

Curriculum policy

2025-2028

Monitoring	Frame of engagement	Date
Member of Staff Responsible	N Scott	16/11/2025
Governor Accountability	Teaching and Learning Standards Committee	
Date of latest version		As above
Date for next review (and cycle)		November 2028 (and every 3 years)
Uploaded to Website		20.11.2025

1. Aims and Values

“We will develop a curriculum that meets the needs, sparks the imagination and brings the best out of each individual pupil according to his/her ambition, aspirations, ability, interest and learning styles”

At Haberdashers' Abraham Darby we are passionate about learning in its widest sense. Our mission is to ensure that our pupils value and enjoy their learning inside and outside the classroom. We are focused on achieving the best possible academic outcomes and the development of the whole person.

We have an extensive sporting, creative and academic extra-curricular programme, allowing pupils to work independently and with others to promote the building of strong relationships with peers and staff.

Our House system is the lifeblood of the academy. It fosters competition, participation, belonging and student leadership. Older pupils help to organise and run events, leading by example and modelling the values we seek to prioritise.

The academy has worked hard to develop an ambitious and well thought out curriculum; it has been carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that knowledge and skills build on previous learning with key topics revisited and expanded throughout a student's journey through the school.

Our curriculum is designed around a knowledge-engaged approach; we clearly identify the knowledge that we require students to gain in each subject and unit of work. By distinguishing the powerful knowledge that we require the students to commit to long term memory, we aim to provide clarity to students, parents and teachers.

2. PRIME, INSIGHT and Assemblies

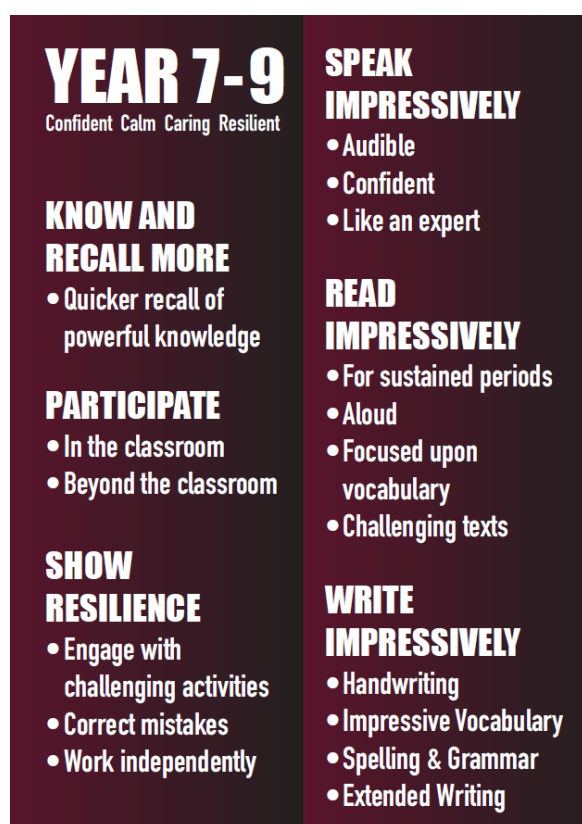
In addition to the curriculum time identified in the Appendix all students have a 30-minute daily mentor period. A major part of this is PRIME time which is used to foster a love of reading and enhance the reading skills that are so vitally important throughout the curriculum. It also provides time for our academic mentors to work with small groups of identified students on developing their reading and literacy skills.

INSIGHT is a planned 'Learning journey' delivered to all Year 7-13 students. This is in line with the Department of Education statutory guidance from the Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education. It is a bespoke programme of study which teaches our young people the skills to become impressive and employable people. The programme focuses on four main character values, resilience, respect, responsibility, and relationships. We also include education and advice to support a students' mental wellbeing.

This is delivered by our teaching staff, as well as using the expertise from NHS staff, Police, and a wide range of other external companies. We use timetabled INSIGHT lessons, as well as assemblies and virtual events to educate our young people. The programme includes several topics that challenge stereotypical thinking, raise aspirations, and promote equality.

Regular year group assemblies allow us the opportunity to meet as a community and provides the platform to nurture a positive school ethos that stresses care for the self, others, and the pursuit of all forms of excellence. The themes and delivery re-enforce the school ethos of Aspiration, Respect and Excellence and make a positive contribution to pupil self-development and consequently help to raise the importance of standards and academic achievement.

