

Intelligent Alignment

A Common Core Curriculum

Intent and Implementation

March 2019

Statement of Intent

1.0 Introduction

An academy's curriculum model articulates its central construct for delivering the common totality of learning opportunities which Trustees, governors and professional educators wish our young people to experience as part of their holistic development. The curriculum encompasses the extent of learning available both from the breadth of formal lessons and in the wider opportunities provided across all Key Stages. This publication addresses Consilium's intentions in this regard.

In the document 'Vision Values and Aims' Consilium Academies Trust presents its fundamental principles as follows:

'Consilium Academies has an inclusive partnership with our communities where lives are enriched by providing care, experience and opportunity.'

Specifically the Trust's aims are articulated as:

- To ensure that everything that we do has a focus on helping children and young people to succeed to their potential; academically, socially and emotionally.
- To instil a passion for life-long learning and continued improvement; so that our academies, staff and students can grasp their aspirations and ambitions.
- To focus on the development of the whole child; by providing exciting and challenging learning and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences.
- To create a family of academies that is inclusive and embraces diversity, where all members of the community feel supported, inspired and empowered to succeed.
- To ensure that all stakeholders are seen as partners in our work within the communities we serve.

The Trust now intends, as the logical next step, to realise these ideals for every student within the Trust through the mechanism of curriculum offer, inclusive of all within the Academy Trust. This principled aim consequently drives a requirement to develop a commonality of elements applied across all our individual academy's curriculum offers. Alignment in this aspect of Trust-wide operation will follow the previously expressed Trust policy of intelligent implementation. This will lead to the delivery of essential elements of learning across all Consilium academies, while accommodating scope for appropriate localised flexibility.

Consilium Academies believes the five years of compulsory secondary phase education should be a cumulative learning experience which supports students to build the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and attitudes required for the next chosen steps in their learning journey. The curriculum should make an important contribution to assisting students become successful, healthy and well-adjusted adults, capable of functioning proactively in modern Britain and within the global community.

The Trust recognises the separate and specialised functions of Key Stages 3 and 4 while acknowledging that the first provides the foundation for the second. Seamless integration between the two is the mark of a system which will successfully transition students through the five years of secondary phase learning.

One of the core values of Consilium Academies Trust is to provide inclusive educational provision at each of its academies. The Trust recognises that the preferred models are appropriate for mainstream educational experience. However, there may be some students for whom these models do not best meet their particular needs. Therefore, where such circumstances arise, there is scope for adjustment for individual academies to tailor students' curriculum experiences to secure effective individualised progress. It is expected that this will only apply to a small minority of students. There is also some scope to tailor the models to recognise particular academies' strengths and expertise.

Any medium to longer term significant variance from the models and methodologies described in this publication will require robust educational rationale, supported by the Local Governing Board and members of the senior leadership team, to be presented by senior leaders of the academy and accepted by Trustees (or their representatives) at their discretion.

2.0 Key Stage 3

As previously observed this Key Stage must form a secure foundation from which students can develop successful study in their later progress towards public examinations. However, Key Stage 3 must encompass more than just this function. It should be a time when the breadth of learning continues to include a wider range of subject areas so as to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills forming the rounded comprehensive educational base required for each individuals' future in the wider context. This means learning across the curriculum at this stage needs to extend beyond the more confined and specialised requirements of GCSE and vocational course specifications. It should also provide opportunities for teachers to follow students', and their own, interests within subject studies, a time for appropriate experimentation and the potential to develop students' enthusiasm for subjects and the range of learning types this entails.

There is therefore need to sufficiently secure this broader educational base and position the necessary precursory choice mechanism, leading to initial specialisation, at an appropriate point in children's maturation. As a consequence Consilium's preferred Key Stage 3 offer will encompass the first three years of compulsory secondary education. **The Trust expects all currently incorporated academies to implement this pattern, impacting 2018-19 Y8 and subsequent year groups, from September 2019.**

The Trust also expects that by September 2020 all currently incorporated academies will operate a Key Stage 3 curriculum model which emulates the preferred model described in table KS3.1. Where individual academy's current curriculum models are at variance with the preferred models there is an expectation that academies in this circumstance action a change management plan. Any such plans will aim to move, as far as is practicably possible, towards Consilium's recommendation for the academic year starting September 2019 with closer emulation of the preferred models following in September 2020.

