

# **CURRICULUM POLICY 2017**

Withington Girls' School is committed to providing a stimulating curriculum, which is appropriate to the high academic ability of the intake. The curriculum, along with diverse extracurricular activities seeks to broaden pupils' interests providing a wide-ranging and balanced educational experience.

Withington Girls' School believes that learning is an ongoing process and seeks to establish an environment where lifelong learning is encouraged amongst all members of the school community. The school aims to achieve this by inspiring all individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and concepts whilst developing the ability to think analytically, critically and creatively.

*The Curriculum is designed to:*

- Create a caring and supportive learning environment in which every member of the school community, including pupils and staff, is well-known and well-supported and in which their individual needs are met.
- Ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning across a broad curriculum to help girls to an excellent standard of academic achievement; to foster an intellectual curiosity, a love of learning, independence of mind and individual responsibility.
- Provide opportunities for teamwork, leadership and community service through the broadest possible range of activities, both within and outside the classroom.
- Encourage every girl to acquire the skills, confidence, knowledge and experience to extend her aspirations and realise her potential in terms of personal, social, spiritual, moral, cultural, academic and physical development.
- Encourage respect for self and others, acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of others within the School, local communities and globally.
- Encourage all girls to make appropriate choices and decisions and prepare them for higher education and future careers and for the responsibilities and expectations of adult life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In order to achieve this, the curriculum takes account of the following areas:

## **The Learning Experience**

In order to ensure that the pupils experience a varied and interesting curriculum it is designed to be broad and well-balanced. Details of the curriculum content for different years can be found in the Curriculum Plan, but pupils of compulsory school age will gain full-time supervised experience of the following educational areas:

- Linguistic (including English, French, Spanish, German, Latin and Greek).
- Mathematical.
- Scientific (including Biology, Chemistry and Physics).
- Technological (including DT, Food Technology, Textiles and ICT).
- Human and Social (including History, Geography and Religious Studies).
- Physical (including netball, hockey, lacrosse, gymnastics, swimming, trampolining and other sports and games).
- Aesthetic and Creative (including Art, dance, Drama, Music, literature and a range of extra-curricular activities).

Pupils above compulsory school age receive a programme of activities appropriate to their needs. This will include not only the academic subjects of their choice, but also a Research Skills programme and compulsory time dedicated to one or more of:

- Extended Project Qualification.
- Any other research-based, accredited courses that they choose.
- Enrichment Courses

This is in order that they retain breadth, have opportunities to extend their learning beyond the examination specifications and develop skills useful for higher education, employment and lifelong learning.

Withington Girls' School is committed to ensuring that pupils' learning is systematically supported, guided and encouraged so that they become effective learners, understand how they learn, possess a range of effective study techniques and are able to take responsibility for their own learning.

*Pupils are expected to:*

- Bring previous experiences, expectations and styles to their learning.
- Develop academically, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually at a pace that is challenging but suitable for them.
- Take account of feedback and information given on their progress in school.
- Be actively involved in their own learning.

*Teaching should:*

- Build self-esteem and encourage respect for all other individuals.
- Include all pupils in a variety of opportunities so that every individual has appropriate access to the whole curriculum.
- Encourage pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- Teach pupils a range of interpersonal learning skills to enable them to make full use of the curriculum offered.
- Promote positive attitudes to learning and self-discipline.
- Encourage the development of critical thinking.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to take an active part in their learning.
- Encourage pupils to become reflective learners.
- Maintain an attractive physical environment to motivate pupils' learning.

### **Teachers and Teaching**

Withington Girls' School believes that the purpose of teaching is to promote active learning, and that teaching should allow pupils to develop independent study and research skills where that does not compromise their ability to make the progress required by, for example, examination specifications. Teaching should encourage pupils to participate and contribute to lessons and homework tasks in ways that challenge and extend their existing knowledge. The School understands that the learning process is affected by pupils' life experience, including the influence of parents and the influence of the wider community. In so far as it is possible, the School aims to allow pupils to utilise the positive aspects of these experiences to enhance their learning and to negate the effects of negative experiences that would hinder learning.

The school aims to ensure that teaching is of the highest possible standard, that it is well resourced and takes place within an ordered and supportive environment. There is an expectation that teachers will develop their own skills, knowledge and understanding of teaching, through internal and external training courses and by taking initiative to develop their teaching methods and styles to take account of new research, technological developments and current thinking on best practice. There is a further expectation that they will share good practice within and between departments. Senior leaders will ensure that the organisation of the school day and year support good teaching and that other school policies and systems support this Curriculum Policy.

