

CURRICULUM POLICY

Aims

The curriculum aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve their potential. We are keen to ensure that girls receive a broad and balanced education, and that they undertake a wide range of educational experiences aimed at enriching and extending their abilities and understanding. There is a strong emphasis on enrichment generally: explicitly and through cross-curricular links, educational visits (both day and residential), foreign exchanges and cultural visits and links with industry and the community.

The curriculum has been planned to ensure that it is:

Broad - so that it provides each girl with a wide range of experiences, knowledge and skills, fostering educational development and encouraging independent learning

Balanced - so that each area of the curriculum is allowed sufficient time for its contribution to be effective

Flexible and differentiated - so that what is taught and how it is taught is matched to the learning needs of individual girls and fully develops their abilities and aptitudes

The curriculum aims to foster the development of the qualities and skills which will enable all pupils to achieve success and fulfilment, particularly:

- to encourage and stimulate the best possible progress and highest attainment for all pupils
- to develop pupils' enjoyment of, appetite for and commitment to learning and achieving
- to equip pupils with the essential learning skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology and the skills to enquire and make connections across areas of learning
- to build on pupils' strengths and interests and develop their confidence in their capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively
- to enable pupils to think creatively and critically and to solve problems
- to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- to develop pupils' physical skills and encourage them to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe
- to encourage pupils to identify their preferred learning style but also be flexible and keen to develop others

Issues of learning and teaching are high on the professional agenda of the school and staff are regularly involved in discussions about such issues - on curriculum development, assessment, homework and the provision for individual needs - through whole school, academic board and departmental meetings and through working parties. We aim to use a wide range of teaching styles in response to the different learning styles of individuals. Heads of Department take responsibility for the management and monitoring of learning and teaching in their areas and members of the SMT take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching overall and the curriculum through the line management system.

Learning and teaching is supported by a well resourced Library in the Main School and Independent Learning Centre in the Sixth Form Centre and a well qualified Librarian.

The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is included within the curriculum at all key stages. All staff are asked to consider how pupils' learning in their subject area builds confidence and increases self-esteem. The SMSC dimension is particularly extended in PSHE, and RS and multicultural themes are explored in many subject areas. A mapping exercise is carried out at intervals across the curriculum.

Assemblies are held on three days each week and these provide further opportunities to explore spiritual and moral issues. In the extra-curricular programme the Christian youth groups and debating clubs are well attended. Charitable work features highly in the work of the school; pupils are encouraged to support local and national charities through voluntary work and fund-raising. Pupils are also aware of the global dimension, visiting school in various parts of the world and supporting pupils in Bangladesh. The school has links with schools in Spain, France, Germany, Egypt, China and the USA.

The school is committed to providing a planned programme of careers education, advice and guidance for all girls in years 9-13 in addition to the PSHE learning provision which is given across all years. The programme helps pupils become more self aware and enables them to leave school with personal skills and academic achievements to help them achieve their aspirations and make a successful transition into higher education and/or career. The national framework for careers guidance is followed as far as possible and there is input from the Independent Schools Careers Organisation and the local Connexions service.

By the end of the following Key stages all pupils will:

| | |
|-----|--|
| KS3 | <p>Have a greater awareness of themselves Know where the careers information is to be found Be aware of its implications towards GCSE options</p> |
| KS4 | <p>Choose and have chosen an appropriate route and acted to secure this option by researching the necessary information, advice and guidance. Be aware of their post-16 options and which might be best for them. Have participated in work experience or some work related learning. Know where the careers information centres are and how to use them. Know who the Head of Careers is and how to contact her. Complete ISCO psychometric tests and receive individual reports and interviews.</p> |
| KS5 | <p>Know who the Careers staff are, where to find the Careers reference library and how to use it. Have gained increased awareness of their options post18 and matched these to their personal ambitions and achievements Have realistic expectations of post-18 options Have an increased awareness of their personal attributes and skills and have developed a CV and action plan. Know how to use their future wise membership. Be aware of the Minerva network Know who to ask for help regarding careers advice and higher education. Continue with work experience where appropriate.</p> |

Pupils of all ages who have limited English are supported by specialist staff at all stages of their education.

Key Stage 3

The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 takes account of the National Curriculum and extends beyond it.

The various strands of Technology (textiles, printing and ceramics) are taught in a new course as part of a carousel with emphasis on designing and making a product, using new technologies, and evaluating the process and finished article. In Year 9 pupils enjoy participating in an off-site cookery course in a full catering kitchen during the Summer Term. Optional cookery skills courses are offered to all Key Stage 3 pupils during the Easter and Summer holidays.

In Year 7 pupils choose to study 2 languages from French, German and Spanish. They then study these languages until the end of Year 9. In Year 8 all pupils start a 2 year Latin course. Pupils who have English as a second language are given specialist support if parental approval is received. Specialist teaching is also available for dyslexic pupils. Additional language support is also provided if a pupil joins the school part way through a course.

