

# Nishkam School Trust



## Curriculum Policy and Guidance

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## Our Vision and Ethos

Nishkam schools are Sikh ethos multi faith schools that take a distinctive approach to many traditional faith schools. The Nishkam School Trust education model is led by virtues such as, compassion, humility, service, contentment, optimism, trust and forgiveness. Virtues are prevalent throughout our teaching and learning model and are modelled by our pupils, staff and teachers. Our pupils explore the divine context of humanity and wonder of all creation and also learn from the wisdom of all religions and in doing so explore the infinite human potential to do good unconditionally. We support all pupils and staff to develop aspects of their own religious, spiritual or human identities. In service of God, we pray for guidance in this endeavour and forgiveness for the errors we may make.

### 1. Curriculum Intent

#### 1.1 Curriculum vision:

Our curriculum is underpinned by the Nishkam School Trust mission statement:

To empower children with virtues that enable them to excel **academically** and **spiritually** inspiring them to serve humanity selflessly (*Nishkam*), with an abundance of love, compassion and forgiveness.

Our curriculum and schools are built around our vision to ensure we remain:

**Faith-inspired:** learning from the wisdom of religion

At Nishkam Schools, our pupils explore the divine context of humanity and the wonder of all creation. They not only learn about, but also learn from, the wisdom of religions and in so doing explore the infinite human potential to do good unconditionally. We support pupils to develop aspects of their own religious, spiritual or human identities. They learn about serenity through prayer and humility in service and in so doing, they deepen their own respective faith, and respect the common purpose of all religious traditions, as well as respecting the beliefs of those with no faith tradition. They explore the unique divinity of the individual, and our common humanity.

Pupils are enabled to commit to and practise their faith/belief through knowledge, and experiential learning. Commitment in faith may be demonstrated by pupils through faith initiation (e.g., Baptism/Amritdhari) and regular faith practice (prayer, service and understanding elements of scripture).

**Virtues-led:** nurturing compassionate, responsible human beings

At Nishkam Schools, we believe that the fostering of human virtues forms the foundation of all goodness. Our curricula are carefully enriched to allow experiences where our pupils, teachers and parents alike learn to grow through a conscious focus on virtues. Our virtues-led education helps to provide guidance to enable pupils to understand their choices in order to help them lead better lives. Our pupils become self-reflective and flourish; they are able to build strong, meaningful relationships and understand their responsibilities to the global family and all creation, founded in faith.

Pupils learn to experience faith lived out through righteous living in thought, action and deed.

**Aspiring for Excellence:** in all that we do.

At Nishkam Schools, our pupils and staff alike aim to become the best human beings they can possibly be, in all aspects of spiritual, social, intellectual and physical life. We foster a school culture which inspires optimism and confidence, hope and determination for all to achieve their very best. This is accomplished through a rich and challenging curriculum, along with excellent teaching to nurture awe and wonder. Pupils gain a breadth and depth of knowledge and a love of learning to achieve their full potential.

Staff are highly motivated to inspire both as role models of virtue and through quality-first teaching. Pupils are highly engaged to achieve their very best. The whole child approach is central, where the involvement

of parents as key role models and educators is nurtured. As a result, academic attainment is in the top quintile nationally at all key stages.

## 1.2 Preamble: The Role of Nishkam Education Curriculum (Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ji)

### Key Questions

There are two simple facts about human life. We are born, and then we die. What sort of learning is important in between? What are our innermost hopes for a newborn child? When someone dies, what do we remember and value most?

Every child is precious, deserves to have dignity, to experience love, to develop inner confidence in being part of the wider world. Every child needs good nourishment, for the body, the mind and also for that spark of the spirit that shines within. These are the foundations for successful learning; we fail children if we don't provide these. The collective responsibility for this lies with family, guardians, teachers and society as a whole.

Children have innate qualities which education can draw out and cultivate – curiosity, wonder and awe, a capacity for love, contentment, sharing, a sense of caring and responsibility towards others. Call them human values, though I would describe them as God's divine gifts to us. As humans we also have survival instincts which can go out of control and become destructive. Good education helps us to manage tendencies like selfishness, anger and greed, giving us the skills, knowledge and outlook to raise standards in our character as human beings.

An essential step on the road to peace is to ensure every child grows up with their innate capacity for spiritual development fulfilled and their virtues developed.

Holistic education and the positive experiences during childhood can help individuals to achieve their purpose in life, fulfil their potential and become good citizens. Education is therefore a priority within and without: for personal individual human development and also for secular and infrastructure development.

### Nurturing the Seeds of Greatness

Every human being carries the seeds of greatness within. This may be intellectual, technical, physical or artistic skill and talent. But true 'greatness' consists of human dignity, inner strength, wisdom and humility, and the capacity to act in a noble way and contribute selflessly towards the common good of humanity. It is a quality which requires development in the spiritual as well as secular sense.

The responsibility is ours as a society to provide a framework to nurture the seeds of greatness in our children and young people, through schools, guiding institutions, the social environment and the family home. Through this process, we also discover the best in ourselves.

