



Backwell School's Approach to the Curriculum

At Backwell School our curriculum intent is that all pupils will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to play their part in society and have fulfilled and successful lives. We want pupils to enjoy their time at school and have opportunities to pursue their interests and ambitions inside and outside of the classroom.

We share the strategic aim of the other Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP) schools to provide an **excellent curriculum**.

An excellent curriculum is one that includes:

1. **Clarity about knowledge content** selected – what it is and why it is there.
2. Organised by **subject domain** because it is the best for learning and progress.
3. Understanding that **skill is the practised and fluent application of knowledge** – skills are not acquired 'naturally' in the absence of knowledge.
4. The important of **sequencing** – foundation knowledge is given special attention so that there is sufficient knowledge for the next stage of learning.
5. What we teach is **inherently interesting** so that learning is the primary motivator.
6. **Clarity about purpose** of tasks and activities: to practice and embed new knowledge in long term memory, enabling knowledge to be integrated and applied with increasing fluency and independence.
7. **The curriculum is the progression model** – progress in learning does not happen outside a carefully sequenced curriculum.

At Backwell School we intend our curriculum to:

- Help all pupils develop the knowledge and skills necessary to play their part in society and live fulfilled and successful lives.
- Allow all pupils to follow a broad curriculum for as long as possible within a three-year Key Stage 3 and two-year Key Stage 4 model.
- At the end of Year 11 (and Year 13) pupils to have the qualifications, knowledge and skills to enable progression to the next stage of their education which is appropriate to their needs.

- Be aspirational for all our pupils with the majority following a curriculum with a strong academic core.
- Respect the individuality of different subjects by allowing them to deliver a curriculum of deliberately selected content taught in a sequence which aids understanding and supports progress.
- Provide varied, interesting and engaging opportunities outside of classrooms to enable pupils to secure 'cultural capital' regardless of their background.
- Support students to learn how to be healthy, kind, ambitious and responsible adults who contribute positively to society.

This curriculum intent will be implemented in the following ways:

- Each curriculum area will have a clear rationale for their subject domain(s)
- Curriculum areas are autonomous in producing a curriculum plan for each year group in which they will select the most powerful knowledge for pupils to learn.
- The curriculum will be deliberately sequenced to enable pupils to progress in terms of what they know and what they can do. This will facilitate accurate reporting to parents and carers.
- Meaningful assessment routines are built in to measure pupil knowledge and understanding and to provide feedback.
- Knowledge retrieval practice is incorporated into plans to ensure that what is learned is also remembered.
- A knowledge rich pedagogical approach delivers the curriculum whereby teachers:
 - Are aware of common misconceptions and ways to help pupils overcome these.
 - Emphasise the most powerful knowledge in a bold and exciting way.
 - Have the subject knowledge and expertise to make diversions within lessons allowing pupils to understand their learning in a wider context.
 - Routinely check for understanding and make adjustments within lessons accordingly.
- The extra-curricular offer is made explicit to all pupils to promote an inclusive approach.

The impact of the curriculum is evaluated by:

- Gauging how well pupils are learning the curriculum through:
 - Robust self-evaluation of teaching and learning
 - Analysis of pupil outcomes
 - Pupil voice
 - Analysis of pupil destinations to understand the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing pupils and students for the next stage of their life

Evaluating the extent to which it positively impacts on the educational experience of different pupil groups particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Organisation of the Curriculum

Key Stage 3 is taught from Years 7 - 9 with the exception of science who begin the GCSE syllabus during Year 9. The vast majority of subjects are taught in mixed ability groups with the exception of maths.

All pupils at Key Stage 3 study a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish), some study a second foreign language (German) from Year 8 onwards.

Statutory RSE and PSHE topics are delivered in key stage 3 Philosophy and Religion lessons as well as through the tutor led personal development programme

The allocation of teaching periods per two week cycle for every subject is shown below:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	7	7	7
Maths	7	7	7
Science	7	7	8
Single linguists	6	7	6
Double linguists	n/a	9	8
Art	4	4	4
Design Technology	4	4	4
Performing Arts	3	3	3
Geography	4	4	4
History	4	4	4
Computing	2	0* or 2	0* or 2
Music	3	3	3
Philosophy and Religion (inc PSHE)	4	4	4
PE	4	4	4

*Pupils who study two languages (dual linguists) do not have computing lessons in Years 8-9.

Pupils studying one language in Years 8-9 have two lessons of computing a fortnight.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 the following courses are compulsory for all pupils:

- Maths
- English language and English literature
- Combined science or separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- History or Geography
- Core PE (non-examined)

- Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education – SMSC (non-examined) This includes the PSHE and RSE curriculum.

Pupils have as much freedom as possible to choose the courses they want to study, within a process that provides strong and directed information and guidance around subject options. Students are encouraged to pursue a ‘broad and balanced’ curriculum, and the subjects required for the English Baccalaureate are made explicit; pupils are expected to pursue a language at Key Stage 4 unless senior staff specifically guide them otherwise.

At Backwell we are aspirational for all our pupils and believe that GCSE courses are highly suited to the vast majority. Occasionally it is necessary to support pupils with specific needs by designing a more bespoke curriculum which takes into account their starting point and future goals. This is set alongside parents and carers with advice from school leaders.

The Sixth Form

At Key Stage 5, students choose either four or, in most cases, three two-year Level 3 courses. These courses are mainly A Levels but there are also vocational courses on offer in Business, Performing Arts, Health and Social Care and Applied Science. Those students taking four subjects will have particularly high prior attainment at GCSE level. Those taking three courses will take an additional qualification at the end of Year 12: for most students this will be the Extended Project Qualification or Core Maths, however it is still possible to sit an AS examination in a small number of subjects. Students who are yet to reach the required threshold in GCSE Mathematics and English (Language) will join res-sit classes and be re-entered for the examination(s) in November and June until they achieve a standard pass – currently this is a grade 4.

The wider curriculum

The curriculum taught at Backwell School ensures that all pupils have the time to develop wider knowledge, gain opportunities and skills which will be needed later in life. The academic curriculum is therefore underpinned by the following:

- A tutor and assembly programme, which supports the delivery of PSHE.
- At Key Stage 4 a lesson per fortnight where pupils will be taught about social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues (SMSC) including the RSE curriculum.
- A careers offer which allows pupils and students at all stages of their time at Backwell to receive impartial advice and guidance to ensure they are successful at progressing to the next stage.
- An enrichment week which offers the opportunity at KS3 for pupils to pursue interests both in and out of school.
- A week-long work experience for all Year 10 pupils.
- A hugely popular and comprehensive extra-curricular programme enabling pupils to take part in:
 - Sports
 - Drama and dance
 - Music

- Photography
Creative writing
- Computing
- Outdoor pursuits
- Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme at bronze, silver and gold level
- The extra-curricular provision is monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils but particularly those with SEN and those who are in receipt of the Pupil Premium

British values in the curriculum

Throughout their time at Backwell School, British values will be taught and revisited during many different subjects focusing upon:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

The assembly programme and tutor time Personal Development programme reinforces and adds to the issues learned within lessons.