

Our Curriculum Vision

Colton Hills Community School is an inner-city school with a diverse cohort that draws from a wide range of cultures, nationalities and identities. Our curriculum seeks to address the disadvantage that may exist within these diverse communities by giving our students access to an education that broadens their horizons, challenges them, and provides them with the skills and knowledge they require to be successful in school while also preparing them for life beyond school.

We have designed our curriculum to ensure that students have every opportunity to gain worthwhile employment, attend a top university and have access to the social mobility that can change lives for themselves and their families.

Our curriculum is underpinned by our core values: Participation, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence. We believe that every child, regardless of background or ability, deserves access to high-quality learning that inspires curiosity, fosters resilience, and builds the skills needed for future success.

One of the most pivotal aspects is making our students highly literate and numerate, ensuring that they have the fundamental skills necessary to take their place in society. Our skill makes literacy a central aspect of life at Colton Hills and addressing deficiencies in reading – whether due to prior achievement or being new to the language – is a huge priority and focus. We know that an ability to read well often holds the key to the rest of the curriculum, and so we want to ensure all students are given the tools they require to succeed.

We are aiming for world-class education and intend our curriculum to be knowledge-rich, deep in its explorations of topics, challenging, and with a distinctive, outward-looking, international feel. We want our students to make sure that our students encounter the best of what has been said and written throughout human history, and the chance to read these words is something that we hold dear in our curriculum. We recognise the importance of grounding our curriculum in its wider contexts to enable us to fill gaps in our students' knowledge. We are unapologetic in ensuring that our students have every opportunity to engage with as much powerful knowledge as anyone else in the country.

The intention of our curriculum at all stages is that we will teach all children at our school that:

Students who leave school with wider awareness of the world around them, with self-respect and with a personal morality will be best able to take advantage of all that life offers and find their place in the world as a citizen of all of their communities.

Our Curriculum Plan

In 2025-2026, we continue to deliver a two-week timetable, to better allow us to maximise students' learning time and to create a more even timetable model across subjects. In the information below, therefore, the curriculum allocations are the amount of hours **per fortnight**.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

We believe in teaching a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3, and students get the chance to explore a vast range of subjects with and beyond the National Curriculum.

We invest a significant amount of time in core subjects and subjects which ultimately form part of the EBACC offer, but equally value time spent in the Arts and technical subjects to ensure that all students have a comprehensive and well-rounded curriculum experience.

The hours spent in each subject vary slightly in Years 7-9, so below is a summary of the curriculum offer and how long students spend in each subject:

Subject	Key Stage 3 time (mins. per fortnight)
English (including library lesson)	480 (8 lessons)
Mathematics	480 (8 lessons)
Science	480 (8 lessons)
Geography	180 (2 lessons)
History	180 (2 lessons)
German	240 (3 lessons)
IT/Computing	180 (2 lessons)
PE	240 (4 lessons)
Religious Studies	120 (2 lessons)
Art	120 (2 lessons)
Music	120 (2 lessons)
Dance	120 (2 lessons)
Drama	120 (2 lessons)
PSHE	120 (2 lessons)
Design and Technology	60 (1 lesson)

This curriculum is well-planned and sequenced, with all elements available to be viewed by parents on our website ensuring that there is an encompassing of all elements of the National Curriculum. PSHE is now delivered weekly with age-appropriate themes including health, relationships, citizenship, and careers education. Year group differentiation ensures content is tailored to developmental stages.

Students are introduced to a wide range of knowledge and skills, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and personal development. The curriculum is sequenced to build on prior learning and prepare students for Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)

When students come to make their options choices for Years 10 and 11, we offer an even wider selection of courses to suit all interests and aspirations. We ensure that all students pursue an ambitious and wide subject offer, with strong encouragement to continue to pursue some of the 'facilitating' A Level subjects and the subjects which make up the EBacc. We also offer a suite of relevant vocational subjects to ensure that all students have relevant and effective pathways to support them to their eventual destinations.

In Year 9 students will be given a suggested 'pathway' which we think best suits their needs. For example, one pathway includes Triple Science for our high attaining students, while another pathway includes our inclusive laser learning lessons where students are given access to additional access to Maths and English teaching, and develop employability skills.

