



# Curriculum



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Date of Publication: September 2020

# Curriculum Vision & Principles

Our curriculum, like everything at Astrea Academy Sheffield, builds upon our vision of ‘a relentless commitment to excellence, every day’. We believe in developing the whole child and as such provide extensive experiences which are an integral part of our curriculum offer.

We believe that every Astrea scholar is capable of achieving something wonderful. By providing a rigorous, carefully sequenced, academic curriculum that is full of powerful knowledge, we are enabling scholars to understand and challenge the world around them. We maintain consistent high expectations of all scholars as they are all entitled to learn this powerful knowledge, regardless of starting place. We do not narrow the curriculum for any pupil. Instead, we ensure that all scholars receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.

As an all-through academy we have an opportunity to really change the way our scholars learn and grow. Each subject discipline is delivered discretely having been developed by subject experts. We work hard to ensure our curriculum is coherent and builds learning over time. This enables pupils to attach new knowledge to old in a manner that is efficient and sustainable. As a result, our pupils make good progress through our curriculum and are well prepared for their next level of study.

From nursery to sixth form we expose pupils to this cleverly crafted curriculum, not only to ensure success at SATs, GCSEs and A-Levels, but because this knowledge is incredibly important for pupils’ wider lives. In KS3, the curriculum is filled with core knowledge which needs to be mastered by all pupils. Each term we publish knowledge organisers, which scholars and parents must use to ensure that they have committed their core knowledge into their long-term memory.

At Astrea, **reading underpins everything** that we do; we are aware that strength in reading is fundamental to academic success across the curriculum. The ability to read accurately, fluently and for pleasure is a right which we ensure that all scholars have access to.

## Key Curriculum Principles

1. Rich in powerful knowledge
2. High expectations for ALL
3. Reading, reading and a little bit more reading

# Classroom Culture

At Astrea Academy Sheffield we hold our classroom culture in high regard. It is the role of the teachers to set the exceptionally high expectations to allow all scholars to flourish.

## Learning is sacrosanct

All Astrea scholars deserve to explore the best of what has been thought and said. As staff who are unashamedly passionate about our **subject disciplines and phases**, we know that the greatest gift we can give our scholars is our expertise. We believe joy and wonder is found in learning and we fiercely protect every scholar's right to access this.

## Equity of knowledge

We believe that it is our moral imperative to impart as much knowledge as possible to all of our scholars. Staff thoughtfully select the most **powerful knowledge** which enables our scholars to understand and challenge the world around them. We maintain consistent expectations of all scholars because they all have the right to access this powerful knowledge, regardless of barrier or starting place. It is the job of our staff to teach to the top and find ways to support all pupils to get there. We believe that the best **differentiation** is often invisible and relies on teachers knowing their scholars and ensuring that the classroom experience is tailored to them as individuals.

## Time is precious

We know that knowledge begets knowledge. With this in mind, the time in our classrooms is precious and both staff and pupils must treat it as such. We are always interested in taking **the shortest path to learning** and we deal with disruptions to learning consistently and seriously: learning time should never be wasted. To maximise learning time, scholars move swiftly around our building and enter classrooms quickly. Staff use timers to hold themselves and pupils accountable to the time that they have. No task is undertaken without a reason – nothing is for the sake of it, or because it's the way it has always been done.

## True understanding is long-term

We understand learning to be a change in **long-term memory**. Staff sequence their teaching carefully and always consider their curriculums in the context of a through-school education. Our staff are mindful of **poor proxies for learning** and regularly interrogate what has truly been understood, transferred to longer-term memory and also applied to differing scenarios.

## Common approach

As we believe that all of our scholars deserve the very best educational opportunities, we think that it is important that our staff follow a common approach to classroom culture. As such, we have a **common language** around our expectations, for example:

- ★ 'Sit like a scholar' – backs against chairs, sat up straight, arms folded and looking at the teacher.
- ★ '3,2,1, eyes on me' – silence is expected.
- ★ 'Practice makes permanent'

We know that learning looks different across our curriculum and at different times during a scholar's journey. Consequently, we do not insist on a 'one-size-fits-all' model of teaching. Instead, we advise our staff to pay heed to **Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction** and to use these principles in whatever way best serves their scholars' current needs. Our staff thoughtfully preplan questions which enable scholars to think hard and solutions for misconceptions that might arise.

