ST. MARY'S
MENSTON

Curriculum Statement

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Our Purpose

We are a pilgrim school and we journey with Mary to become the person God intends us to be.

This statement was approved by the headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body

Signature:

Date: 2 December 2025

Our Curriculum

St Mary's, Menston: Mission Statement
We are a pilgrim school and we journey with Mary to become the person God intends us to be.

The curriculum is central to our mission as a school to develop virtuous young people who are able to grow and flourish and fulfil their God-given potential. The teachings of Christ underpin everything we do. Our curriculum encompasses opportunities within and beyond the classroom and promotes achievement for all. Core subjects are central to Years 7 to 11, and our pathways programmes in Year 10 and at Post-16 allow as much individual choice as possible.

We believe that each individual pupil has a right to access a varied and exciting curriculum, one that inspires, nurtures and celebrates each pupil's unique talents. Our curriculum aims to challenge and encourage every pupil to strive to achieve their full potential.

Curriculum core purpose
St Mary's aims to:

- develop virtuous character so we become the person God intends us to be
- be inspired by our patron, and form group saints
- teach the beliefs, doctrines, and practices of the Roman Catholic Church
- instill respect for moral values and tolerance of other religions, races, and cultures
- give the satisfaction of achievement to all pupils and develop a sense of vocation
- encourage good habits of work, appearance, and healthy living
- promote an understanding of British values, our place in society and the importance of our contribution to the common good

Our curriculum further aims to:

- promote oracy, numeracy, and literacy
- develop an effective and imaginative use of language
- provide mathematical, scientific, and technical knowledge and skills
- teach about human achievement and encourage aesthetic and environmental awareness
- teach how present-day society evolved, including British values, and understand what it means to be a global citizen
- immerse pupils in a rich, ambitious yet secure environment where they can be challenged to grow and succeed
- encourage open-mindedness and rational discussion

- provide opportunities in the creative arts
- develop independent learning and study skills

Our curriculum builds on the skills and knowledge taught by our partner primary schools and reflects our local context. Our pupils' attainment on entry is above national average. We therefore have an aspirational and inclusive curriculum to meet our pupils' needs, to prepare them for life in the wider world. We have high ambition for all our pupils including those with special educational needs, and those who are disadvantaged. We have a detailed strategy to address the needs and narrow the gap for those pupils who are socially disadvantaged.

The St Mary's Curriculum Journey

Each year group has a specific focus or theme. The focus is reflected in the key events and opportunities planned during each key stage and in the personal development time (PDT) set aside every fortnight. You can see how the theme is reflected in the curriculum by looking at our curriculum maps, and you can find further information about each year's curriculum on the curriculum section of the school website.

In Year 7, the theme is **Belonging**. Pupils 'belong' at St Mary's as soon as the transition process starts. As well as meeting staff, they have the chance to make new friends, to be involved in exciting activities and to learn new subjects. They soon settle into secondary school life, embracing their new freedoms and making the most of the opportunities they are given. Their maturity flourishes, and they rise to the high expectations and challenges that St Mary's offers them in order that they can be the best that they can be.

In Year 8, the theme is **Responsibility**, pupils continue their development whilst being prompted to begin to consider their role in the wider world.

In Year 9 the theme is **Choices**. Year 9 pupils gain a broader knowledge of each subject area, informing them of the complexities of the curriculum and how their studies connect with the wider world. They are able to make informed decisions about their own future education based on their foundational understanding of each subject area. As enthused, forward-thinking individuals, they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to transition to GCSE study smoothly and effectively.

Throughout Key Stage 3, all pupils are offered opportunities to become role models to others, applying their developing leadership skills in unfamiliar contexts which support school and the wider community.

In Year 10, we focus on **Challenges**. Pupils make the transition from KS3 to KS4 and embark on their GCSE studies. Each pupil's timetable reflects their individual option choices and all subjects, including new ones, are studied to a depth that is designed to stretch, challenge, and inspire pupils. Pupils are asked to embrace the opportunities this offers so that they are empowered to grow in confidence, become more independent and to take advantage of the range of trips and activities that complement their taught curriculum. In doing so, they are preparing to become senior Pupils in the school.

The theme aligned to Year 11 is **Discernment.** It is during this year that the pupils' journey towards their GCSEs culminates, the pupils are witnessed realising and fulfilling their potential as the young adults they were meant to be. Year 11 pupils use their prior knowledge and understanding to help them pursue individual success, whilst also considering the next stage of their education. Each pupil is provided with the necessary guidance, advice, and information about the range and variety of pathways available to them, ensuring that all are able to make personalised choices regarding the most

appropriate choice for their Post-16 education.

