

CURRICULUM POLICY

Introduction

Our curriculum policy is underpinned by the aims of the School.

Manchester High School for Girls aims to educate and empower our pupils by:

- Supporting our pupils to develop an understanding of the value of education as an end in itself; instilling a lifelong love of learning, whilst striving for academic excellence alongside cultural awareness and understanding
- Inspiring pupils to achieve high academic standards within a culture of innovation, where they fulfil their individual potential
- Providing a broad and diverse range of subjects and extra-curricular activities that offer each individual pupil the opportunity to develop their talents and flourish
- Educating the whole child and prioritising their wellbeing so that pupils leave School with a sense of self-awareness, self-worth, self-discipline and an ability to contribute with confidence in an increasingly competitive and technological world
- Drawing on the School's social, cultural and religious mix of pupils to enable all to live and grow in an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion
- Encouraging qualities of caring, kindness, honesty and loyalty, fostering high moral standards

In all the stages of MHSG, from our Reception class in the Prep department through all the key stages up to the Sixth Form, the curriculum is planned to ensure a breadth and balance of subjects studied and to engage and challenge our pupils. We carefully review and develop schemes of work at all levels, following the intentions of the National Curriculum and other DfE guidelines, but broaden the scope to ensure that courses are constructed to suit the abilities and interests of our pupils and to focus on the development of the individual. Our House system and extensive extracurricular and Well Being programmes form an important part of the whole educational experience alongside the way pupils are treated and are expected to behave in order to promote the values and ethos of MHSG.

Key Stage Three

Drama, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies are taught in form groups. The four form groups are usually split into six classes for Art and Graphics, Biology, Chemistry, Computing, Physics and DTI (Design, Technology and Innovation) if the number of pupils in the year group warrants this. A circus operates within DTI, in which pupils study different aspects of the subjects during each year, in rotation.

In Mathematics, in Year 7, there is some setting from the start of the year based on entrance test results. There is setting in English from Year 8, based on results and performance during Year 7. Each pupil's ability is assessed throughout Key Stage 3 using internal tests, standardised data and the knowledge of the subject teacher in order to ensure that she is in the teaching group best suited to her needs.

In Year 7, pupils study taster courses in French, German, Mandarin and Spanish. Year 7 pupils also study Latin throughout the year. Pupils then choose two of the five languages to study for Year 8 and Year 9. (Note that Mandarin was introduced to Year 7 in September 2022) In Year 9, all pupils complete the Higher Project Qualification, HPQ, which is worth a half GCSE. This is intended to improve pupils' independent study and research skills.

Key Stage Four

In Years 10 and 11 pupils study nine GCSEs. Our compulsory subjects are English Literature and Language, Mathematics, a Language (French, German, Latin or Spanish) and either three separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) or Double Award Science. English is taught in ability groups. Mathematics is set across the year in five groups. In addition, pupils currently study the GCSE short course in Religious Studies, which is examined in Year 10 (note that this course has been discontinued and the last set of pupils to complete the course will take their examinations in May/June 2023). Pupils enjoy a wide range of Physical Education activities including climbing, use of the fitness suite and the option to study GCSE Dance as an extra-curricular subject.

Pupils are then able to choose two or three optional subjects. Each Head of Department/ Subject Leader provides a summary for pupils and parents in an information booklet supported by an options process during the Spring Term in Year 9. The optimum size of groups is about 18 but in less popular subjects this can be as small as five. The option pool structure in the timetable is designed after the pupils make their choices so that the maximum number of pupils can study their first choice options. Subjects available are: Art, Computing, Drama, French, Food Technology, Geography, German, Graphics, History, Latin, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies and Spanish.

Pupils are encouraged to engage in activities such as the Model United Nations group or the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award expeditions to develop their wider interpersonal skills.

The Sixth Form

The entry requirement for the Sixth Form is five grade 7s at GCSE level, or equivalent, with at least grade 7 in their chosen subjects.

In the Junior Sixth, most pupils choose four subjects from a list of over twenty in a pool structure that is designed to accommodate each pupil's choice. It is therefore very flexible, allowing most combinations of subjects. Each subject is allowed six periods with a group size of about 10 to 16 pupils. In some cases, if the number of students falls below three, subjects are either taught in a reduced number of lessons or joint lessons between Junior and Senior Sixth are arranged. The progress of each individual pupil is monitored carefully throughout the two years of Sixth Form, with regular assessments and reporting sessions. Most pupils will continue to study three of their four subjects in the Senior Sixth, dropping one subject after internal examinations in the Summer Term of the Junior Sixth. Pupils may continue with four subjects, though this is not advisable for most. Where there are several teaching groups for a subject, we make an attempt to balance the numbers of pupils in each teaching group at the start of the Senior Sixth when we know all the pupils' intentions and how many have dropped out of each subject. This, inevitably, can lead to a change in teacher between Junior and Senior Sixth but such changes are always kept to a minimum. We do not allow pupils to choose their teachers. All Junior Sixth pupils are expected to participate in an academic enrichment activity; the options available include Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), Mandarin for Beginners, Gold Arts Award, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Generally, each pupil has one period of academic enrichment supervised by a teacher who monitors their progress. Pupils are expected to spend some of their independent study time on academic enrichment activities.

