



NORWICH SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

This policy is reviewed by the Council of Management annually. This policy was last reviewed and agreed in Trinity 2023. It is due for review in Lent 2024.

Confirmed by:

John Ingham	Head of the Lower School	Trinity 2023
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Version Control

The version control table should be updated each time:

- a **change** is made to an **agreed version** of a document; or
- a previously agreed document version is **reviewed with no changes** (i.e. at annual review no changes are required and the document continues to be live for the following year).

Use the following convention: version 1.0 (first version), version 2.0 (major change to version 1.0 and issued as a new version), version 2.1 (second version with minor change)

Version number	Date issued	Author / key contact	Change(s) summary
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor changes can be authorised by a senior staff member and do not need formal approval.• Major revisions require approval through the confirming authority (typically a Committee)
1.0	Trinity 2022	Chris Parsons	
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Overview

Norwich Lower School provides pupils with full-time supervised education from Reception to Lower 3 (Year 6), giving them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. Provision gives specific emphasis to the overall ethos and aims of Norwich School. Namely:

- To nurture and develop knowledgeable, reflective young people who are capable of understanding difficult concepts and expressing complex and profound ideas;
- To provide a rich, broad and varied education that develops the diverse talents of all;
- To equip our young people for a lifetime of leadership and service.

Our Curriculum specifies the structured teaching and learning experiences provided for all children, and the objectives we seek to achieve through them.

Curriculum Philosophy

Underlying our pursuit of the School's aims, the curriculum seeks to build our children's capacity for deriving meaningful experience in life. This involves expanding their engagement with the world of sensibility, ensuring they meet squarely with the world of necessity, and facilitating a full embrace with the world of opportunity. In doing this, we seek to ensure that they are equipped with the attributes and skills required to thrive in our Senior School, and are directly prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in a British Society (see Pupil Personal Development Policy).

We believe that the most effective approach to achieving this is through a richly diverse and demanding curriculum, based largely around traditional subject domains, and which overtly pursues mastery in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, physical, aesthetic, creative, human and social education. We believe that the pursuit of such a broad and varied curriculum naturally balances opportunities to nurture personal interests and talents, with the challenge to children of adapting to and developing less instinctively easy ways of succeeding in the world.

The proper acquisition of mastery requires three phases of learning, and all units of work will normally contain elements to facilitate these:

- Direct Experience – the exposure to and witnessing of concrete, sensory or emotional aspects of the world which can be used to anchor the acquisition of more abstract concepts or refined experiences.
- Accurate Understanding – the rational or tacit comprehension of the concepts, relationships and dynamics that represent the characteristic building blocks of distinct subject domains.
- Lasting Retention – the development of habits of thought and action, bringing with it the long-term recall and application of key understanding.

Adaptable habits of thought – sometimes called 'transferable skills' – can be seen as best developed through a studious immersion in diverse, knowledge-rich subject domains, along with the regular requirement to critically reflect from positions beyond them. We recognise that knowledge is what we think with, as well as what we think about, and that creative thinking is constrained in its absence.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Teachers at the Lower School use a variety of teaching approaches and will flexibly adopt the role of facilitator, coach or instructor depending on the nature of the subject matter and the level of prior knowledge and experience:

- In learning about fundamental aspects of the world, children are naturally equipped to learn best through playful experimentation and discovery.
- In acquiring culturally evolved abstract areas of knowledge, children learn more efficiently through the modelling and explicit instruction techniques of an expert.
- Once subject competence has been attained, mastery is best acquired through critical analysis and problem-solving approaches.

Whether or not a child will learn best through social interaction or through personal reflection and endeavour will depend to an extent on the individual child, the subject matter and the stage of learning. However, over time all of our pupils will learn:

- to adapt to cooperative needs
- to utilise collaborative opportunities
- to succeed independently in the completion of tasks

The Development of Character

In equipping children for a lifetime of leadership and service, and in preparing them to embrace the domains of both necessity and opportunity, we seek to develop persistent character traits of thought and deed. In the pursuit of this we aim to:

- Provide rational and moral guidance regarding the ways of the world and our parts within it.
- Provide consistent and persuasive role-models.
- Provide a broad range of supportively challenging participatory experiences, designed to engrain mechanisms for persistence, resilience and virtue.

