

# Lower School Curriculum for Wales at Cardiff High School

## How Our Curriculum Enables Learners to Realise the Four Purposes

At Cardiff High School, our curriculum is designed to help learners become:

- Ambitious, capable learners who understand the world and can think critically about it
- Enterprising, creative contributors who apply knowledge in valuable and interesting ways
- Ethical, informed citizens who appreciate and critique the world around them
- Healthy, confident individuals who thrive and shape their future

We believe that the extent to which learners achieve these purposes depends on the quality and quantity of what they learn. The more useful, valuable and interesting their learning, the greater their capacity to think and act in meaningful ways.

To support this, our curriculum is built around progression, where pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills become more sophisticated over time.

Our curriculum design is guided by three principles:

**Breadth:** Pupils experience a wide range of subjects and perspectives, each offering unique ways of thinking about the world.

**Value:** We prioritise the most important concepts, knowledge and skills that learners need to thrive.

**Coherence:** Learning is logically sequenced and connected, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections across subjects and experiences.

This approach ensures that learners are not only prepared for qualifications and future pathways, but also equipped to understand, engage with and shape the world, which is the ultimate purpose of education.

## How Our Curriculum Meets the Mandatory Elements

At Cardiff High School, our curriculum fully meets the mandatory elements set out in the Curriculum for Wales framework and the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. These elements ensure that all learners receive a broad, balanced and coherent education that prepares them for life, learning and work.

## Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)

Learners experience all six AoLEs:

- **Expressive Arts** (Art, Drama, Music)
- **Health and Well-being** (Form Time, Physical Education Theory and Practical)
- **Humanities** (History, Geography, Religion and Philosophy)
- **Languages, Literacy and Communication** (English, Cymraeg, French)
- **Mathematics and Numeracy**
- **Science and Technology** (Science, Design and Technology, Digital and Computing)

The curriculum within each subject is planned with progression in mind, to ensure breadth, value and coherence, with clear links to the Statements of What Matters.

## Statements of What Matters

Our curriculum encompasses every Statement of What Matters across the six AoLEs. These statements guide our selection of content, concepts and skills, ensuring that learning is purposeful and aligned with national expectations.

We use these statements to:

- Identify core disciplinary concepts
- Plan progression pathways
- Ensure coherence and relevance across subjects

## Cross-Curricular Skills

We embed the three statutory cross-curricular skills of Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence across all Areas. These skills are developed progressively and applied in meaningful contexts, helping learners communicate effectively, think mathematically, and use technology confidently.

## Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)

RVE is taught in accordance with the agreed syllabus for Cardiff, and reflects the pluralistic, inclusive and balanced approach required by the Curriculum for Wales. It is embedded within our Humanities AoLE and supports learners to explore beliefs, ethics, and philosophical questions.

## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE is a mandatory element and is delivered in line with the RSE Code and statutory guidance. It is:

- Developmentally appropriate
- Inclusive and sensitive
- Planned across the curriculum, particularly within Health and Well-being

We ensure that learners develop the knowledge, skills and values to form healthy relationships and understand their rights and responsibilities.

## Our Approach to Progression and Assessment

At Cardiff High School, we see progression and assessment as integral to learning. Our curriculum is designed as a progression model, meaning that the intended learning is sequenced to become more sophisticated and developed over time. Assessment then helps us understand whether pupils are making the progress we intend, and how we can support them further.

### Curriculum as the Progression Model

We plan our curriculum using the Principles of Progression, Progression Steps, and Descriptions of Learning. This means:

- We define clear end goals for what pupils should know, understand and be able to do.
- We break these goals into sequenced components that build over time.
- We monitor whether pupils are grasping these components and progressing as expected.

If pupils are learning what we've intended, they are making progress. If not, we intervene to support them.

### Assessment: Teach–Check–Respond

We use a continuous cycle of:

- **Teach:** Develop learning based on clear curriculum intentions.
- **Check:** Assess whether pupils have grasped the intended learning.
- **Respond:** Take action to support pupils, either immediately or over time.