### A call to do battle with the self

This planet which we call our home has been entrusted to us; we must serve it and love it. Sikh scripture tells us that the world is a *dharamsal*, a school in which to sow the seeds of spirituality, a place of worship. What characterizes the Sikh faith is a call to all peoples to recognize one Universal Creator, a unity behind the diversity of creation. It teaches us not to escape from the world, but to bring a spiritual dimension to all secular pursuits, from raising a family, to earning one's daily bread and engaging in community life. This is summed up by a threefold motto or calling which is the founding 'charter' for Sikh life: *Nam Japo* – remember the Divine Name in all that you do; *Kirat Karo* – work with integrity, in constant acknowledgment of God's presence; *Wand Ke Chhako* – share the fruits of your labour with others. This paves the way for a God-conscious society, which plays an active role in everyday life, encouraging interdependence and selflessness for the love of creation.

Another strong feature of Sikh tradition is the concept of the 'saint-soldier' or *sant sipaahi*, one who has the courage and grit to do good in the world. It reminds us that we must constantly do battle with the inner demons of lust, anger, greed, materialistic attachment and haughty pride. Once these battles are fought and

won can we bring any meaningful change around us and bring long term results as we strive for sustainable peace.

### **Towards Interfaith Education**

At no time in human history has the need for education about the world's faith traditions been stronger. There have been several 'agendas' for the teaching or non-teaching of faith traditions in schools. Religion has often been studied in a descriptive or anthropological way, as a matter of cultural interest, or with the presumption of the superiority of one particular faith or worldview to another. The time is long overdue for an open-minded exploration of faith traditions as collective repository of teachings to uplift and enrich the experience of human life. This must not be limited to acquisition of intellectual knowledge, but an understanding of what it means to practice the values which each faith, in its own way, seeks to kindle in us.

### **A new calling for education**

We are just emerging from an era where education has rarely gone beyond the bounds of mundane functionality. Its main output has been to prepare us for the job market, to generate individual and national income, power or reputation. Attempts have been made to broaden the learning experience (and prepare individuals for living and working in a multicultural/global context) by the introduction of the National Curriculum and subjects such as citizenship. However, the starting point for such developments tends to rest on socially agreed norms and political legislation rather than a realisation that there is a profound human capacity which faith has the power to activate and set free. Despite a number of decades of highly developed state education for all, there are still in the world today many individuals who are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their respected fields, but lacking in depth and nuance in matters of the human spirit.

A parallel and broader approach to education emphasises the need to draw out, cultivate and sustain innate human values alongside the intellect in order to develop the whole individual and to enrich the way in which we coexist and move forward together. This approach has its roots in the Latin verb *educare*, which means 'to bring out that which is within'. The process of education is thus intended to draw out human characteristics, values and skills for living which are latent in every human being.

### **1.3 Curriculum statement**

Nishkam School Trust offers a holistic approach to the curriculum with the aim of nurturing character through virtues and faith, building significant knowledge, cultivating critical thinking and nurturing leadership, in the widest sense, through communication, collaboration and community. The curriculum is necessarily aspirational, it has clear intent, implementation and positive impact. It is reviewed regularly, it is focused on excellence and on securing in all learners a love of learning through the acquisition and retrieval of knowledge, the study and practice of faith, and an understanding of the world around them.

Our curriculum narrative is built around our golden threads:

- Understanding of what we learn about collaboration, peace, forgiveness and love through each subject and unit of work

#### **1. Love and Forgiveness vs Enmity/Hate**

- Looking to exemplify the core virtue of love/forgiveness and which can often be exemplified through the example of when the negative trait of hate and enmity is in play.

#### **2. Peace/Collaboration vs Blame/Conflict/War**

- Adding opportunities where examples of decision making have led to living/working collaboratively/peacefully and improving socio-economic factors, health and, most importantly, harmonious living leading to contented communities and lives. Exploring how the narrative may differ when there are strong disagreements leading to blame/conflict/tension/war and the impact on individual people's lives.

#### **3. Trust in 'The Divine/God' in the context of exploring the purpose of life**

- Looking actively for opportunities of famous individuals (or situations) where their belief in the Divine (and virtuous living) has influenced them.
- E.g., leaders, scientists, mathematicians, inventors, musicians, artists and composers.

The curriculum is constructed to ensure the disciplinary and substantive concepts and the substantive knowledge of each subject is carefully mapped out to allow for synergy and cohesion.

We believe all children **can and will achieve**; this is supported through engagement with an academic and rigorous curriculum which is planned for progression, delivered by passionate subject experts and underpinned by our language of virtues. The role modelling and use of the language of virtues in our curriculum is a key component in securing achievement and in helping to develop successful and confident global citizens.

#### 1.4 Curriculum Aims:

The Nishkam Curriculum aims to support pupils to learn about collaboration, peace, forgiveness and love through their academic subjects, faith practice and personal development.

