



Curriculum Policy

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Statement of intent

This Policy sets out how Atrium Studio School realises its vision, through the curriculum, to prepare its students for successful professional careers in the Built Environment. We want our students to be the leaders of the future in the Built Environment industries and beyond.

Atrium was set up to provide qualifications that are valued by employers in the Built Environment. They have been selected in consultation with local employers in the industry and are designed to facilitate young people's progress in professional, technical and creative pathways. The qualifications therefore have external currency.

Our students make an informed decision to join Atrium in Year 9 from other provision, including home education ('Education Otherwise'). This means that they arrive with a commitment to the curriculum that Atrium offers, designed with their professional careers in mind.

Principles

Evidence suggests that, if the UK is to compete in an increasingly global economy, it is vital that young people are able to respond successfully and flexibly to change.¹ Our curriculum is based on the following principles:

- We want our students to flourish in a world that is constantly changing. We believe that we equip them to do this when academic rigour, project-based learning and meaningful work experience are combined so that they learn effectively and with high levels of engagement and commitment.
- We encourage and support our students to become independent, reflective and motivated learners. We teach them the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions they need, including curiosity, creativity and problem-solving, and how to adapt and apply what they learn.
- The curriculum is designed to equip our students with qualifications, dispositions and competences that will serve them positively in the careers of their choice. We acknowledge that not all of them will decide to take up professional careers in the Built Environment, and the curriculum reflects this. The knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that our curriculum develops, and the transferable skills that we inculcate, should serve all students effectively – whatever pathway they choose.

Implementation at Key Stage 4

The taught curriculum

¹ 'Future prosperity for the UK's population and businesses depends on developing a skilled, flexible workforce that can drive up productivity and respond rapidly to shifts in global market opportunities.' CBI, *Inspiring growth – CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015*.

Atrium has a three-year Key Stage 4. The curriculum is a mix of core subjects and options.

Core Subjects
Mathematics English Language English Literature Design, Engineer, Construct! (DEC) ² Combined Science OR Triple Science (Physics, Chemistry & Biology) Geography or Ancient History Physical Education (non-examined) PSHE and Global Education (non-examined)
Options
Mandarin and/or Spanish or Access and Opportunity (A&O) Computer Science 3D Art & Design Graphic Communication Digital Photography

Qualifications

Key Stage 4 students work towards achieving an extensive suite of GCSE qualifications (and GCSE-equivalent qualification, in the case of DEC) at the end of Year 11.

With the full support of governors, the school has taken a deliberate decision not to prioritise the suite of EBacc subjects. With its extended personal coaching, employability skills framework, and regular, frequent work experience, Atrium is not a conventional school in miniature. An emphasis on the EBacc subjects would straitjacket the curriculum and constrain the school in providing exactly what students need for their future careers.

Access and Opportunity (A&O)

English and mathematics are vital qualifications for all students; employers continually stress their importance. The Access and Opportunity programme provides specific support for identified students to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics. The programme's title signifies the importance of these two subjects for students' life-chances: it provides access to the whole curriculum and enhances their opportunities when they leave school.

Project-based learning

² Further information on DEC! is available here: <http://designengineerconstruct.com/what-is-dec/>

Project-based learning is key to delivering our curriculum. It aims to ensure that students understand the relevance and practical application of their studies. Atrium's project-based learning has been designed in partnership with local employers through the Industry Education Steering Group.

During Flexible Fridays, students in Years 9 and 10 have the opportunity to learn through enterprise projects, based in Atrium and other schools (such as primary schools within the Academy Trust), local businesses and the community.

Work experience

All Year 10 and 11 students undertake regular work experience to gain valuable employability skills: three placements in Year 10 and two in Year 11.

Safeguarding and Health & Safety requirements are at the forefront of preparation for students' work experience placements.

Equality of opportunity is a cornerstone of our curriculum, including the work experience placements. We take steps to ensure that all students can take part fully, whatever their gender, background or financial circumstances.

Employers need employees who have the right attitudes and dispositions for work. Through their engagement with Atrium, employers begin to secure the skilled and conscientious employees and apprentices they need. They see their involvement in work experience placements as beneficial for their companies, now and into the future.

We capitalise on students' and employers' strengths and expertise, investing time and staffing in matching students and employers. This means that placements work successfully from both sides: students are motivated to learn because they are committed to their placement and employers have opportunities develop to strong professional relationships with their future workforce, engaging with the next generation of professionals in the Built Environment industry.

Although parents can suggest work experience placements and organise these themselves for their child, if they wish, it is still the case that all placements are quality-assured to ensure they are fit for purpose, meeting students' needs and our safeguarding requirements.

Work experience raises students' aspirations, inspires them and has real benefits when they come back to school. It gives them an opportunity to apply their school learning to the real world outside the classroom. During their placements, students learn to communicate with adults, find out what they are passionate about and what they really love doing. They have tasters of potential future careers and start to learn about the different routes into those careers. It is our job to fuel their passions and to put everything in place for them to become successful in the roles they aim for.

Work experience also helps students to develop personal and professional relationships that may lead to careers in the future, as well as the key employability skills that are so marketable.