Full details of the Sixth Form curriculum, including information on specifications for A-level subjects are updated annually and are available in the Sixth Form Prospectus.

Well Being Programme

All pupils follow a coordinated programme, which includes health, personal, social, economic and careers education, study skills and citizenship. The material is delivered via a weekly taught period, theme days and tutorial periods by form tutors, specialist staff or external 'experts'. Some aspects of the programme are delivered in subject lessons whilst other aspects are reinforced by subject teachers during lessons. The Well Being programme is at the heart of reinforcing our MHSG values:

- Learning: We inspire a lifelong love of learning and promote the highest standards of intellectual curiosity and academic rigour among both our staff and pupils.
- Innovation: We empower our pupils to think for themselves and to experiment, express opinions, develop new ideas and challenge stereotypes. We encourage them to be 'risk-takers', embracing the importance of failure and viewing challenges as stepping-stones to future progress, enabling them to be self-confident agents of change.
- Compassion: We foster a culture of respect for others, tolerance, kindness, honesty and service. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to their community, locally and globally.
- Individuality: We are proud of our diverse community and know every pupil as an individual. We support their aspirations and encourage the development of resilience and self-confidence, so that our pupils can become tenacious, independent and happy.
- Wellbeing: We believe in prioritising the all-round development of our pupils and encourage the pursuit of enjoyment, fun and mindfulness; recognising that happiness is fundamental to success.

As part of the Well Being programme, pupils in all year groups are taught about the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Clearly, these values overlap with our MHSG values and they are actively promoted by the school.

The Well Being programme encourages pupils to show respect for others, both within the school community and beyond. Pupils are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and the importance of having particular regard for the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Personal skills, such as resilience and others which enable our pupils to become more resourceful human beings have been included as well as theme weeks, such as community week.

Inclusion and Learning Support

The curriculum is designed to be accessed by all pupils who are selected to join MHSG but if we need to modify it in any way, this is done in consultation with parents. For instance, some pupils who join the school through occasional vacancy places after Year 7 may have their languages programme adjusted depending on prior experience and pupils who participate in sport at national / international level may follow a reduced curriculum if they are required to miss a lot of school time.

We have a clear learning support policy which enables the individual needs of gifted and talented pupils, pupils who are bilingual, or have specific learning needs or English as an Additional Language to be met. Where appropriate, Individual Support Plans are provided by the Learning Support Co-ordinator.

We are committed to meeting the needs of children with disabilities and MHSG complies fully with the requirements of the Equality Act of 2010. This could involve the use of ICT to adapt curriculum materials or allowing additional time, for example, should the need arise.

Educational visits

Almost all subjects offer a variety of educational visits and other curricular enhancement activities. The demands on pupils at this level can be overwhelming for some weaker pupils, or some who have poor organisational skills.

- We allow each department to organise one visit each year in the examination years.
- Colleagues are asked not to arrange any external visits in September or at the start of the summer term in the run up to both internal and external examinations.
- Heads of Year will monitor pupils closely and pupils who are a cause for concern may not be allowed to participate.
- We ask sixth form students to limit open day visits to 2 days off school where possible.
- All proposals must be agreed by the Teaching and Learning Deputy and the Co-curricular Assistant Head who will attempt to minimise disruption to teaching time and will monitor the *whole picture*.

- As with any guidelines, we attempt to ensure that if there is an extraordinary opportunity for enrichment, it is fully exploited!

Monitoring and Review

The Teaching and Learning Deputy is responsible for the organisation of the timetable which is part of an annual cycle of review with Heads of Department. The Head Mistress, SLT members attached to specific departments and Heads of Department monitor the curriculum through lesson observations, work scrutinies and feedback from pupils and parents as well as external examination results. This policy is reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Deputy and approved by the Governors' Academic Development Committee at least every three years. Governors are invited to observe lessons as part of the planned monitoring of the curriculum.

Reviewed by Teaching and Learning Deputy, Jennie Hodson September 2022
Approved by Academic Development Committee of Governors, October 2022.