



St Mary
Magdalene
Academy

THE COURTYARD

CURRICULUM POLICY

The Courtyard aims to offer an outstanding educational and social provision that will equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and live out their potential.

CURRICULUM - POLICY STATEMENT

ST MARY MAGDALENE ACADEMY THE COURTYARD

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Contents

1. Introduction and Context
2. Vision, Values and Aims
3. Quality of Education - Intent: Curriculum Design
4. Quality of Education – Implementation: Curriculum Framework and Delivery
5. Quality of Education – Implementation: Assessment
6. Quality of Education – Impact: Attainment and Progress
7. Quality of Education – Impact: Reading
8. Quality of Education – Impact: Destinations
9. Personal Development: SMSC, British Values, Careers Guidance, Healthy Living/Wellbeing, Citizenship, Equality and Diversity

Introduction and Context

The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive document to share with pupils, staff, Governors, families and other interested stakeholders. The policy incorporates our vision, values and aims as well as describing the approach to our curriculum and the ways in which teaching, learning and assessment takes place at our school.

The Courtyard School is a free school for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils who attend the school have a diagnosis of autism spectrum condition and/or speech, language and communication needs.

We provide a personalised curriculum for up to 36 pupils, aged 14-19. Each pupil who attends the school follows an individual curriculum depending on a number of factors which include academic ability, social and communication skills and strengths. Pupils are taught in ability groups where appropriate, regardless of age. Due to our inclusive relationship with St Mary Magdalene Academy, we are able to offer a broad range of mainstream qualifications subject to an initial assessment.

We are also able to offer a therapeutic element to the curriculum through our links with CAMHS, the Local Authority Educational Psychology and Speech and Language teams, the Islington Learning Disability Partnership and our on-site art therapy service. All pupils are provided with a keyworker to oversee all their pastoral needs.

Vision, Values and Aims

The Courtyard's vision is to offer an outstanding educational and social provision that will equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to discover and live out their potential.

We believe that The Courtyard is a safe, happy and stimulating school that supports pupils' individual needs. The staff work hard to ensure that a nurturing approach supports all pupils through their education, encouraging them to be responsible and resilient citizens who are able to make the right choices to promote educational and emotional wellbeing.

The aspiration for all pupils is to unlock their potential and access the highest level of qualification possible whilst also equipping them with the skills to be able to live and work independently.

It is our duty to:

- Provide a curriculum which prioritises skills for life and work, including relevant accreditation and work experience.
- Ensure our learners have strong functional literacy and numeracy skills.
- Maximise opportunities for independence.
- Nurture the whole child to develop their empathy, compassion and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide opportunities to be a confident citizen within the local community and the wider world through engagement in a range of enrichment activities within and beyond the curriculum.

Quality of Education – Intent: Curriculum Design

The Courtyard is dedicated to providing a broad and balanced curriculum at levels appropriate to the developmental understanding of our pupils. We believe that students should leave us with the necessary knowledge, skills and accreditation to see them successfully move forward to the next stage in their lives, whether that be college, an apprenticeship or paid employment.

Ensuring our pupils are prepared for adult, independent life is at the centre of our curriculum, as evidenced in the new PAIL suite of subjects introduced in September 2018 (**P**reparation for **A**dult **I**ndependent **L**ife).

The starting point is the individual child with a programme designed to meet his/her needs. The long term targets from each child's EHCP are used to populate a pupil's pathway whilst at The Courtyard, with the short term targets from the Appendix A of the EHCP forming the basis of the pupil's end of year goals which are reviewed three times per year.

Communication is another key aspect of our curriculum, with both specific communication sessions timetabled as well as cross-curricular opportunities throughout the day.

We endeavour to provide opportunities for pupils who are identified as having a gift or talent to develop their skills and abilities in that area.

Quality of Education - Implementation: Curriculum Framework and Delivery

The curriculum at The Courtyard recognises the need for pupils to move towards a higher proportion of life skills and independence. The SEND Code of Practice recommends that from 14 years old:

“High aspirations about employment, independent living and community participation should be developed through the curriculum and extra-curriculum provision” (SEND Code of Practice, January 2015).

