



Leigh Academy
MINSTER

Curriculum Policy (2025-26)

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This Curriculum Intent Policy Framework provides a comprehensive structure for developing the academy's approach to curriculum design and implementation. It reflects the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in England (2014), aligns with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF 2019, updated 2022), and incorporates guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). This framework is designed to ensure the curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, and prepares pupils for the next stage of their education, employment, or training.

Our Vision Statement:

We believe that every learner is entitled to a high quality, varied and personalised education; delivered through a broad and balanced curriculum that provides challenge, irrespective of need, starting point or background. Our commitment to maximising the potential of every child; teaching them the skills they need to be successful and nurturing a desire to be a lifelong learner, will prepare them for whichever career path they choose to follow. At Leigh Academy Minster we inspire our learners to be responsible for their own learning, to be independent and have ambitions to develop themselves and enhance their community.

Our Academy community works collaboratively to achieve success and develop its own unique character. Our belief in 'human scale' education, delivered through a small school college model, means every one of our students is known and valued. Strong pastoral care is at the heart of our academy and we place great importance on building strong partnerships with parents and carers.

Our inclusive community has ambition, drive and responsibility. We embrace a high challenge, high support culture and seek positive collaboration with others. At Leigh Academy Minster our community allows ambition to take flight.

Our Mission:

['Leigh Academy Minster - Where ambition takes flight'](#)

Our Values:

[Ambition - Striving for Excellence](#)

We encourage individuals to set high aspirations, push boundaries, and pursue their goals with determination. Ambition fuels innovation and fosters a culture of excellence, empowering individuals to reach new heights and make meaningful contributions.

[Character - Integrity and Authenticity](#)

Character is the foundation of our identity, built on the principles of integrity, honesty, and authenticity. We believe in the importance of maintaining strong moral and ethical values in all interactions. Our commitment to character ensures a culture of trust, respect, and transparency, fostering meaningful connections and genuine relationships within our community.

[Achievement - Continuous Learning and Innovation](#)

We celebrate achievement as a result of continuous learning and innovation. We value the pursuit of knowledge and the willingness to adapt and evolve. Through a commitment to excellence, we recognise and reward accomplishments that contribute to personal and collective growth. Achievement is not just a destination but a journey of exploration, curiosity, and improvement.

Responsibility is at the core of our values, emphasising accountability and guardianship. We believe in taking ownership of our actions, decisions, and their consequences. As responsible members of our community, we are committed to environmental and social stewardship, making choices that positively impact our surroundings and the well-being of others.

Curriculum Intent:

A curriculum that delivers an education of excellence for all. Leigh Academy Minster aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and experiences so that they can play an active and informed role in modern 21st Century Britain.

We believe passionately in the mastery of the core within a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum that develops the whole child holistically. Our curriculum is also shaped by our local context, with explicitly planned opportunities for students to learn about where they live and the community around them.

The curriculum is shaped by, and deeply rooted in, the strongest available evidence about how students learn and retain knowledge in the long term. We value the uniqueness of each subject we offer. We are committed to students engaging deeply and comprehensively with both substantive and disciplinary knowledge so that they achieve strong outcomes throughout each phase of the curriculum: the Middle Years Programme (MYP), a two-year Key Stage 4 (GCSE's and BTECs), and the International Baccalaureate Careers Programme (IBCP), A Levels and Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQ).

Our curriculum prepares students to lead fulfilling and successful adult lives: inquisitive, articulate and internationally engaged, our students are defined by their boundless thirst for knowledge, self-improvement and learning.

Core Principles of Curriculum Intent:

- Seven year curriculum journey: This extended time frame allows for a deep, spiralling curriculum where knowledge and skills can be revisited, built upon, and mastered over time, rather than rushed through in shorter blocks, leading to more robust long-term retention and understanding.
- Backwards planned to ensure all students have the opportunity to access a rigorous, coherent and sequenced curriculum: By starting with the desired end outcomes (e.g., GCSE or post-16 success) and planning backward, the curriculum ensures that all necessary foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are explicitly taught in a logical progression, scaffolding learning to enable every student to reach ambitious goals.
- Assessment for purpose and meaning to remove barriers to learning: When assessment is designed not just for grading, but to genuinely diagnose understanding, pinpoint misconceptions, and inform subsequent teaching, it proactively identifies and addresses individual learning barriers, making the learning process more efficient and equitable for all.
- Deliberately planned opportunities for extended practice: Consistent, structured opportunities for extended practice (e.g., retrieval practice, spaced repetition, challenging application tasks) are crucial for moving knowledge from short-term to long-term memory, developing fluency, and allowing students to consolidate complex skills, ultimately leading to deeper mastery.
- High quality feedback and reflection: Effective feedback (timely, specific, actionable) combined with student reflection empowers learners to understand not just what they did wrong, but why and how to improve. This meta-cognitive process fosters independence, resilience, and a deeper understanding of their own learning journey.
- International Baccalaureate MYP and CP Programmes: The Middle Years Programme (MYP) emphasises interdisciplinary learning, connecting subjects to real-world contexts and encouraging students to understand the relationships between traditional disciplines. It fosters a holistic approach to learning through a focus on Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills. The Career-related Programme (CP) engages in career-related learning while gaining transferable and lifelong skills. The CP Core