3. Key Stage 3



YEAR 7-9
Confident Calm Caring Resilient

KNOW AND RECALL MORE

- Quicker recall of powerful knowledge

PARTICIPATE

- In the classroom
- Beyond the classroom

SHOW RESILIENCE

- Engage with challenging activities
- Correct mistakes
- Work independently

SPEAK IMPRESSIVELY

- Audible
- Confident
- Like an expert

READ IMPRESSIVELY

- For sustained periods
- Aloud
- Focused upon vocabulary
- Challenging texts

WRITE IMPRESSIVELY

- Handwriting
- Impressive Vocabulary
- Spelling & Grammar
- Extended Writing

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum is designed around our 6 core principals. We want students to:

- Know and Recall More
- Participate
- Show Resilience
- Speak Impressively
- Read Impressively
- Write Impressively

The intent of our Key Stage 3 curriculum is to provide students with a broad and balanced education that allows them to enjoy learning, increase their knowledge and have access to the best that is thought and said.

Students study a broad range of 15 subjects; we aim to have a strong emphasis on the core subjects of maths, English, humanities and science whilst also focusing on creative subjects such as art, drama, music etc.

We aim to provide opportunities for students to develop as independent, confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives in modern Britain.

National Ark Curriculum

At KS3 we use the Ark Mastery curriculum for English. Based on real-world classroom insights and current pedagogical research, this programme is proven to engage students. The curriculum is purposefully sequenced to build understanding at Key Stage 3 level.

4. Key Stage 4 and Options

We start our options process in Year 10 with students studying a range of compulsory and optional subjects.

Compulsory:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Combined or Triple Science
A choice of Geography or History

Options:

Three choices to be made from a range of subjects:

SUBJECTS	
Art & Design	Music
Business Studies	PE
Computer Science	Religion, Philosophy & Ethics
Product Design	Triple Science
Drama	Photography
Food Preparation & Nutrition	Vocational Sport
French	Health & Social Care
Geography	Creative iMedia
History	Engineering

Throughout the options process we provide advice and guidance to students to ensure that they are making choices that reflect their abilities, interests and aspirations whilst at the same time ensuring that their choices represent a broad and balanced curriculum. Whilst we emphasise the importance of the EBACC in providing a solid basis for education and provide the opportunity for all students to study an additional language we acknowledge that not all students wish to do this.

5. Key Stage 5

We operate a very inclusive sixth form; we take great care to ensure that students are placed on courses that allow them the opportunity to succeed. Most students take three Level 3 qualifications in Year 12 that they continue through to Year 13. We also cater for students from a whole range of secondary schools who need to resit either their English or Maths GCSE's. For these students we look to provide bespoke pathways that include maths/English Level 2 qualifications combined with Level 3 vocational courses. Some of our vocational students go on to study extended qualifications in their chosen subjects giving them additional points towards their UCAS entries.

6. Exam Weeks

In addition to regular class based formative assessments we have two yearly assessment periods for all students. All subjects will assess student progress and understanding during these periods and follow up with targeted intervention to

address any issues before moving on with the curriculum. Information from these tests is also reported to parents.

7. Careers and Employability

Careers education forms an integral part of the curriculum in line with the current DFE Statutory Careers Guidance, Gatsby Benchmarks, and school CEIAG policy. We follow a whole school approach that ensures that staff understand and highlight the relevance of their subject to the world of work, making and embedding links from their curriculum to career pathways and employability skills. The wider CEIAG programme and stakeholder links further support this development of our students along with an established work experience programme.

8. House Events

The house system also provides ample opportunity for students to develop skills outside their comfort zone; we offer over 30 different academic, artistic and sporting events through the year. These range from whole school events such as cross country, house rugby/netball, arts week etc. to more specialised events such as cooking, public speaking, charity week and other challenges.

Taking part in these events provides students with the opportunity to develop their communication and leadership skills in a competitive and nurturing environment.

