



# St Ursula's Convent School

## A Humanities College and Teaching School

### St Ursula's Curriculum Policy

The Curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced and for all learners aims to: -

- develop knowledge and skills including personal learning and thinking skills, literacy and numeracy
- promote talents and high expectations
- motivate every pupil to succeed
- provide equal opportunities for all learners to achieve their individual potential
- ensure attainment and progress at 16+

#### **Years 7, 8 and 9**

In Key Stage 3 pupils follow the National Curriculum comprising Core subjects English, Maths and Science and Foundation subjects Art, Computer Science, French, Geography, History, Music, P.E. and RE. From year 8 Spanish is added to the curriculum.

Pupils are also given the chance to study Food Technology, Product Design and Textiles as part of a Design Technology carousel system so that all pupils may experience each subject for at least part of the school year. Drama is delivered through the English provision and also as an extra-curricular offer.

The school timetable will advance in the second half of the summer term to allow Yr. 9 more time to study their KS4 curriculum. This means that pupils will have to make firm decisions about their option choices in the preceding spring term

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is further enhanced by a series of Enrichment Days where the whole school is off timetable experiencing a variety of activities which enable the school to deliver Citizenship, PSHEE, Study Skills etc. and the Every Child Matters Agenda. These are also delivered as cross curricular elements within subject departments and discreetly in a rolling programme of PSHEE themed lessons

St. Ursula's understands the value of different types of learning experience and subject departments are encouraged to further enrich the curriculum with a large number of off-site trips to museums, galleries, exhibitions, field centres and foreign countries. "Humanities Week" and "Science Week" also offer a raft of new opportunities to learners as does the full extra-curricular programme of clubs, societies and study groups offered by the staff and outside providers.

#### **Years 10 and 11**

Initiatives in 14 to 16 Education are closely monitored and applied to the school as required. St. Ursula's is aware of the need to be fully prepared for the changes to the public examination reporting system, the introduction of new GCSE specifications and the need to check regularly for any new Government policies, given the fast pace of recent changes

Pupils take a broad range of core subjects at GCSE and opt for three more subjects of their own choice as set out below. Most pupils will leave with at least 10 GCSE qualifications, some will leave with more. A strong Core offer allows pupils to access essential subjects as a whole cohort and fits well with the Government's declared purpose of promoting achievement in English, Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages. If a student wishes to be considered for the English Baccalaureate

they must choose from a prescribed list of subjects; full details are made available to pupils and parents during the options process which takes place early in the spring term. As a Catholic school we consider the study of Religious Education to GCSE level to be fundamental to our role as educators.

### **Core subjects**

English Language GCSE

English Literature GCSE

French GCSE

Maths GCSE

Religious Studies GCSE

Science – a choice of either Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics GCSEs - this counts towards one of the 3 option choices) or Double Science (GCSE or BTEC)

### **and**

Physical Education (non-examination)

### **Optional Subjects**

Art GCSE

Computer Science GCSE

Drama GCSE

History GCSE

Geography GCSE

Music GCSE

Physical Education GCSE

Separate Sciences GCSE

Spanish GCSE

Pupils are guided in their choice of option subjects and although the school tries hard to accommodate everyone's preferences some option choices are governed by limited places or required levels of attainment at KS3.

St. Ursula's has acknowledged in recent years the value of early entry for English and maths. This has been very successful, but recent Government changes to entry regulations have led to the school considering early entry on an individual pupil basis rather than as an entire cohort. The situation re early entry will be closely monitored

Gifted and Talented pupils at both key stages are targeted for activities which develop their skills and knowledge. At KS4 this can lead to AS level mathematics, GCSE Astronomy, GCSE Latin and a number of other courses some of which are delivered off-site in partnership with local schools etc. Native foreign language speakers are encouraged to take GCSE as soon as possible. The school also makes provision for graded music exams.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 experience the same opportunities for enrichment activities as those in KS3. In addition a variety of GCSE study group and tutoring sessions are made available to Year 11 students in particular, but not exclusively.

A wide variety of support is in place for pupils with additional educational needs, for those in danger of underachieving and for those whose literacy and numeracy skills need to be enhanced and developed.

Reviewed: February 2014