



SHAPWICK SCHOOL

CURRICULUM
POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** A student entering Shapwick School will spend their adult life living in the Twenty-first century. It is almost impossible for us to predict accurately the lifestyle, which will be enjoyed by those living in the middle of the next century or indeed their precise needs in terms of the knowledge, and skills that will be required. What is important is that the learning of today provides each individual with the opportunity to develop the confidence, flexibility and values to meet the challenges of the world tomorrow. However, it is reasonable to assume that society, families and individuals will continue to demand automaticity in the skills of literacy and numeracy. IT may well ameliorate the specific weaknesses shown by our students and enhance their strengths.
- 1.2** Learning takes place throughout life in all contexts including the home, the peer group, work and the community as well as in the school. The curriculum, which is a term, used to describe all the learning experiences provided at Shapwick School needs to build upon the knowledge and experiences of each individual student in ways which complement learning in these wider arenas. The responsibility placed on teachers is therefore to work in partnership with the home, outside professionals, employers and the wider community. Set in this context, this policy is designed to provide a framework for designing and implementing a curriculum which is relevant to an individual's needs, abilities and disabilities and which helps each student to achieve their full potential within the community. It also serves as a framework for Directors, the Headmaster and teaching staff to monitor and evaluate the curriculum.
- 1.3** The curriculum includes: the formal curriculum – the knowledge, concepts, skills, values and attitudes included in subjects; the informal curriculum – the extracurricular activities which enhance the formal curriculum; and the hidden curriculum – the values and attitudes communicated to students through the practices of our school.
- 1.4** The curriculum may also be described in terms of being: a planned curriculum – that designed by the school; a delivered curriculum – that delivered by the teacher; and a received curriculum – that experienced by the student.
- 1.5** The curriculum at Shapwick School sets out to meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum as laid down in the Education Act 1993, the Education Act 1996 and the Education Act 1997.

2. AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM

The guidance, both statutory and non statutory of the DfE forms a backcloth against which the aims of the school's curriculum are drawn. Most importantly, they are designed to reflect the needs of our students. The aim of the curriculum at Shapwick School is detailed in the policy document entitled 'Aims and Objectives'.

3. PRINCIPLES OF THE CURRICULUM

3.1 Students at Shapwick School have an entitlement to experience a curriculum that embodies the principles of access, breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, coherence, continuity, progression, participation and equality of opportunity.

- **Access**

Our students have an entitlement to access the curriculum and therefore it is our responsibility to ensure that the student's specific learning difficulties do not prevent access.

- **Breadth**

The curriculum should bring all students into contact with the nine areas of learning and experience and give access to a broad range of knowledge, concepts, skills and values and attitudes. It should also encompass a wide variety of learning activities and resources. Breadth is also necessary within an area and within its components.

- **Balance**

All students whatever their abilities and disabilities are entitled to a curriculum that is balanced, providing there is no conflict between exposure to a Modern Foreign Language and a student's specific learning needs. The subjects of the National Curriculum go a long way to ensuring this, but the nine areas of learning and experience provide a useful cross check. There should also be balance in terms of teaching strategies and learning activities. Learning should also take place in a range of environments that extend beyond the classroom. Balance needs to be sought in the manner in which learners are assessed. A range of different assessment procedures should be employed.

- **Relevance**

The curriculum and the styles of teaching and learning used at the Prep School and Shapwick should be, and be seen by students to be, relevant to their needs in the context of the society in which they live and will live in the future. Central to the notion of relevance is that what is learned should be worthwhile, and that learners should be engaged wherever possible in active learning.

- **Differentiation**

What is taught and how it is presented needs to be matched to learners' individual abilities and aptitudes. Some students are exceptionally able, but have profound specific learning difficulties. Some are highly motivated, others have little incentive to learn because of past educational experiences. It is of the greatest importance to stimulate and challenge all learners and to maintain high expectations of their performance. Careful recording of achievement along with regular discussion of future targets and programmes of study with students will do much to assist this process.

