



Curriculum and teaching policy

Independent school standards

Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 34.

Last updated by senior leaders

September 2025

Last reviewed by advisory board

September 2025

Next review due

September 2026

The St. John's curriculum

- This policy, the St. John's curriculum, and our approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, reflect statutory requirements, including those outlined in Parts 1 and 2 of the independent school standards (ISS) and the Teachers' standards.
- We provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is the means by which we achieve our objective of educating pupils in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.
- Our curriculum and high-quality teaching aims to foster creativity, helping pupils to become life-long, independent learners. Above all, we believe in balancing high expectations and academic rigour with learning that is engaging, enjoyable and inclusive.
- All pupils of compulsory school age are provided with experience in all the required areas of learning, as per the ISS. In the sixth form, students have a choice of 16 'A' Level qualifications.
- Every subject at St. John's is planned thoroughly with clear and comprehensive coverage of, as appropriate, the relevant National Curriculum and/or qualification aims.
- Subject leaders work together across the Preparatory and Senior schools as a matter of course to ensure their subject is logically sequenced and taught exceptionally well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

- Please see our EYFS policy.

Subjects from Key Stages 1 to 5

At Key Stage 1, we teach:

- English, Mathematics, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, French, Science, Geography, History, Computer Science, Art, Lamda, Music, Dance, Drama, Physical Education, Swimming, Handwriting and Forest School. Alongside this, we offer a First Access Music Course in the recorder to Years 1 and 2.

At Key Stage 2, we teach:

- English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, French, Spanish, Computer Science, Art, Lamda, Dance, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Swimming, Chess, Handwriting, Classics and Forest School. Alongside these, we offer a First Access Music Course in the violin (Years 3 and 4) and the viola (Years 5 and 6). For pupils in Year 6, subject specialists from the Senior School

teach pupils English, Mathematics, Science and French as part of our Transition Programme.

At Key Stage 3, we teach:

- In Year 7 we teach English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Combined Sciences, Geography, History, Computer Science, Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Citizenship Education, French, Art and Design, Physical Education, Lamda, Drama, Music, Swimming, Handwriting, Chess and Forest School.
- In Year 8 we teach the same subjects as in Year 7 except for Handwriting and Swimming, and we introduce German.
- In Year 9, we also introduce Latin and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

At Key Stage 4, we teach:

- Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Citizenship Education and offer GCSE options in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Physics (pupils choose at least one science to study), French, German, Latin, Geography, History, Computer Science, Art and Design, Physical Education and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- Where pupils in Key Stage 4 do not choose options in aesthetic and creative (e.g. Art and Design), human and social (e.g. Business Studies, Geography or History), or technological (e.g. Computer Science) education, we do all we can with the available time to provide pupils with continued experience of these areas of learning. As examples, pupils participate in Lamda, the Duke of Edinburgh award, whole-school creative arts productions, STEM projects, speeches and debates, and have opportunities to participate in a variety of extra-curricular options including flying, coding and chess clubs.

In the Sixth Form, we offer 'A' Levels in:

- English Literature, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, French, Geography, History, Government & Politics, Economics, Business, Computer Science, Art, Photography and Psychology.
- We also use the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for our students with EAL, and offer Mandarin and Persian to our international students.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE)

- PSHE education is taught from the Early Years upwards throughout the Preparatory School using the Jigsaw Approach to Learning. At the Senior

school, PSHE education is taught by subject specialists. St. John's adheres to statutory RSHE guidance. Please see policies for PSHE education and RSHE.

Subject leaders

The responsibilities of subject leaders include:

- strategic leadership of the subject
- the subject policy, curriculum plans / schemes of work
- keeping up to date with subject developments, at both a national and local level
- coordination between the preparatory and senior schools, ensuring pupils receive a seamless learning experience
- supporting, advising and developing colleagues teaching the subject
- oversight of the taught curriculum (via scrutiny of curriculum plans, workbooks and lesson visits) and the progress pupils make
- resource management.

The Principal (Prep.) and Headteacher (Senior) are responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented and for the day-to-day organisation of the curriculum.

Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL)

- The curriculum is designed to be accessed by all pupils who attend the school, including those with SEND, EAL and the most able. If it is necessary to modify some pupils' access to the curriculum, in order to meet their needs, then we do so in consultation with parents.
- If pupils have SEND, our school does all it can to meet the individual needs via an Individual Education Plan (IEP). We comply with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010.
- If a pupil may potentially have SEND, then his/her teacher assesses this need in liaison with the School's SENDCo. In most instances, the teacher is able to provide the resources and educational opportunities that meet the pupil's needs. However, if a pupil's need(s) is/are more severe, we involve the appropriate external agencies in making an assessment.
- We provide additional resources and support for pupils with SEND, where reasonable and appropriate. For example, teaching and learning may be modified by adapting teaching tasks, providing additional support and/or giving pupils additional time to complete activities.
- Teachers will always take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

- For further information, please see our SEND, EHCP and EAL policy.

Partisan political views

- All teaching at St. John's is unbiased and balanced. Teachers know that they must never promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject. Where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, teachers always offer pupils a balanced presentation of opposing views as per the [Department for Education's 'political impartiality in schools' guidance](#).

Monitoring the quality of teaching

- We actively monitor the quality of curriculum delivery, teaching and pupils' progress, as follows.

	Curriculum plans	Triangulated learning walks	Book checks	Departmental lesson observations	Progress data checks
HT1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
HT2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HT3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
HT4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HT5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
HT6		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- At the start of each academic year, senior leaders check that curriculum overviews (published on the school's website) and supporting schemes of work are completed, up-to-date and accurate, and available on the school's shared drive.
- Throughout the academic year during every half term, unannounced documented learning walks take place across the sites, subjects and age ranges. These are often led or supported by advisory-board members. Each lesson visit is triangulated with evidence from pupils' workbooks, the teacher's planning, assessment information, and conversations with pupils and the teacher.
- Separate workbook checks are calendared formally three times across the academic year. These documented checks, and any required follow-up actions, are designed to uphold the school's high standards, as outlined in the assessment and feedback policy.
- Subject-specific lesson observations, led by heads of department, take place at least twice during the academic year. These focus sharply on subject-specific pedagogy.

- Progress information, as tracked on Insights at Prep. and the internal tracker at Senior, is routinely reviewed by leaders. Any pupil identified as not on track to achieve their potential receives timely intervention. Formal reviews of pupils' progress are undertaken at three points across the academic year.

Disruption to the school timetable and curriculum delivery

- We ensure that our pupils receive a high quality of education even under exceptional circumstances. Where it is necessary to close sites (for reasons such as, but not limited to, infrastructure failure or extreme weather), wherever possible teaching staff provide online learning to pupils, ensuring – as far as possible – continuity in the quality and consistency of teaching. For when there are immediate concerns, such as power cuts during the school day, please see our continuity and closure policy.