

Curriculum at AJK

The importance of curriculum

Our mission is to ensure our pupils lead a life of genuine choice and can drive their own destinies because they:

- *Have a rigorous academic curriculum which is well taught*
- *Know that kindness, effort, aspiration and tenacity lead to success*

Pillar 4: Depth for breadth

An academic curriculum, rich in powerful knowledge, opens up opportunities for our children for the rest of their lives.

We believe all children have the right to be taught the powerful knowledge which will open up the world to them and open up the joy that comes from learning an academic curriculum. Powerful knowledge builds cultural capital, and a knowledge-based curriculum is the most efficient and effective way to enable our children to be knowledgeable, articulate, curious, and able to access the next stage of their development. All teachers understand that academic success is predicated on wide reading in all subjects, and so lessons include significant amounts of reading. Our curriculum builds pupil memory, because if nothing has been remembered nothing has been learnt. In all lessons pupils are tasked to work hard and practice applying key knowledge deliberately. As a result, our pupils achieve exceptional outcomes which open doors for the future.

The curriculum is the mechanism by which we ensure students receive the world class education they deserve. It is the single most important factor in driving extraordinary outcomes for our students, which will enable them to thrive in academic, professional and social settings where they must compete and collaborate with peers from a range of backgrounds.

Our society requires the requisite cultural capital and academic results to enable students to succeed in life. What that knowledge consists of is contentious in popular discourse. As educators we do not define the rules of the game, rather it is our job to prepare students to play and win the game.

We believe that there is a body of knowledge that all students need and are entitled to learn. We recognise that this body of knowledge is not static but evolves over time to encompass new ideas and perspectives in addition to the content which has traditionally comprised of the 'best that has been thought and said'.

AJK curriculum context and aims

AJK is proud to serve our diverse, vibrant and aspirational community. We work closely with our pupils and families to develop their character and academic knowledge.

Every adult who works at AJK believes in the limitless potential of all children. We therefore have three overarching curriculum aims which ensure that all of our students, regardless of their backgrounds, can lead a life of genuine choice and drive their own destinies:

1. Powerful knowledge

We know that our children deserve and can handle a rigorous academic curriculum, and that a curriculum rich with powerful knowledge will open doors for the future.

2. Reading

We know that academic success is predicated on wide reading in all subjects, and so lessons include significant amounts of reading. Reading broadens horizons and fosters aspiration.

3. Diversity

We want our curriculum to celebrate and reflect the diverse bodies of people who have generated and evolved powerful knowledge within subject disciplines, so that students can appreciate, critique and change the world around them.

Intellectual Preparation

Intellectual preparation is a thinking process which outlines the highest leverage actions a teacher can take before teaching a lesson. The process enables teachers to plan for rigour by:

- Explicitly naming the key knowledge and skills to be mastered in a lesson
- Anticipating the most challenging aspect of the lesson
- Planning and practicing the delivery of the whole, or parts of the lesson

Intellectual preparation happens individually and in teams before teaching an individual lesson or series of lessons.

Co-Planning

Co-planning is a collaborative process in which two or more teachers engage in intellectual preparation. All subject teams at AJK have two periods a week protected for co-planning which are led by the HoD or an experienced teacher. Most co-planning sessions will focus on short term planning but once a term, there is also a co-planning session dedicated to medium term planning to give teachers a clear understanding of the content and curriculum sequence over time.

Intellectual preparation and co-planning closely mirror one another, co-planning supports teachers to internalise the process of planning.

Curriculum documentation

Curriculum documentation enables effective planning and intellectual preparation to take place. Great curriculum documents are simple to use and contain all of the key information a teacher needs in order to plan for progress over time and in the short term.

The following key documents are essential parts of the AJK curriculum:

- Curriculum vision statement
- Curriculum overview
- Medium term plans

Resources

Our teachers are supported by high quality resources, and as a result their planning is focused on intellectual preparation. For each medium term plan there are accompanying central lesson resources in the form of a PowerPoint or a workbook, meaning that teachers do not create their own lesson resources from scratch, but focus on how to adapt their teaching through delivery.

A great lesson resource adheres to the following principles:

- Resources are objective driven and sequenced appropriately to build conceptual understanding.
- Resources present relevant, interesting content which encourages deep thinking
- Resources are inclusive, sensitive to diversity and culturally appropriate
- Resources are constructed to a high standard and are fit for purpose.