

# The Curriculum at St. Paul's

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## Philosophy

*“The glory of God is each person fully alive.’ The curriculum at St Paul’s should encourage excellence and achievement by all pupils through the breadth of opportunity available, the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and the motivation that comes from good relationships between staff and pupils.”*

(A Vision for St Paul's)

## Curriculum Intent & Implementation

The Curriculum at St. Paul's is a framework for setting out the aims of the programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage. We will translate that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within our school context. We are committed to evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against both internal and external expectations.

At St. Paul's we recognise that God has called us to respect the dignity of each unique individual. We believe that education is a truly holistic process concerned with the development of the whole child. We believe that every child is capable of academic excellence. We aim to provide a wide range of experiences so that each individual is able to flourish and achieve their full potential. We aim to set high standards and we will demand the very best from the children in our care.

The curriculum at St. Paul's is designed to reflect the aims of the school's mission statement. The curriculum provides a holistic education in which we enable children to develop their personal gifts and talents, their spiritual, social, moral and emotional understanding of the world, as well as their academic knowledge and skills. This is achieved by designing a broad and balanced curriculum which is responsive to, and supportive of their needs and aspirations, fosters intellectual curiosity and academic achievement, and motivates them to grow to their full potential.

The Curriculum at St. Paul's is framed within our mission statement, is academically challenging and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences both inside and outside the classroom. We recognise that the curriculum is not just concerned with academic learning within the formal taught environment. Our curriculum values enrichment experiences such as extra-curricular activities, accredited courses such as Duke of Edinburgh and World Challenge, as well as a formal work experience entitlement for all, and a PHSE Programme designed to equip children with the knowledge and skills required to be successful citizens. We also aim to ensure that British values are promoted throughout the curriculum and that Careers education is a prominent feature so that children can see their learning in context.

From the beginning of Year 7 we aim that all our pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that also enables them to develop talents that will help them to become independent and curious learners. We aim to ensure that our curriculum prepares children fully for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life so that they can become active citizens in the community.

St. Paul's will continue to grow and develop into a centre for excellence in terms of the quality of teaching, the breadth of its curriculum, and the robust nature of its assessment of and target setting for pupils. We must, systematically, expand pupils' ability to learn and to strengthen their capacity to do so. We want pupils to become scholars of each subject, experts in the powerful knowledge that we have selected as part of the domain of each subject. We want pupils to know how to act when faced with situations for which they were not specifically prepared and we want this to apply to all pupils. Our aim must be to enable pupils to work at the edge of their capacity at each stage of their time at St Paul's so that we develop and strengthen their ability to learn. We know that learning is only successful, and fun, when it is challenging and the greatest progress is made by pupils when they are challenged robustly.

We must develop learning minds that have a thirst for knowledge and that are curious and questioning, bold and persistent, independent and convivial, imaginative and playful, thoughtful and careful and which learn from mistakes. Our approach to curriculum planning and the development of our pedagogy will create the conditions to enable pupils to develop the powerful knowledge, skills, capacity and language for learning. In this way pupils will prepare for a life immersed in learning.

If we aim to develop pupils as learners in each subject so that they are independent, self-directed, and self-motivated, then they cannot merely be passive recipients in the classroom. If they are to be critically reflective and have highly developed decision-making skills then they need to be a key part of the process of learning. They need to be critically reflective and have highly developed decision making skills so that they can play a full part in the community beyond St. Paul's.

We are committed to driving the acquisition and retention of knowledge through The Learning Talents and The Gifts We Grow. These frameworks underpin what we are trying to achieve at St. Paul's. We want to provide children with the powerful knowledge that they require in order to become scholars of each subject. We will make decisions about the knowledge and culturally rich language that children require. We will plan a curriculum sequence so that the knowledge is built in an effective way so that children make rapid progress. This will empower children to use their knowledge and skills so that they are able to play an active part as Christians in society who combat and eradicate injustice.

We are committed to planning for and developing both powerful knowledge and skills from the moment pupils join our community in Year 7. We aim to grow pupils into subject scholars, specialists and experts within each subject discipline. This will permeate all interactions within the classroom and beyond. The teacher must be aware of our pedagogical approach and adapt planning and delivery accordingly in a flexible way, addressing gaps swiftly. An essential aspect of this is the development of relationships and the teacher's knowledge and understanding of pupils. This means that learning conversations need to take place between teacher and pupil(s) and form essential parts of teaching reviews. If pupils are to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and capacity to learn that we want, then they will need guidance to help them to do so. Teachers will reflect to them, or with them, and pupils will reflect together on their current position or learning that they have done. Pupils will engage in a dialogue with teachers through the feedback process. Teachers will suggest, propose or agree the next steps in pupils' learning as aims, challenge questions or through incisive next steps targets. These can be carried out by formal mentoring, informal discussion and chance conversations. Support staff will support this through their intervention inside and outside the classroom.



