



# MERCHANT TAYLORS'

Prep

## CURRICULUM POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Merchant Taylors' Prep's Curriculum Policy applies to the EYFS (including the Wrap-around Care), the Pre-Prep section and the Prep section of Merchant Taylors' Prep. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Policy, Feedback Policy and SMSC policy.

Our aim at Merchant Taylors' Prep is to realise the potential of each pupil in our care whilst providing them with a full-time, supervised educational experience. This includes linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative educational experiences. All are delivered through subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the pupils, including, if appropriate, those with statements of special educational need.

In the course of this programme, we aim to ensure that all pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills that will enable them ultimately, as adults, to contribute fully to community life as well-balanced, compassionate and generous citizens.

Merchant Taylors' Prep has a strong academic tradition. We are committed to maintaining this tradition whilst preserving the correct balance between the academic, spiritual, emotional and physical needs of our pupils.

We seek to develop character and a true sense of values. We aim not only to deliver high levels of teaching and learning, but also to cater for the needs of each pupil through an extensive range of extra-curricular and sporting activities.

The School is characterised by a broad, exciting, world class curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge, skills and talents, supporting them to become reflective, problem-solving, independent learners. The curriculum encompasses all National Curriculum subjects, and is significantly broadened and enriched with diversity and variety at each stage of learning. Each curriculum area has a specific Scheme of Learning that identifies the content, skills and knowledge introduced at each stage of learning.

A great deal of emphasis is placed on core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science), with Modern Foreign Languages (French with some German and Spanish), History, Geography and Classics (including Latin and Greek), surrounding this core.

Art & Design Technology, Computing, Drama, Music and Physical Education & Sport are important components. TPRE (Theology, Philosophy, Religion & Ethics) & Religious Studies inform about different beliefs, and gives further meaning and context to our own culture as well as the cultures of others. Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills are an integral part of all learning: in particular they are used to present work, research information and portray data across the curriculum.

The curriculum aims to ensure coherence in pupils' learning in order to encourage high achievement. Continuity and progression through succeeding phases of education will be promoted

through detailed curriculum planning across the School, which incorporates the response of the School to the outcomes of pupil assessment.

The School places importance on the links between each section in order to ensure a smooth transition for pupils. Strong links exist with admissions tutors in a wide range of senior independent and maintained schools both locally and nationally. The School maximises individualised learning for Year 8 pupils in preparation for the next phase of learning.

The School emphasises equality of access to the curriculum. Pupils are presented with the same knowledge and skills for each subject, but at levels and in ways appropriate to their needs. Where required, work is adapted to the different needs and abilities of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties receive extra specialist support, whilst more able pupils enrich their learning through extension tasks.

### **Our Aims:**

- through ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress, to promote a love of learning and develop intellectual curiosity in our School.
- to draw from the core requirements of the National Curriculum (as a minimum), offering breadth, balance and relevance, and allowing flexibility for individual talents and aptitudes.
- to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, physical, aesthetic and practical development of all pupils. This will enable them to distinguish right from wrong, to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- to prepare pupils to contribute to society as responsible citizens in British society, giving them the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. This is planned to enable pupils to see how they may contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the local and wider community. It will include the provision of a broad, general knowledge of public institutions and services in the United Kingdom. Additionally, the School aims to actively promote a respect for the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- to prepare pupils for the next stage of their schooling.
- to promote the acquisition of skills of independent learning and encourage responsibility for this.
- to promote respect both for their own achievements and for those of others. It aims to encourage pupils to appreciate and respect their own culture and their own beliefs, and those of others, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural and religious traditions.
- to build self-confidence in our pupils, which will enable them to take full advantage of the opportunities they meet at the School and in later life.
- to develop the key skills of Communication, Numeracy, Literacy and ICT.
- to nurture spiritual and moral values, which reflect our aims and ethos through all activities of the School, in particular our assemblies, and the courtesy and respect evident in the relationships between all members of the School.

- to provide subject material appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those with a statement of SEND or an EHC Plan, and to review schemes of learning regularly seeking to ensure they meet the needs of all pupils.
- to develop lively, enquiring minds through well-planned lessons that provide stimulating, challenging and purposeful learning experiences, extended and enhanced by a range of homework tasks.
- to monitor, evaluate and act upon the quality of the planning, delivery and consistency of provision of the formal curriculum through Assessment for Learning, Recording and Review procedures.
- to extend the pupils' learning experience through our House events, a wide range of day and residential visits, an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and fund-raising events for charity.
- to celebrate pupils' achievements and success through a variety of School activities, performance and displays, and by individual commendation.

The curriculum is monitored by senior leaders aiming to ensure that no indoctrination of political ideology exists in any studies.

Heads of Department have overall responsibility for the curriculum throughout the School, and are encouraged to ensure they are always up to date with new requirements.

