



Thomas Tallis Curriculum 2022-23

At Tallis we believe in **Education to understand the world and change it for the better.**

Therefore, our curriculum is rooted in our belief in powerful knowledge. In the teeth of structural change we remember our role as society's educators and guardians of the young, offering powerful and shared knowledge to the nation's children. That knowledge comes from centuries of learning and from the universities and subject associations. It is powerful because it enables children to interpret and control the world: it is shared because all our children should be exposed to it. It is fair and just that this should be so. It is unfair and unjust when children are offered poor quality knowledge which fails to broaden their experience.

We formulate this in 10 principles.

1. Knowledge is worthwhile in itself.

We tell children this unapologetically: it's what childhood and adolescence is for

2. Schools teach shared and powerful knowledge on behalf of society

We teach what they need to make sense of and improve the world

3. Shared and powerful knowledge is verified through learned communities

We should be model learners ourselves, in touch with research and subject associations

4. Children need powerful knowledge to understand and interpret the world

Without it they remain dependent upon those who have it or misuse it

5. Powerful knowledge is cognitively superior to that needed for daily life

It transcends and liberates children from their daily experience

6. Shared and powerful knowledge enables children to grow into useful citizens

As adults they can understand, cooperate and shape the world together

7. Shared knowledge is a foundation for a just and sustainable democracy

Citizens educated together share an understanding of the common good

8. It is fair and just that all children should have access to this knowledge

Powerful knowledge opens doors: it must be available to all children

9. Accepted adult authority is required for shared knowledge sharing

The teacher's authority to teach is given and valued by society

10. Pedagogy links adult authority, powerful knowledge and its transmission

High quality professional skills enable children to make a relationship with ideas to change the world.

Our curriculum has the following characteristics:

It is ethically driven so

- inclusive not exclusive in approach
- offers subject choices that go beyond the performance table measures
- includes the development of Tallis habits and character
- has creativity at its core
- it prepares our young people for global justice, fairness and sustainability

It has knowledge at its core so

- teachers are expert subject specialists
- programmes of study focus on developing powerful knowledge
- subjects have a 'signature pedagogy' which helps students learn particular knowledge
- we aim for real learning rather than exam tips and tricks
- 'threshold concepts' or big ideas are interleaved throughout the programmes

It is creative so

- students are expected to make the learning their own
- students are deliberately given a broader curriculum than required
- the curriculum and co-curriculum support deep personal engagement
- the co-curriculum is extensive, providing cultural and personal creative capital
- opportunities for real world experiences are sought

It is rigorous and challenging so

- subject areas design their curriculum to encourage students to *think hard*
- it builds real understanding in both knowledge and skills
- it provides the skills, understanding and qualifications for progression
- complex ideas are relevant and made available for all.
- students are encouraged to make connections within and across subjects

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

[Key Stage 3](#)

Knowledge is important to us and so a rich array of subjects is the foundation of studies in our Key Stage 3 - years 7, 8 and 9. In addition to the core subjects of English, maths and science, are the foundation subjects: humanities (history and geography), languages, design & technology, art, music, drama, dance, PE, RE and computing. This curriculum is common to all students, although we tailor its delivery to the needs of different learners. Whilst the majority of the KS3 curriculum is delivered in mixed attainment groups, where necessary some groups receive a differentiated curriculum.

- The core: All students have six lessons per fortnight of English, maths and science, three for PE and two for RE.
- Languages: We offer two languages (French and Spanish) in Year 7 and all students learn one over four lessons per fortnight.

- Humanities: Students have four lessons per fortnight for both history and geography.
- The Arts: Art, music, drama and dance are taught throughout the year for two hours per fortnight. Students also have three hours of design & technology.
- Computing: All students learn computer science in Years 7, 8 and 9. They receive two hours per fortnight and cover the foundations of programming as well as units on e-safety and the creation of websites.
- Guidance: We deliver personal, social, health and citizenship education and careers through our tutorial programme once per fortnight and also through a series of collapsed '*Community days*' over the year. These are days when students come to school as normal but they follow a different programme for the day, working on topics such as career choices, personal development, democratic participation and community values.

