

# Curriculum Intent Alternative Curriculum AC4

## Curriculum Priorities

The Key Stage 4 Alternative Curriculum at Nottingham Girls' Academy is designed to prepare our pupils for post 16 education and the world of work, to continue their focus on independence and gain key Entry Level Qualifications. The curriculum is designed to reflect the diversity of our school community and provides opportunities for sharing life experiences and learning about cultures and faiths that are not experienced by our pupils directly, e.g., through our ASDAN Beliefs and Values and Geography Short Courses. Our bespoke and responsive PSHE curriculum is designed to support the needs of our female and non-binary pupils and opportunities for communication and collaboration with group work, self-reflection and discussions are weaved throughout all the subjects. The curriculum is paced appropriately to ensure that all our pupils can engage and thrive within it.

## Knowledge

By the end of Key Stage 4 we want pupils to be:

- Equipped with the essential foundation knowledge in core subjects that will support them in planning for adulthood and into the next stage of their education. These subjects form the core of our qualification offer including NCFE Entry Level English, Maths and Essential Digital Skills. Through our ASDAN Short Course pupils will also be confident in voicing their opinions, listening to the opinions of others and aware of their individual strengths so that they can continue to make informed and independent choices about their lives. Our bespoke PSHE course will ensure that our pupils have agency over their own bodies, be able to keep themselves safe online and in the physical world and demonstrate respect and awareness of the private and public space of others.

For those who learn with the Alternative Curriculum at Key Stage 4 we want pupils to have:

- Independence in their personal lives to ensure that they can make informed and relevant choices about their futures.
- The skills to communicate effectively using a strategy that works for them that enables them to articulate their choices, opinions and have agency over their lives.
- A broad and balanced knowledge of the world around them that lies outside their lived experience whilst celebrating and sharing their own cultures, faiths and life choices in a safe and supportive environment.

## Skills

The skills we aim to develop are:



Literacy & Numeracy



Communication



Problem Solving



Metacognition



Leadership



Collaboration



Physical,  
Practical &  
Technical



Digital Literacy

For example:

- **Literacy & Numeracy:** The AC4 curriculum embeds literacy and numeracy within all its core ASDAN Short Courses as well as the Functional Skills English and Maths qualifications through an explicit focus on speech and language, effective and appropriate communication, reading skills and numeracy skills that equip them for living independently into adulthood.
- **Collaboration:** Social skills, group working and problem solving underpins the delivery of the curriculum throughout key stage 4, teaching our pupils to manage emotions, self-regulate and express themselves appropriately. This is supported through our ASDAN Short Course group work, 4 Zones of Regulation and bespoke interventions.
- **Digital Literacy:** The new Essential Digital Skills qualification (EDSQ) has been introduced to the AC4 curriculum to support pupils to gain the key digital skills required for them to engage and participate fully in the digital world.
- **Physical, Technical, Practical:** Our pupils engage with mainstream PE as well as a weekly bespoke PE lesson within their own class. Pupils experience a range of technical and practical skills through their ASDAN Personal Development Programme focusing on, for example, interviewing skills, fine motor skills, cooking skills.
- **Leadership:** Our AC4 pupils are encouraged to support and spend time with the AC3 pupils as part of their community in the AC and leadership is encouraged and explored through our ASDAN Short Course where the pupils learn to work in groups, consider appropriate roles for each other and reflect on what worked and what didn't work.
- **Metacognition:** Opportunities for our pupils to gain self-awareness and critical thinking are woven throughout our curriculum, building on the work started in AC3. Each pupil works closely with our skilled and dedicated staff to gain understanding of the barriers they experience and to work towards making choices and having strategies that enable them to be independent thinkers. They are encouraged to reflect on their progress and think of their own solutions to the problems they encounter.
- **Problem Solving:** The pupils in the AC are constantly problem solving as they learn to navigate a world that holds many more barriers and difficulties for them than others. With each ASDAN 'Challenge', our pupils create skills plans that consider what they have to do, what they need and when they need it done, they then reflect on this

during and after, discussing the problems they face and sharing how they overcame these.

- **Communication:** Effective communication lies at the heart of our curriculum. Our pupils experience speech, language and communication difficulties that are supported through everyday modelling, targeted discussion topics and bespoke literacy and communication interventions where necessary. Our pupils will be equipped with the skills to listen, express their opinion appropriately and effectively taking into consideration their audience and purpose.

