

The Thomas Telford Template

(last revised September 2016)

Thomas Telford School has been at the forefront of educational developments nationally, by pioneering radical ways of organising and delivering education since its opening in 1991. A set of key characteristics have been continually developed and refined to create a highly effective template for organisation and a value system that underpins a very student-centred ethos. This template produces outstanding standards and young people who are succeeding at all levels in industry and commerce in local, national and international arenas.

Building Design Rationale

The designs of Walsall, Sandwell and Madeley academies have benefited from these developments, and each building improves as a result of the lessons learnt from the previous project. The buildings share the same educational rationale.

Key Characteristics in the Family of Schools

Academies that have adopted the template, where necessary have customised some characteristics to accommodate the unique features of the community of learners they serve. Although we believe that some of the characteristics are of primary importance, we would wish to stress that it is their combination that creates a potent chemistry for highly effective education.

The primary characteristics are:

Organisation

- Two-hour 40 minutes taught sessions with a creative use of curriculum time to provide a more positive learning for students
- An expanded session 3 programme providing a flexible learning programme for each student outside of the normal school day to complement the curriculum provision, deliver key curricular experiences and enrichment activities.
- All ability intake provides a stable base for planning and resource preparation
- Vertical tutor groups provide supportive structure for students
- Breakfast, lunch and tea on site avoids problems in the community and ensures punctual return to afternoon Session
- Rolling programme for Lunch and Break reduces pressure on management and accommodation

Management

- Flat management structure places top practitioners in the classroom and alongside subject staff
- Integrated pastoral management ensures a holistic approach

Values

- Total concentration on what is best for the children
- An achievement culture that recognises and celebrates what young people can do using all means possible, for example weekly broadcasts, star students profile, achievement evenings, achievement assemblies etc.
- Simple rule that teachers should be able to teach and children should be able to learn
- Parental partnership and active involvement

Curriculum

- Modular delivery provides focus for planning, assessment and reporting
- Online curriculum provides consistency, clear foundation for lesson planning and resources
- Personalised curriculum which allows for independent learning
- Focus on extra-curricular activities in sports and performing arts
- Regular reporting to parents
- Study programmes for ten GCSE and vocational subjects
- Greater prospects of employability opportunities with technical study programmes available to students who find this pathway more appropriate
- Provision of Sixth Form study routines which prepares students for University life emphasising independent learning opportunities
- Three A level students will be given additional timetabled teaching time to prepare for the new linear A levels in Session 3
- Ebacc alongside more flexible technical and BTEC programmes will be provided to meet the range of ability and aspirations of the students
- Detailed attention is given to Progress Levels with enhanced personalised programmes provided to ensure performance irrespective of ability is maximised
- Every student to receive a “TTS passport” to ensure they:
 - Go to university, gain an apprenticeship or employment
 - Have a residential experience
 - Participate in a democratic election procedure
 - Succeed in an enrichment activity
 - Visit a place of worship
 - Experience a cultural event
 - Participate in charity work
 - Have access to comprehensive careers advice service
 - Have a mock interview and attend work experience
 - Participate in Business Enterprise
 - Have a discussion with the Head

Incentives, Terms and Conditions

- Performance Related Pay to recognise exceptional outcomes in examinations
- Payment for covering sessions to maintain standards and security for students
- Over and above payments to recognise significant commitment to the students outside of normal hours or job role
- Freedom secured from CTC/Academy contracts for employees
- One day per week for planning, preparation and marking
- Plan for succession management at all levels to enhance and create professional development opportunities and career progression

The secondary characteristics are:

Business Approach

- Governance through sponsors provides business management focus
- Self-financing catering service

Building

- Site security included in design
- No Staff Room provision places staff working alongside students
- Curriculum-based facilities
- Leading edge ICT provision
- Interactive website and archived video

Standards

- Staff smartly dressed to set the tone for students
- School uniform 11-16 that fosters pride and eradicates social inadequacy
- Sixth Form business dress which fosters adult attitudes and creates a professional outlook

Outward Facing

- Commitment to educational advancement by sharing the results of research and development with the wider education community
- Specific outreach projects achieving tangible gains for local schools
- Working with but independent from Local Authority
- Mutual support gained from the Thomas Telford family of schools
- Teacher training programmes that provide a supply of well-trained teachers to the family of schools and the West Midlands

Personnel

- Direct employment of staff i.e. catering, cleaning, grounds, security
- Finance Director with a brief for transport, site, catering and cleaning
- Student Support Officer role to provide dedicated service for students and reduce time-consuming pastoral demands on senior leaders
- Fabric Manager to ensure high quality maintenance and conditions
- Expert Display Technician to ensure high quality display
- Industrial consultants to manage Careers and Work Experience

