



## Curriculum Update from the Deputy Headteacher

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Dear Parents

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing further to my previous email sent in October ([here](#)) to provide an update on various matters relating to curriculum and assessment at Sir Thomas Rich's School. We continue to strive for excellence in our teaching and learning, ensuring that all pupils benefit from a well-structured and dynamic curriculum.

### Curriculum Aims Update

You may recall in my previous email that I detailed our revised *curriculum aims* and included the following link to a document that outlines these aims in more detail: [Curriculum Aims - click here to open](#)

Mr Lynch recently presented an assembly to Year 7 pupils to give them a better understanding of the curriculum and these school aims. He explained how curriculum sequencing is carefully planned in all subject areas and reminded pupils about our five core aims: Self-discipline, Thinking Skills, Resilience, Behaviours for Learning, Core Knowledge and Understanding. These aims are designed to equip pupils with the skills and mindset necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

To reinforce these aims, each Year 7 form group (STRBC) has been assigned a curriculum aim to explore further. Pupils will use Tutor Time to create short presentations for their peers, supported by a resource pack to aid their research and preparation.

We hope that this activity will give pupils a greater understanding of the benefits of achieving these curriculum aims and help them to monitor their progress towards them.

### Curriculum Development

Our Curriculum Leaders (Heads of Department) regularly meet to review and refine our curriculum. Recent discussions have focused on aspects of the curriculum where we would like to further enhance our curriculum provision. In a recent meeting, we discussed strengthening cross-curricular links and departments are now seeking ways to work together where there are natural cross-overs between their subject curricula to enable pupils and students to more easily see the links between different subjects.

We also spent some time sharing best practice on the checking of pupil understanding in lessons and discussing strategies that have worked well to ensure that all pupils have grasped the key ideas of a topic before moving on.

Other topics discussed have been effective use of homework, and considering the impact of AI technologies on teaching, learning, and assessment.

### Curriculum Brochure

To provide a clear and accessible overview of our curriculum, Mrs Vielvoye and Mrs Robinson have been working with Curriculum Leaders to compile a Curriculum Brochure. Progress on this project is going well, and we aim to share the final version with parents and stakeholders later this year.

### Work Sampling and Curriculum Conversations

As part of our ongoing monitoring, we regularly sample pupils' work. One of the key findings of recent work sampling events is the improvement in the presentation and organisation of pupils' work. This is an important aspect of pupils' approach to learning. If individuals find that they are struggling to organise their work or that presentation continues to be an issue for them, they should speak with their tutor to seek further support.

This term, we are introducing 'Curriculum Conversations'—discussions with groups of pupils alongside their work to gain insights into their learning experiences, the feedback they receive, and the effectiveness of assessments. The first of these sessions will take place later this term with Year 12 pupils.

### Value Added and Progress 8

We are pleased to share that our value added (L3VA) score at A Level for 2024 results stands at +0.24; this means that on average students achieved around a quarter of a grade higher in each A Level than would be predicted if they had made progress from GCSE in line with the rest of the country. This score ranks us as the top state school in Gloucestershire for this measure. Our Progress 8 score, which assesses value added at GCSE in a similar way, is an impressive +0.91, placing us in the top 4% of schools nationally. Trial GCSE results indicate that our current Year 11 cohort is on track to match the strong performance of the previous year.

### Pupil Absence and Catch-Up Work

A reminder that if your child is absent from school, they should ensure they catch up on any missed lesson work. Homework will remain accessible via Satchel One, and pupils should obtain class notes from peers or departmental resources on SharePoint. Teachers are not expected to provide personalised work for short-term absences. For longer-term absences, parents should liaise with the Head of Year to coordinate catch-up arrangements.

### **Digital Strategy**

We are exploring the potential of one-to-one student devices (e.g., tablets or laptops) to enhance learning. Staff have visited schools that have implemented similar schemes, and discussions are ongoing about how this could be introduced at Sir Thomas Rich's. We believe that there are potential benefits to such a move with devices facilitating an increased range of learning resources, enabling new methods of teacher feedback as well as preparing pupils for the use of such devices in the workplace. Any such initiative would not commence before September 2026 and will involve pupil, parent and staff consultation. We will keep parents updated on developments.

### **Government Curriculum and Assessment Review**

You may have read that the Government has commissioned Professor Becky Francis to lead a review of its curriculum and assessment policies. The interim findings of the review can be read at [Curriculum and Assessment Review publishes interim findings - GOV.UK](#). We will, of course, be keeping a close eye on the outcomes of the final report and any implications for Sir Thomas Rich's.

Thank you for your ongoing support. If you have any questions regarding the curriculum or assessment, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Dave Dempsey

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

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