In addition, each school's curriculum will aim to secure in our pupils:

- **spiritual fulfilment** through
  - learning how to lead a highly moral and ethical life through a virtues-led approach
  - learning about faith, as well as from the wisdom of faith, to make informed choices about faith life using the language of prayer, service and virtues
- **the importance of equality** respecting the dignity of all human beings
- **academic excellence** through a broad and balanced set of knowledge-rich academic disciplines, underpinned by the National curriculum
- **excellent literacy and oracy skills** which support success across the curriculum
- effective global responsibility and outlook, which engenders **peace, collaboration, love and forgiveness**, with pupils contributing positively to society
- **highly developed skills:**
  - *Reasoning*
  - *Critical thinking* - conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesising, evaluating information
  - *Creative thinking* - developing ideas which are novel and useful
  - *Problem solving* - accessing effective heuristics;
  - *Oracy and rhetoric* – expressing and justifying opinions, asking questions and clarifying responses
  - *Flexibility and adaptability*
- **independence and responsibility for their own learning**
- **core life skills**

## 2. Curriculum Implementation

### 2.1 Principles for Curriculum Construction

	<b>Our Curriculum should:</b>	<b>Impact:</b>
1.	Encourage a love of learning and be delivered by staff who are knowledgeable and passionate about the topics they teach	Staff and pupils who are passionate about and engaged in their learning will secure better outcomes
2.	Give all pupils the opportunity to study a breadth of subjects and a wide, rich set of experiences to develop their talents and interests.	Inclusivity and equality are important; all pupils need to experience a broad and balanced curriculum to give them a breadth of knowledge and experience which will help them to make informed choices for future study and career pathways
3.	Be coherently planned to ensure progression within individual subject strands to ensure depth of learning within individual subjects, relevant to our community, pupils and the world around them	A well-planned curriculum allows for progression and ensures that judiciously chosen in-depth learning experiences help pupils to make progress and develop a greater understanding of the world around them

4.	Allow pupils to reach excellence through carefully planned opportunities and teachers' understanding of what excellence looks like	Articulating excellence helps pupils to strive towards this; models of excellence motivate and support pupils to achieve this
5.	Ensure assessments are relevant and appropriate to age and stage as well as preparing pupils for SATs, GCSE, A Level, and the wider world beyond school	An understanding of the end point is important, so that learning is structured, and pupils are well-supported. There is no need to repeat SATs/GCSE assessments year on year; assessments need to measure the curriculum and learning at judicious points to inform future learning and teaching
6.	Be underpinned by knowledge-rich learning which builds each term and year	Knowing, understanding and remembering more is the key to success. Staff should have high expectations of pupils' learning and retention of core information
7.	Be ambitious in terms of content, concepts and vocabulary, building on the excellent work at the previous phase	All children can and will achieve highly in an ambitious climate, with well-planned ambitious lessons, which attempt to increase cultural capital, address the vocabulary gap and increase their knowledge and use of academic language
8.	Be mapped out explicitly, through curriculum maps and knowledge organisers, so that knowledge is transparent for staff, pupils and parents	Learning should be clearly mapped and signposted to allow for pupils, teachers and parents to be well-prepared; to enable pre-learning and to ensure all know the end-goals
9.	Be carefully mapped to allow for interleaving and spaced practice so that key concepts, themes or areas of knowledge can be revisited but not repeated	It is important to create opportunities for knowledge to be recalled, skills practised and assessments to cumulatively test. Spaced practice and interleaving are supported by research to show they help pupils to build their knowledge and understanding. Simply repeating SATs/GCSE topics may lead to disaffection and a lack of interest
10.	Allow for flexibility to respond to the changing world and secure a developing understanding of the language of virtues in relation to learning and individual topics and subjects	Development of our virtues will help secure better concentration, self-discipline and engagement, as well as supporting our pupils to grow as people, engaged in the world around them
11	Allow for coherence, supporting links between subjects and topics through an interleaved approach which identifies, makes clear and returns to key concepts and ideas	Coherence within the curriculum will support learning and learners to make connections; the curriculum narrative will help learners to make sense of their learning journey and achieve highly

## 2.2 Type of Curriculum and Approach

The Nishkam School Trust curriculum is broadly based on the national curriculum in each phase and is aligned to the core aims:

### National Curriculum Aims

The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

The curriculum is mapped backwards from end point (Excellence) to ensure sufficient opportunities for children to excel are created. Where possible the curriculum is common across all schools within the Trust, supported by nationally bench-marked common assessments. Each subject has a carefully considered bank of substantive knowledge, disciplinary and substantive concepts, skills and specific subject terminology which are used by teachers and modelled to learners. The senior leadership team carefully consider the overall narrative, structure and coherence of the curriculum to support pupils making links and connections and using their prior learning to access new knowledge and understanding.

Subject hubs across the different phases help ensure progression within and between phases and schools as well as quality assuring resources, planning and assessments.

