

# Avonbourne Girls' and Boys' Academies and United Sixth Form

## Curriculum Expectations

This document explains the principles that inform our curriculum at Avonbourne Girls' and Boys' Academies. It sits alongside our Curriculum Plan documents for each year group ([available here](#)). These outline the subjects studied at; Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9); Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) GCSE / vocational subjects offered; and Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13) at United Sixth Form, including Religious Studies and PSHE. Avonbourne Girls' and Boys' Academies and United Sixth Form are part of the United Learning Trust.

### Intent – our ambition for our pupils; how we achieve the best in everyone

Our aim is to provide an excellent education for all our students; an education which brings out the best in all of them and prepares them for success in life.

Our curriculum is designed to provide children with the core knowledge they need for success in education and later life, to maximise their cognitive development, to develop the whole person and the talents of the individual and to allow all children to become active and economically self-sufficient citizens.

By teaching our curriculum well we develop pupils' cultural capital: "the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement." (DFE National Curriculum, 2014)

We draw on Michael Young's distinction between 'the knowledge of the powerful' and 'powerful knowledge': "Powerful knowledge ensures that people are not trapped by the limits of their experiences." Yet we also want all pupils to be able to see themselves in our curriculum. Our trust's recent review into the Diversity and Inclusion of our curriculum included a commitment to this dual function of curriculum: that all pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience. This, and the other guiding principles for our curriculum, are stated here:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence:** Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability:** The core content – the 'what' – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their own local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the 'how' – to meet the needs of their own classes.
- **Representation:** All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.



- **Education with character:** Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, our co-curricular provision, and the ethos and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

## **Implementation – how we expose our pupils to powerful knowledge and provide education with character**

The curriculum in each subject can be accessed [here](#). Subject specialism is at the heart of our curriculum and you will see differences in the way that the curriculum is constructed and assessed in different subjects. Standardised written assessments, for example, play less of a role in performance subjects such as music and physical education. The stability of our curriculum allows subject expertise to develop over time, and we are careful to provide sufficient time for teachers of the same subject to plan together and collaborate. We have committed time to our CPD programme to develop all teaching staff's knowledge of effective curriculum design. Through this we continue to develop our teaching staff's understanding of types of knowledge such as disciplinary and substantive, in their subjects. This allows them to effectively sequence their subject's curriculum to allow new knowledge and skills to build on what has been taught before, with clearly defined end points.

Further subject specialism is provided by United Learning's subject advisers. These advisers are subject experts who help teachers link the subject discipline to our pupils' daily experience in the classroom. Subject advisers meet regularly with Heads of Department across United Learning and provide curriculum resources to support the implementation of the subject curriculum.

As a mastery curriculum our pupils study fewer topics in greater depth. A 3-year Key Stage 3 provides pupils with the time and space to gain a secure understanding that builds over time in each subject. In our lessons we expect to see all pupils grappling with the same challenging content, with teachers providing additional support for pupils who need it. Rather than moving on to new content, our higher attainers produce work of greater depth and flair.

Our approach to teaching and learning supports our curriculum by ensuring that lessons build on prior learning and provide sufficient opportunity for guided and independent practice. We use Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction to develop our teaching practice. At the heart of Rosenshine's principles is a simple instructional core:

- **Explanation** of new material in small steps (I)
- **Guided practice** with prompts and scaffolds (we)
- **Independent practice** with monitoring and feedback from teacher (you)

At each point in this instructional core, teachers check understanding of all pupils by asking lots of questions and providing feedback.

The Rosenshine principles support the implementation of the curriculum by ensuring that pupils regularly recall prior learning. You will often see this at the start of our lessons. When prior learning is committed to long term memory it becomes fluent or 'automatic', freeing space in our working memory which can then be used for comprehension, application, and problem solving.





Deans for Impact, [The Science of Learning](#), 2016: “Each subject area has some set of facts that, if committed to long-term memory, aids problem-solving by freeing working memory. Existing knowledge and skills can then be applied to new contexts.”

Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) techniques such as ‘cold calling’ and ‘no opt out’ are the practical application of the Rosenshine Principles in the classroom. The Rosenshine Principles and the TLAC techniques are not intended to be a checklist for every lesson. Barak Rosenshine describes his principles as an articulation of the ‘general pattern’ of teaching, while Doug Lemov (author of Teach Like a Champion) describes his approach as a ‘recipe book’ and ‘not an instruction manual’.

In order to allow the mastery approach to be effective (i.e. children learn what they are expected to in the year they are expected to), early catch-up is essential: we aim to promptly identify and support pupils who start secondary school without a secure grasp of reading, writing and mathematics so that they can access the full curriculum.

Everything from which children learn in school – the taught subject timetable, the approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the co-curricular provision and the ethos and ‘hidden curriculum’ of the school – are to be seen as part of the school curriculum. Our principle of ‘Education with Character’ is delivered through the curriculum in this broadest sense.

## **Impact – how we measure and secure continuous improvement for all**

With thousands of pupils across United Learning following the same curriculum, we have been able to develop common assessments in most subjects which we use at Avonbourne Girls’ and Boys’ Academies. These summative assessments allow pupils at the Academies to demonstrate their growing understanding of their subjects and teachers to assess the impact of their teaching. They are taken twice a year through our rank order attainment tests at Key Stage 3 and common mocks at Key Stage 4, enabling teachers to focus on formative assessment from lesson to lesson.

We are particularly conscious of the role that literacy and vocabulary plays in unlocking the whole curriculum. Our teachers explicitly teach the meaning of subject-specific language, and we expect lessons to contain challenging reading and writing. Knowledge organisers provide students with key information that they are expected to learn and recall with fluency, enabling them to develop their understanding of key concepts outside of their lessons.

The culmination of our curriculum is that pupils leave our school with the confidence and intelligence to thrive. We know our pupils as individuals which enables us to provide curriculum guidance and careers guidance throughout their time with us. We expect all pupils to leave our school with the grades required to progress to their desired destination, and the character required to flourish once they get there.

By teaching our curriculum well, and delivering education with character, we bring out the best in everyone.

**September 2022**

**Review date: July 2023**

