

# St Ursula's Convent School

## Curriculum policy 2021



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### 1. Curriculum intent

St Ursula’s is an established Ursuline school proud of its strong academic successes, where each student is unique, respected and loved. At the heart of our curriculum is a passion to ensure each student gains a lifelong love of learning developed within a caring Catholic community; allowing everyone to grow and share in the love of Christ; serving the world of today and tomorrow through the relationships made and service to others.

‘Curriculum’ derives from the Latin verb ‘currere’ meaning to ‘run’ or ‘proceed’. The word is filled with a sense of progress and journey. We intend for our curriculum to take our students on a journey from novice to expert. To achieve this we provide a fascinating and ambitious curriculum, delivering powerful transformative knowledge, which affords each of our students the advantage to ‘acquire knowledge that takes them *beyond their own experiences*’ (Young et al., 2014, p. 7) and allows them to develop their God-given talents.

“Learning is defined as an alteration in long-term memory.” (Sweller et al. 2014) so with careful consideration of Cognitive Load Theory, our curriculum will embed low stakes retrieval practice, revisit and extend work with suitable spacing and interleave content between and within subjects. The rich contexts, stories and vocabulary that surround the core of each subject are explored to develop each of our student’s unique connections to the world we live in so they are willing, in the spirit of SERVIAM, to develop their talents and use them respectfully, for the good of all others, making a positive contribution to their community, wider society and the future of our planet.

Our students will learn how knowledge is gained and understand that declarative knowledge can be abstracted depending on the domain of each subject enabling them to theorise possibility, giving them power to create and rethink and the skills and confidence to speak up through debate. By sharing metacognitive strategies from the start of the learning journey, all students can maximise their long-term memory becoming independent, resilient learners with a healthy and positive mind-set capable of excelling both their terminal exams and in life beyond school.

## 2. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum aims to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Provide subject choices that support pupils' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements

- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals
- Pupils from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

### **3.2 Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They oversee requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

### **3.3 Heads of Department and teaching staff**

Heads of Department and teaching staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy and the curriculum intent.

## **4. Organisation and planning**

### **4.1 Years 7, 8 and 9 – KS3**

In Key Stage 3 pupils follow the National Curriculum comprising of the Core subjects of English, Maths and Science; and Foundation subjects of Religious Education, Art and Design, Computer Science, MFL (Modern Foreign Languages), Geography, History, Music and Physical Education.

Pupils are also given the chance to study Food Technology, Product Design and Textiles as part of a Design and Technology carousel that enables all pupils to experience these subjects for part of KS3. Drama lessons are delivered fortnightly.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is further enhanced by a series of Enrichment opportunities where the whole school experiences a variety of activities enabling the school to deliver Citizenship, PSHEE and Study Skills. These elements are also delivered as cross curricular components within subject departments and discreetly in a rolling programme of PSHEE themed lessons.

St. Ursula's recognises the value of different types of learning experiences and subject departments are encouraged to further enrich the curriculum with off-site trips to museums, galleries, exhibitions, field centres and foreign countries.

There is a regular timetable of extra-curricular provision to further enhance the curriculum. Please see the Extra-Curricular policy.

## **4.2 Years 9 and 10 – KS4**

Pupils take a broad range of core subjects at GCSE and opt for three more option subjects of their own choice as outlined 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 the English Baccalaureate.

Initiatives in 14 to 16 Education are closely monitored and applied as required.

As a Catholic school we consider the study of Religious Education to GCSE level to be fundamental to our role as educators.

### **Core subjects**

- Religious Education GCSE
- English Language GCSE
- English Literature GCSE
- Mathematics GCSE
- Science GCSE - either Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) or Double Science (Trilogy)
- French or Spanish GCSE
- Physical Education (non-examination)

### **Option subjects**

- Art and Design GCSE
- Computer Science GCSE
- Design and Technology GCSE
- Drama GCSE
- Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE
- Geography GCSE
- Health and Social Care Cambridge National
- History GCSE
- Music GCSE
- Physical Education GCSE

- Spanish GCSE
- Psychology GCSE

In partnership with the Greenwich Observatory a small number of pupils study Astronomy GCSE. The school is also able to offer native foreign language GCSEs and in recent years pupils have studied Russian, Polish, German and Italian.

Pupils are guided in their choice of option subjects and, although the school tries hard to accommodate all pupils' preferences, some option choices are governed by limited places.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 experience the same opportunities for enrichment activities as those in KS3. In addition, a variety of GCSE study groups, Masterclasses 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.

For each subject area of the Curriculum more detail can be found on our website under the Curriculum tab.

## 5. Inclusion

The following is based on the [National Curriculum inclusion statement](#).

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy.

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- School visits
- Meetings with Heads of Department and teaching staff
- Governors Meetings and documentation
- Attendance at school events
- Teaching and Learning Committee meetings

Heads of Department and Subject Leads monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Learning walks
- Collaborative planning
- Book Looks

Heads of Department and Subject Leads also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and Director of Curriculum and Assessment. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## 7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Extra-curricular policy
- Homework policy
- Feedback policy
- Non-examination assessment policy
- SEND policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- More able policy
- Relationship & Sex Education policy
- Careers policy