



Yardleys School

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Curriculum Policy

Adopted by Governors:

Signed:

Date:

This policy is reviewed annually the Curriculum & Standards Committee

Review date:

POLICY INFORMATION

Date of last review	November 2021	Review period	Annually
Date ratified by governors	November 2021	Governors' committee responsible	C&S
Policy owner	Neil Warner	SLT member responsible	Neil Warner
Date of next review	November 2022		

Reviews/revisions

Review date	Changes made	By whom
September 2020	<p>Yardleys Charter added under key principles of Yardleys Curriculum</p> <p>Section 4 added on Teaching & pedagogy</p> <p>Section 5 added on Other teaching and learning activities</p> <p>Section 8 added on Accountability and reporting</p>	Brynley Evans
November 2021	<p>Policy owner and SLT member responsible updated</p> <p>2.2 line updated to state that the school follows the National Curriculum</p> <p>2.3 removal of reference that the school's curriculum does not follow all aspects of the NC</p> <p>Section 3 – removal of section on reasons for KS3/4 structure</p> <p>Removal of section on EBacc</p>	Neil Warner

Dates of linked staff training (if applicable)

Date	Course title	Led by

EQUALITY AND GDPR

All Yardleys' policies should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities and GDPR policies.

Statement of principle - Equality

We will take all possible steps to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against any individual or group of individuals. When compiling, monitoring and reviewing the policy we will consider the likely impact on the promotion of all aspects of equality as described in the Equality Act 2010.

Statement of principle - GDPR

Yardleys School recognises the serious issues that can occur as a consequence of failing to protect an individual adult's or child's personal and sensitive data. These include emotional distress, physical safety, child protection, loss of assets, fraud and other criminal acts.


Yardleys School is therefore committed to the protection of all personal and sensitive data for which it holds responsibility as the Data Controller and the handling of such data in line with the data protection principles and the Data Protection Act (DPA)/GDPR.

Yardleys School Charter



Staff & Students believe everyone at Yardleys School should:



 Be Ready


- show **positivity** and enthusiasm;
- be motivated & have high expectations of ourselves & others;
- be **curious** and ready to learn new things;
- be fully prepared for all activities with everything you need;
- communicate with others regularly and effectively;
- have excellent attendance and punctuality;
- be well presented and smartly dressed;
- show **resilience** when faced with challenges



 Be Respectful

- recognise that we are all equal individuals;
- have regard for each other's personal space and privacy;
- take care of the building, equipment and the environment;
- be polite, considerate and kind to everyone;
- communicate in a calm and polite manner;
- actively listen to others;
- appreciate others' beliefs, opinions & cultures;
- show **empathy** and maturity when dealing with sensitive issues



 Be Responsible

- be safe and look after each other;
- complete work on time and to a high standard;
- behave well with **integrity**: even when no-one is watching;
- be a positive role model and representative of the school;
- recognise that we are responsible for our own actions;
- be fair in your treatment of others;
- give our full effort to everything you do;
- **reflect** on all that we do and learn from our mistakes