Extra-curricular activities play a key role in the development and enjoyment of our pupils. We offer a wide range of after-school clubs and activities to pupils in all sections of the School, and each pupil in turn is expected to broaden his horizons by attending and contributing to his chosen activity.

## **Pre-Prep Department**

### **EYFS (Nursery and Reception)**

At Merchant Taylors' Prep, we recognise that pupils learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected. Merchant Taylors' Prep has been granted exemption from the learning and development requirements of EYFS (from 26.11.12). This deliberate move has allowed us to develop our own Early Years curriculum. We believe this enhances, expands and enriches significantly the opportunities we are able to offer our pupils, over and above those required by EYFS.

Merchant Taylors' Prep's Early Years curriculum focuses on pupils acquiring positive dispositions towards learning:

- Concentration
- Perseverance
- Empathy
- Communication & Collaboration
- Independence
- Wisdom
- Curiosity
- Imagination
- Risk-Taking

Through planning meaningful activities that help pupils to acquire these and other dispositions, we seek to ensure that their experiences include opportunities to develop their personal and social skills, emotional and physical development, well-being, literacy and communication skills, Mathematics, general knowledge, and creativity.

With a comprehensive view of the level of developmental and educational needs for each child, an appropriate and challenging curriculum can be delivered, seeking to ensure the needs of the individual can be met effectively.

On entry to Reception at Merchant Taylors' Prep, all pupils will undertake a baseline assessment in order to ascertain stages of development, strengths and needs. Many pupils have followed an EYFS programme at Nursery, and the records made by practitioners in that setting also provide vital information on individual attainment and requirements for the coming year.

Careful and flexible planning between all the staff in contact with the pupils ensure a wide, varied and effective curriculum is delivered. At Merchant Taylors' Prep subject specialist teachers in Computing, French, Music and Physical Education work with the pupils and liaise with class teachers to give an accurate picture of attainment in relation to the assessment scales.

Further information can be found in the EYFS policy.

### **Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2**

Key Stage 1 begins in Year 1. Class teachers are responsible for teaching English, Mathematics, Philosophy for Children and Religious Studies as separate subjects. Science, History, Geography and Art & Design Technology are taught as elements of a topic. Subject specialist teachers take pupils for Computing, French, Music and Physical Education.

Skills in speaking, listening, literacy and Mathematics are promoted, where possible and applicable, in all subjects.

Through monitoring the results of various types of assessments, the School seeks to ensure pupils learn and make progress.

Teachers in Years 1 and 2 work collaboratively to plan and deliver the creative topic-style of teaching which enables more connections between the subjects. Schemes of Learning, which do not undermine fundamental British values, and short-, medium- and long-term planning, exist for each topic.

### **Prep Department**

A great deal of emphasis is placed on core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science), with Modern Foreign Languages (including German and Spanish), History, Geography and Classics (including Latin and Greek), surrounding this core. Art & Design Technology, Computing, Drama, Music and Physical Education & Sport are important components. TPPE (Theology, Philosophy, Religion & Ethics) & Religious Studies inform about different beliefs and give further meaning and context to our own culture as well as the cultures of others. The pupils also learn Wellbeing & PSHE, aiming to ensure that they are confident and well-rounded. Digital Literacy skills are an integral part of all learning; in particular they are used to present work, research information and display data across the curriculum.

The syllabus for each academic subject is planned in accordance with our pupils' needs, with appropriate reference to the National Curriculum. We incorporate, where appropriate, elements of the Common Entrance Examination and Common Academic Scholarship Examination syllabuses.

### **Key Stage 2:**

In Years 3 to 6, the syllabus content and skills taught in Mathematics, English, Science, History and Geography, French and TPRE (Y5 to Y8) & RS (Y3 to Y4) are bespoke, and based on the needs of Merchant Taylors' Prep pupils, whilst taking into account the requirements that may be needed for some for 13+ examinations. Classics (including Latin) is introduced in Year 3.

The broad curriculum continues to be delivered with appropriate allocations of time to Art & Design Technology, Computing, Drama, Music, Physical Education & Sport, and Wellbeing & PSHE.

Subject Schemes of Learning, which do not undermine fundamental British values, and medium- and long-term planning exist for all subjects.

The key skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are promoted, where possible and applicable, in all subjects. The pupils have dedicated Accelerated Reader lessons where their reading is encouraged and monitored.

Through monitoring the results of various types of assessments staff ensure pupils learn and make progress.

### **Key Stage 3:**

In Years 7 and 8, pupils are prepared for their transition to Merchant Taylors' School (or another 13+ school via entrance or scholarship examinations) as they study the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry & Physics), Modern Foreign Languages (French with some German and Spanish), Geography, History, TPRE and Classics (Latin, and Greek for selected groups). The pupils follow syllabuses designed by our Heads of Department in agreement with their opposite numbers at Merchant Taylors' School. Our pupils who are external candidates follow ISEB's syllabuses for the CEE, or individual schools' syllabuses for entrance examinations or scholarships as is appropriate.