Below is summary of our Key Stage 4 curriculum, including the different subjects that we offer inside and outside of the core curriculum:

Subject	Key Stage 4 time (mins. per fortnight)
Core Subjects – all students	
English	480 (8 lessons)
Mathematics	480 (8 lessons)
Science	480 (8 lessons)
Core PE	240 (4 lessons)
Religious Studies (non-examined)	120 (2 lessons)
PSHE	120 (2 lessons)
Optional Subjects – EBacc suite	
Geography	360 (6 lessons)
German	360 (6 lessons)
Computer Science	360 (6 lessons)
History	360 (6 lessons)
Optional Subjects – other options	
Business (Enterprise) BTEC	360 (6 lessons)
Dance	360 (6 lessons)
Design and Technology – Hospitality	360 (6 lessons)
Design and Technology – 3D Design	360 (6 lessons)
Drama	360 (6 lessons)
Health and Social Care BTEC	360 (6 lessons)
IT BTEC	360 (6 lessons)
Music	360 (6 lessons)
Religious Studies	360 (6 lessons)
Sport BTEC	360 (6 lessons)
Sociology	360 (6 lessons)
Citizenship	360 (6 lessons)
Travel & Tourism BTEC	360 (6 lessons)
Film Studies	360 (6 lessons)

The curriculum is based on strong work with exam boards and continually refined and reflected upon by our Curriculum Leaders. It is further underpinned by an assembly rota and form time curriculum, and with a vast array of opportunities for extra-curricular learning and intervention towards success in exams.

PSHE continues with differentiated content for Years 10 and 11, including financial literacy, mental health, and post-16 pathways. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education. Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher. Our careers curriculum involves significant contact with external employers and universities, as students seek to choose their next steps as they near the age of 16.

Key Stage 5 (Years 12-13)

We offer our students a significant amount of support in choosing their post-16 options. We do believe, however, that the Colton Hills Sixth Form is the right destination for the vast majority of our students, and our curriculum offer is designed to cater for all needs, aptitudes and aspirations.

Our offer is a mix of traditional A Level subjects including the 'facilitating' subjects necessary for acceptance at strong universities, as well as a relevant suit of vocational courses which build on our Key Stage 4 offer.

All subject blocks have five hours of taught curriculum time per week (10 hours per fortnight), as well as 9 hours per week of independent study time within the school day.

Here are the current subject choices in our post-16 offer:

A Level subjects
Art & Design
Biology
Chemistry
Computer Science
Economics
English Literature
Geography
History
Mathematics
Physics
Psychology
Sociology
Vocational Level 3 BTECs
Applied Science
Business
Criminology
E-Sports
Health and Social Care
IT
Sport
Construction
Applied Law
Travel & Tourism
Animal Management
Creative Digital Media

Students also engage in enrichment activities, university and career preparation, and leadership development. PSHE is delivered through a one-hour explicit taught lesson, as well as in tutorials and enrichment sessions, focusing on independence, employability, and civic responsibility. Students are provided with opportunities to develop their study skills, mentor younger students, engage with careers opportunities and begin the process of applying to universities. These priorities are echoed in our form period programme, which takes place at the beginning of each school day.

Our wider curriculum

At Colton Hills, we do not believe that the curriculum ends at the classroom door, and we have put in place a wide variety of opportunities for our students to develop all aspects of themselves.

We are always looking for opportunities to further develop this offer, but some of these aspects include:

Form periods – Each day begins with a form period, which sees students meet their form tutor to help prepare them for the day and to follow a structured programme of activities. These periods include a weekly assembly on a topical theme, two periods focused on reading, a Pastoral period where key messages are shared and a session where students focus on an aspect of current affairs or personal development. Form tutors become central to the life of students at Colton Hills, the first port of call for parents and guardians.