Many of our Year 11 cohort regularly continue their St Mary's journey in our sixth form. Here the focus is **Formation** in Year 12, and **Human Flourishing** in Year 13. Our hope is that, when they leave our family community, their virtuous character and their God-given gifts shine and that they contribute to the common good of society and the beauty of the world.

These themes are echoed in our extensive extra-curricular programme of clubs, activities, school teams, trips, and visits. These cover a wide range of activities that take place at lunchtime and after school, from music, dance, and drama groups to sports teams. There are clubs dedicated to interests ranging from chess to science, as well as opportunities to be involved in the catholic life of the school and the life of the local community through voluntary work and fundraising. All these activities and opportunities complement what happens in the classroom and encourage our pupils to grow in self-knowledge and confidence.

The curriculum: structure and detail

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

Year 7: number of hourly lessons per two-week cycle

- RE - 5 hours
- English - 7 hours
- Maths - 6 hours
- Science - 6 hours
- PE - 3 hours
- French - 5 hours
- Geography - 3 hours
- History - 3 hours
- Design Technology (Product Design, Textiles and Food) - 3 hours
- Art - 2 hours
- Computer Science - 2 hours
- Drama - 2 hours
- Music - 2 hours
- Personal Development Time (PDT) - 1 hour

Year 8: number of hourly lessons per two-week cycle

- RE - 5 hours
- English - 6 hours
- Maths - 7 hours
- Science - 6 hours
- PE - 3 hours
- *French **or** French & German - 5 hours
- Geography - 3 hours
- History - 3 hours
- Design Technology (Product Design, Textiles and Food) - 3 hours
- Art - 2 hours
- Computer Science - 2 hours
- Drama - 2 hours
- Music - 2 hours
- Personal Development Time (PDT) - 1 hour

Year 9: number of hourly lessons per two-week cycle

- RE - 5 hours
- English - 6 hours
- Maths - 6 hours
- Science - 9 hours
- PE - 3 hours
- *French **or** German - 4 hours
- Geography - 3 hours
- History - 3 hours
- Design Technology (Product Design, Textiles and Food) - 3 hours
- Art - 2 hours
- Computer Science - 2 hours
- Music - 2 hours
- Drama - 1 hour
- Personal Development Time (PDT) - 1 hour

*For a very small number of students in Year 8 and Year 9 an alternative programme of additional English and Maths lessons replace their Language lessons. This bespoke offer is provided to meet the specific and individual needs of a small cohort of students in consultation with core teaching colleagues and parents/carers.

The Bishop Wheeler Baccalaureate

The Bishop Wheeler Baccalaureate is central to our Key Stage 3 (KS3) curriculum and has character education at its heart. The Bishop Wheeler Baccalaureate is an inclusive award that aims to enhance student knowledge, skills and attributes to enable them to contribute to the common good of all. It is aspirational in that the award acknowledges that each young person is capable of significant achievements and successes in multiple areas. The award offers a range of opportunities that encompass traditional subject disciplines in addition to an entitlement to personal development opportunities that are physical, creative and cultural and include elements of community service. In addition, the Bishop Wheeler Baccalaureate recognises the steps on our journey towards developing a virtuous character, and a deepening understanding of our Catholic faith and its call to serve.

The Bishop Wheeler Baccalaureate will be rewarded for engaging in activities and opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. The Baccalaureate provided an appropriate level of challenge for each learner in the classroom and beyond. The award encompasses three areas of school life; core learning, the personal development of each learner, and their contribution to the community. The tasks that students complete embody the virtues of Faith, Love, Hope, Justice, Solidarity, Temperance, Courage and Practical Wisdom among others

Principles encapsulated by Pope Benedict XVI, when he wrote the following statement about education,

'It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator…' (Benedict XVI, 2010a)

Our curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 strives to inspire and motivate pupils, aiming to instill in all pupils a genuine love of learning and a curiosity to expand their knowledge and skills. Our curriculum offer is designed to exceed the prescribed requirements of the National Curriculum in both range and depth, thereby laying firm foundations from which learning at Key Stage 4 can thrive and flourish

There are seven forms in each year, four on the north side and three on the south side. In Years 7, 8 and 9, most subjects are taught in mixed ability form/teaching groups.

Maths is taught in two half-year group cohorts to allow balanced setting, there are four teaching groups for each half of the year group. This approach is also introduced in year 9 for Science lessons and allows pupils to make rapid progress from their individual starting points.

All pupils in Year 7 learn French. In Year 8 the majority of pupils continue with French, in addition to this, German is taught as a second modern foreign language to about two thirds of the year group. A small number of pupils are offered literacy support as an alternative to a language.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education is delivered as a discrete subject and forms part of all pupils' timetabled lessons from Year 7 through to Year 13. These PDT (personal development time) lessons also include elements of careers education, the Prevent strategy and RSHE (Relationship, Sex and Heath Education). Each year group follows a scheme of work that is relevant to and appropriate for them whilst also having the flexibility and capacity to accommodate emerging or topical local, national or global themes.

