



Colton Hills Community School

Many Minds, One Mission

Our Curriculum

Our Curriculum Vision

Colton Hills Community School is an inner-city school with a diverse cohort that draws from a wide range of cultures, nationalities and identities. Our curriculum seeks to address the disadvantage that may exist within these different communities by giving our students access to everything that the world can offer.

Our school proudly holds the status of a School of Sanctuary, where students from across the local area – and across the globe, too – can come together to learn harmoniously regardless of their background.

Therefore, the intention of our curriculum is that we will offer our students the access to a broad and varied curriculum that seeks to equip them for modern life. We have designed our curriculum to ensure that students have every opportunity to gain worthwhile employment, attend a top university and have access to the social mobility that can change lives for themselves and their families.

One of the most pivotal aspects is making our students highly literate and numerate, ensuring that they have the fundamental skills necessary to take their place in society. Our skill makes literacy a central aspect of life at Colton Hills and addressing deficiencies in reading – whether due to prior achievement or being new to the language – is something that we attack with all of our energies.

We are aiming for world-class education, as we embark on our journey towards High Performance Learning. We, therefore, intend our curriculum to be knowledge-rich, deep in its explorations of topics, challenging, and with a distinctive, outward-looking, international feel. We want our students to make sure that our students encounter the best of what has been said and written throughout human history, and the chance to read these words is something that we hold dear in our curriculum.

We recognised the importance of grounding our curriculum in its wider contexts to enable us to fill gaps in our students' knowledge. We are unapologetic in ensuring that our students have every opportunity to engage with as much powerful knowledge as anyone else in the country. As a High Performance Learning school, we believe that all students can achieve high performance, if armed with the knowledge to allow them to flourish.

With these school contexts in mind, at Colton Hills we have built our curriculum around a series of thematically based Curricular Concepts that students will see in various subjects, enabling them to draw links and supporting them in making connections that might not always be apparent to them.

The intention of our curriculum at all stages is that we will teach all children at our school that:



Social Justice

Humanity is on an optimistic, positive journey of developing tolerance, enfranchisement and rights for all peoples, and we must all play our part in this.



Cultural Diversity

Diversity is a gift to be valued, one that enriches our school, and that the shared histories of all cultures are worthy of respect and understanding.



Civic Responsibility

Respect for the law, democracy and its institutions are vital, but that existing power structures should always be respectfully questioned.



Technological Progress

Technological development is full of great human achievement, but is not without its challenges and drawbacks of which we must always be aware.



Precious Planet

The natural world is a place of wonder, mystery and beauty that should be respected, revered and protected, particularly in the face of climate change.



Healthy Living

Our health – mentally, physically and spiritually – is of primary importance and must be preserved as it contributes immensely to a happy and contented life.



Ethical Enterprise

Being enterprising and financially independent is crucial, but making money should always be weighed against the moral decisions about who it might affect.



Artistic Creativity

An appreciation of the vast array of creative arts and their power to entertain and educate is vital in an enriched, meaningful and fulfilled life.

Students who leave school with wider awareness of the world around them, with self-respect and with a personal morality will be best able to take advantage of all that life offers, and find their place in the world as a citizen of all of their communities.

Our Curriculum Plan

In 2023-4, we continue to deliver a two-week timetable, to better allow us to maximise students' learning time and to create a more even timetable model across subjects. In the information below, therefore, the curriculum allocations are the amount of hours **per fortnight**.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

We believe in teaching a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3, and students getting the chance to explore a vast range of subjects with and beyond the National Curriculum.

We invest a significant amount of time in core subjects and subjects which ultimately form part of the BTEC offer, but equally value time spent in the Arts and technical subjects to ensure that all students have a broad and balanced curriculum experience.

