

# Our curriculum

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**GEORGE  
SALTER  
ACADEMY**

## Overview

*"The curriculum is very well designed and is a strong feature of this academy. It offers students a wide range of well-taught vocational and traditional academic courses that hold their interest and encourage them to "aim high"."*

Ofsted 2014

George Salter Academy has a curriculum designed for students from a wide range of backgrounds who have different skills and varied needs.

Our curriculum is:

- broad to enable all students to develop personal qualities, knowledge and a range of skills relevant to the real world
- promoting practical capability, technical and vocational skills
- an introduction to economic awareness and enterprise
- interesting, enjoyable and pupil-centered

*"A school without failure, where all children leave school having identified a talent, a skill, an intelligence through which they can become whatever they want to be."*

Michael Alexander

## House System

Your son/daughter will be placed into a mixed ability form group for tutor periods. This tutor group will be part of one of the four Houses which operate within George Salter Academy's Pastoral system (the Houses are Crescent, Loxdale, Royal and Trinity). There will be a 15 minute form period every morning, Monday to Friday. All Year groups have an allocated morning assembly every week which follows a timetabled, relevant and topical theme to support PSHE and SMSC.

## Setting and Blocking

In addition to being placed into a House and Form group on entry to Year 7, your son/daughter will also be placed into a teaching block named George or Salter. Within these blocks, he/she is set according to ability based on current attainment and their personal specific needs. These blocks and sets are reviewed termly to allow for the movement of students, ensuring that we continue to cater for their development and individual needs.

For details of the subjects taught to each year group select the appropriate Key stage below.

## Extra-Curricular activities and Flexible Learning

As well as the school day we also offer our students the opportunities to study outside of school and also take part in activities which will enhance their wider learning and employability. These include the provision of Curriculum Enrichment Days where the student's timetable is collapsed and allows subjects to be delivered in a whole new and dynamic way, whilst enhancing the students learning and developing vital skills in preparation for the world of work. For more information about the Extra-Curricular Clubs, please see the [Extra-Curricular Clubs webpage](#)

Curriculum Enrichment Days have offered our students support and a different approach to learning across the curriculum. They have enabled staff to bring the curriculum to life via relevant trips, using external speakers and presenting topics in a vibrant and exciting way. Feedback from both staff and students has been extremely positive and they continue to offer staff and students an opportunity to develop learning both inside and outside the classroom.

## Tracking Student Progress

- We will set target grades which challenge all of our students to be successful.
- Progress towards these target grades will be frequently checked (three times per year) and closely monitored.
- Where students are falling behind, or underachieving, we will provide an intervention programme to help them catch up. This includes support staff helping in lessons, allowing students to work in smaller groups to help students enhance their learning.
- We have two Progress days in addition to Parents' Evenings which allow the students to review their performance in all subject areas and to set specific targets to improve their progress.
- Students have the opportunity to attend organised sessions, which focus on key areas of the subject curriculum or make use of the extensive ICT, library and other specialist facilities for their own private study.

For more detail on the current structure of the curriculum please download the [Curriculum overview \[pdf, 590 KB\]](#)

## Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8)

We create clear pathways for our students based on close consultation with our feeder schools, close scrutiny of Junior School results and students' performance in the Academy's benchmark tests.

Those students who should go on to achieve 8 Grades 5-9 at GCSE will be in the Academy's George band. The students who could achieve 8 Grades 5-9 at GCSE but may benefit from additional support and intervention are placed in the Academy's Salter band. Those students who would benefit from extra support will be placed in our nurture group, the Academy Band.

We have a specialist Arts group, for students who are particularly talented in the Performing Arts. These students receive an extra lesson of Dance, Drama or Music each week. This creates a pathway into the Performing Arts at an early age for our students and reflects our underlying principles as reflected in the quote from Michael Alexander. It has also increased our numbers in the George Band which reflects our drive to improve students' performance in GCSE subjects.

## Year 7

In 7 a small number of students are taught for 20 periods of the week by the same teacher, whilst also supported by a specialist subject teacher in English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and ICT. This creates an environment that allows a real focus on the development of the essential skills of literacy, numeracy, independent learning and working with others.

A Salter 4 group has been established to support students who benefit from additional English and Mathematics.

Subject	Time allocation for North and West (number of 50 minutes lessons)	North 5	Time allocation for East/Nurture Group and West 4 (number of 50 minute lessons)
English	4	4	6
Maths	4	4	5
Science	3	3	3
Languages	3	3	George & Salter 1-3 only
History/RE/Citizenship	3	3	George & Salter 1-4 only
Geography	2	2	George & Salter 1-4 only
Humanities	Academy only		5
Product Design/ Food	2	2	2
ICT	1	1	1
Dance/Drama	2	2	2
Music	1	2	1
Art	2	2	2
Physical Education	3	2	3

Table of subject period allocations for year 7

## Year 8

In Year 8 we have created an extra band, the South Band, which includes those students in the West who have made sufficient progress to be working at the level of the North Band students.

Whilst the Nurture Group continues, all students who are capable of making progress in mainstream Maths and English are moved into the Academy Band sets. Those who remain in the Salter Band continue to receive extra periods of English and Maths delivered by subject specialists (see table below).