The wider curriculum

Personal coaching

Personal coaching is provided for specific groups of students, such as some of the disadvantaged students, the most able and students who are under-performing. The personal coach works alongside the student to develop their personalised learning plan and to track their progress towards their qualifications and ambitions.

Students value these one-to-one coaching sessions. They have a significant impact on helping the individual students to meet and overcome some of the challenges they face, motivating them to reach their full potential.

Home Learning

From Monday to Thursday, the Atrium school day starts at 8.55am and ends at 5.30pm, when Home Learning finishes. School transport is provided at this time. On Fridays, the school day ends at 3.35pm.

Home Learning is a compulsory, supervised study period for all students. It enables them to learn in a structured environment with access to expert staff, as well as other specialist support and resources. It also contributes to providing equality of access to the curriculum.

Home Learning supports students to:

- manage their learning time and meet goals
- avoid procrastination
- complete tasks to deadlines.

These are key employability skills. Home Learning also provides the opportunity for students to collaborate with their peers in tasks where they might be working as a group, such as those in project-based learning.

Parents and carers support Home Learning because they know that students will complete, in school, the work that they need to do. This avoids any possible friction at home.

Further information on Home Learning is [available here](#)

Enrichment

Our enrichment programme promotes the life-skills that are required for everyday life, as well as providing opportunities for students to pursue their interests and passions. We feel that developing students' social, cultural, sporting and personal strengths will allow them to succeed and participate fully in education, work and society.

Competition and the market place

Entering regional and national competitions is an important part of the enriched curriculum for students. Responding to briefs and challenges, developing products that meet criteria and making presentations (oral, written and video) all contribute to their learning about competition in the marketplace and in the wider world. Through competition, students learn to learn from failure. Competitions resemble, essentially, bidding for contracts and constitute an integral part of the wider Atrium curriculum.

The portfolio of evidence

Every student in Year 10 and 11 has an employer as a mentor. Together, they develop a professional portfolio of evidence – essentially, a CV – that records each student's organisational, communication, enterprise and industry-specific skills and other learning. Developing the portfolio, including collecting the evidence for it, requires from students the self-discipline that they will need in the world of work.

Implementation at Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form)

Our Sixth Form students have a tutorial base at Atrium Studio and full access to a wide range of resources. They can also access South Dartmoor Community College's own excellent Sixth Form facilities at Place House, the SDCC Library and PSHE assembly programme.

Alongside more traditional A Levels, students also have opportunities to work towards Level 3 qualifications that are relevant to the Built Environment industry.

From September 2018, Atrium's A-level provision will increase as the first of our Key Stage 4 cohorts make the transition into Key Stage 5.

Key Stage 5 Subjects	
<p><u>Offered within Atrium Studio School:</u></p> <p>DEC (Design Engineer Construct) – Level 3 Certificate</p> <p>Graphic Design – A Level</p> <p>3D Art and Design – A Level</p>	
<p><u>Offered through South Dartmoor Community College Sixth Form:</u></p>	
<p><u>A Levels in:</u></p> <p>Art (Fine Art)</p> <p>Art (Photography)</p> <p>Biology</p> <p>Business</p> <p>Chemistry</p> <p>Classical Civilisation</p> <p>Computer Science</p> <p>Critical Thinking AS</p> <p>Dance</p> <p>Design and Technology</p> <p>Drama and Theatre Studies</p> <p>Economics</p> <p>English Language</p> <p>English Literature</p> <p>Extended Project Qualification AS</p> <p>French</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Core Maths (Certificate)</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Further Mathematics</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Philosophy and Ethics</p>	<p>Physics</p> <p>Psychology</p> <p>Sociology</p> <p>Spanish</p> <p>Sport and PE</p> <p><u>Level 2 Core subjects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English GCSE • Mathematics GCSE <p><u>Level 3 Applied:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Health and Social Care • Music Performance • Music Technology • Science

The curriculum has been designed to allow time each week (usually a full day) for DEC Level 3 Certificate students to undertake an extended period of work experience. Over weeks/months, they collaborate with a Built Environment employer on a specific project which then forms part of their DEC coursework and portfolio.

Monitoring and evaluation

The curriculum is monitored and evaluated through:

- the governing body
- staff and students
- employers
- parents.

The full governing body keeps the curriculum under review, especially through the governors' Teaching and Learning Project Team. Work experience placements are reviewed and evaluated with employers and students.

Employers, through the Industry Education Steering Group, have been vital partners in developing Atrium's curriculum and ensuring that it is relevant and fit for purpose. They continue to monitor the curriculum, ensuring that it is up-to-date and takes account of technological advances and industry-specific requirements.

Parents provide informal feedback on the curriculum, particularly through meetings with the Principal at parents' evenings.

The Leadership Team at the school reviews the curriculum every year and makes adjustments as appropriate, including reflecting on student feedback through the School Council and other routes. Additions have been made, for example, to reflect the qualifications that might be required for careers in the creative industries, since we are aware that not all our students will take up careers in the Built Environment. From September 2017, therefore, digital photography has been included for the new Year 9 intake.