

English Martyrs' Catholic School
Extended Project Curriculum Statement

Key message /Overall theme of the Extended Project Curriculum

In the spirit of the specification, the EPQ is available to all students. High expectations are held for all and so equal opportunities exist for all learners. Students are challenged to produce work of the highest quality with the intention of preparing lifelong independent learners. The Project aims to inspire, deepen knowledge and widen perspectives. Moreover, Level 3 Extended Projects aim to support learners with the transition to Higher Education and/or into the world of work. A successful student will be one who can identify their project, produce an effective design and plan. They are highly organised, independent and respond effectively to feedback. They use a wide range of resources and they can review them critically. All students should be able to evaluate their performance and communicate what they have achieved. Ultimately a successful student will show deep and extensive knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions and their project outcome. They will gain enthusiasm and be equipped for further study. A student will be able pursue relevant careers connected with a successful EPQ. An aspiring doctor may, for example, complete their project on stem cell research, the ethics of privatising of the NHS etc.

Why does the Extended Project follow the Pearson Edexcel specification?

Students will study relevant content and acquire relevant knowledge. There is a strong emphasis on developing the tools needed to be lifelong independent learners. The specification has been chosen because it offers progression. Students select a project topic which may build on existing knowledge gained from lower Key Stages e.g. in History. They may also expand knowledge in one of their current A Levels or investigate an area that current specifications do not cover. It develops e-confident learners who can apply relevant technologies in their studies e.g. online research. Students can use their learning experiences to choose relevant courses in further education to support their personal aspirations for further education and/or career development. Ultimately the specification equips all students with essential knowledge of how to study and succeed independently in the future.

How does the Extended Project Department implement the curriculum?

Teaching in EPQ aims to give every child the chance to be excellent through encouraging the development of a growth mind set. Teaching aims to use language which promotes challenge as something which is positive in all. Teaching involves strong knowledge of the project outcome e.g. how to plan, research and write a dissertation. This leads to a greater impact on students' learning e.g. by helping to identify and correct misconceptions. Therefore, the quality of instruction is important which is demonstrated through effective questioning –e.g. acknowledging correct answers (in a business like fashion), identify incorrect answers swiftly, prompting, giving girls and shy pupils chance to answer questions. Teaching involves providing challenge and having high expectations of all students all of the time irrespective of their starting points so they experience a productive struggle. Therefore, adapting teaching is a priority i.e. providing focused support for pupils who are not making progress rather than differentiating by task. In other words students are given the same task yet teacher responses are different allowing all to reach and go beyond expectation. Teaching involves explanation in EPQ. Teachers actively present materials e.g. asking questions and giving feedback. High quality teacher talk is a feature of EPQ lessons to promote excellence and growth but there is also a strong emphasis on facilitating, providing guidance and most importantly providing feedback on the progression of the project. Students are therefore encouraged to be independent at all times leading their own learning within a given framework. This involves regular one-to-one meetings with students to review progress and provide further guidance. Explanation also recognises the limitations of STM so lessons cover small chunks of information to help with transfer from STM to LTM. Teaching in EPQ also involves modelling of worked examples e.g. showing and working with exemplars. This is accompanied by good questioning and thorough feedback.

A sequential approach

The curriculum in EPQ builds on knowledge and skills developed in KS3 and 4. In Year 12, the Project is delivered in two lessons per week. One is allocated to the development of core knowledge the other to the Project Outcome itself.

For 6 weeks students participate in research, debating, note taking and presentation activities. They also gain knowledge of ethical and philosophical perspectives.

Running concurrently with these lessons are dedicated learning hours to the writing and development of either an Investigation, Performance or a Dissertation the latter of which being the most popular.

Projects are submitted in the Autumn Term of Year 13. Students then deliver a 10 minute presentation detailing their work.

What is the impact of the Extended Project curriculum?

A student of EPQ will feel like they have the opportunity to pursue further education and a career perhaps in their area of interest. They will have the opportunity to build on knowledge acquired in the previous Key Stages. The subject of EPQ contributes to the Catholic Ethos of the school by: 1) Focusing on the total learning experience of the child and improving their lives for the better. 2) It teaches young people through knowledge of different theoretical approaches that an issue may be explained through different viewpoints each of which deserves respect. In the Discussion section of the Dissertation, students must provide a balanced perspective considering not only their point of view but also counterarguments. Therefore EPQ promotes acceptance and tolerance. 3) All students can strive for and achieve their full potential by writing a Project with the expectation of producing work of undergraduate quality. 4) Fundamentally, the curriculum in EPQ aims to inspire, enable students to develop deep learning and prepare them for the world of work and further education.

What is the focus for change?

The results analysis after public examinations will focus on areas requiring changes. Amendments are made to schemes of work based on this.