In seeking to develop the intellectual strengths of our children – both academically and in personal character – the role of physical, expressive and varied co-curricular provision is highly valued. Consequently, competitive sport has a strong presence on our timetable, and the facilitation of non-timetabled performance events and learning experiences are given high priority where an enriching opportunity is available.

Curriculum Organisation

Reception

There is no legal requirement for Norwich Lower School to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements or the National Curriculum. However, our Reception curriculum is based upon the revised EYFS Statutory Framework and the guidance of the Early Years Outcomes. Curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals, and on developing children's needs, skills and experiences.

The framework focuses on how children learn and encourages children to describe, reflect upon and question the world around them. We retain the freedom to offer greater enrichment and challenge, beyond the expectations of the EYFS learning and development requirements. In Reception we primarily adopt a topic-based approach to interpreting the framework, fully supporting the principle that young children best acquire primary knowledge about their surrounding physical, biological and social world through structured exploration and play. Nevertheless, we are able to prepare all children for a more formal approach to learning by the end of the Reception year, enabling a smooth transition into Key Stage 1 (KS1).

Key Stages 1 and 2

The curriculum for KS1 is based on the guidelines of the National Curriculum documents. Literacy skills and Mathematics are given priority within the timetable and core skills are embedded across the curriculum. During this phase children gain increasing access to more abstract artefacts of cultural development, requiring greater exposure to explicit instruction and background knowledge. Whilst some subjects are taught discretely, where appropriate, a cross-curricular topic approach is used to support children's natural curiosity and to help facilitate an integrated approach to learning. It offers children the opportunity to work in depth, giving them the time they need to reflect, consolidate and transfer their learning.

In Key Stage 2 (KS2), value is placed on an education which takes the best from traditional and modern methods. Classes are taught in a more didactic environment, with structured lessons designed to stretch and challenge every child. A variety of teaching methods are used over time to ensure that children possessing a variety of preferred ways of learning can all develop the capacities to adapt to whatever learning environment they find themselves in. We believe that high expectations are ultimately essential for high achievement. The curriculum is broad, and although we make reference to the National Curriculum, we make active choices to stretch beyond this in areas which we believe we can develop most powerfully. We pride ourselves on enabling teachers to teach to their strengths where feasible.

Throughout the Primary years, we ensure that subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Regular assessments and marking ensure that all pupils are monitored closely and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) notifies staff of any children with specific needs, who will need different teaching strategies, differentiated tasks or additional help to access the

curriculum. The Grades and Reporting System enables staff and parents to monitor the children's attainment and progress as they pass through the School. In addition, it records significant achievements and enables teachers to flag up concerns to form tutors early so that strategies can be put in place to support the children.

Whilst the Lower School operates a different timetable structure to the Senior School, our respective scheduling of lessons is broadly in line, creating opportunity for us to make the best possible use of the wider school's excellent facilities and staff.

All Key Stages

Across all ages, the Norwich Lower School curriculum is structured to provide pupils with a wide range of educational experiences, which in particular enables them to acquire skills related to speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. In the pursuit of building understanding about the world around them, we seek to give our pupils an astute perspective on their personal identity, their cultural inheritance and that of others. Our curriculum and approach aims to build a firmly situated world-citizen, and does not undermine fundamental British values.

Linguistic skills are predominantly delivered through the English curriculum, although all teachers share some responsibility for the teaching of literacy. The marking, spelling and presentation policies reinforce literacy skills in all subjects, and the marking policy is available as Appendix 2 to this policy, with our agreed marking codes being contained in Appendix 3.

Progress and attainment are monitored through ongoing work, and through termly tracking assessments in key skill areas. They are also monitored through the annual formal assessment schedule of reading, writing and spelling, the results of which are recorded and tracked in the Grades and Reporting system.

Drama is an important vehicle to aid the development of speaking and listening skills and all children are involved in distinctive – year group specific – performing arts projects. This is reinforced by optional London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) lessons, in which some pupils choose to participate.

A developing awareness of and proficiency in Modern Foreign Languages is also nurtured through courses in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin in KS2, and French in KS1.

