Curriculum Policy

Shrewsbury School

September 2026

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1. Academic Life at Shrewsbury School

1.1 At Shrewsbury, we are passionate about the 'serious fun' of learning. Academic life focusses on developing intellectually curious young adults who are able to think critically and creatively, have the confidence to question and to challenge and are equipped with the skills that they will need to thrive at all stages of life.

1.2 We want all our pupils to aspire to a love of scholarship, and we prepare them thoroughly to achieve success in Public Examinations. We also understand that academic fulfilment is not confined to examination results, nor should it be exclusive to the brightest pupils. We celebrate involvement in all areas of academic life and academic passions are fostered both inside and outside the classroom via enriching activities in all areas of school life, which include super-curricular Academic Perspectives courses offered by all faculties, pupil-led academic societies, a vibrant Shrewsbury Dialogues visiting speaker programme and comprehensive programme of academic trips.

1.3 The curriculum at Shrewsbury School gives all pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. We operate a weekly timetable with 37 lessons each lasting 40 minutes to ensure that enough time is dedicated to achieving our curriculum aims.

1.4 Heads of Faculty are responsible for devising Schemes of Work which provide subject matter appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan. All staff share the responsibility for ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and to make progress and that their educational needs are met. The Deputy Head (Academic) and Deputy Head (Learning and Partnerships) scrutinise the Schemes of Work of every Faculty during regular faculty reviews to ensure that they are appropriate to the needs, ages and aptitudes of all pupils and that each makes an explicit statement that the curricula for each subject discipline do not undermine the Fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Across the range of subjects, pupils are given the opportunity to acquire and improve their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. In the case of any pupil with an EHC plan, the School will ensure that its educational provision reflects their needs.

1.5 Pupil progress is monitored by all classroom teachers in their subject. Heads of Faculty, Heads of Section, Housemasters, Tutors and the Deputy Head (Academic) monitor patterns of individual pupil progress in their respective area. Parents and guardians are invited to raise academic matters with appropriate staff whenever they wish to do so. In addition, annual Parent Consultations for each of the five year groups ensure that pupil progress and future prospects can be discussed in detail.

1.6 The information within this policy provides a basic overview of our curriculum. Detailed Schemes of Work can be found in Faculty Handbooks.

2. The Third Form (Year 9)

2.1 Pupils arriving in the Third Form, aged 13, undertake a broad and comprehensive curriculum called Origin, named with our most famous alumnus, Charles Darwin, in mind.

2.2 There are three aims to the Origin Curriculum:

- to ensure that all pupils reach a high level of proficiency in key areas of competency: Literacy, Numeracy, Physicality, Creativity, Digital Skills, Cultural Appreciation and Communication,
- to ensure that all pupils engage actively in their learning and participate wholeheartedly in activities designed to build confidence, self-awareness and reflection in conjunction with the co-curricular aspects of their education,
- to ensure all pupils understand that academic study is neither restricted by traditional subject boundaries, nor determined entirely by routes to qualification.

2.3 All pupils follow a full year's course in English, History, Geography, Philosophy & Theology, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Music, Drama, PE, Design & Technology, Art and Computer Science.

2.4 Pupils choose two additional language courses from French, German, Spanish, Latin and Classical Greek.

2.5 Pupils who are registered as having English as an Additional Language (EAL) may choose to take a course in EAL within the timetable in place of one of their additional languages.

2.6 All pupils attend one lesson per week in Personal and Social Development (PSD), which forms part of the PSHE education programme, including the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

2.7 Pupils have one tutorial per week with their house tutor, which provides an opportunity for them to discuss their progress in a group setting and also for the tutor to monitor academic standards, comment on reports and set goals for the future. Tutors offer advice and guidance on time management, methods of learning, revision planning and other academic and pastoral matters.

2.8 In the Lent Term of the Third Form, pupils choose (I)GCSE options (see Section 3). To help them make informed decisions, pupils engage in a series of tutorials and assemblies providing them with the information they need, which is all published in the Middle Years Curriculum Guide, which is available to all pupils and parents on the School website. Parents and guardians also have the opportunity to attend a GCSE Options Webinar in the Lent Term of the Third Form.

2.8 All Third Form pupils take part in a programme of careers education, delivered by the Futures Department. Through tutorials, Third Formers have the opportunity to reflect and record their employability skills through engagement with Unifrog, a web-based platform. Third Form pupils also attend PSD lessons on decision making and attend our an 'Enterprising Futures Conference', which includes workshops developing key employability skills, delivered by UK based entrepreneurs.

