CURRICULUM POLICY 2021

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Aims:
It is our policy to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
National changes in the curriculum are monitored to provide an exciting, engaging and challenging curriculum that seeks the highest level of attainment from all our children, taking their learning beyond the boundaries of the National Curriculum.
The Junior School selects girls according to their academic ability and the curriculum is developed with this in mind. The pupils' interests are extended through a wealth of extra-curricular clubs and activities, trips and visitors to school and enrichment days.

Objectives

- To provide every girl with the highest quality educational framework and the opportunities to realise her full individual potential - academically, physically, creatively and morally.
- To develop sound work habits and attitudes to learning, whilst preparing pupils thoroughly for entrance to the Senior School.
- To provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of our pupils including those with any special educational needs (please see SEN Policy).
- To provide opportunities in which pupils will acquire skills in speaking, and listening, literacy and numeracy.
- To provide personal, social and health education which reflects the School's aims and ethos.
- To provide a curriculum in which all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and to ensure its delivery through effective teaching and learning strategies in order to stimulate high achievement and the full realisation of each pupil's potential.
- To prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life by equipping them with the personal, learning and thinking skills they will need to succeed.
- To develop a dynamic curriculum with the capacity for flexible responses to national and local educational initiatives and social change.
- To help enable all our pupils to achieve more by being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and enjoying economic well-being regardless of their background or circumstance.
- To prepare pupils for a full and active role within British Society through the promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The curriculum does not undermine fundamental British Values.
- These objectives are supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work.

2 Curriculum Overview

- The Junior School educates children aged 7 to 11. Pupils are class based but some lessons are taught by subject specialists (some of which are Senior School staff) or by class teachers in specialist rooms in the Senior School.
- The curriculum is broad, comprising: English, Mathematics, Science, MFL, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Classics, Art, Design & Technology, Music, Drama, PSHE, Thinking and Learning skills and PE.
- The curriculum encourages children to respect Fundamental British Values. In subjects across the curriculum, children are taught to respect each other and each other's opinions; to be cooperative and collaborative; to be tolerant, and to support each other during lessons. Children are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their own choices, ambitions and aspirations.

The subjects on offer ensure that all pupils experience a linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. The methods of teaching also ensure that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils have the opportunity to learn, to make progress and to become prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
The following foundation subjects are also taught on a weekly basis:

- Science
- Computing
- Geography/History
- Art/Design
- Drama
- Modern Foreign Language (French and German)
- Music
- Physical Education
- PSHE
- Religious Studies
- Classics (Year 6)

4 Planning

- The curriculum is planned in two phases. We agree a long-term plan for each year group which indicates what topics are to be taught in each term. The Subject Coordinator is responsible for reviewing subject plans on an annual basis.
- Through detailed medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies for each topic. We use a variety of sources including the National Curriculum to help inform and update our medium-term planning in the foundation subjects but we aim to teach to the year **above** their national curriculum year. The plans indicate the teaching taking place each week and are a working document, annotated with any amendments, assessments or comments.
- The curriculum is planned carefully so that there is coherent and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

5. Monitoring and review

- The Deputy Head of the Junior School is responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the curriculum and for ensuring that all long- and medium-term planning is in place. They ensure that all documentation is kept up to date to reflect

curriculum developments and link with the whole school development plan. These changes are agreed and recorded on Junior School Development planning sheets and are kept in the online central Curriculum File.

- Subject coordinators monitor the way in which their subject is taught throughout the school; examining long-term and medium-term planning and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject coordinators also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed, and for supporting the staff in the teaching of their subject. Liaison with the Senior School Subject department is an important aspect of their role. In some subject areas, the coordinator is the Senior School Subject Leader and the policies are kept in a whole school Subject File.
- Different aspects of the Junior School curriculum are discussed at the weekly Junior School staff meetings and at scheduled subject meetings* led by the curriculum coordinators.
- Teachers have the freedom to plan their own schedule of work and produce their termly plans in consultation with the subject coordinator. These are then included in the relevant Subject File. Short term planning is recorded in their school diary/planning book and is readily available.
- Teaching is observed and books monitored throughout the year, to enable good practice to be shared.
- This policy is reviewed every year, or earlier if necessary.

6 Staff Development

CPD training is provided to update and develop standards of teaching and learning. Initiatives in curriculum development and teaching and learning styles, are monitored to ensure teachers are well-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively. CPD days are delivered throughout the year. We aim for staff to attend at least one external course during the academic year* and to update and report at staff meetings on relevant updates, and content.

7 Curriculum Plans and Time

The table below indicate the number of lessons a week, out of forty, allocated to each subject.

During the Autumn Term, girls in Year 6 are preparing for their Entrance Examinations and some ICT and PSHCE lessons are given over to English and Mathematics. Lesson time for these subjects is compensated for during the second half of term.

Subject	Lesson allocation per week
English	8
Mathematics	8
Science	4
Geography	2
History	2
PE	5
Music	2
DT/Art	2
Languages	1
Drama	1
RS	1
ICT	1
PSHCE	2
T&L Skills	1
Classics	1

A weekly Thinking and Learning Skills Lesson (T&L) takes place for each class. In Year 3 to Year 5. These include areas such as philosophical, creative and critical thinking, questioning skills, investigating types of learning styles and reasoning; many of these skills are ingrained in the Junior Curriculum. Through these specific Skills Lessons girls learn to improve their potential by developing positive thinking and learning dispositions. Girls gain an understanding of how these skills can be applied in all areas of the curriculum, encouraging them to be independent and creative thinkers and learners. In Year 6, thinking and learning skills are incorporated into curriculum challenges and they also have a lesson of Classical Studies

8 Individualised Learning

Girls who have disabilities, specific learning issues, have a special educational need or those who require extension activities are identified and appropriate help and challenges given. The Head of Learning Support liaises with form teachers. The girls are screened at the start of each academic year, and at the end of each term the class teacher identifies girls who have any weaknesses and they are further monitored and helped. The curriculum is implemented by top down planning; planning for the most able and differentiating down, scaffolding and supporting those pupils who need more help. Individualised learning is enabled by verbal and written feedback and target setting.
**The pandemic has impacted on these areas.*

SENIOR SCHOOL

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. The curriculum does not undermine fundamental British Values.
- 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, Religious Studies and Classical 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:

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 the range that the school offers.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Ian McKenna
Director of Studies
August 2021

Year 7 Curriculum 2021

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	4
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	2
Drama	1
PE	4♦

*Subjects marked with an asterisk are taught as ½ or ¾ 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 2021

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 ½ or ¾ 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 2021

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	5
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	1
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 five sets for Mathematics based on ability, and for English in mixed ability groups. 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 2021

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	**6**
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 2021/22 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.

1	2	3	4
French	Art	Design & Technology	Art
History	Computer Science	Drama	Drama
Latin	Food and Nutrition	German	French
Music	History	History	Geography
RS	PE	RS	RS
Separate Science	Separate Science	Separate Science	Separate Science
Spanish	Spanish	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:

- GCSE Greek
- Higher Project Qualification
- 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 2021

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 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 2021

- 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 in 2021/22 are:

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

In 2021/22, there is a Classical Civilisation class running outside the usual blocking system, in which some lessons are taught to a group comprising Year 12 and Year 13 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.

Reviewed August 2021
Ian McKenna
Director of Studies