Student leadership – There are a range of opportunities for students to undertake leadership roles. We have an active School Board which has representatives from all year groups. They meet regularly to be consulted on school developments and their views are considered by the SLT as part of school improvement planning. This develops further as students move through school, with opportunities to become a leader in their House, a Vice Captain, Student Councillor, part of the post-16 leadership team, or a Head Student. There are also opportunities for pupils to join leadership focus groups such as: Transition, Wellbeing, Library and Diversity.

Extra-curricular participation – There are a vast array of opportunities beyond the school day for students to develop themselves. A half-termly calendar is published and shared with parents, and students are actively encouraged to attend wherever possible. Sport is particularly popular, with use of our outstanding grounds allowing for a wide range of activities. We also have a growing level of participation in the performing arts, and other opportunities in STEM, literacy and other areas of school life.

Work-based learning and careers – Students have access to a careers curriculum which has been planned by our Careers and Aspirations Lead with their needs in mind. Careers education is vital to the long-term economic success of our students, and they are given access to this from Year 7 onwards. As well as lesson opportunities and links in their subject areas, we begin to offer a more bespoke service in Key Stage 4 and 5 which encompasses personal interviews, work experience placements and growing employer contact to ensure that our students are ready for the world of work and can access meaningful careers.

Music Development Plan - We are committed to nurturing musical talent through curriculum music, instrumental tuition, ensembles, and performance opportunities. Our plan aligns with the National Plan for Music Education and ensures progression from KS3 to KS5.

Literacy and numeracy

We know that for our students to be successful, they need to be highly literate and numerate and we place these skills as central to our curriculum. All students have a significant commitment of time to English and Maths as part of the curriculum throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, and our intent is that all students leave school with the skills necessary to achieve good qualifications in English and Maths, as these are the gateways to many of the opportunities that can follow. A few examples of what this looks like outside of lessons includes:

- **Literacy:** Whole-school reading strategy, vocabulary development, disciplinary literacy, and targeted interventions
- **Numeracy:** Cross-curricular numeracy focus, diagnostic assessments, and support programmes and inclusive pathways

Staff receive regular training to embed literacy and numeracy in their teaching.

Literacy

PLANETS: Reading to Learn	
Before	- Predict it - Use an inference grid to predict content by asking literal, then inference and exploratory questions about a key image in or related to the text. - Predict what the text will be about by only showing parts of the text such as an image, headings, topic sentences, key words and phrases.
During	- Listen and follow it - Play an audio of the text or the teacher reads the text aloud. - Pupils listen and follow to get an overview and assess their predictions. - Pupils complete a visual organiser to see how the information is laid out. - Ask questions about it - Pupils read text closely and discuss margin questions written by teacher (e.g. about content/ideas, word meanings, how information is organised) - Pupils read text closely and write their own margin questions to discuss. - Teacher asks line number questions to clarify new meanings. - Note down answers to questions - Pupils annotate the text with answers to questions and word meanings. - Pupils add new vocabulary to a glossary or word list in their books.
After	- Extract information from it - Pupils scan the text to find answers to comprehension questions. - Pupils take notes, at first using frameworks and models, then without. - Transform the information - Pupils apply the information to a new but related task. - Summarise it - Pupils produce a verbal summary of the text type and key ideas they have read about in the text.

Central to our teaching approach is a focus on **literacy and reading**. We support our entire curriculum with a high level of focus on reading because we know that literacy is vital to educational success and social mobility. We build this into our curriculum in several ways, such as through Library Lessons in Key Stage 3 English, the use of the Bedrock Vocabulary programme, Drop Everything and Read strategy for form time, guided class readers, and an increase of the extended reading that students do in all of their lessons.

In addition to these wider strategies, we have supported our teachers and students with a strong focus on the skills of reading that they develop in each lesson. Working with advisors from our Local Authority, we have developed our **PLANETS reading strategy**, which teachers use when getting students to undertake reading in their lessons. These are the unspoken reading skills which enable students to decode challenging texts and make meaning out of them in ways which will support them in exams and beyond.

Our mentality at Colton Hills is that whilst we may teach different subjects, we are all teachers of reading.

Numeracy

At Colton Hills, we have a passion for mathematics that many of our students share, reflected in our strong and improving outcomes in this area. We want our students to know why mathematics is so important, and we have built this into our curriculum, too.