9. Extra-curricular

Extra-Curricular activities play a major role in the curriculum at Haberdashers' Abraham Darby. We recognise the opportunities that participation in activities outside of the classroom setting can bring to students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pupils' participation is registered and monitored with all students encouraged to take part in as many activities as possible; our school target is 100% participation.

Among the clubs we offer are:

- Drama Club and school productions
- Art Club
- Sports Clubs
- Film Club
- After school and holiday revision sessions for Year 11 and Year 13 students
- Homework catch-up Club

It is worth giving extra mention to the following clubs:

Netball

The Abraham Darby Netball Programme continues to grow from strength to strength, flourishing over the last six years. We have over 110 girls from Years 7–13 involved in playing and coaching younger students. Many year groups

now field two or even three teams due to the high level of participation and enthusiasm.

Our students have also enjoyed exciting international opportunities, including attending the European Sports Tours to Greece in 2023 and Gibraltar in 2025. Each year, our Year 7 students take part in a dedicated PGL Netball Tour, which is always a highlight of the season.

We are incredibly proud of the achievements across all of our teams. At the annual Haberdashers' Netball Tournament in 2024, our U13s finished 3rd, our U16s were crowned champions by finishing 1st, and our U19s also secured a 3rd-place finish. In addition, our U16s came 2nd in the Shropshire County Tournament 2025 and will now go on to represent the school at the School National Finals in 2026.

To support these opportunities, we fundraise in a variety of ways such as bag packs, non-uniform days, and even 24 hours of continuous netball!

As a programme, we aim to help our girls develop into confident, skilled, and successful athletes. We also strive to provide them with life-changing experiences and essential skills that will support their success long after they leave Abraham Darby.

Music

The Abraham Darby Academy music department has a very successful music tradition, which goes back well over 40 years and has ensured that the Academy has become one of the country's leading education establishments for musical opportunity for its students, with a high reputation within the youth music world. The department comprises three music classrooms, one of which operates a suite of apple mac computers and there is a professional recording studio. The music department is one of the very few left in the country, which still provides free instrumental lessons and operates a Saturday morning music college during term time, where many lessons and rehearsals take place. There are 150 pupils in the Academy receiving free instrumental & vocal lessons on a weekly basis. Students are given the opportunity to work towards taking Trinity College London and Associated Board graded music examinations in a termly basis. There are several ensembles within the Academy which rehearse regularly across the week:

Showband; Senior Jazz Band; Senior Brass Band; Saxophone Ensemble; Brass Group; Clarinet Choir; Percussion Ensemble; Friday Band (Intermediate Wind Band); Junior Jazz Band; CZ Band (training brass band); Megaband (training wind band); Choir.

Both the Showband, Senior and Junior Jazz Bands from Abraham Darby have participated successfully in the National Concert Band Festival and National Festival of Music for Youth over the past 25 years. Showband and Senior Jazz Band are currently top platinum award recipients from the festival and they have both been presented with consistent outstanding achievement awards for gaining platinum award 3 years consecutively. Senior Jazz Band have won numerous awards within the Great North Big Band Festival of Great Britain, winning best band award at least 4 times in the last 8 years.

SHOWBAND

The Academy's Showband has had the fortunate opportunity of performing twice at Carnegie Hall, New York in the last 10 years, winning a Gold Award in New York Band Festival in 2007 and then performing in the Showcase evening concert at the New York Band Festival in 2010. For the past 10 years the Showband have performed at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, and in 2012 represented England in the Commonwealth Carnival of Music in Westminster Hall, London for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. In July 2017 the Academy Showband travelled to Kerkrade, Holland where they competed in the 3rd Division of the World Music Contest and were awarded a silver award. They were still ranked the highest UK school wind band. Showband regularly participates in the National Festival of Music for Youth, Symphony Hall, Birmingham and has performed twice in the Music for Youth for Youth Schools Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in the past 6 years.

Rugby

Haberdashers' Abraham Darby looks to provide students with the very best rugby opportunities; we aim to develop personal and team skills, provide discipline, inspire hard work and endeavour, and offer new horizons to show young people that there are genuine career opportunities when secondary education is finished.

Abraham Darby has a strong rugby history in the local community.