components; Personal and Professional Skills, Service Learning, Reflective Project, and Language Development are designed to develop personal qualities and professional skills essential for the 21st century workforce and higher education. Central to all IB programmes, including the MYP and CP, is the IB Learner Profile. This is a set of ten attributes that the IB believes can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national, and global communities.

Legal and Statutory Curriculum Requirements:

Through delivery of the IB Middle Years Programme the academy ensures that it remains compliant with all National Curriculum requirements. A balanced programme including English, mathematics, science, RE, computing, PE, history, geography, art and design, design and technology, music, and languages are delivered to ensure that students acquire the foundational knowledge and skills deemed essential for success in Key Stage 4 and their progression into higher education, vocational training, and the modern workforce.

Please refer to our policies for further additional requirements:

- [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#)
- [CEIAG](#)
- [IB Programme Standards and Practices](#)

Curriculum Implementation

We have deliberately planned and sequenced a seven-year curriculum journey. We have identified and considered the knowledge, skills and values that enable academic excellence and develop quality of character. Leaders and teachers then plan backwards from this point, to ensure that at each phase of their journey they receive a rigorous, coherently and intelligently sequenced curriculum.

Our robust assessment practices carry real meaning: they explicitly challenge the misconceptions of students, so that our lessons are unapologetically focused on removing the barriers to learning for all learners. Students are required to take responsibility for their learning, with opportunities to reflect and improve on their understanding of the knowledge, skills and concepts they have been taught.

Students have deep and substantive knowledge precisely because this is deliberately planned, honed and mastered. Our schemes of learning are interleaved, providing ample and timely opportunities to purposefully practice skills and retain knowledge in the long term.

Meeting the Needs of All Pupils

Inclusion and Equality - [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

It is the Academy's aim to create a working environment for students free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

The aims of the Academy's ethos as a whole are to:

- Utilise the IB Learner Profile attributes to foster inclusion and equality within the academy community, as they promote a mindset and skillset that values diversity, empathy, and respect for all individuals.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the Academy community
- Comply with the Academy's equality obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Every Child Matters and Keeping children safe in education

- Provide a learning environment where all individuals through the Equal Opportunities Policy and other Academy policies such as SMSC & PSHE and the SEND, feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging
- Prepare students for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and international community
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society
- Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the Academy community learn from these experiences
- Embed inclusion through all our activities.

Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils - [Pupil Premium Statement](#)

Ensuring equity for our disadvantaged pupils and those in receipt of the Pupil Premium is a critical aspect of our educational provision. We employ a range of strategies to identify and address the specific barriers these students face, aiming to close attainment gaps and ensure they have the same opportunities as their peers.

The academy robustly identifies barriers to learning through strategies and systems outlined below:

- The academy utilises data analysis to meticulously analyze data related to Pupil Premium eligibility, attendance, attainment (both academic and non-academic), exclusions, and engagement in extracurricular activities. This data is disaggregated to identify specific trends, strengths, and areas for improvement for this group.
- The academy performs an Individual Needs Assessment that looks beyond broad data, to achieve a deeper understanding of each disadvantaged pupil's individual circumstances is crucial.
- The academy's small school model is led by experienced pastoral teams who supported by Senior Leaders, SENDCO and safeguarding teams who conduct regular check-ins, home visits (where appropriate), and liaise with external agencies to understand holistic needs (e.g., housing instability, mental health concerns, safeguarding issues).
- The academy utilised student voice to actively seek input from the students themselves about what helps or hinders their learning and participation.

Developing Mastery and Critical Enquiry

The curriculum is designed to be inherently challenging, offering a rich breadth and depth of knowledge in each subject, going beyond the basic requirements of the National Curriculum. This ensures that even high-attaining students are consistently exposed to new and complex ideas. As the Academy's curriculum is rooted within the principles of the International Baccalaureate, and as such significant emphasis is placed on developing deep conceptual understanding rather than just rote memorisation. This encourages all students, including the most able, to make connections between different topics and subjects, fostering higher-order thinking. The curriculum is carefully sequenced, building progressively from foundational knowledge to more complex applications. This clear progression ensures that all students are appropriately challenged as they advance. Key concepts and skills are revisited over time at increasing levels of complexity. For the most able, this allows for deeper analysis, critical evaluation, and the application of knowledge in more sophisticated contexts each time a topic is revisited. Through our principles of highly effective feedback, teachers use probing, higher-order questioning to challenge all students, pushing them beyond surface-level understanding. For the most able, questions encourage critical thinking, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Students are provided with access to a wide range of challenging resources, which they can access through their Chromebook, including advanced texts, scholarly articles, complex data sets, and extended practical investigations.