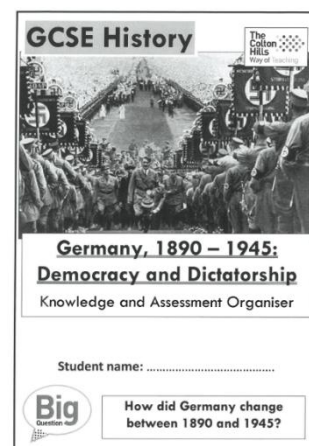
We are committed to raising the standards of numeracy of all of our students; we want our pupils to be confident and capable in the use of numeracy to support their learning in all areas of the curriculum and to acquire the skills necessary to help achieve success in further education, employment and adult life.

Our curriculum also involves a significant amount of cross-curricular mathematical work, in particular with our Science department, so that all students have a regular diet of experiences to secure key skills.

Teaching and Learning

Our curriculum vision is based around the principle of us delivering and students remembering the powerful knowledge which will be so important for the rest of their lives. We ensure that our curriculum is **knowledge-rich**, and so we have developed teaching approaches in the classroom which support this aim, enabling our students to get the most from each lesson.

One of the key elements of learning at Colton Hills are our **Knowledge and Assessment Organisers**, which students are given for each topic that they study in several subjects. These booklets contain key subject knowledge, extended reading opportunities, access to cultural capital materials and examples of examination excellence. It is worth noting that all students have access to the same knowledge – we believe in parity of experience and high expectations of all our students.



C ontext	Know/Share the Big Picture, Clear Learning Intent
O rganised	Demonstrate strong subject knowledge to link to wider concepts
L ong term	Effective seating plan. Clear focus and resources are ready HPI competencies shared
T ransitions	Why Not? Why now? Recall/ retrieve evident Links to Big Question/ and other topics/ areas of the curriculum.
O ptimistic	Sharp transitions which have impact and signify changes. Brightening Lines Inject pace to get students working and slow down for deep thinking.
N o hands up	See all students as potential high performers. Student work is well-presented. No opt out
H ello	Cold-calling questioning - identify 'leaders' and challenge them first. Right is Right questioning - Students critique and develop the answers of others All student response - all students involved throughout
I ndividual	Set a positive tone from the start. Constant greeting routine which promotes punctuality, calmness and purpose. Welcoming but establishes authority from the start of the lesson.
L earn together	Know the PP/SH/EAL students and how best to support them All stretched & challenged. Add layers of support rather than make work easier. Breaking the plane
L ove reading!	Partner work is efficient incorporating 3Ps - Participation, Purpose, Progress Ensure accountability by assigning specific roles. Set up tasks that encourage students to 'link together'.
S peaking and L istening	Include demanding texts and ensure reading activities are planned carefully, using tools such as the PLANETS template. Students never read text aloud if not been previously modelled by teacher. Students answer in full sentences. Sentence starters, Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary and thinking time for quality answers Students rehearse answers with another student before giving a detailed answer to the class.
W ork through	Skills should be modelled. Extended writing is evident, and redrafting has taken place. Students reflect on their work and know how to improve
A sk, ask, ask	Knowledge and Assessment Organiser is integrated into learning VQA's and AC/Ps referred to throughout the lesson Quality feedback provided regularly to demand even more.
Y ou	Students do well in lessons and respect the teacher Students are working harder than the teacher, poor work is not accepted Track the teacher. Listen to the speaker. Sit up straight (TLS)

We support our knowledge-rich teaching with proven teaching and learning strategies which enable our teachers to be as successful as possible in delivering excellent lessons. We call this our **Colton Hills Way of Teaching**, and we ask that our teachers refer regularly to this policy in order to continually refine and improve their practice for maximum impact.

Our lessons are divided into phases where knowledge can be acquired, consolidated and the revisited at in the next lesson as 'retrieval'.

The Colton Hills Way of Teaching

Preparation Phase

High expectations

- Be clear about why you are teaching what you are teaching
- Effective seating plan
- Know the students
- Clear focus, resources ready
- Links to the Big Question
- See all students as potential high performers
- Check the books - does anything need to be re-taught?