*Teachers must:*

- Ensure the programme of study in their subject has breadth and balance and provides progression and continuity.
- Plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate their courses effectively;
- Employ a range of teaching strategies to include the learning needs of all pupils.
- Assess regularly each pupil's learning progress in line with performance indicators.
- Deploy all available resources appropriately to promote the most effective teaching.
- Ensure that pupils experiencing specific difficulties with their work are offered additional support.
- Ensure to the best of their ability that pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education.

**Learning Support**

The support of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) within the context of Withington Girls' School aims to encourage all girls to achieve academically in relation to their ability and to thrive socially and in extracurricular activities in order to fulfil their potential. The School aims to promote inclusion and access to the curriculum, whilst embracing diversity and caring for the needs of the individual.

*The school will:*

- Provide appropriately for pupils with SEND in accordance with the Special Educational Needs Policy.
- Where a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs from a local authority, it is the local authority's responsibility to ensure that an annual review takes place for this statement. However, it is the policy of Withington Girls' School to check that these reviews take place and to provide an education which fulfils the requirements of their statement.

**English as an Additional Language**

Withington aims to enhance the learning experience of all its pupils, including those who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). The School seeks to identify girls requiring assistance in this area as quickly as possible, and to address their needs through the targeted work of the Learning Support Team. Where appropriate, this may include group sessions or one-to-one sessions with the Learning Support Mentor.

**Gifted and Talented**

All members of the school community including the teaching and support staff, Senior Leadership Team, and Governors, are fully committed to meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils within the school.

The school will:

Identify and provide appropriately for pupils identified as Gifted or Talented in accordance with the Gifted and Talented Policy through the targeted work of subject teachers and extra-curricular provision.

### **Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education**

Withington Girls' School is committed to providing an effective PSHCE programme to all pupils. This programme should be delivered at a time and in the manner that is most appropriate to the age and the needs of the pupils. Details can be found in the PSHCE Handbook.

### **SMSC**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural values are central to life at Withington. SMSC is a thread that runs through the pastoral system, the academic curriculum, the extra-curricular programme, PSHCE teaching, assemblies and all aspects of the day to day life of the School. We take regular opportunities to celebrate the diversity of our School community and we continue to enjoy and develop strong links with other Schools and communities in our own local area and across the globe.

### **Careers**

Withington Girls' School provides ongoing careers advice to pupils through the Careers Department and in terms of opportunities, both formal and informal, to discuss subject options and their impact on future choices with relevant members of the school community. This advice is tailored to the individual needs of the pupils and enables them:

- to know how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work
- to gain information about training, education and occupations beyond school.
- to obtain individual guidance
- to have some work experience

### **Extra-Curricular and Enrichment**

Withington Girls' School believes that extracurricular and other enrichment activities play a vital role in the provision of a broad and balanced educational experience. It therefore provides opportunities for girls to develop leadership and team working skills through the provision of a wide and varied extracurricular and enrichment programme, including Citizenship Days which all the girls participate in, sports teams, dance competitions, theatrical productions, orchestras and ensembles, Model United Nations and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, debating as well as a variety of subject specific activities. Participation in these activities is monitored to ensure that all girls take advantage of the opportunities available at school and that they balance these commitments with the requirements of their academic work.

### **The Timetable**

The school day consists of eight periods, four each in the morning and the afternoon, totalling 40 periods per week. Most periods last 35 minutes but those immediately after morning and afternoon registration last 40 minutes. Most subjects are taught in double periods to allow sufficient time for practical work or further development of ideas. The learning of language however, is facilitated by frequent exposure so two modern languages and Latin are often taught in single periods.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 study towards GCSE examinations, with all pupils being entered for the European Computer Driving License in Year 10. Sixth Form pupils typically study four AS subjects and three full A Levels, meaning that they choose to drop a subject at the end of Year 12. Some pupils elect to study five subjects in Year 12, which is allowed as long as Further Maths constitutes two of them and their teachers are satisfied that they are making good progress in every subject. Some pupils choose to study four subjects in Year 13, which is again subject to their teachers being convinced that this is not having a negative impact on their progress in any subject.

