

# SCHOOL POLICY



Name	Curriculum Policy
Approved	August 2025
Review	August 2026

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The curriculum at Dubai Heights Academy focuses on the development of the whole child and learning skills for life through a progressive and rigorous roadmap for learning. The Curriculum is adapted from the National Curriculum for England to ensure content and learnt concepts are cross-curricular, meaningful and linked to real life and relevant contexts. Our Secondary Curriculum will lead to the award of GCSEs, IGCSEs, BTECs and A-levels, where appropriate. The school will provide a deep, broad and balanced curriculum. We link learning wherever possible to our international context and use opportunities to develop the diversity of our school community. Teachers explicitly develop the skills associated with higher order thinking and encourage students to question and enquire through rich exploratory talk and discussion through a range of fascinating themes and topics. By the end of each Key Stage, through our curriculum delivery and focus on the learner attributes, our students are fully prepared for their next phase of education. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided to allow all students to develop further and enrich and enhance our provision.

## **AIMS**

Dubai Heights Academy aims to provide an ambitious, knowledge rich and innovative curriculum, which inspires, challenges and safeguards students, and enables them to become:

Successful learners who:

- Have the essential learning skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology
- Are creative, resourceful and able to solve problems
- Have enquiring minds and think for themselves to process information, reason, question and evaluate
- Communicate well in a range of ways
- Understand how they learn and learn from their mistakes
- Are able to learn independently and with others
- Know about big ideas and events that shape our world
- Can join up their learning and who can cross-reference
- Enjoy learning and are motivated to achieve the best they can now and in the future

Confident Individuals who:

- Have a sense of self-worth and believe in themselves
- Relate well to others and form good relationships
- Are self-aware and deal well with their emotions
- Have secure values and beliefs
- Become increasingly independent, are able to take the initiative and organise themselves
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Are physically competent and confident
- Take managed risks and stay safe
- Are willing to try new things and make the most of opportunities
- Are digitally literate

Responsible, moral citizens who:

- Are well prepared for life and work
- Are enterprising and innovative
- Are able to work cooperatively with others
- Respect others and act with integrity
- Understand different cultures and traditions and have a strong sense of their own place in the world
- Appreciate the benefits of diversity
- Challenge injustice, are committed to human rights and strive to live peaceably with others
- Maintain and improve the environment, locally and globally
- Take account of the needs of present and future generations in the choices they make whilst believing that they can change things for the better

In addition to this, the Curriculum Policy aims to ensure that the curriculum of Dubai Heights Academy:

- Prepares students fully for the next stage of their education, and ultimately the world's leading universities;
- Facilitates personalised provision and, where necessary, personalised curriculum pathways;
- Allows all students to progress rapidly and therefore achieve their highest possible academic standard;
- Allows all students to develop independent learning skills; allows all students to be consistently stretched and challenged.

## 1. LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum Programmes of Study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework](#) and refers to curriculum related expectations of schools set out in the [UAE School Inspection Framework](#), providing an education in line with the local context.

For the Ministry of Education curriculum, DHA is in alignment with the Emirate and National Vision. Students are split into native and non native Arabic teaching groups. In addition, the curriculum includes Social, Moral and Cultural Education, as well as Islamic Studies (for Muslim students)

## 2. ENGLISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM COVERAGE

### 2.1. Primary Curriculum

Year Group	Age	Curriculum
Foundation Stage 1 and 2	3-5	Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021)
Year 1 & Year 2	5-7	National Curriculum for England (Key Stage 1)
Year 3 to Year 6	7–11	National Curriculum for England (Key Stage 2)

### 2.2 Secondary Curriculum

Year Group	Age	Curriculum
Year 7 to Year 9	11-14	National Curriculum Key Stage 3
Year 10 & Year 11	14-16	National Curriculum Key Stage 4
Year 12 & Year 13	16-18	National Curriculum Key Stage 5

## 3. PRIMARY CURRICULUM

### 3.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years published by the DfE (Department for Education, England) August 2021, will be followed and underpinned by the 'Curiosity Approach' principles. The rich, play-based Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum supports students' physical, emotional, social and linguistic development, whilst also providing the foundations for literacy and numeracy. Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed through students' interests and curiosity.

