



Curriculum

Learning and Teaching Policy

Including EYFS

Authorised by the Governing Body: Yes	Date: 4-11-25
Produced by: Deputy Head (Academic Life) and Head 1-9.25	
Date Disseminated to the Staff via the intranet: 1-9-25	
Date of Review: 1-9-26	
Signed: James Pitt, Chair of Governors	

Introduction

This policy outlines a Packwoodian's learning experience and outcomes, along with the pedagogical approach to learning adopted by the staff and embedded across the school, including EYFS.

It is designed to evidence how Packwood ensures that pupils receive a broad, balanced and suitably ambitious curriculum, and that teaching enables pupils to make progress relative to their starting points, aptitudes and needs.

This policy sets out Packwood School's philosophy, principles and practice for curriculum design, learning and teaching. It reflects our belief that an excellent prep school education should be ambitious and joyful, inculcating an intellectually rigorous approach while nurturing the whole child.

At Packwood, curriculum, learning and teaching are shaped by Curriculum SOAR, our school-wide framework for how pupils learn, think and apply knowledge. This framework aligns with the Packwood 2030 Strategy, the Big Tree Attributes, and the Packwood Way, ensuring that pupils leave Packwood not only well-prepared for senior school, but confident in who they are and how they learn.

Packwood provides education for pupils aged from 4-13, encompassing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stages 1 and 2, and the first two years of Key Stage 3. Full-time supervised education is provided for pupils of compulsory school age (constructed in accordance with Section 8 of the Education Act, 1996) which gives Packwoodians a rounded experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

This policy, along with our curriculum plans (on Toddle) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including pupils with an EHC Plan.

The Aims of the Packwood Curriculum Policy

- Provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that meets statutory requirements while retaining the independence, creativity and depth of a leading preparatory school.
- To ensure that pupils acquire speaking, listening, numeracy and literacy skills.
- Ensure equitable access to all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop pupils' knowledge, skills and mindset in equal measure.
- Foster intellectual curiosity, creativity and a love of learning.
- Enable pupils to make strong academic progress and demonstrate excellent value-added.
- Prepare pupils effectively for senior school pathways, including Shrewsbury School's Year 9 Origins Curriculum and other leading senior schools.
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, rooted in the Packwood Way.
- To recognise and grow the individual talents of each pupils, whilst recognising that they have differing needs which must be met, ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum progress at their performance level.
- To familiarise pupils with the use of ICT so that it is an integral part of their learning across the curriculum.
- Through an environment of high performance, systematically empower pupils to be 'intelligent' and how to succeed in school (recognising and celebrating that 'intelligence' comes in all forms).
- Grow individual pupils intellectually to be socially confident, who will be real world ready with a global outlook and concern for others.
- Ensure that the curriculum does not undermine the fundamental British values of: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensure that teaching does not undermine or discriminate against pupils contrary to the Equality Act (2010), that is, on the basis of the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- To ensure that pupils receive high-quality teaching in Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE), including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), in a way that is age-appropriate, inclusive, and in line with statutory guidance.
- To ensure that the statutory requirements are met, whilst developing our curriculum so it retains its independence to be flexible, dynamic and relevant to the 21st century.

- To monitor individual pupil attainment and the quality of learning and teaching, ensuring that the curriculum is effectively implemented and that every pupil makes progress.
- To facilitate the assessing, measuring and recording of pupil progress, enabling the school to ensure every pupil performs at a high level.
- To set ambitious targets which promotes an ethos of continuous improvement.

Curriculum SOAR

Launched in September 2025, Curriculum SOAR provides clear curriculum intent, coherent implementation, and demonstrable impact on pupils' learning, wellbeing and preparedness for next steps.

Curriculum SOAR underpins all learning and teaching at Packwood from Reception to Form 8.

A Connected Learner Journey

- One coherent and progressive curriculum journey from Reception to Form 8.
- Subjects taught discretely, with intentional interdisciplinary links (including through STEM and conceptualised-based learning).
- Clear progression within and across subjects, ensuring continuity and depth.

Curriculum Structure

For every subject and year group, curriculum planning identifies three core components:

1. Content – the rigorous taught curriculum: what pupils know and understand.
2. Skills – progression of the Big Tree Attributes and subject-specific skills.
3. Assessment and Applied Learning – what pupils can do with their learning.