The majority of lessons are taught in mixed ability form groups. The timetable follows a 5 x 1 hour period day, 25 periods per week, and the curriculum structure at Key Stage 3 is as follows:

| SUBJECT | NUMBER OF 1 HOUR LESSONS PER WEEK | | | FORM GROUPING unless indicated below |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|---------|--|
| | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | |
| Art | 1 | 1 | 1 | half forms in Y9 |
| Biology | 1.5 | 1 | 1.5 | two forms split between 3 staff in Y8 and 9 |
| Chemistry | 1.5 | 1 | 1.5 | two forms split between 3 staff in Y8 and 9 |
| Drama | 0.5 | - | 0.5 | |
| English | 2.5 | 3 | 3 | |
| 2 of French, German, Spanish | 2 x 2 | 2 x 2 | 2 x 1.5 | |
| Geography | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | |
| History | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | |
| ICT | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | |
| Learning to Learn | 0.5 | - | - | |
| Mathematics | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 groups- from November of Y7 based on ability |
| Music | 1 | 1 | 1 | Twilight course can be started in Y9, GCSE exam taken in Y10 |
| PSHE | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | |
| Physical Education | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Physics | 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | two forms split between 3 staff in Y8 and 9 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|-----|---|
| Religious Studies | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Technology | 1 | 1 | - | two forms split between 3 staff in Y8 and 9 |
| Latin | - | 1.5 | 1.5 | |

A two week timetable cycle operates so there are no ½ hour lessons

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 all pupils follow a core curriculum of English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science and a Foreign Language. All girls are encouraged to study at least one humanity (History, Geography and Religious Studies).

Ten subjects are normally taken at GCSE level at the end of Y11.

The following subjects are usually available as options at GCSE:

Art and Design, Business Studies, Drama, French, Geography, German, Greek, History, ICT, Latin, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Russian, Spanish.

Student choice is a priority and the timetable is drawn up to try and accommodate as many of the girls' first choices of subjects as possible.

In addition to GCSE subjects a carousel in PSHE, Careers and General Studies is also followed, covering study skills, health education, social and moral issues, economic understanding, politics, public institutions and local and world affairs.

Physical Education remains an important part of the curriculum (two hours per week) and is offered as an additional GCSE subject as well as in the Options system.

Full course GCSE subjects at Key Stage 4 have a timetable allocation of 2.5 x 1 hour lessons per subject with the exception of Mathematics (2 ½ hours in Y10 and 3 hours per week in Y11) and English (3 ½ hours in Y10 and 3 hours in Y11). The average GCSE teaching group size is 20.

Recommendations for entry to a lower tier at GCSE may be made on the basis of a girl's mock examination results. The student will be advised of these recommendations and parental agreement sought.

If it is felt appropriate a pupil may study a reduced number of GCSE subjects and have supported study time in the Library.

Sixth Form

Most of our Y11 students continue into the Sixth Form at Sheffield High School and we are pleased to welcome a number of new girls into our Sixth Form from other schools. The majority of students take 4 AS subjects although some take 5 or 3 AS subjects. In Y13 the vast majority of students continue with 3 subjects to A2. They may also choose to study AS General Studies or AS Critical Thinking. In addition, students take part in an enrichment programme covering personal development, work in the community, work experience, work shadowing and subject or employment conferences. Off-site cookery sessions in a full catering kitchen are also available for Year 12 and 13 students. These provide instruction in creating easy, cheap and nutritious meals in readiness for life at University. The tutorial programme throughout the Sixth Form is comprehensive,

comprising lectures, study skills programmes, preparation for University sessions and so on.

There are currently 26 subjects offered at AS and A2 level:

Art & Design, Business Studies, Classics: Classical Civilization. Latin, Drama & Theatre Studies, Economics, English Language, English Literature, Geography, Government & Politics, History, Information & Communication Technology, Mathematics and Further Mathematics, Modern Languages: French, German, Russian, Spanish, Music, Philosophy of Religion with Ethics, Physical Education, Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Physics, Psychology.

The AQA Baccalaureate is also available for those students wishing to extend their learning. As part of the Baccalaureate students follow an independent learning course, supported by a team of staff, to enable them to produce high quality Extended Projects. Open university modules are also offered to students through the Young Applicants Scheme to develop independent learning skills. The Science modules are particularly popular for students wishing to study medicine or a Science at University.

As at KS4, student choice is a priority and the timetable is drawn up to try and accommodate as many of the students' first choices of subjects as possible. The average size of teaching groups is 12 at AS level and 8 at A level.

AS subjects have a 4.5 x 1 hour lesson allocation per week and A2 subjects have 5 x 1 hour lessons.

There are entry requirements for the Sixth Form: a basic requirement of seven A * to C GCSE passes, including English and Mathematics, but also normally grade B or higher in the subjects to be studied at AS.

Options Advice

Students are asked to make choices about their GCSE, AS and A2 subjects. Guidance is provided as outlined below:

| CHOICE | GUIDANCE | TIMING |
|---------------|---|----------------------------------|
| GCSE options | Discussion in PSHE lessons, options booklet and information evening. | Spring Term of Y9 |
| AS options | Individual careers interview, sixth form options booklet, information morning and interviews with SMT, Head of Y11 or Head of Sixth. Post GCSE results interviews. | Autumn Term of Y11 August |
| A2 options | Tutorial sessions. Optional post AS results interview. | Spring Term of Y12 August |

Subject staff offer advice about how well a student is likely to cope with their subject and advice about combinations of subjects is available from members of the careers

department. The school will counsel a girl if, for example, her preferred combination seems too restrictive.

The school may need to remove a subject from the list of option choices if the numbers opting for the subject are considered not viable or not sufficient to provide a suitable educational experience. The school is committed to making every effort to accommodate each girl's preferred combination of subjects but should this not be possible advice on alternatives will be offered.

Changes to Options

If students wish to change their options they need to discuss the matter with the Director of Studies. It is not always possible to transfer a student to another group and the student must continue to attend all lessons in the originally agreed courses until such a time as the Director of Studies has ascertained that a move is desirable and possible and parents have been consulted.

Likewise if students wish to drop a subject they need to discuss the matter with the Head of Year and either the Head of Pastoral Care (for Key Stages 3 and 4) or the Head of Sixth/Director of Studies (for AS or A2 subjects). Sixth Form students will also be referred to the Head of Careers as career and higher education opportunities could be severely reduced. Parents will be consulted and their agreement sought before any final decision is reached.

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