*This policy is reviewed annually.*

*July 2017*

## Year 7 Curriculum 2017

The Third Form Curriculum is based broadly on the National Curriculum and is intended to give the girls breadth and balance. There is no setting for any subjects and girls attend classes in their form groups. Some of the practical subjects benefit by being taught in smaller numbers and the form groups are subdivided for these periods.

Girls are allowed a free choice of any two modern languages from French, German and Spanish.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of Periods</b>
<b>English</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Modern Language 1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Modern Language 2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Latin</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PSHCE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Biology*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Chemistry*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Physics*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Geography</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Religious Studies</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Music</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Design Technology *</b>	<b>2♦ for half the year</b>
<b>Food and Textile Technology *</b>	<b>2♦ for half the year</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Drama</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>4♦</b>

\*Subjects marked with an asterisk are taught as  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  form groups

♦Subjects marked with a diamond are taught as double periods.

Each form has 4 periods of PE, with one of the periods in the summer term allocated to swimming.

## **Year 8 Curriculum 2017**

In Year 8, the emphasis is still on balance and no subjects are dropped at this stage, although the number of lessons per week varies slightly in some cases from Year 7.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of Periods</b>
<b>English</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Language 1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Language 2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Latin</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Biology</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Physics</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Geography</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Religious Studies</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Music</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Design Technology *</b>	<b>2♦ for half a year</b>
<b>Food and Textile Technology*</b>	<b>2♦ for half a year</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Drama</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PSHCE</b>	<b>1</b>

\*Subjects marked with an asterisk are taught as  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  form groups.

♦Subjects marked with a diamond are taught as double periods.

All Mathematics lessons are timetabled at the same time so that the Year can be divided into three sets, based on their ability. All other lessons are taught in forms.

Modern languages follow directly from the girls' choices at the beginning of Third Form.

## Year 9 Curriculum 2017

The Year 9 curriculum is designed to maintain breadth so that the girls have the widest possible choice of GCSE subjects in Years 10 and 11.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of Periods</b>
<b>English</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>2 (option)</b>
<b>German</b>	<b>2 (option)</b>
<b>Spanish</b>	<b>2 (option)</b>
<b>Latin</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Biology*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Chemistry*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Physics*</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Geography</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>Religious Studies</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Music*</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Design Technology *</b>	<b>2♦ for half a year</b>
<b>Food and Textile Technology*</b>	<b>2♦ for half a year</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Drama</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>2♦</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PHSCE</b>	<b>1</b>

\*Subjects marked with an asterisk are taught as half-form groups or smaller groups.

♦Subjects marked with a diamond are taught as double periods.

This Year group is divided into four sets for Mathematics based on ability. This allows for a smaller number of pupils in set four so that these girls can have greater individual attention.

Pupils study two Modern Foreign languages, which are determined by their choices on entry to the School.

## Year 10 Curriculum 2017

By February half-term of Year 9, pupils will have chosen which subjects they wish to study as GCSEs and they will continue with these subjects for next two years. In all, they will take 9 GCSEs at the end of the Year 11 and will also gain the European Computer Driving License in Year 10.

Some subjects are still compulsory and all girls study English and English Literature, Mathematics, at least one Modern Language, ICT and either Core and Additional Science or the three Separate Sciences. In addition, the Lower Fifth have a timetabled PSHCE lesson which is used for discussion of important issues and also allows some time for careers guidance.

Subject	Number of Periods
English/English Literature	5
Mathematics	4
PSHCE	1

There are four sets of each of the above subjects, other than PSHCE, which is taught in forms. Mathematics sets are arranged according to ability so that pupils who find the subject more difficult can have greater individual attention. English sets are organised to give one higher ability group, two sets of mixed ability and one lower ability group. ICT groups are the same as the Science groups.

If pupils opt for Core and Additional (Double Award) Science, then they will have **3 periods** each of **Biology, Chemistry and Physics**. In addition, they study one more GCSE option than pupils who study separate Sciences. Pupils who have chosen to study the separate sciences will have **4 periods** each of **Biology, Chemistry and Physics**.

Pupils in 2017 will also have selected one subject to take as a GCSE from each of the four columns below. These columns are organised in order to allow the greatest number of pupils to study their preferred subjects, with the stipulation that they must choose to study at least one modern foreign language.

