

CURRICULUM POLICY

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MONITORING AND REVIEW

Staff Responsible	Deputy Head (Academic) and Head of Prep
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	October 2023
Date of Next Review	October 2024

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

AIMS

This policy sets out to ensure St Mary's School meets its wider aims including:

- A stimulating, well-balanced education which will challenge and excite our students, encouraging them to strive for excellence and leading to the acquisition of skills, independence, self-discipline and academic success
- A framework of support and challenge which enables all our students to achieve their individual potential and to develop personal confidence and self-esteem
- A full range of opportunities which will enable our students, as responsible citizens, to take their place in the world with poise and assurance

WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Regulations 2014
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook, September 2023.
- DfE's framework guidance for Character Education 2019.

RELATED INTERNAL POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Curriculum Plan
- Teaching, Marking and Assessment Policy
- Co-Curricular Policy
- SEND Policy
- EAL Policy
- More Able Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is designed to take into consideration the interests, ages, aptitudes and needs of all students, including those who have an EHC plan. The curriculum enables all students to have the opportunity to learn and make excellent personal progress. The curriculum is grounded within fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Students are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within British society.

Broad

The curriculum is broadly based, each student is given access to a wide array of experiences, including: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, spiritual, physical, Aesthetic and creative.

Balanced

The weighting of each element of learning and experience is carefully considered and give an appropriate weighting. All students acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

Challenging

The curriculum is stretching for all students and allows them to develop mastery of concepts and skills. This includes students who are below and above compulsory school age, which is appropriate to their educational needs.

Adaptive and Accessible

The curriculum is designed to challenge and support all students so that they meet high expectations and make progress. Key to this is teachers knowing their students' needs and using this knowledge to adapt their planning, teaching and assessment to enable all students to master concepts and skills, gain self-confidence and self-esteem. Adaptive teaching is best achieved through a clear identification of learning intentions, provision of support when needed and effective use of formative assessment.

Continuous

The curriculum is mapped to ensure that students continue to build on skills, independence, knowledge and experience and minimise needless repetition. This is important across all key stages including the movement between KS2 and KS3 which is a vital element of the School's Transition.

CURRICULUM PLAN

The curriculum plan is reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the students. The current Curriculum Plan is available on request.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

Teaching time each week: 33 hours 45 minutes

The curriculum that we teach in the Early Years classes meets the requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes, 2023. We provide a programme of activities for students in Early Years which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.

Assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child from Reception upwards. At the end of a student's Reception year, the teacher completes an Early Years Profile.

The three 'prime' areas:

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

The four 'specific' areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

KEY STAGE 1

Subjects

Core	Core
English	Computing
Mathematics	Topic (History and Geography)
Science	Music
Physical Education	Art
PSHCEE	French
Religious Studies	CORI

KEY STAGE 2

Subjects

Core	Core
English	Computing
Mathematics	History
Science	Geography
Physical Education	Art
PSHCEE	Spanish Year 5 & 6 only
French	Design Technology
Religious Studies	Music
Thinking Skills Year 5 only	CORI
Drama Year 5 & 6 only	

KEY STAGE 3

Subjects

Core	
English	Computer Science
Mathematics	History
Science	Geography
Physical Education	Art
PSHCEE (including Careers)	Food Technology
Careers	Drama
French	Music
Religious Studies	Textiles
Option	
German (in Year 8 and 9)	Spanish (in Year 8 and 9)

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

All students are given the opportunity to study a Modern Foreign Language. In Year 7 the students study French. In Year 8 they add either German or Spanish to their Languages curriculum and in Year 10 they are encouraged to study at least one of these languages at GCSE. In some cases students will not study a Modern Foreign Language which allows the student to access additional supports in keeping with their SEN requirements as identified in their Provision Passport. During this time they will receive extra support in core skills such as literacy. For more information on support for students on a reduced curriculum please refer to the SEND Policy. Some students elect to take optional language subjects in addition to the normal curriculum (e.g. Polish), the School will support these where possible

KEY STAGE 4

Subjects

* Denotes adapted pathway adapted to students needs

Core	Option
English Language and Literature (GCSE)	Computer Science (GCSE)
Mathematics (IGCSE)	History (IGCSE)
Science (GCSE)	Geography (GCSE)
*English Language (Functional Skills)	Art and Design(GCSE)
*Mathematics (Entry Level Certificate)	Food Preparation and Nutrition (GCSE)
At least one MFL	Drama (GCSE)
Physical Education (Core)	Music (GCSE)
PSHCEE	Textiles (GCSE)
Careers	French (GCSE)
	German (GCSE)
	Spanish (GCSE)
	Business (GCSE)
	ICT (IGCSE)
	Religious Studies (GCSE)
	Physical Education (GCSE)
	Further Mathematics (GCSE)
	Media (GCSE)
	Dance

Science GCSE

Science consists of two pathways at GCSE: Combined and Separate. Combined Science allows students to study all three sciences and receive two combined GCSE grades to reflect their work. Separate Science goes into greater detail in each Science and students will achieve three separate GCSE grades to reflect the outcomes achieved in each discipline.