- **Coherence**

It is essential that the curriculum is seen as a coherent whole by the learner and that its various components integrate closely together. Teachers of different subjects need to work closely with each other to ensure effective planning, delivery of the whole curriculum. Liaison between teachers and subject co-ordinators of years 7,8 and 9 is also essential to ensure coherence within Key Stage 3. Working together will help ensure that effective links are

made between the different components and that these links are clear to the learner. In this way knowledge and concepts from one area can be used to illustrate and reinforce other areas and the development of skills and personal qualities become the joint responsibility of all teachers.

- **Continuity and Progression**

It is essential that students add progressively to learning and that discontinuities and repetition are avoided. This applies particularly at the point of transfer from year 8 to year 9 but is no less important within the school as students move from year to year and teacher to teacher. In the 13-16 phase the National Curriculum programmes of study will aid curriculum continuity but in addition specific attention will need to be given to the following: the monitoring of student progress, liaison and joint curriculum planning in Shapwick School.

- **Participation**

The principle of participation should be explicit in the curriculum. Students' learning is most effective when they are actively involved and participate fully in the learning process. Furthermore, parents, Directors, staff and the community should be encouraged to participate in a partnership with staff to determine the nature and form of the curriculum.

- **Equal Opportunity**

All students should be valued equally and have an equal opportunity to access and thus experience positively an entitlement curriculum regardless of gender, ability/disability, religion, race, background or physical ability.

4. AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

4.1 The areas of learning and experience listed and described below are widely accepted as those that should feature in a rounded education. The curriculum at Shapwick should involve students, at relevant ages, in each of the nine areas as well as our specialist courses. These are not suggested as discrete elements to be taught separately and in isolation from one another. Nor are they equated with particular subjects, although inevitably individual subjects contribute more to some areas than others. The cross-curricular elements are a feature of all the areas but because of the nature of the subject such work will differ from area to area. Significantly they also act as a benchmark against which the curriculum of individual students should be evaluated.

- **Aesthetic and Creative**

This area is concerned with the capacity to respond emotionally and intellectually to sensory experience; the awareness of degrees of quality; and the appreciation of beauty and fitness for purpose. It involves the exploration and understanding of feeling and the processes of making, composing and inventing. Aesthetic and creative experience may occur in any part of the curriculum, but some subjects contribute particularly to the development of the students' aesthetic awareness and understanding because they call for personal, imaginative, affective and often practical responses to sensory experience. Art, some aspects of Technology, Music, Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts, in particular, promote and development of the imagination and the creative use of media and materials.

- **Human and Social**

This area is concerned with people and how they live, with their relationship with each other and with their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. Students need to understand that human beings, in shaping their world, making their living, planning their futures, developing forms of government and law, are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by ideas and beliefs, by their past, by the places and conditions in which they live and by the ways they need to relate to each other.

- **Linguistic and Literacy**

This area is concerned with increasing our students' command of language in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In part this will be achieved through the use of language for a variety of purposes in different contexts, in part through the specific study of language and literature. This is the 'raison d'être' of our School and our students will receive support in specialist literacy/numeracy lessons as well as all areas of the curriculum detailed previously. It is argued by Educationists that experience of language is extended and the linguistic awareness increased by knowledge of a second language. This is not accepted here for most of our students for whom the primary aim must be to develop fluency in their own language. However, there must be opportunities for those with the ability and interest to develop their skills in a second language. The importance of received and expressed language should not be understated here given that most of our students are not competent writers.

- **Mathematical**

This area is concerned with the search for patterns and relationships in number and space through the development and application of mathematical knowledge and skills. The mathematical approach provides a powerful, concise and unambiguous means to investigate, analyse and solve practical and theoretical problems, to construct predictive models and communicate information and ideas. Dyslexics are classically weak at number crunching, which is probably a more critical process in mathematics than spelling is in writing. We recognise that our students may well be fundamentally good mathematicians when their arithmetic difficulties are circumnavigated.

