



**A C A D E M Y  
G R E A T B A R R**

# Curriculum Policy

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<b>Ratified by:</b>	Local Governing Body
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## **Introduction**

Q3 Academy Great Barr is committed to providing an engaging, challenging, supportive and knowledge rich curriculum so that students experience wide and varied opportunities, both inside and out of the classroom. This will support their prior learning and help them to develop Cultural Capital in all its forms. The engagement of our parents/carers is a fundamental part of our curriculum offer and supports increased collaboration and understanding.

A broad, balanced, and personalised experience is provided for all students, allowing access to the EBacc. subjects along with a wide selection of Foundation subjects. The Academy is working towards the Government target that by summer 2025, 90% of students taking their examinations will be studying the EBacc. Curriculum. However, each year we will identify the needs of its individual cohort to assess the suitability for this as part of the Key Stage 4 Pathways process at the end of Key Stage 3.

We recognise the importance of good literacy and numeracy and the impact this has on our students' opportunities for the future. Reading programmes are in place for all students at Key Stage 3 to develop literacy skills and further enhance literacy at Key Stage 4.

The well-being of all our students is a key priority and this is embedded throughout, including during RSHE, PSHE, British Values, Careers, and SMSC.

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#), and the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#) which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

## **Policy Statement**

The curriculum at Q3 Academy Great Barr is underpinned by the values that we hold as an institution. The curriculum will challenge, support and inspire all students in order to achieve appropriate and individualised progression beyond the Academy, preparing them for their future lives.

We understand the importance of engaging parents/carers with their children's learning and therefore opportunities for home/Academy interaction will be integrated to build relationships, particularly at Key Stage 3.

The curriculum will be well-sequenced and challenging to ensure that all students, regardless of any previous or current disadvantage, are given every opportunity to be successful, following the Mercian Trust ethos:

*Life to the full in pursuit of what is good, right, and true.*

The curriculum should support students to:

- ✓ Achieve excellence, making excellent progress from their starting points;
- ✓ Explore a range of subject areas and apply these in challenging situations;
- ✓ Accept challenge and develop strategies to be successful in challenge;
- ✓ Develop a life-long love of literacy and reading;
- ✓ Use cross-curricular literacy, numeracy and computing skills fluently;
- ✓ Understand their contribution to the wider World and how the World around them is changing;
- ✓ Understand how to maintain their own, and others', physical and mental wellbeing;
- ✓ Be creative and develop their own ideas and thinking;
- ✓ Understand their responsibility within the Fundamental British Values and how to be good citizens, particularly demonstrating mutual respect and tolerance for others;
- ✓ Understand and value history, heritage and traditions of communities;
- ✓ Have access to appropriate careers and progression advice to ensure that they continue to be successful after they leave Q3 Academy Great Barr;
- ✓ Be Ready, Respectful, and Responsible for themselves and others around them.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- ✓ A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets;
- ✓ The Academy is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, Mathematics, Science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) Religious Education, and enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the requirements of the funding agreement;
- ✓ Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEND) and/or disabilities;
- ✓ All courses provided for students below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-Levels, are approved by the secretary of state;
- ✓ The Academy implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements;
- ✓ It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum;
- ✓ It fulfils its role in processes to disapply students from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals;
- ✓ Students from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced;
- ✓ The curriculum meets the needs of the Equality Act, ensuring that all students are included within the curriculum provided.

### **Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher for Quality of Education**

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- ✓ All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the Academy chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the Academy and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met;
- ✓ The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board;
- ✓ Where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum;
- ✓ They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate;
- ✓ The Academy's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements;
- ✓ The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum;
- ✓ The governing board is advised on Academy-wide targets in order to make informed decisions;
- ✓ Proper provision is in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND.

### **Other staff**

Other staff will ensure that the Academy curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

## Curriculum Structure

The Academy follows a two-week timetable structure to allow for a more substantial exposure to the creative curriculum at Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9). Subject areas produce their own calendar of assessment and curriculum delivery to fit into half-terms, terms or assessment cycles as appropriate for their needs. The Academy follows the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9, based on subject specific levels of 'Stage Related Expectation'.

### Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8)

<b>World Subjects</b> (cross curricular literacy focus)	
English (including 1 Accelerated Reading Lesson)	7 hours per fortnight
French*	4 hours per fortnight
History	4 hours per fortnight
Geography	4 hours per fortnight
Religious Studies (RS)	2 hours per fortnight
<b>STEM Subjects</b> (cross curricular numeracy focus)	
Mathematics and Computing	8 hours per fortnight
Science	7 hours per fortnight
<b>Wellbeing Subjects</b> (mental and physical wellbeing focus)	
Wellbeing Active (Physical Education)	4 hours per fortnight
RSHE, PSHEE, Citizenship and Careers	2 hours per fortnight
<b>Creative Curriculum</b>	
Art	Each receives 2 hours per fortnight, taught in one, two hour block.
Performing Arts (Drama)	
Enterprise (DT and Business)	
Performing Arts (Music)	

### Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

<b>World Subjects</b> (cross curricular literacy focus)	
English	6 hours per fortnight
French*	4 hours per fortnight
History	4 hours per week
Geography	4 hours per fortnight
Religious Studies	2 hours per fortnight
<b>STEM Subjects</b> (cross curricular numeracy focus)	
Mathematics and Computing	7 hours per fortnight
Science	7 hours per fortnight
<b>Wellbeing Subjects</b> (mental and physical wellbeing focus)	
Wellbeing Active (Physical Education)	4 hours per fortnight
RSHE, PSHEE, Citizenship and Careers	2 hours per fortnight
<b>Creative Curriculum</b>	
Art	Each receives 2 hours per fortnight, taught in one, two hour block.
Performing Arts (Drama)	
Enterprise (DT and Business)	
Food	
Performing Arts (Music)	

\* 2 hours per fortnight to allow for additional Literacy support for students in B4.

During Year 9, students complete the Pathways process to identify subjects for Key Stage 4. This is a rigorous process which involves checks of suitability and identifications of correct Pathways to best meet the needs of individual students. Recommendations are made to students based on prior data but students are not restricted by these.

**Key Stage 4 (Year 10)**

English Literature and Language	4 hours per week
Mathematics	4 hours per week
Science (Double Award)	4 hours per week
Wellbeing PE	2 hours per week
Humanities Choice (History or Geography)	5 hours per fortnight
Option P	5 hours per fortnight
Option Q	5 hours per fortnight
Option R	5 hours per fortnight
RSHE, PSHEE, Citizenship, and Careers with RS	1 hour per week

**Key Stage 4 (Year 11)**

English Literature and Language	4 hours per week
Mathematics	4 hours per week
Science (Double Award)	4 hours per week
Wellbeing PE	1 hour per week
Humanities Choice (History or Geography)	3 hours per week
Option P	3 hours per week
Option Q	3 hours per week
Option R	3 hours per week
RSHE, PSHEE, Citizenship, and Careers with RS	Tutor Time and Collapsed Days

**Key Stage 5 (Year 12)**

Sixth Form students study three subjects (unless a student is studying Further Mathematics). Suitability of choices is assessed within the first month of Year 12. Entry criteria for subjects are evaluated each year based on Key Stage 4 and 5 outcomes.

Option 1	4 hours per week
Option 2	4 hours per week
Option 3	4 hours per week
Option 4 (if studying Further Mathematics)	4 hours per week
Wellbeing PE	1 hour per week
ASPIRE	1 hour per week
Inspire: PSHEE, RSHE, Careers, Citizenship, and RS	1 hour per week
Private Study – in the Academy	10 (or 6) hours per week

**Key Stage 5 (Year 13)**

Option 1	5 hours per week
Option 2	5 hours per week
Option 3	5 hours per week
Option 4 (if studying Further Mathematics)	5 hours per week
Private Study – in the Academy	10 (or 5) hours per week

## **Disapplication**

In accordance with the law, the Academy has the right to respond to individual needs by modifying the National Curriculum programmes, or disapplying the National Curriculum for the duration of Key Stage 4 to:

- ✓ Allow students to participate in extended work-related learning;
- ✓ Allow a student with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum area;
- ✓ Allow a student making significantly less progress than other students of his/her age to consolidate his/her learning and progress across the curriculum.

Decisions relating to the above will only be made after discussion with both the students and parent/carer.

## **Provision and Grouping**

We provide a curriculum which meets the needs of, and is accessible to, all students. The curriculum has been planned particularly around support and modelling for students of all needs including those who are identified as High Potential, Lower Prior Attaining, SEND, EAL, Disadvantaged, or those at risk of falling from mainstream education.

## **Staffing and Resource**

Q3 Academy Great Barr will not run Key Stage 4 or 5 courses which cannot be staffed by qualified professionals or taught in specialist areas. All curriculum areas are staffed to meet the requirements of 8 groups per year group (Years 7-11) and 4 groups per year group (Years 12 and 13). In the small case where a member of teaching staff is required to teach outside of their specialism, appropriate CPD and support will be put in place to ensure students are not impacted by this staffing decision.