Additional to the above – and helping to knit together diverse aspects of the above – all classes in KS2 participate in our WoLLoW (World of Languages and Languages of the World) programme.

Mathematical skills are mainly delivered through the Maths curriculum and progress and attainment are assessed regularly at the end of topics. There are also termly tracking assessments and an annual formal assessment of progress in mathematics, the results of which are recorded in the Grades and Reporting system.

The Maths curriculum enables pupils to use and apply mathematics, understand shape, measures and data handling, develop a capacity for logical thinking and express themselves independently using number. All pupils are encouraged to explore mathematical problems in a variety of contexts and through a variety of subjects including topic work, Computer Science, Engineering and Design, Science and Geography.

Scientific knowledge and understanding is developed through the science curriculum in KS1 and KS2. This enables pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces, and to develop enquiry skills, form hypotheses, conduct experiments and record their findings. In Upper 3 (Year 6) a programme of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is delivered.

Technological skills are developed through our Computer Science (CS) and Engineering and Design (ED) programmes, and through appropriate topic work. In CS, pupils use a broad range of packages to develop digital literacy in communicating ideas, organising information and creating a range of multi-media products. Different forms of programming are also taught to develop in pupils a conceptual understanding of how computers work and the ability to apply computational thinking. For all year groups, digital technology is also an embedded tool for use through many areas of the curriculum. Additionally ED is taught formally to all pupils in KS2. They are able to produce high quality products, evaluating their processes and methods whilst reinforcing independent working and problem solving.

Human and social education is delivered through cross-curricular topic work from Lower 1 (Year 1) to Upper 2 (Year 4), and through discrete History, Geography and Religious Studies (RS) lessons from Lower 3 (Year 5) to Upper 3 (Year 6). A sensitivity is developed towards the circumstances of people and their environments, along with the skills for exploring these further, and a knowledge and understanding of how our lives, and those of others, are connected with what has gone before, and the world we inhabit.

The **Personal Development** (PD) programme is designed to assist in fulfilling the aims and ethos of the School. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of moral values, the awareness of what it means to be a good citizen, to have respect for others and the environment, and in the promotion of Fundamental British Values. In Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), Science and the tutoring programme, pupils are taught about the principles of healthy living and age-appropriate experiences of human development, as well as about navigating the responsibilities and challenges of the digital world. A key emphasis is placed on the promotion of equality between all peoples, with particular regard being placed on the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

Physical development is promoted through the Physical Education (PE) curriculum and the Games programme, which enable all pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting and physical pursuits. In Reception and KS1, this includes discrete dance lessons and also swimming, which is continued into Lower KS2.

Physical and Personal Development are brought together for all year groups in an Outdoor Education programme which covers a mix of outdoor learning activities, bushcraft skills, outdoor pursuits. In KS2 there is also an expedition which aims to challenge the pupils in the skills they have learned and promotes teamwork.

Aesthetic and creative education is delivered through Art and Music lessons, and through topic work in KS1. In Art, a broad range of media and approaches are explored, and the display of artwork is taken as a serious mechanism for the promotion of aesthetic sensitivity throughout the School.

In **Music**, all children are encouraged to think of themselves as musicians. There are also a wide range of peripatetic instrumental and vocal opportunities available to the children, as well as the opportunity to participate in a large selection of choirs and instrumental groups.

Drama productions at the Lower School further enable large numbers of pupils to participate in high quality expressive and creative performances throughout the course of the academic year.

Education for the ‘more able’

It is our priority to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and make progress. By virtue of our academically selective entrance procedure, all children in the School can be viewed to be positioned towards the ‘more able’ end of the academic spectrum, and consequently, we do not maintain a formally exclusive ‘Gifted and Talented’ register. This is considered particularly prudent given the developmentally immature age-range of our children. If, whether due to aptitude, prior learning or uncommonly high motivation, a child is positioned substantially beyond the reach of our mainstream provision, then alternative educational opportunities will be sought for them.

