

Research Appendix

A range of government based research over time has suggested that a 2-year Key Stage 3 might offer benefits to a secondary framework, if applied judiciously within the context.

- Sutton Trust (Allen & Thompson 2016): Suggests that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds may be discouraged from taking academic subjects:
This is why we design our curriculum model to ensure a breadth of choice for all students ensuring that PP students are not disadvantaged. Without the 4th choice staggered, our research tells us that many students would not choose to complete the full EBacc entitlement.
- Berliner (2011) and UK EPI Report (2017): Suggest that test pressure in the US is leading to diminishing study of the Arts. This is supported by the findings of a UK EPI report (Sept 2017) Summary: Entries to arts subjects by KS4 cohorts have declined over the past couple of years, with the 2016 entry rate falling to the lowest of the decade:
 - the average number of arts entries per pupil fell from 0.80 in 2013 to 0.70 in 2016.
 - the proportion of pupils taking at least one arts subject declined from 57.1 per cent in 2014 to 53.5 per cent in 2016.
 - Pupils who enter the EBacc are less likely to take at least one arts subject than those who do not. In 2016, this gap stood at 7.3 percentage points (56.5 per cent for pupils who do not enter the EBacc, compared with 49.2 per cent for those who do).

This is not the case at Heathfield with 80-85% of students opting for an Arts based subject at GCSE, the model is designed to ensure students are able to continue with the breadth that enables more practical subjects which require time outside the taught curriculum to be followed alongside a full EBacc compliment to equal success.

3. The Ofsted report on “Key Stage 3: the wasted years?” in 2015 warned of a lack of pace, challenge in Key Stage 3 where insufficient focus on transition, staffing and challenge meant students were allowed to drift and underachieve. Recommendations stated leaders should:
 - make Key Stage 3 a higher priority in all aspects of school planning and evaluation
 - ensure that not only is the curriculum offer at Key Stage 3 broad and balanced, but that teaching is of high quality and prepares pupils for more challenging subsequent study.
 - ensure transition from Key Stage 2 focuses as much on academic needs as pastoral.
 - create better cross-phase partnerships with primary schools to build on prior knowledge.
 - ensure robust systems and procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils’ progress.
 - focus on the needs of disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 3, including the ablest, in order to close the achievement gap as quickly as possible
 - evaluate the quality and effectiveness of homework in Key Stage 3.
 - guarantee that pupils have access to timely and high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance from Year 8 onwards
 - have literacy and numeracy strategies that build on prior attainment in Key Stage 2.
4. The expert panel review in 2011, documented in ‘The Framework for the National Curriculum’, recommended a two-year KS3. The expert panel reviewed both models for KS3/KS4 (the 3 year/2 year and the 2 year/3 year models) and identified benefits and issues for both. Overall, the expert panel recommended a three-year KS4. The expert panel believed a three-year KS4 would allow students to study a broader curriculum and avoid “premature subject choices that might disadvantage students later”.

We track the options and the destinations of students post 16 to ensure that the choices maintain aspirational options for all students. Maintaining breadth at KS4 has enabled us to maintain breadth at KS5 and allow students a fuller choice and therefore more viability in 16-19 courses.

5. The DfES report 'A condensed Key Stage 3: Designing a flexible curriculum (2006 update)' also outlines further benefits including:

- Reviewing Key Stage 3 means any unnecessary repetition of Key Stage 2 can be removed
- Allowing a broader choice of subjects provided for GCSE options
- Teaching GCSEs over three years allows for greater enrichment (depth) to be built in.

6. Review of Option Choices at Heathfield

Despite the funding for Specialist Performing Arts Status being removed in 2011 the numbers choosing to study Arts based subjects through the curriculum model has remained high, with typically 80% of students studying 1 or 2 Arts based subjects.

2019 - 85% opted for at least one Arts based subject (Art, Drama, Media, Music, Photography)

2019 - Ebacc Entry at Year 11 was 65%

2018 - 80% opted for at least one Arts based subject (Art, Drama, Media, Music, Photography)

2018 - Ebacc Entry at Year 11 was 34% (Yr 9 Languages Legacy GCSE's were not included)

2017 - 80% opted for at least one Arts based subject (Art, Drama, Media, Music, Photography)

2017 - Ebacc Entry at Year 11 was 70%

In ALL Key Stage 4 year groups 50% study GCSE Technology.

Over time parents and students have shown a preference for broader range over longer rather than narrower over shorter at KS4

7. Mental Health and Resilience

Repeated NHS Studies of young people in this locality show **mental health, anxiety and self esteem to be the greatest Health concerns. It was also referenced in East Sussex Mark Your Mark student voice surveys and Youth Parliament engagement action.** Repeated studies show that experience of academic success enhances self esteem and mental health:

- **Martin & Marsh (2011), Pinxten et al (2013) Mujijs (1997)** quote self belief as significantly related to attainment. Including the strong claim that the effect and impact of achievement on belief is the key to promoting positive self belief.
- **Tough (2012)** suggests that resilience (academic resilience) along with optimism and self control can help explain why some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do better in terms of educational outcomes and life outcomes than others from the same backgrounds
- **Hill et al (2007)** seem to show that ensuring pupils achieve academically, or in areas such as arts and sports make a difference in developing resilience.
- **Muijs (1997) Marsh et al (2011)** academic achievement itself can lead to positive socio-emotional outcomes for pupils e.g enhanced self concept and attitudes to learning.

Under the current examination specifications, a year 11 student sitting all their exams in 4 options and core in the same year would experience up to 30 exams in one summer.

Structuring KS4 differently, this is alleviated and ensures students stay healthy and balanced whilst maintaining a breadth of curriculum which creates greater options for KS5. Staggering the GCSE entries over the 3 years, running two-year courses alongside three-year ones reduces workload and stress, as shown repeatedly through student voice and parental feedback. This is particularly relevant with the removal of coursework and modular exams which previously helped to balance the pressure.

The management of this relies on a strong culture of learning, enabling appropriate progress to be made through KS3 and KS4, it also relies on strong pastoral support, enabled through training and investment in staffing. These are supporting elements to the curriculum model leading to strong student voice that they feel less stressed in Year 11 and have confidence in their ability to succeed based on their experiences of successful outcomes.