



St. Mary's Grammar School, Belfast

CURRICULUM

POLICY

April 2017



St Mary's Grammar School

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Rationale

The curriculum of the school seeks to fulfil both the educational aims specified in the School Development Plan and the complementary school aims which are stated in the Prospectus. In addition to the compulsory subjects specified for study at each key stage, it is the policy of the school to provide an enriched curriculum for all pupils, offering optional subjects as appropriate and making a wide choice of extra-curricular activities available to all age groups.

Overall Aims

Our aim in St Mary's is to provide the richest personal experience possible in a secure, fulfilling and challenging environment for all of our pupils. To this end, our school has agreed the following strategic goals to promote the education of every pupil:

- To ensure that our ethos based on Christian values is a key priority for the whole school community and to ensure that this inclusive approach will develop the confidence of all;
- To improve the quality of learning and teaching by embedding AfL and extend active and independent learning practices across all subject areas;
- To further develop the sharing of best practice in learning and teaching across the curriculum;
- To raise the level of pupil achievement at all levels and to further embed the culture of tracking including improved target-setting by staff and pupils;
- To improve the quality of the pupil experience and to further embed and develop the Pupil Voice;
- To promote the school community by further developing the parent link and the links with educational partners at primary and post-primary levels.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

At Key Stage 3 (Years 8-10) the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and has fully implemented the revised curriculum as required by the Education Order 2006, including Learning for Life and Work (incorporating Home Economics, Personal Development, Local and Global Citizenship and Education for Employability), Skills and Capabilities (incorporating Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) and the General learning areas.

Subjects and Allocated Periods at Key Stage 3

Year 8															
Art	Dra	Lang	Geo	Hist	ICT	Mat	Mus	RE	Sci	Tec	PE	Eng	LLW	Lib	LS
2	1	4	3	3	1	5	2	3	4	2	2	4	2	1	1

Year 9															
Art	Dra	Lan	Geo	Hist	ICT	Mat	Mu s	RE	Sci	Tec	PE	Eng	LL W	LS	
2	1	4	3	3	1	5	2	3	5	2	2	4	2	1	

Year 10															
Art	Dra	Lan	Geo	Hist	ICT	Mat	Mu s	RE	Sci	Tec	PE	Eng	LL W	LS	
2	1	3	3	3	1	5	2	3	5	2	2	4	3	1	

Points of note:

1. Pupils choose 1 language from a selection of French, Spanish, Irish and Gaeilge (for Bunscoil pupils)
2. Practical subjects are not taught in Form Classes

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

At Key Stage 4 (Years 11-12) the school aims to address the following:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable pupils to have access to studying a range subjects that are in their sphere of interest.
- Provide a curriculum that is accessible for pupils who display evident barriers to learning but enables us to stretch those pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Provide pupils with a curriculum that provides appropriate and viable pathways for transition into Key Stage 5 at St Mary's and then into further education or employment.
- Deliver a curriculum that will meet the Entitlement Framework and is realistic deliver with our current staff/resources.

To achieve these aims, the school streams Key Stage 4 pupils into bands which will dictate the number of GCSEs studied (from 7 to 10 GCSEs) and available subject choice. Banding decisions are completed through an extensive analysis of available data, including Progress in English and Mathematics assessments, Year 9 & 10 ARP Tracking data and staff feedback for pupil suitability for Further Maths, English Literature & Single Award Science.

Subject List for GCSE (commencing September 2017)

Mathematics (G)	Further Maths (G)	Digital Technology (G)	Spanish (G)	Religion (G)
LLW (G)	Statistics (G)	Performing Arts (A)	Irish (G)	Technology (A)
English (G)	Cert. In Personal Finance (A)	Media (A)	Gaeilge (G)	Sports Studies (G)
SA Science (G) OR DA Science (G)	Cert. In Digital Applications (A)	Contemporary Crafts (A)	Geography (G)	Leisure & Tourism (A)
	Art & Design (G)	Business & Com. (A)	History (G)	MIA (A)
English Lit. (G)	Computing (G)	French (G)	Music (G)	Business Studies (G)