The hours spent in each subject vary slightly in Years 7-9, so below is a summary of the curriculum offer and how long students spend in each subject:

Subject	Key Stage 3 time (mins. per fortnight)
Art	120 (2 lessons)
Design and Technology	120 (2 lessons)
English (including library lesson)	480 (8 lessons)
Enrichment Wednesday	120 (2 lessons)
Geography	180 (3 lessons)
German	240 (4 lessons)
History	180 (3 lessons)
IT/Computing	180 (3 lessons)
Mathematics	420 (7 lessons)
Music	60 (1 lesson)
PE	240 (4 lessons)
Performing Arts	120 (2 lessons)
Religious Studies	120 (2 lessons)
Science	420 (7 lessons)

This curriculum is well-planned and sequenced, with all elements available to be viewed by parents on our website ensuring that there is an encompassing of all elements of the National Curriculum. It is underpinned by our Life Skills curriculum – taught through our weekly Enrichment Wednesday slot and through form periods – in which key elements of PSHE, SRE, citizenship and British Values are delivered to ensure that all students at Colton Hills have access to a rounded educational experience that supports all of our communities.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)

When students come to make their options choices for Years 10 and 11, we offer an even wider selection of courses to suit all interests and aspirations. We ensure that all students pursue an ambitious and wide subject offer, with strong encouragement to continue to pursue some of the 'facilitating' A Level subjects and the subjects which make up the EBacc. We also offer a suite of relevant vocational subjects to ensure that all students have relevant and effective pathways to support them to their eventual destinations.

Religious Studies is a core option in our curriculum, meaning that all students will take the subject through to Year 11. Our reason for this change is continuing to build on how our students engage with the wider world and have an appreciation for other cultures both within their own school and in their communities. We see this as vital to developing young people with real character and ability to be successful in society, who can think critically and philosophically, with an appreciation of ethical dilemmas.

All students make three subject choices as they move into Year 10 – two others if they pursue the Single Sciences. More details about the Options process and the choices available can be found on our Year 9 Options page, found on the school website.

Below is summary of our Key Stage 4 curriculum, including the different subjects that we offer inside and outside of the core curriculum:

Subject	Key Stage 4 time (mins. per fortnight)
Core Subjects – all students	
English	480 (8 lessons)
Mathematics	480 (8 lessons)
Science	480 (8 lessons)
Religious Studies	300 (5 lessons)
Core PE	240 (4 lessons)
Enrichment Wednesday	120 (2 lessons)
Optional Subjects – EBacc suite	
Geography	300 (5 lessons)
German	300 (5 lessons)
Computer Science	300 (5 lessons)
History	300 (5 lessons)
Optional Subjects – other options	
Business (Enterprise) BTEC	300 (5 lessons)
Dance	300 (5 lessons)
Design and Technology – Hospitality	300 (5 lessons)
Design and Technology – Product Design	300 (5 lessons)
Drama	300 (5 lessons)
Health and Social Care BTEC	300 (5 lessons)
IT BTEC	300 (5 lessons)
Music BTEC	300 (5 lessons)
Single Sciences (additional lessons)	300 (5 lessons)
Sport BTEC	300 (5 lessons)

The curriculum is based on strong work with exam boards and continually refined and reflected upon by our Curriculum Leaders. It is further underpinned by an assembly rota and form time curriculum, and with a vast array of opportunities for extra-curricular learning and intervention towards success in exams.

We continue to deliver our Life Skills curriculum to all student, through our Enrichment Wednesday slot and through form periods. In Key Stage 4, we also continue to broaden also have a significant Careers curriculum which involves significant contact with external employers and universities, as students seek to choose their next steps as they near the age of 16.

Key Stage 5 (Years 12-13)

We offer our students a significant amount of support in choosing their post-16 options, and this had led to being able to report excellent NEET figures in recent years. We do believe, however, that the Colton Hills Sixth Form is the right destination for the vast majority of our students, and our curriculum offer is designed to cater for all needs, aptitudes and aspirations.

Our offer is a mix of traditional A Level subjects including the ‘facilitating’ subjects necessary for acceptance at strong universities, as well as a relevant suit of vocational courses which build on our Key Stage 4 offer.

As well as the curriculum below, we offer a wider package of careers advice, work experience, enrichment opportunities and higher education contact, as well as a PSHE curriculum and bespoke assembly cycle for post-16 students. We also ensure that students re-sit GCSE English and Mathematics qualifications to secure Grade 4 and above.

All subject blocks have five hours of taught curriculum time per week (10 hours per fortnight), as well as 75 minutes per week of independent study time within the school day.

