



**Monmouth** | Ysgol Gyfun  
Comprehensive School | **Trefynwy**

# Curriculum Summary 2024-25

## Four Purposes

The Curriculum for Wales is built around the Four Purposes of education, enabling our young people to become: **ambitious, capable** learners; **enterprising, creative** contributors; **ethical, informed** citizens and **healthy, confident** individuals.

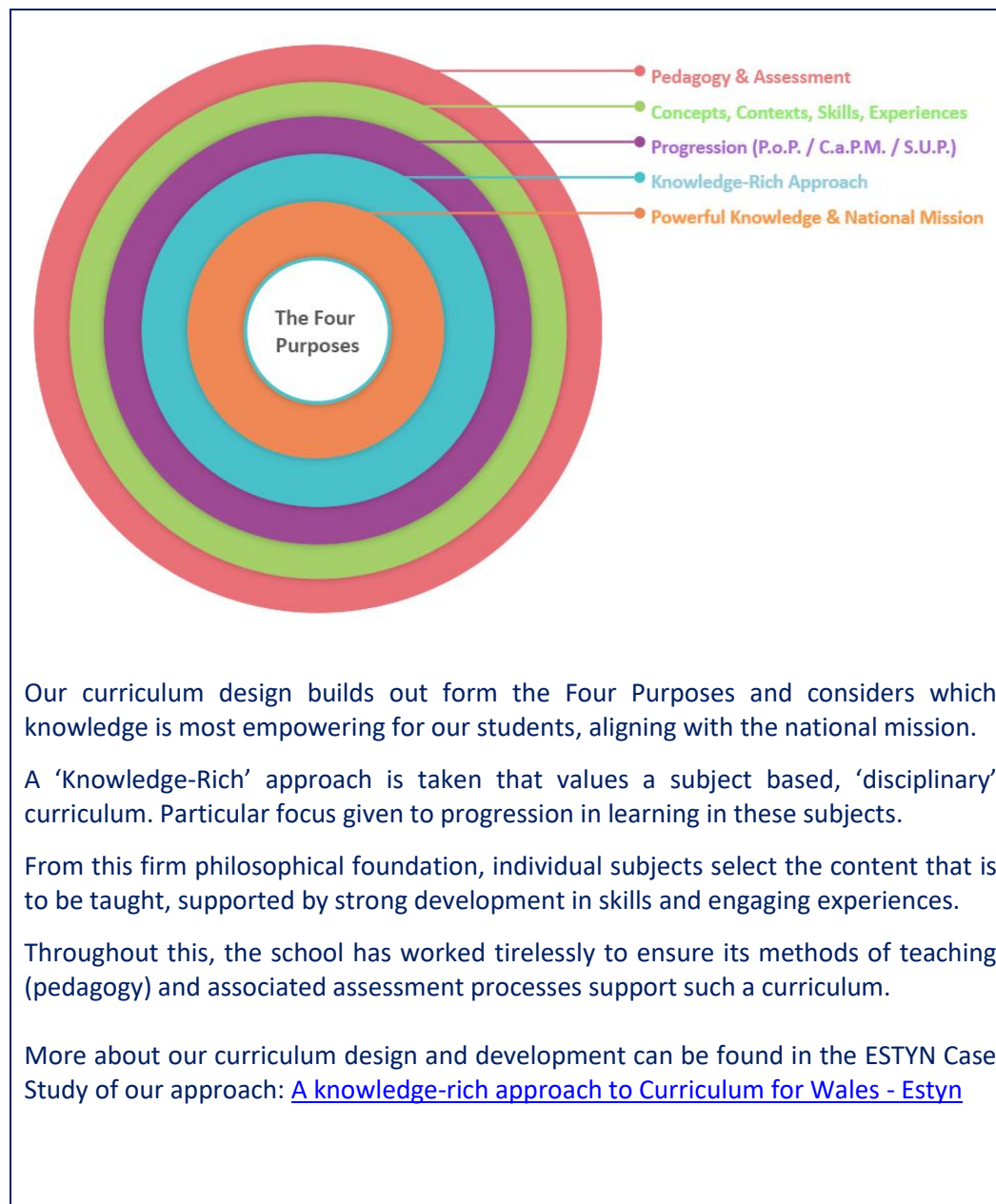
The Curriculum opens with, *“Improving education is our national mission. Nothing is so essential as universal access to, and acquisition of, the experiences, knowledge and skills that our young people need for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship.”*