The ways in which students engage with other people, their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support our students to remain active and motivated learners.

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) has four guiding principles that shape our practice. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Students learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Students learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Students benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or careers.
- Importance of learning and development. Students develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all students in early years provision, including students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS. All areas are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting students' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development Personal
- Social and emotional development

We also support students in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### **3.2 Key Stage 1 - Year 1 and 2**

In Years 1 and 2, students continue their learning journey through a curriculum that is based on the educational philosophy of active learning. Students will build on and consolidate their learning through practical work, practice and the opportunity to use their learning. This approach will help create flexible, creative, and proactive students who can solve problems, make decisions, think critically, communicate ideas effectively and work efficiently within teams and groups. The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects encompassing the National Curriculum for England - including French, Music, Moral Social and Cultural Studies, Arabic and Islamic Education.

#### **Primary School Subjects in KS1**

English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, History, Geography, French, Art and Design, Design and Technology including Food Technology, Music, Physical Education, Swimming, Arabic, Islamic studies (for Muslim students) UAE Moral, Social and Cultural Studies (Year 2).

### **3.3 Key Stage 2 - Year 3 to 6**

In Years 3 to 6 the students will continue to build on and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through a learning focused curriculum that prepares the students with 21st Century skills suitable for entry to Key Stage 3 at age 11. The curriculum in the core subjects will be balanced with a cross-curricular approach in the foundation subjects with a view to emphasising independent enquiry and a love of learning. Students will follow a rich and balanced curriculum which will be delivered by a combination of the class teacher and specialist teachers.

#### **Primary School Subjects in KS2**

English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, History, Geography, French, Art and Design, Design and Technology including Food & Textiles, Music, Physical Education, Swimming, Arabic, Islamic studies (for Muslim students), Social Learning and Innovation, UAE Moral, Social and Cultural Studies.

### **3.4 Specialist Curriculum teaching**



Whilst the majority of the curriculum is taught by the class teacher from FS1 upwards, elements of the curriculum are delivered by specialists, this will include Arabic, PE, Swimming and Music to start with but then increase to Islamic Education, French, Library, Art and DT as students get to Key Stage 1 and 2.

### 3.5 Organisation and Planning

- Staff in year groups, and middle leaders, have created a cross curricular approach to learning with a focus on Reading and Writing, using Cornerstones as a stimulus for topics.
- Teachers translate these plans into smaller units – medium term and then weekly plans where the specific needs of the learners are addressed.
- Medium term plans are written to ensure coverage of the foundation subjects.
- Weekly planning uses the learning objectives, skills and knowledge from the medium term planning for each session.
- The weekly plan identifies key resources, questions, and differentiation informed by previous learning whilst promoting challenge.
- Teaching is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all the students and builds on prior learning from EYFS to the end of KS2 ensuring consistency and progression across the whole school.
- Middle leaders quality assure the sequencing linking to the knowledge and skills taught to ensure that prior knowledge is built upon and higher order skills such as problem solving and critical reasoning are developed.
- Senior and Middle leaders ensure that learning meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provide support in ways to expand its scope wherever possible.

## 4. SECONDARY CURRICULUM

### 4.1 Key Stage 3

- The curriculum is all of the experiences that we plan in order to promote the learning, personal growth and development of our learners.
- The Key Stage 3 curriculum follows the English National Curriculum, as well as the Ministry of Education requirements for Arabic, Islamic Studies and Moral Social and Cultural Studies (MSC).
- Our curriculum is further enriched through our partnership with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to develop and deliver a bespoke AI (artificial intelligence) project-based programme. With a range of student nationalities, our teachers are able to leverage opportunities to adjust the curriculum to include topics, concepts and themes that encompass the cultural diversity of all its students.
- At present, our curriculum provides education for Year 7 to Year 10 students and builds on the achievements of the Primary Department whilst preparing students with the skills required for Key Stage 5 and beyond.