## Qualities

The qualities we aim to develop are:



For example:

- **Respect:** Our AC4 curriculum builds the work started in AC3 by continuing to expose pupils to the values of respecting difference through the wider perspective as part of our Beliefs and Values ASDAN Short Course. Our focus on collaboration within and across the groups provides opportunities to practise being respectful in the context of their everyday lives.
- **Integrity:** Self-assessments, outcome checklists and progress reports are all embedded in the curriculum subjects to provide opportunities for self-reflection and critical thinking that supports the pupils to become aware of their own personal learning journey and take ownership of their learning as they work towards their post 16 life. The curriculum embeds the skills and knowledge required to success in everyday life so has purpose and meaningful outcomes for our pupils.
- **Aspiration:** The AC4 curriculum embeds a focus on future goals in the English curriculum, employability skills in PSHE and collaboration in the Short Courses. This provides time and opportunity for discussions about the future and creates a focus for our pupils to work towards. Our pupils are taught to not feel limited by their differences but learn skills and strategies that allow them self-control and independence so that they can aspire beyond what they may initially consider achievable.
- **Empathy:** Our pupils learn, work and socialise in a diverse and inclusive group as well as beyond in the mainstream community. The qualities of considering the thoughts and feelings of others are embedded in our everyday curriculum, for e.g., our Beliefs and Values Short Course and is then modelled during social times, group work and restorative conversations.

- **Positivity:** Through the inclusive, diverse and individual nature of the curriculum our pupils learn very quickly that supporting and celebrating the achievements of others and themselves is rewarding and helps others to achieve and feel proud.
- **Creativity:** Each of our pupils expresses themselves differently and have creative talents; we aim to provide a range of opportunities for pupils to find their creative interests and encourage them to explore and expand on these. The flexible and responsive nature of our curriculum means that we can even adapt it to support a specific skill or talent where possible.
- **Resilience:** Our pupils demonstrate resilience every single day as they face the challenges of education, social community and the wider world. Our aim is to build a curriculum that listens to the individual needs of our pupils and responds effectively and proportionally, helping pupils gain personal responsibility whilst teaching them the skills and strategies to self-regulate and reflect.
- **Tolerance:** Our pupils will learn to self-regulate and gain awareness of the impact of their actions, behaviours and communication on others. Skilled and sensitive staff model this everyday through their teaching, lesson content and discussions outside of the classroom.
- **Kindness:** Each of our pupils is encouraged to help within the AC as there is always so much to do to keep everyone going! Staff work closely with pupils outside of lessons to encourage them to help others; our pupils gain excellent skills in being kind to others through sharing their own experiences and how they solved their problems.

## Curriculum Principles

### Sequencing, Learning and Assessment

Our AC4 curriculum has been created to continue to reflect and meet the individualised needs of our pupils. The curriculum focuses on delivering a differentiated learning experience that delivers the foundation qualification, skills and knowledge required for the world of work and training. The required skills, content and knowledge are embedded repeatedly across all areas of the curriculum to support recall and retention as well cross-curricular application.

This is further reinforced by:

- **Learning Challenge:** A relevant and differentiated outcome that allows our pupils to be clear on their purpose and provides a scaffold towards independent assessment.
- **Learning Consolidation:** Skills Builder assessments that provide opportunities for application of pupil knowledge, reflection on their own progress and awareness of their skills gaps.

## **Cultural Capital**

Cultural capital is embedded and reinforced throughout the curriculum with links across all subjects and topics to expose the AC pupils to experiences and cultures that differ from their own lived experience.

For example:

- All pupils work towards a Personal Development Progress qualification that provides a wider exposure to experiences and challenges outside of the academic school life.
- Visits and trips are linked to employability skills, life skills and getting ready for independence. We are planning a residential trip in the Summer Term for our pupils to gain independence, build resilience and experiences outside their own lives.
- Pupils participate in the wider school community and get involved with assemblies and events beyond the AC Group.
- Pupils take part in PE tournaments throughout the year.

## **Equality**

We want our curriculum to reflect what it means to be part of a wider, diverse community with diverse needs; for our pupils to know about the barriers and difficulties that are faced and overcome by those around them. We want them to celebrate the culture and heritage of those around them and learn tolerance and respect for ways of life that they haven't experienced. Above all, our curriculum is designed to ensure that our pupils learn that they have a right to speak up, a right to be heard and to voice their needs and be listened to so that they too can contribute and change the future.

- Our AC Tutor cultural capital weekly session includes exploring the cultures and heritage of our pupils in the group and wider community. Pupils are given opportunities to talk about their lives and share their experiences, helping others to understand that their lives may differ but that's ok.
- The Equality Group works with the AC Group throughout the year to encourage the pupil voice about how their experience of school is different than the mainstream pupils and educate the whole school body on what the AC Group is and how the SEND Faculty supports those with academic and mental health needs.

## **Careers and Employability**

Our key stage 4 curriculum is focused on preparing our pupils to prepare for life beyond NGA and support them to aspire towards personal aims and goals. The AC4 curriculum continues to focus on communication and discussion whilst underpinning the academic content with critical self-reflection.

- Careers and employability skills are taught through our Tutor PSHE sessions focusing on practical and essential life skills such as managing money, bank accounts and keeping safe online.

- Our pupils work closely with the Careers Advisor throughout KS4 to ensure that they gain relevant and supportive work experience, as well as tailored advice and guidance on their next steps.
- Speakers from Apprenticeship providers come to talk directly to our AC4 pupils about courses and opportunities that are available to them.
- Our AC4 pupils visit local colleges to see the groups, courses and environments that they may be moving onto in Year 12.