In addition, all pupils continue to be taught Art & Design Technology, Computing, Drama, Music, PSHE, Physical Education & Sport. The pupils have dedicated Accelerated Reader lessons where their reading is encouraged and monitored.

In the Prep, there is also the opportunity for enrichment and intellectual curiosity through extra-curricular activities, homework and a House system which involves and values every individual.

### **Wellbeing & PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)**

Wellbeing & PSHE are important elements in our curriculum. Wellbeing & PSHE reflect the School's aims and ethos. Wellbeing encourages the pupils to achieve greater self-awareness, acquire useful skills, and to aspire to a successful, compassionate and happy life. PSHE covers topics such as sex and relationships education, careers education, drugs awareness, substance abuse, issues of safeguarding, internet safety, citizenship, healthy living and respect for all in society. Visiting speakers are sometimes invited to cover some of these topics.

Please refer to the PSHE Policy for further information.

## **Visits and Outings: The Enrichment Curriculum**

Opportunities are offered for a variety of non-residential and residential visits (as Covid-19 regulations permit), which give the pupils first-hand experiences of the curriculum, adding an exciting and supportive dimension to classroom teaching. Within these settings, organisational and social skills are practised, helping the pupils to develop in maturity and confidence. Visits are available both within single year groups and across year groups.

## **Homework**

A homework timetable is published for each form or teaching group. The Parental Handbook sets out the purposes of homework, the types of homework that will be set and offers advice on helping the pupil and communicating with the subject teacher.

Homework is comprised of three elements. There is an academic component, a reading element, and the opportunity for the pupils to enrich themselves through membership of a club, team or organisation. Pupils may also use enrichment to practise a language or instrument. They may pursue a hobby or take part in a religious or cultural group.

In Y3 and Y4, the School uses the platform Seesaw for setting homework which pupils can access at home. In Y5 to Y8, the School uses Microsoft Teams for the same purpose (see Homework Policy).

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Throughout the School, where a pupil has a new specific Education and Health Care plan (EHC), or an existing statement of special educational need that identifies their special needs in terms of learning or disability, we aim to provide an education which fulfils those requirements. Such plans are reviewed annually by the School and the Local Authority.

Our Special Educational Needs Coordinator [SENDICO] supports staff in identifying pupils' difficulties and devising suitable teaching strategies and materials. Many such pupils will be provided with an individual education plan to record the provision in place for them and monitor their progress. The Coordinator liaises with parents and outside agencies to coordinate any extra help that may be required and to offer support to small groups in class.

Through ongoing classroom observation and assessment we identify and meet the needs of pupils performing highly, and work closely with specialists and professional agencies aiming to ensure that the needs of such pupils are met.

Pupils with English as an additional language are appropriately catered for with individual assistance if necessary, following an entry assessment of their ability with spoken and written language.

## **Pupils Performing Highly**

We believe that all pupils are entitled to make the greatest progress possible. Any high performers are identified as early as possible, and developed throughout the pupils' time at the School.

The CPH Coordinator supports staff in the identification and setting-up of provision for pupils performing highly and collates and monitors a register. The CPH Coordinator promotes the School's agreed policy and practice with regard to the teaching and learning provision, and encourages Heads of Department to provide suitable resources.

### **Assessment, Feedback and Reporting**

Assessment is an essential part of each curriculum area. Regular assessments are made of pupils' work to establish a level of attainment and to inform future planning. Teachers use assessment information to track the progress of individual pupils and use it to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. Effective feedback is a key lever in raising pupils' performance.

Record-keeping and assessment procedures are defined in the Teaching and Learning Policy (see also the separate Assessment Policy, Feedback Policy and Reporting Policy). Reports to parents give clear accurate and useful information on their pupils' progress.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All pupils have equal opportunities and equal access to the curriculum giving them the opportunity to learn and make progress, enabling them to fulfil their potential.

### **Staff Development**

Senior leaders ensure that all staff have access to a programme of continuous professional development, which supports both the needs and aspirations of the individuals concerned. In-service training is provided to update and enhance teaching and learning. Training needs are regularly assessed. Initiatives in curriculum development and teaching and learning are monitored to help to ensure teachers are well-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.

### **Political Views** (see SMSC policy for further information)

In its curriculum, at all levels, Merchant Taylors' Prep precludes the promotion of partisan political views, or any attempt to radicalise pupils in any way, in all subjects and by all teachers and staff. From time to time, and at levels appropriate to the pupils' maturity, political matters are brought to their attention.

Such issues may, on occasion, be brought to pupil's attention as part of their studies:

1. When they are in School.
2. While they are taking part in extra-curricular activities provided or organised by or on behalf of the School.
3. Or in the promotion at the School, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the School or elsewhere.

On these occasions all such issues are offered in a balanced presentation of opposing views.

**Policy reviewed by AM: March 2024**  
**Next review date: March 2025**