Leading to Academic Excellence and Personal Development

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE



 Positivity



 Integrity




 Curiosity




 Resilience



 Empathy



 Reflection

The Yardleys Curriculum

Introduction – Key principles

- a) The Yardleys Curriculum is at the core of what we do and **is extremely important** to our pupils. It is influential in improving life chances including social mobility, employment, health & wellbeing.
- b) We always take account of **pupils' backgrounds** such as their prior learning & their wider socio-economic background. We never use this as an excuse but, rather, it adds to our core purpose.
- c) The Yardleys School Charter informs our curriculum.
- d) **Intelligence or ability is not fixed**. All pupils can become more intelligent or raise standards of achievement if we have high expectations and an ambitious curriculum. Similarly, all teachers and should always be seeking **continual improvement** in the quality of the curriculum.
- e) **Leadership at all levels** is vital in delivering a high quality Yardleys Curriculum. We place particular emphasis on subject leadership in planning, developing and assessing the taught curriculum including that of personal development.
- f) Cognitive scientists define **learning as a change in the long term memory** as opposed to the working memory. This should be central to our thinking around curriculum and pedagogy.
- g) We place a high emphasis on **learning knowledge** as a central tenet of learning, intelligence and our curriculum (including in the development of skills). It also provides **cultural capital** to our pupils.
- h) **Explicit or direct instruction** by the teacher is the most effective way to teach a curriculum to novices such as pupils. However, this does not exclude other teaching & learning techniques such as independent research or group work when pupils have achieved a level of mastery.
- i) The **development of language** skills including speaking & listening is central to the quality of the Yardleys Curriculum and we are proactive in teaching these explicitly to our pupils.
- j) We aim to **enrich the** Yardleys Curriculum in many different ways both within subjects and across the school so that learning is more relevant, engaging and effective.
- k) **Personal or character development** is a key aim of the school and an integral part of the Yardleys Curriculum. Learning, therefore, is not restricted to formal academic lessons but many other activities throughout pupils' time at school. This includes pastoral work, extra-curricular activities and independent study.
- l) **Assessment** is extremely useful to inform pupils, teachers, leaders and parents of progress in learning the Yardleys Curriculum and to advise on further areas of improvement. However, all assessment and the gathering of data must be **manageable and meaningful**.
- m) As professionals and public servants using public funds we understand that we are all **accountable** to our pupils, parents and governors as well as many external organisations for the quality of the curriculum we provide. However, school leaders should be mindful of **teacher workload and wellbeing** and that such evaluative work always needs to be both manageable and meaningful.
- n) Our school motto of **'Keep Troth'** means that we will always adhere to our values and ethos in our curriculum work even when we face internal and external obstacles or pressures.

I. Curriculum Aims – what are we trying to do?

The aims of the Yardleys Curriculum are the same as that of the school i.e.:

- i. To achieve academic excellence**
- ii. To educate the ‘whole child’ so they are ready for life**
- iii. To work collaboratively and ethically to provide education of the highest standard.**

2. Curriculum Foundations – where does our curriculum come from?

2.1 Yardleys School vision, values and ethos - The school has a firm belief in the importance of both academic learning and personal development (aims 1 & 2). The third aim highlights our ethos (working together for a better future) of teamwork as well as our commitment to our ethical principles (Keep Troth). The three curriculum aims are supported by the Yardleys Charter and our school values.

2.2 Statutory regulations and guidance - The school follows statutory requirements and guidance from HM Government, Department for Education (DFE) and other educational agencies such as Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The Yardleys Curriculum will also incorporate other relevant legislation or guidance. For example, various Educational Acts, the Equalities Act 2010, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as those regarding the Environment, Safeguarding, Health and Safety.

As an academy we follow the National Curriculum.

Educational legislation also provides for the right for parents and carers to withdraw their child from some aspects of the curriculum such as RE, collective worship and sex education. Parents & carers should contact the Headteacher for further information in the first instance.

2.3 The Yardleys Curriculum delivers a broad, balanced and holistic education where some aspects go beyond the NC. We teach all of the National Curriculum subjects at KS3 and many of the features outlined within each subject framework.

The Yardleys Curriculum is ambitious. It aims to go beyond the National Curriculum for all pupils by including additional features such as Guided Reading, Literacy, Personal Development course, Enrichment sessions, Study Skills, Homework, Life Skills (First Aid) and a General Studies course.

2.4 Prior Learning - Our pupils arrive from primary school with below average KS2 attainment including low reading ability. Many of our pupils also have a different home language which can contribute to a lower reading and vocabulary knowledge on entry. The Yardleys Curriculum aims to address this with a focus on literacy skills in Key Stage 3 e.g. through Guided Reading and literacy lessons.

2.5 Local context - Pupils come from a supportive family and community background. However, this is an area which has, in general terms, high socio-economic deprivation indicators including high unemployment, low social mobility, narrow cultural experiences, high crime and ill health indicators. The Yardleys Curriculum aims to address many of these issues through its pastoral and personal development programme.

