



# The Sutton Academy

## Foundational Knowledge Policy

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Status                          | <b>Non-Statutory</b>  |
| Responsible Trustees' Committee | <b>ALT</b>            |
| Date last approved by TB        | <b>Not Applicable</b> |
| Responsible Person              | <b>Mrs E Dempsey</b>  |
| To Review Date                  | <b>October 2028</b>   |
| Last Amended Date               | <b>October 2026</b>   |

## **Intent**

At The Sutton Academy, we believe that all students are entitled to acquire the foundational knowledge, skills and vocabulary necessary to access a broad, ambitious and knowledge-rich curriculum. Foundational knowledge forms the building blocks upon which future learning is constructed, enabling students to make connections, think critically and achieve success across all subjects.

This policy outlines the Academy's commitment to identifying, teaching, securing and revisiting the essential knowledge and skills students need to flourish academically, socially and personally. Through carefully sequenced curricula, high-quality teaching, strategic assessment, literacy and numeracy development, targeted intervention and inclusive provision, we ensure that students develop secure foundations that support long-term success.

The Academy adopts a proactive and responsive approach, recognising that students arrive with varying levels of prior knowledge and experience. Where gaps are identified, timely and evidence-informed interventions are implemented so that all students can access and succeed within the full curriculum.

## **Policy Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure all students develop secure foundational knowledge and skills.
- Promote consistency in the identification, teaching and assessment of foundational knowledge across the curriculum.
- Identify and address gaps in learning at the earliest opportunity.
- Support all students to access the full curriculum regardless of starting point.
- Develop students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills as essential foundations for learning.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities in securing foundational knowledge.
- Use assessment intelligently to inform curriculum planning, teaching and intervention.
- Foster a culture of reading, curiosity and lifelong learning.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum is designed to secure foundational knowledge through careful sequencing and clear curriculum planning.

- All curriculum areas identify the essential knowledge students must learn first and ensure learning builds progressively over time.
- Each subject clearly defines the intended knowledge students should acquire at each stage of the learning journey.
- Curriculum maps outline core knowledge, key vocabulary and disciplinary skills with precision.
- Knowledge is deliberately sequenced to reduce cognitive overload and maximise retention.
- Curriculum planning ensures consistency across subjects and provides clarity regarding what should be taught and when.
- Foundational knowledge is revisited regularly to strengthen long-term retention and support increasingly complex learning.

## **Teaching**

Teachers play a central role in securing foundational knowledge.

- Retrieval practice is embedded at the start of every lesson.
- Retrieval activities are closely aligned to curriculum maps and prior learning.
- Strategies include short-answer questions, true/false questions, recap quizzes, discussion activities and knowledge checks.
- Retrieval is delivered through "Think Through Writing" using mini whiteboards to ensure high participation and accountability.
- Regular recall strengthens long-term memory and helps knowledge become embedded.
- Teachers use strong circulation and intentional pathways to monitor understanding, particularly for vulnerable learners.
- Explicit instruction, modelling, guided practice and opportunities for independent application support students in securing core knowledge.
- Staff routinely check for understanding and address misconceptions before introducing new content.

## **Use of Assessment**

Assessment is used strategically to identify strengths, misconceptions and gaps in foundational knowledge.

- Assessments are designed to evaluate both current learning and retention of prior knowledge.

- Staff undertake item-level analysis following assessments.
- Analysis identifies specific concepts, knowledge or vocabulary requiring further support.
- Assessment outcomes directly inform curriculum adaptations and future planning.
- Teachers may:
  - Deliver standalone reteach lessons.
  - Adapt retrieval practice.
  - Provide targeted homework.
  - Implement intervention programmes.
  - Pre-teach or revisit key concepts.

This responsive approach ensures gaps are addressed before they become barriers to future learning.

## **Whole School Literacy**

Literacy is fundamental to students' ability to access the curriculum and engage meaningfully with the wider world.

Our whole-school literacy strategy develops reading, writing, vocabulary and oracy across all subject areas.

### **Reading**

- High-quality reading opportunities are embedded across the curriculum.
- Students encounter ambitious and challenging texts that build both knowledge and comprehension.
- Teachers explicitly teach reading strategies and support students to access increasingly complex material.
- Sparx Reader provides additional opportunities to strengthen reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary.

### **Vocabulary**

- Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary is explicitly taught, revisited and assessed.
- Key vocabulary is identified within curriculum maps.
- Students are provided with multiple opportunities to apply academic and subject-specific language across subjects.

### **Oracy**

- Structured talk opportunities are planned into lessons.

- Strategies such as Think-Pair-Share, Turn and Talk and structured discussion frameworks encourage students to verbalise their thinking.
- Students are taught to communicate using precise academic language and Standard English.

## **Library and Reading for Pleasure**

The Academy recognises that developing a lifelong love of reading is essential in building strong foundations for learning.

- The school library is a central part of the literacy strategy and serves as a hub for reading, research and independent learning.
- Students are encouraged to access the library regularly during and beyond the school day.
- The library provides access to a diverse range of fiction, non-fiction and subject-specific texts.
- Staff actively promote reading through book recommendations, reading events, curriculum-linked texts and enrichment opportunities.
- Reading for pleasure is celebrated and encouraged across the Academy.
- The Director of Literacy works closely with library staff to ensure resources support curriculum priorities while fostering enjoyment of reading and intellectual curiosity.