**Core Subjects:** English, Mathematics, Science, Arabic and Islamic Studies (Muslim students only)

**Foundation Subjects:** History, Geography, Physical Education (including swimming), Modern Foreign Languages (French), Art and Design, Design and Technology, Food Technology, Computing, Drama, Music and Moral Social and Cultural Studies (MSC).

- Our innovative KS3 curriculum is tailored to the individual's needs and focuses on providing continuity and progression through memorable, active and diverse learning experiences. Extensive opportunities exist to ensure that talents, aspirations and interests are nurtured.
- The Key Stage 3 courses and the way they are taught are designed to ensure the transition in and out of this vital Key Stage is seamless and meaningful. Schemes of work are regularly and rigorously reviewed to keep the curriculum fresh, exciting, relevant and in line with National and local priorities.
- The structure of both the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum ensures summative assessments are built in to compliment the learning cycle and to provide students with the opportunities to make sustained progress. Cross-curricular planning ensures there is a transfer of learning between different



subjects to enable students to increase their knowledge and skills in interesting contexts. Our inclusive ethos ensures that experiences are personalised and that students are prepared and eager for the next stage in their learning journey.

#### 4.2 Key Stage 4

- Following a broad provision in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 students have the option to select options for further study leading to GCSE / IGCSE examinations in Years 10 and 11.
- Our aim is to provide each and every one of our students with a broad and balanced Key Stage 4 curriculum that is tailored to the individual's needs containing a range of possibilities and opportunities for their education Post-16. The Key Stage 4 courses and the way they are taught are designed to best prepare your child for their future.
- Our KS4 curriculum aims to prepare our students for their GCSE / IGCSE examinations whilst maintaining a focus on their personal and emotional development. Opportunities will be provided to ensure the acquisition of knowledge is complemented with the development of skill and understanding across a wide range of choices and pathways. Cross curricular links will remain purposeful and lead to a significant enhancement of transfer of learning between different subjects. Regular assessment periods will provide students time to reflect on their learning and highlight knowledge and understanding.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum follows accredited exam boards from the UK. The school is an accredited exam centre for Edexcel Pearson and Cambridge International exam boards and students study subjects from a combination of these. Key Stage 4 students also adhere to Ministry of Education requirements for Arabic, Islamic Studies and Moral Social and Cultural Studies (MSC).
- All Key Stage 4 qualifications we offer are recognised by schools, colleges and universities internationally, thus enabling all of the students to gain access to the best academic institutions in the world.

**Core Subjects:** English, Mathematics, Science, Arabic and Islamic Studies (Muslim students only)

**Option Subjects (TBC):** Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Drama, Economics, Fashion & Textiles, Food & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education, and Psychology.

#### 4.3 Key Stage 5

The Key Stage 5 curriculum at Dubai Heights Academy is designed to provide students with the opportunity to specialise in their chosen areas of study while continuing to develop essential life skills and employability. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and flexible, ensuring progression into higher education, training, or employment both in the UAE and internationally.

Our provision balances academic rigour with practical, skills-based learning, through A Levels, BTECs, and enrichment opportunities. All students also fulfil the Ministry of Education requirements for Arabic, Islamic Studies (Muslim students only).

#### Curriculum Structure

- Students typically study three subjects across Years 12 and 13, with the option of a fourth subject for high-performing students.
- Courses follow accredited UK exam boards (Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge International).
- The curriculum is enhanced with the Future READY Programme, enrichment, and physical education.

#### Core Requirements

- Arabic (per MOE requirements)
- Islamic Studies (Muslim students only)
- Future READY Life Skills Programme (enrichment)
- MIT

- Core P.E.