2.6 Regional context - Birmingham is witnessing a growth in economic opportunities as new businesses start up or move into the city and the wider West Midlands region. We aim to support our pupils to learn about these developments and to give them both the academic and personal skills to take advantage of these opportunities through our careers education programme. We provide both a strong academic core but also some vocational courses (e.g. ICT, DT, Sport Science) as part of our Key Stage 4 curriculum offer. We also aim to develop the pupils' essential soft skills that are so important to successful entry and progression in employment.

2.7 Equality and inclusion - The Yardleys Curriculum is open to all pupils. There are no separate pathways for pupils. For example, all pupils study Triple Science and two English GCSEs.

2.8 Education research and cognitive science - The Yardleys Curriculum has a clear focus on the teaching and learning of knowledge as an essential component of understanding and skill development. There is also a focus on understanding key concepts to provide the mental connections (or schema) necessary for permanent learning. We also emphasise effective learning techniques such as regular, spaced and interleaved retrieval practise through low stakes quizzing and online homework tests.

2.9 Teaching and pupil wellbeing - The Yardleys Curriculum has also been developed to look after and promote the wellbeing of children and adults including their mental health. We believe in a balance between work and play. We aim to teach high quality lessons and learning experiences by giving both teachers and pupils sufficient time e.g. during a three year KS4/GCSE course. Therefore, we do not expect or provide an extensive after school programme of boosters and interventions. This extra time also allows us to deliver enrichment activities such as subject fieldwork, theatre visits or educational trips. It also helps us to look after and retain our teachers at a time of a national recruitment shortage.

2.10 Resources - The Yardleys Curriculum has been developed in a practical way i.e. we plan meticulously and take into account constraints in terms of resources, knowledge and expertise. As a result, subject curriculum teams are fully staffed with highly skilled practitioners who in turn are backed up with high quality support systems and the necessary resources.

3. Curriculum features

3.1 Time allocation

- i. 25 x 55 minute lessons per week
- ii. 4 x 20 minute guided reading sessions for every pupil to help the teaching and learning of reading skills and to improve vocabulary

3.2 Cohorts and Groups

- i. 180 pupils in a cohort are taught in 7 groups (average class size 26) except in year 8 which has 210 pupils and 8 groups
- ii. In Key Stage 3 & 4 the core subjects (English, Maths and Science) have groups set according to prior and current attainment.
- iii. In Key Stage 3 foundation subjects are taught in four equal groups of high attainers and two equal groups of middle attainers and one or two groups of lower attainers.
- iv. Option subjects in Key stage 4 are taught in mixed ability groups.

3.3 The options system

- i. At Key Stage 4 pupils are taught all of the core subjects including PE as well as three option subjects. There are currently blocks for option choices with all pupils able to select from the full list of options. However, advice and support is given to pupils to help decision making.
- ii. The modern foreign languages are either French or Spanish.
- iii. All pupils study Triple Science GCSEs (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)

3.4 Additional Support

- i. Some academic time at both KS3 and 4 is given over to academic support such as literacy and numeracy for all pupils. A few pupils including some SEND, EAL or other vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils may need further support or additional interventions.

3.5 Subject Curriculum planning

- i. Curriculum planning at subject level includes the following features – a curriculum overview of the key knowledge, skills and assessment objectives; a scheme of work for mid-term planning usually a half or full term unit; the essential knowledge for each subject unit is summarised in the knowledge organiser and a biannual cumulative or synoptic test/mock exam. This is supported by weekly subject collaborative planning sessions.

3.6 Homework & independent study

- i. Homework is also aligned to the taught curriculum units and takes the form of weekly or fortnightly online quizzes.
- ii. Techniques to improve independent study and revision are taught in lessons and in form time

4. Teaching & pedagogy (implementation or delivery of the curriculum)

4.1 **The Yardleys Teaching Standards** guide all staff on the expectations of the school, their professional responsibilities and in their professional development needs

4.2 Consistent routines and procedures

There are specific routines and procedures that we expect all teachers and staff to follow in classrooms and lessons. This is beneficial to both pupils and teachers as it provides clear expectations thereby minimising disputes, inconsistencies or issues that arise. Routines and procedures include: -

