

CURRICULUM POLICY 2025-2026

St. Mary's School endeavours to provide the very best education to meet the needs of all pupils within the school including those pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). The curriculum covers all the planned activities that we organise to promote learning, personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), but also understands how important co-curricular activities are to enrich the children's education. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave.

We aim to teach the children how to grow into healthy, positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with each other while developing knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they can thrive in a supportive environment to the best of their ability.

A range of enrichment/curriculum enhancement days are organised throughout the year to bring many facets of learning under one focus (such as day trips, residential, book days, eco-week etc) and these days involve co-operation by all taking part. A variety of enrichment activities are also on offer to pupils.

In summary, it is our aim that all pupils can learn, develop and make progress through access to:

- A broad and balanced full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- The acquisition of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- Personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school's aims and ethos.
- Pupils are encouraged to show respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (a)
- An extensive programme of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, to allow girls to be creative and to develop self-esteem, teamwork, responsibility and respect for self and others.
- All curriculum areas regardless of ability, with support where appropriate.
- A flexible approach, both within the classroom and through support available to allow for different learning needs.
- Accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner to those pupils receiving secondary education, thereby enabling them to make informed

choices about a broad range of career options and help to encourage them to fulfil their potential

- A programme of activities which is appropriate to the needs of those pupils below compulsory school age in relation to personal, social, emotional, and physical development and communication and language skills
- The opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress
- Effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British Society

Through the curriculum we aim to enable all pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Teaching

Staff at St. Mary's School are expected to:

- Have high expectations of pupils and to differentiate the delivery of the curriculum to suit the needs of individual pupils as far as practicable
- Employ a range of teaching methods appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils, taking into account prior attainment
- Share aims and objectives with pupils, giving regular feedback and encouraging pupils to evaluate their own achievements
- Monitor pupil progress and plan lessons effectively making use of assessment Reward and value achievement and effort and ensure that the learning environment is stimulating and purposeful
- Keep parents informed about the progress and achievement of their children

The Heads of Senior School and Lower School, in conjunction with the wider SLT, take responsibility for the overall monitoring of the curriculum. We aim to use a range of teaching styles in response to the needs of individuals. Regular training and professional development opportunities are provided for all staff to enhance the delivery of the curriculum and to keep teachers informed of current initiatives and developments relating to their subject areas. The Appraisal process identifies training needs which benefit the delivery of the curriculum.

Continuity and progression are considered important to learning, and we use assessment as a formative mechanism to ensure progression, with careful and constant monitoring and tracking of each pupil taking place throughout the year. Where there is likely to be movement of a pupil from one teaching group (or set) to another, care is taken to ensure continuity.

It is School policy to review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of pupils, allowing them to reach their full academic potential, whilst also enabling them to acquire up- to- date knowledge and skills which equip them for adult life and employment in our rapidly changing world.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is divided into several areas:

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

Key Stage 2 (KS2)

Key Stage 3 (KS3)

Key Stage 4 (KS4)

EYFS

The curriculum in the Kindergarten and Prep class is built around the four principles of: A Unique Child; Positive Relationships; Enabling Environments; Learning Development; taking into consideration that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The seven areas of learning and development are covered in the educational programme. The prime areas of learning are as follows:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are;

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

Work covered in the Early Years is child centred using the Framework for the Early Years. Staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each pupil in all the areas of learning and development.

In planning and guiding pupils' activities, teachers focus on the Characteristics of Effective Learning and reflect these in their practice and assessment processes.

- playing and exploring - pupils investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - pupils concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - pupils have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Structured and imaginative play forms an important part in the EYFS curriculum. Adult intervention is for a real purpose and in all areas, language is one of the prime indicators of achievement and progress.

A baseline assessment is conducted within the first 6 weeks of entry into the Prep class.

Key Stage 1 and 2

In the Lower School we agree long-term plans which indicate the topics to be taught in each term and to which groups of pupils. We review our long-term plans on an annual basis. Medium term plans give guidance to the objectives of the topics, to ensure that the needs of all the pupils are being continually met.

Although the National Curriculum is often used as the basis for the long and medium term plans for KS1 and 2, at St. Mary's we often go beyond the expectations of the National Curriculum.

The Head of Lower School is responsible for the overall planning and organisation of the curriculum which is supervised and reviewed by the Assistant Head of Lower School (Academic). Subject Leaders and Subject Coordinators ensure that their subject provides continuity and progression from the EYFS to the end of KS2.

Some specialist teaching forms part of the curriculum. In all year groups the pupils are taught by specialist PE, Music, French/Languages and Forest School. This allows for a stimulating and challenging curriculum in which the pupils can thrive.