Moderation also plays a vital role in our NST Schools by ensuring -

- Teachers are making consistent and accurate judgements, which are quality assured
- Teacher judgements are fair and comparable to those made for other pupils
- There are opportunities for sharing good practice and professional development
- Moderation has an impact on improving pupil outcomes through identifying next steps

The following resources are used to support planning:

- Language of virtues framework
- The national curriculum in each phase
- The 2014 programmes of study from the DfE (Department for Education)
- White Rose Mathematics Hub curriculum
- Centre for Literacy in Primary Education's Power of Reading
- Examination board materials and associated products
- Skills, content and assessment styles included in the GCSE specifications
- Skills, content and assessment styles included in the A Level specifications
- Subject hubs and national subject associations (NATE, NATRE, Geographical Society, Historical Association, Association for Science Education for example)
- Master-classes and resources from local universities

### **Excellence for All**

High aspirations are a key component of school life at Nishkam. The curriculum is mapped backwards from Excellence, excellence statements for each subject are used to help create opportunities to allow pupils to excel and make informed choices about their education and careers. Teachers have a secure understanding of progress within each phase and work hard to accelerate progress, setting aspirational subject based targets to help pupils to secure breadth and depth of understanding and strive towards excellence.

Our aim is that pupils have sufficient information to make informed lifestyle choices from the earliest possible stage. They are therefore asked to consider and reflect on their personal journey, aspirations and potential career paths from the start of their journey at Nishkam, supporting them to make decisions as they move up through the key stages. Real-life simulations and role play are used in the Early Years setting to help explore different jobs and roles. Information about careers is provided through PSHCE lessons throughout each phase, complimented by careers days, online software, masterclasses, external speakers, regular visits from university graduates and lecturers, visits to universities and other places of interest and employment.

A 'CEIAG map' for Years 7-13 is published on the website to make it very clear to all stakeholders where and how pupils are receiving appropriate information, advice and guidance.

### **2.3 Technology and access to the Curriculum**

Technology is used to enhance and bring the curriculum to life, from iPads in the Early Years setting and beyond, to interactive whiteboards in every classroom. Other software such as MyMaths and Literacy based Accelerated Reader are used in conjunction with subject specific websites and assessment-based tools, to support low-stakes testing, such as quizzes and unit tests.

Educational platforms such as Edmodo, SAM Learning, Mymaths, Hegarty Maths, Accelerated Reader, Activate in Science, Read Theory, Spelling Frame, Phonics Bug, Mirodo, SATs Companion, IXL and Timestable Rockstars are used in the primary and secondary phases to support autonomy and encourage learning beyond the classroom.

The mapped curriculum appears on the website and Knowledge Organisers are provided at secondary phase to help pupils and parents immerse themselves in key vocabulary and concepts.

## 2.4 The 'Enriched' Curriculum

The enriched curriculum is designed to broaden pupil's experiences, expand their horizons and raise their aspirations for life, encouraging and embracing an attitude of 'life-long learning'.

The enriched curriculum in the primary phase includes a vast range of experiences pertinent to the ages of the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to partake in residential visits to widen their experiences in addition to educational day visits throughout the year to support their learning of particular curriculum areas.

All pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 have the option to choose from a range of 'After School Enrichment' sessions to further develop their skills in a range of areas/disciplines. Our curriculum enrichment offer can be found on each school's website.

In the secondary phase, we always look for opportunities both within and beyond the classroom to educate and inspire our children. We have focused on opportunities that, along with our virtues, will ready pupils for life beyond our school and equip them to take their place in wider society. For example, sixth form pupils experienced Further Education opportunities through collaborative ventures with Keble College, Oxford, Winchester University and the University of Birmingham – where pupils can also regularly attend subject specific 'master classes'. In preparation for life in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, pupils can also develop their cultural capital with visits to the Houses of Parliament, UCAS conventions, Price Waterhouse Cooper, National Geography Conference, various places of worship, including Coventry Cathedral and explore the arts through visits to the Tate Gallery, Globe Theatre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Other opportunities include being part of the Holocaust Beacon school programme, acting as ambassadors for civic engagement through projects such as Echo Eternal and Citizenship awards.

Music plays a prominent role across our schools, through discrete instrumental lessons, the Music curriculum and various performances, for example the multi-faith collaboration with the FOCOLARE group.

Participation with organisations such as NACE (National Association for Able Children in Engagement), SSAT and ArtsMark help to ensure our curriculum is relevant, engaging and sufficiently challenged for all our pupils.

### Independent Study

Nishkam learners are expected to build, reflect on and review their learning outside of the curriculum. They are supported in this by:

- Homework planners which include timetable information (Secondary phase)
- Curriculum maps which outline all key units and topics
- Knowledge Organisers which include key vocabulary, facts, concepts and content
- Online classrooms such as: Edmodo
- Online learning platforms such as Mymaths, Hegarty Maths, Accelerated Reader, Activate in Science, Read Theory, Spelling Frame, Timestable Rockstars, Phonics Bug, Mirodo, SATs Companion and IXL

## 2.5 Organisation and Phase Expectations:

### The Primary Phase Curriculum should:

- focus on developing the child as an active learner responsible for their learning and progression
- support development of literacy and oracy, nurturing confidence and fluency in reading as well as building vocabulary and cultural capital
- be broad and balanced; a knowledge and skillsrich curriculum which inspires and enthuses pupils and helps them to develop an understanding of the world around them, as well as a sense of awe and wonder
- ensure there are opportunities for pupils to practice effective retention of knowledge in their long-term memory. Retrieval practice involves recalling something you have learned in the past and bringing it back to mind; it is far more effective than more frequently used strategies such as re-reading. Retrieval practice strengthens memory and makes it easier to retrieve the information later. Retrieval practice needs to occur a reasonable time after the topic has been initially taught and needs ideally to take the form of testing knowledge, either by the teacher (for example questioning using flash cards, a test or getting pupils to write a concept map) or through pupil self-testing. It is important

that feedback on accuracy is provided either by the teacher or by the pupil checking accuracy for themselves.

