

CURRICULUM POLICY 2019

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 21st Century.

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

The Learning Experience

The curriculum is designed to be broad and well-balanced. Details of the curriculum content for different years can be found in the Curriculum Plan below, 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 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 can 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 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 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 best facilitated by frequent exposure so modern languages and Latin are often taught in single periods.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 study towards GCSE examinations. They are required to take GCSEs in:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics

They must choose either to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as three separate GCSEs or to take the Trilogy Science GCSE, in which all three disciplines are studied and which counts as two GCSEs.

They are then given free choices for their other GCSE subjects (three choices for those taking Separate Sciences and four choices for those doing Trilogy). They are required to choose at least one Modern Foreign Language among their GCSE subjects.

Sixth Form pupils choose whether to study three A Levels or four A Levels. They are advised on this by their subject teachers and the Director of Studies. Those opting to study Further Maths at A Level are encouraged to study two further subjects; those opting to take three A Levels are encouraged to undertake an Extended Project Qualification. Beyond this, they are given a free choice of which subjects to study from those the range that the school offers.

This policy is reviewed annually.

*Ian McKenna
Director of Studies
August 2019*

Year 7 Curriculum 2019

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.

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

*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 2019

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.

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

*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 2019

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.

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

*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 Third Form.

Year 10 Curriculum 2019

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, plus Further Maths for those who are able.

Some subjects are still compulsory and all girls study English and English Literature, Mathematics, at least one Modern Language, ICT and either Trilogy 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	5
PSHCE	1

There are four **groups** 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.

If pupils opt for Trilogy 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 2019/20 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.

A	B	C	D
Art	Computer Science	Drama	Food & Nutrition
Design Technology	History	Geography	French
Food & Nutrition	Religious Studies	German	History
Geography	Separate Science	History	Latin
Music	Spanish	Physical Education	Separate Science
Separate Science		Spanish	Spanish

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 to choose one Enrichment activity from the following list:

- Duke of York IDEA Award
- GCSE Greek
- Higher Project Qualification
- PE
- Independent Study

Enrichment activities take one lesson per week, with GCSE Greek requiring a commitment to additional lessons at lunch time and after school. The HPQ also requires students to put in extra time beyond lessons.

Year 11 Curriculum 2019

The curriculum followed by Year 11 follows that studied in Year 10, with the exception that the Enrichment period is replaced by an extra English lesson per week for all pupils. 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.

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 Trilogy Science and Separate Science.

Pupils in Year 11 also follow a non-examined course in Religion and Philosophy.

Sixth Form Curriculum 2019

- In Year 12, most pupils choose four subjects, though they have the option to study three subjects. 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, a number of 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.

An Enrichment programme runs in Years 12 and 13. The course contains core elements of PSHCE, Careers, Financial Literacy and Mental Health Awareness. There are extra lessons for those applying to Oxbridge, preparing for Olympiads, or keen to extend their knowledge beyond the A-level specifications. 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 choices made by other students. Blocks for 2019/20 are:

A	B	C	D
Chemistry	Art	Biology	Biology
Computer Science	Biology	Chemistry	Economics
Geography	Chemistry	English Language	Latin
Maths	Economics	English Literature	Maths
Philosophy	English Literature	Further Maths	Physics
Physics	French	History	Politics
Psychology	Further Maths	Maths	Psychology
Spanish	Maths	Politics	
	Music		
	Theatre Studies		

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.

Reviewed August 2019

Ian McKenna

Director of Studies