English and Mathematics are taught through carefully selected schemes from Reception to Form 8, aligned to the National Curriculum, enabling strong foundations, mastery and measurable value-added.

Curriculum design: Understanding by Design

Packwood's Curriculum is rooted in the pedagogical approach, Understanding by Design (UbD), created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

The principles of this:

Understanding: Achieved through the transfer of knowledge – applied learning – education is about deepening understanding.

Design: What are the desired results and acceptable evidence to prove this?

The Big Idea: Pupils think deeply about what we teach them.

Essential questions:

How can we uncover a pupil's understanding of the content?
How can we demonstrate tangible progress for every pupil?
How do we ensure learning is challenging for every pupil?

UbD is based on the following principles:

1. What is the Big Idea? What do we want pupils to understand and remember?
2. Essential questions that are open-ended to provoke thinking. We want to focus from teacher questions to pupil generated questions
3. Evidence to show progress, understanding and learning attributes (BIG TREE)
4. Learning Plan which allows for adaptive teaching

Four aspects of UbD planning:

1. The Lighthouse: What are the learning goals? This guides the teacher
2. Big Ideas: Enables pupil exploration and making sense of the subject
3. Essential Questions: Drives conceptual understanding and critical thinking
4. Evidence through formative (insight into pupil progress), summative (evaluating mastery) and performance (application) assessment

Assessment is revealed through 3 facets:

1. Exhibiting knowledge through understanding and explanation
2. Socratic: interpretation, shifting perspectives
3. Application so pupils can transfer to authentic contexts

Approaches to Learning: SOAR in practice

Learning at Packwood is shaped by the SOAR:

Socratic: Pupils are encouraged to grasp why, not just what. Teachers use a range of questioning methods, dialogue and challenge to deepen understanding and promote critical thinking.

Oracy: Pupils develop confidence and clarity in speaking and listening through discussion, debate, presentation and various performance methods across the curriculum.

Applied Learning: Learning is purposeful and meaningful. Pupils apply knowledge and skills through explicit performance tasks, projects, investigations and real-world concepts.

Reflective: Pupils are taught to reflect on their learning, understand their next steps and recognise that learning is an ongoing process.

The progression of the Approaches to Learning is achieved through **Awareness (Reception to Form 2), Understanding (Forms 3-5) and Competency (Forms 6-8)**.

Approaches to Teaching: SOAR in practice

Teaching at Packwood is evaluated against the following expectations:

1. Enabling pupils to acquire an enhanced depth of knowledge and skills
2. Supporting sustained progress over time
3. Curriculum content is well planned, adaptive and inclusive

Teaching is informed by assessment: every new unit across all subjects begins with a pre-assessment to [a] check prior knowledge and understanding and [b] inform adaptive teaching and targets; each unit ends with both a summative assessment and applied learning performance task (both of which are known at the start of the unit).

Teaching is informed by ongoing differentiation: each pupil has clear and relevant learning goals which they understand; pupil progress towards these is constantly monitored through ongoing assessment; additional depth and complexity is always added to ensure we don't teach to a perceived potential. Feedback is timely, specific, understandable and should lead to self-adjustment.

Teaching is informed by the need for both knowledge, conceptual understanding and acquisition of learning skills (see Approaches to Learning). Teaching is 'expert-led' (by the teacher rather than 'child-led') but focused on developing critical thinking skills.

Teaching is informed by AI and advancements in technology to drive personalised learning.

Teaching is informed by collaboration: teachers engage in meaningful collaboration with each other. This includes planning and peer observations.

Assessment for Learning: SOAR in practice

Assessment practice at Packwood demonstrates how pupils:

- Know more and can do more over time
- Understand their own progress and next steps
- Are prepared effectively for future learning and senior school transition

Assessment Principles

- Assessment is purposeful, manageable and meaningful.
- Pupils understand assessment criteria and success measures from the outset.
- Feedback is timely, specific and focused on improvement.

Assessment Framework: SOAR in practice

Each unit of learning includes:

- Pre-assessment to identify prior knowledge and inform teaching.
- Summative assessment to assess knowledge and understanding.
- Applied learning performance task to assess application, skills and understanding.