Table KS3.1

KS3 Curriculum Area	Taught time allocation
English	16%
Mathematics	16%
Science	12%
Geography	8%
History	8%
Modern Foreign Languages	8%
Physical Education	8%
Technology	8%
Information Communications Technology	4%
Art & Design	4%
Music/Performing Arts	4%
Personal/Social/Health/Religious/Ethics/Citizenship/IAG	4%

The Trust further expects that all our academies will, as far as is practicably possible, use specialist teachers to deliver lessons in subject areas and to develop a trained team for the promotion and timetabled delivery of Personal/Social/Health/Religious/Ethics/Citizenship/IAG lessons. There is an expectation that within each curriculum area careful consideration of delivery will result in sequenced teaching and learning that best promotes progress and results in long term retention of knowledge, understanding and skills. Alignment expectations for teaching and learning are explored in greater detail later in this document and in the Trust's publication 'Common Fundamentals of Teaching & Learning'.

Consilium Academies will also monitor proxy indicators of curriculum efficiency. All Consilium academies are familiar with analysis mechanisms such as integrated curriculum led financial planning, which describes an ideal contact ratio of 78%. Senior managers in our academies need to be aware of how significant savings, or additional costs, are dependent upon relatively small changes in this ratio eg in an academy with a roll of 500 students a reduction of 0.5 percentage points in the contact ratio will generate an annual saving equivalent to the salary of an average FTE teacher. Where academies have not yet achieved a contact ratio at or close to the ideal they are expected to work towards it. Alongside, and allied to this figure, is average teaching group size, which also has optimum figures associated with efficient and effective deployment of resources. In Key Stage 3 the average group size is recommended to be not less than 25 students.

3.0 Key Stage 4

In Key Stage 4 students continue to study core and foundation subjects but also begin some specialisation of learning, which is most often related to notions of interest and aptitude, future studies and/or career pathways. During the latter part of Key Stage 3 students will have received comprehensive and considered guidance regarding appropriate study choices and will also have completed a process leading to confirmation of their selected option subjects.

This means that academies require greater flexibility in constructing their Key Stage 4 curriculum models so that pathways through the latter two years of the secondary phase can meet students' needs. Such pathways are expected to be designed to meet the requirements of particular proportions of each cohort on entry to Key Stage 4; an EBacc pathway would be a case in point. However, these pathways should not be so rigid that they cannot accommodate less common choice combinations eg academic students who wish to follow traditionally vocational pathway careers. In essence, the guidance given to individual students, and hence the pathway they embark upon, must not compromise Consilium Academies' expressed values.

In considering these factors, Consilium Academies Trust has developed a preferred common core Key Stage 4 curriculum model which, in parallel with the Key Stage 3 model, will be adopted across currently incorporated academies by September 2020 (for 2018-19 Y8 and subsequent years' students). This gives scope to tailor the offer of a suite of option courses, grouped into pathways where appropriate, which meet student needs, future study and career aspirations.

The Key Stage 4 preferred common core curriculum model is described below:

Table KS4.1

KS4 Core Curriculum Area	Taught time allocation
English	16%
Mathematics	16%
Science	16 - 20%
Physical Education	4 - 8%
Personal/Social/Health/Religious/Ethics/Citizenship/IAG	2 - 4%
Option A	10%
Option B	10%
Option C	10%
Option D	10%

The inclusion of four options is suggested in the preferred model in order to retain the potential for the total number of qualifications to include a 'safety-net' and for students who follow traditionally highly academic pathways to also continue study in a creative subject.

As observed earlier in this document Consilium will monitor average group size as a proxy indicator of efficiency. The recommendation for Key Stage 4 is an average group size of not less than 22 students. Consilium Academies recognises that there are some special circumstances regarding this figure, particularly where the preservation of study in 'minority' subjects eg. music, is at stake. This can be discussed by the Trust at individual academy level.

4.0 Securing a Comprehensive Curriculum Experience

Consilium's 'Vision, Values and Aims' publication describes the Trust's mission statement which is referenced in the opening section of this document. Realisation of these aims requires wider experiences than can be provided by formal learning opportunities alone.

