

## Swindon Academy Curriculum Statement 2024-25

### Our Values

At Swindon Academy, we are unapologetic in our unique approach to ensuring that every pupil can flourish academically and personally in an aspirational and supportive environment.

Our aim at Swindon Academy 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 values help drive our ambition for our students:

**Hardwork:** We believe knowledge is power. Our curriculum is designed to provide students with the core knowledge and cultural capital they need for success in education and later life, to maximise their cognitive development to empower them with the knowledge needed to make well-informed, logical, and ethical decisions.

**Kindness:** We believe that everyone should grow personally and thrive collectively. Our curriculum develops the whole person and the talents of the individual to allow all students to become kind and well-rounded citizens who make a valuable contribution to our society. This means that we are all thoughtful and considered about how we treat ourselves and others

**Responsibility** – We believe in clear adult authority. Our curriculum provides clear guidance on acceptable behaviour both in terms of how students conduct themselves in school and towards each other. It teaches students how to be safe, healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive way.

### Curriculum Design

The guiding principles for our curriculum are:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the curriculum, and we 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 of our curriculum is consistent, but we bring it to life within our local context, our teachers adapt lessons 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 extra-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.

Our curriculum model consists of subjects that meet all National Curriculum Requirements. We adopt a three year key stage 3 mastery approach to provide students with the time and space to gain a secure understanding of the knowledge needed for the next stages. The curriculum at Key stage 4 is broad and balanced with a large selection of subject choices. Students who join United College Sixth Form have access to a wide range of academic and Applied General courses that prepare them for pathways to higher education, further study and employment.

Subject communities are central to our long-term curriculum development. Subject teachers and leaders are deeply engaged with curricular questions, renewing and holding ownership of our curriculum and sustaining their own experience. Teachers and leaders work collaboratively in ongoing development to draw upon collective expertise and to continually update subject curriculums.

Alongside a rigorous and challenging academic curriculum, our students' lives are enriched by a broad range of extra-curricular activities.

### **Curriculum Delivery**

Swindon Academy teachers and leaders implement the curriculum by:

- Planning for rigor: A curriculum that challenges all students. Expert teaching fosters independent, resilient and creative learners who gain a mastery of their subjects and can communicate confidently and effectively.
- Using the fundamentals of cognitive science, lessons build on prior learning and provide sufficient opportunity for guided and independent practice. 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.
- Explicitly teaching the meaning of subject-specific language using explicit vocabulary teaching, and expecting lessons to contain challenging reading and writing.
- Using retrieval practice strategies across the curriculum so that students can learn and recall with fluency, enabling them to develop strong mental maps and the ability to make connections across the curriculum.
- Expecting all students to grapple with the same challenging content, with teachers providing additional support for students who need it. Rather than moving on to new content, our higher attainers produce work of greater depth and flair.
- Identifying and supporting students who start secondary school without a secure grasp of reading, writing and mathematics through our Thinking Reading and Direct Instruction programmes.
- Explicitly teaching character education through our tutor and Personal, Social, Health, Economic, Relationships and Sex education programmes. This enables students to develop a strong sense of who they are, how to keep themselves safe and how to develop healthy relationships.
- Fostering a culture of reading so that students develop a love reading, build cultural capital and improve vocabulary and reading fluency.
- Being ambitious for every student and through our careers programme, we ensure that students are well-informed about their future opportunities. We ensure that students gain a full

understanding of the variety of career pathways open to them and to develop skills for life and work.

Swindon Academy students sit common assessments in most subjects as part of United Learning. Assessments enable students to demonstrate their growing understanding of the knowledge and skills learned across the curriculum and enable teachers to assess the impact of their teaching. Assessments are typically taken once or twice a year, allowing teachers to focus on formative assessment from lesson to lesson.

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, that is specific to them. We expect all pupils to leave our school with the qualifications required to progress to their desired destination, and the character required to flourish once they get there.