Standardised assessments are used to support tracking, value-added analysis and transition discussions.

Year 8 pupils sit formal examinations in the Spring and Summer Terms to support senior school preparation.

Implementation of the Packwood Educational Philosophy

Differentiation and Inclusion

Packwood ensures that teaching and curriculum planning:

- Take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs
- Provide appropriate challenge and support for all pupils
- Enable pupils with SEND and EAL to access the full curriculum

Packwood is committed to ensuring that every pupil can access, enjoy and succeed within the curriculum.

- Teaching is differentiated through task, support, questioning, scaffolding and outcome.
- Pupils with additional learning needs are supported through tailored strategies and specialist provision where appropriate.
- High-performing pupils are stretched through depth, complexity and enrichment.

All pupils are supported to develop confidence, independence and resilience as learners.

Equal Opportunities

At Packwood, we ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. Regardless of gender, ethnicity, social and family background and age, all pupils are taught in a manner that they will individually perform at a high level. The school's Equal Opportunities Policy applies across all areas of the curriculum.

Special Educational Needs (please see separate policy)

Pupils with special educational needs will benefit from the support given by the Learning Support department.

Pupils identified as having learning needs will receive support from their teachers, who in turn are supported by the SENDCo and her team.

Pupils with learning needs will have an Individual Passport. These assist teachers in providing strategies to best support these pupils across the curriculum.

Teachers are expected to tailor their lessons accordingly so that all pupils can both access the curriculum and perform at a high level in a way that is appropriate to their own individual strengths and weaknesses or stage of development.

Pupils for whom English is an additional language may also require help to access the curriculum so they can learn and make progress.

Pupils on an EHC plan will be supported in line with the recommendations set out in the plan. The Learning Support Team will work closely with the local education authority, as well as parents of any pupil on an EHC plan to ensure that the correct provision is in place.

Safeguarding (please see separate policy)

Packwood is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of every pupil in the school. As such, there is a focus on safeguarding throughout the curriculum. We aim to provide an environment in which pupils feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We recognise the contribution the school can make to safeguard and support the pupils in its care through:

- Prevention: a positive school atmosphere, careful and vigilant teaching, pastoral care, support to pupils, and providing good adult role models.
- Protection: following agreed protocols, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- Support: to pupils and staff and to children who have concerns or who may have been abused.

Assessment

Formative assessment is the process of ongoing monitoring of individual pupil progress by the teacher. This should be a constant process, with appropriate and high-impact feedback given to the pupil, highlighting exactly what they can do to reach the next level. Formative assessment also takes the form: of pre-unit and post-unit assessments to measure progress and pupil understanding; ongoing reading assessments; maths check ins; ongoing monitoring of skills - subject and overarching Big Tree Attributes.

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is carried out as follows:

Year Group	Standardised Assessments	Internal Assessments
Reception		Baseline assessment within first 3 weeks of Autumn Term Phonics assessment at the end of each term EYFSP updates termly and collated at the end of the Summer Term
Form 1	NGRT – Autumn and Spring Term GAPS (Spelling and Grammar) – termly PUMA (Maths) - termly	Phonics assessment – termly Phonics Screening Check – end of Summer Term
Form 2	CAT4 – Spring Term NGRT, NGST- Autumn and Spring Term PUMA (Maths) - termly	Phonics assessment – termly
Form 3	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn and Spring Term	Pre-unit assessments Performance tasks / knowledge-based assessments for each unit
Form 4	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn and Spring Term	Pre-unit assessments Performance tasks / knowledge-based assessments for each unit
Form 5	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn and Spring Term	Pre-unit assessments Performance tasks / knowledge-based assessments for each unit
Form 6	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn and Spring Term	Pre-unit assessments Performance tasks / knowledge-based assessments for each unit
Form 7	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn and Spring Term	Pre-unit assessments Performance tasks / knowledge-based assessments for each unit
Form 8	CAT4 – Autumn Term NGRT, NGST, NGMT – Autumn Term	Formal examinations in Spring and Summer Terms

Standardised scores are not usually shared with parents, unless requested or forms part of the senior school discussions.