Standing at the door: 'Good morning, afternoon, etc to see you. Take a seat. The retrieval work is ready on the board. Please stand to the side to correct your uniform before you enter.'

While breaking the plane: 'Well done second row, you have come in so efficiently. Third row, looking good, I can see you're ready to start. First row, I know you could do it too. Now we'll all sit up for a great lesson.'

'Do you remember earlier/yesterday/last week, when you worked with us on such a difficult task? That is who I need to see today.'

Retrieval and Intent Phase

Retrieval Task

- Students complete retrieval task as they enter the room
- Completed without referring back to their book - just what they have remembered.
- It must take no more than five minutes at the most.

Learning Intent

- The Learning Intent must be clear.
- Students know essential knowledge and vocabulary they need to have before they leave the lesson and how they will engage it.
- Intent shared with 'Big and Small Questions' and revisited throughout lesson.

'The title and date are on the board. I expect you to know these within three minutes in your books and double underlined with a red pen before I count down from 10 to 5, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0.'

Intent slide: 'Here is our plan for today. This is what we will achieve by the end of the lesson (read yellow box), and these are the steps that will take us there (pink box).'

'Good start Year 10. Well done for taking pride in your work, remember to use the success criteria to aim for excellence.'

Knowledge Phase

Knowledge acquisition

- Students acquire the essential knowledge
- Develop an understanding of the knowledge content. This will often be using the KAOs
- Check for understanding with formative assessment
- PLANETS for reading
- Adaptive teaching - re-teach if necessary

Engage based tasks

- Students find enquiry-based activities more stimulating - this is where our 'Big Questions' come in

3, 2, 1, 10. Thank you, Year 9.

'You have 30 seconds left to complete this task. When the timer goes, I will march in student to read out their answer.'

'When I reveal the question on the board, I would like you to write the answer on your whiteboards. Leave your whiteboards flat on the table until I say 'whiteboards up' - 3, 2, 1, whiteboards up.'

'Now I'm going to nominate some students to give their answers. Before you are showing respect by listening politely.'

Application Phase

Academic Oracy

- Sentence starters
- Thinking time
- An opportunity to rehearse on answer and listen to other students' ideas - talk supports writing
- Encourage Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary

Modelled example and clear success criteria

- I do, we do, you do
- Visualiser for high quality modelling
- Students know exactly what to do to be successful

Cognitive Processing

- Students working harder than the teacher
- Students enter 'The learning pit'
- Thinking deeply and applying knowledge
- Suitable level of challenge

Live marking

- Check students have understood the work by circulating around the room and live marking
- Check for whether concepts to be re-taught if necessary
- Acknowledge successful work with praise and notes on the board

'Now that we have gathered all the necessary information to address the Small Question, we are going to apply that information with the main task. Remember that unless it is a discussion, all question tasks are completed in silence.'

Speaking to a student outside: 'Now many marks out of ten would you give yourself for achieving this lesson? Tell me why it is not a ten... Thank you for acknowledging your behaviour could be better. Now lets go back in so you can see how you can.'

Consolidation Phase

Homework

- The task is recorded on Class
- Check with any additional resources provided on Teams
- Students should be clear of expectations and deadlines for all homework

Exit Ticket: Leave nothing to chance

- Revisit intent
- Check what the students know
- Make links to the next lesson.

Lesson reflections

- How could the lesson be improved?
- Avoid House Points (for students with their names on the board)

'Stares on, one you're standing behind a tidy desk with the correct uniform and shoes laced in. I can start classifying you a row at a time.'

Strong starts

Teachers at the door to ensure neat and greet

Non-compliance is corrected at the door

Work is on the board for students to see

Provide students with challenge time

Positive yet assertive

In moments of crisis, threat or punishment are futile. What children need are adults who are not just regulated but who have a flexible, responsive and adaptable plan.

Emotional coaching: It is ok to feel... but it is not... Show me you can

Student on the corridor: 'I can see you are running late to lesson. Where should you be right now? Let me help you get to where you need to be.'