Providing meaningful **feedback** is fundamental to the learning process. Feedback can take many different forms and will look different across a year. For example: live marking, low-stakes questioning or whole-class feedback. Our staff are the experts in their subject disciplines and, as such, are given the autonomy to make the decisions which best suit their curriculums. We only ask that they consider the implications that their choices have on their workload.

# Nursery & Reception (Pre-Prep)

Astrea Academy Sheffield is committed to the development of an aspirational Early Years' education which not only instils a love of learning but provides a relentless drive to ensuring the highest standards of teaching, wellbeing and personal development of young people.

As such, the Astrea Academy Sheffield EYFS curriculum is broad and wide ranging, giving children a sense of awe and wonder by providing those wow moments that children will remember and are able to base their learning on. Our curriculum statutorily follows the guiding principles of the EYFS Framework, which is underpinned by four themes:

A unique child	Positive relationships
Enabling environments	Learning and development

These themes in turn foster the characteristics of effective learning:

- ★ **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- ★ **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties by developing their resilience, and enjoy achievements; and
- ★ **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in early years settings.

The four **prime** areas are fundamental and work together, moving through and supporting development in all other areas:

- 1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- 2) Mathematics
- 3) Understanding the World
- 4) Expressive Arts and Design

From the outset, our Pre-Prep curriculum will capture the core vision and ethos of the academy, as well as incorporating the over-arching principles above. The curriculum will encourage our youngest learners to develop a passion for learning, to be curious and excited about the world around them, and to develop a 'can-do' approach with a strong resilience to setback. A clear focus on children's personal development ensures that learning is unique and tailored to the individual child. The expectation is to "challenge and extend the learning of all children, without predetermining what any individual might be capable of achieving and without communicating messages of differential worth or undermining children's beliefs in their own capabilities". This is the core expectation underlying the Astrea commitment to 'inspiring beyond measure'.

Learners need to meet a minimum threshold of expression and comprehension in order to be successful in the classroom. Therefore, a focus on language, communication and vocabulary acquisition is a priority in the Early Years.

# Key Stage 1 and 2 (Prep, Y1 to 4 & Lower Senior Y5 & 6)

Astrea Academy Sheffield is committed to the development of collaborative and active learners who are able to make links between subjects and topics; who are at home with technology and who flourish through challenge. The acquisition of language and communication skills remains a priority to ensure that children have the optimum opportunity to be able to access the whole curriculum.

Priority is also given to the learning of mathematics and literacy from Nursery to Year 6 to ensure that our children seamlessly move from each key stage as prepared as possible. Good literacy skills provide us with the building blocks not just for academic success, but for fulfilling careers and rewarding lives. (EEF, 2016)

As children move from Pre-Prep to Prep the curriculum will move to discrete subject teaching in the following subjects:

Mathematics	English	Science	Geography
History	Computing	Personal, Social & Health Education	Art, Design & Technology
Spanish	Music	Physical Education	Religious Education

Pupils are given the opportunity to study one modern foreign language – Spanish, as the second most commonly spoken language in the world.

Early reading is the bedrock of our curriculum. We immerse our children in a wide range of literacy that engages children and helps them to build confidence with the written word. We believe that reading does underpin the whole curriculum and so it is essential for every child's academic success that we develop confident and fluent readers that is underpinned by a rich, engaging and systematic phonics programme.

At **Key Stage 1**, we use evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation which suggests the following should be considered when developing approaches to literacy:

- ★ Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme;
- ★ Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language;
- ★ Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, which integrates both decoding and comprehension skills; and
- ★ Explicitly teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension.

At **Key Stage 2**, we will use evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation which suggests the following should be considered when developing approaches to literacy:

- ★ Explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice;
- ★ Develop pupils' language capability to support their reading and writing; and
- ★ Explicitly teach writing composition strategies through modelling and supported practice.

Our curriculum is extensive, and designed to meet the needs and interests of all children that study it. Personal development, culture, character development and identity are intrinsic elements and not seen as 'bolt-ons'. There are plentiful opportunities for children to engage in sport and the arts. Children are encouraged to think deeply about subject matter so that they can form their own opinions, ideas and beliefs about content. Every child is different and every ambition unique. It is our purpose to be able to give children the stepping stones they need to make fulfill that ambition.

# Key Stage 3 (Lower Senior, Y7 to 9)

The revised (2014) KS3 National Curriculum is a significant step up from previous years. The Ofsted Report, “The Wasted Years” (Sept 2015) stated that too many academies are not building on the improved learning at Key Stage 2 and expectations of progress are not high enough.