- preserve the separate subject disciplines, introduced from EYFS setting to allow for depth and breadth of study and also to raise their status and the value perceived by both teachers and pupils
- be planned for progression through an interleaved curriculum which ensures content and skills are introduced, reviewed and consolidated, ensuring connections in learning are explicitly taught and reinforced
- secure coverage of the national curriculum and a solid foundation to support pupils' learning at secondary phase
- include a comprehensive programme to develop and practice faith and virtues, including regular prayer, service and celebration of religious events
- include quality CEIAG provision to help raise aspirations and expectations from year 7 onwards
- include a wide variety of extra-curricular events, trips and visits to build cultural capital and ensure our pupils remain global in outlook

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.

At Nishkam Schools the reception class lasts for one year and sets the standard for ensuring that all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The reception classes promote learning and teaching to ensure children are 'school ready' giving them a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right solid foundations on which to build on through school and life.

EYFS settings in Nishkam schools provide:

- Quality and consistency - *Ensuring every child makes progress and no child gets left behind.*
- A secure foundation – *Through planning based on the needs of the children and assessing and reviewing what has been learnt regularly.*
- Partnership working – *A positive relationship with parents to support the development of the children.*
- Equality of opportunity – *Ensuring all children are supported and included.*

Four guiding principles shape practice in our early years' settings. These are:

1. **Unique child** – every child is unique who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. **Positive relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. **Enabling environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual needs and help them to build their learning over time.
4. **Learning and development** – children learn and develop at different rates and ensuring the needs of those children with special educational needs and disabilities are met.

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS Statutory Framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We believe that play is essential for children's development. Through indoor and outdoor play, children learn to concentrate, investigate, develop their imagination, enhance language skills and develop their personal, social and emotional skills. Play is natural and spontaneous and is carefully nurtured within the Reception setting. Adults skilfully interact with children in their play to further support, extend, consolidate the learning. Developing a love of reading is essential in the EYFS years. In Nishkam schools making sure that children become engaged with reading from the beginning is therefore one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances whatever their socio-background. The children learn how to read using a synthetic systematic phonics programme whereby children are taught phonemes in a structured way and allowed time to consolidate previous learning. Children are then encouraged to read books that match their phonics ability.

In addition to reading, the EYFS settings have a language-rich environment in which adults talk with children throughout the day to develop their comprehension skills as well as enhancing their vocabulary. This would then support their ideas when they write.

The White Rose curriculum for maths is followed alongside the core objectives for EYFS mathematics. The maths mastery approach is also used alongside the objectives for Number and Shape, Space and Measures. Learners are given opportunities to problem solve, reason and engage in high quality mathematical talk within the continuous provision.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are central to planning experiences and opportunities in EYFS. Practitioners skilfully ensure playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically are developed through every strand of learning.

The curriculum is collaboratively planned and reviewed by EYFS practitioners. Termly moderation is carried out throughout the year to ensure teacher judgements are accurate and robust. Termly pupil progress allows for practitioners to discuss those children not on track on making the expected progress and plan to meet the needs of these pupils.

Assessment in reception is ongoing, every moment is an assessment opportunity to see what a child can and can't do. At the start of the year the Reception Baseline Assessment is completed alongside school-based assessments and the Wellcomm Screening (focus on communication and language). In the final term of the year the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. It is here that teachers make a judgement on each child using the Early Learning Goals within the 7 areas of learning. This information is shared with Year 1 teachers to support the transition from reception to Year 1.

### **Key Stage 1**

This phase is a two-year programme which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage and is mapped backwards from the end of Key Stage 2 to ensure progression.

From key stage 1 pupils are immersed in the separate subject disciplines so that they can develop their understanding of the wider world and themselves in relation to the world. There is a core focus on literacy and oracy, as well as vocabulary acquisition; pupils are supported with their reading skills through a comprehensive systematic synthetic programme for Phonics, taught in parallel with the reading content domain skills. Heavy emphasis is placed on pupil's ability to decode words, using a combination of phonics, etymology and morphology throughout this phase to support with reading and for application in writing.

Pupils are encouraged to read widely and for pleasure. Programmes such as Accelerated Reader and resources like the school library and library services' book banks support pupils' reading skills and development. All pupils have discreet reading lessons and are regularly heard reading aloud by their teachers. Pupils reading books are matched based on their phonics knowledge and ability to decode.

Pupils are grouped in broadly mixed attainment classes where they are taught all areas of the curriculum. There are some attainment groupings, (grouping with purpose), to support phonics, literacy and numeracy interventions to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

The curriculum includes a virtues-led programme; pupils are taught the foundations of ten key virtues which are later built upon in key stage 2. Pupils gain a further understanding of the virtues through prayer, assemblies, faith enrichment sessions, virtues lessons and the celebration of many different religious events.

