

Curriculum 2016-17

Our school aims

Our ambition is for every child to access high quality learning experiences, which encourage them to be academically successful, happy, confident and enquiring young people. Every child has the potential to make a difference in the world, to be ambitious in their career choices, and to understand their place in society. These aims, and our school values, underpin our curriculum design and the opportunities we offer both within and beyond the curriculum model.

This document gives an overview of our curriculum content and design: for more information on specific subjects and what is taught, please refer to the section called 'Faculties' on our website (under the 'Students/Parents' tab).

Aims of our curriculum: *Engaging, Challenging and Inspiring all Learners*

All children have a right to broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. At John Mason School we provide a broad and varied curriculum to support all our students.

We aim to:

- build on students' previous learning and provide stretch and challenge for our learners, regardless of their ability, so that they make rapid and sustained progress
- provide for the particular needs and aspirations of students, as well as offering a basic entitlement to broad areas of experience
- equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge for a fast changing world
- help students develop a social and moral awareness and an understanding of their responsibilities towards themselves, others and the environment
- stimulate the development of lively and enquiring minds, and to provide the conditions in which creativity, imagination, improvisation, confidence in risk-taking and a thirst for new ideas and understanding can flourish
- encourage the attitudes and qualities which will lead students to pursue their learning beyond school, and be happy, safe and successful in their adult life.

It is important to us that students are engaged in, and excited by, their learning. We aim therefore to provide the appropriate level of support and challenge for every student at all times.

Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Opportunities

The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and activities. It is also enhanced by our iDays (Inquiry Days). There are four iDays a year: days when we suspend the normal timetable in order to allow us to deliver activities and opportunities that are not covered in the normal curriculum model, and to develop cross curricular skills such as team working, creative thinking, resilience, leadership and independent learning. Typically, iDays focus on such areas as careers education, health and personal development, British Values, or Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education.

Key Stage 3

During Key Stage 3, students experience and develop skills and knowledge across a wide range of subjects and opportunities. Our aim is that during Key Stage 3, students should enjoy a wide range of subjects, experiences and opportunities, and in doing so, discover what they are interested in and what their individual skills and talents are, as well as gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to be happy and successful throughout their five or seven years with us. Schemes of Learning are designed to build on KS2 and to prepare students for KS4, providing the appropriate level of support and challenge for all.

All students follow the National Curriculum, which consists of the core subjects of English, Maths and Science together with the foundation subjects of Art, Drama, Music, PE, Design and Technology (including Textiles, 3D design, Food and Nutrition and Graphics), Geography, History and Religious Studies. In Year 7, all students study a modern foreign language - either Spanish, German or French. In Year 8, most students also take up a second language. The Social Education programme (Soc. Ed) covers areas of well-being, careers, and citizenship education.

In Year 7, students are taught in form groups or other mixed ability groupings, although Maths and English are taught in ability sets. In Modern Foreign Languages, students are grouped according to the language they have chosen and their ability. In Year 8 and 9, Science is also set. These subjects set independently from each other, and sets therefore reflect students' ability in each separate subject: a more flexible system than banding or streaming. All students are regularly assessed as well as supported, to ensure that they are in the right set for their ability and potential.

PSHCE is delivered through a course called Social Education (or Soc. Ed). The course covers careers information, citizenship, well-being and sex and relationships related education, as well as financial awareness and enterprise. These subjects are linked together because they are about helping young people embrace change, feel positive about who they are and enjoy healthy, self-responsible and fulfilled lives. The course encourages students to recognise risk, take increasing responsibility for themselves, their choices and their behaviours, and make a positive contribution to their families, school and community.

Currently at John Mason School, Key Stage 3 covers Years 7-9. We are changing this model in 2017-18: in line with many other schools in Oxfordshire and nationally, we are moving to a two year Key Stage 3, so that students have three years to be ready for their GCSE exams, rather than two. For students joining the school in 2017, therefore, Key Stage 3 will be Years 7-8, with students narrowing down their choice of subjects from Year 9, when they start to cover the GCSE syllabus in the subjects they have chosen to pursue. In both Year 8 and Year 9 this year, students will be guided to consider what they are successful in, and with advice and guidance, begin to choose the subjects that they enjoy and wish to study further in Key Stage 4. The principles behind our Information, Advice and Guidance for the options process are: choice; breadth and balance; flexibility; appropriate pathways for all students; and personalised, expert advice. Students receive independent advice on their choice of options from our *Adviza* consultant, Terry Bianchini.

Key Stage 4

During Years 10 and 11, students follow courses in the core subjects of English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (Core and Additional) and Religious Studies (RS). Students take a GCSE

exam in RS at the end of Year 10; in Year 11 they then continue with the Soc. Ed. (PSHCE) programme outlined above.

In addition, students follow a number of options chosen from: Triple Science (separate GCSEs in Biology, Physics and Chemistry); History; Geography; Sociology; Psychology; French; German; Spanish; Computer Science; ICT; Creative IT; Music; BTEC Performing Arts; Business Studies; Leisure and Tourism; Art, Textiles, Graphics, Food and Nutrition; 3D Design; Health and Social Care; Preparation for Working Life. Some students also study for The Prince's Trust qualification and a number are also entered for the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence).

A number of our students in Years 10 and 11 are enrolled onto vocational courses at Abingdon and Witney College or the City of Oxford College. Currently these include: Equine Studies; Hair and Beauty; Motor Vehicle Studies and Construction.

The majority of students take four option subjects; students on college courses take two or three options; students who need more time for study may take three options and have extra time to catch up in the fourth option block.

We review the subjects offered every year to meet the needs and aspirations of our students.

Key Stage 5: AS and A Level courses in the sixth form

John Mason sixth form is part of the very successful Abingdon Consortium for Education, a long standing partnership between the three schools and Abingdon and Witney College. A common timetable structure enables students to choose from an excellent range of 16-19 subjects at AS and A Level. Most students study four AS qualifications and then reduce this to three A levels in Year 13. A students' programme will include Complimentary Studies, which delivers careers advice, advice on applications to university, college or apprenticeships, PSHCE, well-being, financial awareness, citizenship and study skills. There are opportunities for sport, and all students complete a number of hours of voluntary service as well as extra-curricular activities.

Assessment

Throughout all key stages, students are assessed regularly to monitor progress and help them and their teachers to set targets for further improvement. A student's performance is reported home between three and five times a year, depending on the year group. (see separate Assessment Policy). Formal national examinations are taken at the end of a GCSE course (in Year 11 for most courses with the exception of RS). AS and full A level courses are examined at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 respectively. In addition, students will have a number of internal exams throughout KS4 and KS5.

For more information on curriculum, please contact Valerie Munro, Deputy Head