3. The Fourth Form (Year 10)

3.1 Fourth Form pupils have the opportunity to develop their broad academic experience into a more specialised curriculum that will cater to their preferences. The Fourth Form Curriculum is centred around (I)GCSE course and pupils will continue to study the core disciplines that will equip them with the skills and knowledge to thrive in later life and will choose additional subjects, selected from a wide range of disciplines, that should accommodate all individual academic passions.

3.2 The aim of the Fourth Form curriculum is to continue to inspire a lifelong love of learning, intellectual curiosity, independence of mind, critical thinking, articulacy and creativity through a two-year programme that will lead to (I)GCSE examinations in the summer of the Fifth Form. The vast majority of pupils take between 8 and 10 (I)GCSEs via a pathway that is the best fit for each individual.

3.3 All pupils attend one lesson per week in Personal and Social Development (PSD), which forms part of the PSHE education programme and also includes the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

3.4 All pupils study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Sciences to IGCSE.

3.5 There are two pathways to IGCSE science. The most confident scientists will take three Separate Science IGCSEs, with the other pathway leading to the Double Award, resulting in two IGCSEs. Regardless of pathway, all pupils attend separate classes in Biology, Physics and Chemistry, taught by subject specialists, and will receive the same total contact time. The School will recommend a science pathway for each pupil at the end of the Third Form and decisions will be made in dialogue with pupils and parents.

3.6 In addition to the compulsory subjects, pupils must choose four (I)GCSE courses from French, German, Spanish, Latin, Ancient History, Classical Greek, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology, Religious Studies, Music, PE, Drama and Computer Science.

3.7 While it is not compulsory for Fourth Form pupils to choose a modern or classical language, they are strongly encouraged to take at least one of French, German, Spanish, Latin, or Classical Greek as one of their three or four optional subjects.

3.8 In place of one optional (I)GCSE course, pupils may choose a non-examined course in Guided Study. This is a less academically demanding course designed for pupils who would benefit from additional support with their learning in their other academic subjects. Its aim is to boost academic confidence and help pupils achieve their personal-best grades in their (I)GCSE subjects.

3.9 All lessons at Shrewsbury are enriching and intellectually stimulating and opportunities outside the classroom include clubs, societies, Shrewsbury Dialogues (our wide-ranging academic lecture programme) and the opportunity to complete the Level 2 Higher Project Qualification (HPQ). There is also a comprehensive programme of subject clinics providing optional support to pupils outside of the core timetable.

3.10 High performing mathematicians will also have the option of taking an additional accredited Maths course at the end of the Fifth Form, which will serve as excellent preparation for those who end up choosing Maths in the Sixth Form.

3.11 Pupils who have prior experience in Russian, Chinese or Japanese may complete GCSE qualifications in the Fourth Form by attending weekly tutorials outside the timetable.

3.12 All Fourth Form pupils take part in a programme of careers education, delivered by the Futures Department. Fourth Form pupils discuss careers and future plans during PSD lessons and tutorials, which incorporate psychometric testing (linked to choosing a career), Skills Battle, and Jobs of Tomorrow. During the Summer Term, Fourth Form pupils participate in a 'Future Leaders' conference led by local and national careers leaders.

4. The Fifth Form (Year 11)

4.1 Pupils will continue with the two-year courses started in the Fourth Form leading to (I)GCSE qualifications.

4.2 All pupils attend fortnightly lessons in Personal and Social Development (PSD), which form part of the PSHE education programme and also includes the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).

4.3 In the Lent Term of the Fifth Form, pupils choose A Levels (see Section 4). To help them make informed decisions, pupils engage in an A Level Options Fair, providing them with the information they need, which is all published in the Sixth Form and Beyond Curriculum Guide, which is available to all pupils and parents on the School website. Heads of faculty also publish videos on each A Level subject and their curricula, which are also available on the School website. All Fifth Form Pupils, parents and guardians also have the opportunity to attend the A Level Options Fair in the Lent Term of the Fifth Form.