Aspirations and high expectations are further raised through a vast range of after school enrichment clubs, specialist music and language teaching, visits to educational establishments linked to the curriculum, visits to places of worship and enrichment days.

**KS1 Curriculum Model – these are representative times as sessions may vary slightly in each school due to timetabling constraints.**

Subject	Approx. no. of lessons	Curriculum share
English ( <i>to include Reading and Phonics</i> )	10.75	35.8%
Maths	5	16.6%
Science	2	6.7%
Religious Education and Faith	2	6.7%
PSHCE – Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education ( <i>to include RHE</i> )	1.5	5%
Physical Education	2	6.7%
History	1	3.33%
Geography	1	3.33%
Computing	1	3.33%
Music ( <i>including Music Speaking &amp; listening session</i> )	1.25	4.15%
Art	1	3.33%
Design Technology	1	3.33%
Languages	0.5	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Key Stage 2**

This phase is a four-year programme, implementing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, to prepare them for the rigours of the KS2 SATs and beyond. The curriculum builds on the learning foundations from EYFs and Key Stage 1, ensuring that there is a clear progression of skills from one year group to the next. Progress and attainment are judged at previous milestones (Key Stage One and Early Years). In Year 6, children take National Curriculum assessments known as SATS. These are statutory assessments that test English reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and maths. Results for this are reported in July, alongside teacher assessments.

The curriculum is made up of eleven compulsory subjects. These are:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Design and Technology
- History
- Geography
- Art and Design
- Music
- Physical Education (PE), including swimming
- Computing
- Foreign Languages

In addition to this, our curriculum includes virtues, faith and personal development (V We teach this through our PSHCE and RE and Faith lessons. The teaching and development of virtues is woven across the curriculum and is an embedded part of practice, with staff and pupils regularly using the language of values and virtues.

**KS2 Curriculum Model - these are representative times as sessions may vary slightly in each school due to timetabling constraints.**

Subject	Approx. no. of lessons	Curriculum share
English ( <i>to include Reading lessons</i> )	10.25	34.17%
Maths	5	16.6%
Science	2	6.7%
Religious Education and Faith	2	6.7%
PSHCE – Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (to include RHE)	1.5	5%
Physical Education	2	6.7%
History	1	3.33%
Geography	1	3.33%
Computing	1	3.33%
Music ( <i>including Music Speaking &amp; listening session</i> )	1.25	4.15%
Art	1	3.33%
Design Technology	1	3.33%
Languages	1	3.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

### Key Stage 3

This phase is a comprehensive three-year programme, which ensures a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, to prepare them for the rigours of GCSE, A Level and beyond. Each academic discipline is focused on providing a knowledge rich curriculum, enhanced by extra-curricular trips, independent study, online learning and Knowledge Organisers, to build breadth, depth and cultural capital, as well as ensuring our pupils remain global in outlook.

The curriculum is mapped backwards from A Level or GCSE and builds on the excellent foundations from primary phase education, ensuring a continuation of the learning journey, which is challenging and engaging, rather than repetitive.

Pupils are grouped into broadly mixed attainment classes, with some attainment grouping to support interventions and facilitate better progress in maths and English, where pupils arrive with scores well below age related expectations and access to the curriculum is restricted through poor literacy and numeracy skills.

The provision ensures sufficient focus on the core curriculum to enable high levels of communication, literacy and numeracy, which are the foundations to success in all aspects of the curriculum.

The curriculum also includes a comprehensive ) PSHCE programme to develop and practice faith and virtues, through regular prayer, *seva*, assemblies, collective worship, and the celebration of religious events, as well as nurturing autonomy and developing leadership skills.

Aspirations and high expectations are raised through a quality CEIAG (Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance) provision and a rich enrichment programme.

Assessments include regular low-stakes testing and higher stakes termly Key Assessments Tasks, which are cumulative in nature and build towards a formal reported end of year examination. Progress is measured from prior attainment and baseline assessments. All assessments measure progress in the taught curriculum and are created with the next phase of learning, GCSE assessment objectives, in mind.

Although there is no formal reporting at the end of KS3, core subjects use nationally benchmarked GL common assessments throughout the key stage to ascertain pupils' attainment and progress, along with GCSE preparatory papers at the end of Y9. .

### KS3 Curriculum Map

Subject	Number of lessons (55 minutes each)	Curriculum Share %
English/Reading	5	16.5
Maths	5	16.5
Science	4	13
RS	2	7
PHSCE	1	3
History	2	7
Geography	2	7
MFL (inc. Punjabi)	2	7
PE	2	7
Computer Science	1	3
Art	2	7
Music	1	3
DT	1	3
	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

### Key Stage 4

This is a two-year programme focused on covering the curriculum content and securing the GCSE assessment objectives for each subject chosen.

