

## POLICY ON CULTURAL EDUCATION

### Vision Statement

***We, the staff and governors, aspire to ensure that all our students, irrespective of ability and regardless of anyone's doubts, achieve their potential in full; and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School the best in the country.***

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. This Policy provides a consolidated guide to one aspect of the implementation of the requirements of paragraph 10 (a) of the current Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust.
2. In reading this statement reference should be made to the Curriculum Policy and especially the requirement that in pursuit of the School's aims the curriculum should, *inter alia*:
  - (a) provide an experience of high quality;
  - (b) be broad and balanced;
  - (c) provide the means for children to develop morally, spiritually, culturally, artistically and physically as well as intellectually;
  - (d) provide increasing degrees of choice as pupils progress through the school;
  - (e) be accessible to all pupils, relevant and well-delivered;
  - (f) prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their future lives;
  - (g) be influenced by and, in turn, contribute to a culture of achievement for pupils of all abilities;
  - (h) be outward-looking and seek to broaden pupils' horizons;
  - (i) be complemented by an extensive programme of extra-curricular opportunities.
3. Reference should also be made to the Equality of Opportunity Policy and the Community Cohesion Policy.

### PURPOSE

4. This Policy seeks to clarify the School's approach to promoting pupils' cultural development, which may be defined as the process by which they acquire "an understanding of cultural traditions and an ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. They acquire a respect for their own culture and

that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity about differences. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture" (*Department for Education guidance*).

5. Our pupils live in scattered and small communities. There are inherent problems in promoting pupils' cultural development in a rural school in terms of both (a) promoting a full understanding of different cultures and (b) creating sufficient opportunities for children to appreciate and contribute to culture. The School has throughout its history placed particular emphasis on finding ways to overcome these potential disadvantages of rural life.
6. The School welcomed the thrust of the Henley Review, "*Cultural Education in England*" (2011) which envisages all secondary school pupils enjoying access to "a high quality and enriching curriculum" of arts subjects and thus producing "a generation of culturally aware and culturally literate young people moving into adulthood with a genuine understanding of culture and the ability to make informed critical decisions about the cultural activities in which they engage later in their lives." This policy statement is the School's response to the Henley initiative, which governors and staff see as entirely consistent with our vision and values and helpful in suggesting ways to move forward with further developments. This was followed by 'The importance of Music' – A National Plan for Music Education (2011) which established Music Education Hubs in 2012.

### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

7. The Community Cohesion Policy outlines the School's general approach to multicultural education.
8. It is acknowledged that, given the rural isolation of the majority of pupils, finding ways of improving this aspect of cultural development is a constant and especially significant challenge.
9. There is a particular responsibility in this area on the Religious Studies department, but all subjects are expected to contribute to developing respect for, understanding of and interest in other cultures and to combating extremism, both as educational objectives in themselves and to promote the cohesion of society.
10. The arts subjects have many opportunities to contribute to the overall curriculum by broadening pupils' experiences and understanding in this area, for example through the study of Islamic art and the art of the indigenous peoples of Australia, Indian and African music, the history of Native Americans and, in English, a range of poems or texts from other cultures.
11. All pupils in Year 7 take part in an annual Multicultural Day which provides access to a range of outside speakers and workshops with different religious and cultural

backgrounds with whom they might not otherwise come into contact. Other vehicles for improving multicultural education are always being explored.

### CULTURAL EDUCATION: THE ARTS CURRICULUM

12. At Key Stage 3 all pupils have separately timetabled lessons in Art, Drama, Design, History and Music. Literature is taught in their English lessons and they have access to Dance in Physical Education. The emphasis is on providing high quality teaching by subject specialists.
13. The following Cultural Education subjects are available at GCSE: English Literature (as a compulsory subject); and Art, Drama, History, Media Studies, Music and Design Technology.
14. In the Sixth Form, Art, Classics (this includes the study of ancient sculpture), Drama, Design, History, English Literature, Music and Photography are all available as options.
15. Opportunities are made available for all pupils to share their Arts work, whether it be in the classroom, assemblies, exhibitions or concerts.
16. There are strong links between the school and various arts organisations. Arts partnerships have been formed successfully with local artists, dance practitioners, theatre companies and jazz musicians, as well as with the Suffolk Music Hub; the County Music Service, Music for Youth, Dance East, the Britten-Pears Foundation, Aldeburgh Young Musicians and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Links with the local community extend and enhance the current provision within the Arts. Links with a wide range of community groups already exist for example, feeder primary schools, the Parish Church, the Town Council and local music teachers and artists.
17. The range of experiences offered to students in the arts is vast. It is the policy of the school to maintain these opportunities and extend them. Examples of activities that are regularly on offer include: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Orchestras, Junior and Senior Choir, String Group, Recorder Group, Wind Band, Jazz Band, Chamber music, music tours abroad, instrumental and vocal tuition (15% of students take instrumental or vocal tuition), theory of music classes, composition tutorials, access to County Music Service examinations, Associated Board examinations, concerts, trips to concerts, collaborative Arts experiences leading to public performance, school productions, trips to the theatre, theatre workshops, Drama clubs, trips to exhibitions and galleries, pupil exhibitions, trips to galleries abroad, workshops with writers and illustrators, dance workshops, dance shows and music competitions.
18. The School employs peripatetic teachers of instruments and voice, and although parents pay a contribution towards this, the School underwrites the cost of such tuition.

19. All pupils are encouraged to read widely. A newly introduced accelerated reading scheme aims to improve literacy levels as well as encourage a love of reading.

### BRITISH VALUES

20. The school takes seriously its responsibility to reinforce British values as part of the government's 2011 Prevent Strategy. This definition has 5 parts:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

21. The curriculum and the wider opportunities available at the school seek to reinforce these values. In addition, our own charter of values and annual Thomas Mills Day Assembly are further opportunities to reinforce these important aspects in preparing pupils for life in Modern Britain.