Here are the current subject choices in our post-16 offer:

A Level subjects
Biology
Chemistry
Computer Science
Economics
English Literature
Geography
History
Mathematics
Physics
Psychology
Level 3 BTECs
Applied Science
Business
Criminology
E-Sports
Health and Social Care
IT
Sport

Students also have an Enrichment Wednesday slot, which allows them to take part in their own, bespoke post-16 enrichment curriculum. As well as current affairs and school-wide activities, this incorporates opportunities to develop their study skills, mentor younger students, engage with careers opportunities and begin the process of applying to universities. These priorities are echoed in our form period programme, which takes place at the end of each school day.

Our wider curriculum

At Colton Hills, we do not believe that the curriculum ends at the classroom door, and we have put in place a wide variety of opportunities for our students to develop all aspects of themselves.

We are always looking for opportunities to further develop this offer, but some of these aspects include:

Form periods – Each day ends with a form period, which sees students meet their form tutor to review the day and to follow a structured programme of activities. These periods include a weekly assembly on a topical theme, a period focused on current affairs, a Pastoral period

where key messages are shared and a session where students focus on an aspect of PSHE. Form tutors become central to the life of students at Colton Hills, the first port of call for parents and guardians.

Student leadership – There are a range of opportunities for students to undertake leadership roles. We have an active School Board which has representatives from all year groups. They meet regularly to be consulted on school developments and their views are considered by the SLT as part of school improvement planning. This develops further as students move through school, with opportunities to become a leader in their House, a prefect, part of the post-16 leadership team, or a Head Student.

Extra-curricular participation – There are a vast array of opportunities beyond the school day for students to develop themselves. A half-termly calendar is published and shared with parents, and students are actively encouraged to attend wherever possible. Sport is particularly popular, with use of our outstanding grounds allowing for a wide range of activities. We also have a growing level of participation in the performing arts, and other opportunities in STEM, literacy and other areas of school life such as our Eco School.

Personal development – At Colton Hills we actively encourage students to consider how they are changing and developing as a person, and we get them to reflect on this regularly through their form periods. To enable them to do this effectively, staff at the school agreed on 100 activities that students could take part in both inside and outside of school to develop themselves. These activities are highlighted by form tutors, and student success in achieving them is celebrated whenever possible.

Enrichment Wednesday – This weekly slot sees the entire school engaging in Enrichment Wednesday, a specially-designed enrichment programme which is based on the university model of Wednesday afternoons being given over to personal development. Our programme is a combination of interform activities, PSHE lessons, guest speakers, cultural performances the marking of important milestones. The full programme is available to view elsewhere on our website.

Work-based learning and careers – Students have access to a careers curriculum which has been planned by our Careers and Aspirations Lead with their needs in mind. Careers education is vital to the long-term economic success of our students, and they are given access to this from Year 7 onwards. As well as lesson opportunities and links in their subject areas, we begin to offer a more bespoke service in Key Stage 4 and 5 which encompasses regular personal interviews, work experience placements and growing employer contact to ensure that our students are ready for the world of work and can access meaningful careers.

PSHE – The PSHE curriculum includes Sex and Relationship Education, citizenship, study skills and personal safety. It is taught through Enrichment Wednesday slots, and through form periods, with sufficient time given for students to reflect on their learning and to take part in discussions. We have ensured that all parts of the statutory SRE curriculum are taught in full, and students are taught to engage in and raise challenging issues which affect their everyday lives.

Literacy and numeracy

We know that for our students to be successful, they need to be highly literate and numerate and we place these skills as central to our curriculum. All students have a significant commitment of time to English and Maths as part of the curriculum throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, and our intent is that all students leave school with the skills necessary to achieve good qualifications in English and Maths, as these are the gateways to many of the opportunities that can follow.