Personal Development and Enrichment

Our daily tutor programme serves as a dedicated platform for students to explore Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) aspects. Through this programme, students engage in reflection and action on both global and local issues, enhance their understanding of digital safety and careers, develop essential numeracy and literacy skills, and boost their agency by cultivating key IB learner profile attributes and approaches to learning. We deliver a PSHRE curriculum through bespoke weekly lessons, across all key stages that empowers students with essential knowledge, skills, and understanding for confident, healthy, and responsible living, fostering their well-being and preparing them for diverse societal roles.

On a wider basis the base curriculum builds resilience through challenging tasks, problem-solving, and learning from mistakes. It cultivates independence via self-directed study, critical thinking, and metacognition (reflection on learning). Self-expression through creative subjects also boosts confidence.

The curriculum is also a vital tool for equipping students with cultural capital by providing access to foundational knowledge, canonical works, and influential figures across arts, history, and science. Our curriculum develops sophisticated academic vocabulary and language skills in all subjects, while cultivating critical thinking, analysis, and the ability to engage with complex arguments. Furthermore, the curriculum ensures familiarity with key cultural references and narratives, often integrating valuable experiential learning opportunities like museum visits.

Students have access to a full calendar of extracurricular opportunities across the academic year. This offer is pivotal in complementing the taught curriculum by providing broader contexts, deeper engagement, and practical application that classroom-based learning alone cannot always offer. This allows students to apply, deepen, and connect their learning in meaningful ways, ultimately shaping well-rounded, resilient, and globally aware individuals.

Stakeholder Engagement

The academy actively involves all key stakeholders in shaping its curriculum and ensuring its intent is widely understood. This collaborative approach fosters a strong sense of ownership and ensures the curriculum genuinely meets the needs of the community it serves. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback through surveys, parent forums, and direct communication channels. This feedback can highlight areas where the curriculum could better support student needs or address community concerns.

Student surveys, school councils, and subject-specific feedback sessions gather student perspectives on curriculum enjoyment, challenge, relevance, and effectiveness. Students provide valuable insights into which teaching methods help them learn best, influencing how the curriculum is implemented. Governors receive regular reports from the Headteacher and curriculum leaders on curriculum intent, implementation, and impact. Governors act as a "critical friend," challenging leaders to ensure the curriculum is ambitious, balanced, compliant, and meets the needs of all learners and the school's unique context.

Curriculum Review, Evaluation and Development

Our curriculum is organically designed, developed, and reviewed by academy staff, ensuring content is deeply rooted in a rich local context. This iterative and strategic process guarantees the curriculum remains relevant, ambitious, and effective for our students and their surroundings from its inception. The academy follows systematic and ongoing processes within each module to monitor, evaluate, and improve the quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning across all subjects and year groups. It is a continuous loop of review, feedback, and refinement that is calendar on our ARR calendar. The academy collects, analyses, and acts upon quantitative and qualitative information about what students achieve academically (e.g., attainment grades, progress measures, assessment results) and where they go after leaving a particular key stage (e.g., post-16 courses, university, apprenticeships, employment). This data is used to make informed decisions that are aimed at improving student outcomes and well-being. Structured, in-depth, periodic processes such as Assessment and Progress meetings are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum within specific subjects, phases, or across the whole school.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governing Body - Their responsibilities fall broadly into three interconnected areas: approving the curriculum offer, reviewing its effectiveness, and holding leaders to account for its delivery and impact.
- School Leaders - Their responsibilities fall broadly into three interconnected areas: development of the curriculum, implementation and quality assurance.
- Subject Leaders - Their responsibility is to design and lead subject-specific curriculum intent in line with whole-academy aims.
- Teaching Staff - Describe expectations for delivering the intended curriculum with consistency and fidelity, ensuring that students experience a quality first education experience.

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team, following consultation with all stakeholders. The next review cycle will be in Module 6, 2026.

Links to Relevant Policies and Resources

- [Teaching and Learning Framework](#)
- [Assessment, Recording and Reporting](#)
- [MYP Assessment Policy](#)
- [Marking and Feedback](#)
- [SEND](#)
- [Literacy Strategy](#)
- [LAM Curriculum Map 2025 - 26](#)