



St Mary Magdalene Academy

**The Courtyard**

# Curriculum Policy 2020-21

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## **1. 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, as well as a high proportion of social, emotional and mental health issues.

We provide a personalised curriculum for up to 48 pupils, aged 13-19. 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 areas of strength. 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.

## **2. 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

### **3. 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 pupils 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.

The Courtyard has developed a curriculum that meets the wide ranging educational and social needs of our pupils. It is based on the values made explicit in our vision and also encompasses and extends the National Curriculum. Curriculum planning is based on The Courtyard's recognition of key skills that pupils who attend our school need to develop in order to live successful lives and achieve their potential.

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 and entry point baseline assessments 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.

Our aim is for all pupils to leave with at least five accredited outcomes.

Our aspirational aim is for all pupils to leave with at least five Level 2 accredited outcomes.

### **4. 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 in both 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. The introduction of Maths Mastery methods in September 2019 benefits many of our pupils, enabling them to see maths as a subject which relates to the real world.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>Level</b>
Maths	Pearson A/AS Level Maths Pearson GCSE Maths Pearson GCSE Statistics Pearson Functional Skills	Foundation or Higher Foundation or Higher Foundation or Higher Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1-2

*Intent, Implementation and Impact statements and termly Teaching Overview [can be viewed on the school website](#)*

### **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. We believe that a quality English curriculum should foster and develop our young people’s love of reading, writing, discussion and debate. We aim to inspire an appreciation of the written word through reading songs, poems, articles, novels and non-fiction texts, and to develop pupils socially, emotionally, culturally, intellectually and spiritually.

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

The IDL Literacy 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.

***Intent, Implementation and Impact statements and termly Teaching Overview [can be viewed on the school website](#)***

## **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.

Our aim is to provide a high-quality computing education which equips pupils to use computational thinking and creativity to understand and change the world.

Learners will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of computational systems of all kinds, whether or not they include computers.

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

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## **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 ways they can.

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

**Autumn Term:** The Self/Identity and Relationships

**Spring Term:** Communication

**Summer Term:** Our World

### **PAIL: Life Skills**

The PAIL: Life Skills subjects of the curriculum are those deemed necessary to enable our pupils 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
- Science
- Physical Education
- RSE

### **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	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2
Hospitality	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

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### **Personal and Social Development (PSD) and BTEC WorkSkills:**

PSD is taught via an adaptation of the PSHE Association's scheme of work so that it ties in with our PAIL themes. It provides pupils with a safe environment to learn and practise skills needed to help them develop meaningful relationships and successfully navigate our social world.

Pupils 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 pupils 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 cover personal and social relationships, working in a team and learning from work placements.

Pupils 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 pupils 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.

Pupils have careers support for personal development, skills development, access to online resources, employability skills training, college taster days, and pastoral support. All Sixth Form pupils 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 2

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## Science:

A strong focus on practical science is given in science lessons as pupils explore how the world around them works. All pupils 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, pupils 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

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## Physical Education:

All pupils engage in 2 hours of P.E. per week. Sessions take place in Highbury Fields where team games build interpersonal skills and co-ordination, or at Highbury Leisure Centre gym where pupils can increase their knowledge on muscles and their own body, as well as specific exercise and muscle training they can use in all aspects of life. A main focus of P.E. is how exercise and general fitness is beneficial for pupils in terms of mental health, psychological well-being, anxiety, depression and stress.

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## Relationships and Sex Education (R.S.E.):

R.S.E., now a statutory part of the curriculum, is seen as a crucial part of the journey of preparing our pupils for adult, independent life.

We recognise not only the high importance of teaching and assisting our pupils to understand, recognise and form healthy friendships and relationships, but also the vulnerability that our learners have in the community when it comes to matters of sexual activity and the possibility of being exploited.

High quality RSE helps create safe school communities where pupils can grow, learn, and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life. It can have a positive impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and their ability to achieve, and can play a crucial part in meeting these obligations.

Our aim is to generate discussion amongst young people about health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world. RSE has a key part to play in the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of young people.

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## **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 (Music and Drama)
- Art
- World Studies (Humanities subjects)

### **Creative Expression (Music and Drama):**

Creative expression lessons introduce pupils 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. Pupils are encouraged to act on their creative impulses within a structured format, and learn basic drama skills that will help them not only in playing a character but also into adulthood.

Skills such as a clear public speaking voice; projection and articulation, posture and improvisation as well as basic theatre vocabulary.

The music module allows pupils to understand and indulge their curiosity for music across various genres; to have a basic concept of time scale and tone, and to perform a piece of music, whether composed by the pupil or learnt. This subject is very practical, and allows pupils to experience a more kinaesthetic approach to learning.

Pupils 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 pupils to receive the necessary introduction into drama if they wanted to continue studying upon leaving The Courtyard.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>Level</b>
Performing Arts	Pearson BTEC	Level 1-2

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## Art:

The art course allows pupils to explore different ways to express themselves creatively, alongside learning new skills and techniques via a wide range of mediums. Learners are encouraged to express themselves, culture, current affairs and personal discovery and development through a range of mediums including drawing, painting, sculpture and design.

This subject combines practical artwork production with artist research and trips to galleries, which add to their cultural experience and understanding. Finding out about the wider world through exploration of different artists and designers from past and present means their understanding of our place in the world and in history becomes more meaningful.

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

Pupils who have little experience have the opportunity to gain accreditation through 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

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## 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. Our aim is to inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people, and equip them with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments. The topics covered are also used to compare British Values with the different lifestyles all over the world, equipping our pupils with a wider scope of understanding of the complexity of people's lives, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

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## PAIL: Enhanced

### Independence Group

The Independence Group was created in September 2019 in recognition of the need to have a bespoke curriculum for a group of pupils for whom a particular focus on developing independence skills was seen as a priority. The curriculum was formed in consultation with teachers and parents and designed in close collaboration with the school's speech and language therapist.

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## **5. 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 RAGG (Red/Amber/Green/Gold) rating, depending on how far pupils have met their targets.

## **6. 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:**

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.

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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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. A full insight into the huge range of visits pupils experience can be seen on the school's dedicated [webpage](#).

### **School Residential Trip:**

The result of a School Council request was to have an annual school residential trip. Pupils visited Macaroni Wood Children's Venture in the Cotswolds in April 2018. The success of that trip meant

it has been booked every year since and has also been extended from 3 days to 4 days to further promote pupils' independence away from home.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Form Workshops:**

The 6<sup>th</sup> 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. Full details of work experience and careers options can be seen [here](#).