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Art 1	Food 1	Art 2	Food 2
Science	French 1	CS	Geography 2
Spanish 1	History 1	Drama	German
	Music	French 2	History 3
	RS	Geography 1	Spanish 3
	Spanish 2	History 2	Latin
		Latin	

Pupils all have non-examined **PE** lessons, the number of which will depend on the options which they choose. They will also take a general, non-examined course in **Religion and Philosophy** for half of the year.

Pupils also have the opportunity this year to complete a GCSE in Classical Greek as a non-timetabled subject. The lessons will take place at lunch time and after school.

## **Year 11 Curriculum 2017**

The curriculum followed by Year 11 follows that studied in Year 10. The subjects that pupils chose as Options in Year 10 continue into Year 11 and subject groups normally remain the same.

English, Mathematics, Science and a Modern Foreign Language continue to be compulsory, though there are five Mathematics lessons per week.

Year 11 have a timetabled lesson in their form groups to follow their PSHCE programme and they also continue to receive advice on careers.

All pupils have some timetabled PE lessons although the actual number of periods varies because of the differential between Core and Additional Science and Separate Science.

Pupils in Year 11 are allocated PE lessons or a non-examined course in Religion and Philosophy. The decision is based upon whether the particular pupil studies RS at GCSE level and has fewer than 2 lessons of PE (including GCSE PE), in which case she does extra PE; or whether the particular pupil does not do RS at GCSE Level, in which case she does R & P unless this means that she will receive an inadequate number of PE lessons.

In addition, pupils will receive one lesson per week of 'Skills' which is arranged as a carousel and comprises critical thinking, arts appreciation, study skills and sports leadership.

## **Sixth Form Curriculum 2017**

- In Year 12, most pupils study four subjects, though they have the option to study three subjects and complete a Level 3 Extended Project Qualification. Girls wishing to study Further Mathematics may do so, but the whole course equates to two of the four subjects. Each subject is allocated eight periods of 35-40 minutes per week. There are no requirements to study any particular subject(s).
- In Year 13, most pupils will continue with all of their Year 12 subjects to full A Level, although some who studied four subjects in Year 12 may choose to drop one and continue with three, and most who undertook an EPQ in Year 12 should have finished it by the end of that year. There are extra lessons for those applying to Oxbridge, preparing for Olympiads, or keen to extend their knowledge beyond the A-level specifications.

The following subjects are offered to A level:

Art	French	Mathematics
Biology	Geography	Further Mathematics
Chemistry	German	Music
Computer Science	Government & Politics	Physics
Drama & Theatre Studies	Greek	Philosophy & Theology
Economics	History	Psychology
English Language	Latin	Spanish
English Literature		

- A new Enrichment programme was introduced for Year 12 students in September 2016, in place of the General Studies course that was previously undertaken. The programme will feed through into Year 13 for the first time in 2017. The course contains core elements of PSHCE, Careers, Financial Literacy, Mental Health Awareness and a Speakers Programme. All girls are expected to take part in some physical activity and some voluntary service. Beyond those compulsory elements, girls have a choice of a range of bespoke subjects, which are not examined and which run for ten weeks each. As far as possible, the Enrichment programme is timetabled to allow as many student options as possible to be accommodated.

### **Sixth Form Subject Choices**

Following the results of the GCSE mock examinations, current pupils will have a personal interview with the Careers Department to discuss their future plans.

Pupils will then be required to make firm decisions regarding their A Level choices in February. The subjects are arranged in ‘blocks’, based on the subject combinations chosen by the girls. Most will be able to study their selected subjects, but there may be a very few girls whose preferred options cannot be fitted into the blocking system along with the choices made by other students.

Some pupils may change their minds after making their choices. This is, of course, understandable and will be accommodated as long as subject sets are not full (we aim to keep group sizes to a maximum of 14, although in some circumstances and with the agreement of teaching staff, some groups may be slightly larger), and the combination of subjects is possible within the existing blocking system. However, pupils must bear in mind that the timetable is constructed on the basis of which subjects they initially choose, and group sizes are balanced at that point. Some changes may not be possible after the

timetable has been constructed because of the implications for other groups of girls switching between blocks. This especially applies to practical subjects such as Sciences, where the ability to run certain experiments may be compromised in larger groups. Once the term starts, girls will be expected to stick with their choices for at least two weeks to ensure they do not make hasty decisions.

*Reviewed August 2017*

*Ian McKenna*

*Director of Studies*