Option System

Students will take part in all core subjects and will additionally select three optional subjects at GCSE level. The School expects the majority of students to select at least one MFL subject. Students will receive support and guidance from the School to help them select appropriate options.

The School aims to allow all students to secure their preferred option choices but sadly this is not always possible and as a result some students are asked to select 'reserve' choices.

Further Mathematics

Further Mathematics is taught as part of the options subjects and students can elect to take the examination.

KEY STAGE 5

Sixth Form curriculum consists of more than just academic study and we offer a programme of activities for students which is appropriate to their needs. In addition to the A Level lessons, there are a number of lessons and activities that the students have in order to enrich their education and give them valuable experiences and preparation for independent adult life.

Subjects

Core	Option
Physical Education (Core)	English Literature
PSHCEE	Mathematics
Enrichment	Further Mathematics
	Biology
	Chemistry
	Physics
	Dance
	ICT
	Computer Science
	Religious Studies
	History
	Geography
	Economics
	French
	German
	Spanish
	Fine Art
	Food Science and Nutrition
	Drama and Theatre
	Media Studies
	Music
	Government and Politics
	Psychology
	Business
	Physical Education
	Sociology
	Textile and Design
	History of Art
	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Option System

Students may pick one of three pathways for A Level study:

- Four A Levels (or five if taking Further Mathematics)
- Three A Levels and an EPQ
- Three A Levels
- A mix of AS Levels, A Levels and EPQ

Subjects at A Level have entry requirements that vary between subjects. These include performance at GCSE in related subjects and prior study.

The School aims to allow all students to secure their preferred option choices but this is not always possible and as a result students are asked to select 'reserve' choices.

CAREERS CURRICULUM

Careers guidance is an essential part of the School curriculum and more information can be seen in the Careers Policy available on request. The careers curriculum ensures that all Senior House students have timely access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner; enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and helps to encourage them to 'know themselves' and fulfil their potential.

PSHCEE CURRICULUM

The curriculum incorporates Personal, Social, Health (Physical and Mental), and Economic Education for all students. The PSHCEE course reflects the School's aims and ethos and encourages respect for all pupils. Citizenship Education is incorporated within the delivery of PSHCEE, individual subjects and co-curricular activities and pays particular regard to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 which are as follows: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. The curriculum is also designed to develop in every young person the values, skills and behaviours they need to get on in life and function as adult citizens within British Society, using the DfE's framework guidance for Character Education 2019.

For more information please see the PSHCEE Policy and Scheme of Work, which is available on request.

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE)

The School provides RSE in the PSHCEE curriculum for all students, in which students are encouraged and guided by moral principles. A full statement of the School's RSE Policy is available to parents on the School website. All students study the biological aspects of human reproduction as a compulsory part of their Science curriculum.

SPRITUAL MORAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is included within the curriculum at all Key Stages. All staff are asked to consider how students' learning in their subject area enables them to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. The SMSC dimension is particularly extended in PSHCEE and Religious Studies and multicultural themes are explored in many subject areas. For more information on this please see the SMSC – RS policy and the SMSC – British Values policy, both of which are available on request.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies is compulsory for all students up to the end of Key Stage 3. Any request to withdraw a student from the Religious Studies programme or related activities must be made to the Headmistress in writing.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The School has been designated by statutory instrument as having a particular religious character: Anglican. Prospective parents are informed of the School's designated religious status.

All students are expected to take part in collective worship. The School has a programme of collective worship involving whole-school assemblies and smaller group assemblies.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the School is forbidden. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and assemblies. These are always presented in a balanced way, in keeping with fundamental British values.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE) AND GAMES

All students (including the Sixth Form) are expected to take part in the School's Physical Education and Games programme. Students can only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the School.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The School has a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. For more information, please see the Co-curricular Policy.

SENIOR HOUSE ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

Senior House planning takes place in three phases.