4.4 All Fifth Form pupils take part in a programme of careers education, delivered by the Futures Department. All Fifth Form pupils are expected to engage in a work experience placement during the year, with the support of the Futures Department and pupils attend one-to-one guidance interviews with the Head of Futures or the Futures Advisor to discuss A Level choices and work experience options. Pupils also access careers support via the PSD and Tutorial programme. Fifth Form pupils also attend a “Careers Fair” at the end of the Summer Term after (I)GCSE Exams.

4.4 At the end of the academic year, following the (I)GCSE Examinations, the School hosts a week-long ‘Post GCSE Programme’ where pupils have the opportunity to attend taster A Level lessons in their chosen subjects, making adjustments to their choices if appropriate.

5. The Sixth Form (Years 12 & 13)

5.1 The aim of the Sixth Form curriculum at Shrewsbury is to give pupils flexibility, breadth and the academic rigour that prepares them for enrolment at some of the world's best universities and other post-school destinations.

5.2 All pupils entering the Lower Sixth (Year 12) must make four options leading to at least three A Levels at the end of their two years in the Sixth Form. The fourth option should be one of:

- A Fourth A Level - academically ambitious pupils are encouraged to take this route, which typically approximately 20% of Shrewsbury pupils will follow.
- Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) - this highly-valued Level 3 qualification, which is equivalent to half an A Level is completed in the Lower Sixth Year. It is an opportunity for pupils to develop project management and independent research skills on a topic that most interest them.
- Future Ready Qualifications (FRQ) - this bespoke Shrewsbury course, completed in the Lower Sixth year, incorporates a range of qualifications that focus on employability and leadership skills, including the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) Level 2 qualification, Microsoft Digital Skills qualifications, and a course on AI Literacy, Skills & the Future of Work.
- US universities and SAT Preparation (SAT) – this in-house course, completed in the Lower Sixth year, prepares pupils for application and admission to competitive US universities and includes training for SAT Maths and English examinations, essay-writing guidance, and application support.
- Business and Entrepreneurship Diploma (BED) – this UCAS-accredited course, completed in the Lower Sixth year, is delivered by collaboration between the Futures and Business Faculties. It teaches pupils the skills to develop a business idea from scratch and bring it to market, with a customer-focused approach.
- Independent Study Skills (ISS) – this course is the Sixth Form version of our Guided Study course in Middle School. It is designed to support pupils in developing the essential independent study skills required to successfully navigate A Level programmes, while providing them with structured time to work on their studies with staff support and guidance.

5.3 All Sixth Form entrants are supported in making A Level choices by the Sixth Form Admissions Tutor (new entrants) or their Pastoral Tutor (Fifth Form pupils). To help them make informed decisions, all pupils, parents and guardians are provided with the information they need in the Lent Term prior to the Lower Sixth year. This is published in the Sixth Form and Beyond Curriculum Guide, which is available to all pupils, parents and guardians on the School website. All pupils, parents and guardians also have the opportunity to attend an A Level Options Fair in the Lent Term prior to the Lower Sixth year.

5.4 Pupils can choose from 25 A Level subjects: English Literature, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Ancient Greek, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Government and Politics, Philosophy & Theology, Classical Civilisation, History of Art, Economics, Business Studies, Theatre Studies, Physical Education, Art, Photography, Music, and Design and Technology.

5.5 Pupils make provisional A Level choices in the Lent Term prior to the Lower Sixth year and are welcome to make changes, where they can be accommodated in the timetable, up to the first Coach Weekend of the Lower Sixth year. Pupils cannot expect to make any changes after the first Coach Weekend of the Lower Sixth year, as at that point a significant amount of course content has already been covered.

5.6 Pupils in the Lower Sixth must also take one 'Academic Perspectives' course in each of the Michaelmas and Lent Terms. These courses, which are for one period per week, are classified as either 'Deepen' or 'Widen'. 'Deepen' courses provide pupils with an opportunity to enhance learning directly relevant to their A Level studies, such as improving their essay writing, or

revisiting foundational mathematical or scientific knowledge. These courses aim to further support pupils finding one or more parts of their A Level studies challenging. 'Widen' courses are designed to add breadth and innovation to their learning parallel to the A Level specification, which includes embedding key skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy, research, communication, creativity and enquiry. These courses present pupils with an opportunity to explore learning outside their chosen A Level subjects.

5.7 Pupils with significant prior experience of Modern Foreign Languages, including French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese or Japanese may choose to complete a Level 3 qualification (A Level or AS Level) in that language in the Lower Sixth year. This requires approval from the relevant MFL Head of Faculty and ultimately from the Deputy Head (Academic). The School may require pupils to demonstrate their level of proficiency via assessment, prior to being entered for the examinations.