As much as possible students will be taught by one teacher per subject. Where groups require more than one member of staff for timetabling reasons, the number of staff will be kept to a minimum. The curriculum plans are adapted to meet the best needs of more than one teacher by dividing the content up appropriately.

## **Grouping of Students**

At Q3 Academy Great Barr, students in Years 7-11 are organised into eight groups per year, divided into two halves of the year. These two halves are called 'G' (Great) and 'B' (Barr).

Students are largely in mixed ability groups at Key Stage 3 and set in some subjects as they enter Key Stage 4.

**Key Stage 3:** Data is reviewed on entry to Year 7 to identify the best 'mixed ability' structure for the cohort. Students who enter working significantly above Stage Related Expectation are grouped together in one or two groups (as required). Similarly students who entering working significantly below (see Inclusion and Special Education Needs) are also grouped together. Remaining students who enter working at, are grouped in five or six groups of mixed ability, known as the 'mixed middle'. This is based on research demonstrating that mixed ability teaching produces better outcomes for students than completely set with opportunity for sufficient challenge, support and extension for all.

Groups are arranged in subject areas as follows:

**Literacy Subjects:** English, French, Reading, Humanities – Based on KS2 Reading Score

**STEM Subjects:** Mathematics, Science, Computer Science – Based on KS2 Maths Score

**Creative Curriculum:** Art, DT, Drama, Music – Completely mixed ability.

**Key Stage 3:** Student data (see Assessment) is monitored regularly to identify whether students are in the best group to meet their needs. Students who arrive significantly above ARE should remain grouped as such, unless appropriate circumstances are identified which indicate this would not be in a student's best interest. Students in 'mixed middle' groups may demonstrate the ability to move into a group with students who entered above ARE. Similarly, students who entered significantly below will be moved into a group of mixed ability students when they meet the expectation.

**Key Stage 4:** Students are grouped for English, Mathematics and Science based on their expected Key Stage 4 targets with variation to meet specific need. Students should not move down into groups of lower targeted students unless there are special circumstances. However, students may move up into groups of higher target students if they prove capable during interim assessment. Option subjects at Key Stage 4 are largely mixed ability with the exception of subjects, such as History and Geography who are able to apply an element of setting due to the number of groups taught.

**Key Stage 5:** As group sizes at Key Stage 5 are small (3 – 15 students), mixed ability is appropriate.

In order to best support the needs of our students, we categorise students into four provisions:

- **Provision 1:** Quality First Teaching in lessons;
- **Provision 2:** Quality First Teaching in lessons with support from the SEND Department; This might include additional sessions within the SEND department or support from an Additional Adult within lesson time;
- **Provision 3:** Quality First Teaching in a smaller group intended for those who arrive significantly below expectation at Key Stage 2. Students are given additional time for English and Reading, reducing the amount of time given to a foreign language. This is supported significantly by the SEND department and particularly prominent when an EHCP is in place;
- **Provision 4:** Based in 'The Zone', this is designed for those students who are at risk of falling out of mainstream education or returning from a period of exclusion. Students who arrive mid-year may also spend extended time here to support their transition. Students may be placed here full or part time.

Within Provisions 1 and 2, students are grouped for subjects so that they are largely mixed ability at Key Stage 3 (with the exception of one or two groups for the highest prior attaining students) and grouped at Key Stage 4 by ability for English, Mathematics and Science. Option subjects are mixed ability at Key Stages 4 and 5.

### **Inclusion and Curriculum for all**

**Special Educational Needs:** Students who are identified as requiring an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) or SEND Support (K) will receive provision as detailed within the EHCP or specific student plan. It is expected that these students should still have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum and attend all subject areas. This may require additional adult support.



Our Learning Base (The Zone) is equipped to support students with additional learning needs with interventions in Literacy (including early phonics), Numeracy (including early mathematics), Social Skills and Life Skills. These interventions are evaluated annually and student data is monitored throughout the year to identify success. The Academy ensures Annual Reviews are completed for students with EHCPs and a cycle of review is place for Students with an additional need (K).

Teaching staff are provided with key information and strategies to support students' needs within the classroom. These are backed up by appropriate CPD to ensure that teaching staff understand their role in the teaching of students with SEND. Within the classroom, a large focus on modelling, supports all students, but is particularly beneficial for students with a SEND.

Students with SENDs' academic data is monitored throughout their time at Q3 Academy to ensure that they are making progress in line with their peers. When required, additional interventions may be put in place, including the use of our Independent Learning Club, to support their progress. Parents/carers are kept up to date with any additional interventions which take place and progress which is made. For further information, please see our SEND Policy.