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) devises a curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of the current cohort of the school and, if necessary, adapt and modify it annually.

Teachers create a long-term curriculum overview which details the progression of learning pupils will make throughout the year. These incorporate the termly PAIL themes and are overseen by the Deputy for Teaching and Learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the SLT via monitoring and moderation of planning and assessment, analysis of progress data, lesson observations, book monitoring, a CPD programme, learning walks, LINK meetings with teachers and discussions with pupils.

Subjects

Subjects are divided into three areas at The Courtyard: Core, Life and Creative.

Core Subjects

The core subjects of the curriculum consist of adapted National Curriculum subjects.

The core subjects are:

- Maths
- English
- ICT

Maths:

Maths is taught discretely to all pupils whilst also being reinforced throughout the curriculum. A wide range of skills and accreditations is offered to cater for pupils of all ability. Maths is often taken out of the classroom so that pupils can see how it informs a large part of wider life.

Maths Games is a timetabled session for students to increase their numerical skills and vocabulary in a fun and engaging way.

Teachers adapt content to suit the interests of pupils and link topics and themes to the PAIL theme of the term (see p.9).

Subject	Accreditation	Level
Maths	Pearson AS Level Maths (9MA0) Pearson GCSE Maths (1MA1) Pearson GCSE Statistics (8382) Pearson Functional Skills	Foundation or Higher Foundation or Higher Foundation or Higher Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1-2

English:

English is taught discretely to all pupils whilst literacy is also reinforced throughout the curriculum. Pupils engage with a wide range of texts and writing tasks whilst an emphasis is put on communication and developing speaking and listening skills.

Teachers adapt content to suit the interests of pupils and link topics and themes to the PAIL theme of the term (see p.9).

Subject	Accreditation	Level
English	AQA English Language (8700) AQA GCSE English Literature (8702) Pearson Functional Skills	GCSE GCSE Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1-2

The IDL Intervention programme is used for pupils who are identified as requiring additional literacy support. The programme is a computer based multi-sensory system which supports learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties to increase their reading and spelling ages. The over-learning model of the programme means that pupils are able to better retain the spelling and meaning of new vocabulary.

ICT:

ICT is at the forefront of our modern world and is taught discretely to all pupils whilst supporting teaching and learning throughout the curriculum. A broad range of ICT skills and qualifications are offered as well as high quality technology being used to support teaching and learning in and out of the classroom. Teachers adapt content and skills to suit the interests of pupils and ensure they are relevant to the wider world. Links are made with the PAIL theme of the term and pupils also engage in The Hour of Code as part of an after-school enrichment option.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
ICT	Pearson GCSE (4IT1) Pearson Functional Skills BCS E-Safety BCS ECDL in PPT, Database, Spreadsheets and Word	GCSE Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1-2 Level 1 Level 3

PAIL (Preparation for Adult Independent Life)

Creating a curriculum with our pupils at its heart has been a journey that has taken many factors into consideration.

The CAT4 assessment that all pupils complete on arrival at The Courtyard has shown that a large proportion of our pupils have a spatial bias, which includes those who think most easily by using images and then converting these thoughts to words later. Spatial learners tend not to be vocal and there is evidence that those with relatively strong spatial abilities tend to gravitate towards and excel in fields such as physical sciences, engineering, maths and computer science, as well as art and design.

The PAIL curriculum was developed by the PAIL team of teachers who used their knowledge of our pupils' needs and interests to create a curriculum that would engage, interest and inspire and give our pupils as many opportunities to learn, develop, excel, create, express and communicate in whatever fields they can.

All PAIL subjects work around a shared, termly theme and key question:

Autumn Term: The Self – Who Am I?

Spring Term: Communication – How Do I Communicate?

Summer Term: Relationships – What is a relationship?

PAIL: Life Skills

The PAIL: Life Skills subjects of the curriculum are those deemed necessary to enable our students to be equipped with a variety of knowledge and skills to pursue adult, independent life.