All pupils are given an ambitious target grade based on their prior attainment and baseline testing. Progress towards this target is tracked, and interventions identified. Interventions to support learning include:

- Targeted one-to-one and small group literacy and numeracy support with teaching assistants
- Nurture support and guidance from the Hub
- Personalised timetables
- Inclusion support through form groups
- Intervention/counselling from inclusion team
- Off-site alternative provision

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

Year 10: number of hourly lessons per two-week cycle

- RE - 5 hours
- English - 9 hours
- Maths - 9 hours
- Science - 9 hours
- PE - 2 hours
- Option Subjects - 5 hours (3 chosen = 15 hours)
- Personal Development Time (PDT) - 1 hour

Year 11: number of hourly lessons per two-week cycle

- RE - 5 hours
- English - 9 hours
- Maths - 8 hours
- Science - 9 hours

- PE - 2 hours
- Option Subjects - 5 hours (3 chosen = 15 hours)
- Personal Development Time (PDT) - 1 hour

Our pupils follow a two-year programme of study prior to taking GCSE and technical qualifications at the end of Year 11. One key feature of our curriculum model at Key Stage 4 relates to the increased proportion of curriculum hours allocated to English and maths. This reflects the importance of literacy and numeracy for all pupils as well as the challenge of the current linear GCSEs and the good pass measure of grade 5.

Our two-year Key Stage 4 is specifically designed to maximise pupil choice whilst retaining a strong academic profile. The vast majority of pupils complement their compulsory core subjects of English, mathematics, Science, RE, core PE and PDT (Personal Development Time), with three additional option choices.

The options available to pupils include: art, computer science, design and technology (including a textiles option), drama, food preparation and nutrition, geography, health and social care, history, media studies, performing arts, PE, sport science, PDT, and two modern languages (French and German).

All of our pupils follow one of three curriculum **pathways** at Key Stage 4. Each pathway features the compulsory core of English, mathematics, religious education, science and a non-examination PE programme of lessons.

Most pupils follow the **EBacc pathway**, which features a modern foreign language and a humanities subject alongside one other option subject from the list detailed above.

Approximately 20% of pupils follow the **Open pathway** This route combines the opportunity for individual pupils to pursue subjects that make up the EBacc with some additional flexibility. It is designed for those we feel will benefit from an increased range of choice whilst also being able to undertake a full suite of GCSE subjects.

Our **Bespoke pathway** focuses on providing a personalised curriculum for a very small minority of learners who have particular and individual learning needs. With a focus on promoting a mastery of literacy and numeracy and preparing pupils for the next stage in their lives the core curriculum is complimented by an individual combination of optional subjects, including an OCR qualification in Life and Living Skills. Those pupils on this pathway also receive personalised support in through our Hub provision.

In addition to our school-based curriculum, we also work with external partners to provide alternative education packages to meet specific need. This could take the form of college courses beginning in Year 10, tailored provision, or one-to-one support. The aim is to ensure success in the core literacy and numeracy skills thereby securing progression to a suitable qualification or training provider for each individual.