Each of our academies' curriculum models encompasses the entirety of learning intentions and, as confirmed previously in this document, includes formal lessons extended by enrichment activities within subject delivery. Our academies greatly augment these formal programmes by offering additional experiences, not necessarily related to specific subjects or courses, and learning opportunities beyond the classroom. This extends from the everyday subtle social and attitudinal learning promoted by atmosphere, ethos and relationship expectations, to the largest special set-piece experiences arranged at whole class, year group or whole school level. Eg. educational visits, cultural experiences, national or international residential events, visiting speakers etc.

In each of our academies this element of the core curriculum should add value in each of the five years of secondary experience, and continue beyond for those with post sixteen provision. The enrichment experience envelope, described as aspirational entitlements in the Consilium Academies Charter, include the following aspects:

- A cultural event (a Shakespeare play, a classical concert/opera, visit a major art gallery)
- A major sporting event
- An educational residential visit (national or international)
- An outdoor education experience that is challenging (there needs to be an adrenaline rush)
- An opportunity to play a musical instrument
- Providing a reference or literature book as a memento/token of their time at the academy - this will have the academy and Trust logo on the inside cover
- An opportunity to spend time with students with a different cultural background
- Supporting a charitable activity
- A visit to a regional university
- An opportunity to be involved in voluntary/community event that could be externally accredited e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award

Each of our academies will aspire to offer such experiences to all students during their time in secondary education.

5.0 Creating and Implementing A Coherent Curriculum

The list of KS3 and KS4 subjects describes only the fundamentals of an academy's curriculum model. The curriculum itself is much more than can be contained in a subject list. Within each of the curriculum areas Senior and Middle Leaders and teachers must carefully consider what content, from the plethora of material available, takes priority for inclusion in the Programme of Learning. In turn the Programme of Learning requires careful sequencing so that students' can acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in accessible 'parcels' at appropriate points of maturation.

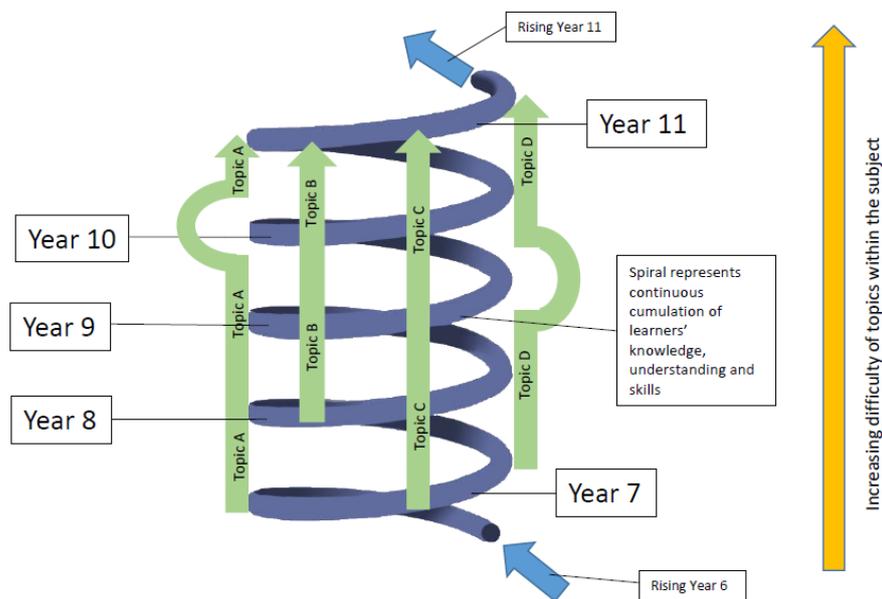
Programmes of Learning, or Learning Maps, are important planning tools for teachers. They should be constructed with clear sequencing to maximise opportunities resulting in long-term memory changes with understanding (learning).

6.0 Consilium Academies' Secondary Phase: A Curriculum and Teaching Model For Compulsory Years' Learning Experiences – Securing Effective Impact

Diagram ST1.1

Sequencing Teaching for Cumulative Learning Within A Secondary Curriculum Subject

Example representation of 5 Years' Programme of Learning within a subject



Within each core subject the learning experience across five years of secondary schooling is designed to be a seamless pathway which presents a continuous sequence (the spiral representation in diagram ST1.1) of appropriate opportunities for extension of knowledge, skills and understanding. Topics, which are each subject's constituent pillars, are deconstructed such that teaching delivery can be logically ordered to build cumulatively across the five years of secondary compulsory education. These sub-divisions of topic material are allocated to portions of the scheme of learning for given years within the overall programme. Evidence based cognitive constructivist learning theory, drawn from the wealth of scholarly study in the field of psychology of education, strongly supports the effectiveness of this learning model. This can be viewed as a macro-application of the theory.