## **The English Curriculum**

The English curriculum is carefully designed to develop reading, writing and communication mastery.

- Writing instruction is informed by evidence-based approaches including David Didau's *Writing Mastery*.
- Weekly Key Stage 3 Building Blocks lessons focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Reciprocal Reading approaches are used to develop comprehension and disciplinary reading skills.
- A bespoke curriculum is available for students with significant gaps in literacy knowledge.
- Sparx Reader homework supports the development of reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Students are provided with regular opportunities to write extended responses and receive feedback to improve accuracy and quality.

## **The Mathematics Curriculum**

The mathematics curriculum is sequenced to build secure foundations and mathematical fluency.

- The curriculum follows a spiral model in which key concepts are revisited and developed over time.
- Key Stage 3 pathways include Support, Core and Prime, with increased emphasis on foundational knowledge within the Support pathway.
- Key Stage 4 pathways continue to address gaps through Foundation and Foundation Plus routes.
- Retrieval practice is embedded through PLC-linked starter questions.
- Repeated practice enables students to secure core mathematical concepts and procedures.
- Sparx Maths supports the development of foundational skills, including times table fluency and retrieval of prior learning.

## **Reading Strategy**

The Academy implements a graduated and evidence-informed approach to reading intervention.

### **Universal Provision (Wave 1)**

- Whole-class reading strategies.
- Ready to Learn reading programme.
- Curriculum reading opportunities.
- Sparx Reader homework.
- Explicit vocabulary instruction.

### **Targeted Provision (Wave 2)**

Students identified through NGRT and diagnostic assessments receive targeted support through:

- Lexonik Advance.
- Comprehension Reading Programme.
- R2L Comprehension Boxes.
- Small-group reading support.

### **Specialist Provision (Wave 3)**

Students with the greatest needs receive:

- Lexonik Leap intervention.

- Phonics and word-level reading programmes.
- Intensive literacy support delivered in small groups.
- Regular monitoring through trackers.

Student progress is reviewed regularly to ensure interventions remain effective and responsive to need.

### **The Gold Curriculum**

The Gold Curriculum provides specialist support for students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and significant gaps in foundational knowledge.

- Detailed baseline assessment identifies barriers to learning.
- Students access the Key Stage 3 curriculum through carefully adapted provision.
- Teaching takes place within smaller groups to allow for personalised instruction.
- Learning is supported through scaffolded resources, modelling and increased opportunities for practice.
- The curriculum is designed to strengthen foundational knowledge while maintaining ambition and curriculum entitlement.

### **Intervention**

Intervention forms part of a graduated and responsive approach to addressing gaps in foundational knowledge.

### **Literacy Interventions**

- Lexonik Leap.
- Lexonik Advance.
- Reading comprehension programmes.
- Phonics interventions.
- Reading fluency support.

### **Numeracy Interventions**

- Targeted six-week numeracy programmes.
- Personalised support based on assessment outcomes.
- Small-group and individual tuition where appropriate.

### **Writing and Handwriting Interventions**

- Bespoke writing interventions targeting identified gaps in spelling, grammar, punctuation and written communication.

- **Bespoke handwriting interventions** for students whose handwriting presents a barrier to learning, presentation or assessment performance.
- Handwriting support may focus on letter formation, fluency, consistency, speed, legibility and written stamina.
- Intervention programmes are monitored and adapted according to student progress and need.

## **Curriculum Support**

- Pre-teaching of key concepts.
- Small-group curriculum support.
- Targeted reteaching following assessment.
- Short-term intervention cycles reviewed regularly for impact.

This structured approach ensures support is tailored, time-bound and focused on enabling students to successfully access the full curriculum.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Academy Leadership Team**

The Academy Leadership Team will:

- Champion the importance of foundational knowledge across the Academy.
- Monitor implementation and impact of this policy.
- Ensure effective professional development is available to staff.
- Oversee curriculum development, assessment and intervention provision.
- Allocate appropriate resources to support foundational knowledge development.

### **Faculty and Curriculum Leaders**

Faculty and Curriculum Leaders will:

- Identify essential foundational knowledge within their subjects.
- Ensure curriculum sequencing supports knowledge retention.
- Monitor implementation through quality assurance activities.
- Analyse assessment information and coordinate appropriate responses.
- Support staff in securing high-quality classroom practice

### **Teaching Staff**

Teaching staff will:

- Deliver the curriculum as intended.

- Use retrieval and assessment effectively.
- Identify and address misconceptions.
- Promote literacy and numeracy within their subject.
- Implement intervention and support strategies where appropriate.
- Maintain high expectations for all students

## **Students**

Students will:

- Engage fully in learning activities.
- Participate actively in retrieval and review activities.
- Take responsibility for completing independent practice and homework.
- Make use of intervention and support opportunities when provided.
- Develop habits that support long-term learning and knowledge retention.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The implementation and impact of this policy will be monitored through:

- Curriculum quality assurance.
- Learning walks and lesson visits.
- Book scrutinies and work reviews.
- Assessment and progress data analysis.
- Literacy and numeracy monitoring.
- Intervention impact reviews.
- Student voice and stakeholder feedback.