**Lower Prior Attainers:** Students who arrive in Year 7 significantly below national expectation (usually an average point score < 90) are grouped in a Nurture group (known as Provision 3). This group are taught by subject specialists but in addition receive consistent support from a Learning Support Assistant (LSA). Curriculum plans are adapted for these students to support their learning towards meeting expected age-related standards. Students study two hours of French per fortnight, rather than four, in order to provide additional time for literacy and reading. Students are not limited by being placed in this group and data is reviewed throughout the year to identify when they are ready to join the 'mixed middle' groups.

At Key Stage 4, an additional supportive Pathway is available for students who continue to work significantly below. This provides the ASDAN course to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills, taught by the SENCo. Students continue to be grouped in smaller teaching groups for English, Mathematics and Science to allow for more individualised support. All students, including those who are Lower Prior Attainers study a Humanities subject at Key Stage 4 and make appropriate choices for options based on recommendations at Key Stage 3.

**Disadvantaged (Pupil Premium):** Students identified as Pupil Premium are not disadvantaged by the curriculum at Q3 Academy Great Barr. The following measures are in place to support improved outcomes for disadvantaged students, within the curriculum:

- ✓ Academic coaches in English and Mathematics;
- ✓ Student profile of appropriate strategies to support personal needs;
- ✓ Inclusion in the full curriculum, unlimited by financial restraints (i.e. food, DT, ...);
- ✓ Funding for wider curriculum experiences and opportunities;
- ✓ Ensuring appropriate representation/distribution of Pupil Premium students when monitoring, including in grouping;
- ✓ Early careers and progression mentoring/support.

**High Prior Attaining Students:** Students entering with an Average Point Score significantly above Age Related Expectation (usually > 110) in Year 7 are identified as the High Prior Attaining students. Whilst we have high expectations for all of our students, teaching to the top, we understand the particular need to challenge these students through appropriate curriculum adaptations. Curriculum plans include detail on how to challenge students related to each area of study and provide opportunity for greater application and analysis related to learning. In addition, the following strategies are in place to support students who are High Prior Attaining:

- ✓ Academic coaches in English and Mathematics;
- ✓ Opportunities for appropriate curriculum enrichment and enhancement, with a particular focus on University opportunity;
- ✓ Appropriate additional work for students to complete out of the classroom.

**EAL:** Students who attend Q3 Academy Great Barr and have a significant need as English as an Additional Language are integrated into the main curriculum as quickly as possible in order to provide exposure to the English Language. Nearly all students who attend Q3 Academy Great Barr, identified as EAL, are fluent English speakers. However, we understand that communication with home may be more challenging and this is taken into account when this is required. Literacy and reading development is incorporated into our curriculum. Therefore, all students are supported in the development of their literacy related to subject specific needs.

For students who enter with significant EAL needs, additional support is made available through Provision 4 to provide opportunities for general language acquirement to support the main curriculum. Other strategies include:

- ✓ Use of language specific dictionaries;
- ✓ Use of digital translators;
- ✓ Buddying of students with the same home language.

**Students at risk:** Students who are at risk of significant underachievement due to Behaviour Social, Emotional, Mental Health or Physical Health issues have been catered for at each Academy through the use of Provision 4. These are utilised on a case-by-case basis and provide opportunity for mentoring and support along with teaching. Additional and early careers mentoring may also be put in place for these students, along with work placed learning which is appropriate for some students. Use of Academic Coaches to provide early subject interventions may also be applied.

Students identified as Looked After are supported through additional funding, through the Virtual School, to support their progression through the mainstream curriculum. Where necessary this funding may be spent on additional tuition to support progress in lessons.

### **Literacy and Reading:**

We understand the importance of developing a life-long love and appreciation of Reading. It is the responsibility of all teachers, across all subject areas to use opportunities to develop literacy and reading where possible. Reading and Literacy opportunities are built into the curriculum through:

- ✓ Dedicated Reading Lessons in Years 7 and 8, based in the Library;
- ✓ A focus on literacy development within all subject areas through exposure to key Tier 2 and Tier 3 terms;
- ✓ A focus on reading development related to subject specific matter through Disciplinary Reading;

- ✓ Tutor Time Class Reading scheme;
- ✓ Reading competitions led within the Library;
- ✓ Development of early phonics as required, supported by the use of Fresh Start;
- ✓ CPD for staff around the development and use of literacy and reading within the classroom.

### **Numeracy:**

Numeracy is developed through the STEM subjects (Mathematics, Science, Computer Science and Technology). These subjects plan curriculum to ensure appropriate sequencing between topics to support students' progression. Furthermore, where possible, these subjects make use of opportunities to develop practical numeracy strategies.