However, through our mainstream focus on preparing all children for the world of opportunity, we seek ways in which any child can access personal routes to extension and fulfilment – whether anticipated or not. In keeping with the Senior School, acceleration through the curriculum is considered undesirable, and so the following four approaches [SERA] encapsulate our overall approach:

- **STRETCH** – Prompts to think about the material from different perspectives and in different ways.
- **ENRICHMENT** – Exposure to wider and deeper knowledge about a subject area.
- **RELEASE** – Key moments of choice open to pupils, or opportunities to pursue personal fascination.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT** – Opportunities to contribute to a larger task or on a bigger ‘stage’.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Full details of the Lower School's Learning Support provision are detailed in the separate Learning Support Policy. Where a pupil has an EHCP, every effort is made to ensure that the needs of that pupil are properly provided for. The Lower School SENDCo works closely with teachers to ensure they are fully informed about the needs of the pupils and to advise on the best teaching strategies for them. The academic selection process for gaining entry to the School means that some children with an EHCP for educational needs may find the curriculum difficult to access, although reasonable adjustments for certain specific learning needs will be made during the entry process. Children with EHCPs for a physical need, or for communally supportable emotional and social difficulties, but who are able to access the curriculum, are fully supported.

English is an additional language (EAL)

Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) may receive individual support if it is required.

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External documents referenced:	

APPENDIX 1: Assessment Policy

The success of children in a curriculum such as ours will always be best assessed through the tacit judgements of a variety of stakeholders over time. Our main academic focal points are the public exams which pupils will encounter during their Senior School years, as well as an independent lifelong love of learning about “the best that has been thought and said”.

In keeping with this, the Lower School does not enter children for national testing, nor are Lower School children required to undergo the 11+ entry process into our Senior School. However, the school uses assessment in the pursuit of multiple goals:

- Firstly, it is used as a diagnostic tool on entry into the school and at key points during the academic year to inform teachers of general progress being made in certain key skills areas. From this information, we can identify strategic priorities in the education of cohorts and individuals.
- Secondly, it is used as a formative influence in the day-to-day education of our pupils, informing both teachers and pupils of the developing grasp children have of their on-going education, and enabling them to work together to ensure that key elements of their learning are fully assimilated, and maximum progress is made. Formation also occurs for the children in the form of enhanced recall through the ‘testing effect’, and through the development of skills in how to approach such procedures most successfully.
- Thirdly, it is used in a summative role, giving pupils, parents and teachers a statement of what level a child has reached academically at key points in their school career.

The tools used in our diagnostic assessment schedule involve age-standardised tests in areas such as spelling, reading and maths.

The methods of formative assessment vary depending on the context, and will include a mixture of verbal discussion, observed informal class practice, marked classwork and homework, topic-based tests and termly standardised skills tests.

The summative assessment waymarks are generally an annual process, conducted through formal examination, following subject-specific procedures during the Trinity term. As these summative assessments are a low-stakes process, we also treat them as a formative tool to help children with their developing ability to successfully approach such procedures.

The consequence of all this is that, from Lower 1 (Year 1) upwards, Lower School pupils do undergo regular testing in a low-stakes environment. In the process, we believe that they will progress more quickly, develop useful academic habits, and learn greater confidence regarding the significance of such mechanisms to their lives and their abilities to deal with them.

The use of regular assessments and marking ensures that all pupils are monitored closely, and the Learning Support Coordinator works with staff to identify and cater for any children with specific needs, and who require different teaching strategies, differentiated tasks and additional help to access the curriculum.

The Grades and Reporting System in turn enables staff and parents to monitor the children's attainment and progress as they pass through the school. In addition, it records significant achievements and enables teachers to flag-up concerns to form tutors early, so that strategies can be put in place to support the children.

Assessment in EYFS

Formal assessment in EYFS is limited to the Baseline assessment at the beginning of Reception, and to the 'Base Progress' test later in the year. All further assessment towards the completion of the Early Learning Goals and the EYFS Profile are done through informal ongoing observation.

Learning Support Screening

Pupils are screened on entry to the school for potential learning support needs. Pupils may require specific learning support offered by the Head of Learning Support over a period of time. Ad-hoc support is offered one-to-one, in pairs or in groups for pupils struggling to grasp a particular concept or skill in Maths or English. Further withdrawal support is also given to assist with social skills or coordination difficulties. A record is kept of support given, as well as Educational Plans for pupils with identified specific needs from an educational psychologists report. Pupils' progress is discussed regularly in Common Room meetings.

