

Icknield High School – Curriculum Policy 2026/27

Rationale

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#), and the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#) which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

In September 2026 our curriculum was updated in line with [The Curriculum and Assessment Review](#) (2025).

The school's curriculum is thoughtfully designed to offer enriching, meaningful experiences that inspire a love of learning and promote academic excellence. It provides students with a broad and balanced education, aligned with the school's core vision and values: to be recognised as an outstanding institution known for exceptional academic outcomes and for nurturing confident, happy, respectful, and compassionate young individuals. These young people are empowered to make a positive and lasting impact on their communities and the wider world.

This vision is underpinned by the school's unwavering commitment to ensuring that every student achieves remarkable progress, reaches the highest standards, and fully realises their unique potential.

Aims

The curriculum at Icknield High School aims to encompass every aspect of a young person's learning; everything we do is underpinned by our overriding philosophy of 'Raising the Achievement of all' where staff have the right to teach and the students have the right to learn. We wish to be recognised as a school that achieves strong academic outcomes whilst also supporting students to become confident, happy, respectful and caring young people who will make a positive difference to their communities and society.

Our aim is to provide a broad and balanced entitlement curriculum where students acquire the knowledge, skills and concepts needed to develop their full potential and become well-rounded individuals.

We aim to ensure that our curriculum is:

- Cohesive: with planning, teaching and assessment well-linked and of a consistently high quality.
- Challenging: being broad and ambitious and informing the level of rigour expected in our classrooms.
- Knowledge-based: outlining the deep knowledge that students need to learn over time to ensure durable changes to the long-term memory.

At Icknield High school we encourage students to immerse themselves in their studies and choose subjects which cater for their potential and capability. In order to give students a broad and balanced experience, we cover the whole of the statutory national curriculum at Key Stage 3 (KS3), and continue to offer a wide range of subjects at Key Stage 4 (KS4). We encourage students of all abilities to follow an academic pathway and are pleased that all of our students study Geography or History and most study Ethics & Philosophy.

As a school we also value the creative arts and believe that every student should be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in this area. As such, every student study the core principles of Art and Design at KS3, before choosing either Art and Design, Graphic Communication, Photography or Textiles to study in greater depth at KS4. We are proud of the fact that all of our students leave us with a GCSE in a creative arts subject and the majority of students excel in this area.

Our curriculum is designed around fifty one-hour lessons over a two-weekly cycle. In addition to this, all year groups begin the day with a 30-minute session with their tutor group. At Icknield the role of a tutor is extremely important and recognised as being crucial in supporting our students' development, both academic and personal.

Implications in order to achieve our aims we expect all subject areas to:

- Provide a curriculum map that directs what knowledge should be taught and when it should be taught. However, this should also allow some flexibility for teachers to respond to the differing needs of their classes.
- Teach their curriculum in a coherent and step-by-step sequence that allows for the incremental development of knowledge within each subject/topic.
- Have units of work that build upon the previous knowledge.
- Embed deep knowledge which is usually the prerequisite for skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, evaluation and analysis.
- Support real learning which requires durable changes to long-term memory.
- Incorporate new tier two and tier three vocabulary into curriculum planning.

This is being implemented in the following ways:

- Each subject/team should have a long-term map that clearly lays out the curriculum across the relevant key stages, so that the knowledge students are expected to acquire each academic year is made explicit. This knowledge should build cumulatively in terms of its breadth and depth.
- Regular retrieval practice and spaced practice should be built into the curriculum to help students form durable long-term memories.
- CPD and Curriculum meeting time must maintain an unrelenting focus on improving and evolving the curriculum, and ensure that all teachers are developing their subject pedagogical knowledge.
- Homework should be planned into the curriculum and consistently applied across teams. It should provide students with the opportunity to practice, embed, extend upon or apply the knowledge that they have been taught in lessons.
- Key curriculum documents are centralised to ensure fair and equitable experience for all students across all teaching groups.
- Assessments at KS3 & KS4 is relevant, meaningful and regularly moderated. The assessment should aid future planning for teachers and leaders.

School Curriculum

The school follows a biweekly timetable consisting of 50 instructional periods spread across two weeks. Each school day includes 5 periods, with each period lasting 60 minutes. This structure allows for a balanced distribution of subjects and learning activities over a ten-day cycle.

Key stage 3 (Year 7, 8 and 9)

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Maths	8	8	8
English	8	8	8
Science	8	8	8
History	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	3
Ethics and Philosophy	2	2	3
MFL (Spanish or French)	3	3	3
Visual Arts	4	4	4
Music	1	1	1
Technology	2	2	2
Computing	2	2	2
PE	4	4	4
PSHE	1	1	1
Extra English	1	1	0

Key Stage 4 (Year 10 and 11)

Options Model	
Core Curriculum	English Language and Literature (8 hours), Maths (8 hours), Triple or Combined Science (8 hours), PE (3 hours) and PSHE (1 hour)
Option 1 – 4 hours	Ethics & Philosophy or Additional Core Support
Option 2 – 6 hours	History, Geography, French or Spanish
Option 3 – 6 hours	Open choice
Option 4 – 6 hours	Visual Art Subject (chosen in Year 8)

Open choices available: Business Studies, Computer Science, Design Technology, Food Preparation & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education, Spanish and Statistics.

Success criteria

- The curriculum in all subjects and at all key stages will be challenging, clearly sequenced, and effective in preparing students for their terminal exams at the end of year 11.
- Students will develop a deep understanding of all their subjects and build their cultural capital through their learning.
- All staff will have secure subject knowledge and be able to deliver all areas of their curriculum with confidence.
- All students will make significant progress, irrespective of their starting points across their subjects.
- All students will be fully ready for the next stage of their educational journey and effectively prepared for the wider world.

Links with other policies:

- Charging and remission policy
- Assessment policy
- Careers policy
- Homework policy
- Examination/Non–Examination Assessment policy
- Provider Access policy
- Relationship and Sex Education
- SEND policy and SEN information report
- Complaints policy