



## Curriculum Policy

***This policy also applies to the Early Years' Foundation Stage and Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014***

### Introduction

St Margaret's School is an independent day School for girls aged 4 to 16. We are a very small School, comprising around 150 girls and with only one class per year group. This unusually small size is central to the ethos of the School, which is committed to providing a secure, caring and challenging learning environment in which girls are encouraged to strive for excellence in all that they do. Respect for others lies at the heart of the School community, within which the potential and talent of each individual can be recognised, nurtured and realised. At St Margaret's education is seen as a partnership between pupils, parents and teachers.

We provide a balanced curriculum which offers our girls experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education, appropriate for their ages and aptitudes, and through which each girl may learn and make progress. We aim to equip every girl with the skills and knowledge which will prepare her for the responsibilities, challenges and opportunities of her future education and of adult life.

The curriculum at St Margaret's is broadly based on the National Curriculum throughout the four Key Stages but we take advantage of our ability, as an independent School, to adapt it to suit the specific needs of our pupils and our smaller than average cohorts.

The term 'curriculum' refers, in this document, to the activities implemented by the staff to promote learning and personal development. It includes the extra-curricular and timetabled activities that the School organises in order to enrich the experience of the girls. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum' which aims to help girls develop positive behaviour and attitudes.

### Aims

The aims of our curriculum are to enable every girl to develop:

- A sense of enquiry, the ability to question, to solve problems and to argue rationally;
- A willingness to apply herself and to experience the rewards of application;
- Speaking and listening skills, literacy, numeracy and competence in the use of ICT;
- Creativity, critical awareness, empathy and sensitivity;
- The skills of working both independently and as part of a team;
- Self-worth, self-esteem, self-awareness and self-confidence;
- Appropriate spiritual, moral, social and cultural values and respect for the values and opinions of others, through membership of a community which conducts itself in an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- An understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health and of the physical and psychological benefits of active sport;
- A knowledge of the natural world, and an understanding of the principles of scientific enquiry;
- An understanding of how her environment and the society of which she is a part have changed over time;
- An understanding and appreciation of Britain's cultural heritage;
- A knowledge and understanding of other countries, their cultures and languages.



## Curriculum Details

### Junior School (EYFS, Key Stages 1 and 2)

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, we plan the curriculum carefully so that there is coherence and coverage of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Framework. From January 2014 we opted out of the standard national EYFS curriculum. The St Margaret's curriculum for our Reception class includes the majority of the EYFS goals but also includes more formal teaching of literacy and numeracy.

As well as focused daily time on literacy and numeracy, at Key Stage 1 the girls will work on history, geography, art, science and drama through topic-based work. Time is also allocated to their Personal, Social and Health Education.

At Key Stage 2, the curriculum places a greater emphasis on the core and foundation subjects than it does at Key Stage 1, and we teach these subjects separately.

Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 all pupils follow programmes, at levels suited to their ages, in the following subjects:

Mathematics	Art	English and English Literature
Music	Science	Drama
History	PHSEE/Belief	Geography
PE and Games	French	ICT

From Reception the girls' curriculum is delivered by a class teacher and by subject specialists for ICT, PE, Music and French.

From Year 3, Geography and Art are added to this list of specialist taught subjects. In Year 4, Science is added and in Years 6, 7 and 8, the girls also receive one lesson of Latin a week.

### Senior School (Key Stages 3 and 4)

At **Key Stage 3**, girls study the following subjects, taught by specialist teachers:

Mathematics	Music	English and English Literature
Drama	Science	PHSEE
History	PE and Games	Geography
ICT	French	Latin
Art	RE (via Senior Assembly)	Spanish

At **Key Stage 4**, all girls study the following core GCSE subjects:

#### English and English Literature

2 separate GCSE subjects

#### Mathematics

This subject is taught in two ability groups. Girls may move up or down between the groups depending on her teachers' views of which group will serve her needs better.



Though the School respects the right of parents to have a view on which group their daughter will be in, the decision will lie with the relevant teacher(s).

Final decisions about GCSE exam tiering are not made until the Spring Term of Year 11. (Tiering refers to whether a girl is entered for the Higher Tier paper, which is more demanding but allows girls to achieve a Higher grade, or the Foundation Tier, which has fewer challenging questions but which does not enable girls to access the highest grades.)

Girls with a particular aptitude for mathematics at GCSE level may be offered GCE Additional Mathematics. Lessons for this will normally be timetabled after School. A decision to enter pupils for the terminal examinations in the subject will be made in the Spring term of Year 11.

## **Science**

The girls prepare for the AQA Science Trilogy, which delivers two GCSEs.

## **A Modern Foreign Language**

Either French or Spanish or both.

The girls may choose from the following optional GCSE subjects to add to this core:

History      Art      Music      Geography      Drama      Psychology

Whilst every effort is made to accommodate the choices of individual girls, it is not possible to guarantee that all combinations of subjects will be available in all years.

Years 10 and 11 also have 80 minutes per week at the local sports centre where they alternate between a variety of activities such as rowing, trampolining, fitness, climbing, volleyball and badminton.

This can be complemented by attendance of optional extra curricular Sports Clubs.

Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 the pupils follow a personal development programme, which includes the following:

- Physical Education
- Sex and Relationship Education
- Careers Education including a week of work experience
- Alcohol and Drugs Education
- Citizenship
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award (optional)

## **Extra Curricular Activities**

Our aim is to offer a range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, reflecting the differing interests of our pupils and the availability of particular expertise within our staff, who are encouraged to pass on their own, individual skills and enthusiasms.

The clubs roster is different every term. For the current or most recent term's clubs' list please visit the School website.

## **Assessment**

The following formal assessment methods are used:

- Summer Examinations for all curricular subjects in Key Stage 3 and Year 10.



- Key stage 4 GCSE examinations (Year 10/11).
- Progress in Reading Assessment twice annually in Reception and Years 1-6 (once annually in Reception).
- Oxford Writing Assessment twice annually in Years 1-6 (once annually in Reception).

The results of these assessments are maintained throughout a pupil's career at St Margaret's.

In addition, we adopt external baseline assessments.

- CEM Baseline assessment for girls in Reception in the Autumn and Summer terms (Base Progress).
- CEM InCAS assessment for Years 1 to 6.
- MidyYIS tests for girls in Years 7.
- YELLIS tests for girls at the end of Year 9 and those joining the School in Year 10.
- These tests are administered in the School and marked at the University of Durham. The results give standardised scores in *Vocabulary, mathematics, non-verbal skills and skills*.

These latter scores, are used to generate expected grades of each pupil in each subject at GCSE and the amount by which a pupil has exceeded the expectations or has not reached the expected levels.

In addition the pupils are routinely assessed frequently throughout each year, relevant to their age and stage.

### **Girls with Special Needs**

*See our SEN/Learning Support Policy for details of how the curriculum may be adapted for girls needing individual support.*

### **Responsibility, Monitoring and Review**

Every aspect of the curriculum is reviewed annually and is agreed by the members of staff involved in its teaching. Changes to assessment and reporting procedures are also reviewed annually. Every member of the teaching staff prepares his/her own schemes of learning and has a responsibility for reviewing their own curricular areas and their assessment methods.