- **Moral**

The community and Shapwick School, like family life, provides a context for moral learning and experience in a number of ways. First, it brings together moral actions and the principles that underlie them. If students are to understand concepts such as fairness and justice, they must see those concepts exemplified by the adults with whom they deal. Second, it provides experiences which help to form and test moral convictions and to modify attitudes. In addition to this practical moral learning, however, is the necessity for students to begin the process of reasoning about morality. There is a place in school for direct moral teaching, but students must be helped to reason about values if they are to make sound moral judgements.

- **Physical**

For practical purposes, it is useful to identify three strands in the physical area of learning and experience. First, there are those activities that normally

belong to the subjects of physical education and dance. They aim to develop control, co-ordination and mobility and to provide for the development of knowledge, understanding and attitudes. Second, there are the manipulative and motor skills that need to be applied in many areas of the curriculum and life. Third, students should know how the human body works, be helped to develop a healthy attitude towards it and to adopt an active way of life to keep in good condition.

- **Scientific**

The scientific area of learning and experience is concerned with increasing students' knowledge and understanding of the natural world and the world as modified by people, and with developing skills and competencies associated with science as a process of enquiry. These include observing, selecting from the observations whatever is important, formulating hypotheses, planning and conducting experiments, communicating in oral and symbolic forms and applying the knowledge and understanding gained to new situations.

- **Spiritual**

This area of learning and experience points at its most general to feelings and convictions about the significance of human life and the world as a whole which students may experience within themselves and meet second hand in their study of other people. Religious Education and collective worship, which have a statutory place in the curriculum, are contained within this area but are not wholly responsible for it. Sometimes it may be awe at the natural world or an aesthetic rather than an explicitly religious experience which induces this insight, or sense of direction.

- **Technological**

This area is concerned with the creation of artefacts, systems and environments in response to human needs and aspirations within social, political, ergonomic, ethical and aesthetic constraints. The technological process involves the generation of ideas, the application of design and the use of materials, tools and systems. At the heart of people's involvement with technology lies the constant search for ways and means to extend and enhance our powers to control events and order our environment. Technology itself enables work to be carried out more efficiently and effectively; to purchase more, better and cheaper products; and to carry out operations which human physical and mental capacities could not do unaided by the extension and refinements technology brings to those human capacities.

5. **ELEMENTS OF LEARNING**

The different forms of curriculum content make up the elements of learning. These include knowledge, concepts, skills, values and attitudes. They are used to develop the aims of the curriculum into specific objectives and to select content that will enable these objectives to be achieved in practice and assessed with some precision. For the purpose of planning the curriculum it is useful to regard these elements as distinct from the areas of learning and experience, even though the elements are acquired in the context of the areas and are therefore inseparable from them.

- **Knowledge**
Knowledge is the information element of the curriculum content that is selected to enable students to develop an understanding of concepts, to become proficient in a range of skills and to acquire a set of attitudes and values.
- **Concepts**
Concepts are ideas which are used to classify, organise and understand knowledge. They are generalisations which are arrived at by identifying common features from a number of examples.
- **Skills**
A skill is a capacity or competence to perform an intellectual or practical task. The acquisition and practice of a skill depends on the possession or appropriate knowledge and the understanding of appropriate concepts.
- **Values and Attitudes**
Values are basic beliefs held by individuals about the ways in which people and societies should behave. Values determine attitudes taken by individuals when confronted with events.

6. CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

6.1 The Basic Curriculum

This comprises the elements of learning which make up the subjects as prescribed by the National Curriculum. Subjects are defined in the Statutory Orders, and in the case of Religious Education by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). The basic curriculum comprises:

English	Geography*
Mathematics	History*
Science	Religious Education
Design and Technology	Art*
Information Technology	Music*
Modern Foreign Language*	Physical Education

Subjects marked by * are non statutory at Key Stage 4.