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The importance of good and trusting relationships which see each pupil as a unique and redeemed child of God is essential if we are to be successful in our curriculum planning and pedagogical approach. Mentoring is central to our work in preparing pupils for life outside St. Paul's. It is clear that advice and guidance as well as mentoring and coaching should include an emphasis on social relationships as well as academic progress. This will also focus on pupil responsibility, organisation and commitment to developing pupils' independence.

Our curriculum aims to enable each pupil to develop the powerful knowledge, cultural capital, learning skills and capacities that we seek and enable them to make better than expected progress. This will continue to be based on the principle of breadth and depth to the curriculum. There will be a strong vocational curriculum in line with the vocational areas identified for development in Milton Keynes. The Post-16 curriculum will be inclusive and include both academic and vocational routes. There will be defined pathways through the curriculum for all pupils to enable them to have courses appropriate to them and the opportunity to make appropriate and rapid progress. There will be a diverse range of opportunities for all members of the curriculum to experience a rich a diverse programme of enrichment activities. There will be a strategic programme of careers related information and guidance that will support pupils in their preparation for their next steps beyond St. Paul's.

At St. Paul's we recognise the importance and value of both academic and vocational courses and aim to ensure that children follow a bespoke pathway that is appropriate to their needs. The curriculum is flexible to ensure that the needs of individuals, cohorts, the school and the local community are met. The curriculum will respond to national priorities and requirements. It will also be shaped by the needs of Milton Keynes as a growing city. These needs are currently outlined in the Milton Keynes Futures 2050 Commission vision for the development of the city and the Learning 2050 Report. This means that the curriculum at St Paul's must be vocationally relevant in curriculum content and subjects as well as in the approaches to teaching and learning that are used.

At Post 16 we aim to ensure that a diverse range of academic and vocational courses are available so that students can follow a bespoke pathway that is tailored to meet their individual needs. We are creative in how we implement our Post 16 curriculum to ensure that breadth and choice are protected and that enrichment and the development of core skills are valued alongside academic and vocational courses.

We also recognise that the personal development of our pupils plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve their full potential. Their happiness and well-being is secured through excellent pastoral care and this is complimented by a rich and diverse programme of PHSE and rewards as well as a focus on the Gospel Values. As such, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural enrichment of our children is at the heart of our curriculum.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales describes the 'centrality' of classroom Religious Education as a subject which should be considered the "core of the core curriculum", with the primary goal of increasing the knowledge and understanding of the Christian message for all pupils in Catholic Schools. The Bishops have mandated that pupils are entitled to Religious Education which constitutes 10 % of the taught week until the end of Year 11 and 5 % of the taught week in Sixth Form. At St Paul's, there is no doubt that the teaching of Religious Education is highly regarded and of central importance to the school. An outline of the curriculum allocated to the teaching of Religious Education can be found [here](#).

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of children and believe that all those involved in the education of a child should work in partnership with the family to achieve the best that is possible. We are committed to doing everything that we can to nurture and develop this partnership for the good of the children in our care. It is of vital importance for us to encourage parents to engage with their child's personal and academic development.

The curriculum at St. Paul's will be planned for progression over 5 years to enable a seamless transition between Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four. Where appropriate, this will become a 7 year curriculum to incorporate Key Stage Five. Our focus will be to ensure that subjects are taught in sufficient depth that children can become subject scholars, immersed in the richness of each subject domain regardless of the key stage within which they progress.

Our priority is to provide depth, breadth and balance through the curriculum. In order to maintain breadth, and ensure success for our pupils, we organise option choices at strategic points. The aim is to enable sufficient time so that subjects can be explored in the depth required to enable children to develop into subject scholars who become experts in the domain of the subject. We are clear that learning in Year 9 should not be the start of the study of GCSE courses and subject content. Rather it is a distinct year and should provide opportunities for pupils to explore the wider knowledge and concepts of the subject domain in depth. We aim to lay strong foundations for Years 10 & 11, and beyond, by providing children with a sequence of learning throughout the 7 year curriculum so that they can become scholars in each subject.

