

ST MARY'S SENIOR SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

Aims:

The school's curriculum follows statutory requirements and the requirements of the National Curriculum.

It is balanced and broadly based, and promotes the spiritual, social, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society – and prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The school objectives are to:

- Ensure that pupils develop the essential literacy and numeracy skills (*refer to whole school literacy and numeracy policies*).
- Provide pupils with a full and rounded entitlement to learning.
- Foster pupils' creativity and develop essential skills, including learning skills to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Inspire pupils to a commitment to learning which will last a lifetime.
- Promote high standards in all teaching and learning.
- Give pupils the opportunity to apply and develop their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects. (*refer to whole school ICT policy*)

Religious Education is also provided for all pupils, and is an integral part of school life.

Equal Opportunities

Entry to all programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of race, disability, religion or belief.

Differentiation

A variety of differing teaching and learning methods and materials are used in all courses to suit pupils' different needs and maintain an inclusive curriculum. Appropriate assessment approaches and target setting for learning will allow teachers to respond to pupils' diverse needs.

Subjects Offered

Refer to Senior School Curriculum document – APPENDIX A

Key stage 3

Subject	Years	
Art and Design	7, 8, 9	
English	7, 8, 9	
French	7, 8, 9	
Geography	7, 8, 9	
Home Economics (Textiles/Food Technology)	7, 8, 9	
History	7, 8, 9	
ICT	7, 8, 9	
Latin / Classical Civilization	7, 8, 9	
Mathematics	7, 8, 9	
Music	7, 8, 9	
Physical Education	7, 8, 9	
Religious Education	7, 8, 9	
Science	7, 8, 9	
Spanish	8,9	

Option System

At the end of Year 9, pupils are able to choose up to a maximum of three additional GCSE subjects, together with a 'core' of compulsory subjects.

Refer to 'Year 9 Options Booklet'

Core Subjects at GCSE		Option Subjects
English Language		Art & Design
English Literature		Geography
Mathematics		Food and Nutrition
Science		Textiles Technology
French or Spanish		History
RE		Information & Communication Technology
ICT (ECDL or GCSE ICT)		Latin
		Music
		Physical Education
		Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
		French

Key Stage 4

Refer to Senior School Curriculum document – **APPENDIX A**

Subject	Years	2008-2009	Changes in 2009-2010
Art & Design	10,11	Optional	
English (English Literature) English Language	10, 11	(module taken in Year 10)	
French – Pupils must take either French or Spanish at GCSE. Those wishing to take both languages choose Spanish as core language and French as an option	10, 11	Optional	
Geography	10, 11	Optional	
Home Economics (Textiles Technology and/or Food)		Optional	
History	10, 11	Optional	
ICT	10, 11	GCSE or ECDL	
Latin	10, 11	Optional	
Mathematics	10, 11		
Music	10, 11	Optional	
Physical Education	10, 11		
GCSE PE	10, 11	Optional	
Religious Education	10, 11	Some pupils take RE GCSE in Year 10	
Science	10, 11	Core Y10 and Additional Science Y11	
Separate Award Science	10, 11	Optional	
Spanish - Pupils must take either French or Spanish at GCSE. Those wishing to take both languages choose Spanish as core language and French as an option	10, 11	Optional	

Post 16

Refer to Sixth Form Curriculum document – **APPENDIX B**

Subject	
Art	
Biology	
Business Studies	
Chemistry	
Classical Civilisation	
English Literature	
Food Science	
French	
Further Mathematics	
Geography	
History	
ICT	
Latin	
Mathematics	
Music	
Physical Education	
Physics	
Psychology	
Religious Studies (Philosophy/Ethics)	
Spanish	
Textiles	
Theatre Studies	

Careers

A comprehensive careers programme is provided for pupils as part of the PSHE programme. This includes guidance in subject choices at KS4 and KS5 and for further education

Cross Curricular Links

Opportunities will be provided to reinforce knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of curricular areas.

Cross-curricular themes: career education and guidance, health and sex education, education for citizenship, environmental education and economic and industrial. Understanding (EIU) will be integrated into PSHE programmes and also permeated through other subjects in order to meet the curricular aims of breadth and balance and preparation for adult life. Schemes of work highlight opportunities for cross-curricular topics and Subject Leaders will liaise, if appropriate, to develop such approaches.

Cross-phase liaison between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 takes place through a range of initiatives to promote continuity and progression.

