

THE NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL
Curriculum Policy

Signed by Headmaster:

Signed by Co-Chair of Governors:

Reviewed by Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee:

23 June 2022

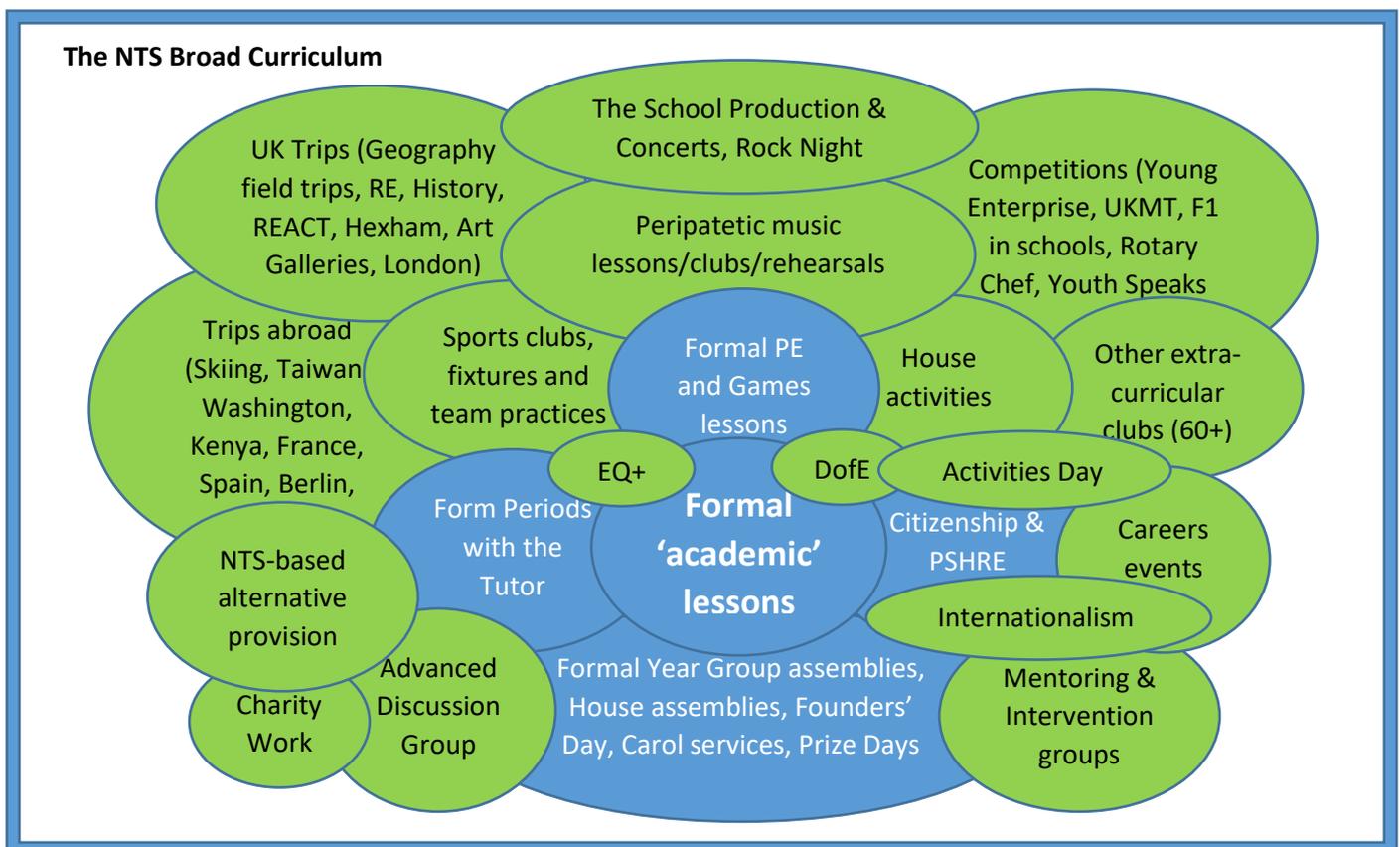
Next review:

June 2023

The NTS Curriculum

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum – in the broadest sense of the word - stems from four philosophies that are inextricably linked: we are a comprehensive school in the truest sense and have a duty to cater for the full ability range from pupils arriving in Year 7 with CAT scores of less than 70 to Oxbridge candidates and potential medics in the Sixth Form; we have a duty to prepare pupils for the world of work and to deliver not only first class teaching but a suite of soft skills, such as emotional intelligence; we consider education to be an experience that extends well beyond the classroom and continually encourage an especially broad range of extra-curricular activity and full participation in our ‘set pieces’; and the thread that runs throughout our provision (“NTS-ness”) is provided by our long-established focus on altruism, good manners and immaculate behaviour. In terms of the make-up of *formal* qualifications and regularly timetabled lessons, we have never jumped on band-wagons or restricted our offer to tick governmental boxes, we continue to offer courses where uptake is typically low (and where budgetary pressure points to a different strategy entirely) – because we know it is right for our children, and we create a programme of educational activities that encourage pupils to develop as sensitive, resilient, articulate and empathetic human beings.