The first stage is the long-term planning where the entire curriculum map is reviewed and subject offerings and time are allocated. This happens annually and is completed by the Headmistress and the Deputy Head (Academic) in consultation with the SLT and Heads of Department.

The second phase is the medium-term planning. Each Head of Department is responsible for overseeing an effective programme of study appropriate to the ages and needs of the students. Teachers at all levels share responsibility for conducting medium term planning for the delivery of curriculum content by creating schemes of work. Departments should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their schemes of work. The curriculum will incorporate many aspects of the National Curriculum KS3 to KS4 for Years 7 to 11 and the requirements of the A Level specifications for the Sixth Form. However, these do not determine the whole curriculum. Heads of Department ensure that schemes of work are tailored to the needs of all our students, that topics and resources are engaging, and that the aims identified by the School are fulfilled by the curriculum. Medium term plans give clear guidance on the core knowledge and objectives around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Medium term plans may suggest teaching strategies that can be used when teaching each topic.

The third phase is the short-term planning conducted by individual teachers who plan how to effectively communicate ideas, concepts and skills in each lesson. Short-term plans are written or formulated by

our teachers either weekly or daily and in a style that suits each individual teacher. These are used to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities will be used and take into account provision for the differing needs of the students.

SENIOR HOUSE NUMERACY AND LITERACY

All Senior House staff contribute to the development of all students speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. This requires creating space within lessons to allow students to practice, giving clear feedback and by holding students to a high standard.

The School have made the advancement of these skills a priority and staff training has focussed on how the skills can be built within lessons.

PREP DEPARTMENT ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each subject within each year group. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children. Our curriculum map, which is reviewed annually, attempts to link subjects, where possibly, to broaden the students understanding and develop their learning.

Medium term plans give clear guidance on the core knowledge and objectives around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills. These plans also include activities linked to our SMS Spirit values. Medium term plans may suggest teaching strategies that can be used when teaching each topic, including retrieval practice.

Short-term plans are written by our teachers either weekly or daily and in a style to suit the individual teacher. These are used to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities will be used and take into account provision for the differing needs of the students.

In the Early Years, we adopt an inter-disciplinary topic approach to curriculum planning based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook, September 2023. Our school fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned, structured activities.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 we base our plans on the National Curriculum 2014. In Key Stage 1, this is largely delivered by the form teacher, with specialist teachers for Music, French and PE. At Key Stage 2 we teach all subjects separately either by form teachers or by specialist teachers.

PREP DEPARTMENT NUMERACY AND LITERACY

In accordance with National Curriculum guidelines, and in addition to the individual subject Schemes of Work, we promote the teaching of core skills across all subjects:

Numeracy and Mathematics

Teachers develop students' numeracy and mathematical reasoning in relevant subjects so that they understand and appreciate the importance of mathematics. Students are taught to apply arithmetic fluently to problems, understand and use measures, make estimates and check their work, as appropriate to their age and stage of development. Students apply geometric and algebraic understanding, and relate their understanding of probability to the notions of risk and uncertainty. They also understand the cycle of collecting, presenting and analysing data. They are taught to apply their mathematics skills to both routine and non-routine problems, including breaking down more complex problems into a series of simpler steps.

Language and Literacy

Teachers develop students' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for students, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

Spoken Language

Students are encouraged to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using standard English in lessons and assemblies, such as our Great Debate Assembly. They learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They are taught to give well-structured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This enables them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

Reading and Writing

Teachers develop students' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Students are taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and are encouraged to read for pleasure. We promote wider reading through use of the Accelerated Reader Scheme and by provision of a variety of genres of books in classrooms and libraries and set clear expectations for reading at home. Students develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They are taught the correct use of grammar and build on what they have been taught to expand the range of their writing and the variety of the grammar they use. The writing they do includes narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

Vocabulary Development

Students' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers develop vocabulary actively in lessons building systematically on students' current knowledge. They increase students' store of words in general and make links between known and new vocabulary, discussing the shades of meaning in similar words. In this way, students expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write. In addition, it is vital for students' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects. It is particularly important to induct students into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language.

FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School offers learners opportunities to achieve and develop confidence, independence and resilience through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment. The skills learnt can be applied in the classroom to develop and extend learning.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider curriculum and is led by accredited Forest School Trained Leaders.

Nursery and Reception attend a weekly session and students in Key Stage 1 and 2 have an opportunity to attend Forest School in CORI sessions.