### **Assessment and Reporting**

Progression of students is recorded and reported to parents/carers three times per year but it is expected that subject areas record and monitor students' progression more regularly through department-level tracking systems. Subject areas will produce:

- ✓ Assessment calendars appropriate for the curriculum plan;
- ✓ Levels of Age Related Expectation for Key Stage 3 students, in Years 7-9;
- ✓ Portfolios of work meeting or exceeding Age Related Expectation;
- ✓ Plans of moderation for work, particularly at Key Stage 3.

### **Growth and Wellbeing**

The emotional and physical wellbeing of students is addressed within the curriculum at Q3 Academy Great Barr. Through the subject block "Wellbeing" at Key Stages 3, 4, and 5, students explore age-related topics around mental and physical health including how to stay active. Physical Education is studied by all students until the end of Year 12 through 'Wellbeing Active'.

RSHE, PSHE, Citizenship and Careers are addressed through the Wednesday morning programme 'Wellbeing Inspire' for students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12. Where possible, this is always taught by Personal Tutors who have the best understanding of their students and can therefore support the adaptation to meet any specific needs. Years 11 cover content through collapsed days and tutor time whilst Year 13 cover any additionally required concepts through Tutor Time, having studied the Key Stage 5 curriculum in Year 12. Our Inspire programme includes some aspects of Religious Education to ensure students understand different perspectives on RSHE and PSHE related issues.

We allow for flexibility within our Wellbeing Inspire programme in order to allow opportunity to reflect local and national issues appropriate to our students. Where possible, we make use of external organisations such as Brook, DECCA, and West Midlands Police to provide opportunities for students to hear professional or alternative perspectives.

It is expected that curriculum areas identify opportunities to address issues related to RSHE, PSHE and Citizenship within their curriculum plans which are collated and monitored across the Academy.

For further information, please see our RSHE Policy.

## **SMSC, Character Education and Fundamental British Values**

Our curriculum develops students' character through the delivery of the Fundamental British Values. It is expected that curriculum areas identify opportunities to address issues related to the British Values within their curriculum plans which are collated and monitored across the Academy.

In addition, Character Education is developed across the curriculum through:

- ✓ Picture News during Tutor Time to enable discussion around current events, related to the British Values;
- ✓ Inspire lessons related to changing image and positive self-image;
- ✓ External visitors to raise awareness of current issues at a local level and the impact this has on the law;
- ✓ External visitors to develop self-esteem and self-confidence;
- ✓ The Academy Assembly and Tutor Time Programme;
- ✓ The Tutor Reading Programme;
- ✓ Application of the Behaviour Systems and teaching around students being: Ready, Respectful, and Responsible;
- ✓ Exposure to and opportunity to work with Charitable organisations;
- ✓ Student voice;
- ✓ Exploration of wider issues across the Academy, outside of the classroom.

## **Independent Learning**

We understand the benefits that additional work outside of the classroom can make to students' progress. Therefore, Independent Learning is a key part of our curriculum provision at all Key Stages.

All students will be set Independent Learning weekly, in all subject areas, in relation to their timetable. For Key Stage 3, this will predominately be based around the use of 'Century Tech'.

## **Disability**

Q3 Academy Great Barr believes in the inherent equality of all individuals irrespective of physical or mental ability, and will within the spirit of accessibility, work towards delivering its short, medium and long term objectives.

The curriculum offered within the Academy will ensure that:

- ✓ There is adaptation enough for the needs of all students in mainstream classes, including those who have an EHCP;
- ✓ The use of available resources will meet the individual needs of students with disability in terms of language, physical impairment and those with challenges including conceptual development;
- ✓ At all times there will be demonstrated positive images for students with a disability;
- ✓ The curriculum contains contributions to work and community life by people with a disability.

## **Quality Assurance and Effectiveness of Curriculum**

It is expected that regular Quality Assurance of the curriculum takes. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ✓ Student/Parent/Carer Voice;
- ✓ Staff Voice;
- ✓ Lesson Visits;
- ✓ Curriculum Reviews;
- ✓ Data Review (examination results, interims or suitability assessment).

The following points should be addressed through Quality Assurance and recorded by the appropriate member of staff at the Academy:

- ✓ Suitability of subject uptake at Key Stage 4;
- ✓ Suitability of subject uptake at Key Stage 5;
- ✓ Difference between characteristics in uptake of Key Stage 4 subjects (including disadvantaged students), particularly in EBacc., Separate Sciences and those with 8 Qualifying Subjects;
- ✓ Attendance to events, including by characteristics to target specific groups of parental engagement;
- ✓ Placement in groups at Key Stage 4 (English, Mathematics, and Science);
- ✓ Appropriateness of Curriculum provision within subject areas.