- a) Well planned lessons with a clear learning purpose
- b) Good preparation in terms of resources
- c) Teachers at doors to assist with corridor supervision and to 'meet and greet' pupils positively.
- d) A short, silent, independent 'do now' activity whilst the teacher calls the register.
- e) Teachers to establish a positive climate for learning in line with the Yardleys Charter
- f) Teachers need to ensure that behaviour does not prevent teaching or learning e.g. teachers should insist on silence for many activities so that pupils can hear teacher explanations, listen to answers to questions, listen to each other and to focus on their work.
- g) Completing activities a few minutes before the end of the lesson to ensure an orderly dismissal

4.2 Pedagogy – Direct instruction

The school understands that the most effective method of instruction, particularly before pupils have mastered a topic, is direct or explicit instruction as outlined in the Yardleys Learning Cycle (below). This is not a prescribed lesson structure but rather a set of key instructional principles.



The school also recognises that whilst direct instruction is crucial and forms the great majority of teaching activity, it is also necessary to provide some other opportunities for **more independent or pupil centred activities**. These allows pupils to consolidate, apply or manipulate their learning in different ways not just for exams but also for wider purposes such as developing cultural capital, readiness for work, soft skills and personal growth. Examples may include speculation, debates, cross-curricular project work, real life or employment scenarios, investigations, peer to peer instruction or creative exercises where learned conventions are subverted or even abandoned.

4.3 Training or continual professional development (CPD)

A key responsibility of senior and middle leaders is instructional leadership i.e. the requirement that teachers are provided with the means to improve their teaching.

However we recognise that whilst improving teaching is highly desirable it is very complex and difficult. This is particularly the case when we accept that it is difficult to actually observe pupil learning, that most teachers have deeply ingrained habits and that the day to day requirements of the profession often get in the way of changing practice.

Effective CPD therefore needs to include: -

- A variety of training formats and activities
- Some input from teachers themselves
- Time to reflect on current practice and new information
- A focus on deliberate practising both in and out lessons so that teaching habits change

At Yardleys CPD opportunities include

- a. Appraisal or performance management that focuses more on improvement and is called Professional Development Reviews (PDR)
- b. A coaching/mentoring programme
- c. Collaborative planning time in subjects (subject mastery) or with activities such as PD or guided reading
- d. Whole school CPD which includes updates, key principles or the launching of new initiatives

- e. An additional training programme for new teachers, NQTs or trainees but which existing teachers can also participate in
- f. Leadership and management development programme (LMD) for middle leaders
- g. Networks or Links with other schools both locally or nationally to hear about good practice from other schools
- h. Lead Practitioners and coaches to lead on and assist with training programmes
- i. Greater exposure to educational research and writing either through the school library or the VLE /online
- j. Support for teachers to become GCSE examiners in their subjects
- k. Support for other teachers provided by UPR teachers – usually within their subject areas
- l. Additional non-contact time for all teachers i.e. all teachers have five non-contact periods a week.

School leaders are always open to new suggestions, ideas or research from inside or outside the school so that they can help both staff and the school to improve further

5. Other teaching and learning activities

5.1 Cover lessons

Teachers who have planned absences (or who are unexpectedly away from school and are able to do so) should leave good quality cover work which is written out on the school pro forma with clear instructions, a seating plan, the necessary resources and a contingency for extension/further challenging work for those who have completed the work.

5.2 Home learning

All pupils are expected to study and revise independently outside of normal school hours/at home using: -

- a) Subject knowledge organisers
- b) Homework knowledge quizzes
- c) Revision techniques taught in lessons, form time and in the student development guide
- d) Extra resources and programmes provided online or on the school VLE (e.g. GCSE pod)

Form tutors and teachers should support this in school by regularly referring to the resources and strategies listed above as well as monitoring pupils' activity and progress.

Remote teaching and learning is based around the school VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) which is also the school's website **www.yardleys-vle.com**

5.3 Inclusion and support

We have a wide range of pupils who may require support in their learning and education. These include pupils who are: -

- a) SEND
- b) EAL – over 70% of pupils have a different home language to English
- c) Low prior attainers from KS2 (primary school)
- d) Disadvantaged i.e. those receiving FSM or have done so in the previous 6 years ('Ever 6' or Pupil Premium)
- e) Children in Care
- f) Vulnerable pupils - specific pupils and/or families who are expiring difficulties outside school e.g. housing issues.