Home Learning

All Home Learning information is sent home to parents at the end of each week.

	Continuous Home Learning	Rotated Activities
Prep 15 minutes per evening	Reading Word Cards Spellings (Spring/Summer)	Optional activities provided via Homelinks
KS1 20 minutes per evening	Reading Word Cards (until completed) Spelling Maths Workbook TTRS (Year 2)	Additional Activity (which could include SPaG)
		Activity Grid – one per week
KS2 25-30 minutes per evening	Reading Spelling Maths Workbook TTRS	Additional Activities
		Activity Grid – one per week

Activity Grid Choice: the pupils are given the opportunity to select their own Home Learning from an activity grid linked to high order thinking skills, which relates to their class topic. This allows for creativity and for the pupils to lead their own learning.

Research home learning is structured so that the girls receive guidance to ensure that they are not tackling too broad a topic.

Home learning is differentiated for the individual when and if appropriate.

Home learning should be presented to a standard equivalent to school expectations.

Home learning is expected to be handed in on time in order for the class teacher to mark and feedback to the pupil. Outstanding home learning will be followed up initially with the pupil. If this becomes frequent, parents will be contacted. Any questions regarding home learning should be emailed directly to the class teacher via the St Mary's APP.

Specialist Subjects

Home learning may be set by any specialist subject member of staff but this is in consultation with the class teacher to ensure that the girls are not overloaded with home learning at any point.

Inclusion

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all pupils who attend the school. Those pupils identified with special learning needs - Specific learning difficulties and disabilities (SEND), English as an additional language (EAL) or who are especially more able/talented - are supported primarily through differentiation. This may mean support within the classroom by either Teaching Assistant/Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral) or by withdrawal. Pupils on our learning support register have a One Plan which identifies areas and targets upon which to focus. Regular meetings are held with the parents to ensure that the pupil, parent and school are working together to meet the needs of the individual pupil. We currently have no pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral) supports the EYFS, KS1 and KS2 pupils within the school.

Key Stages 3 & 4

In the Senior School, although the National Curriculum is used as the basis for the development of individual departmental syllabuses at Key Stage 3, at St Mary's we often go beyond the expectations of the prescribed curriculum.

Individual Subject Leads are responsible for the overall planning and organisation of the curriculum, which is reviewed by the Faculty Leads, Assistant Head and Head of Senior School. Subject Leads ensure that their subject provides continuity and progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 (GCSE). Subject Leads are responsible for the selection of a GCSE syllabus appropriate to the needs of the pupils and are responsible for the monitoring of delivery which should be one that is both stimulating and challenging in which the pupil can thrive.

What follows is a summary of the curriculum offer for the 2021-2023 Academic Year, in addition to a summary of the curriculum offer at each key stage:

English

English is part of the Core Curriculum for Years 7 to 11. Girls are taught in mixed ability form groups in Year 7 to Year 9. Girls are taught in ability sets at GCSE in Year 10 and 11. Progress

is constantly monitored and movement between sets is possible if performance and assessments show this to be necessary.

Mathematics

Mathematics is part of the Core Curriculum for Years 7 to 11. Girls are set by ability in Mathematics early in Year 7 and are then taught in ability sets up to the end of GCSE studies. There are four sets from Year 8. Set 1 will be offered Further Maths and set 2 will be offered Statistics in addition to the Mathematics GCSE. Girls are constantly monitored and movement between sets is possible if performance and assessments show this to be necessary.

Science

In Year 7 all girls have 2 hours of General Science and three hours in Years 8 and 9. All girls have one hour of Biology, Chemistry and Physics each week, taught by specialists and they are taught in mixed ability form groups. In Years 10 and 11 Science is a Core Subject and all girls in Years 10 and 11 study either Combined Science or Triple Science, depending upon their option choices.

ICT

ICT is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and compulsory in Years 7 to 9. At the end of Year 9 girls can choose ICT as a GCSE option.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and compulsory in Years 7 to 9, although parents may withdraw their daughter based on religious faith. Currently no pupils are withdrawn from Religious Studies on this basis. At the end of Year 9 girls can choose Religious Studies as a GCSE option.

Modern Foreign Languages

In Year 7, there is a carousel of languages, French, Spanish for the first half term, after which pupils will choose which they will continue with. pupil. Pupils do not have to study MFL at GCSE. In addition, fast track language study is available outside the timetable for native speakers or exceptional linguists and early entry GCSE is available where deemed appropriate.

Classical Languages

Classical Civilisation and Latin are studied from Years 7 to 9. However, in Years 8 and 9 pupils may opt to continue with Latin to gain a Level 2 certificate. Both Latin and Classical Civilisation are offered as an option at GCSE level.