6.2 Additional Subjects

A balanced curriculum must furnish opportunities for additional subjects, particularly at Key Stage 4. Additional provision offers students the opportunity to build further and to extend knowledge, interests and skills. They must also enable students to begin the transition to a more specialised curriculum. Examples include

- A second modern Foreign Language.
- Additional Science and separate Sciences.
- Additional Mathematics and Statistics.
- Drama
- Film Studies
- Vocational Education

6.3 16-19 Curriculum

The nature of a post 16 curriculum will in many ways be different from that which exists pre 16. This is to a large extent due to the fact that students are free to determine their own curriculum through the subject choices that they make. It is important though that the post 16 curriculum provides all students with access to

- A range of academic, creative and vocational courses
- Opportunities to develop core skills in literacy, numeracy, information technology, problem solving and study skills

6.4 Cross Curricular Elements

These are the ingredients which tie together the broad education of the individuals and augment the basic curriculum. It is possible to identify three aspects that make up the cross curricular elements. These are cross-curricular dimensions, themes and skills.

- **Cross Curricular Dimensions**

A cross-curricular dimension is something which is relevant to all students and should permeate every aspect of the curriculum. Certain elements of learning within a particular dimension may, however, be located quite explicitly in one part of the curriculum. Shapwick School is committed to including the following dimensions in its curriculum:

- Personal and Social Education
- Multi Cultural Education
- Equal Opportunities
- Moral and Spiritual Development
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- **Cross Curricular Skills**

Cross-curricular skills are chiefly transferable, independent of content and can be developed to ensure that they are developed coherently throughout the whole curriculum. Six key skills have been identified and these should be included in the curriculum at Shapwick School. Much in the future is uncertain; what is beyond dispute is that these skills, together with flexibility and adaptability will be at a premium.

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Study
- Problem solving
- Personal and Social
- Information Technology

- **Cross Curricular Themes**

Cross-curricular themes have a strong component of knowledge and understanding and need to be identified, though not necessarily taught, separately since they are not thoroughly developed in the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Five themes have been identified and should form part of the curriculum at Shapwick School.

- Economic and Industrial Understanding
- Careers Education and Guidance
- Health Education
- Education for Citizenship
- Environmental Education

6.5 Collective Worship

Collective worship is an opportunity for students to come together and participate in religious praise and thanksgiving. It forms part of the curriculum entitlement for all students. Collective worship should reflect and represent the broad spectrum of Christian belief and practice, drawing in particular on Anglican traditions. At times it should also offer opportunities of sharing the faith of others. Worship should, at all times, aim to be inclusive, enabling everyone to contribute and participate, each in his/her own way. The assembly and worship also have a crucial role in establishing the central values and ethos of the school community. This will be so whether such gatherings are of the whole school or a section of it.

7. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities offer a significant contribution to the whole curriculum in that they enhance provision and provide students with opportunities to involve themselves in activities which they might not normally experience. They take place outside the class or lesson time and extend beyond the formal school day. Their inclusion in the description of the curriculum reinforces their importance and emphasises the need to incorporate them systematically into the whole. Shapwick School is committed to maintaining and developing a wide range of extra curricular provision for all its students. Shapwick School seeks to provide opportunities for students to participate in the following extra-curricular activities;

Outdoor Education	Residential Education
Foreign Visits	Music
Sports Activities	Drama
Social Events	Clubs
Fundraising Activities	Theatre Trips

8. OVERLAP BETWEEN SUBJECTS

In the context of the National Curriculum there is considerable evidence of overlap between the Programmes of Study. To alleviate duplication and strengthen links between subjects it is important that the areas of overlap are identified and taken into account when planning and delivering the curriculum. Curriculum co-ordinators should decide whether overlap between subjects reinforces and consolidates learning; whether it requires a more co-ordinated approach to provide consistency; or whether it is no more than unnecessary duplication.