- 30 subjects in total – 21 General/9 Applied (Entitlement Framework compliant).
- Subjects in green are studied by all pupils at GCSE. In addition, all pupils will study non-examination Religion and PE.
- Subjects in yellow are in the core for pupils but are only studied by selected groups of pupils; these subjects are not available as a choice.
- Subjects not highlighted are in the options pool and are generally available as a choice for pupils, but some restrictions apply for certain bands and subjects.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum

To obtain entry to Year 13 and Key Stage 5, pupils must obtain at least **thirty three points** from six GCSE grades. This is the equivalent of three B and three C grades at GCSE.

(A* = 8, A = 7, B = 6, C = 5).

These must include English or Mathematics at grade C or better. To study BTEC Level 3 in Sport, pupils must obtain at least **thirty points** from six GCSE grades. This is the equivalent of six C grades at GCSE.

Some subjects at AS level have specific entrance requirements which are reviewed annually (see below for criteria as of February 2017). These criteria were introduced to allow pupils to select subjects which are appropriate to their skill set, their aspirations and abilities. After receiving their GCSE results in August, each Y12 pupil wishing to transfer into Y13 has an individual meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and their parents to discuss subject choices. The subject entrance criteria are central to these discussions and this allows our pupils to succeed and progress to the next stage of their learning.

- Mathematics: A or A* in GCSE Maths and/or at least a grade C in Further Mathematics.
- Biology and/or Chemistry: at least AA in Double Award Science (Modular Scores).
- Physics: AA in Double Award Science (Module) plus the criteria for Maths.
- A Level Computing: Grade B in GCSE Mathematics or a Grade C in GCSE Computing.

Subject List for AS Level (commencing September 2017)

Art	Computing	French	Further Mathematics	Religious Studies
Biology	Design & Technology	Geography	Media Studies	Spanish
Business Studies	Drama	Government & Politics	Moving Image Arts	BTEC National Diploma in Sport
Extended Cert. Applied Business Studies	Digital Technology	History	Music	
	English Literature	Irish	Physics	
Chemistry	Financial Services	Mathematics	Applied Sports Science	

Year 12 pupils choose their AS subjects from the list above and we fit blocks around pupil choice. Our aim is to maximise pupil choice and allow pupils the freedom to select subjects they wish to study.

Transition from Year 13 to Year 14

This transition is based on pupils achieving good grades at AS Level, as well as meeting the general expectations of good attendance, punctuality and behaviour.

Pupils need a minimum of 3 Grade Cs (or equivalent) at AS level to transfer into Year 14, however grade Bs would be considered a minimum if the pupil needs to achieve high grades.

Entitlement Framework (EF) at Key Stage 5

Through participation in the West Belfast Area Learning Community, St Mary's works alongside other local schools to ensure that pupils in the West Belfast area have access to a wider selection of AS and A2 subjects than those available to them in their home schools. St Mary's acts as the providing school for a number of subjects. Not all of our current subjects are accessed by EF pupils every year but we accommodate EF pupils where we have space in classes and where the EF pupils achieve the same entrance criteria as our own pupils.

Financial Viability at Key Stage 4 and 5

Due to current economic and budgetary constraints, it is imperative that we achieve best value for money for each of our pupils. In the case where there is a low uptake of pupil numbers for a GCSE or AS class we will review the viability of running the class. In some cases where class sizes are low we will run classes on a reduced period allocation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of Department

HODs work with colleagues to promote and sustain a consistently high quality of teaching and learning in their subject and to ensure the best possible outcomes by pupils. They ensure that appropriate Schemes of Work and Syllabi are in place, and used by colleagues, in all year groups which are in accordance with Department of Education guidance. Careful monitoring of pupil performance is also carried out.

Subject Teachers

Under the direction of their HOD subject teachers deliver the appropriate Schemes of Work, ensuring pupils are given the opportunity to gain their best possible outcomes.

Heads of Year/Heads of School

HOYs take an overview of each pupil's progress at each assessment. If required they communicate with parents and pupils to help put in place strategies for improvement.