The Academy boasts 140 players with 50 representing local clubs, 10 of which represent Shropshire with ten players who are part of Worcester Warriors Academy. During the 2022 season four out five teams made it to the County finals, meaning we can now be considered the strongest rugby school in Shropshire. The teams have undertaken various UK, Europe and worldwide tours, visiting such places as Barcelona, London, Lisbon, Bournemouth, Lake District, Bath, Bristol, Northumbria, Northern France, South Africa, South America and Canada. All these tours rely heavily on fundraising, the students are central to this process incorporating business and leadership skills.

We expect all rugby players to be student athletes. Attainment and behaviour are linked with attendance at training and fixtures. All students are expected to put in the same effort in the classroom as on the rugby pitch, this is recorded by staff and referred to students and parents alike.

The rugby programme is considered one of the strongest in the Midlands and we are one of few schools to play competitive fixtures on a Saturday. Each year the teams will play approximately 14 Saturday fixtures against some of the best private schools nationally, providing aspirations and broadening horizons. We have full time professional coaches involved from local professional clubs, including the Worcester Warriors. Haberdashers' Abraham Darby is seen as a hot bed of rugby in the area.

There are eight committed full time staff who run nine teams and training takes place between two to four times a week. We have our own specialist power lifting gym and seven rugby pitches. Students will be seen training before school as well as after school. We are attracting more students to squads than ever before and at Academy open evenings parents are looking specifically at the rugby within the

Academy as a key reason for choosing the school. With the introduction of the sporting aptitude test we expect to see the link grow further.

10. Equal opportunities/SEN

All of curriculum provision is arranged to provide equal opportunities and to engage fully with SEN students. Please refer to the SEN policy for further details.

11. Alternative Curriculum – ADAPT and THRIVE

To allow us to best cater for the complex needs of some of our students we introduced the ADAPT and THRIVE provision. This provides an alternative to mainstream provision for students whose intransigent behaviour puts them at risk of permanent exclusion. In addition to Maths, English, Science and Humanities lessons, students work through a bespoke package of qualifications, life skills and work experience. Since introducing these alternative pathways we have had great success in keeping these students in school and dramatically reducing the number of exclusions, this has allowed students who were in danger of permanent exclusion to leave with qualifications that give them access to the next level of education.

12. The Future

Although we believe that we have a strong curriculum, we are always looking for ways to improve it. Some of the options we are currently investigating include:

- **Extension of vocational qualifications in the sixth form.** We are getting increasing numbers of students in our sixth form that do not have the necessary academic ability for a diet of 3 A-Levels. By increasing the number of vocational subjects and including more extended courses we aim to provide an attractive and successful curriculum for these students.
- **Continue to adapt the curriculum in line with DfE changes to recognised qualifications.** We will continue to monitor and adapt our KS4/5 curriculum offer to ensure that our students are on courses that provide them with the best chances of moving onto the next level and also ensure that the school is credited for the work that it does.
- **Make our curriculum accessible to all stakeholders.** Develop our website to ensure that parents have access to what their child is studying at school and the Core/Powerful knowledge that required for each unit of work across all Key Stages.
- **Continue to develop our KS3 curriculum.** Continue to review and amend our current KS3 knowledge sheets to ensure that the knowledge and language is accessible to students and parents. Continue to develop the use of the Core/Powerful Knowledge sheets in and out of lessons.

Appendix – Curriculum structure

Year 7

% Curriculum Time	
Maths	16
English	16
Science	12
Geography	6
History	6
Modern Languages	6
ICT	4
DT and Food	8
Drama	2
Music	4
RE	4
P. E.	6
INSIGHT	4
Art	6

Year 8

% Curriculum Time	
Maths	16
English	16
Science	12
Geography	6
History	6
Modern Languages	8
ICT	4
DT and Food	8
Drama	2
Music	4
RE	4
P. E.	6
INSIGHT	4
Art	4

Year 9

% Curriculum Time	
Maths	16
English	16
Science	18
Geography	6
History	6
Modern Languages	6
ICT	4
DT and Food	8
Drama	2
Music	2
RE	4
P. E.	6
INSIGHT	2
Art	4

Key Stage 4

% Curriculum Time	
Maths	16
English	16
Science	18
PE	4
Option Block 1	14
History GCSE	
Geography GCSE	
Option Block 2	10
Option Block 3	10
Option Block 4	10
INSIGHT	2