

# ARK Soane Academy

*'Ensuring our students have the education and character to go on to live happy, fulfilled lives as the drivers of their own destinies.'*

## Curriculum Policy

2021-2022

*"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."*  
WE Henley, 1875

## PURPOSE

This policy outlines the Ark Soane Academy Curriculum, Teaching, Learning & Assessment provision for the academic year 2021-2022.

Date of last review:		Author:	Principal
Date of next review:	July 2022	Owner:	Principal
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Project Board
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## ARK MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Curriculum Model

## Introduction

### Beliefs, Vision & Values

*“Ensuring our students have the education and character to go on to live happy, fulfilled lives as the drivers of their own destinies.”*

#### Beliefs

At Ark Soane Academy, we believe in the extraordinary potential of our students. We believe that by living according to our values “work hard, be kind aim high”, our students are empowered to understand the world, make positive contributions to society and shape their futures.

#### Vision

Ark Soane students will receive an excellent academic education and develop the character needed to live happy, fulfilled lives as the drivers of their own destinies. We aim for all our students to leave us as knowledgeable, inquisitive, determined, confident, resilient, self-aware, good-mannered and kind citizens with a strong civic identity.

#### Values

At Ark Soane Academy, our values will be strongly held and central in all that we do. Our school aim reminds us that it is by living according to our values that we can lead fulfilling lives and drive our own destinies.

Our values:

Work hard – we know that effort, not intelligence, leads to exceptional results

Be kind – we treat others how we want to be treated.

Aim high – we all have the potential for greatness: we always strive for it

Our values are underpinned by responsibility - we remember that each of us is responsible for how we live and can influence our destinies. We are honest with ourselves and each other, and we take pride in ourselves and how we are seen.

Our values are underpinned by responsibility, honesty and pride: we celebrate that each of us is in control of our lives. We are proud of who we are and the decisions we take.

## Ark Network's 'Six Pillars'

Our school will be built on six pillars, which will be present in all aspects of our practice, setting our long-term vision and driving day-to-day decision making. These pillars underpin our curriculum offer and how we will implement it.

- **High Expectations:** Students at Ark Soane will understand the opportunities that education gives them. With our teaching and support, each student will realise their full potential and have the opportunity to go to university or pursue the career of their choice.
- **Excellent Teaching:** Our teachers will be passionate subject and curriculum experts with an excellent understanding of the intellectual journey they will be taking their students on. Each lesson will be underpinned by high expectations and teachers will challenge every child while fostering a curiosity for learning.
- **Knowing every child:** At Ark Soane, we will build on each child's character and habits to support their academic and personal development. They will grow into thoughtful and engaged members of society, acting responsibly and making good decisions.
- **Depth for breadth:** We will provide a rigorous academic curriculum. At Ark Soane, our curriculum offer will provide each student with a solid foundation for further study and preparation for university. Each subject leader will craft a rigorous curriculum that promotes curiosity, develops a depth of understanding and includes a thorough base of content.
- **Exemplary behaviour:** We will create an environment that is calm, respectful and focused on learning. We will teach self-discipline and develop a sense of responsibility in all our students.
- **Always learning:** Ark Soane will be a community of professionals who strive for excellent practice and constant improvement. High quality training and development will be part of daily life at our school.

We will organise our school effectively and work together efficiently to ensure we can deliver our vision fully in all aspects of our school in a sustainable way.

## Curriculum Intent

At Ark Soane Academy we believe that all students, no matter their starting point, are able to achieve academic success. We know that a rigorous, challenging, academic curriculum equips all students to make the choices to drive their own destinies.

Through our curriculum we will:

- build the framework of knowledge and understanding in each subject area that provides a solid foundation for further study;
- develop students' characters and values ensuring that they are equipped with the self-belief to access the most aspirational careers and higher education pathways; and
- equip students with the learning habits and the lifelong skills that will ensure that they are able to be successful at school and beyond.

