



At the heart of everything we do is our vision of Whickham School as “a school that ensures all pupils are the very best they can be.”

Context of our school

Whickham School is a single academy trust serving the community of Whickham in Gateshead and surrounding villages. This large and diverse catchment area includes a significant number of pupils from nearby County Durham. Whilst the school is situated in one of the least deprived areas of Gateshead, significant numbers of pupils reside in some of the most deprived areas of the borough.

We are a well above average sized school with over 1700 pupils on roll. We are popular and oversubscribed, admitting approximately 288 pupils each year across 9 tutor groups. Around 20% of our pupils are entitled to Free School Meals. We have a resourced SEND provision with a specialism in autism (21 pupils).

Pupils enter the school with broadly national average attainment from primary school. Our curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for further education and their future destinations. Pupils at the school make good progress as evidenced in exam results over time and our own internal quality assurance. Despite living in a region with lower educational outcomes and employment than other regions of the country, our sustained education, employment or training destinations are above national averages, particularly for those who stay on into our highly successful Sixth Form.

Ofsted last inspected our school in January 2025 judging the school to be Good across all categories.

“The school has high ambitions for all its pupils. The broad curriculum prepares pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils achieve well at Whickham School. Staff have high expectations of pupils’ conduct. Pupils are polite and friendly. Through their actions, they embody the school’s values of aspiration, respect, resilience and empathy. The school environment is calm and respectful. Pupils behave very well.”

Pupils do well in external examinations. The overall Progress 8 figure for the school relating to examinations sat in summer 2024 was +0.26. This means that on average pupils scored one-quarter of a grade higher, in every subject, compared with the national average.

Ambition of our curriculum

We have a broad and ambitious curriculum rooted in rigorous academic foundation. Our values and beliefs are developed through four key qualities which pervade all aspects of our curriculum as we look to provide pupils not only with the knowledge and skills that they will need to succeed but also a strong sense of moral values and responsibility that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.



Through our focus on developing these four key qualities in children we aim to ensure all our pupils mature into responsible citizens who:

- Have high expectations for their future and have the skills and qualities required to pursue their chosen path
- Are literate, numerate, imaginative and creative;
- Are financially and digitally literate;
- Are well organised and taking pride in their work and achievements;
- Have a high level of cultural capital;
- Are resilient and independent;
- Have an understanding of how to look after their physical and mental health;
- Have well-developed leadership skills;
- Are able to maintain positive and healthy relationships with others and are rooted in the values of mutual respect, equality and diversity;

- Are engaged with what is going on in their local community and the wider world.

This ambitious intent is delivered through:

- A strong focus on the core basics: literacy and numeracy;
- A broad and balanced and academically ambitious curriculum founded on the EBACC suite of subjects;
- An inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of all students;
- Consistent and high expectations of behaviour and learning from all students;
- A focus on the attributes of Resilience, Respect, Empathy and Aspiration;
- Providing a rich and diverse set of experiences both within the formal curriculum but also through extra-curricular experiences;
- A curriculum which is underpinned by appreciation of equality, diversity displayed through inclusivity, mutual respect and restorative approaches.

What does our ambitious intent mean?

Our pupils should dare to dream and be able to aspire to any career, including those which have not yet been thought of. We offer an environment which allows pupils to be “who they want to be”. Our high expectations in the classroom enable the acquisition of knowledge and understanding as well as a range of key skills required for future success. Our pupils also have access to high quality Careers Information, Advice and Guidance, enabling pupils to make well informed decisions about their future and empower them to achieve their best.

A strong focus on the core basics: literacy and numeracy

We are unapologetic for our focus on ensuring all pupils develop their key literacy and numeracy skills: these are vital for all pupils to achieve their potential. Our curriculum is well sequenced to build on learning from primary school. We are proactive and systematic in identifying where additional support is needed and we ensure that this is provided.

A broad and balanced and academically ambitious curriculum founded on the EBACC suite of subjects

Throughout Years 7-9 pupils follow an academic and broad curriculum encompassing all national curriculum subjects.

As pupils move into Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11), they continue to focus on a strong, traditional academic core alongside flexible and personalised pathways. The full [EBACC suite](#) is offered to all pupils; a strong academic core opens pupils’ minds to the world and provides them with the skills, knowledge and understanding to pursue the widest possible range of careers. Pupils are also empowered, through a strong understanding of the wider world, to become well informed, global citizens.

In addition to the EBACC we believe that a strong focus on creative subjects is also important. Other than some non-examined “core” courses (e.g. RE, PE), all courses lead to recognised rigorous and robust qualifications such as GCSEs, OCR Nationals and BTEC Technical Awards.

An inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of all students

Our curriculum is designed to be accessible to all. Staff have high expectations and support all pupils to reach key milestones in their learning by the end of each academic year. Our curriculum delivery model centres around setting the bar high and providing the scaffolding and adaptive teaching required to allow everyone to succeed. We have excellent support structures that remove barriers to learning through effective mentoring and intervention. Where pupils have specific learning needs our dedicated inclusion team provides time bound evidence based intervention packages that are designed to give them the skills and knowledge required to access the full breadth and depth of our curriculum as well as to prepare and support them for education and training after their time at Whickham.

Consistent and high expectations of behaviour and learning from all students

We believe that every pupil has the right to learn in a calm and safe environment that enables them to be themselves. Outstanding behaviour underpins effective learning and the development of strong relationships, use of restorative approaches and the fair and consistent application of the school behaviour policy are key to this.

We aim to work with parents and carers in ensuring each child develops the confidence and personal qualities that make them a good citizen and someone we are proud to know. Academic success is important but it is equally vital that each child develops the personal qualities that will enable them to make the most of their unique talents.

A focus on the attributes of Resilience, Respect, Empathy and Aspiration

In line with our mission statement “To ensure all students can be the best that they can be”, we focus upon developing four key qualities in all pupils:

- **ASPIRATION** - Whickham students set aspirational goals that are ambitious and without limitations.
- **RESPECT** - Without compromise, Whickham students demonstrate respect for themselves, others and their environment.
- **RESILIENCE** - Whickham students persevere with challenges, especially when faced with setbacks.
- **EMPATHY** - Whickham students strive to be kind, caring and understanding of each other's feelings and needs.

These qualities permeate the curriculum and are embedded throughout the school year including in our live feedback to parents, rewards and prizegiving.

Providing a rich and diverse set of experiences both within the formal curriculum but also through extra-curricular experiences

Our curriculum is designed to support learning in a wide range of contexts. We recognise the need to provide multiple viewpoints and experiences to support the academic and personal development of our pupils.

We believe learning outside the classroom is as essential to pupils' development as learning within the classroom. We want pupils to take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities, from sports clubs and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme to film club and STEAM club. Within our curriculum time we provide a rich experience across the year to ensure that all pupils are challenged by activities that broaden their life experience and cultural capital. We monitor participation in extracurricular activities and we remove barriers to participation by offering bursaries to disadvantaged pupils.

A curriculum which is underpinned by appreciation of equality, diversity displayed through inclusivity, mutual respect and restorative approaches

As a school, we believe strongly that pupils' personal development and understanding of equality and diversity will support and guide them to become fully rounded citizens. The school's work in this area is as important as, and in fact underpins, academic success and from the moment they start school in Year 7, we encourage our pupils to be healthy, socially responsible and culturally aware.

Additionally pupils follow a rigorous and creative programme of Citizenship, PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) through a combination of tutorial time, drop down mornings and afternoons and the school's assembly programme.

We want our pupils to demonstrate the essential personal characteristics that will prepare them for adult life beyond school - to empathise and care for others, to work hard and never give up, to treat others with respect and equality, to demonstrate leadership skills through facing challenges and inspiring others through continually striving for excellence.

Delivery of our curriculum

We operate on a curriculum model of 49 x 1 hour periods per fortnight. Pupils also spend 25 minutes each day with their tutor.

For the majority of the time in Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils are taught in their tutor groups but are placed in broad ability groups for Maths, and from Year 9, English. Pupils are taught in smaller groups for Technology. PE is taught in different groups to allow additional flexibility.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Subject	Hours per fortnight		
English	7	7	8
Mathematics	8	8	7
Science	7	6	6
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
RE	2	2	2
Modern Foreign Languages	5	5	5
Computing	2	2	2
Art	3	3	3
Technology	2	3	3
Music	2	2	2
Drama	1	1	1
PE	4	4	4

PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) is taught during tutor time and through a series of specialist part-day events.

Towards the end of Year 9 pupils choose a route for KS4 based on their individual strengths and preferences. We offer a range of options/pathways that enable pupils to personalise their curriculum. All pupils are able to study an EBACC curriculum, including a modern foreign language (French or German).

	Year 10	Year 11
Subject	Hours per fortnight	
English	8	8
Mathematics	8	8
Science	9	9
Core RE	1	1
Core option	4	4
Humanity option	5	5
Option A	5	5
Option B	5	5
PE Option	4	4

PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) is taught during tutor time and through a series of specialist part-day events.

Pupils who choose to stay post-16 further specialise. Pupils are required to take between 3 and 4 A-level equivalent subjects.

	Year 12	Year 13
Subject	Hours per fortnight	
Option A	9	9
Option B	9	9
Option C	9	9
Option D (if chosen)	9	9
Additional study / resits	variable (4-8)	variable (4-8)
Enrichment programme	2	

PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) is taught during tutor time and through a series of specialist part-day events. Pupils also have access to core PE and core RE.

In addition to their curriculum timetable pupils also have timetabled time in the Sixth Form study areas.