

Annex 1: Curriculum Review

Sandwell Academy continually strives to ensure that our students receive the best possible education and have access to a wealth of experiences and opportunities. Much has been put in place to support students as we move to more normal school arrangements and out of the pandemic, but even with the hard work of students, parents and staff, it was inevitable that children's education would be impacted, and this is something that our assessments have confirmed.

With our longer school day and longer lessons, the Academy has in the past covered all of the Key Stage 3 curriculum during Years 7 and 8. This allowed students to choose their options a year sooner and make an early start to GCSE and BTEC courses. Students were able to move to their next stage of learning having established a good Key Stage 3 foundation on which to build. Our approach has been highly successful, though we always keep arrangements under continual review to ensure they meet the needs of our students.

During the spring term of 2021/22, we undertook an evaluation of the Academy's curriculum and the progress our students were making towards their Key Stage 3 attainment targets. Students had been working well and responding to support when needed, but it was clear that the disruption of the past two years had led to the need to cover more ground than previously. Whilst we had anticipated Year 8 students would be ready to move to the next key stage and select their GCSE and BTEC courses, it was concluded that this would not be in the students' best interests, and more time was required to build that solid foundation of learning.

Furthermore, following the relatively recent changes to GCSEs that remove many course work components, our subject teams confirmed that GCSE and BTEC course can be successfully delivered over the more usual two year time period of Years 10 and 11; this is especially true given our longer lessons, school days and Session 3 provision.

Accordingly, from September 2022, the Academy will move to a three year Key Stage 3 curriculum. Some of the benefits students will experience from the curriculum change include:

- greater opportunity to address gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills before starting Key Stage 4 courses
- access to a wider range of subjects for a longer period of time before making option choices
- a richer curriculum at Key Stage 3 with more opportunities for subject enhancement
- greater opportunity to support literacy and numeracy

The curriculum changes affect current Year 7 and 8 students (in 2021/22), and our future intake, and will remain in place under continual review.

Academic Year	Curriculum Change Plan
2022/23	Transition Year: Year 9 – First year group to experience 3 rd year of Key Stage 3 curriculum
2023/24	Transition Year: Year 10 – First year of two-year Key Stage 4 courses Year 11 – Last year group to complete three-year Key Stage 4 course
2024/25	Transition Complete Years 7 – 9 Key Stage 3 Years 10-11 Key Stage 4