The curriculum is the heart of the school and drives all other decisions in the academy:

All our students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum built around the core disciplines of English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education and languages. We also offer a range of creative subjects, both through the formal curriculum and as part of our enrichment offering, as well as two hours per week of physical education for all students.

Our longer academy day enables us to provide additional maths and English learning time as we know that progress in these subjects unlocks the doors to all others. Students who enter at below average levels of attainment will be supported to catch up, so they can access the full breadth of our curriculum.

The curriculum in each subject area has been designed backwards from university study, through A-Level and GCSE to ensure students can reach their fullest potential and are able to choose their specialisms and their future pathways as they progress through school and beyond. At each point the core knowledge that needs to be mastered in order to move on will be clearly defined. Our teachers will have a detailed understanding of the curriculum, recognising how each lesson's learning fits into the students' broader development within the subject. We are passionate about our students being taught the "the best which has been thought and said"; as we believe that all students are entitled to access the collective wisdom of humanity, which will in turn empower them throughout the school journey and in later life.

We believe in the extraordinary potential of our students and we know that, in every subject, success requires students to have extensive, secure knowledge. We will routinely assess students to support their progress through the curriculum and we will leave no stone unturned in making sure that every student has mastered the core knowledge that lays the foundations of the complex mental models we seek to build. Robust, cumulative assessments will enable us to gather accurate data about what students have learnt, which can in turn inform the re-teaching of content and the ongoing development of the curriculum in each subject. Assessments will inform our continual improvement of the curriculum in each subject.

We want every pupil to do well enough to go to university or pursue the career of their choice. To support this, we will ensure that alongside setting high expectations for academic progress, we will focus on building the habits and skills most desired by employers and universities. As part of our tutor and assemblies programme, through our termly Exploration Days and within the curriculum for each subject, we will teach the key learning habits needed to succeed at university and in the workplace. Pupils will learn to be independent and organized, how to take notes and conduct research, how to listen, discuss and debate; they will be confident speaking in public. In addition to this, we will guarantee access and exposure to the experiences that will help them to shape their purpose and guide their decisions about their university or career pathway after school. During assemblies, family lunch and tutor time, we will introduce and discuss further study, career options and aspirational role models. Guest speakers will share their career insights with pupils.

All of our pupils will visit a university, with visits increasingly tailored to individual aspirations, as they get older. This will give them a comprehensive understanding of a range of careers and the qualifications, skills and experiences they need in order to pursue them.

### **Our students:**

The curriculum is designed such that students will leave Ark Soane Academy embodying our values and character:

- Students will be hard working: They will know that it is hard work, not natural intelligence, that drives their academic success. They will have a thorough grounding in a broad range of subjects that enables them to appreciate the world around them. This will empower them to be adaptable to the fast-changing employment market; they will have the self-confidence, the cultural awareness and the communication skills to be courageous in their choices; and they will have the tenacity to overcome obstacles in their path.
- Students will be kind: They will learn about their community and other communities and will develop the honesty, empathy and self-awareness to form their own civic identity.
- Students will aim high: They will know that they are the drivers of their own destinies, they will have the curiosity to thrive in advanced study and they will have the reflectiveness to be true to themselves.

### **Designing the academic curriculum:**

1. We have a clear focus on the core concepts within each subject that give structure, meaning and the specific knowledge required within each subject area.
2. We acknowledge that students need deep knowledge of a subject in order to think creatively or critically about it.
3. A fundamental acknowledgment that to “think like a scientist,” a student must know the facts, concepts and procedures that a scientist knows and must see the teacher as the expert.
4. We recognise that the curriculum is the progression model, and so the curriculum maps out the specific knowledge that defines progression in the subject.
5. We believe in the extraordinary potential of all students and believe that almost all students can learn every subject.
6. We acknowledge that, if students have not mastered key content early in a curriculum, they will have difficulties later.
7. We believe that students thrive with a high degree of challenge from the first day at school.