We believe that our responsibility under the Four Purposes is to ensure that our students acquire **powerful knowledge** – knowledge that empowers them to become confident members of society and *“encourage critical and civic engagement”*. We aim for the curriculum to support our young people to become kind, hardworking individuals, who embody our school values.

## Curriculum

At MCS, students will always be taught in subjects. **Subjects matter**. They have an important body of knowledge, specific skills and belong to a rich tradition that is unique to them. In order for students to think critically and to form their own opinions, it is necessary to have something to think about. We value a knowledge-rich approach, delivered by expert teaching staff.

The curriculum at MCS is broad and balanced, exposing students to a wealth of learning across fifteen subjects. It also embraces all of the **mandatory elements**: study of English and Welsh; the three Cross-Curricular Skills (numeracy, literacy, digital competency); Relationships & Sexuality Education; Religion, Values & Ethics; United Nations Conventions of the rights of the child and of the rights of persons with disabilities; Careers and Work-Related Experience.



Our curriculum design builds out from the Four Purposes and considers which knowledge is most empowering for our students, aligning with the national mission.

A ‘Knowledge-Rich’ approach is taken that values a subject based, ‘disciplinary’ curriculum. Particular focus given to progression in learning in these subjects.

From this firm philosophical foundation, individual subjects select the content that is to be taught, supported by strong development in skills and engaging experiences.

Throughout this, the school has worked tirelessly to ensure its methods of teaching (pedagogy) and associated assessment processes support such a curriculum.

More about our curriculum design and development can be found in the ESTYN Case Study of our approach: [A knowledge-rich approach to Curriculum for Wales - Estyn](#)

## The Principles of Progression



The concept of ‘making progress’ in learning is well-defined within the Curriculum for Wales. Rather than simply be the scoring of higher marks or attainment of higher levels (as in the previous curriculum), it is now a broader concept. A learners’ progress is seen as development across the five **Principles of Progression**.

## Progression and Assessment

Our curriculum is constructed to ensure that all students make progress in their learning as they move through the school, informed by the national Principles of Progression.

We have constructed our curriculum with learning progression built into it. It is through following our subject curricula, over the years, that students make deep, meaningful progress.

To support students’ progress and monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum, we adopt a number of assessment practices:

Day-to-day, ‘formative’ assessment activities are those that occur as part of the learning experience in lessons. Teachers assess students’ understanding and recall during lessons and adapt their teaching or future teaching plans to ensure maximum progress for all students.

In order to monitor students’ progress through our curriculum and to allow us to evaluate our approach on curriculum planning, we conduct infrequent, substantial ‘summative’ style assessments. These assessments are recorded whole-school twice a year for each year group, typically in December then at either April or June.

The majority of our students enter the school under Yr6-7 transition and strong links with primary schools allows us to be well informed of their journey. Students joining MCS at a later time will be monitored in line with our usual approaches to assessment in order to identify the next steps they require in their learning.

## Implementation & Review

Our curriculum is not static: it is open to continuous review and iteration. Robust evaluation of our curriculum and its associated processes will require the input from not only our teaching staff and that of our primary school colleagues, but also from parents/carers, governors and the students themselves. The curriculum will evolve; restlessly seeking to improve and better meet the needs of our students and the challenges that lie ahead of them.

“Work Hard, Be Kind”

## Subject Summaries – Year 7

**Art.** We explore the topic ‘Who am I?’, developing fundamental art skills. Students enhance their drawing from observation, blending of paint, analytical research skills and ability to work in a range of styles. In the last term we explore a range of world cultures for inspiration and techniques.