Disapplication

In accordance with the new law, the school has the right to respond to individual needs by modifying the National Curriculum programmes, or disapplying the National Curriculum for the duration of Key Stage 4 to:

- Allow a pupil to participate in extended work related learning, but not in place of science due to the implementation of the new science programme of study at key stage 4 from 2006.
- Allow a pupil with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum
- To allow a pupil making considerably less progress than other pupils of her age to consolidate her learning and progress across the curriculum.

Decisions about any of the above will only be made after discussion with the pupil and parent.

Religious Education

Religious Education is available to all pupils, and pupils are expected to appreciate and respect the Catholic ethos of the school.

Collective Worship

All pupils are expected to attend the daily collective worship. The school has a programme of collective worship including some whole-school assemblies, form assemblies and themed assemblies, form masses and whole-school masses. Form tutors will provide an opportunity to offer a prayer and a quiet moment of reflection for their tutor group within the form room on a daily basis.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

A comprehensive PSHE programme is provided for pupils as part of their pastoral care to enable them to develop confidence and responsibility and to prepare them to play an active role as citizens to the best of their abilities. Pupils are taught to develop good relationships and to respect the differences between people, and to develop a healthy, safer lifestyle.

Pupils will receive experience of **Work-Related Learning** through a range of opportunities within lessons, the PSHE programme, and Young Enterprise.

Refer to Senior School Curriculum document – **APPENDIX C.**

Sex Education

The school provides sex education as part of the PSHE programme for all pupils, in which pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life.

A full statement of the school's sex education policy is available to parents. It has been drawn up in consultation with Directors of Learning, staff, parents and the trustees of the school. It has regard for the government's guidance in Sex and Relationship Education.

In accordance with the law, the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons.

Political Education

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is forbidden by law. Political issues may be introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner.

Physical Education and Games

All pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education and Games programme. Pupils can only be excused from PE and Games for medical reasons, for which a parental note will suffice, or other reasons agreed by the school.

Extra Curricular Activities

The school has a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum.

Homework

The school expects homework to be set as appropriate. The school homework policy provides guidance on the times pupils in a particular group are to spend on homework.

Year Group	Maximum Time Per Day
7 and 8	90 minutes
9	100 minutes
10 and 11	2 – 3 hours
12 and 13	Depends on the subjects, guidance included in the School handbook, certainly 4 hours per subject per week would be expected, not including Directed Study.

SEN / LDD

The school has a special educational needs policy for statemented and non-statemented pupils. The school will determine the appropriate courses in consultation with parents.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be monitored by the Learning Facilitator, in discussion with Subject Leaders and will report to the Headmistress on its implementation on a regular basis.

The Headmistress will report to the governing body's Curriculum Committee on the progress of the policy and will recommend any changes.

Reviewed by	Susan Cookson – January 2009
Adopted by Trustees Meeting	26 th February 2009

APPENDIX A

Senior School Curriculum at St Mary's Convent School

At all levels girls are encouraged to pursue high standards in their academic work and to develop good study skills and an independent approach to learning.

The curriculum is supported by excellent facilities including a networked computer system, laptop computers with wireless technology, and well-equipped classrooms and science laboratories. All subjects are taught by specialist teachers in small groups.

The academic life of the school is divided into three distinct sections:

- The Lower School – Years 7, 8 and 9
- The Upper School – Years 10 and 11
- The Sixth Form

Many girls will supplement their formal study programme with lessons in speech and drama, music, and individual sports. A diverse range of extra curricular activities and clubs including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, together with subject-related trips, visiting speakers and competitions, are a regular feature of academic life at St Mary's.

Years 7, 8 and 9

Pupils experience a broad and balanced range of learning based on the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, and curriculum guides are available for parents.

Subjects taught in Years 7, 8 and 9:

English; Mathematics; Science; French; Religious Studies
Spanish (in years 8 and 9); Art; Geography; Home Economics (Food Technology and Textiles); History; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Latin; Music ; Physical Education.

A personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, including citizenship, is an integral part of each pupils learning.

The curriculum in Year 9 lays the foundations for GCSE which begins in Year 10.

In the second half of Year 9, girls consider which GCSE subjects they would like to take and they are able to select optional subjects as well as the compulsory subjects comprising the core curriculum (English, Mathematics, Science, French or Spanish and Religious Studies).

