



St Swithun's WINCHESTER

ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY (SENIOR SCHOOL)

Policy History	
Reviewed and updated	September 2024
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Reviewed by:

Deputy Head Academic

The Education Committee

Charles Hammel

Steve Bailey, Chair

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Date: October 2024

Aims

In line with the school's aims and ethos, curricular provision is designed to:

- develop the full academic and creative potential of each pupil as an individual;
- provide a broad, balanced, academic curriculum with an emphasis on flexibility and individual choice;
- be relevant and appropriate and to motivate and engage pupils;
- provide equality and opportunity for all students with inclusive learning opportunities;
- provide opportunities for numeracy and literacy, speaking and listening throughout the curriculum;
- help to develop an understanding of personal, social, health and economic issues (PSHE) in the curriculum and the wider school context;
- develop the role of citizenship in the curriculum and the wider school context;
- provide careers advice and guidance throughout the school;
- encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and develop intellectual curiosity;
- prepare pupils for the next stage of their lives, equipped with the knowledge and skills to facilitate lifelong learning;
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society;
- reinforce the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils;
- develop in each pupil the learning skills (Advanced Cognitive Performance characteristics [ACPs]) and behaviours (Values, Attitudes and Attributes [VAAs]) associated with High Performance Learning.

Principles

- Pupils in L4 – L5 (years 7 – 9) follow a broad, general curriculum which aims to develop a wide range of skills and subjects, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative aspects of education. All pupils follow a programme of enhancement known as Stretch, which offers a wide range of courses and a lecture programme.
- Pupils in M5 and U5 (years 10 and 11) at IGCSE or GCSE, study English language and literature; mathematics; a minimum of two sciences, either (i) separate biology, chemistry and/or physics, or (ii) double award science; and at least one modern foreign language. In addition, they choose from a range of optional subjects which includes humanities and social sciences; classical languages; and technological, aesthetic and creative subjects. Pupils continue to follow the Stretch enrichment programme. Physical education is compulsory.
- In the sixth form (years 12 and 13) A levels are offered in a range of subjects. Pupils may choose either three or four full A levels as two-year courses. All pupils are given the option to complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) within the timetable

structure. In addition, pupils continue to follow the Stretch programme, and physical education is compulsory.

- In Key Stage 3 pupils are organised into divisions (mathematics – years 7, 8 and 9; French, German and Latin/Classical civilisation – year 9 only); in Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11) pupils are organised into divisions where it is deemed appropriate (English language and literature, mathematics and, where timetabling permits, modern languages).
- All pupils in Key Stage 3 have timetabled provision for religious studies, and the subject is available as an option choice in Key Stages 4 and 5. Aspects of religious education are also delivered through school assemblies.
- The choice of subjects available at I/GCSE and A level is wide-ranging, and the school endeavours to meet the option requests of all students. However, on occasions, this may not be feasible due to timetable constraints.
- There is a programme of co-curricular activities designed to extend and complement the curriculum.
- Please read in conjunction with Curriculum Plans in S:\ACADEMIC ADMIN\Curriculum Plans.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Students who are not expert users of English, either because it is not their first language or because they have experienced significant exposure to another language, have English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons in order for them to enhance their skills in reading and listening, and improve their written and spoken English. As well as supporting girls with their academic curriculum and their general English, incoming sixth-formers are prepared for the IELTS exam that most British universities require for entry.

Please see the separate EAL policy for further details.

LEARNING SUPPORT

St Swithun's is a learning community in which pupils should experience success. We are committed to an inclusive culture where all girls are enabled to have equality of access to the curriculum in a welcoming, valuing and respectful environment. Sometimes a pupil needs additional support to enhance development or learning performance in order to strengthen self-esteem across an area(s) of the curriculum. The department which takes responsibility for this is called the Learning Support department.

Please see the separate Learning Support policy for further details.

SUPPORTING THE MOST ABLE PUPILS

All pupils at St Swithun's are able. We are, however, always looking to challenge the most able through appropriate learning and teaching approaches and diverse and stimulating co-curricular and enrichment opportunities. The ethos of the school is one whereby we hope that all girls aspire to be confident learners and high achievers.

Please see the separate Supporting the Most Able Pupils policy for further details.

STUDENT GUIDANCE

The student guidance department focuses on supporting individuals in personal development, encouraging self-confidence and the ability to handle decisions and manage change. The aim of the student guidance department is to provide impartial guidance to enable all pupils to achieve their declared long-term career objectives and, where no definite goal exists, to ensure that they are sufficiently informed to keep a wide range of options available to them.