We are committed to enabling pupils the opportunity to study Expressive Arts, Technology and EBacc Subjects throughout Years 7 to 11. Our aim is to ensure that we continue to enable in excess of 85% of pupils study the English Baccalaureate through to GCSE. We have been committed to this since before its inception as part of Government policy. This is because we firmly believe that the areas of learning incorporated within the EBacc are fundamental for the children that we teach. We have ensured our commitment to these subjects over the 5 year curriculum with clear pathways through to the 7 year curriculum. This includes a commitment to GCSE and A Level Music, with St. Paul's entering more children for these subjects than any other school in the local area. In Year 7 pupils study 4 Expressive Arts subjects. In Year 8 they study 3 Expressive Arts Subjects. In Year 9 to 11 they study 2 Expressive Arts Subjects. Pupils study Technology throughout the 5 year curriculum. We believe that this programme ensures that we maintain depth, breadth and balance for our pupils. We do not offer a carousel curriculum for these subjects as we believe that this would only provide a fleeting exposure to the subject domains and it would not allow these subjects to be explored in sufficient depth. Our commitment to Expressive Arts and Technology is much deeper than what a carousel would offer. We ensure that children are exposed to creativity throughout the curriculum and have the opportunity to develop their practical skills in depth. Creativity and practical skills are disciplines realised within the subjects that all pupils study throughout the 5 year curriculum.

All children have an entitlement to study two humanities subjects through to the end of Year 11. We believe that these subjects add to the richness and diversity of the curriculum, ensuring that pupils develop a significant understanding of how the world around them has been shaped and developed. This will enable them to use this knowledge and understanding to shape and influence the world around them in the future.

We are also committed to ensuring that pupils are taught a Modern Foreign Language throughout Years 7 to 11. We believe that learning a language is fundamental for the holistic

development of our pupils because the very study itself ignites a desire to understand and involve ourselves with the different people and cultures of the world. Language is a uniquely human gift, which has made us the dominant force on the planet. Our commitment to the study of Languages will ensure that our pupils will develop excellent communication skills which will enable them to make a significant contribution to the world around them.

We also introduce the possibility for pupils to select from a small number of additional 'option' subjects. These subjects have been selected because they offer a richness and diversity to our overall curriculum, whilst offering a secure pathway through to Post 16 and beyond. We have also taken into account the future employment needs in the local area when selecting these courses. Each of these 'option' subjects aims to ensure that our children develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and talents which will enable them to be active global citizens in the future.

At St Paul's we are committed to developing students who leave St Paul's as upstanding citizens within our community; we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are given every opportunity to be successful and thrive within their lives both in school and when they leave. A bespoke PSHE programme, planned in consultation with our pupils and tailored to our context, will equip students with the knowledge and skills to make safe and well-informed decisions. We aim to develop pupils who will actively question and contribute to the world around them, whilst developing a set of Christian moral values and beliefs that will be their guiding principles throughout their lives.

We are committed to a pedagogical approach that promotes academic excellence for all learners at St. Paul's. We have high expectations of every pupil, regardless of their ability. The curriculum intent is implemented through planning and delivering sequences of lessons that are determined to stretch the most able child in the classroom whilst ensuring that swift and effective intervention and, where appropriate, differentiation, that enables everyone to achieve to their full potential. The curriculum will enable progression of both knowledge and Learning Talents to enable children to make excellent progress and to strive for scholarship.

We recognise that the attainment, progress and success of pupils is primarily based on the development of excellent relationships between teacher and pupils. We will continue to use Positive Behaviour Management as a structure to support this. This is underpinned by our Catholic ethos and the Gospel values of love and forgiveness. We will create the best environment possible to enable the curriculum to be delivered effectively.

Each department will identify the subject knowledge and skills, and the application of these, required for success in their subject. Each teacher will use the Learning Talents as the learning skills framework that pupils must and will develop over time as the basis of independent learners and a foundation for success in higher education and the world of work. The development of subject knowledge and skills (and the application of these), Learning Talents, The Gifts We Grow and examination skills and techniques will be an integral part of schemes of learning. They will be key principles underpinning the school and department teaching house styles and the pedagogical approach routinely used within each classroom. This approach will be flexible in order to adapt to our context and will start from what is required to enable every child to succeed, make more than expected progress and do the best that is possible.

We acknowledge that an effective transition process makes a significant difference to a child's educational experience. We have established strong partnerships with local primary schools. We invest significant time ensuring that we have identified individual strengths and established a secure baseline prior to arrival at St. Paul's. We then plan our curriculum to



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ensure that children are able to make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points. We identify any gaps in their understanding and skills very swiftly and ensure that the curriculum provides strategic opportunities to ensure that those gaps are addressed securely.

### **Curriculum Impact and Review**

The impact of our curriculum will be analysed through a triangulation of evidence. This will include external validated data, internal pupil achievement data, the Peer Review Process, The Teacher Mentoring Process, Pupil Mentoring Outcomes and annual surveys.

The curriculum will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that our provision matches the specific needs of the current cohorts, whilst continuing to provide sufficient depth, breadth and balance for all children in our care. The review will be conducted by all stakeholders. The review will also include a consideration of the changes to the local and national priorities to ensure that these are reflected in our provision. We will take an outward looking approach to reviewing our curriculum offer by looking at the provision in schools with a similar context. This will ensure that we continue to offer an excellent curriculum that enables all pupils to do the best that is possible.