



University of Brighton



# Hastings Academies: Summary of Education Briefs

## 1. Size of academy / Schools within a school

A key aim of the curriculum of each academy is 'to ensure a safe and secure learning environment' and this will be achieved via a 'schools within a school' model of curriculum organisation and student support.

All students in each academy will belong to one of four / five 'mini schools'. Each of these 'mini schools' will have dedicated and flexible space within the academy, and students will spend the majority of their time in this space (only leaving it when they need to access one of the specialist teaching facilities e.g. science labs or the sports hall). This will minimise movement between classes and therefore disruption between lessons. The model enables students to build closer relationships with their teachers and fellow students, and make better academic progress as they do not get lost in the system.

The schools within a school model will also be central to each academy's approach to supporting transition, particularly when students move from their primary schools into the academy.

## 2. Transition

One of these mini schools will be dedicated to year 7 students. Normally, the change from primary to secondary school is an unsettling period, and this year 7 'mini school' will build on students' primary school experiences so that they are able to maximise the learning environment.

The remaining mini schools will be comprised of learners from years 8 – 11. Each year 7 student will also be linked to one of the remaining mini schools throughout the year. Year 7 students will increasingly integrate into the Year 8 – 11 mini school activities during the year, so that they are confident by the end of the year about joining the next mini school, having already become familiar with its structure and established relationships with their fellow students and teachers.

In fact, the allocation to students' future mini schools will take place whilst students are in year 6 of their primary school, and there will be a range of activities and contacts during the latter part of year 6 so that students are less daunted when they join the academy in September.

Year 7 students will also be allocated a 'buddy' from their future mini-school who will meet regularly with them and help them with any concerns or worries that they may have.

## 3. Student support and tutoring

There will be two types of tutoring for students in each academy:

- Horizontal tutoring for subject-related learning (e.g. there will be a mathematics tutor group), will take place in year / key stage groups. A subject tutor group will normally be comprised of a maximum of 25 students;
- Vertical tutoring is used for non-subject related learning such as Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). Vertical tutor groups will be mixed age (comprising students from across all years groups, within each mini-school), and will be led by teachers and other adults from the academy community. The vertical tutor group will normally have a maximum of 15 students.

Each academy's curriculum will be designed 'to develop learners' personal qualities, attributes and confidence'. A strong student support structure will be established so that students can develop independent learning skills, experience positive role models and participate in opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others in and outside the academy community. This will be organised through the aforementioned mini school structure and will include:

- one: one support from individual mentors who will be drawn from a range of adults including the sponsors, local colleges, industry and training providers: these mentors will be ideal role models for the students;
- support from within the student population of each academy, through peer mentors, buddies and peer mediators;
- support from teachers, tutors, other adults, shared teachers at each stage of transition;
- support from specialist workers for more vulnerable learners including those with disabilities, speech, language and communication difficulties / autistic spectrum disorders and gifted and talented.

Each student's progress will be mapped to ensure that they are active and involved learners and members of the academy community.

The involvement of parents and carers is central to this student support structure: they will be able to access information and communicate with teachers and other adults who can guide and support them to help their children make suitable choices.

## **4. Approach to learning and teaching**

### **4.1 *Individualisation and personalisation***

The curriculum will be designed 'to ensure inclusivity, accessibility and challenge for all learners'.

It will allow *personalisation* by providing a range of subjects, qualifications, activities and approaches to learning that students can choose from (particularly during key stage 4) according to their interests and future aspirations. This helps students to take ownership for their learning.

It will be *individualised* through the development of a bespoke package of study and support to meet a student's individual needs. This ensures that the strengths and areas for development of all students are recognised, and all students learn to value the contributions of all of their fellow students.

All students' progress will be closely tracked and monitored in order to enable appropriate additional support to be provided where needed, and to enable students to achieve to the best of their abilities.

## **4.2 Teaching and learning strategies**

A variety of teaching and learning strategies will be adopted, which will be complementary to this individualised approach. For example, there will be:

- small break out areas near classrooms, for small group work and to enable one to one support to be provided to individuals;
- some large group activities which will provide opportunities for teachers to model team working and collaboration;
- 'online' learning and assessment, facilitated by each academy's learning platform;
- independent study opportunities;
- problem solving and investigative approaches to learning.

## **5. Curriculum**

Each academy's curriculum will draw on the best elements of a traditional approach in innovative ways.

### **5.1 Core subjects**

The importance of separate teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT is recognised, and this will be a feature of each curriculum throughout key stages 3 and 4. Furthermore, these core subjects will be integrated within the teaching of other subjects (for example, students will complete mathematical calculations in the development of a design and technology project): by featuring across the entire curriculum this will ensure that standards will continue to improve in these core subjects.

### **5.2 Project based learning**

During key stage 3 (primarily years 7 and 8), the teaching of the core subjects is enriched by a project-based approach, whereby students in each mini school will investigate a problem or issue in depth. This approach enables teachers to work in teams in support of students, and encourages students to see the links between different subject areas.