### **A Level Subjects Offered**

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Politics
- Psychology
- Music
- Design & Technology (Product Design)

### **BTEC Subjects Offered**

- **Level 1 BTECs:** introductory qualifications offering a foundation for further study, training, or entry-level employment.
- **Level 3 BTECs:** practical, career-focused qualifications that are widely recognised by universities and employers.

### **Enrichment and Super Curriculum**

- All Sixth Form students participate in the Future READY Programme, a bespoke life-skills curriculum designed to build independence, resilience, and employability.
- Sessions include: financial literacy, teamwork, cooking and nutrition, interview preparation, vehicle maintenance, housekeeping, sustainability, digital literacy, and first aid.  
Future READY Sessions.
- Additional opportunities include physical education, volunteering, and project-based learning through partnerships such as MIT.

### **Assessment and Examinations**

- Assessment is a mixture of coursework and examinations depending on the qualification.
- External examinations take place in January and June, with resit opportunities where available.
- Examination fees are the responsibility of parents and are billed per examination cycle.
- Regular internal assessments are built into the learning cycle to monitor progress and ensure personalised support.

### **Progression and Next Steps**

- All Key Stage 5 qualifications offered are internationally recognised, enabling access to leading universities, apprenticeships, and careers worldwide.
- Careers advice, university application guidance, and pastoral support are embedded throughout Sixth Form.
- Students graduate from Dubai Heights Academy with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in higher education, employment, and adult life.

## **5. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SUBJECTS**

Equally important is our Ministry of Education curriculum which consists of Arabic, Islamic, and Moral Social and Cultural Studies (MSC). Successful learning in these subjects, as any other, depends heavily on high quality teaching. We ensure the learning of Arabic is inspiring and relevant to students. Our Arabic teachers work closely with English class teachers to ensure a consistent experience for students, with a focus on making the subjects cross curricular.

Learning Arabic is crucial for the maintenance of cultural identity. Our Arabic curriculum is concept and enquiry-based and founded on the UAE national curriculum.

Arabic is compulsory for Arab nationals throughout their schooling (Arabic A), and Arabic as a foreign language is required for students through to Year 10 (Arabic B).

### 5.1 Arabic

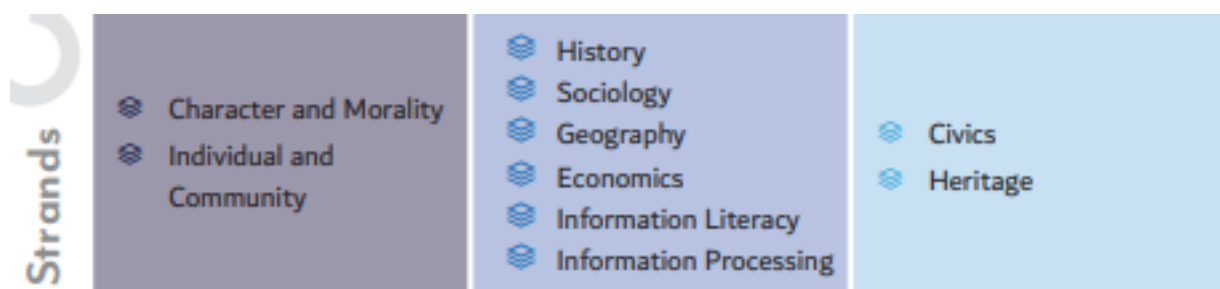
- In Dubai, Arabic is considered as a core subject by MOE and KHDA.
- At DHA we believe that learning to speak more than one language is deeply empowering.
- It is a compulsory subject from Year 2 to Year 13 for native speakers of the Arabic language
- It is a compulsory subject from Year 2 to Year 10 for non-native-speakers of the Arabic language and optional after that.
- Dubai Heights Academy offers Arabic language from FS1.
- The Arabic language subject must be taken in Year 12 and 13 in order to meet the equivalency requirements of the UAE's general secondary education certificate
- students experience a wide range of learning activities to allow them to develop skills and confidence within the four areas of literacy: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.
- We offer the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum to support native and nonnative Arabic speakers. However, the type of work and activities students complete will be differentiated according to the student's level of ability.
- As part of our provision for support, we group the non native Arabic speakers **according to the requirements of KHDA and the Ministry of Education, students are grouped based on the number of years they have studied the Arabic language, to ensure that the curriculum and instruction are aligned with their language proficiency level.**
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- We use one platform to enhance learning : Alef Platform for native and nonnative speakers i