The starting point for support is having high expectations. All staff need to uphold and promote a key school principle that all children do not have fixed ability or intelligence and that everyone can develop and improve i.e. of all pupils.

We also need to ensure 'quality first teaching' in all pupils' lessons. This is far more effective than other forms of support or providing a different curriculum.

There are some withdrawal groups where specialist input would be beneficial e.g. EAL beginners

The pastoral team will also support teaching staff in this work.

5.4 SEND

All teachers and support staff are expected to read the profiles of all SEND pupils in their classes and to enact key support actions in their lessons.

Some SEND pupils will need extra scaffolding or support in their learning so that they have access to the same curriculum as other pupils.

Teachers need to liaise with and plan how to utilise teaching assistants or any other support provided in lessons.

5.5 EAL

Many of our pupils have a different home language to English and therefore will need further support with literacy. A small number of pupils who are beginners in English will need intensive support including some withdrawal lessons.

5.6 Literacy

All teachers should teach literacy within their subjects. This includes: -

- a) Reading from textbooks or other subject specialist material
- b) Vocabulary – especially 'Tier II & III language' i.e. academic/formal language and subject specific terms
- c) Sentence construction and different sentence types
- d) Spelling punctuation & grammar
- e) Writing formats and conventions e.g. essay writing

All pupils receive extra literacy support during their time at Yardleys through: -

- Additional literacy lessons in Year 7 using the SRA programme
- Additional reading through the guided reading programme (see below)
- Additional English lessons in Year 9 & 11
- Additional lessons in Year 8 for a few pupils

5.7 Guided reading

Guided reading is where everyone reads in their form groups with their form tutor or another member of staff every morning for four days a week.

Guided reading should have the following features: -

- a. All form groups in the year group reading the same book at a coordinated pace
- b. 'Control the game' reading strategy where the teacher decides to ask random pupils to 'pick up' and read aloud so that there is full concentration by every member of the group

- c. Comprehension questions – either for the meaning of words and phrases or the narrative/plot
- d. Vocabulary support provided on the board and through the teacher
- e. Online quiz at the end of the book
- f. Emphasis on reading clearly to the rest of the class using the acronym SHARPEST
- g. Emphasis on encouraging a love of reading

5.8 Numeracy

There are 8 common areas where all teachers can support the development of numeracy skills in their subject lessons. These are: -

- a) Using calculators
- b) Mathematical language
- c) Fractions, decimals and percentages
- d) Using formulae
- e) Written numbers
- f) Units
- g) Scales and graphs
- h) Estimation and rounding

5.9 Additional learning

Additional learning time or boosters need to be requested and planned carefully. It cannot be a vague request for additional time for a subject. The reasons given must include specific details about:-

- The learning outcomes
- The length of time for the additional learning programme e.g. 6 weeks of 1 hour sessions
- The date and time of the proposed sessions
- The names of targeted pupils with reasons for their selection

5.10 Form time

Form time is an important aspect of the Yardleys Curriculum. There are clearly defined objectives and activities including: -

- Checks on basic expectations e.g. uniform, equipment etc. and a review of the previous week
- Independent study skills and revision techniques including the use of knowledge organisers
- Personal Development (PD) programme

6. 'Whole child' & personal development curriculum

6.1 Aims The whole child curriculum supports personal development through a wider range of activities which students take part in during lessons, enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The main aims of the this aspect of the curriculum are to:-

- i. Develop pupils' values of positivity, integrity, curiosity, empathy, resilience and reflection
- ii. Develop social skills which value and respect others in order to form positive relationships
- iii. Provide the necessary knowledge and skills to move successfully to the next stage of their education
- iv. Prepare pupils for the world of work and ensure they become economically independent and successful
- v. Ensure pupils become active citizens who take participate responsibly in their local, national or international communities
- vi. To ensure pupils are healthy and safe and are able to make informed decisions about their personal wellbeing

