

## Curriculum 2017-18

### 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.

Our curriculum aims link directly to our school values: Proud of our creativity; Passionate about learning; Keen to inspire; Valuing ourselves and each other; Determined to be the best that we can be

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

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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.

We also offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Years 10, 11 and 12, and to support this we provide opportunities for students to learn new skills, take part in volunteering, and participate in expeditions, for which they are fully trained and supported. Students work towards bronze and silver award in Years 10 and 11, and the gold award in Year 12.

### **Key Stage 3 (Years 7-8)**

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 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.

In Year 7 and 8, students are taught in form groups or other mixed ability groupings, although Maths and English are taught in ability sets in Year 8. In Modern Foreign Languages, students are grouped according to the language they have chosen and their ability. 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 in one subject area, 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. They also are guided to reflect on their learning and their ambitions, and receive information on possible future pathways.

Students in Years 8 have the opportunity to challenge themselves to complete their 'passport': a set of activities, linked to our school values, which are designed to develop life skills. Students discuss their progress in competing these with their tutor but can achieve the activity in any class or outside of the classroom.

Year 7 follow a brand new tutorial programme called PixL Edge: a student focussed initiative where students select to attempt and achieve 10 challenges. Students are given access to a National

database of challenges that fall under 5 categories, designed to develop their skills and competence in these 5 areas:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Resilience
- Organisation
- Initiative

Students select two challenges per category. Their tutor will guide and support them through the process but it is the student's responsibility to prepare for, complete and evaluate each challenge via an on line portfolio. All students will start on the apprentice level in Year 7 with 2 higher levels as they work their way through their time at JMS.

#### **Key Stage 4 (Years 9,10 and 11)**

During Key Stage 4, students follow courses in the core subjects of English, English Literature, Mathematics, Citizenship/RS and Soc. Ed (PHSCE: as above). All students also study Science: the majority are entered for combined science (two separate GCSEs) but the most able students are entered instead for 'triple science': separate GCSE exams in Physics, Chemistry and Biology. This decision is made at the end of Year 8 based on students' progress and potential.

In addition, students follow a number of options chosen from a wide range of subjects. This year the choices include: History; Geography; Sociology; Psychology; French; German; Spanish; Computer Science; ICT; Creative IT; Music; BTEC Performing Arts; Business Studies; 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) and/or the ASDAN COPE course (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness).

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**

In the sixth form, students have a wide range of Level 3 subjects to choose from. The majority of our students study three A level subjects, but some are studying four or five. A common timetable structure across Abingdon allows students to access some courses at Abingdon and Witney College (this year the college is offering to our students courses in Engineering, Health and Social Care and Applied Science) and A level subjects taught at Fitzharry's or Larkmead. Sixth form students' enrichment programme includes 'Futures' (a course which delivers careers advice, advice on applications to university, college or apprenticeships, PSHCE, well-being, financial awareness, citizenship and study skills) and a rich programme of enrichment, leading to Duke of

Edinburgh Gold award. The Duke of Edinburgh Award programme involves sports and/or fitness, voluntary service, and a programme of enrichment activities. Training for expeditions is scheduled as part of the curriculum provision.

### **Assessment**

Throughout all key stages, students are assessed regularly to monitor progress and help them and their teachers 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; this is in Year 11 for most courses, with the exception of English Literature which is taken at the end of Year 10. A level courses are examined at the end of Year 13. In addition, students will have a number of internal exams throughout each key stage.

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