The government publication *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (January 2023), outlines the following as statutory duties for state schools:

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures. It helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work, including the routes to jobs and careers that they might find engaging and rewarding.

Independent careers guidance to be provided for all students from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds). '**Independent**' is defined as external to the school or college. External sources of careers support could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access, and personal guidance provided externally to the school or college. Taken together, the external sources must include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships. Personal guidance does not have to be external – it can be delivered by school or college staff, if trained.

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to set students on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need. That means schools and colleges must act impartially, in line with their statutory duty or contractual requirement, and not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical. They should promote a full range of technical options. Schools and colleges should always focus on the student and what is best for them. Although our universities are world-class, it is not the only choice: in many cases, a college course or apprenticeship can offer better outcomes.

The department expects all secondary schools and colleges to use the internationally recognised Gatsby Benchmarks to develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a careers adviser, to engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities. The benchmarks also support schools to fulfil their statutory duty to enable access of training providers to showcase to students what technical education and apprenticeships can offer.

The latest ISI regulations (April 2023) largely mirror the statutory guidelines, although they also consider careers guidance as applying to students in year 7 (11-12 year olds). The Values,

Attitudes and Attributes (VAAs) and Advanced Cognitive Performance Characteristics (ACPs) associated with High Performance Learning represent values, skills and behaviours viewed as part of preparation for life in British society, and are ones which we fully endorse and support as attributes needed for the world of work and life beyond school.

As an independent school we are not required to meet the statutory guidelines for state schools, although in the interests of best practice we take them into account when planning our programme. Another useful document is the Gatsby Report into *Good Career Guidance* (2014) with the eight benchmarks against which to assess provision: use of COMPASS is helping to inform our strategy moving forward in this respect. The student guidance department is working to gain formal accreditation of its careers programme through the Quality in Careers Standard. The Quality in Careers Standard is the single national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). The Standard is fully aligned with the [Gatsby Benchmarks for "Good Career Guidance"](#) and complies with the DfE's Statutory Guidance.

At points in the school career where subject option decisions arise [in L5 (year 9), U5 (year 11) and the sixth form (years 12 and 13)], each student is assigned a student guidance tutor who meets with his/her tutees on an individual basis to discuss career plans and subject choices. All students have access to the student guidance website which carries up-to-date links to impartial external websites and information about a wide range of opportunities. This is also accessible to current parents via the portal. In addition, the following year-specific input takes place, and Morrisby evaluations are used to obtain student feedback where appropriate:

In L4 (year 7): In the Thrive (PSHEE) programme, L4 explore the knowledge and skills needed to set realistic and challenging personal targets and goals. This is done mainly through work with form tutors, with additional time dedicated through Positive Education and PSHEE.

In U4 (year 8): In the Thrive (PSHEE) programme, U4 learn about different work roles and career pathways, including clarifying their own early aspirations. This also considers the diversity of professions and access to underrepresented careers. U4 students develop their enterprise skills during the enterprise day in the spring term.

In L5 (year 9): There are lessons within the Thrive (PSHEE) programme when students consider their own strengths and potential career choices and the implications of GCSE subject choices on their future plans. They explore a range of options using impartial computer software, including a basic Morrisby profile, consider their personal 'brand' and have an introduction to CVs and interview skills. The intention is to use this as the basis of an e-portfolio that the students are able to build upon throughout their time at St Swithun's and beyond. In the spring term there is a GCSE choices presentation in which the GCSE options available are outlined and further impartial advice is given on decision-making. Throughout the year there are careers speed meetings mornings.

In M5 (year 10): There is an opportunity to undertake Morrisby profiling (a commercial careers psychometric testing programme), offered on an opt-out basis. In the Thrive (PSHEE) programme students learn about the information, advice and guidance available to them regarding careers, and how to access it, together with exploring how their strengths, interests, skills and qualities are changing and how these relate to future employability.

In U5 (year 11): Students are encouraged to undertake work experience in the penultimate week of the summer term, in the post-GCSE period: this is incorporated into the U5 activities programme. The subject choices which students make at this stage have considerable implications in terms of future paths, decisions and choices, including university degrees, or careers, and these are aspects explored at some length in the one-to-one guidance interviews, which also incorporate the results of each student's Morrisby report. Workshops are held for girls in U5 and L6 to advise students on strategies to strengthen applications for specific university courses (e.g. engineering, medicine, law, etc.); these are delivered online or in person.