5.8 At carefully selected points in the Sixth Form curriculum, pupils attend talks and seminars in Personal and Social Development (PSD), which form part of the PSHE education programme, and also includes the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Sixth Formers receive a range of presentations on lifestyle issues which are designed to help them move towards life as university students and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

5.9 The Futures Department is responsible for ensuring that pupils are well advised and informed when making some of the most important life decisions. The department is a physical space in the centre of School, open to Sixth Form pupils throughout term time, but Futures provision is also embedded into our curriculum, from academic lessons, tutorials and PSHE, to several flagship events that ensure that all pupils engage with the opportunities on offer. For further information about Futures activity in the Sixth Form Curriculum, please see the Sixth Form and Beyond Curriculum Booklet. Significant events include:

- Introduction to Futures and Unifrog (new students),
- Futures Evenings (themes include leadership and employability skills),
- House visits on planning for life after Shrewsbury (parents able to attend or offered Webinar as alternative),
- Mock Assessment Centre afternoon,
- HE & Gap Year Fair,
- Careers Fair,
- 1:1 guidance interview with a member of the Futures Team.
- Futures lessons in curriculum: topics include Student Finance, Salopian Connect, Gap Year Planning, Personal Statement Workshop, Career Insight Talks, Personal Statements (delivered by external universities), registering on UCAS.
- Three workshops as part of the PSD 6th Sense Festival (Choosing Courses and Places, Personal Statement drafting).

6. Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE), including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

6.1 The School's PSHE Education Programme is embedded into the curriculum and reflects its aims and ethos. It is delivered through a combination of classroom lessons, seminars and lectures and is updated to include reference to the latest statutory guidance e.g. Relationships and Sex Education (DfE 2019, updated 2021) and non-statutory guidance e.g. Promoting Fundamental British values as part of SMSC in Schools (DfE 2014). This is delivered through the Personal Social Development (PSD) programme and also via regular lectures, workshops, visits off site, and consultations with staff. For more information see Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 above and the School's separate *Relationships and Sex Education Policy*.

6.2 In 2021, the School undertook a whole-school community review titled the 'Respect Project', led by the Headmaster. It aimed to devise appropriate initiatives to further embed the values of equality, diversity and inclusion in our daily life and work at Shrewsbury. The work included listening to views, raising awareness, assessing the perceived strengths of our school culture, policy and practice, identifying weaknesses and areas to improve, and gathering input to form an action plan. The work of the 'Respect Project' was conducted with reference to all aspects protected by UK equality legislation.

7. Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs

7.1 Shrewsbury is an academically selective school and we welcome all pupils who can access our curriculum to make the most of the opportunities that we offer and who can flourish in the caring environment of Shrewsbury. Treating every pupil as an individual is central to our philosophy and ethos, and we welcome pupils with special educational needs, including those with disabilities, provided that they attain the academic standard for entry and that our Learning Support Department can provide them with the support they require. For further information please see the School's *SEN & Learning Difficulties Policy*.

8. Academic Enrichment

8.1 We want all our pupils to aspire to a love of scholarship and there is much more to the academic adventure than Public Examination qualifications. Pupils are encouraged to enter external competitions (e.g. Olympiads, national essay writing competitions) and regularly achieve success on the national stage.

8.2 Internal opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Shrewsbury Dialogues – the School's wide ranging visiting speaker programme.
- Junior Essay Prize – open to Third and Fourth Form pupils; pupils write an essay on a choice of titles from across the curriculum.
- Hillary Essay Prize – open to Sixth Form pupils; pupils write a one-hour essay on a previously unseen one word essay title.
- Bentley Elocution Competition – open to all pupils; pupils learn and recite a poem of their choice.
- McEachran Competition – open to all pupils; pupils choose a line of poetry and prose and articulate what it means to them.
- Hawksley-Burbury Competition – open to Fifth and Sixth Form pupils; a competition assessing scientific practical and observation skills.
- Arnold Hagger Prize – open to all pupils; England's longest running Mathematics competition.
- Powell Prize – open to all Third Form pupils; house Maths competition.
- David Harrison Prize – open to all pupils; a competition assessing the presentation of an area of mathematical interest.
- MFL Speaking Competition – open to all pupils; pupils learn and recite a poem of their choice in a foreign language.