### 5.2 Islamic

- Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject from Year 2 to the end of the secondary stage for all Muslim students
- Dubai Heights Academy begin teaching Islamic to all Muslim students from FS2 upwards
- Our Islamic vision at DHA is not to simply fill students' minds with information about Islam, but rather to teach them about being a Muslim by pursuing excellence in teaching, research, and innovative learning.
- Islamic A is given for Arabic speakers, while Islamic B is for non-Arabs students. Both groups are taught by Islamic specialist teachers.
- Islamic offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances awareness and the understanding of religious theology, ethics and beliefs, teachings and practices.

### 5.3 Moral Social and Cultural Studies

MSC is a compulsory subject from Year 2 to Year 10 for all students. It focuses on the below strands :



- Moral studies aims to develop the individual as a moral being, develop the language understanding and skills of moral thinking and reasoning. It also helps students in applying moral thinking to the individual in a variety of social contexts, as well as to the development of others in their school, family and local communities For Arab students, **Moral Education is integrated with Arabic Lessons and Islamic Education** to further enhance their Arabic language proficiency and strengthen their connection to the cultural and ethical values of the UAE.
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- Social Studies increases awareness of UAE culture and traditions. Students learn about the unity of the Emirates and cover topics such as the Emirati traditions, past and present.
- students use a variety of resources (e.g. maps, graphs, tables, ipads, atlases, photographs and statistics) in a critical manner, in order to explore and cover many skills such as: knowledge, understanding, communication, research and organisation.
- Studying Social Studies develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the U.A.E, an understanding of maps, and a range of investigative and problem-solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. Such real life skills prepare students for adult life and employment.
- Cultural Studies infuses individuals with knowledge of milestones of UAE national social, economic, and cultural development, heritage and national identity symbols, and the rights and responsibilities of living in the UAE as a global citizen.
- For Arab students: Social Studies is taught as a separate, stand-alone subject in Arabic to enhance their understanding of national identity, strengthen their Arabic language skills, and provide them with deeper engagement with the UAE's heritage and values.
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#### 5.4 MOE Curriculum Breakdown (Lessons per week)

Subject	FS 1	FS 2	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9
Arabic	2	2	3	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Islamic Studies		1	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
MSC				2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

## 6. INCLUSION

Dubai Heights Academy is a highly inclusive mainstream school. Our aim and ethos is to personalise our curriculum to meet the needs of every child, every mind and everybody. We tailor and personalise the curriculum to meet the needs of each learner whilst also ensuring each student is sufficiently challenged to achieve their full potential. This also includes access to our enrichment therapies; Mbone and Sensation Station Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy (See Inclusion Policy 2022/2023)

We provide the alternative curriculum ASDAN for a specific cohort of students which enables this group of learners to experience success in their learning experiences as well as developing independent life skills. DHA is a fully registered and accredited ASDAN centre, allowing us to offer a wide range of courses and options to our students fitting their learning needs. This programme provides flexible and engaging programmes and qualifications that help students develop skills for learning, work and life. The courses have been developed for learners with a wide range of learning needs and abilities and provide meaningful outcomes through a person-centred approach that prepares the learner for adult life. The Passport to Success Program further

embeds and enriches our alternative curriculum pathway options (See Passport to Success- Alternative Curriculum Pathway Policy 2022/2023)

At DHA every learner is encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential. DHA have specific identification processes to highlight when additional challenges are required for more able or gifted and talented learners (See Gifted & Talented Policy)

A whole school differentiation support system is in place to ensure all learners can access the curriculum and are sufficiently challenged.