The PAIL: Life Skills subjects are:

- Home Cooking/Hospitality
- PSD/WorkSkills and
- Science
- Physical Education

BTEC Home Cooking and Hospitality:

Being able to prepare a meal for oneself is a key life skill and so all pupils engage in both theory and practical cookery lessons every week. The Home Cooking Skills course gives pupils the basic skills and knowledge to be able to cook for themselves in a healthy and cost-effective way. They learn kitchen basics: what equipment you need and the best way to stock your store cupboard, fridge and freezer: food safety and hygiene, knife safety, fridge management and rotation, how to shop cleverly: shopping lists, seasonal food and planning ahead, preparing ingredients and understanding confusing food labels.

The Hospitality course sharpens pupils' skills for employment or further study. Pupils gain an understanding of the hospitality industry including job roles, enterprise and finance, healthy lifestyles, and preparing and presenting food and beverages. They will learn and then apply the knowledge and practise the skills needed in order to follow a chosen career or future studies.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
Home Cooking Skills	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2
Hospitality	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

PSD and BTEC Work Skills:

PSD is taught via The Social Express programme which provides pupils with a safe environment to learn and practise skills needed to help them develop meaningful relationships and successfully navigate our social world. The research-based animated interactive lessons are engaging and teach foundation skills for social and emotional learning including: attentive listening, conflict resolution, conversations, critical thinking, group participation, non-verbal communication, relationship management and self-management.

Students in the Sixth Form are then able to progress onto the BTEC WorkSkills course, gaining accreditation in Level 2, depending on the number of units achieved. The BTEC WorkSkills Level 2 course is a two-year program. Each 'Year Plan' is composed of three units. In the first year students will focus on the creation of a CV and a covering letter, self-management skills and presenting a professional image in new work environments. In the second year the units covered will be personal and social relationships, working in a team and learning from work placements.

Students will gain a Pearson BTEC Level 2 95*GLH Award in WorkSkills after the successful completion of the six units.

Tailored employability workshops and events will be run once a month to complement the curriculum and give students a better awareness of what they have to offer employers/what to expect and guidance about how to succeed in their applications, interviews, work experience placements, college, etc.

Students have careers support for personal development, skills development, access to online resources, employability skills training, college taster days, and pastoral support.

All Sixth Form students take part in work experience placements for 2 hours per week. A great deal of time and effort is put into finding appropriate placements based on pupils' interests and future aspirations.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
WorkSkills	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

Science:

A strong focus on practical science is given in science lessons as pupils explore how the world around them works. Those who are keen scientists can study the BTEC in the Applied Principles of Science which develops key knowledge of scientific principles such as: fundamentals of science, working in the science industry, scientific investigations, scientific practical techniques, perceptions of science and using mathematical tools in science. In addition to these units, students cover key areas of biology, chemistry and physics related to medical science. Assessment is on-going throughout the two year programme and includes externally assessed exams, assignments, presentations and practical based assessments.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
Principles of Applied Science	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

Physical Education:

All pupils engage in 2 hours of PE per week. The Courtyard KS4 pupils engage in PE sessions with a qualified instructor at SMMA, and the 6th Form has access to the facilities at Market Road Sports Centre where they can use a range of equipment and take part in a number of activities in one of the studio spaces available.

PAIL: Creative Skills

The PAIL: Creative Skills subjects of the curriculum are those that enable our pupils to express themselves in the wide variety of modes and means that they need.

The PAIL: Creative Skills subjects are:

- Creative Expression (SRE and Drama/Performing Arts);
- Art;
- World Studies;
- Music and Visual Art; and
- Animation.

Creative Expression (SRE and Drama/BTEC Performing Arts):

SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) lessons focus on understanding the reproductive system, basic sexual health, and staying safe in relationships. Students who complete the work through the SRE lessons will gain accreditation through the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

Performing Arts lessons introduce students to the different ways of expression through the means of performing arts. This includes units such as introduction to drama, exploring emotions, movement exploration, and using your voice which will expand their vocal and singing skills. This subject is very practical, and allows students to experience a more kinaesthetic approach to learning.