Planning of the tasks and activities in lessons is adapted as required to ensure that subject matter and level is appropriately challenging for all our pupils. [Further details can be found in the separate Learning Support Policy.]

APPENDIX 2: Marking Policy [KS1 & KS2]

The primary focus of all marking at the Lower School should be to provide pupils with feedback which supports current or future learning.

There are three ways in which our marking should seek to do this:

1. Through acknowledging that learning has been successful and pupil efforts appreciated. This provides for the learner confirmation of their understanding and self-efficacy, and encourages the likelihood of a similar approach to future work.
2. Through seeking to correct misunderstandings or inappropriate ways of working. This is most fruitful if pupils are engaged in thinking through their corrections.
3. Through prompting pupils to think further about the work or topic at hand. This can provide some opportune stretch or enrichment, but shouldn't undermine the first goal.

Teacher marking is not the only way in which successful feedback can be used to achieve these aims, and indeed may not be the most effective. Consequently, whilst direct marking is a good way of ensuring that personal focus is given to each child, more time-efficient approaches are adopted if they can achieve the same ends. Indeed, verbal feedback and self / peer marking is to be encouraged on a regular basis as a way of helping pupils to learn directly from their work, as well as that of others.

It is an additional reality that not every mistake can always be learned from – particularly in a lengthy piece of writing for example – and to try to highlight them all could in fact undermine other ways of moving a child forward, as well as taking time which could potentially be invested in better planning for further learning. Furthermore, different pieces of work can be committed to workbooks for different purposes, and it may well sometimes be the case that acknowledgement and feedback is simply not required.

As a result of this, it is expected that teachers will make a professional judgement regarding the form and quantity of formal marking utilised on different pieces of work. In particular, teachers should prioritise methods which can ensure that feedback is timely, and which will promote actual engagement in reflection by pupils.

Nevertheless, it is expected that, over time, a range of approaches will be used, and also that the following key guidelines will be followed for the benefits of clarity and consistency afforded to the children:

Key expectations of book work and marking

Dates / titles / headings

All pieces should have a date and title, both underlined. In Mathematics, the date should be a numerical equivalent.

Writing Pen

Pupils are expected to have a blue ink writing pen. Many will use a fountain pen but a quality rollerball or fibre-tipped pen is also acceptable. This is used after pupils have graduated from pencil, normally during Lower 2 (Year 3). Pupils who encounter problems with this transition will be given an interim handwriting pen to support them through this process. Ball-point pens are not to be used.

Marking colour

Marking of work which is correct or otherwise pleasing should be completed in green. Corrections, or comments intended to promote further thought in the pupil should be completed in pink. This guidance applies to annotations across the work as well as summative comments. Green and pink highlighters can additionally be used to draw attention to larger sections of work which follow a particular pattern.

Self or peer marking, including corrections and pupil responses to teacher comments during feedback, should be completed in purple pen.

Marking Codes

Whilst subject and teacher-specific marking adaptations may sometimes be beneficial and easily understood by pupils, a series of marking codes has been agreed for use across the school, so as to facilitate simple to use, but easy to understand marking. [Appendix 3]

Grades / Marks

In books, grades are not used and marks are only used for tests (except in Mental Arithmetic books). Teachers should keep an appropriate record of individual pupil progress using grades, marks or designations such as "not met" / "met" / "exceeded" in relation to key objectives, even though these may not be recorded in the pupil's book. All grades should mirror the agreed report grading policy. However, teachers should be wary of grading prep for attainment as the pupil may have received considerable assistance.

Rewards

Teachers should make use of the school Star system. Stickers or a hand-drawn 'smiley face' can be used for encouragement and to create cumulative steps to a reward, with three such tokens equating to a Star. For exceptional work or effort, a straight Star can be awarded. For endeavour and achievement during curricular Games, Sport Education or Music, a yellow star is the appropriate award.

APPENDIX 3: Agreed Lower School Marking Codes

Norwich Lower School Marking Codes	
Symbol	Meaning
✓ or ●	Correct/ pleasing work/LO achieved
● or X	Improve Factually Incorrect
Sp	Incorrect spelling
?	Unclear/missing information
↗	Steps needed to improve this work
VF	Pupil feedback in purple pen (evidence pupil has received FB)