



Birchwood High School Curriculum Policy 2024 - 2025

Our Mission

At Birchwood we are part of something special, welcoming all, supporting all and encouraging all.

Enjoying together the exploration of ideas,
the excitement of learning and the celebration of our achievements,
in a school where we feel safe.

“Your dreams, your future, our challenge”

Birchwood believes that the National Curriculum forms a strong foundation for its 11-16 curriculum because it:

- provides a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:
 - allows for exploration of ideas
 - enables learning to be exciting
 - supports all and encourages all
 - promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society, and
 - prepares students at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

Curriculum Intent

Birchwood's Key Stage 3 curriculum intention is to provide and develop foundation knowledge and skills based on the National Curriculum. From Year 7 to 9 students study continuously: English, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, one or two Modern Foreign Languages, Physical Education, and PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education). Furthermore, we have planned and sequenced our curriculum so that the National Curriculum aims and content of Geography, History, Computing, Art, Music and Design Technology have been met in full by the end of Year 8.

Year 7 and 8

Subject	English	Maths	Science	PE	PSHCE	Drama	Art	Music	History	Geography	RS	Technology	Food	MFL
Hrs/Wk	4	3	3	2.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	0.5	3

- English have 4 hrs a week in recognition of building literacy skills in the initial stages of secondary school
- Maths and Science have a core entitlement of 3 hours each
- Physical Education have 2.5 hrs and Expressive & Performing Arts (Art, Music, and Drama) have 3 hours, stressing the importance of creative and physical aspects to the curriculum.
- Modern Foreign Languages are allocated 3 hrs per week, again reflecting the need to build foundational skills in this area. All students follow French in Year 7, with the option of adding Spanish or German during the year.
- Technology have 2.5 hours a week with an additional 0.5 hours a week to ensure Food Technology is taught to all students
- Humanities have 3 hours and study History, Geography and RS equally
- All students receive statutory PSHCE teaching in their form groups

Year 9

In Year 9 individual National Curriculum subject pathways are available that ensure Students get a broad and balanced curriculum with an Ebacc suite and a Creative Suite of courses that students have the ability to opt into, ensuring they balance both suites.

Subject	English	Maths	Science	PE	PSHCE	Ebacc Suite 1	Ebacc Suite 2	Creative Suite 1	Creative Suite 2	Open Choice	Open Choice
Hrs/Wk	4	3	3	2	0.5	2	2	2	2	2	2

- All curriculum content will be taught from developed Key 3 content and skills and will form a Foundation Core Curriculum
- English remains at 4 hours to ensure curriculum coverage and support with high levels of literacy across the curriculum
- Maths and Science continue with a core entitlement of 3 hours each
- Physical Education have 2 hours
- Expressive & Performing Arts (Art, Music, Drama, and Dance) and Technology (D&T, Food) will be placed in a Creative Suite from which a minimum 2 options are to be taken, ensuring the importance of creative and physical aspects to the curriculum are retained.
- Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish) and Humanities (History, Geography, RS) as well as Computer Science are all in an EBACC Suite from which a minimum 2 options are to be taken, ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum
- All students receive statutory PSHCE teaching in their form groups
- There is a small degree of flexibility for those wanting to continue with two languages and also for this who need an adapted curriculum.

Year 10 and 11

Birchwood's Key Stage 4 curriculum is for Year 10 and 11. Core and optional subjects are studied, which are mostly based around the curriculum of GCSE specifications and which also include vocational options. In order for students to achieve their dreams and so we can support their future, we encourage pupils to take the Ebacc subjects, however, we recognise that for some this is not appropriate.

Subject	English	Maths	Science	PE	PSHCE	EBACC Suite 1	Open Choice 1	Open Choice 2	Open Choice 3
Hrs/Wk	4	4	4.5	2	0.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

- All curriculum content will be taught at Level 2 (GCSE, BTEC, OCR)
- English and Maths both have 4 hours
- Science increases to 4.5 to cover the Trilogy and Triple content
- Physical Education have 2 hours
- Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish) and Humanities (History, Geography) as well as Computer Science are all in an EBACC Suite from which a minimum 1 option is to be taken
- All other subjects are placed in the Open Choice and 3 choices can be made.
- All students receive statutory PSHCE teaching in their form groups
- There is a degree of flexibility for those who need an adapted curriculum.

Available Subjects

Core	Ebacc	Open	
English Language English Literature Maths Science – Trilogy and Triple	History Geography French Spanish German Computer Science	PE Music Art Drama Dance Statistics	Religious Studies Media or Film Studies Design Technology Food ICT Btec or Computing Business Studies

Year 12 and 13

Our Key Stage 5 programmes of study lasts for two years, from Year 12 to 13. In that time our students choose from a range of A Level and Btec courses. English and Maths retake at Level 2, EPQ and enrichment opportunities are also available.

Our Key Stage 5 curriculum aims to balance academic excellence, personal support, and a wide range of student leadership opportunities .We provide a diverse curriculum of 32 subjects. We attempt to make the curriculum flexible and respond to student led demand, therefore ensuring that we can meet the diverse and varied range of needs incumbent of a comprehensive school.

The majority of our Year 11 students apply for places in our Sixth Form to follow a predominantly A level curriculum, although an increasing range of BTEC vocational opportunities also exist. The curriculum is designed to support students as they step into Higher Education, University, Higher Level Apprenticeships, or more aspirational employment.

Our Key Stage 5 curriculum therefore provides students with a strong platform from which to achieve excellent academic results, but also allows them to develop into well-rounded and tolerant young adults with plenty of enrichment and leadership opportunities.