Students who still require some additional support remain in Salter (Salter 1) and have additional Maths and English periods.

In accordance with our Michael Alexander principles, students are given the right to opt for extra PE, Performing and/or Visual Arts; those with a particular linguistic talent are also able to opt for a second language. Students can therefore spend more time studying the subjects they really enjoy and in which they succeed. We believe that this will allow students to make greater progress and further prepare them for year 9 options.

The periods allocated to each subject in Year 8 are:

Subject	Time allocation for North, South and West (number of 50 minutes lessons)	Time allocation for West 1 (number of 50 minutes lessons)	Time allocation for West 2/Nurture Group (number of 50 minute lessons)
English	4	6	6
Maths	4	5	5
Science	3	3	3
Languages	3	-	Academy take a Humanities course, see below, or additional English and Maths
History	2	2	
Religious Education	1	1	
Geography	2	2	
ICT	1	1	1
Humanities	Salter 2 only	Salter 2 only	5
Product Design/Food	2	2	2
<b>Specialism:</b> 1,2 & 3 from: Dance, Drama, Music, Art, Design, Textiles, 3D Sculpture, Physical Education and a Second Language	2	2	2
	2	2	2
	2	2	2
Core PE	2	2	2

Table of time allocation of subject to the setting block in year 8

At the end of Year 8, students are able to select from a number of option subjects for courses they will study through 9 to 11. These optional subjects include; Art & Design, Business Studies, Catering, Child Development, Dance, Drama, French, Geography, Graphics, Health & Social Care, History, Music, Photography, RE, Product Design, Spanish, Sports Studies, Textiles. Students can follow pathways through Vocational Qualifications, Traditional GCSE's or a combination of both.

To ensure all students in the George band follow the EBACC qualification, they study a foreign language and have a choice between History and Geography.

However the options also allow them to select a second foreign language or Humanities subject if they wish to from their 2 free option blocks. Students in George and Salter follow the optional EBACC pathway, selecting one of MFL, History or Geography as well as a further two free option choices.

- Download [Year 9 Options booklet \[pdf, 24 MB, 32 pages\]](#)

## Key Stage 4 (Years 9, 10 and 11)

At George Salter, we start our Key Stage 4 curriculum in year 9 to offer all students the maximum amount of time to achieve the full award in all courses studied.

During this three year period all students study; English, Maths, Science, PE, PSHE and Careers.

It is also a target for all students to achieve a Grade 5 or above equivalent in an ICT qualification. As the students achieve this qualification, the time freed up will be allocated to support other subject areas, notably English and Maths.

## Post 16

The Academy has a Consortium arrangement at Post 16 with Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy and Bristnall Hall Academy. The underlying principles that have driven the curriculum offer at Post 16 for the last 5 years are the same as those set out in the recently published DfE publication "Study Programmes". The Curriculum Offer allows all students to follow a structured study programme that suits their needs and starts from the point they have reached at the end of KS4. Students will normally embark upon a tailored study programme at one of the following levels:

- Level 1/2 – students who have achieved a grade 4 or below in both Maths and English at GCSE. The morning sessions are composed of core level 2 provision including GCSE English, Maths and other GCSEs with an aim of improving literacy levels e.g. GCSE Humanities. Level 2 students will access the afternoon provision in a similar way to level 3 students, but with some level 2 subjects for students who are following a pure level 2 route.
- Level 2.5 – these are typically students who have achieved a grade 4 in Maths or English at GCSE. Typically these are students who wish to go onto level 3 study and university. These students will normally take 3 level 3 subjects (based on their strengths and talent) and a re-take in GCSE English or Maths.
- Level 3 – these are students who have achieved a grade 5 or above in both GCSE English and Maths. Students will typically study 4 level 3 courses in year 12 and then take 3 onto year 13

The curriculum is blocked into five blocks, three of which take place as morning sessions, and two as afternoon sessions, which are available to students across the consortium.

The rationale behind the blocking is:

- to offer popular subjects in the three morning blocks on all three campuses e.g. English and Maths
- to make it possible for students to be able to take combinations of subjects leading to specific career outcomes e.g. Sciences and Maths
- to arrange the blocking to ensure viability of teaching groups
- to strategically develop and offer maximum breadth of subjects

## Additionality

The Academy recognises the need to prepare students for higher education and the world of work. In order to develop students study skills in independence, all students take part in a double session a week focusing on these skills and how they can be applied in their different subjects.

Yr 12 will have these lessons Thursday periods 3&4 and Yr 13 on Tuesday periods 1&2. Attendance to these sessions is compulsory.

In order to put into practice the skills developed, students have the opportunity to complete an Extended Project and work towards an additional qualification.

## Electives

On Wednesday p.m. there are no timetabled lessons and a full and varied enrichment programme is planned. The programme is continually reviewed and updated and students will be offered the chance to sign up for activities.

Sessions include:

- Team sports
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Cooking
- Music
- Subject Specific Sessions – e.g. Law – programme includes: visits to magistrates and Crown Court, visit to prison, visit from probation service, opportunity to write bail application etc.