9. WELFARE AND GUIDANCE

All students have an entitlement to learn in a caring and supportive environment. The provision of good welfare and guidance is central to this and should form an integral part of the whole curriculum. Effective welfare and guidance is based on

- The needs and progress of an individual being identified and monitored by a tutor who has the confidence of the student, and to whom there is ready and regular access.
- Clear procedures for dealing with welfare matters including child protection issues.
- A carefully structured and co-ordinated guidance programme which include PCHSE and ensure that students are counselled wisely, particularly at points of transition.
- An effective Home/School partnership which keeps parents regularly informed about their child's education.
- Links with specialist external agencies.

10. EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Shapwick School is committed to ensuring high quality teaching for all students. Effective teaching takes place when:

- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and convey their enthusiasm to the students
- Lessons are well planned
- Objectives are shared and understood by students at the start of the lesson
- Teachers are confident of their own subject knowledge and skills
- Lessons have suitable content
- Activities are well chosen to promote learning of that content
- Teaching methods circumvent specific learning difficulties, engage, motivate and challenge all students, enabling them to progress at a suitable pace, and to be aware of their achievements and progress.

11. EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Effective learning depends as much upon how and in what context students learn, as on what they learn. Students at Shapwick School are entitled to learning experiences which;

- Engage them in the process of enquiry
- Recognise the value of the students own experience
- Reflect individual needs and abilities/disabilities
- Recognise individual choice and initiative
- Involve students in a variety of purposeful activities
- Involve a variety of organisational arrangements including working as individuals, small groups and as a class
- Take place in an environment conducive to learning where there is order, purposeful structure, clear and high expectations of behaviour and attitude, and a relationship between teacher and students which is relaxed

but which make appropriate demands which are challenging and expect active involvement

- Involve techniques and strategies in a variety of contexts such as in the classroom, school, community and residential

12. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Students are entitled to a learning environment which is conducive to effective learning. The learning environment at Shapwick School should provide:

- Classrooms which are well maintained and kept clean and tidy
- Displays which are well presented and include students' work
- Access to specialist facilities and equipment appropriate to the curriculum
- Adequate space in which students can work
- A healthy and safe place in which to learn

13. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a fundamental and integral aspect of the curriculum. It is central to the teaching and learning process since its prime purpose is to improve students' performance. Although some assessment may take place at the end of a course, it should be a continuous process which takes place throughout the curriculum. Effective assessment should take into account all of the following:

- Assessment should recognise what the students know and can do
- Assessment opportunities should be provided as an integral part of the planning of learning
- Assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses should inform lesson planning
- Students need to know what they are expected to do. The criteria by which they will be assessed should be shared with them
- A range of assessment methods should be used to measure progress in different kinds of learning experiences
- The outcomes of assessment should be recorded in a way which enables student progress to be monitored within subjects. Across the curriculum and over time
- Reports based on assessments should make clear what has been achieved, provide students with an opportunity to assess their own performance and set targets for learning
- Assessment should not dominate or constrict the curriculum

14. EVALUATION

The process of evaluation is central to the provision of a high quality education for all students. The curriculum should be subject to continuous review both in terms of what is planned and delivered and against the key principles of breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, coherence, continuity, progression, participation and equality of opportunity. The need to ensure that the curriculum complies with statutory requirements and that it

reflects the school's aims is also important. A programme of evaluation needs to:

- Be formative and summative
- Involve a range of techniques
- Involve teachers, students, parents, governors and external bodies
- Make judgements on the basis of sound evidence

15. SUMMARY

It is the Directors' view that all students are entitled to become enabled to access a planned curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant, differentiated, coherent, and participative and which has continuity and progression. The curriculum policy has sought to describe the nature of this entitlement for all students at Shapwick School and provide a clear framework for the organisation of a curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed on or before 01/09/12