



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

<b>Approval Committee:</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Head Teacher</b>
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> February 2017</b>
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<b>Required to publish on website?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Statutory?</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the school's aims, principles and procedures for the delivery of the curriculum at The Courtyard. It reflects the values and philosophy of The Courtyard and it gives a framework for staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the schemes of work for each subject that give details of what students in each ability group will cover.
- 1.2 The Courtyard seeks to support its young people by offering a curriculum that is tailored to their individual needs and interests in order to become an active member of the community, either going on to further education or a form of paid employment.
- 1.3 The Courtyard's curriculum includes the various extra-curricular activities that are organised in order to enrich the students' experience as well as the 'hidden curriculum' – what the students learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. The curriculum represents all of the planned activities that The Courtyard organises in order to promote learning and which enable personal growth and development. The Courtyard wants students to grow into positive, responsible people who can work and co-operate with others while, at the same time, developing their knowledge and skills in order to achieve their true individual potential. Accordingly, The Courtyard provides an educational environment which is caring, friendly, well-structured, positive and academically relevant to each individual student.

## **2. AIMS**

The aims of The Courtyard curriculum are:

- 2.1 to enable all students to learn, and develop their skills, to the best of their ability;
- 2.2 to promote a positive attitude towards learning so that students enjoy coming to school;
- 2.3 to ensure students leave with a knowledge of the functional skills of maths, English and ICT;
- 2.4 to enable students to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- 2.5 to teach students to appreciate and value the contribution made by all the different and diverse traditions in our multi-cultural society;

- 2.6 to enable students to be aware of the importance of their own positive contribution to society and their responsibilities as members of a local community;
- 2.7 to teach students to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to distinguish right from wrong;
- 2.8 to help students understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- 2.9 to enable students to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to live and work co-operatively with others.

### **3. PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1 Organisation and Planning**

- 3.1.1 We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each ability group. This indicates what units will be covered in English and maths in each term, and to which group of students. We review this long-term plan on an annual basis at the end of the summer term.
- 3.1.2 Through our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies for each unit. Each subject has schemes of work which provides structure to the content of the medium-term plans.
- 3.1.3 The short-term plans are those that The Courtyard teachers write on a weekly basis. These are used to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities are to be used in the lesson.
- 3.1.4 All students study English, maths, ICT, PSD, home cooking, self-discovery. PE and throughout Key Stage 4, all students are timetabled to access an element of art and/or animation teaching during the year. Through the partnership with the St Mary Magdalene Academy, The Courtyard is in a position to offer a personalised curriculum for those students who are working at potential GCSE standard. Subjects available include maths, English, the humanities, art, science, music and drama.
- 3.1.5 The Courtyard's post-16 provision is in partnership with the St Mary Magdalene Academy and therefore The Courtyard is able to offer curriculum options from the A-Level system, depending on personal ability. All students will take part in self-discovery, based at The Courtyard. All post-16 pupils will have the opportunity to access a range of work experience placements.

3.1.6 Within The Courtyard, students are taught in ability groups where appropriate, regardless of age. When students attend lessons at the St Mary Magdalene Academy, they are organised into ability groups within their year group.

## **3.2 Enrichment Learning Opportunities**

The Courtyard offers a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities which support and extend the curriculum. The Enrichment Activities are optional, though students are encouraged to attend.

## **3.3 Monitoring and Review**

3.3.1 The class teachers are responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the curriculum. The Headteacher monitors the weekly lesson plans, ensuring that all classes are taught the full requirements of the agreed schemes of work, and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives.

3.3.2 The Courtyard Senior Leadership Team monitors the way the subjects are delivered throughout the school. They examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Class teachers also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

3.3.3 Monitoring will also take place using the following:

3.3.3.1 Lesson observations and learning walks;

3.3.3.2 Work scrutiny;

3.3.3.3 Moderation of work;

3.3.3.4 Scrutiny of planning;

3.3.3.5 Discussion with students.

## **4. CURRICULUM PROVISION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

### **4.1 Definition**

The Courtyard has chosen to use the terminology 'Gifted and Talented' and to adopt the erstwhile DCSF definition. This is in line with Excellence in Cities and the current provision undertaken in secondary schools. We accept the following recommendations:

4.1.2 According to the erstwhile DCSF, 'gifted' students excel in academic subjects such as Maths, English, Science or Information Technology, whereas 'talented' students are those that have special ability in Art, Music, Drama, Dance and Physical Education. It is important to emphasise that students identified do not necessarily demonstrate high attainment but have the potential to achieve well.

4.1.3 The erstwhile DCSF advised that the gifted and talented cohort should be between 5-10% of a school's population. The balance within the cohort should be roughly 2/3 academically gifted or 'all-rounders' and 1/3 specific talent. Through raising expectations and a focus on challenging teaching and learning, all students should benefit from the provision.