**Design Technology.** Students learn subject specific skills and knowledge from three disciplines: Food, Product Design & Textiles. Topics: Food and Nutrition; Working Properties of Materials; Sustainability.

**English.** We journey through literature: from Chaucer and the development of the English language, to Shakespeare’s sonnets and *Romeo and Juliet* and then on to Roald Dahl’s *Boy*. Whilst undertaking this journey, we also ensure the effective coverage of vital English language and literacy skills and knowledge.

**History.** We begin our chronology of ‘Who are the British?’ – understanding the nature of power and citizenship through key turning points in our past. Topics include: settlement patterns in Wales & Britain; the Norman Conquest; Castles; The Crusades; Church & Monarchy; life in Medieval society.

**Mathematics.** We start the year focussing on key number skills in order to build a strong foundation. This is followed by geometry, algebra and statistics, allowing students to deepen understanding and develop secure numeracy.

**P.E.** students have the opportunity to explore a range of activities that include; Football, Netball, Rugby, Hockey, Swimming, Creative (Gymnastics / Dance), Athletics and Striking (Rounders, Longball, Cricket).

**Science.** We study a range of separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics: cells and organs; ecosystems; atoms; materials; energy; waves. Throughout these topics, students also develop core laboratory skills.

**Computing.** We aim for students to become digitally literate: possessing a wide variety of computing knowledge and skills. Topics: Using Digital Media Responsibly; Graphics (Logos); Computational Thinking; Spreadsheets.

**Drama.** Students study semiotics - the ways we create meaning in theatre – and their use to devise, perform and analyse. We begin with semiotics of the actor using *Alice in Wonderland*; go on to study voice and movement to enhance communication; then finish with Quentin Blake & Roald Dahl.

**Geography.** We study the importance of maps and the use of them to interpret the world; undertake fieldwork activities on school site; investigate countries using atlases and research; look at the human and physical reasons for migration along with the consequences of migration in Europe.

**International Languages.** Students learn French, German and Spanish, enabling students to explore the connections and differences between languages. In Year 7, we explore ‘Identity’ as individuals.

**Music.** Students gain foundations across performing, composing and listening. We begin with Elements of Music - developing singing and keyboard skills; move on to listening with rhythm in African drumming; explore composition - creating music to represent character, time or place.

**RVE.** We study three topics through the year. A spotlight on key RVE themes in the first term; a systematic study of a world faith in the second; finally, an ethical investigation into human rights and responsibilities.

**Welsh.** We seek to develop confident use of the Present, Past and Perfect tenses in Welsh, both in oral and written work. Topics covered: Identity; Holidays / Wales and the World; School and Studying Welsh.

## Subject Summaries – Year 8

**Art.** We study the ‘Landscape of Colour,’ where we delve into Welsh landscape artists whilst exploring our locality and colour theory. Later, students explore mediums such as printmaking and clay, using themes of local wildlife & sustainability to drive experimentation.

**Design Technology.** Continuing to build knowledge and skills in: Food, Product Design & Textiles. Topics: food provenance; world cuisine; sewing machines; structures; CAD/CAM; using workshop machinery.

**English.** We explore more mature genres and themes: from *Private Peaceful* and war poetry, to *Animal Farm* and dystopian literature, to the literature of black writers ‘Noughts and Crosses.’ We also ensure effective coverage of vital English and literacy skills and knowledge.

**History.** We continue to view the nature of power and citizenship through our past. Topics include: the impact of politico-religious changes under the Tudors; exploration and settlement of the New World; the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; gender and witch trials; the Industrial Revolution.

**Mathematics.** We start the year recapping and increasing fluency of key number skills. We use these skills within geometry, algebra and statistics, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding within these topics.

**P.E.** Students refine their skills, techniques, strategies and tactics in a range of activities including: football, netball, swimming, gymnastics and athletics. Class selected activities included basketball and badminton.

