



Innovation, Aspiration and Excellence

Curriculum Policy

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1. Our Curriculum – an overview

Houlton School is an academy within the [Transforming Lives Educational Trust \(TLET\)](#); we define the term ‘curriculum’ in its broadest sense; therefore, our curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that are planned for our students. Annually, we review the intent of the curriculum, its implementation and how its impact is assessed through our Staff Forum and our Local Governing Board. We plan the content students need to know; how we deliver and sequence the teaching and learning; and the skills required to access the curriculum’s content with confidence. We then evaluate the impact of the curriculum’s impact through formal and informal assessment (see Assessment Policy), quality assurance (e.g. learning visits, work scrutiny and TLET Health Checks) and independently administered student, staff and parent voice, which is triangulated through both Trust-level comparisons and national comparisons via our external provider.

Our academy’s curriculum is underpinned by the [Secondary National Curriculum Programmes of Study for England \(2014\)](#). There are also areas of our academy curriculum that extend students’ learning beyond the requirements of the NC PoS (for example, our offer of discrete teaching in the Performing and Expressive Arts as an historic link to our campus’ heritage as a global centre of excellence for communications). This supports our mission to provide an **excellent**, World Class education through an **innovative** and **aspirational** experience for all.

2. Curriculum Intent

We provide an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum for all, in accordance with [our Academy’s ESFA funding agreement](#).

We promote high academic standards that lead to the rapid and sustained progress from individuals’ end of Key Stage 2 starting points. The development of widely-educated, confident and responsible young people who are prepared today for the world of tomorrow is the core aim of our curriculum for **excellence**. We seek to stretch and challenge all students, regardless of their starting points.

In line with the Government’s expectations for all schools in England, our students experience a curriculum with the rigour of the [English Baccalaureate \(EBacc\)](#) at its heart. Within this framework, student choice and aspiration is prioritised to give each individual the opportunity to proceed to destinations that meet their hopes and dreams for their futures. Pupils then transition into our Sixth Form, or other local post-16 providers, depending on their future aspirations and career plans.

Our curriculum prepares students for a rapidly changing world whilst learning from the best that has been thought, said and written. We promote and recognise success in a wide range

of extra-curricular activities to enable students to discover and develop lifelong interests and talents. This rich set of experiences develops students' strength of character, their cultural capital and enables them to become empathetic, resilient and independent young people.

3. Curriculum Implementation

What's the Houlton difference? We are a local school, for local children, and we want everyone to be included in our outstanding provision, regardless of their attainment levels when they arrive. We assess students' inherent cognitive ability on arrival through nationally standardised (GL Assessment) CAT4, Reading, Spelling and Mathematics tests, and diagnose where they are with their reading and spelling so that we can set ambitious targets for their progress with us and ensure they have equity in terms of their access to our exciting offer.

Our pedagogy is based on the latest research from the Education Endowment Foundation: [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#).

Our vision for our Houlton's energetic and immersive curriculum is inspired by impressive, research-led great thinking, such as that from [Mary Myatt](#) and [Professor Dame Alison Peacock](#). All teaching at Houlton encourages 'deep learning without limits' through our use of 'the Big Question', which has **curiosity** and **story-telling** at its heart. Children acquire knowledge through investigation and then revisit key facts and skills throughout the academic year/key stage so that memorability and skilful encoding within the brain becomes second nature.

Eminent Cognitive Psychologist [Daniel T Willingham](#) once wrote, 'Our brains privilege story...human beings are curious. Thinking is hard'. But we know that **children like challenge** so long as the threat is low. We provide a safe space for children to think hard and evolve into the young adults they become by the time they leave us in Year 13.

4. General Principles

In addition to the formal, taught curriculum, an extensive range of co-curricular clubs and activities, subject enrichment and trips and visits are offered to all students:

- Aspects of religious education are covered through form time, assemblies and the statutory Religious Studies curriculum. Houlton School does not have a specific religious character. There is a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes students' cultural awareness of the major world faiths and religions in order that they become accepting, global citizens who embrace diversity. Religious Studies is a discrete, timetabled opportunity in both Key stage 3

and 4 (see Appendix 1). We follow the [Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for RE](#).

- There is a programme of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) education throughout a student's time at Houlton. This is accessed through form time, assemblies, collapsed-curriculum days and specific events/interviews with specialist staff. This programme begins in Year 7.
- At Key Stage 4, students are taught in apgroups for all of their option subjects and will have a free choice of whether they prefer to study Combined or Triple Science.
- Up-to-date [Learning Journeys](#) are available for all subjects on our website.
- At Post-16, in the Sixth Form, students are guided towards courses that will maximize their opportunities for success based on the qualifications they hold on entry. A mixture of GCE 'A' level and applied qualifications are offered, which can be taken in combination.