The Packwood Learner Journey

Early Years Foundation Stage

Packwood has exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, we use it as a frame of reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage>

Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage is distinct in its identity. The curriculum is therefore planned in accordance with the latest expectations. There are seven areas of learning.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

We also support pupils in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Reception classroom is based on the lower floor of the Pre-Prep with specifically designed classrooms and resources to support pupils in these year groups. The classroom has access to a dedicated outdoor learning area which enables free flow.

Pupils attending the EYFS have specialist teaching in Digital Learning, Music, Physical Education and Spanish.

Phonics is taught using Twinkl and pupils are assessed and taught according to their needs. The EYFS is staffed by a dedicated team.

Acorns: Key Stage 1

The Pre-Prep is housed in a purpose-built learning environment, which includes classrooms and a spacious outdoor area.

Classes do not exceed 18.

By way of progression from EYFS, the learning is more formal as expectations of all pupils are increased in order to maintain momentum, enable an environment of high-performance learning for all, and ensure that the pupils are prepared as they journey through the school.

The curriculum is focused around the National Curriculum, adjusted to Packwood's Curriculum SOAR, which, alongside English and Maths, is designed to support pupils' natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity.

Pupils are taught in mixed ability groupings. Phonics continues to be taught (as with the EYFS) via the Twinkl Scheme although pupils are expected to have completed this by the end of the first term of Year 2.

Reading is taught daily on an individual basis as well as integrated into other subjects within the topic.

White Rose scheme is followed in Maths to ensure breadth, depth and mastery. This approach gives pupils the time needed to reflect, consolidate and transfer their learning to real world situations.

Pupils are taught by a Class Teacher; however, they have specialist Music, Spanish, Digital Learning, Swimming, PE and Games, Design and Art lessons.

Prep School: Key Stage 2

Accommodated in the main classroom blocks, Forms 4-6 continue to exceed 18 unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Pupils in Forms 3 and 4 are taught English, Maths, PSHE and Moving Up by their class teacher, otherwise all subjects are taught by specialists.

Other than fluid performance groupings in Maths, classes are grouped by mixed ability.

Most pupils in Form 6 will be transferring to Shrewsbury School so there is no requirement for assessments, however some will prepare for and sit assessments for senior schools, and so a dedicated lesson is provided in the timetable to help prepare for these assessments from Form 3. The school use Atom Learning as a tool to enable pupils to have familiarisation ahead of the ISEB and other pre-tests. We are, however, extremely mindful of the need for balance. The breadth of the curriculum during the school day is maintained to enable pupils to understand their own mental health and the importance of physical exercise. They explore strategies for calming and meditation to balance what can be a busy period in their educational journey.

Prep School: Key Stage 3

Forms 7 and 8 are taught by subject specialists. The current Form 8s will be preparing for Common Entrance Examinations in June 2026, however following this a new, rigorous examination-based approach will be adopted by the school, in line with the principles that underpin Curriculum SOAR.

High performing pupils prepare for scholarship assessments at their senior schools, and are supported through a scholarship seminar programme, run by the Deputy Head (Academic Life).

Packwood prepares pupils for the iPQ (ISEB's Independent Project Qualification), in which Form 8s deliver a 'Fireside Talk' in June, which focuses on an issue of global importance.

Prep is set each night on a rota basis. Pupils are expected to spend 45 minutes each evening with Prep.

Monitoring and developing Learning and Teaching

Staff

We appoint highly qualified and specialist staff, provide first-rate teaching facilities, and create a positive, supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Teaching staff are supported through a thorough appraisal and professional learning process, which is both self-led and directed by the Leadership Team.

The school is currently reviewing the professional development framework, aligning it with Shrewsbury's IDP.

Planning

All planning is all on The Toddle Platform. Subject links are made and highlighted weekly where relevant. Short-term planning is carried out by individual teachers and used to inform weekly and day-to-day teaching of the curriculum and assessment.

Ensuring high quality teaching and learning

The Leadership Team monitor the teaching through the following ways:

- Regular learning walks and informal lesson observations
- Book and planning scrutiny with teachers
- Regular meetings with faculty staff
- Developing opportunities for collaboration

The Packwood Committee, chaired by the Shrewsbury School Director of Education, has oversight for the quality of education provided and supports the ongoing development of the curriculum, learning and teaching throughout the school.