In sixth form: Support and impartial guidance are available to girls and their parents in preparation for UCAS applications. In the spring term of L6 students and parents are invited to a presentation about applying to university where the guest speaker is usually an experienced university admissions officer. In addition, L6 (year 12) attend a local UCAS HE exhibition and a booklet is sent to parents explaining the mechanism for university entrance. An annual talk takes place about applying to American universities as a precursor to a SAT tutoring programme, offered by a commercial company each spring if numbers support this. Talks by UK university admissions tutors are arranged where possible. With the University Guys' support the school hosts annual visits by admissions officers from North American and European universities to which our students are invited. Details of opportunities, including taster days, open days and apprenticeship opportunities are circulated to all students via e-mail and the Futures portal. Students attend these and university open days to inform their thinking about applications. An external agency also offers preparation for admissions tests (UCAT and BMAT). Students are guided through the process of completing the UCAS form online with each student guidance tutor overseeing the applications of his/her own tutees: help with personal statements is provided by individual members of academic staff and sessions with admissions teams at local universities. In U6 (year 13) a programme of mock interviews takes place, staffed mainly by external experts, for those girls who will face university admissions interviews: the head of academic enrichment facilitates additional support and practice for Oxbridge applicants. A networking evening is held for sixth formers. A Gap Fair is held every two years which is open to other schools and sixth-form colleges in the area. Members of the student guidance department are available to give advice when A-level results are published and for post-A level applications or reapplications.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION (PSHEE): THRIVE

The PSHEE curriculum at St Swithun's, known as Thrive, is a developmental programme of learning through which pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. As part of a whole-school approach, PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

The Thrive programme has also been developed to:

- Promote students' mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- Contribute to careers education;
- Provide relationship and sex education;

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion and awareness of the protected characteristics;
- Promote the school's values of *caritas*, *humilitas* and *sinceritas*;
- Make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, their behaviour and safety. It also contributes to the safeguarding of our pupils.

The school's PSHEE provision has been shaped in consultation with students, staff and parents, alongside statutory requirements and guidance from the PSHE Association. PSHEE includes Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), for which see also the separate Relationships and Sex Education policy. The government statutory guidance for RSE and Health education is embedded in every year group.

Parents are informed of upcoming units of work using the SchoolPost system and via the parent portal site, with opportunities to contact the head of department to discuss questions or concerns clearly indicated.

The PSHEE and RSE curriculum is complemented by our Positive Education and High Performance Learning programmes:

- Positive Education: our own course designed to enable students at St Swithun's to improve their wellbeing and to flourish by focusing on character strengths, as well as learning how to manage emotions; foster positive relationships; develop optimism; and build resilience.
- High Performance Learning: this whole-school approach focuses on developing a series of values, attitudes and attributes that are key to enabling students to be ready for university, employment and life.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Relationships and Sex Education policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Anti-bullying policy

Learning environment

Teachers of PSHEE create a safe, supportive learning environment which allows all students to flourish. PSHEE lessons often draws on students' real-life experiences, and teachers establish clear classroom 'ground rules' and ensure that these are adhered to in order to encourage a mutually respectful, safe space for all. Throughout all aspects of the PSHEE curriculum teachers promote consideration of each other's needs.

Teachers of PSHEE highlight upcoming topics regularly and repetitively, with clear guidance for students on what they should do if they have any concerns regarding forthcoming content. This may include speaking to the PSHEE teacher, a head of year, tutor, member of boarding staff or another member of staff. Lessons contain regular signposting to sources of support, including both those in school and from outside agencies.

Staff delivering PSHEE and RSE ensure that any student who indicates that they may be at risk receives support by liaising with the appropriate member of the pastoral team and adhering to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

It is important that pupils have avenues to ask questions, both within the classroom and after the lesson has ended. This is facilitated in a number of ways, including methods such as a box for anonymous questions and using anonymous Microsoft forms, which enable access at a time to suit the student. Regular points for asking questions are built into lessons, with a clear expectation that questions are encouraged and respected as ways in which we all learn and clarify our understanding.

Students with varying and individual needs

Classroom practice and pedagogy reflect students' ages, aptitudes, readiness and cultural backgrounds, and those pupils with SEND, and are adjusted to enable all pupils to access the learning. PSHEE provision takes account of the fact that some students may have learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or physical disabilities, that result in particular PSHE and/or RSE education needs. Where appropriate the head of PSHEE liaises with the Learning Support department and parents about how best to support a student's individual needs.