All students sit core GCSE examinations in English, English Literature, maths, triple science or combined trilogy (two science awards), all of which form part of the English Baccalaureate (EBACC), and Religious Studies (which is not part of the EBACC). The curriculum includes non-examined PE lessons and students can choose another three exam courses from a variety of different subjects including:

Humanities:	Geography, History (EBACC)
Modern Foreign Languages:	French, Spanish or Punjabi (EBACC)
Social Sciences:	Business Studies, Psychology
Arts:	Music, Art
Technology:	Computer Science (EBACC), Food Technology
Applied Courses:	Health & Social Care, Leisure, Sport

The vast majority of students select the suite of subjects which make up EBACC but this is not mandatory. Whilst the Trust believes that the EBACC encapsulates a broad and balanced curriculum, it also supports its students in selecting the courses most pertinent to them and their future career aspirations.

### KS4 Curriculum Map

Subject	Number of lessons (55 minutes each)	Curriculum Share %
English	5	16.5
Maths	4	13
Biology	3	10
Physics	3	10
Chemistry	3	10
RS	2	7

PE	1	3.33
Option 1	3	10
Option 2	3	10
Option 3	3	10
	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

### Key Stage 5

There is a wide range of academic A Level courses available to study at Key Stage 5, along with three Applied courses. All students are expected to follow three A-Levels (with a potential route of opting for a fourth if prior attainment suggests this is manageable) or a hybrid mix of A Level and Applied courses.

The curriculum also includes a comprehensive PSHCE and Enrichment programme. Aspirations and high expectations are nurtured through a quality CEIAG provision that is well developed and based on the Gatsby principles, with universities, employees, summer schools and work experience all featuring within the programme. Nearly all students leave the Sixth Form having chosen to further their education at university. In some instances, students may opt for an apprenticeship; visits to the 'Skills Show' and 'WhatCareerLive', amongst other key events, provide students with the information necessary to make informed decisions on where their journeys, post Nishkam, will lead. All Year 12s embark on mandatory work experience in the final two weeks of Summer term and are also allowed the opportunity to develop work experience links during their enrichment time on Wednesday afternoons.

Sixth formers are also able to develop and practice faith and virtues through A Level Religious Studies, regular prayer, seva, assemblies, collective worship, the celebration of religious events, as well as working within a culture that nurtures autonomy and a vision focussed on creating humans that will serve humanity well.

Assessments include regular low-stakes testing and termly Key Assessment Tasks, alongside summative high stakes testing in the form of mock examinations. Progress is measured from the last key marker (e.g., mock examination outcomes against Key Stage 4 outcomes). In Year 12, mock examinations are held at the end of the academic year and provide a summative view on student progress against their KS4 starting point. In Year 13, there are two mock examination windows, which enable close scrutiny of what is known and what is not yet known, with personalised learning plans, precision teaching and other interventions being utilised to close any gaps in skills and/or knowledge.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is offered to students in Year 12, alongside their other courses. For some it provides a boost to their university applications, whilst for others it is a way of developing their research and analytical skills in a practical manner, which a number of Russell Group universities acknowledge in the form of a reduced tariff offer. The EPQ is launched in February of each year in partnership with the University of Southampton, with submission taking place the following May. The EPQ represents 50% of an A level in UCAS points, and for performance measures, equates to 0.3 of an A level qualification.

Student Leadership is at the core of our Sixth Form, with a new Leadership Team appointed each Christmas for a one-year placement. The Sixth Form Leadership Team conducts several whole school roles working in the key areas of; peer mentoring, literacy, student voice, learning consultation and SEVA. The students interested in these positions are invited to formally apply, with follow up interviews conducted by members of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) team. Student Leadership meet weekly with the Head of Year to review their intended actions, and support and liaise with staff throughout the school.

Subjects available to study at A level:

English Literature	Maths	Sociology
History	Further Maths	Psychology
Geography	Biology	Business
Religious Studies	Chemistry	Economics
Punjabi	Physics	

Subjects available to study at Applied level:

- Applied Science
- Applied IT
- Applied Health and Social Care

A key focus moving forward is to nurture and expect significant independent study from our sixth formers. We believe that this a major factor in success A Level students. The study room has been built for Sixth Form students only and provides a quiet venue for students to complete their research and further wider reading. Students are required to complete a minimum number of study room sessions per week. Attendance to these sessions is monitored and following high stakes testing, additional study sessions can be allocated in instances where students are not making the required progress. We will also continue to review the balance between directed learning in the classroom and independent learning

### KS5 Curriculum Map

Subject	Number of lessons (55 minutes each)	Curriculum Share %
Option 1	6	20
Option 2	6	20
Option 3	6	20
Independent Study	6	20
Enrichment	1	3
PSCHE	1	3
Study Room	5	14
	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3. Assessment (How is impact measured)?

#### 3.1 Principles (from NST Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy)

Quality assessment relies on the fact that the curriculum is thoroughly understood, appropriately constructed and planned; judicious testing will provide information about a pupil's journey through the curriculum and support teachers to tailor teaching, interventions, schemes of work and future assessments.