Students who show particular talent and interest in performing arts can have the opportunity to study BTEC Performing Arts. This involves 3 units spread across 2 years, with a more detailed exploration into acting and opportunities to take part in performances, allowing students to receive the necessary introduction into drama if they wanted to continue studying upon leaving The Courtyard.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
Performing Arts	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

Art:

The art course allows students to explore different ways to express themselves creatively, alongside learning new skills and techniques via a wide range of mediums.

This subject combines practical artwork production with artist research and trips to galleries, which add to their cultural and understanding.

This subject is inclusive of all abilities; from students with little or no Art experience to those working at a more advanced level.

Students whom have little experience have the opportunity to gain accreditation though The AQA Unit Award Scheme. Those with a passion for art can study the BTEC Firsts Art & Design.

Subject	Accreditation	Level
Art	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

World Studies:

World Studies is a combination of History, Geography and RS, designed to guide the pupils in the self-discovery of the world that surrounds us. Learning takes place through the exploration of the biographies of three main characters: Charles Darwin, Queen Elizabeth II and Martin Luther King, as pupils explore exciting topics such as evolution, the British Empire and the fight for civil rights. This allows pupils to explore ideas of identity, British values and the wider world. The key characters will change every year. Pupils can gain accreditation through the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

Animation

Animation is a further opportunity for pupils to explore their creativity using stop-frame animation and film-making technology. Pupils can gain accreditation through the AQA Unit Award Scheme.

Music and Visual Arts:

Whilst the Animation teacher takes her maternity leave, pupils are partaking in Music and Visual Arts.

This gives pupils a chance to develop their ear, their listening skills and explore their own musicality. They learn about instruments and the orchestration of music, as well as timing, tempo and how to construct a song and a music composition.

Pupils will also look at how music and the visual relate; how they can use sound with animation and film.

Quality of Education - Implementation: Assessment

At The Courtyard we use a range of assessment systems in order to show progress in both academic achievement but also in other areas of the curriculum and a pupil's development in Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Independence (SCERI), emotional literacy and behaviour.

For pupils at The Courtyard, assessment aims to:

- Provide a baseline against which to measure attainment and progress in all areas, including the PAIL Life Skills and Creative Skills curriculum.
- Identify the 'hidden talents' of pupils beyond the academic subjects (through the CAT4 assessment).
- Identify the learning needs of an individual pupil or group of pupils.
- Inform planning, target setting and interventions.
- Assist with the development of quality teaching strategies which motivate pupils.
- Comply with statutory requirements.
- Inform parents and carers of their child's experiences and achievements.
- Support the identification of barriers to learning and the development of strategies to overcome these.

Assessment is an on-going activity throughout the year through questioning, marking of pupils' work and observations of pupils' learning.

Pupils are formally assessed in English, maths and ICT three times per year, the final assessment of the year often, but not always, being one which gains an accreditation. Pupils will only be entered for a qualification if it is agreed by all parties that they are ready and we are confident that accreditation will be gained.

Pupils are entered for the BTEC qualifications once their body of coursework is ready and they have completed all necessary units in order to achieve the award.

Teachers assess other PAIL subjects, SCERI and behaviour using a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating, depending on how far pupils have met their targets.

Quality of Education - Impact: Attainment and Progress

Targets and tracking:

Pupils' academic targets are set based on a number of factors: their KS2 achievements, baseline assessments, therapeutic advice, parental advice and teacher advice.

Due to the wide range of qualifications offered in English, maths and ICT, these subjects use a points system in order to create a uniform tracking system of progress. The points system is adapted from DfE Primary Progress Measures (2016).

Expected and aspirational targets are set based on the expectation that pupils will make 4 points of progress per year and uses a target-setting model based on the DfE National

Progression Guidance document, although these are adjusted according to individual pupils' starting points and other factors which may have affected their attainment prior to arrival at The Courtyard. Attainment data is collected and tracked by the Deputy for Teaching and Learning and analysed in collaboration with teachers in order to monitor progress of pupils.

SCERI targets are assigned to pupils either in Annual Reviews, SCERI staff meetings, 'All About' staff meetings and the emotional literacy questionnaire. These are also reviewed three times per year and adjusted accordingly, depending on when they are met.