This cycle helps us bridge the gap between teaching and learning, ensuring that assessment is purposeful and responsive.

### Learning Indicators

At the end of each year, subjects award a Learning Indicator based on evidence from all assessment cycles. These indicators reflect how well pupils have grasped the intended learning, and range from Foundational through to Exceptional.

These indicators are not final judgements. Instead, they help us plan next steps, target support, and monitor progress across pupil groups, including those eligible for eFSM. Assessment helps us identify pupils who need additional support and tailor interventions accordingly.

## Suitability for All Learners

Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible for all learners. It is:

- Broad and balanced, offering meaningful learning for all pupils regardless of background or starting point
- Adaptable, with support and challenge built in to meet individual needs
- Responsive to diversity, ensuring representation and relevance across subjects

We make reasonable adjustments to support learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and those for whom English is an additional language. Curriculum planning reflects the principles of equity, inclusion and learner voice, ensuring that every pupil can make progress and thrive.

## Cross-Cutting Themes

Cardiff High School incorporates the cross-cutting themes of the Curriculum for Wales across all Areas of Learning and Experience. These themes help learners understand themselves and others, prepare for life and work, and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

## Local, National and International Contexts

We help learners develop a strong sense of cynefin (their place in the world) by connecting learning to a range of meaningful contexts. Locally, pupils explore topics such as the regeneration of Cardiff and Welsh cultural traditions and activism. Nationally, they engage with the Welsh language, history, and civic life to understand identity and belonging. Internationally, they examine global issues including migration, imperialism and globalisation. Through these experiences, learners build empathy, develop critical thinking, and grow as informed global citizens.

## Human Rights

We embed human rights education across the curriculum, helping learners understand the principles of dignity, equality and participation. Pupils explore global conventions such as the UNCRC and UNCRPD, and examine rights including freedom of belief, privacy, and protection from harm. These themes are addressed directly in subjects like Health and Well-being, RVE and Humanities, and explored through enquiry and creative work in Geography, English, Art and Digital Competence. This approach fosters respect, inclusion and active citizenship.

## Diversity

We embed diversity throughout the curriculum as a core thread. Our approach helps learners understand diverse societies and cultures, recognising a wide range of contributors within each subject, and ensuring inclusive language, imagery and resources across all learning materials. This framework ensures diversity is meaningfully integrated into every pupil's learning experience, helping them challenge stereotypes, value difference, and see themselves, and others, reflected in their education.

Beyond the classroom, diversity is celebrated through pupil-led initiatives such as our Diversity Group and Cultural Appreciation Week, which mark events like Eid, Diwali, Pride and Disability Awareness Week. These experiences foster empathy, inclusion and a sense of belonging across the school community.

## Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE)

We provide meaningful opportunities for learners to explore career pathways, develop employability skills, and understand the real-world relevance of their learning. CWRE is embedded across subjects and supported through enrichment activities such as employer talks, and guidance for post-16 choices, helping pupils make informed decisions about their futures.

## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

RSE is a mandatory part of the Curriculum for Wales and is delivered in line with the national RSE Code. It is developmentally appropriate, inclusive and sensitive, and is planned across the curriculum, particularly within Health and Well-being. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, emotional well-being, sexual health and safety, respect, consent, identity, and LGBTQ+ inclusivity. RSE is supported by a whole-school approach, including staff training, safe environments, and strong engagement with parents and carers.

## Curriculum Review and Refinement

We keep our curriculum under continuous review to ensure it remains of value, inclusive and aligned with the Curriculum for Wales. This process includes regular evaluation by Senior Leaders and Curriculum Leaders, feedback from staff and pupils, and analysis of learner progress. We use lesson observations, work scrutiny and assessment data to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Updates are shared with the governing body, and refinements are made annually, or sooner if needed, based on evidence and stakeholder input.