Diagram ST1.1 illustrates the learning path within a core subject, ie one which is studied in each of the five years. Each of these years is represented along the path, but the path itself is continuous. The green pillars represent topics, albeit a limited number for illustrative purposes, within a subject, some of which have elements taught in each of the five years, some which are only taught in selected years. Eg Elements of Topic A are taught in each of years 7, 8, 9 and 11 (but not year 10). The delivery of Topic B does not begin until year 8 but is then taught in that and each of the subsequent years. These elements should increase in complexity such that what is learned in a later year builds upon the foundations created in earlier teaching. Long-term memory changes combined with deeper understanding and higher skill levels (learning) are promoted and reinforced by the sequenced delivery of, and multiple returns to, each topic over a number of years, providing opportunities for recap before teaching the next, more complex, element of the topic.

The more long-term memory/understanding change is secured the greater the number of links between one topic and another, both within and beyond the subject in question, a student can establish and so their capacity for future learning is consequentially increased.

Where a Consilium Academies' preferred programme of learning is not offered for a subject it will be for individual academies and their subject experts to determine the learning programmes spanning the five years of the secondary phase. It is important that leaders plan a cohesive and effective programme in each subject, and that teaching staff work to this plan, in order to foster more effective learning.

The efficacy of delivery of the curriculum is measured by its impact. Impact depends upon the effectiveness of sequencing and the skills of our teachers to enthuse, engage, present and explain curriculum content to students in ways which allow changes, whether they be in knowledge, understanding or skills, to long-term memory. To this end the Trust describes good teaching to include the following elements:

7.0 Fundamental Features of Effective Teaching and Learning

It is expected that the effective Consilium Academies' teacher will, over the delivery of a learning topic or unit, demonstrate an expert familiarity with, and deployment of, the following features in their teaching:

- Excellent subject knowledge
- High expectations for all students and a commitment to equality of opportunity
- Regular review of prior achievement so that planned learning is cumulative
- Appropriately detailed planning which includes differentiation suited to the range of abilities
- Establishment and maintenance of a positive learning environment
- Consistency in classroom craft
- Developing and sustaining rapport
- Clear instructions imparted to students
- Clear exposition with tailored deconstruction of concepts to facilitate 'chunking-up' for effective understanding
- Astute questioning which skilfully engages, challenges and develops students' learning
- Deployment of a variety of teaching approaches which stimulate students' interests and engagement
- Use of illustrative examples which are relevant, interesting, stimulating and engaging
- A focus on developing students' vocabulary, both generally and in subject related technical language
- Use of group work providing accountability for all, including the deployment of a variety of groupings over time
- Thinking and consolidation time incorporated into classroom experience to ensure deeper understanding and longitudinal retention
- Learning opportunities designed to appropriately stretch knowledge and understanding
- Deliberate development of subject skills with time to practice and embed
- Formative and summative assessment that is used to identify strengths, areas for development in learning and to inform next steps planning
- Feedback to students which demonstrates progress and includes advice on how to improve

- Setting meaningful and regular homework that furthers learning
- Evidence in books of quality teaching and learning, which builds to become a useful revision resource
- Effective and thorough preparation for high performance in internal and external assessment
- Evaluation of lessons used to inform future teaching and which continually develops the teacher as a reflective practitioner

The constructivist learning theory model, referred to in the previous section, can also be applied in the micro-environment of a single lesson, or sequence of lessons. This is achieved when the teacher deconstructs a topic of study and leads students through a reconstruction process, with appropriately sized steps providing a scaffolded experience. This greatly assists students in their learning.

It is not expected that in any single lesson a teacher will demonstrate all the aspects included in the features list but that if a sequence of lessons were to be observed then these effective strategies and tactics would be noted.

8.0 Concluding Remarks

Consilium Academies Trust wishes to provide the highest quality learning and developmental opportunities for all its students, in whichever of our academies they attend. It is beholden of our professional educators to view and articulate delivery of the curriculum models in holistic terms. Ensuring, through careful consideration, that the experiences offered are those intended and that they build into a sequenced, cohesive, whole which supports our young people across all required dimensions as they prepare for adult life.