- Assessments therefore need to measure progress through the taught curriculum
- Where possible, assessments are common across a cohort and between Nishkam schools
- Assessments need to build to cumulative examinations at the end of a year, so that pupils are able to recall knowledge, facts, concepts, practise and apply skills from across the curriculum they have been taught, rather than simply the last unit
- Progress is measured from prior attainment; the trajectory of progress goes from milestone to milestone: EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) to KS1, KS1 to KS2, KS2 to KS4, KS4 to KS5
- Common assessments, including nationally benchmarked assessments in core subjects (English, maths and science), are used to provide an indication of progress and attainment in between the aforementioned milestones. Common assessments are also reviewed diagnostically to inform planning, teaching and future assessments, where relevant.

**Dame Alison Peacock:** 'There are three key pillars of education: pedagogy, curriculum and assessment...Great assessment enables both children and teachers to understand what has been learnt and identifies specific areas where misconceptions have occurred or where more practice is needed. Assessment that is used formatively, actively informs pedagogy.'

## Effective Assessment contains the following elements:

- ✓ Explicit Teaching (secure subject knowledge)
- ✓ Success Criteria
- ✓ Deliberate Practice
- ✓ Teaching to the test
- ✓ Regular low-stakes assessments
- ✓ Interleaved curriculum; cumulative testing

### 3.2 Assessment Practice

#### 1) Marking and Feedback

- **Regular immediate feedback:** whole class Q&A, quizzes, modelling and reframing responses (lesson by lesson)
- **Verbal feedback:** learning dialogues, personalised feedback, follow up to learners' comments (lessons)
- **Whole group feedback:** deal with errors, misconceptions, misunderstanding, success criteria missed (daily)
- **Written feedback:** as per the NST 'Marking, Feedback and Presentation' policy.(weekly/fortnightly)
- **Reported attainment:** Nishkam Threshold/KS threshold/GCSE/A Level grade (termly)
- **Reported progress and attainment:** NST Threshold/KS SATs Score/GCSE/A Level Grade, raw score, %, category, progress judgement (annually)

#### 2) Testing

- **Frequent low stakes testing** to check prior learning, link learning, establish errors, misconceptions (quizzes, q&a sessions, multiple-choice – within lessons) in all phases
- **End of unit summative testing** (written paper, practical assessment, essay – usually stand alone, end of scheme of learning, outcomes diagnostically used in inform planning)
- Common assessments (NTS) for Reading and Maths in Primary Phase each term in every year group
- Writing assessments in Primary phase are after each unit of work has been taught
- **Formal reported assessments** (examination style, covering assessment foci or objectives, cumulative, SATs and or Key Assessment Tasks)
- **Formal high stakes, reported examinations** (examination style, replicating next external examination style, cumulative, high stake, externally reported - annual)
- **Baseline testing** (start of key stage – initial measure from which to measure progress. Internal use only)

### Nishkam School Trust Assessment Map

Annual	Review against baseline/towards targets	End of Year Examinations	Report to all stakeholders (high stakes accountability)
Interim	Growth end of unit assessments	Termly assessments/ benchmarked	Termly report on achievement
Weekly	Pre-teaching - check prior learning		
Daily	Plenary/Connecting/Reviewing Learning		
Hourly	Hinge-point questions		
	Instructional Guidance (formative)	Describing Individuals (summative)	Institutional accountability (summative)

## Low stakes vs high stakes assessments

**Testing is the most secure way of measuring a student's progress.** A curriculum planned well contains a variety of different assessments to measure learner's progress through the curriculum. Assessments can diagnose what learners can and can't do and therefore, crucially, informs future planning and teaching. The cycle between assessment, planning and teaching is a crucial component in ensuring effective lessons and learning. Learners are part of this process and will be encouraged to respond to feedback. Learners are also exposed to test papers before external testing for example in Y5 and Y6, they will sit regular SATs papers and SATs style questions under test conditions and GCSE style papers and questions in Y9 and beyond to help practice and develop examination skills.

Nishkam Teachers should:

- have a **secure overview** of the starting points (including prior attainment), progress and context of all pupils
- ensure marking is **primarily formative** using the school model to identify what has been achieved - and support with next steps
- regularly give **feedback**; pupils should receive regular written and verbal feedback to help them reflect on and understand their achievements and areas to work on
- engage in **learning dialogues** with pupils as it is crucial to involve learners in their own learning and development
- allow and build in time for pupils to respond to feedback given
- deliver, mark and feedback on a **key assessment task** once per term to help the student and teacher gauge what has and has not been learnt and understood. The nature and type of assessment will be dependent on the subject and place within the curriculum plan
- implement the **marking codes** as well as the school's **feedback model** in all lessons

## Animal dissection in school

Nishkam Schools, as a part of the Trust vision and ethos, are committed to working towards the compassionate welfare of the planet. As a part of this, pupils do not participate in animal dissection in any lessons. Pupils are provided with alternative methods to ensure that they continue to meet all elements of the curriculum without the need to complete experiments on animals.

## 4. Appendix

### Research and Reading:

- Mary Myatt: The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to Coherence
- Summer Turner: Secondary Curriculum and Design
- Martin Robinson: Trivium 21c
- Michael Young: Knowledge and the Future School: Curriculum and Social Justice
- Ed Hirsch: Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories
- Ofsted: Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years?

## 5. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.