Literacy

PLANETS: Reading to Learn		The Colton Hills Way of Teaching
Before	Predict it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use an inference grid to predict content by asking literal, then inference and exploratory questions about a key image in or related to the text. Predict what the text will be about by only showing parts of the text such as an image, headings, topic sentences, key words and phrases.
During	Listen and follow it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play an audio of the text or the teacher reads the text aloud. Pupils listen and follow to get an overview and assess their predictions. Pupils complete a visual organiser to see how the information is laid out.
	Ask questions about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils read text closely and discuss margin questions written by teacher (e.g. about content/ideas, word meanings, how information is organised) Pupils read text closely and write their own margin questions to discuss. Teacher asks line number questions to clarify new meanings.
After	Note down answers to questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils annotate the text with answers to questions and word meanings. Pupils add new vocabulary to a glossary or word list in their books.
	Extract information from it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils scan the text to find answers to comprehension questions. Pupils take notes, at first using frameworks and models, then without.
Alter	Transform the information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils apply the information to a new but related task.
	Summarise it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils produce a verbal summary of the text type and key ideas they have read about in the text.

Central to our teaching approach is a focus on **literacy and reading**. We support our entire curriculum with a high level of focus on reading because we know that literacy is vital to educational success and social mobility. We build this into our curriculum in several ways, such as through Library Lessons in Key Stage 3 English, the use of the Accelerated Reader and Bedrock Vocabulary programmes, twenty minutes of reading time per day with our weekly Drop Everything and Read strategy and an increase of the extended reading that students do in all of their lessons.

In addition to these wider strategies, we have supported our teachers and students with a strong focus on the skills of reading that they develop in each lesson. Working with advisors from our Local Authority, we have developed our **PLANETS reading strategy**, which teachers use when getting students to undertake reading in their lessons. These are the unspoken reading skills which enable students to decode challenging texts and make meaning out of them in ways which will support them in exams and beyond.

Our mentality at Colton Hills is that whilst we may teach different subjects, we are all teachers of reading.

Numeracy

At Colton Hills, we have a passion for mathematics that many of our students share, reflected in our strong and improving outcomes in this area. We build on a Key Stage 3 experience which is based on the White Rose curriculum, which offers an excellent blend of well-sequenced learning and retrieval which allows things to stick.



We also want our students to know why mathematics is so important, and we have built this into our curriculum, too. We underpin our teaching with explanations of where these mathematical concepts are used in the real world, in employment and in all fields of human endeavour. We also give our students access to the cultural knowledge of how mathematical discoveries we made, so that they know that the story of maths is every bit as compelling as the stories elsewhere in the curriculum.

Our curriculum also involves a significant amount of cross-curricular mathematical work, in particular with our Science department, so that all students have a regular diet of experiences to secure key skills.

Teaching and Learning

We have high expectations of our students, and we exemplify this by setting challenging target grades at Key Stage 4 and 5, in line with the achievement of the top 20% of schools in the country. These target grades are set at the beginning of Year 10 and used as the basis for ongoing conversations about student progress throughout their GCSE, BTEC and A Level courses. We target students who are underperforming for additional support and ensure that they know the steps to take as part of developing their progress and ultimately achieving excellent outcomes.

In Key Stage 3, we base our assessment on progress towards these target grades, but do not assign GCSE equivalent grades to our students at this stage, as we believe this can often be counterproductive to their motivation. Instead, all our subjects have developed their own system, where students can be assessed and graded on a scale from 'Well Below' to 'Well Above', and this can be reported to parents in at each of our assessment points. Parents can be confident that these assessments are meaningful and have been moderated to be consistent, clearly pointing the way towards the progress that students can be expected to make when they complete national qualifications.

We assess and report on students at three points in the year, at the end of our three Learning Phases, which take 12-13 weeks and lead to assessment points roughly towards the end of each term, in November, March and June. These assessments are undertaken after significant preparation and in test conditions which mimic the real examination conditions which students will face further up the school. These timings allow the students to have termly reports and for these to go home prior to the three major holidays in the school calendar. The final assessment is very much a formal end-of-year test, taken in the exam hall.

One key principle that we have developed at Colton Hills is that all assessment should be cumulative, and not simply a measure of what students have learned most recently. Our three assessments build across the year and the Key Stage, so that learning is assessed from various modules and elements, forcing students to commit to long-term memory. Retrieval practice, revision strategies and metacognition skills are a significant priority for us to continue to develop as a school, and our assessment model mirrors this aim.

Revision Cycle

1. **SUMMARISE:** shorten information
2. **RETRIEVE:** find out what you know
3. **FILL THE GAPS:** look at what you don't remember
4. **APPLY:** practice using the information
5. **REVIEW:** reflect on how you have done and repeat