Key Stage 3 (KS3 – Years 7-9)

KS3 is delivered over **three years**.

Our curriculum is designed to allow all students to experience a wide a range of subjects in Key Stage 3; therefore, all students study an ambitious, broad curriculum of 50 periods a fortnight:

English Language and English Literature, Mathematics, Science (Biology / Chemistry / Physics, History, Geography, French, Spanish, Religious Studies, Computer Science, Physical Education, Design and Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Art and Design, Performing Arts: Acting and Dance, Music, PHRSE (inc. LORIC, Relationship & Sex Education, Careers and Citizenship

Key Stage 4 (KS4 – Years 10 and 11)

KS4 is conducted over **two years**.

In line with the government's expectations, all students must continue to study a broad, balanced and academically rigorous curriculum at KS4, with the [EBacc](#) as its ambition. This begins with **GCSE Religious Studies [Short course], PHRSE inc. Careers Education and Core Physical Education.**

Next, all students¹ study:

GCSE English Literature, GCSE English Language, GCSE Mathematics, GCSE Combined or Triple Science, at least one of either **History** or **Geography**, and at least one of either **French** or **Spanish**.

[8 core qualifications].

Pupils will study **10 Level 2 qualifications** in total; therefore, in addition to their core 8 GCSEs, students are then able to choose **two** further subjects from this list:

Computer Science; Design and Technology; Food Preparation and Nutrition; Music; Performing Arts – Acting; Performing Arts – Dance; Physical Education; Religious Studies [Full course]; Psychology; Sociology; Health and Social Care; Fine Art; Photography; Business Studies; Physical Education; Broadcast .

[9 / 10 qualifications]

The Executive Principal has powers in relation to the day-to-day management of the curriculum and may delegate this responsibility to other senior leaders as appropriate. Any requests relating to an adaptation of a student's curriculum must be made in writing in the first instance. Where necessary, the Executive Principal will make the final decision relating to any changes. This may include the number of subjects studied and the qualifications for which students are entered.

A table of the Key Stage 3-4 curriculum is at Appendix 1 below.

PHRSE and Careers Guidance

Our Personal Health, Relationships and Sex Education (PHRSE) curriculum includes Careers Guidance. A comprehensive learning journey and scheme of learning for this is available to view on our website and a statutory separate policy covers our approach to Relationships and Sex Education.

The Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13)

Our Sixth Form curriculum will be refined ahead of our first cohort's entry in **September 2026**. This will respond to the local and national expectations and needs at that time. It is envisaged that students will be able to study GCE 'A' levels, Applied qualifications, or a combination of these across our TLET schools, as we hope to attract students to join us from all local secondary schools.

¹ On very rare occasions, an alternative curriculum is offered for children with an EHCP for High Needs that means they may be unable to access the full curriculum. In this instance, a specialist programme is created in partnership at a professionals meeting led by the Vice Principal and Head of Faculty for Inclusion (SENDCo).

5. Curriculum Impact

The impact of the academy's curriculum is assessed by considering:

- Full details of the approach to assessment can be found in the separate policy. In summary, at KS3 Houlton School's 4-level descriptors (SC, RI, Gd, WC) are used to describe how 'on track' students are with their understanding and knowledge of the curriculum. Internal progress data is collected twice each academic year (more frequently in Year 11). At KS4, end of Year 11 Targets are generated for students' progress based on their previous KS2 results. We set ambitious targets for our students based on national outcomes.
- Progress data from preliminary examinations (commonly referred to in other contexts as 'mocks') in examination courses.
- Progress data from external examination results in GCSE and non-GCSE qualifications at Key Stage 4.
- The range and variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and students' participation in them.
- Pupils' 'Getting it Right' awards scores and attendance data inform an analysis of their personal development, conduct and safety.
- The retention of students from Year 11 into the Sixth Form.
- The numbers of students applying to join the Academy in Year 7.
- The destinations of our leavers at Years 11 and 13.
- Annual reviews of the PHRSE and assembly programme.

Should parent/carer(s) require any further information about the curriculum they should contact the Principal at hos@houltonschool.org.uk

6. Complaints Procedure

If a parent/carer feels that the academy is failing to comply with its legal requirements as to the curriculum or is unreasonable in the way that it complies with them, he/she can make a formal complaint, in writing to the Principal in the first instance in line with [Houlton School's Complaints Policy](#).