Progress:

Progress 8 at The Courtyard involves tracking the progress of what we deem to be the 8 main subject or personal development areas of the curriculum:

- **3 core subjects:** English, Maths and ICT.
- **2 PAIL Life Skills subjects:** PSD/WorkSkills and Home Cooking.
- **3 Developmental Competencies:** Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Independence (SCERI).
- Each pupil's P8 score is calculated by looking at their progress in the 8 areas and recording if pupils are exceeding, meeting or below their expected targets by the end of the year. These are RAG rated.
- A % is then calculated by dividing the number of 'meeting' and 'exceeding' scores each pupil has by 8. This gives each pupil their P8 score.
- The school's Progress 8 scores is then calculated by adding every student in the school's P8 score together and dividing by the number of pupils in total.
- The three assessment windows per year inform teachers and leaders of pupils' attainment against standardised levels for those who are studying formal qualifications in GCSE, Functional Skills and BTEC.

The assessment data will also show pupils' progress from their starting points and also indicate who are either below, meeting or exceeding their expected and aspirational targets. Progress in the remaining PAIL subjects, SCERI and behaviour is monitored by the lead teacher for PAIL, the SENCO and the Deputy for Behaviour and Safety. Targets are adjusted accordingly and interventions put in place for those identified as in need of support.

Pupils and keyworkers also complete an 'Emotional Literacy' questionnaire at the beginning and end of the academic year. These further inform the SCERI targets and indicate progress from pupils' starting points in how they see themselves and consider their awareness of others and their feelings.

Parents are informed of their child's progress three times per year as well as the Annual Review which monitors progress of the EHCP targets.

Quality of Education – Impact: Reading

Pupils are encouraged to read widely. Reading and oracy form part of daily Keyworker sessions whereby pupils are involved in shared reading and discussion of current affairs through the VotesForSchools programme. This is a voting platform for pupils which covers SMSC, British Values and Prevent.

Pupils are invited to complete an online questionnaire about their reading habits which include stating the types of texts they read and the genres of story they enjoy. This allows teachers and leaders to encourage reading of various mediums during break and lunch times and the purchase of favoured genres for those who like to read hard copy texts.

The IDL Intervention programme assesses pupils' reading and spelling ages at 3 points during the year and indicates progress in comprehension, spelling and grammar.

Quality of Education – Impact: Destinations

Our Sixth Form pupils successfully move onto a range of FE destinations including university, college and apprenticeships.

6th form pupils attend 3 different work experience placements each year, for 2 hours per week. The placements are intended to match the interests of the pupils to develop confidence and encourage active participation.

Examples of placements include: Melia Hotels International, Tesco, Odeon, Freightliners City Farm, Westbourne Early Years Centre and Red Brick Marketing.

Personal Development: SMSC, British Values, Careers Guidance, Healthy Living/Wellbeing, Citizenship, Equality and Diversity

Keyworker Sessions:

Keyworker sessions take place daily and, once a week, pupils engage in VotesForSchools; a voting platform on which pupils vote on a topical question based on current affairs. It covers aspects of SMSC, British values, Prevent, Pupil Voice, PSHE and Citizenship.

After-school Enrichment:

Pupils are able to choose an after-school enrichment activity to take part in every Monday. These change regularly and are based on options suggested by the pupils themselves. Current options include: Coding, Arts and Crafts, Baking, Communication Games, Homework Club, Badminton and GCSE English or Maths Booster.

School Trips

Teachers and leaders plan educational visits for their subject or for the wider enrichment of pupils' learning and experience of the world each term.

School Residential Trip

Pupils visit Macaroni Wood Children's Venture in the Cotswolds each year for a 3/4 day residential. During this time away from home, the pupils are encouraged to transfer their communication and interpretation skills developed in school to an unfamiliar setting. The pupils participate in a range of group activities to provide opportunities for team building and friendships. The pupils are also encouraged to apply their independence skills, managing their personal hygiene and self-care routines whilst also cooking and cleaning for the group.

6th Form Workshops

The 6th Form regularly take part in workshops which include motivational speeches from special guests; sessions to develop pupils' employability skills; taster sessions at London colleges and an annual Courtyard Careers Event.