

# RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



## Curriculum Policy

Originator	C Walmsley
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*Believe.....*

# Curriculum Policy

We will:

- Deliver a curriculum which meets the current statutory requirements up to the age of 16, providing adequate time and associated testing and assessment arrangements
- Provide appropriate recording and reporting arrangements
- Provide for pupils with additional education needs via the main school and sixth form curriculum models
- Ensure our curriculum meets the needs of our pupils and keep up to date with all Government reform
- Continually monitor, evaluate and review current provision via subject areas and the Governors' Curriculum committee
- Plan and manage transition and evaluate all relevant data
- Provide appropriate, impartial careers guidance
- Foster voluntary co-curricular activities and encourage pupils' contributions to the school in informal, social and co-curricular activities

## **Curriculum Intent**

### **Our Mission Statement:**

As a worshipping community, witnessing to the Christian faith in all the school's activities, Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy aims to develop to the full the academic, spiritual, aesthetic and physical potential of each pupil, encouraging in its members a real and living faith in God.

### **Our Curriculum:**

Our curriculum principles are rooted firmly in our Christian faith and the Church of England's Vision for Education, 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' (2017). We believe that a good education must promote 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10), therefore we seek to combine academic rigour with a rounded approach to personal development.

We want our pupils to have the opportunity to flourish, to discover their talents and achieve high levels of success. This may be through the formal, taught curriculum and our PSHE programme, but is also through the wide range of other opportunities pupils have to get involved and to develop their talents. The opportunities available to our pupils throughout the different key stages are outlined below.

Alongside our core curriculum, the arts enjoy a strong place at Ripley. Music is a particular strength and we are proud that so many of our pupils are able to benefit from high quality lessons and a wide range of co-curricular opportunities. As well as giving them chance to develop creatively, we want our pupils to develop their skills in STEM subjects through the study of Separate and Combined Sciences and Technology. Pupils have the opportunity to study Languages across all three key stages and we are proud that we are the first school in our area to offer the Mandarin Excellence Programme from 2018. Educating pupils about the importance of a healthy lifestyle is also important. Sport is very popular at Ripley with all pupils getting involved in Core PE lessons throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and many pupils engaged in a wide range of teams and clubs. Finally, we want our pupils to have a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, as well as other faiths, and so Religious Studies is compulsory for all pupils at KS3 and 4 and is a popular choice in the Sixth Form.

Pupils at Ripley have access to an extensive programme of careers information, education and guidance throughout their time at Ripley. From Year 7 onwards, information about careers is built into our PSHE programme to ensure pupils are well informed about their next steps and the opportunities available to them when they leave school. A careers adviser also provides one-to-one guidance to pupils throughout Key Stage 4. Students in Key Stage 5 receive significant careers advice from outside experts, from attendance at the UCAS Exhibition, from visits to Universities, from tutors and from the online resource digital careers library Careers Planner. This ensures that they are well aware of the opportunities for them after they leave Sixth Form, whether it be further study at University, apprenticeships or employment.

It is our duty to prepare pupils for life after school; we want our pupils to leave Ripley as confident, caring and responsible young people who are literate, numerate, able to solve problems and communicate effectively. We hope that they will also develop a faith to sustain them through their lives.

### **Our Key Stage 3 Curriculum:**

At Key Stage 3, pupils build on their learning from primary school and continue to develop firm foundations in literacy and numeracy. It is vital that pupils are able to read well, write fluently and articulate themselves confidently in order to cope with further learning and also life beyond school. English and Mathematics, therefore, have a strong presence in the curriculum throughout a pupil's time at Ripley. We provide extra support at Key Stage 3 for pupils who join us in Year 7 with gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills.

We also believe that reading is vital, not only for the development of pupils' literacy and for further study, but also as one of life's pleasures. As such, pupils in Years 7 and 8 have dedicated reading lessons. Pupils follow a pathway, depending on their needs: Enrichment, Free to Read, or Accelerated Reader.

In addition to developing strong foundations, at Ripley we want our pupils to study a wide variety of subjects throughout Key Stage 3. It is important that they can experience a broad education and can learn where their talents lie. A key feature of our provision is that all subjects in Key Stage 3 at Ripley are taught as discrete subjects and by specialist teachers throughout both Years 7 and 8, enabling pupils to develop an excellent understanding of the key content of each subject.

Pupils are able to develop a good grounding in History, Geography and French, enabling them to study these traditional academic subjects at GCSE. Throughout Years 7 and 8, pupils at Ripley also study Religious Studies, Art, Computing, Design Technology, Drama, Food, Music, Physical Education and Agriculture and Horticulture. The Farm is an important part of our heritage as a school, of which we are very proud. Having lessons on the farm throughout Key Stage 3 enables all our pupils to learn, not only about the farm and caring for our animals, but also the importance of sustainability, caring for our environment and the world in which we live.