Extracurricular Activities occur in a very wide range of subjects and include day trips, guest speakers, residential visits, resident expert clubs, productions and exhibitions, summer schools and environmental groups. A very important part of our work at Key Stage 3 is to make sure that we provide students with the right information and advice to help them make the best choices about their future so they can go on to pursue the higher education course or career path of their choice. This will be different for every individual, but our goal is to maximise the potential of every student based on high expectations and a culture of achievement. English

[Key Stage 4](#)

Our Key Stage 4 Curriculum is based on principles of creativity, academic rigour and opportunity. Students study a broad and balanced curriculum in order to support their cultural understanding and general knowledge; we believe that more doors are held open for young people for longer if they follow a wider curriculum.

The KS4 Curriculum comprises the core subjects of English, maths, science and PE. Students then make choices from a wide range of optional subjects, guided by their recommended pathways. Our broad and balanced curriculum combines GCSEs, vocational subjects and the opportunity to study higher level qualifications early, should students make sufficient progress. Computing and RE are delivered across the curriculum throughout KS4, as well as being available as specialist option choices. Students continue to study PSHCE as at KS3.

Students make their choices in Year 9 following detailed advice and personalised guidance from staff, and in close liaison with parents and carers. We offer a very broad range of subjects to choose from :

[GCSE](#): Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Design Technology (Food Technology, Graphics or Product Design) Drama, English Language, English Literature, Film Studies, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Photography, Religious Studies, Science (Triple Biology, Chemistry and Physics and Combined Science), Spanish

[Level 2 BTEC](#) (*equivalent to 1 GCSE*): Health & Social Care, Media, Music, Sport

[Level 2](#): British Sign Language

[Additionally by invitation or agreement only](#) GCSE Astronomy, GCSE Heritage Languages, BTEC Enterprise, BTEC Health & Fitness, GCSE Three-dimensional design

[The 'Tallis Baccalaureate'](#)

The government wants to increase the percentage of young people taking the 'English Baccalaureate', or Ebacc. This is a combination of particular subjects: English language and literature, maths, sciences, geography or history and a language.

The 'Tallis Baccalaureate' (TBacc) adds a compulsory arts or DT choice because we believe the Arts are a fundamental entitlement of any curriculum. We encourage as many of our young people as possible to study the full TBacc.

Key Stage 5

Our large size means that like a sixth form college we can offer expert teaching even in more unusual subjects. The breadth and depth of results for a non-selective sixth form across a large range of courses embodies our belief as a school that all our students should aspire to greatness, and that our students can compete on wholly equal terms with the best institutions in the country.

At KS5 we offer

A level: Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, Economics, English Language, English Literature, Film Studies, French, Geography, Government and Politics, Graphics, History, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Photography, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology, Spanish
Level 3 BTEC (*equivalent to 2 or 3 A Levels*): Art & Design, Business, Health & Social Care, ICT, Media, Music Technology, Sport

AS: EPQ,

Students entering Tallis post-16 without GCSE grade 4 English or mathematics are required to retake.

Curriculum design

The three cornerstones of our curriculum at Tallis are: Habits of Mind, Powerful Knowledge and Threshold Concepts.

Habits of mind

For a number of years, we have been involved in research about the value of creative learning. Out of this research a set of Habits of Mind has emerged that appear to be associated with successful creative learners.¹

We are committed to helping all of our students develop these Habits of Mind as part of their everyday learning experience. Teachers embed the habits in lessons and schemes of work. We research the impact of habits focused learning and share our learning with each other and the students.

Powerful knowledge

The Tallis curriculum synthesises 'traditional' (knowledge as given) and 'progressive' (knowledge as a social construct) pedagogies, treating subjects as the most reliable tools we have to help students acquire powerful knowledge and make sense of the world, as explained at the start of this paper. An overarching Programme of Study organises the powerful knowledge we want our students to learn. The development of each programme of study is an inherently



¹ The Tallis Habits are based on Bill Lucas, Ellen Spencer, and Guy Claxton (2013) 'Progression in Student Creativity in School: First steps towards new forms of formative assessment' OECD Education Working Papers No 86. Paris: OECD Publishing.

creative process: the process by which we take the desired outcomes from the curriculum and convert them into engaging activities in our classrooms. In so doing, each subject area has also defined their signature pedagogy – the core values that underpin the kind of teaching that will lead to the desired learning within that subject discipline.