8.3 External opportunities, that Shrewsbury pupils regularly enter, but are not limited to:

- Aristotelian Award
- Higher Project Qualification
- UKMT Senior Maths Challenge
- British Mathematical Olympiad
- British Physics Olympiad
- British Astrophysics Olympiad
- British Chemistry Olympiad
- Cambridge Chemistry Challenge
- British Biology Olympiad
- British Linguistics Olympiad
- Science CREST awards
- Oxford and Cambridge University Essay writing competitions.

8.4 Academic societies exist in all subject areas, with an extensive programme of pupil-hosted events and publications throughout the year.

8.5 Each subject area runs its own university preparation classes and there are revision classes and academic clinics available throughout the year for all pupils, as well as educational visits in the UK and abroad in a number of subjects alongside a wide range of non-academic trips and expeditions.

9. The co-curriculum

9.1 A broad co-curricular programme provides a balanced range of activities to complement the academic curriculum in keeping with the School's commitment to whole-person education. Pupils are stretched appropriately and are encouraged to actively engage in a range of co-curricular areas.

9.2 The co-curricular programme is focused on developing skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, and resilience and is linked explicitly to the skills they develop in the classroom.

9.3 Pupils in the Third Form sign up for four sessions of sport per week, pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Form sign up for a minimum of three sessions, and Sixth Form pupils are required to participate in a minimum of two sessions. Sports sessions range from team games to individual pursuits and there is the opportunity to play sport competitively or engage at a recreational level. All students are educated about the importance of physical activity to their health and well-being. Sports offered include football, hockey, netball, rowing, rugby, cricket, dance, tennis, squash, badminton, fives, cross-country running, athletics, fencing, and golf. External fixtures and house competitions take place weekly in a wide variety of sports.

9.4 All pupils from the Third to Lower Sixth Forms participate in Thursday afternoon activities where a wide range is offered. In the Third Form, pupils take part in the BASE programme, which offers taster sessions in all the Thursday Activity options as well as providing a basic grounding in Outdoor Education. This culminates in Activities Week in the Summer Term. In the Fourth and Fifth Form, students may choose from Creative and Performing Arts, Adventure (Outdoor Education), CCF and Volunteering. In the Sixth Form, an even wider choice of activities is offered, including Natural History, Microsoft Skills and Scuba Diving.

9.5 There is a strong tradition of Music, Dance and Drama with the House play season and the Inter-House singing competition ensuring that all pupils at the School are engaged with the performing arts at some point during the course of the academic year. Over 30 ensembles and over 500 individual instrumental lessons take place each week, with a rich and varied programme of concerts encouraging pupils to develop an interest in Music of all genres. In Drama, ten school and house productions take place each year, with a large number of pupils taking part in performance or backstage. The annual John Weaver Dance Festival is a highlight of the year.

9.6 The School is a registered examination centre for Trinity and ABRSM examinations in instrumental and vocal music, for ISTD examinations in ballet, tap and contemporary dance and for LAMDA examinations in speech and drama.

10. Careers Guidance

10.1 Careers Guidance is coordinated and delivered by the Futures Department, which received Career Mark Accreditation in 2022 and re-accredited in 2024, and again in 2026.

10.2 The School is committed to providing a planned and progressive programme of Futures activities for all pupils, calibrated against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and working in partnership with employers, alumni, education providers and external agencies.

10.3 The Futures Programme is presented in an impartial manner, promoting equality of opportunity and no pupil will be disadvantaged in gaining access to education, training or work.

10.4 Throughout all year groups the Futures Programme at Shrewsbury ensures that:

- Pupils leave Shrewsbury School with the necessary skills and attributes to enable them to progress to courses and careers that match their abilities.
- Pupils are provided with the information, advice and guidance to enable informed decision making about their future learning and/or career.
- Pupils are encouraged to understand their potential and the range of opportunities available to them in education and employment.
- Pupils are helped to participate in volunteering or work experience and develop enterprise and employment skills.

10.5 When pupils leave Shrewsbury School, they will have received the appropriate and relevant information, guidance and support to enable them to progress to an opportunity in further or higher education, training or employment. Additionally, former pupils, regardless of age will always be able to access support from the School with regards to information, advice and guidance, as required.

10.6 Information about year-group specific Futures provision can be found in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.

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