Detailed information about the GCSE programme is given to all girls and their parents to enable them to make informed choices, and girls liaise closely with the Director of Learning and subject teachers.

Years 10 and 11 – The GCSE Course

All pupils take English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, the Sciences, French or Spanish and Religious Studies.

Girls may choose three more subjects from the following list of subjects: Art, Geography, Home Economics (Food Technology/Textiles), History, ICT, Latin, Music, GCSE Physical Education and French.

In science, students may choose to take Science (Core and Additional) or the option of the separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics in Triple Award.

The core and optional subjects at GCSE level are complemented by general courses in ICT, PSHE and Citizenship, and Physical Education.

Parents receive regular feedback on their daughter's learning and progress throughout the senior school. There are two parent's evenings each year in each year group, and there are two full written reports sent to parents at the end of the autumn term and at the end of the summer term. Progress reports containing grades for attainment and effort are also issued twice a year.

APPENDIX B

The Sixth Form at St Mary's Convent School

The majority of our girls continue their studies into the Sixth Form. In addition, we regularly welcome new girls from other secondary school backgrounds.

All girls entering the sixth form are presented with the challenge of beginning new academic courses and achieving the life skills and confidence that they may need to be successful in adult life in the future. Most girls are expected to study four subjects at AS Level in Year 12, and at least three subjects at A2 Level in Year 13. At St. Mary's we aim to ensure that each girl's study programme is suited to her individual abilities. Progress of each girl is regularly monitored, and advice and guidance is regularly given when necessary by subject tutors, form tutors and the Head of the Sixth Form.

In addition to academic achievements, there is a strong emphasis on the development of transferable skills such as community service and the Young Enterprise Scheme. Charity and House events including a fashion show help to develop teamwork and communication skills.

Students are expected to have at least five passes at A* to C grade in order to enter the sixth form. The normal requirement for a student taking a subject at AS level is at least a B grade in the respective subject, if this subject was taken at GCSE level. Girls considering joining the Sixth Form are asked to apply in the Spring term of the entry year with a list of provisional options, from which firm choices are required by the summer term.

At St Mary's we offer the following subjects in the Sixth Form:

Art	History
Biology	ICT
Business Studies	Latin
Chemistry	Mathematics
Classical Civilisation	Music
	Physical Education
	Psychology
English Literature	Physics
Food Technology	Religious Studies (Philosophy/Ethics)
French	Spanish
Further Mathematics	Textiles
Geography	Theatre Studies

A clearly structured careers programme throughout Years 12 and 13 enables each girl to make well researched decisions about her future options and university.

APPENDIX C

Work Related Learning

There is a minimum provision expected to meet the statutory requirements within the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Work-related learning comprises three strands:

1. **Learning through work** – by providing opportunities for pupils to learn from direct experience of work (e.g. work experience, part time jobs, enterprise activities in school, vocational contexts in subjects).
2. **Learn about work** – by providing opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of work and enterprise (e.g. vocational courses, careers education).
3. **Learn for work** – by developing skills for enterprise and employability.

All pupils should be given opportunities to:

- Recognise, practice and develop their skills for enterprise and employability.
- Use their experience of work, including work experience and part-time jobs, to extend their understanding of work.
- Learn about the way business functions, working roles and conditions, rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- Develop awareness of the extent and diversity of local and national employment opportunities.
- Relate their own abilities and attributes to career intentions and make informed choices based on an understanding of alternatives.
- Undertake tasks and activities set in work contexts.
- Have contact with personnel from different employment sectors.
- Have experience of working practice and environments.
- Engage with ideas, challenges and applications from the business world.

Opportunities at St Mary's Convent School involving Work-related learning at Key Stage 4:

Subject		
PSHE/Careers programme	Year 11 – Video and worksheets on work experience; writing work experience application letter; <i>Possibility of work experience</i> ; Interview techniques; researching and presenting information on careers ‘Learn to Earn’ (Young Enterprise) Business Programme (Young Enterprise)	

Other work-related learning Years 7 – 13

Year		
12	Young Enterprise	
12/13	Business Studies – case studies	
12/13	Some students have part-time jobs	
12/13	Science – industrial visits	
7, 8, 9	Maths – language/terminology: directed numbers (deposit, credit, overdrawn, balance), percentages (discount, VAT, tax, gross, net), practical graphs (bills, standing charges)	
7 - 13	PSHE/careers programme	