Threshold concepts

Our programmes of study chart the conceptual ('knowing that'), content ('knowing what') and procedural ('knowing how') knowledge entailed by each subject discipline. Threshold Concepts are the big ideas that we believe help students develop a deeper understanding of a subject; they are not meant to be instantly understood. Once opened, they introduce students to troublesome knowledge - a new way of seeing the subject they are studying.

A threshold concept can be considered as akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something

- Jan Meyer and Ray Land

Threshold concepts are:

- Transformative: Once understood, they change the way students see the subject and themselves.
- Irreversible: They are difficult to unlearn.
- Integrative: Once learned, they are likely to bring together different parts of the subject which students hadn't previously seen as connected.
- Bounded: Clearly defined in relation to other concepts
- Troublesome: They are likely to present students with a degree of difficulty and may sometimes seem incoherent or counter-intuitive.
- Discursive: The student's ability to use the language associated with that subject changes as they change.²

In short, Threshold Concepts are what we as teachers agree are the big ideas in our various disciplines. They help our students to make sense of their journey through school. They are a way of making explicit to students the foundational ideas in our subjects, thereby helping them to reach mastery. Threshold concepts, when combined with the content of the curriculum (the 'knowing what'), provide students with the conceptual and propositional knowledge they need.

Decolonising the curriculum

Without a concerted effort to teach anti-racism through a powerfully diverse curriculum, we will miss the chance to educate our students about how they fit and how they are connected in our society.

- Bennie Kara '[Colouring in the Curriculum](#)'

Schools pass on powerful knowledge to their students in the expectation that in possessing this knowledge the future citizens they are becoming will use it to change the world for the better. We examine the nature of the curriculum so that we can be confident that it prepares our young people to be committed to global justice, fairness and sustainability. Diversifying and decolonising the curriculum means looking outside of white, western European borders for sources of disciplinary depth and richness, and filling out knowledge of the 'hinterland' of subject disciplines.

² Meyer, J.H.F. and Land, R. (2003) '[Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: linkages to ways of thinking and practising](#)', in: Rust, C. (ed.), Improving Student Learning - Theory and Practice Ten Years On. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD), pp 412-424.

Curriculum monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of the curriculum, and the delivery of the curriculum, takes place through a number of linked approaches.

- Programmes of study and schemes of learning
- Regular personal line lead meetings (every 1, 2 or 3 weeks according to need)
- Departmental self evaluation
- Lesson observations, learning walks and evaluation of student work
- Outcomes (internal data and external examination)
- Student and parent evaluations
- Regular curriculum reviews for and visits by governors
- Local Authority monitoring visits

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development takes place through 5 main routes:

- Curriculum area meetings (x6 per year)
- InSeT days (3 per year on curriculum and subject development)
- 6 dedicated development afternoons per year for subject development in curriculum areas
- Research & Development- all staff are required to do this as part of their continuing professional development.
- External CPD
- Middle leader development – many of our staff are on development courses with recognised organisations such as the PTI

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)

PSHCE takes place in a designated hour every fortnight, with some additional time in community days, assemblies and tutor time. Activities are mapped across each year group covering our statutory responsibilities and beyond. We cover British values, laws, citizenship, drugs awareness, social enterprise, sex education, body image, Tallis character, stress management, personal safety and revision methods.

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG)

CIAG has 3 main routes across the curriculum.

- special events such as community days, assemblies, option evenings, parent evenings and careers fairs
- Through PSHCE: sessions on apprenticeships, options, applications, CV writing etc.
- Our commissioned independent careers service *Prospects* for group and individual interviews.

Tallis CIAG is organised under the following themes:

- Year 7: Inspire
- Year 8: Inform
- Year 9: Explore
- Year 10: Plan
- Year 11: Decide

The Co-curriculum

Most learning takes place through curriculum time in the school day. Tallis also has an extensive co-curriculum of trips, events, activities and awards that supplement and go beyond taught lessons. These range from specific organised awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh and the Arts Awards, to visiting workshops, being an associate of the Tate gallery, to sports, robotics or astronomy club. We make every effort to make these activities affordable and accessible to all, although we may sometimes have to ask for a voluntary contribution for activities that go beyond the curriculum.

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