## How our curriculum is planned:

Subject leaders will drive the curriculum through our long-term planning cycle

<p><b>Intent:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why is your subject important? How do you ensure this is routinely visible to students?</li><li>2. What substantive and disciplinary knowledge should students learn in each year/Key Stage? Why is this important?</li><li>3. Which substantive and disciplinary knowledge will they need to be successful at GCSE and A-level?</li><li>4. Are you being as ambitious as you can be for your students? Is there sufficient challenge in the curriculum?</li><li>5. Is your curriculum sufficiently diverse? Does it reflect the fact that scholars from across history and around the world have contributed to and evolved humanity's shared knowledge?</li><li>6. Does your team share a clear vision for the curriculum? Are they all able to articulate this if asked? Do the students know this vision?</li><li>7. How does your curriculum deliver the values and character-traits of the school?</li><li>8. How does your curriculum build towards GCSE, A-Level and university study? (it should build towards this but not be constrained by it)</li></ol>
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What structures organise your curriculum? How do you ensure the Enquiry Questions you are using are right? Are you using a chronological or thematic approach?</li><li>2. Does the sequence of units/lessons ensure that knowledge is systematically retained and built upon over time? Are content pre-requisites for later study met?</li><li>3. What concepts are threaded throughout the curriculum? When and how will students re-encounter these?</li><li>4. Is the core knowledge you expect to see covered in lessons and remembered by students made explicit in the knowledge organiser?</li><li>5. Do you know the tier 2/3 vocabulary that students need in order to progress?</li><li>6. How do you ensure that all staff in your department are presenting new concepts clearly and checking for understanding?</li><li>7. How do you ensure that students of all abilities and all needs make progress in your subject?</li><li>8. How have you taken account of the knowledge gaps from Covid-19 in designing your curriculum?</li><li>9. How will you use homework to ensure students meet your curriculum intention?</li></ol>
<p><b>Impact:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How will you know your students have met your curriculum intention?</li><li>2. Is your assessment designed for your curriculum rather than being constrained by GCSE &amp; A Level assessments? Does it tell you what you need to know about student learning?</li><li>3. How much assessment is enough for the students to get sufficient feedback to improve their work but not increase your staff workload?</li><li>4. Does your assessment system test if students are building knowledge cumulatively across a term, a year or the key stage?</li><li>5. How are you explicitly assessing students' disciplinary knowledge?</li><li>6. How are you assessing students' ability to write in the context of your subject?</li><li>7. Are you using cognitive science techniques of regular recall and interleaving when you build students memory?</li></ol>

## The broader curriculum:

We take a holistic approach to developing our students over their time with us. The curriculum extends beyond our academic programme to provide strong foundations for our students' broader development. We believe our provision will enable support every student to achieve a happy, fulfilled life and drive their own destiny.

## Character Programme

Our programme of values and character development includes

- Supporting our students to develop good character traits.
- Provision for teaching them how to keep physically and mentally healthy (see our RSE Policy for further information on the specifics of our Relationships and Sex Education programme)
- Preparation for life beyond school by teaching them to be reflective and responsible students, family members and citizens
- Developing their understanding of our values as a school, the fundamental British values and alongside this an understanding and appreciation of diversity

Every Ark Soane student will have one hour of tutor time and one whole school assembly devoted to the character programme.

At the end of each half-term students will produce an essay, speech or presentation on a key question related to the theme.

## Reading

Reading for pleasure is an integral part of life at Soane as it builds vocabulary, develops student confidence and unlocks new experiences. Students will select a minimum of one book per half-term to read with their tutor group and will devote four thirty-minute sessions per week to communal reading. In addition students will be given the time and support for silent independent reading during the week.

We are committed to ensuring that all students are able to read at their chronological reading age. For those who arrive at Soane with a lower reading age we will provide extensive targeted support.

## Enrichment

We will run a variety of enrichment sessions for our students, giving them the chance to develop interests and passions that will give them enjoyment throughout their lives.

