

# King Edward's School, Birmingham

## Curriculum Policy

### 1. The school's aim and the school's curriculum

The school's declared aim is:

'to make available to the widest possible range of able boys an educational experience that is the richest, most diverse, and most exciting possible in an atmosphere that provides support, encouragement and care for everyone, pupils and staff, here. We want our pupils to love coming here and to go from here prepared for all that human life has to offer.'

The school's curriculum is constructed to address the aims of richness and diversity whilst at the same time preparing boys for the life beyond school. The following are key principles:

- **Breadth:** boys will have the opportunity to experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Thereby they will have the chance to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. This is particularly significant in a school with pupils with very different experiences of English.
- **Balance:** the school wants every boy to have the chance to experience as wide a range of opportunities as possible, both academic and non- academic. To that extent, the curriculum is designed to ensure that a boy can pursue academic and exam success whilst maintaining a balanced experience in the school.
- **Development, progress, challenge and excitement:** the school will provide boys with a curriculum that reflects their needs at different stages and ages, including those pupils with an EHC plan. In particular, the school will ensure that boys with specific needs and difficulties are properly supported. Field trips, tests beyond exams, Olympiads, overseas trips etc. as well as opportunities for Individual Learning and a flexibility of approach with differentiated learning all allow for the full and personal academic development of the boys.
- **Personal Development:** Personal, Social Health and Economic Education at King Edward's School reflects the school's aims and ethos and seeks to identify issues and problems that individuals and society in general might face and, through a structured programme, aims to enable boys to make considered choices when faced with problems and dilemmas, thus developing their self-confidence and enabling them to grow into responsible adults. It encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act (2010). At the heart of this lies the establishment and understanding of fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The developing programme of PSHEE covers a wide variety of topics from such practical help as to how to settle into school to issues of deep principle such as attitudes to human rights. Sex and Relationships Education, Drugs Education, Health Education and education against bullying are integral parts of the programme. In the first three years, PSHEE is delivered in Form Meetings and as part of the Friday Afternoon Programme. Thereafter, there are timetabled PSHEE lessons for the Fourth, Fifth and Division Years.

As a general principle, the more sensitive issues of PSHEE are covered in the timetable lessons by staff who are confident in dealing with such matters. The topics covered by Form Tutors are normally more practical, for example, time-management and study skills. There is an annual PSHEE training day for all staff who take part in PSHEE or who wish to do so.

- **Preparation for life after school:** the way in which the curriculum provides for this takes many forms: for example, the PSHEE programme, advice about university and career choices, the broad range of activities and opportunities available inside and outside the timetable. Careers guidance is presented in an impartial manner and aims to enable boys to make informed choices about a broad range of career options encouraging them to fulfil their potential.

These principles are enacted through some fundamental elements in the curriculum:

- In the first three years the boys are given the opportunity to study a very wide range of subjects, not just the core subjects, but also Art, Design & Technology, at least one modern language, Latin and, as an option, Classical Greek, Music and Drama. That diversity of choice remains very wide at GCSE.
- The school believes that 10 GCSEs, with six compulsory subjects with four options, is the right number so that the pursuit of exams does not encroach too far into a boy's wider education. Nor has the school been in favour of acceleration of pupils to early examinations.
- All boys in the lower five years therefore follow a programme of activities and lessons which is appropriate to their education needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development as well as communication and language skills.
- In the Upper School all boys now study for the IB Diploma. The reason for this is to pursue an education of greater breadth and challenge which we believe will be a much better preparation for university entry, university study and adult life. We also believe that the nature of the diploma, with its core of Theory of Knowledge and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) will develop further the boys' range of thought and experience.
- Every boy, from the Shells to the Upper Sixth, has in his timetable at least one games afternoon and from Shells to Divisions they also have a PE period, and the school has worked hard to extend the range of options open to boys.
- Friday afternoon is set aside specifically for non-academic activities. In the early years, those activities might range from PSHEE/SMSC to games to preparation for summer camps. From the Fourth Form onwards there is a wide range of options including the CCF, the school's own Leadership option, and Personal Service.
- The school encourages trips and expeditions within the curriculum. That ranges from activity weeks for the Shells and Removes to field trips for Geography and Biology, to Art trips to Venice and Madrid.
- The academic curriculum operates alongside a remarkably extensive extra-curricular provision.

*Subjects offered are outlined in the attached grid.*