Entrance Requirements

All applicants, both internal and external, will need to complete an online application form via ULAS.

We operate a Total Point Score (TPS) system that measures what students achieve at GCSE / Level 2. This works by taking the best 8 subject grades. These are then added together to produce a Total Point Score, as shown in the worked example further down.

Students Total Point Score will determine which curriculum plans are most suitable for them. Our curriculum plans are designed to ensure students are following appropriate courses based upon their prior levels of attainment.

We will offer all students information, advice, and guidance in reference to their application to ensure students are making appropriate choices. Students must meet the entrance criteria for courses they wish to study.

At KS5 we will offer only level 3 courses for study. The only exceptions to this is GCSE English and GCSE Maths resits, which will be compulsory for any students we admit without a grade 4 in these subjects. For this reason, there will be an admission benchmark of TPS 34. Students will also need to meet the individual entrance requirements for specific subjects and courses.

Total Point Score

TPS (Total Points Score) is calculated by adding together a student’s total GCSE / BTEC grades at Level 2.

GCSE Grade	BTEC Grade (Level 2) ICT, Business, Health & Social Construction
9	
8	DISTINCTION
7	
6	MERIT
5	
4	PASS
3	
2	
1	

Total Point Score - calculation		
Subject	Grade	Points
English Language	7	7
English Literature	6	6
Maths	5	5
History	4	4
Media	7	7
Science	4	4
Science	4	4
French	6	6
		Total = 43

Subject	Open Choice 1	Open Choice 2	Open Choice 3	Open Choice 4	PSHCE	Enrichment
Hrs/Wk	5	5	5	5	0.5	0.5

Pathway 1: to study 4 A Level 3 courses students should have a TPS of above 48 and meet the entry requirements of the subject.

We will consider entry onto Pathway 1 dependent on subject requirements.

Students will be expected to supplement their 4 subjects with additional supporting qualifications and/or enrichment opportunities.

Pathway 2: to study 3 Level 3 courses students should have a TPS of above 40 and meet the entry requirements of the subject.

We will consider entry onto Pathway 2 dependent on subject requirements.

Students will be expected to supplement their 4 subjects with additional supporting qualifications and/or enrichment opportunities.

Pathway 3: to study 2 Level 3 courses and a Level 2, students should have a TPS of above 34 and meet the entry requirements of the subject.

We will consider entry onto Pathway 3 dependent on subject requirements.

Students will be expected to supplement their 4 subjects with additional supporting qualifications and/or enrichment opportunities.

Supporting Qualifications	Enrichment	Work Experience
Core Maths Extended Project (EPQ) GCSE English / Maths Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Clubs & Societies House Captains Leadership Committee School Council Sixth Form Ambassadors Sixth Form Prefects Sports Leaders Sixth form Trips and visits	Compulsory for all Year 12 students

Courses and Entry Requirements

Subject	Level	Entry Requirement
Accounting	A Level	Grade 6 in GCSE Maths / 5 in English
Art & Design (Fine Art)	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Art, Textiles or Graphics
Biology	A level	Grade 6 in Biology (if taken Triple) 2 x Grade 6 in Science (if taken Trilogy)
Business	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Maths / 5 in English
Business	BTEC Certificate (Single)	TPS 34
Business	BTEC Diploma (Double)	TPS 34
Chemistry	A level	Grade 6 in Chemistry (if taken Triple) 2 x Grade 6 in Science (if taken Trilogy)
Computer Science	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Maths / 6 in Computer Science
D&T: Product Design	A level	Grade 5 GCSE in any Design and Technology subject or Art / Science
D&T: Fashion and Textiles	A level	Grade 5 GCSE in any Design and Technology subject or Art
Drama and Theatre Studies	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Drama If GCSE Drama was not taken a Grade 5 in English (Language or Literature)
Economics	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics , Grade 5 in GCSE English Language
Environmental Science	A level	Grade 5 in any Triple Grade 5/5 in Trilogy
English Language	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE English Language
English Literature	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE English Literature
ESports	BTEC Certificate (Single)	TPS 34
Film Studies	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Film or Media or Grade 5 in English Language or English Literature
French	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE French or the ability to study French to the equivalent level
Geography	A level	Grade 6 in Geography

German	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE German or the ability to study German to the equivalent level.
History	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE History
IT Computing	BTEC Certificate (Single)	TPS 34
Computer Science	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Computer Science or , if not taken, Grade 6 in GCSE Maths
Mathematics	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics (although a grade 7 is highly recommended)
Mathematics Further	A level	Grade 8 in GCSE Mathematics
Media Studies	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Media or Film. If not taken at GCSE Grade 5 in English
Music	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Music or Grade 5 in an instrument/voice if GCSE Music has not been taken
Performing Arts (Dance)	BTEC Certificate (Single)	TPS 34 Grade 5 in GCSE Dance or equivalent performance experience
Philosophy and Ethics RS	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE RS or, if not taken, Grade 5 in GCSE English Language
Physical Education	A level	Grade 6 GCSE in PE or Grade 6 in Science including Biology
Physics	A level	Grade 6 in Physics (if taken Triple) 2 x Grade 6 in Science (if taken Trilogy) Grade 6 GCSE Maths
Politics	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE History or English Literature
Psychology	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE English Language or Literature and Grade 5 in GCSE Maths
Sociology	A level	Grade 5 in GCSE English Language or Literature
Spanish	A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Spanish or the ability to study Spanish to the equivalent level.
Sport	BTEC Diploma (Double)	TPS 34
Sport	BTEC Extended Diploma (Triple)	TPS 34