Every student at Ark Soane will take part in an enrichment activity, built into our extended school day. Students will be able to choose from activities ranging from cooking, debating and drama to coding, football and singing in our school choir.

In addition to this, our students will be invited to take part in music and sports enrichments over lunch time through the week. Our school sports teams will train after school and our musicians and singers will have the opportunity to take part in the Ark network choir (Spark) and orchestra (Fusion) in addition to school based music enrichments.



## Our Curriculum Offer

### School Day

Our school week at Ark Soane is made up of 29 timetabled periods. This includes 1 period of enrichment for every student. Each lesson is 55 minutes in length.

In addition to this, students have four 20 minute morning sessions with a tutor or assembly, and 5 30 minute periods of tutor time through the week. During this time, students will read a wide range of fiction to support their literacy development, as well as study the Character, PSHE and careers programmes. We have an early finish on Fridays to promote staff and student well-being.

Mon-Thursday	Period	Fri	Period
08:30	<b>Tutor</b>	08:30	<b>Tutor</b>
08:50	1	08:50	1
9:45	2	9:45	2
10:40	<b>BR</b>	10:40	<b>BR</b>
11.00	3	11.00	3
11:55	<b>4</b>	11:55	<b>4</b>
12:50	<b>LU</b>	12:50	<b>LU</b>
13:40	<b>5</b>	13:40	<b>5</b>
14:35	<b>6</b>	14:35	<b>Tutor</b>
15:30	<b>Tutor</b>	15:00	<b>End</b>
16:00	<b>End</b>		

### Key Stage 3 Curriculum:

In years 7 to 9, we will offer a rich and varied curriculum, designed to prepare students fully for GCSEs and the 'step-up' to Key Stage 4. We will have a strong focus on English, mathematics, science the humanities and a modern foreign language as we believe that every student is entitled to a rigorous academic curriculum. All students will also learn a range of practical and expressive subjects including art, music and PE every week. This will provide all students with an opportunity for competition, creativity, performance and the breadth of experiences to be able to discover their passions.

Subject	Periods
<i>English</i>	5
<i>Maths</i>	6
<i>Science</i>	4
<i>History</i>	2
<i>Geography</i>	2
<i>MFL</i>	3
<i>Philosophy &amp; Religion</i>	2
<i>PE</i>	2
<i>Art</i>	1
<i>Music</i>	1
<i>Enrichment</i>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

Students are split across six Tutor Group classes. There are three bands in Maths and Science, each with two classes, allowing broad setting by prior attainment where appropriate. Humanities, MFL, Art, Music, PE, RE and Enrichment will be taught in mixed prior attainment Tutor Groups.

## Key Stage 4 Curriculum:

In Key Stage 4, our students will be exposed to a more sophisticated study of their chosen GCSE subjects. The level and complexity of knowledge, vocabulary and concepts that students are expected to learn about, and the challenge of classwork, homework and revision will increase in demand.

All of our students will study the following English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects at Key Stage 4 – English language & literature, maths, either triple or combined science, history and/or geography and a modern foreign language. We will ensure our students are well informed about the benefits of this academic pathway, including the development of cognitive skills and an understanding of the world around them.

We discuss individual curriculum pathways with students and their parents, as students prepare for the transition to Key Stage 4. Each student will be interviewed with their parents by a senior member of staff to discuss their option choices. They will have the option to study additional subjects, including art, music, and religious education.

In addition to this, some students will work towards a heritage (home) language GCSE, supported by our Modern Foreign Languages department.

The weighting of subjects in Key Stage 4 will be as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Periods</b>
<i>English</i>	5
<i>Maths</i>	5
<i>Triple Science</i>	8
<i>Combined Science</i>	5
<i>French or another MFL</i>	3
<i>History of Geography</i>	3
<i>Option Subject 3</i>	3
<i>Option Subject 4</i>	3
<i>PE</i>	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

As our school grows, we will set students in English, mathematics and science according to progress and attainment in that core subject. In Key Stage 4, we will also set students in the languages and humanities blocks.