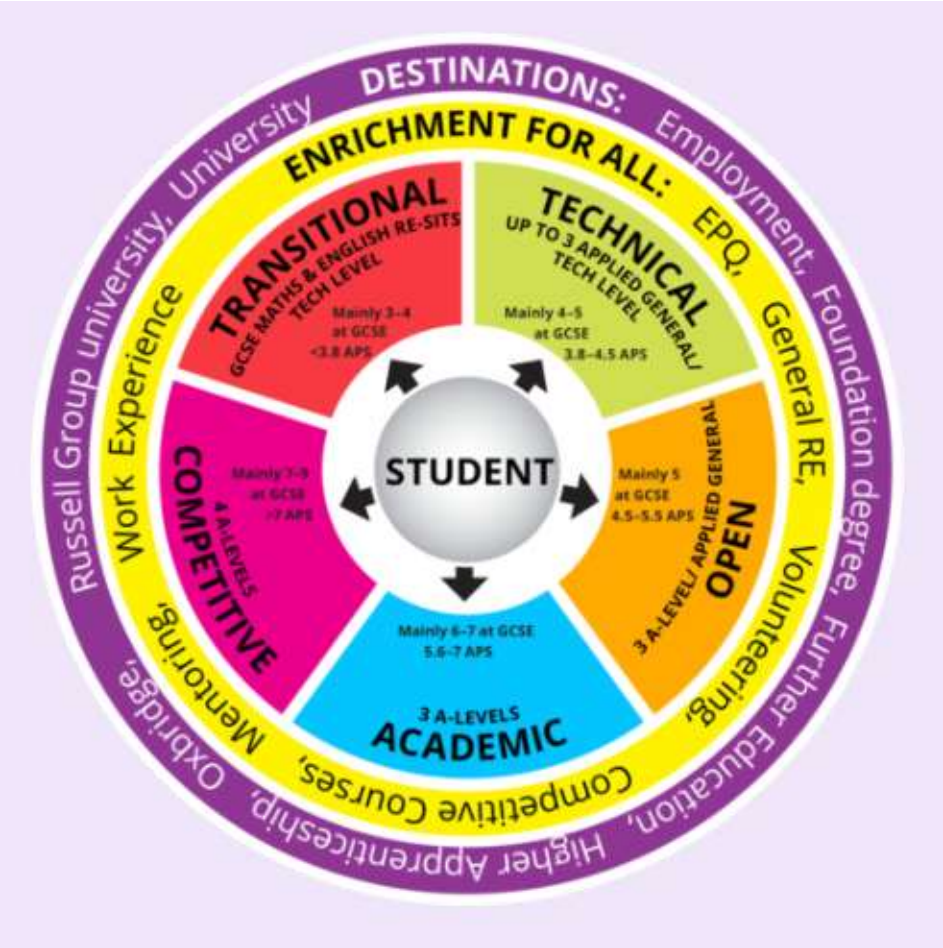
Support is tailored to need. In addition to high-quality, inclusive teaching, further interventions from Year 10 through to Year 11 include:

- Subject-based drop-in sessions
- Individual support from the Hub
- Inclusion team and learning mentor support

- Assertive mentoring
- Opportunities to offer an adjusted curriculum to meet individual medical/SEMH needs
- Personalised timetables
- Offsite alternative provision

Post 16 (Sixth Form - Years 12 and 13)
Our post-16 curriculum in the sixth form is based on level 3 courses, the majority of these are A-level qualifications, with a selection of Applied General courses. Based on an entry requirement of 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above, our Pathways to Success options programme includes a number of routes designed to promote progress and achievement for all students, whatever their GCSE entry profile. The focus is on preparing our students to take their next steps, in education, employment, apprenticeships or training at age 18.

We set challenging targets for each individual student based on their prior attainment at level 2 (GCSE) and provide a range of different interventions and guidance to support all students to fulfil their potential.



Each student is enrolled on a 16-19 study programme made up of the following elements:

- the core aim: most students choose three options (although for some pathways more or fewer subjects might be recommended) with 9 hours of lessons per fortnight for each subject

- English and/or maths tuition if a student has yet to achieve at least a grade 4 at GCSE

- the opportunity to undertake a work experience placement

- non-qualification activities to develop each students' character; this includes:

    - General RE lessons
    - PDT lessons
    - time with tutors to focus on study skills and post 18 pathway
    - a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities

As well as offering a progression route from each of our GCSE and level 2 technical subjects, our post-16 curriculum offers new subjects at level 3, including business studies, economics, politics, psychology and sociology. We also offer applied general science alongside biology, chemistry and physics, and further maths in addition to maths.

Core maths is offered as an AS level in Year 12, furthermore, the extended project qualification (EPQ), worth half an A-level, is also available as an additional option.

Destinations and progression

Our curriculum meets our students' needs and prepares them for the next stage of their lives. Many of our Year 11 pupils progress into our Sixth Form. Those that leave St Mary's go on to follow a range of alternative educational pathways, including Further Education courses, apprenticeships or traineeships and employment/volunteering alongside education or training, consequently we have exceptionally low NEET figures, which we are particularly proud of.

At the end of Year 13, the vast majority of students go to university progressing onto Higher Education courses each year, with a significant proportion going to Russell Group universities. Those not going to university typically move into employment and higher apprenticeships at the end of Year 13.

For further details about destinations of our Year 13 students please visit the school website.

Reviewing our curriculum

Our curriculum is under constant review to ensure that it meets our pupils' needs. Parent/Carer and pupil voice is regularly collected and evaluated. We monitor pupil progress towards their targets and participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities. We have a continuous self-evaluation process in place, including a range of quality assurance procedures which review exam results, teaching and learning, professional and curriculum development.

Contact Information

If you would like to obtain additional information relating to the curriculum, please contact Mr M Flanagan, Deputy Headteacher via admin@stmarysmenston.org. For more information about our school curriculum, please visit the Curriculum page on our school website.

Further Links

- Schools, colleges, and children's services [GOV.UK]
- National Curriculum