PSHE/Careers Education

All year groups have PSHE lessons. PSHE is delivered by specialist teachers. Through Careers Education, pupils will develop the knowledge and skills they need to make successful choices, manage transitions in learning and move onto 'Higher Education' or 'The World of Work.' Pupils will be encouraged to take an active role in their career learning, developing skills to investigate opportunities open to them. Comprehensive and up-to-date Careers information will be available to the pupils.

PE and Games

PE and Games are compulsory throughout Years 7 to 11 and form part of the Core Curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 PE is a non-GCSE subject, but Girls may opt to study PE for GCSE.

Drama

Drama is taught as a discreet subject across KS3. It is a GCSE option in Years 10 and 11.

The tables below summarise the curriculum studied in each year group at Key Stage 3 & 4.

Key Stage 3

√ indicates compulsory subjects which form the Core Curriculum

○ indicates subjects where an element of choice is possible.

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Art	√	√	√
Biology	√	√	√
Chemistry	√	√	√
French	○	○	○
German			○
Spanish	○	○	○
Drama	√	√	√
English	√	√	√
Geography	√	√	√
History	√	√	√
ICT	√	√	√
Classical Civilisation/Latin	√	√	○
Mathematics	√	√	√
Music	√	√	√
Physical Education	√	√	√
Physics	√	√	√
PSHE	√	√	√
Religious Studies	√	√	√
Textiles	√	√	√
Food Preparation and Nutrition	√	√	√

Curriculum Analysis of time allocated per subject at KS3

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	6	6	7
Mathematics	5	7	7
Science	6	6	6
MFL	5	5	6
PE	6	4	4
PSHE	2	2	1
Geography	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Religious Studies	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Classics/Latin	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Food Prep/Nutrition	2	2	2
ICT	2	2	1
Music	2	2	2
Textiles	2	2	2
	50	50	50

Key Stage 4

√ indicates compulsory subjects which form the Core Curriculum

○ indicates optional GCSE subjects.

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
Art and Design	○	○
Classical Civilisation	○	○
Core Modern Foreign Language: choose French, Spanish, German	○	○
Drama (iGCSE)	○	○
English Language	√	√
English Literature	√	√
Further Maths		○
Geography	○	○
History	○	○
Hospitality and Catering	○	○
ICT	○	○
Mathematics	√	√
Music	○	○
Physical Education (non-GCSE)	√	√
Physical Education (GCSE)	○	○
PSHE (non-GCSE)	√	√
Religious Studies	○	○
Science –Combined or separate Biology, Chemistry, Physics	√	√
Fashion and Textiles	○	○
Statistics	○	

In Years 10 and 11, three option subjects are chosen to complement the Core Curriculum if opting to study Combined Science. Pupils opting for Separate Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) choose two option subjects.

	Year 10	
English	8	
Mathematics	8	
PE	2	
PSHE	2	
Option A	5	
Option B	5	
Option C	5	
Option D	5	
Option E	5	
Option F	5	
	50	

	Year 11
English	7
Mathematics	8
MFL	5
PE	2
PSHE	2
Option A	6
Option B	6
Option C	5
Option D	5
Option E	5
Option F	5
	50

The school recognises and appreciates the efforts made by pupils outside of the classroom. It acknowledges that homework provides a platform for pupils to work independently, conduct research, accomplish specific tasks, and finish assignments initiated during class time. Moreover, it emphasises the importance of exploring additional resources to enhance the understanding of a particular topic and extend the knowledge acquired in class. Homework is not merely a way to occupy time, but rather an essential and valuable component of the educational curriculum. Typically, homework assignments will not be due

for submission the following day. However, there may be instances where certain tasks need to be completed before the next stage of learning can commence. In such cases, it becomes necessary for pupils to diligently complete the assigned work on the same evening it is assigned. Both parents and pupils will receive detailed information regarding homework expectations and requirements. This ensures that everyone involved is well-informed and can support the pupils in effectively managing their homework responsibilities.

Inclusion

Our school's curriculum is carefully crafted to ensure that every pupil, regardless of their background or learning needs, has the opportunity to thrive. Pupils who require additional support, such as those with specific learning difficulties, disabilities, English as an additional language, or exceptional abilities, are given the necessary assistance through various means of differentiation.

This support can take the form of in-class assistance from Teaching staff or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), or through targeted withdrawal sessions. Pupils who are on the learning support register are provided with a personalised Pupil Education Plan (PEP) that outlines specific areas of focus and targets for improvement.

Regular meetings are scheduled with parents to ensure that there is open communication and collaboration between the pupil, parents, and the school in addressing the individual needs of each pupil. It is important to note that none of our pupils currently have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

Homework

Reviewed/Approved: June 2025
Next Review: Spring 2026