## Key Stage 5 Curriculum:

Ark Soane will open its sixth form in 2026 after our 2021 founding students complete GCSEs. We will offer A Level courses across a range of academic subjects. Our subject offer will encompass all Russell group 'facilitating subjects' as well as a range of other choices, and will likely include

- Art & Design
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Economics
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- History
- A modern foreign language
- Music
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Religious studies

We believe this offer will prepare Ark Soane students to attend the best universities in the country or embark on a higher level apprenticeship of their choice.

## Evaluating Our Curriculum Provision

At Ark Soane, we are committed to continuously improving our teaching and our curriculum, making intelligent use of data and our collective experience to achieve excellent outcomes for our students. Curriculum evaluation and improvement will be embedded in the school's assessment cycle, will be the focus of departmental planning time, will be supported and challenged through line management review and will be aligned with, and supported by, Ark central teams.

### Ark Soane Curriculum Model - Annual Review:

Each spring term, our senior team will come together with Ark Central colleagues to consider Ark Soane's overall curriculum offer in light of the *Ark Base Curriculum*. This will form part of our curriculum and staffing review and planning process, ahead of budget setting. The Ark Base Curriculum has been developed from an analysis of what the most successful Ark Academies offer and in consultation with our Principals. It provides a useful benchmark for each school's provision in the network.

### Curriculum Review & Re-planning Cycle:

We know that excellent planning forms the foundation for highly effective teaching and consequently, student learning. The most important component in planning high quality learning experiences is the thinking time put in at all stages and reviewing the curriculum offer is no exception.

1. We will review and refine our curriculum planning during the process of planning. Planning of curriculum maps and lessons in each subject will be a key focus in senior/middle leadership line management meetings.
2. Following each assessment point, subject leads will evaluate the effectiveness of the planning for each year group and identify specific improvements to be made to schemes of work for the preceding term, including re-planning of lessons or units of work, re-sequencing and/or adjusting the weighting of time spent on particular topics.
3. A number of our subjects will build on the base curriculum offered in the Ark Mastery Curriculum Programmes. This includes established programmes such as English Mastery, Maths Mastery, the Schools Music Programme and pilot programmes for the year ahead, including Science Mastery and Geography Mastery Programmes. Our subject leads will collate their thoughts on planning through co-planning meetings and lesson observations, and will feed back to programme leads at least once a term. For pilot programmes we will feed back more regularly and our subject leads will input into the development of that scheme of work through the pilot.
4. Our English and maths leads will attend network HoD meetings on a termly basis, during which time will be set aside to discuss curriculum revision and improvement.
5. All of our subject leads who are crafting a curriculum from scratch will have a link with a subject lead in another Ark school. They will have at least one call or visit per term to discuss their planning and areas for development.
6. Senior leaders will work with the Heads of Department they line manage to both support and challenge them during the curriculum design process

### Collaborative Planning:

Teaching at Ark Soane will be a team effort: each teacher will plan collaboratively with their department. This will be scheduled meeting time for two hours each week, where possible with the whole department available together. Collaborative planning will provide an opportunity to

- ★ Explore the rationale for sequencing and weighting in the scheme of work
- ★ Discuss how knowledge and understanding develops through a lesson or unit of work
- ★ Agree key, pivotal questions for each learning unit and approaches to modelling
- ★ Discuss typical misconceptions and possible gaps in prior learning
- ★ Unpick model answers and develop consistency in marking and feedback
- ★ Ensure overarching objectives and longer term development of learning remain a constant priority
- ★ Develop subject or discipline knowledge and expertise in planning
- ★ Evaluate and refine resources using assessment data – always ensuring that resources are improved and ready to be taught again

As part of the follow up to co-planning meetings, teachers will take notes on their scheme of work for each year group and action changes in their planning. The subject leader will also make adaptations to planning based on discussion and evaluation of the planning and resources for each year group.