### **4.2 Provision**

4.2.1 The Courtyard believes in creating equal access to opportunity for all its students. By providing much of the education for our gifted and talented students within the classroom we aim to avoid segregation and create an ethos that celebrates achievement and success. Gifted and talented education at The Courtyard School will not only focus on students who are already high achievers but rather on identifying potential in all our students, raising aspirations and helping them to achieve this, creating a genuine enthusiasm for learning. The Courtyard envisions ability as far more malleable. We believe in a 'Pedagogy of Plenty' – when we see more students as being capable, more will become capable.

4.2.2 In order for gifted and talented students with special educational needs to receive a coherent and inclusive approach, it is necessary for all staff to be aware of this policy and to act upon it. We need to provide a consistent approach and to be aware that gifted and talented students have as much need for differentiated work as any other student. We need to ensure that we are always aiming for

maximum rather than minimum competency when planning and preparing work for gifted and talented students.

- 4.2.3 Teaching staff will be asked to consider provision within their subject area for this cohort of students and to monitor and develop that provision in line with curriculum developments and other school policies. Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans should clearly outline how gifted and talented students will be challenged, monitored and assessed. Careful provision must be made to ensure that the curriculum provided for our gifted and talented students matches and develops their interests, needs and aspirations. We aim to give our students the opportunity to be able to choose from a diverse range of experiences - general, vocational and work-based – all of which will be planned to offer coherence and to secure progression routes.
- 4.2.4 The Courtyard will make full use of its partnership with the St Mary Magdalene Academy. This will ensure that gifted and talented students have the ability to access and be involved in any appropriate opportunities that will further enhance our provision.
- 4.2.5 The overall aim is for all students to make progress as the provision for gifted and talented students filters down. This very much supports equal opportunities in students' access to learning and the overall raising of aspirations.
- 4.2.6 Teaching assistants will be given regular CPD in relation to supporting gifted and talented students.

### **4.3 Identification**

- 4.3.1 There is no such thing as a typical gifted or talented student. They are individuals and demonstrate widely differing patterns of behaviour, skills, aptitudes and attainments.
- 4.3.2 As The Courtyard provision is from aged 14-19, initial identification will be made in using achievement profile on entry. It will use staff assessment and rate of progress data in partnership with St Mary Magdalene Academy staff.
- 4.3.3 Students at The Courtyard can be identified as gifted and talented:
  - 4.3.3.1 at any age as they develop at different rates;
  - 4.3.3.2 through provision of a wealth of opportunities.

4.3.4 In order to make the process as inclusive as possible, teachers and teaching assistants will be provided with two simple checklists that focus on general behaviours and learning characteristics of gifted and talented students, rather than specific academic criteria. These should be used as a starting point in the identification of gifted and talented students but are by no means exclusive. Teacher assessment will be in partnership with the Assessment Policy at St Mary Magdalene Academy. Talented students may be identified from all or some of the following criteria:

4.3.4.1 Music examinations;

4.3.4.2 School drama/music productions;

4.3.4.3 Artistic achievement;

4.3.4.4 Contribution to school life;

4.3.4.5 Success in out-of-school achievement;

4.3.4.6 Departmental nominations;

4.3.4.7 Outstanding sporting ability.

4.4 The gifted and talented register at The Courtyard should be treated as a working document. That is to say, it can change – students can be added to or removed from the register at any time. The register will be maintained by the Headteacher, however, the register should be viewed as a collaborative document and staff members are invited to suggest changes at any time during the course of the academic year. The register will be reviewed in any case at the end of each term.

4.5 All staff working with the identified students will be actively involved in the identification and support of gifted and talented students. The process of identification will be fully inclusive. Lack of knowledge of the English language and/or different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds will not prevent identification as Gifted and Talented; neither should behaviour or additional difficulties.

4.6 Teachers and teaching assistants will be given regular CPD sessions to support them in identifying Gifted and Talented students.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is carried out. The Governing Body will ensure resources are made available.

## **6. BUDGET**

Funding for gifted and talented activities will be assessed on a value for money basis.

## **7. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The Courtyard will inform parents/carers in writing if their child is identified as being Gifted and Talented. Parents and carers should have the opportunity to contribute to the school's understanding of their child. It is important, however, that parents and carers understand that the gifted and talented register is a continually changing and developing document and that their child could be added or removed during their time at The Courtyard. It is important to inform parents/carers of all decisions made and the reasons for these decisions. All parents/carers will be made aware of the difference between a student who is gifted and talented and a student who is a hard-worker. Students on the gifted and talented register will also be provided with the same information. It is the Headteacher who is responsibility to communicate with and support students, parents and carers.

## **8. POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Policy and Action Plan for gifted and talented education at The Courtyard will be written and maintained by the Headteacher. This will be reviewed and evaluated annually in September. As with the gifted and talented register, all staff will be invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the Policy and Action Plan. This should be a collaborative process and it is important that all staff feel comfortable with the Policy and Action Plan so that they can then use it to inform their work and support the School Development Plan. All staff will be given a copy of the Policy and Action Plan to file and it will also be available on the school's Intranet.