Scholars will follow a broad and balanced, traditional 3-year KS3 curriculum which has high academic rigour. All lessons are 1-hour long, with 5 lessons per day.

All Astrea Academy Sheffield scholars are assessed on entry to year 7 using a suite of GL baseline assessments. This gives additional data to leaders to form ideas around extra provision or teaching groups. A scholar’s reading age is key to gaining an understanding about their position in their learning journey, as an academy we use NGRT.

The weekly curriculum offer for every pupil is (*all lessons are 1 hour*):

English (4 lessons)	Mathematics (4 lessons)	Science (3 lessons)
Geography (2 lessons)	History (2 lessons)	Spanish (2 lessons)
PE (2 lessons)	RE (1 lesson)	Art, Design & Tech (1 lesson)
Electives (1 double lesson)	IT (1 lesson)	Performing Arts (1 lesson)

Scholars also spend 30 minutes each day with their form tutor, during which the personal development curriculum is delivered alongside extensive personal reading.

## Electives

Astrea Academy Sheffield is committed to developing the whole child and our curriculum has been shaped around this belief. We believe our scholars are entitled to a curriculum which offers them chances to do things they might have never done before. We think these opportunities are so important that they make up an integral part of our academy day in which everyone takes part in.

Electives are activities which take place within the timetabled curriculum and provide scholars with an incredibly broad range of activities that would not be possible to deliver in a normal after school setting. As electives are during the school day, **every** pupil has the opportunity to take part - no matter their circumstances.

The activities change each term to give scholars more choice and experiences. Electives gives staff the opportunity to share their varied skills and expertise plus a wide range of external suppliers supplement our offer. Electives which have run previously include: rock climbing, skate boarding, The Great Astrea Bake Off, creative writing, circus skills, photography, board games, Mandarin and go karting.

These high-quality enrichment opportunities include a rich programme of sporting activities and community-based service.



# Key Stage 4 (Senior, Y10 & 11)

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is still in development and will be first delivered in September 2021.

Following on from the rigorous curriculum at Key Stage 3, in Key Stage 4 all pupils continue to study a broad and balanced academic curriculum to GCSE or equivalent, but are able to choose additional subjects.

We believe it's incredibly important that pupils have a balanced curriculum which offers them a varied range of learning opportunities. We believe that an academic, knowledge-rich curriculum is an entitlement for all our pupils. We have allocated considerable time and resources to ensure pupils achieve well across the core and options subjects. Additional time has also been allocated to PE and electives. We know pupils and our community value these important enrichment opportunities.

All lessons will be 1-hour long and follow a fortnightly timetable.

The fortnightly curriculum to be offered for every pupil will be (all lessons are 1 hour) – 50 hours per fortnight:

English (10 lessons)	Mathematics (8 lessons)	Science (12 lessons)
Three Option Subjects (5 lessons)		
PE (2 lessons)	RE (1 lesson)	Electives (1 double lesson)

## Core Subjects

All pupils will study the following compulsory subjects:

GCSE English Language	GCSE English Literature
GCSE Mathematics	GCSE Science (Combined or Triple)

GCSE Science is taught throughout years 10 and 11 as discrete subjects. Throughout year 10, all pupils will be taught an identical curriculum. Upon starting year 11, the Head of Science, alongside teachers, will make a decision as to whether a pupil is examined in Combined Science or Triple Sciences (and therefore sits GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics).

## Options Subjects

In addition to the core subjects all pupils choose four subjects from the options below.

*(Courses offered are subject to change)*

GCSE History	GCSE Geography	GCSE Spanish
GCSE Food & Nutrition	GCSE Fine Art	GCSE Physical Education
BTEC First Sport	BTEC Performing Arts	

# Curriculum Overview – Senior

Lessons per fortnight

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
English	8	8	8	10	10
Mathematics	8	8	8	8	8
Science	6	6	6	12	12
History	4	4	4	OPT	OPT
Geography	4	4	4	OPT	OPT
Spanish	4	4	4	OPT	OPT
PE	4	4	4	2	2
RE	2	2	2	1	1
ADT	2	2	2	OPT	OPT
IT	2	2	2		
Performing Arts	2	2	2	OPT	OPT
Electives	4	4	4	2	2
Opt A	x	x	x	5	5
Opt B	x	x	x	5	5
Opt C	x	x	x	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>