**Science.** We study a range of separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics: healthy living; variation; metals; acids; electricity; forces. Throughout these topics, students develop core laboratory skills.

**Computing.** We continue to become digitally literate citizens, developing knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. Topics: Animation; Computational Thinking using micro:bit; Cybersecurity; Communicating via websites.

**Drama.** Students continue to study of semiotics, using existing knowledge to explore text work before moving on to examine non-naturalistic ways of creating theatre using crime mystery to build devising skills.

**Geography.** We study the factors and processes that influence the weather and climate of the UK; the causes and effects of anthropogenic climate change at different scales; the concept of *development* and its crucial position understanding the geopolitics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**International Languages.** We continue our multilingual approach through French, German and Spanish. Students revisit their use of language and develop wider range of tenses through the theme of ‘School Community’.

**Music.** Building on Year 7, we continue to develop across performing, composing and appraising. Students use traditional instruments as well as digital music software. Topics include: Blues Music; Reggae Music; Instruments of the Orchestra and Programme Music.

**RVE.** We study three topics: a philosophical enquiry into the origins of the universe; a systematic study of Judaism as a world faith; an ethical investigation into religious and non-religious attitudes to conflict.

**Welsh.** We develop confident use and construction of the Past and Conditional tenses, building on the Past and Present tense in Year 7. Students use these, developing confidence orally and in written work. Topics: Sport and Celebrations.

## Subject Summaries – Year 9

**Art.** Our focus in Year 9 is 'Art with a Message'. We explore *Guernica* by Picasso as a springboard for examining how conflict is represented in art. Students then select an inspiring artist and create a work that expresses their own message. Students encounter a wider variety of artist inspiration and contextual sources.

**Design Technology.** Students continue to develop practical skills and range of techniques. Increasingly specific and complex skills are required to produce practical outcomes, combining processes learned through Year 7 and 8.

**English.** Students make progress through new, increasingly sophisticated and mature contexts. The texts studied have more complex narrative styles and vocabulary: Romantic poetry, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *An Inspector Calls*, deepening their knowledge and understanding of literature and language.

**History.** Our focus on Citizenship and Power continues, deepening students' knowledge and their ability to analyse evidence. We continue to develop chronological understanding of our ever-changing society through local, national and international events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: war, revolution and dictatorship.

**Mathematics.** Topics continue to be studied in a sequential, hierarchical order to support progression and deepen mathematical connections. Students review the topics studied previously and focus on more advanced skills later in the year.

**P.E.** In Year 9, students will build on refining their activities by focusing on: the application of skills in relation to their performance; analysis, knowledge and understanding within each activity.

**Welsh.** Students will further deepen their knowledge of the key tenses developed in previous years. This will be in the context of new topics, therefore continuing to develop a wider range of vocabulary.

**Computing.** Students continue to develop, refine and increase their subject knowledge through a range of applications, including Video Editing. Computational Thinking is revisited and developed with the introduction of text-based programming with Python.

**Drama.** Work on encoding and decoding semiotics of theatre continues. To support progress, we build knowledge across a wider range of styles and genres and with greater complexity. Students explore drama through the lens of a director / designer as well as an actor, broadening their skills.

**Geography.** Students further develop their understanding of place and scale through studying the Middle East; investigate whether hazards always lead to a disaster; and ask if China is the superpower for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**International Languages.** Students will revisit their understanding and use of the three languages. They will develop a wider range of tenses in the context of our wider world and explore their future aspirations.

**Music.** Again, the three core areas of performance, composition and appraising is at the centre of our approach. Students explore various genres and further enhance their experience of music technology.

**RVE.** We further develop RVE knowledge, skills and confidence with: a philosophical enquiry, 'why do we suffer?'; a study of Islam; an ethical investigation into responses to prejudice and discrimination.

**Science.** We revisit the key concepts studied through Year 7 and 8, but in more depth. Each topic is a blend of sciences, allowing for greater contextualisation and application of understanding: more 'real-life' scenarios in which to secure their knowledge and understanding