9 parents' evening. For students where selecting courses is proving more difficult a member of the senior staff or SEND team will meet students and/or parents to discuss the most suitable curriculum.

Information Communication Technology

ICT is an entitlement to all of our students. Skills, knowledge and attitudes are developed through timetabled ICT lessons at Key Stage 3 for all students, and at Key Stage 4 through GCSE Computing and elements of work within all other subjects.

There is very good provision for ICT both within dedicated ICT suites and netbook trolleys in all Faculty areas.

E-safety is taught from Year 7 with students following a programme of learning. The aim of this will be to develop young adults who can use new technologies responsibly and safely.

Planned Curriculum: Key Stage 5

There are two elements to the planned curriculum for our Post-16 students: Courses and Guidance and enrichment. All students will have a minimum of 540 guided learning hours over the year (typically much more than this).

Courses: Students follow a fortnightly timetable with timetabled lessons totalling between 15 and 18 hours per week. Students are offered a range of GCE, BTEC and Vocational courses in KS5. Provision is also made for students who did not secure a grade 3 or above at GCSE level in English and Mathematics. We maintain an attractive range of courses, outlined in the post-16 prospectus. To download information on our current Key Stage 5 options and our Key Stage 5 curriculum, please refer to our website at www.josephwhitaker.org.

Guidance and enrichment: This time is dedicated to helping students achieve our aims for them as successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. They will leave us being aware of how to stay healthy and safe. They will enjoy their achievements, make a positive contribution to their communities and have the foundation from which they can sustain economic wellbeing. 1 period a fortnight is dedicated to enrichment and this can include external speakers, help with university applications and current affairs.

Students who apply to The Joseph Whitaker Sixth Form will be accepted provided that they meet the entrance requirements of the course and have a proven record of successful study which suggests this would be an appropriate route. Admission to the Sixth Form is based upon the relevant admission policy.

Work Related Learning

Learning about the world of work is integrated within PSHCE and throughout all subjects from Year 7.

Withdrawal for particular activities

Part of admission to The Joseph Whitaker School is an acceptance that all students will take an active and full part in the whole curriculum that is provided for them.

There are some circumstances where parents may wish to request a withdrawal from a particular part of a course or school activity. These may be to do with religious beliefs and assemblies, or sex education. If this is the case, a parent should contact the Deputy Headteacher responsible for the curriculum or the Headteacher and request such a withdrawal, giving reasons. Further details of this area of the school's provision are outlined in Section 4 of this policy.

Additional Information

Students who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

Due to the very personalised nature of a student's needs, each student will be assessed as an individual, and their curriculum adapted appropriately and as financial resources permit. Examples of these personalised programmes are available from the SENCO.

Review of the Curriculum

Our curriculum is reviewed annually. This will be based on achievements, standards and participation as well as on feedback from parents and students.

SECTION 3: TARGET SETTING

All students will be set challenging targets to enable them to achieve outstanding outcomes, through achieving progress at least in line with expected levels of progress.

Key Stage 3

Targets are based on starting points of Key Stage 2 results for all academic subjects.
Targets are determined by English or Maths SATS results for each subject as detailed below:

English KS2	Maths KS2	Combination and Teacher Input
English	Maths	Technology
History	Computing	Art
Geography	Science	PE
MFL		Performing Arts

Students are placed into bands according to their KS2 data and the following table shows how targets are then linked to KS4 and the new GCSE grades.

Key Stage 2 (approximate)	FFT 20 GCSE Grade Estimate	KS3 Band	Band Name
Greater Depth	6+ to 9	A	Advanced
Working at/Secure	4+ to 6	B	Strong
Working Towards	3+ to 4	C	Secure
Working Below	1 to 3	D	Developing

Key Stage 4

- GCSE targets are initially based on Key Stage 2 results
- Progress at Key Stage 3 is then taken into account to set up to date and aspirational targets

Key Stage 5

- ALPS forecasting is used for target setting, based on GCSE achievement
- Staff are able to set targets above ALPS and students are set the higher of the two, to ensure that they are appropriately challenged and aspire to academic success.

Variance from general principles

Targets are assessed and altered for individual students if they are felt to be not challenging enough. This is normally done at the start of the relevant year and is overseen by the Deputy Headteacher (Key Stage 4 Standards and Curriculum).

Communication of targets to parents and students

All targets, and progress towards them, are communicated to parents and students through SIMS Learning Gateway, tutor meetings early in the academic year, parents' evenings as well as termly progress, and full reports.

Teachers will regularly refer to targets in assessments but in classwork teachers will focus on how students can improve their work and will differentiate lessons appropriately, in order to ensure that students work effectively towards achieving them.

SECTION 4: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Collective Worship

The school is a non-denominational secondary school and as such assemblies are secular in nature.

Our pastoral system consists of four Houses which each contain 10 tutor groups. Students attend weekly assemblies either in Houses or year groups and each assembly has a theme which always has a spiritual, moral, social or cultural dimension with a particular focus on British Values.

Parents with strong views about any religious collective worship have the right in law to withdraw their children from such arrangements; this should be done in writing at any time to cover the child's remaining time at the school e.g. Annual Remembrance Service (this is led by The Royal British Legion and the Church of England).

In addition, each day, we have dedicated tutor periods, which may be used as a means to help students with their spiritual, personal, social and emotional development.

Both assemblies, and tutor periods, underpin the ethos that we endeavour to foster in the school.

Religious Education

Provision for Religious Education challenges students to reflect on questions about life's ultimate meaning and purpose. Students are encouraged to reflect on different religions, beliefs, values and traditions. They are also encouraged to explore their own unique beliefs and values, and they are given space to express them. Provision meets legal requirements and the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education is adhered to and incorporated.

The RE course in Key Stage 3 covers philosophical and ethical issues, examining the nature of belief, the relationship between beliefs and actions, and a reflective exploration of values. A number of faiths are examined, as are secular viewpoints. **In KS4 RE is taught through the Moral Issues and Life Skills course.**

A more detailed programme is contained within the school's schemes of work which may be viewed at school.

Parents have the statutory right to withdraw their children from RE lessons and the school is able to make alternative arrangements to ensure that they are supervised. However, we are strongly committed to RE as a central aspect of each person's educational entitlement, and therefore strongly encourage children of all faith and belief backgrounds to participate. If parents wish to consider exercising the right to withdraw their child from SMD, we therefore ask them to write to the Headteacher and to discuss the matter before a decision is made.

Note: There is a separate policy EMET policy '**Relationships & Sex Education and Physical Health & Mental Well-being Policy**'. Please refer to that policy for specific advice, including which aspects of Relationships & Sex Education parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from.

This policy will be reviewed biennially

Adoption by the Governing Body



Headteacher

Signature Date: March 2026



Chair of Governors

Signature Date: March 2026

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