The policy has been influenced by a range of different educational thinkers, but most central is the work of Doug Lemov and his book 'Teach Like a Champion'. The book contains many excellent practical teaching strategies, and focuses on lessons which create engagement, pace and depth and where all students are expected to participate well.

The Expected Five

- Effective questioning** – Cold-call, right is right, no opt out, thinking time, discuss with partner, tier 2 and 3 vocabulary
- Breaking the plane** – circulating around the room
- Cognitive processing** – thinking hard and applying that thinking. Students working harder than the teacher
- Brighten Lines** – Clear instructions and energy at the start of each task. Students know how long they have and what will be happening when the task is complete. Efficient transitions between tasks
- TLS** – Track, Listen, Sit up

The Colton Hills Way of Teaching

Within this policy we go further to focus on the most key elements of successful teaching with our **Expected Five**. These are the five strategies that we believe make the most difference in creating a high-challenge learning environment and we ask our teachers to make these their highest priority. They focus on creating lessons with pace and energy where questioning is paramount and where all students are involved.

To ensure students achieve the maximum amount of learning from their lessons, we want teachers to always know exactly what each student knows and understands. For this reason, we have worked hard to increase the level of formative assessment in class. This is where all students will answer questions to inform the teacher if content needs to be re-taught to guarantee understanding is secure, or whether the class are ready to move on to the next piece of learning. This ensures all lessons are tailored to the students in the class.

Assessment and Reporting

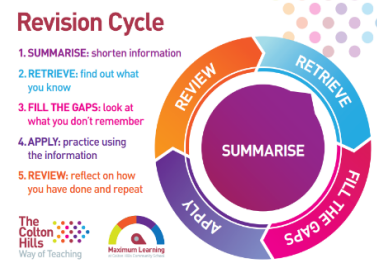
We track and monitor the progress of our students rigorously at Colton Hills to ensure that they stay on track throughout their journey through school with us. We also have a robust and systematic reporting system that enables parents to have a clear picture of how well their children are progressing at all stages of their studies.

We have high expectations of our students, and we exemplify this by setting challenging target grades at Key Stage 4 and 5, in line with the achievement of the top 20% of schools in the country. These aspirational target grades are set at the beginning of Year 10 and used as the basis for ongoing conversations about student progress throughout their GCSE, BTEC and A Level courses. We target students who are underperforming for additional support and ensure that they know the steps to take as part of developing their progress and ultimately achieving excellent outcomes.

In Key Stage 3, we base our assessment on progress towards 'projected grades' which are based on their KS2 data from Primary School. However, we do not assign GCSE equivalent grades to our students at this stage, as we believe this can often be counterproductive to their motivation. Instead, all our subjects have developed their own system, where students can be assessed and then given a percentage mark. This is then reported to parents in at each of our assessment points with a teacher comment on whether this is 'above', 'on track' or 'below' where they should be on the pathway to their projected grade. Parents can be confident that these assessments are meaningful and have been moderated to be consistent, clearly pointing the way towards the progress that students can be expected to make when they complete national qualifications.

We assess and report on students at two points in the year, at the end of our three Learning Phases, which take 12-13 weeks and lead to assessment points roughly towards the end of each term, in November and June. These assessments are undertaken after significant preparation and in test conditions which mimic the real examination conditions which students will face further up the school.

One key principle that we have developed at Colton Hills is that all assessment should be cumulative, and not simply a measure of what students have learned most recently. Our two assessment points build across the year and the Key Stage, so that learning is assessed from various modules and elements, forcing students to commit to long-term memory. Students may also complete end of unit assessments between these points to build further practice and data to support with more accurate reporting. Retrieval practice, revision strategies and metacognition skills are a significant priority for us to continue to develop as a school, and our assessment model mirrors this aim.



Curriculum Information for Parents

We believe in transparency and partnership with families. Parents can learn more about our curriculum by:

- Visiting our website for curriculum maps and subject overviews
- Attending curriculum evenings and information sessions
- Contacting subject leaders or the curriculum team directly

We welcome parental engagement and feedback to continually improve our provision.