Intended Outcomes

The aims of our PSHEE curriculum are to provide pupils with:

- accurate, balanced and relevant knowledge;
- opportunities to turn that knowledge into personal understanding;
- opportunities to explore, clarify and, if necessary, challenge their own and others' values, attitudes, beliefs, rights and responsibilities;
- the skills, language and strategies they need in order to live healthy, safe, fulfilling, responsible and balanced lives;
- opportunities to develop positive personal attributes such as resilience, self-confidence, self-esteem, and empathy.

The PSHEE curriculum is based on three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- The Wider World

The core themes developed throughout the Thrive programme are outlined below.

Health and Wellbeing:

1. how to manage transition;
2. how to maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing;
3. how to make informed choices about health and wellbeing matters, including drugs, alcohol and tobacco; maintaining a balanced diet; physical activity; mental and emotional health and wellbeing; and sexual health.*
4. about parenthood and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.*

5. how to assess and manage risks to health and to keep themselves and others safe.
6. how to identify and access help, advice and support.
7. how to respond in an emergency, including administering first aid.
8. the role and influence of the media on lifestyle.

* Sexual health is included within this core theme, however it is important that sexual health is considered within the context of healthy relationships (below). There will be similar broad overlap and flexibility between topics and areas in all three core themes.

Relationships:

1. how to develop and maintain a variety of healthy and respectful relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts and to develop parenting skills.
2. how to recognise and manage emotions within a range of relationships.
3. how to deal with risky or negative relationships including all forms of bullying (including the distinct challenges posed by online bullying) and abuse, sexual and other violence and online encounters.
4. about intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health.
5. about the concept of consent in a variety of contexts (including in sexual relationships).
6. about managing loss including bereavement, separation and divorce.
7. how to respect equality and be a productive member of a diverse community.
8. how to identify and access appropriate advice and support.
9. about the impact of media and online risks.

Living in the Wider World (economic wellbeing, careers and the world of work):

1. about rights and responsibilities as members of diverse communities, as active citizens and participants in the local and national economy.
2. how to make informed choices and be enterprising and ambitious with regard to careers.
3. how to develop employability, team working and leadership skills and develop flexibility and resilience.
4. about the economic, business and political environment.
5. how personal financial choices can affect oneself and others and about rights and responsibilities as consumers.
6. About contributing to the wider community through community service.

Planning and Delivery

We provide a broad and balanced PSHEE curriculum which has the needs of the students at its core. In order to ensure that the requirements of a particular cohort are being met, regular checks are incorporated when planning units to ascertain the specific needs of the group at the point of delivery. Students are given the opportunity to raise areas of interest and requirement. Where suitable this may be done anonymously to enable students to share their thoughts more freely.

Where appropriate the scheduled plan for a year group may be altered to cover topics that have been identified as having particular relevance, either by pupil voice or by staff, including welfare staff and the pastoral team.

Delivery of the curriculum occurs through a variety of means:

- Timetabled weekly lessons in curriculum time for all year groups L4-U5. In L6 and U6 PSHEE is delivered as part of the wider programme of weekly sixth form sessions on Monday afternoons.
- Visits from specialist speakers
- Learning opportunities throughout the academic curriculum
- Work with pastoral staff in the day and boarding houses
- Whole-school initiatives
- Form time activities that support the PSHEE programme
- Learning through the wider community and through involvement in the life of the school
- Students also have access to information and guidance on topics covered in PSHEE through the student wellbeing site on the school portal.

The Thrive programme is delivered by the head of department and three other members of staff. Teachers who are responsible for the delivery of PSHEE access CPD training specific to PSHE education; this training is provided by the PSHE Association or other recognised programmes, including the NSPCC and Brook. Where feasible and appropriate, elements of the curriculum may be delivered by other members of the pastoral team, in particular the school nurses and counselling psychologist.

Assessment

Assessment in PSHE is important for a number of reasons:

- It gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- It allows teachers to identify future learning needs and evaluate the learning that has taken place.
- It encourages students to become increasingly aware of their own progress and, in turn, increases motivation.

A variety of methods are be used to assess pupil progress, including:

- Baseline assessments, to measure each individual's starting point and to enable effective planning;
- Assessment within lessons to gauge understanding and adapt lessons accordingly, including activities such as structured questioning and discussion;
- Endpoint assessments, referencing the baseline assessment, to measure how far each student's learning has progressed.

For more detailed information about the Thrive programme and content of the schemes of work please contact Claire Goymour at goymourc@stswithuns.com.