*Sample:*

## 7. DHA LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS

DHA Learning Skills Programme supports and maintains focus on promotion of UAE and British values which include and not limited to, cultural awareness and citizenship, collaboration, leadership and responsibility and global and environmental awareness



## 8. TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays a crucial role in the learning process at DHA and students use and further develop their digital literacy skills on a daily basis.

Dubai Heights Academy is the only school in Dubai with a bespoke partnership with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with an onsite consultant and running 2 projects

- AI project-based curriculum for students in KS3 and KS4.
  - Literacy and social-emotional learning through a social robot project in KS1
- Weekly computing lessons are taught from Year 1 to Year 10 by a specialist teacher.
  - Computing curriculum further provides students digital citizenship skills to participate fully in their communities and make smart choices online and in life.
  - Optional BYOD in KS1 and BYOD Google Chromebook in KS2, KS3 and KS4.
  - ECAs provide students with the chance to apply and link different areas of their learning together with clubs such as Lego, Robotics and Coding.



- Cross-curricular links ensure technology skills are used in other subjects
- DHA Learning and innovation skills programme encourages use of technological skills

## **9. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ECAs)**

Students are provided with a longer school day so as to receive curriculum enrichment. Through an extensive programme, DHA aims to build confidence, create character, develop social and leadership skills and build enthusiasm in learning beyond the classroom. Students from FS1 can pursue a range of different interests which will be led either by our teaching staff or external providers. Some activities will incur additional costs and this is highlighted in the information to parents. The ECA options change each term and include anything from sports squads to coding and creative arts to youth theatre.

### **9.1 Educational visits and residentials**

Dubai Heights Academy understands that learning cannot be limited to the classroom. Each year group undertakes a termly trip which will enhance and further the learning that has occurred in the classroom. We also have a progressive residential trips for students in Years 4 to 10. The activities on these trips will develop students' skills year-on-year, whilst being based in a more challenging setting each year. The residentials allow students the opportunity to experience a range of activities such as orienteering, rock climbing, kayaking and team building games. The exercises also support the students' social development through working and living together during their stays.

## **10. QUALITY FIRST TEACHING**

Quality first teaching is a style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all students in a class. This includes differentiated learning, developing strategies to support SEN students' learning in class, on-going formative assessment, good planning of well-sequenced lessons, tracking, monitoring and reviewing students' progress.

- Staff have high expectations of themselves and all of the students.
- Teachers impart knowledge accurately and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers take into account prior knowledge and experiences and to build upon this in a progressive way.
- Highly focused lesson designed with sharp objectives.
- High demands of student engagement in their learning.
- High levels of interaction for all students.
- Higher order questioning, modelling and explaining.
- Emphasis on learning through dialogue.
- Expectation that students will develop resilience and accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently.
- Regular use of encouragement and praise to motivate students.

## **11. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Leadership Team and Subject Leaders have responsibility for the leadership of the curriculum, for teaching and learning and for monitoring the effective delivery of this policy.

Through the annual self-evaluation cycle, judgements on the quality of curriculum provision are made through:

- Lesson observations
- Planning scrutiny
- Work scrutiny
- Assessment scrutiny
- Data analysis
- Discussions about pupil progress
- Learning walks.
- Supporting teaching and learning through the effective allocation of resources and the best use of school facilities.
- Ensuring staff professional development promotes good quality teaching and learning.



Records of these judgements are stored centrally within the annual evidence base that informs the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and School Development Plan (SDP).

## **12. OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS**

10.1 Teaching and Learning Policy

10.2 Inclusion Policy

10.3 Gifted and Talented Policy

10.4 EAL Policy

10.5 Marking and Feedback Policy

10.6 Assessment and Reporting Policy

10.7 Alternative Curriculum Pathways - Passport to Success Policy