Pupils who struggle to cope with the full curriculum are able to study a differentiated timetable if they need it, to ensure they thrive and make progress in their learning. This is sometimes through a reduced curriculum to facilitate the mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

We ensure pupils at Ripley are prepared for life in modern Britain through our curriculum as well as through our comprehensive PSHE provision. This is delivered through four 'drop down' days throughout the year. Pupils cover a range of topics throughout Key Stage 3, such as: Internet Safety, Friendships, Bullying, Diet and Health, Drugs and Alcohol, Values for Life, British Values, Democracy and Careers.

In addition to the formal curriculum, we are proud of the wider curriculum opportunities at Ripley. It is through the many co-curricular opportunities we offer that our pupils are able to develop their skills and talents. Pupils in Year 7 all take part in the Archbishop of York's Award and in Year 8 they engage in our in-house Tri-Star award. Both schemes ensure pupils have to undertake a variety of challenges which provide them with the opportunity to develop socially and for them to learn the importance of community and cooperation.

A wide range of co-curricular clubs and teams are available throughout Key Stage 3. Pupils can take part in sports teams, music groups and choirs, drama and clubs such as Pony Club and Rocket Club. Pupils in Year 8 also follow our Youth Alpha programme, enabling them to discuss life's big questions and explore the Christian faith.

#### **Our Key Stage 4 Curriculum:**

Following consultation with parents and governors, it was agreed that pupils at Ripley begin their GCSE courses in Year 9. Taking into account the breadth of subjects studied throughout Key Stage 3, our pupils are in a good position to make their GCSE option choices towards the end of Year 8. This has been a very popular move and receives the ongoing support from parents and pupils. Studying for GCSEs over a three year period means pupils are given opportunities to engage in their learning in more depth and therefore gain a better appreciation of their subjects. It also ensures pupils are more capable of coping with the demands of linear exams and more challenging GCSEs.

We believe that a broadly academic curriculum is best suited to the majority of our pupils at Ripley. This will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to progress to further academic study or the world of work.

In addition to the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Combined Science, all pupils will study GCSE Religious Studies. As a Church of England school, this is an important part of our curriculum and develops our pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. We want to ensure that our pupils have a deep appreciation of our Christian faith, as well as an understanding of other faiths and beliefs.

All pupils will also study at least one of the following: a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish), History or Geography. We believe it is important for pupils to continue with these traditional academic subjects in order to learn about the world and their place in it. We want our pupils to learn about our country's history and how it affects our lives today, to understand how our world works and our place in it as global citizens, and to have an appreciation of different cultures and languages. If pupils choose to, they can study the five academic subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate (English, Mathematics, two Sciences a Humanity and a Language) which is the pathway for all pupils recommended by the Department for Education.

Our PSHE curriculum continues into Key Stage 4 and pupils have the chance to build on their learning from Key Stage 3 during the four drop down days. They consider topics

relevant to their age group, such as: Spirituality, Careers, Politics, Enterprise, Britishness, Health, First Aid, Values for Life, Resilience, Crime and Punishment, and Politics.

Co-curricular provision continues to be high profile throughout Key Stage 4. Participation in a range of different activities enhances the taught curriculum and enables pupils to have a broader experience, developing them creatively, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally. Many pupils take the opportunity to get involved in our thriving Duke of Edinburgh programme and we are proud to be one of the largest providers in the North West. From September 2018, our pupils will be able to join our RAF Cadets Force which will provide further opportunities for development and personal challenge. The arts and sport remain popular at Key Stage 4 with many pupils benefitting from involvement in our choirs, orchestras, bands, clubs, teams and tournaments. Pupils are able to gain recognition of their involvement in the wider curriculum and of their service to school through our Ripley + award for Leadership and Service.

### **Our Key Stage 5 Curriculum**

The majority of our pupils continue their studies in our Sixth Form and we also welcome many students from other local schools. We offer a varied academic and vocational curriculum which includes A Levels, BTEC courses, Core Maths and the EPQ. Students are able to choose from 28 different subjects to suit their talents, interests and future career aspirations.

In addition to the taught curriculum, all our students engage in a bespoke Enrichment programme where they can take part in an extensive range of activities. We offer programmes such as Aspiring Teachers, Aspiring Healthcare Professionals and Aspiring Engineers for students interested in careers in those disciplines. Students can also get involved in sport, music, Youth Alpha, creative writing, Chinese Language and Culture lessons, run in conjunction with the Confucius Institute at Lancaster University, and the Extended Project Qualification, to name but a few.

Key Stage 5 students have 3 stand-alone PSHE days throughout the academic year. As is the case in Key Stages 3 and 4, students have the opportunity to undertake a range of activities/talks/workshops designed to support their personal development. These cover include age-specific provision such as sexual health and relationships and safe driving, alongside advice and guidance on 'next steps' plans.

We also offer an excellent tutorial programme for Years 12 and 13. Following regular grade events and mock exams, all students benefit from pastoral one-to-one mentoring and academic monitoring. In addition, all students are part of a tutorial group. Tutorials cover key areas such as study skills and exam preparation, employability skills, personal and life skills, and on-going advice and guidance on next steps, including University, apprenticeship and employment applications.

Detailed information about the subjects we offer throughout Key Stages 3 to 5 can be found on our website under the 'curriculum' heading.

For more information regarding our Curriculum, please contact Mrs C Walmsley, Vice Principal.