6.2 The key features of the wider whole child curriculum include:-

- i. The explicit teaching of the Yardleys School Charter including the 6 school values
- ii. A behaviour policy which includes the teaching and adherence to the three key school rules (*'Be Ready; Be Respectful; Be Responsible'*)
- iii. A planned five year Personal Development programme taught every year around 6 topics or themes. Each theme is revisited each year with new or extended learning. The 6 areas are: -
 - Physical health
 - Mental health
 - Careers & enterprise
 - Relationships
 - Democracy and British values
 - Sex education
- iv. A careers education programme coordinated by our in house careers advisor based on the Government's Gatsby benchmarks
- v. Curriculum time including a 20 minute form time session three times a week and an extra weekly 50 minute period where there is either an enrichment or PSHE activity for every pupil
- vi. Enrichment - Wednesday afternoons are extended to 3.30pm in order to incorporate an enrichment session for all pupils. All teachers should organise and lead an activity of their choice for pupils. (Sometimes staff will be allocated to support or work alongside the organiser of an activity)
- vii. The use of visiting speakers, theatre groups or specialists to support the curriculum
- viii. A pastoral team with well-established systems, a generous allocation of non-teaching time, support from senior managers and administrative staff, effective relationships with outside agencies, schools and educational organisations
- ix. Guided reading is where everyone reads whole novels or books in their form groups with their form tutor or another member of staff every morning for four days a week
- x. Spiritual Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC) issues and the teaching of British values are addressed within the features of the curriculum above

7. Evaluation & assessment of learning

Leaders & teachers need to assess and evaluate whether pupils are learning the curriculum effectively.

7.1 Assessment in general

Assessment can be: -

- formative and summative
- formal and informal
- external and internal

The school understands that all assessment must always be both meaningful and manageable.

7.2 School wide assessment

- i. There are two whole school assessment points for all subjects and all pupils
- ii. Assessment or achievement data is derived from practise exams held in school assessment and weeks in December and June/July
- iii. Assessment data is summarised in the form of an age related 9-1 grade but subjects use raw marks and detailed breakdown and tracking of learning against assessment objectives
- iv. Teachers also provide 'Attitude to Learning' (ATL) grades reflecting pupil attitudes and effort in their lessons and learning

- v. Teachers must provide feedback to pupils on their performance in these practise exams and then pupils must act on this by correcting, amending or re-doing specific questions or even re-sitting the whole assessment if required
- vi. Outside of these two whole-school assessment and data points, subject leaders and teachers assess pupil progress in subject specific ways in line with guidance from school leaders

7.3 Monitoring and evaluation by leaders & managers

- i. Managers at all levels should monitor and evaluate the quality of education being provided by looking at a range of evidence. It is important to corroborate this evidence and not to reach a conclusion based on one single piece of data or evidence
- ii. It is important to note that this list does not constitute a monitoring programme and that school leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing when planning evaluation activities. Some of the activities include: -
 - a) Analysing achievement/assessment data – at individual pupil and teacher level as well as at subject and whole school level
 - b) Observing lessons, learning walks etc.
 - c) Work scrutiny including assessments
 - d) Discussions with teachers and subject leaders
 - e) Talking to pupils
 - f) Day to day supervision
 - g) Behaviour/pastoral records
 - h) Subject trackers
 - i) Subject curriculum planning documents
 - j) Formative assessment feedback
 - k) Comments from parents and carers
 - l) External reviews and reports such as those provided by DFE, OFSTED etc.

7.4 Governors monitor the overall effectiveness through the Curriculum & Standards Committee which meets three times a year. Governors also visit subjects in school to see first-hand how the curriculum is being delivered.

8. Accountability and reporting

8.1 Communication of the curriculum

The school will make available curriculum overviews and other information to parents and carers in line with government and regulations and in line with the principles of transparency and openness. Much of this will be available via the school's website.

The school will provide information and evidence regarding the curriculum and standards of achievement to all necessary organisations and bodies.

8.2 Reporting to parents and carers

Parents and carers will receive regular reports and information on the progress of their child. This includes both paper reports as well as opportunities to discuss issues with members of staff