

The Curriculum

The curriculum at The North School is split into three key stages.

Key Stage 3 covers years 7 and 8. The aim of the curriculum in these two year groups is to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills, enhance key learning skills in a range of subjects and ensure all students have the necessary understanding to make progress in their learning. In Year 7, our students follow a rigorous academic and creative curriculum, featuring English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, MFL, Values, Computing, Performing Arts, Creative Arts, Design Technology and Physical Education.

In Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), students have the opportunity to study French and Spanish and can opt to study one or both in KS4 if desired. A small group of students do not study MFL and have extra literacy lessons instead. Students also receive dedicated literacy sessions to develop this core skill within the tutor groups. Design and Technology (D&T) is delivered through a rotation of Food Technology and Design Technology and is delivered by specialist D&T teachers. In Performing Arts, the subject area aims to develop students' confidence and speaking/ listening skills through dance, drama and music which are delivered termly on a carousel basis.

The students are organised into two communities – Essella and Mabledon and each community has three sets. We have a Grammar stream which operates in the Essella community in Year 7 and the Mabledon community in Year 8. This set is formed by the prior attainment data from KS2. In the timetable, Maths, Science and Computing classes are set by Maths data and English, History, Geography, MFL and Values are set by English data. Students have x5 lessons in English, Maths and Science and x2 lessons of Humanities, MFL, Art, PE and DT. In addition, they have x1 lesson each of Values, Computing and Performing Arts. By the end of year 8, students will have chosen option subjects in preparation for their 3 year course which culminates in public examinations at the end of year 11.

All of these subjects have courses which are available for study at GCSE examination level. We then offer a continuous pathway onto a wide choice of courses at post-16, at level 2 and 3 to ensure that all abilities, interests, talents and aspirations are catered for.

Key Stage 4 covers years 9, 10 and 11. Like many schools, we moved to a three year KS4 in 2015/2016 and the students opted for their GCSE subjects. The compulsory subjects in Year 9 are English, Maths, Science, PE and Values. The Grammar and Set 1 students are directed to follow an EBACC Pathway and choose an MFL and an EBACC subject from Geography, History, French, Spanish and Computing. Set 2 and 3 students are directed to choose an EBACC subject and two options. MFL and Humanities subjects also appear in the Options subjects so students in lower set can access an EBACC pathway also. The Options subjects comprise of Art, Design Technology, Health & Social Care, Media, Photography, Psychology, ICT, Animal Care, Music, Performing Arts (Dance/Drama) and Food Technology. In Year 9 students have 5 lessons in English, Maths and Science, x4 lessons of EBACC and option subjects, x1 lesson of Values and x2 lessons of Core PE. There are a mix of L2 academic and vocational /BTEC L2 qualifications.

In addition, we offer some Entry Level and Level 1 Qualifications such as Step Up to English, Entry Level Science, CeFE, Life Skills and Functional Skills in English and Maths for some targeted students who require a different provision.

Key Stage 5 covers years 12 to 14 and is sometimes referred to as The Sixth Form. In these years students can opt to study a range of AS/A2 or BTEC L3 courses which can be continued into Y14 if desired. The school places a high priority on continuing to build students' literacy, numeracy and personal development in these years.

Subjects which can be studied are:

A Levels – Art, Law, Biology, English, Film Studies / Media Studies, Geography, History, Maths, Photography, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Finance Studies Certificate and Applied Science
BTECs - Business Studies, ICT, Health & Social Care, Sport and Sport- Fitness/Leaders

Students who have not yet achieved a grade C in English or Maths are able to follow a Level 2 Business & Retail pathway including GCSE English & Maths, with the aim of achieving these key benchmarks. All students in years 12 and 13 follow a personal, social and health programme which aims to ensure they are fully ready for the next stage in their life.

Teaching takes place in designated and well equipped classrooms,; specialist science laboratories; Art and Technology workshops; the sports hall and gymnasium, the drama studio and music rooms. In addition to our ICT suites, teachers and students make frequent use of our bookable laptop banks to support independent learning. The Library is a modern and flexible space which serves both as a silent study and reading area and as a bookable classroom. Our grounds boast ample playing fields which also serve as recreational outdoor spaces at break and lunch times.

Teachers enter data termly and we track and monitor the students' progress to their end of year and end of course targets. The students have aspirational targets set, based on their KS2 prior attainment data. Teachers provide regular communication to parents and carers through parents evenings and academic monitoring reports sent home. These reports containing information on students' targets, their current working grades, their progress, attitude to learning and homework. The reports also contain information regarding their attendance and make reference to positive or negative behaviour points. The school works closely with home through the pastoral system and the role of Learning Leaders to ensure that academic issues are identified early and appropriate intervention and support can take place. Pastoral Support Managers communicate with parents when required and guide students to demonstrate tolerate and respectful attitudes to peers, staff, the local community and the environment.

All students in each Key Stage are members of a tutor group. The Form Tutor is a first point of contact within the Pastoral system and a source of guidance and support to students. Form tutor time occurs in the middle of the day. In these sessions the students develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding in a range of personal, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and health related issues. The cover cross curricular literacy and numeracy activities and engage in charitable events. Each year group has a weekly assembly following a prepared schedule and form tutors groups also lead assemblies for other year groups. Assemblies often have an aspirational theme or topical, engage external agencies and visiting speakers especially on future outcomes and careers.