For example, a project might be 'What will Hastings look like in the next 50 years', which could culminate in a presentation to a local audience: there will be lessons which relate to this project in all subjects (either indirectly – by supporting students in the development of specific skills that will be useful for the project; or directly, by including sessions of direct relevance to the project). For example:

- during the English lessons, students will look at key literature and books based in Hastings, whilst also developing written and spoken skills needed for presentations;
- during mathematics lessons, students will design and carry out a survey of local people's preferences for the future of Hastings and create a simulation of a future world using variables such as housing, traffic etc;
- during humanities lessons, students will explore how towns and the landscape have changed and how they may look in the future; and will learn how beliefs and ideas have shaped our world;
- during science lessons, students will carry out experiments to model the effects of light, pollution and sounds on local plant life;
- during design and technology lessons, students will design a model of a future Hastings, using CAD /CAM;
- during ICT lessons, students will create a virtual future Hastings using gaming software;
- during creative arts lesson, students will design a range of adverts to promote the presentation;

Whilst there will be a team approach to the design of these projects, individual lessons will be taught by subject specialists to ensure that the emphasis on subject learning remains.

### **5.3 *Learning to learn***

There will be a focus on the development of students' core competences (literacy and numeracy) and the skills of 'learning to learn'. This will ensure that they become independent learners who are able to understand and have the confidence to investigate new knowledge, issues and problems.

English literacy skills will enable students to read, write, critique and communicate effectively; numerical literacy skills will enable students to confidently address problems; and emotional literacy skills will enable students to take responsibility for their learning and demonstrate good team working.

Through the development of these skills and competences, students will be well placed to face future learning challenges that they will encounter through future study and employment.

### **5.4 *Modular learning***

The skills that students develop during key stage 3 will stand them in good stead as they move to a more modular, subject specific approach during key stage 4. Here the curriculum will adopt a more traditional subject timetable, and students will attend lessons according to the qualifications (GCSEs, Diplomas etc) they are aiming for. Students will be able to personalise their curriculum by choosing from a range of subjects and qualification pathways available including:

- GCSEs or equivalent qualifications
- Diplomas (the subjects available will be complementary to the Academy's overall specialisms and build on existing expertise)
- Young apprenticeships or equivalent
- Foundation learning

There will be links to local employers and other education providers in the delivery of these qualifications. Moreover, all students will have the security of guaranteed place at a local post 16 provider (Sussex Coast College Hastings, Bexhill College, Plumpton College, William Parker and Helenswood Federal Sixth Form).

### **5.5 *'Stage not age'***

Students will move from key stage 3 to key stage 4 at the point at which they are ready to – which might be different for different subjects.

Key stage 3 will be primarily followed by students in years 7 and 8; and key stage 4 will be primarily followed by students in years 10 and 11. Students in year 9 will either follow a full key stage 3 curriculum, a full key stage 4 curriculum or a combination depending on their strengths, areas for development and future aspirations (for example, a student who is particularly good at English but might need further development to support their mathematical knowledge might follow the key stage 4 curriculum in English, and the key stage 3 curriculum in mathematics in year 9).

### **5.6 *Enrichment and supported study***

'Enrichment' will be a required part of the curriculum for all students: it will be a flexible element which will provide additional breadth to the curriculum and enable students' individual needs and aspirations to be met.

For example, a student who needed to further develop their mathematical skills would attend a maths 'booster' class during the enrichment time. Students who were particularly gifted at sport could attend additional physical education sessions. Students with additional learning needs could receive one to one support during these periods. There may also be opportunities for students to undertake community-based projects / activities during these periods.

There will also be 'supported study' slots incorporated into the curriculum. These will be used to support students generally or provide additional time for gifted and talented students to extend their learning through guided independent study.

## **6. Technology**

### **6.1 *ICT and Learning and teaching***

ICT will be a subject in its own right as well as featuring throughout the curriculum. It will be used by all teachers to convey aspects of their subject more effectively through, for example, models and online simulations, and will enable increased interaction with students.

ICT will be used to make lessons more stimulating, engaging and innovative for all students, and there will be a high level of access to mobile and fixed computers interactive technology and specialised software. There will also be a highly functional learning platform, to facilitate access to digital resources, a media streaming service, video conferencing etc in support of learning. Students will use mobile technology to communicate with each other, to search for information, interact with their teachers, review timetables, share learning materials and provide peer support for one another. ICT will play a key role in meeting the individual needs of students and the different learning styles and preferences of all.

The learning platform and video conferencing will also help to bring the outside world into each academy through electronic links to the sponsors, employers, community organisations and other schools and colleges – for example, students at a school in another country - which will add value to all subjects.

### **6.2 *ICT and the learning environment***

Remote access to the learning platform will extend when and where learning activities can take place.

ICT will also enable students and their teachers and parents / carers to track progress and set goals, which supports the personalisation of learning. Parents and carers will have access to real-time assessment, attendance and behaviour information and also the opportunity to participate in teaching and learning experiences, therefore enabling the academy to access the vast range of knowledge that exists in the community.

Technology also presents opportunities to improve accessibility for disadvantaged and SEN learners. There will be computer interfaces and applications designed specifically for supporting learners with SEN so as to increase opportunities for individualised instruction, monitoring and support that can be co-ordinated across agencies as required.

All specialised and learning spaces in the academy will have ICT integrated throughout, which will be fully networked, to allow data collection and analysis from other parts of the academy (for example, data about the heart rates of students using the fitness room can be used by students in their mathematics class).