

Curriculum Policy 2023-24

Applicable to:	Responsible Officer	Date Adopted	Date to be reviewed:
All Staff	Deputy Headteacher	Nov 2023	Nov 2024

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: *Visible success for all individuals through a challenging, evolving curriculum*

The curriculum is carefully designed to be ambitious for all students at John Mason School. We believe that a curriculum should be coherent, well-sequenced and knowledge-rich. We want our curriculum to ensure that all students acquire powerful knowledge that can support them to be happy, confident, academically successful, and enquiring young people.

It is designed to be constantly evolving and to ensure it challenges students to attain academic success, alongside building the global awareness to develop into educated, empowered citizens. The curriculum is under regular review to reflect our fast-changing world and to ensure that we are routinely identifying and considering new topics, themes and skills that will support our students as they move into the world beyond school.

Our curriculum offers a wide breadth of academic subjects, alongside the development of essential skills that help our students grow to become confident, independent individuals and excellent communicators.

We aim for our curriculum to provide continuity and progression and take individual differences into account. A wide range of additional opportunities for learning and personal development enriches the curriculum. The range of subjects and courses supports students in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education. Curriculum maps in all subjects are built with consideration of the courses, apprenticeships and employment in which students might draw on the knowledge and skills of that subject in the future.

When designing the curriculum we follow the key principles:

- To ensure our students have access to the powerful knowledge that gives them the best opportunities in later life and is underpinned by our belief in the limitless potential of our students.

- To build on students' previous learning and provide stretch and challenge for our learners.
- To provide for the particular needs and aspirations of students, as well as offering a basic entitlement to broad areas of experience.
- To support students' personal development in building social and moral awareness and an understanding of their responsibilities towards themselves, others and the environment.
- To encourage the attitudes, qualities and metacognitive skills to enable students to pursue their learning beyond school, and be happy, safe and successful in their adult life.

Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Opportunities

We believe that our students' education is far more than the knowledge and skills that they acquire in lessons. School should be a rich and exciting experience that opens students' eyes to new worlds, builds character that equips them to thrive in the world, and equips them to work with a diverse range of people in multiple settings.

As such, we ensure that our curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and activities. A broad spectrum of sporting, musical, creative, scientific and other activities are offered at various points throughout the year. From the Year 7 Family Quiz, through our diverse range of musical and theatrical productions and trips abroad, to the successful compilation of their Extended Project Qualifications in year 13, we want our students to experience a wide range of eye-opening and exciting opportunities in multiple fields.

In KS3 students participate in a range of extra-curricular days such as Charter Day, Careers Day and Keeping Safe Day. These days are spent off timetable exploring some key aspects of their future steps. In addition to this our KS3 students are offered a residential to our very own Welsh Farm towards the end of Year 8. Beyond this all students are offered the opportunity to participate in 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 awards in Years 10 and 11, and the gold award in Year 12. This gold standard programme supports students in developing character and teamwork skills, fitness and sporting skills, overcoming adversity and volunteering to help others. In this we bring together everything we want for our students as young people prepared for their futures.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

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 most passionate about 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 KS3, all students study a modern foreign language - either Spanish, German, French or Mandarin.

In Year 7 and 8, students are taught in mixed attainment groupings for the majority of their lessons. Maths is taught in sets which are determined by the knowledge and understanding the students currently have. In Modern Foreign Languages, students are grouped according to the language they have chosen after the cycle of taster lessons at the beginning of Year 7. In Year 8, most students also take up a second language. Others may receive additional support in succeeding in the core

curriculum, to ensure they are well prepared for the rigour of GCSEs and further qualifications in Key Stage 4.

PSHCE is delivered through a course called Personal Development. 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.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

During Key Stage 4, students follow courses in the core subjects of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, and Personal Development. All students also study single Sciences: receiving 3 separate GCSEs in Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

In addition, students follow a number of options chosen from a wide range of subjects. This year the choices include: History; Geography; Psychology; French; German; Spanish; Mandarin; Computer Science; Digital IT; Hospitality and Catering; Music; Performing Arts; Physical Education; Business Studies; Art; Textiles; Graphics, 3D Design and Health and Social Care.

The majority of students take four GCSE option subjects, however this may not suit every individual. For those students who need greater support we offer a range of adjusted curriculum offers. For example we offer core booster groups to support students develop literacy and numeracy skills. 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.

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

Key Stage 5: Level 3 Courses in JMF6

Beyond GCSEs we very much hope that our students will feel welcomed to JMF6, the outstanding Sixth Form provided by John Mason and Fitzharrys Schools, where we deliver high quality, post-16 education to young people from the Abingdon area and beyond. In JMF6, our ambition is for every student to access outstanding learning opportunities, which encourage them to become academically successful, happy, confident and inquiring young people.

In JMF6 we pride ourselves on being a friendly and inclusive student community. Our ethos is based on the principle that each student is an individual, with exceptional potential and value. Throughout their time in JMF6 students are supported by a tutorial programme that is designed to support them personally and academically to ensure that they are in a position to achieve their goals and prepare them for the future beyond school.

By working in a joint Sixth Form we are able to offer an exciting range of subjects and enrichment opportunities. The majority of our students study three A level subjects, but some are studying four or five. 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. The majority of our students also study for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) which allows students to research into an area they are interested in, giving research skills, essay writing skills and presentation skills. This also supports University and Apprenticeship applications. For those students who need to, we offer opportunities

to resit English and mathematics GCSEs, alongside their A-levels, so that their educational and career ambitions can be fulfilled.

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 three times a year. Formal national examinations are taken at the end of a GCSE course; this is in Year 11 for most courses. 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.

Curriculum Maps

Curriculum maps for each subject can be found on our website and detail the key units covered and the order in which these will be taught. They are updated annually in term 1, to reflect any planned curriculum changes.

For more information on curriculum, please contact Andrew Stanger, Assistant Headteacher.