Based on the 'bubble diagram', the overall aims of the curriculum must be:

- to provide our pupils with an education that will prepare them to play a full part in adult life and employment
- to place equal value on all pupils
- to allow all pupils to achieve and develop a sense of self-worth and mutual respect
- to enable pupils to pursue areas of interest
- to satisfy the requirements of the National Curriculum, and any changes to examination requirements

Curriculum Implementation:

Key Stage 3

Subjects and time allocations are as follows:

Subject	Hours per week		
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English (see note 1)	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	3	3
Science	3	3	3
Computing	1	1	1
French	2	3/2	3/2
Geography	2	2	2
History	1	2	2
Design & Technology	3	3	3
Music	1	1	1
Art	1	1	1
Spanish (see note 2)		1	1
PE	2	2	2
RE	1	1	1

Notes:

English in Year 7 includes one hour aimed at developing literacy (the 'Literacy Hour').

- (1) Selected pupils study Spanish in Years 8 and 9 as part of their Modern Languages lessons. For some, this is in addition to French, whilst for others it is instead of French.
- (2) For details on grouping policy, see below.
- (3) In RE the topics cover a variety of religions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, following the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Key Stage 4

The aims of the Key Stage 4 curriculum are as laid out at the start of this policy but, in particular, we aim:

- to provide a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum which involves contact with all areas of learning and experience – aesthetic and creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological
- to prepare students for a variety of post-16 opportunities, including further education, apprenticeships and other employment with training, through a curriculum relevant to their needs

A summary of curriculum time in Key Stage 4 is shown in this table.

Subject	Hours per week	
	Year 10	Year 11
English	4	4
Mathematics	4	4
Science (Triple)	6	6
Option A	3	3
Option B	3	3
Option C	3	3
PSHRE	1	1
PE/Games	1	1

Notes

1. **Optional Subjects**

The following optional subjects, here in alphabetical order, are currently available. Most are GCSEs (15) unless indicated otherwise (6):

Art, Business Studies, ASDAN Personal and Social Effectiveness, OCR Cambridge Child Development, Computer Science, Drama, D&T (Electronics), BTEC Engineering, Food and Nutrition, French, Geography, BTEC Health & Social Care (L1/2), History, Music, Religious Studies, D&T (Timber), Physical Education, Spanish, BTEC Sport, BTEC Travel & Tourism

Grouping Policy

In **Year 7** pupils are divided into eight teaching groups. Of these, one (7E) is a small group of pupils with learning difficulties to whom intensive remedial help is given. One of the others, 7N, is a larger group of pupils whose learning difficulties are not so acute but who also need support, especially in the area of literacy. This is a 'catch up' group. The remaining seven 7T, 7H, 7M, 7L, 7S, 7W contain mixtures of ability from the rest of the ability range.

These arrangements do not apply to practical subjects in Year 7 where pupils are divided up into a larger number of groups to reduce overall class sizes, each containing the full range of ability. The other

exception is the Mathematics and Computing block, where setting takes place immediately using the standardised and raw scores from KS2 SATS.

In **Year 8** the year group is divided into two half-populations for timetabling purposes and this also allows departments (or groups of departments) to set pupils as they think best fits their subject(s), or in mixed ability classes. The weakest c.30 pupils are placed on the x-half. Apart from this, the two halves are as equal as possible, as judged by CAT scores, exam output, and by the critical eye of the Head of Year to ensure a positive ambiance in both half-populations. Both halves will follow a similar curriculum.

Year 9 follows the pattern of Year 8.

In **Years 10 and 11** setting continues to apply (or is applied, if KS3 is mixed ability) in English, Mathematics, and Science. In the other exam subjects the number of groups and their composition depends upon numbers of pupils opting, but setting is introduced where choices and numbers allow.

Sixth Form

The essential aim of the post-16 curriculum is to provide the skills, qualifications and experiences needed for higher education and/or employment with training.

The majority of Sixth Formers will study the equivalent of three A Levels. Those joining with grade 7+ in the majority of GCSEs are encouraged to study four A levels. Additional choices are available, including Core Maths and the Extended project Qualification (EPQ). All A Levels are allocated 5 hours per week teaching time.

In the Lower Sixth students are expected to spend their remaining lessons engaged in private study (some of which is directly supervised) and/or working towards their "Enrichment Portfolio". In the Upper Sixth all students receive more study time

The following A Level and A-Level equivalent courses are available in the Sixth Form (in alphabetical order):

Applied Science, Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computing, English Language, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, Health & Social Care, History, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Product Design, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology and Spanish.

Additional subjects are Core Maths and L3 EPQ.