



Merchant Taylors'
School

Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policy MTGS

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The following policies are separate to this Policy and should also be referred to get a full picture of the curriculum at MTGS:

- PSHE Policy
- International Policy
- Predicted Grades Policy
- SEND Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Careers Policy
- Remote Learning Policy



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1. Introduction

At MTGS, we provide full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996. Our aim is for pupils to achieve intellectual breadth and depth through the curriculum while developing a love for learning. We strive to challenge all girls at the right level so that each individual learns to take pride in her work and attains the highest levels of which she is capable. In doing so we take account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and Special Educational Needs (SEND). Girls are encouraged to enjoy learning, have high expectations of themselves, to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and to learn to work in co-operation with one another. The curriculum is designed to develop students' ability to think independently rather than promote mere knowledge acquisition. None of the aspects of the curriculum undermine the fundamental British values of democracy: the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Indeed, the curriculum actively promotes fundamental British Values.

COVID-19 – In light of the prevailing COVID pandemic, where pupils have missed out on any aspects of their curriculum, the School will make adjustments to the curriculum based on our on-going assessment of pupils' learning and progress with a view to addressing any prevailing gaps in knowledge and skills. Prioritisation will be given within subjects of the important components for progression.

2. Aims

The general aims of the curriculum are:

- To provide full-time supervised education for pupils aged 11 to 18 years and to give them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. (Section 8 Education Act 1996)
- To be broad, balanced and relevant and should be appropriate to the needs of our pupils
- To enable pupils to acquire speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills
- To generate a life-long love for knowledge and learning
- To encourage pupils to work hard and independently, to study on their own, think for themselves and to enjoy as many forms of learning and skills as their gifts allow.
- To encourage a set of personal values based on honesty, trust, tolerance, understanding, caring and respect for others paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- To achieve the best possible exam results for each pupil



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- To enable pupils to develop self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confidence preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in modern British Society
- To enable pupils to use leisure time enjoyably and profitably
- To give an informed perspective about the role of the individual in the community, in society, in Europe and in the World
- To promote health and fitness
- To prepare for the future in an increasingly technology dependent world
- To provide pupils with knowledge that promotes their wellbeing and protects them from harm
- To actively promote fundamental British Values
- To provide equality of access and opportunity to allow all pupils to learn and make progress

3. A description of the curriculum

3.1. An overview

The curriculum includes all those activities designed to promote the intellectual, personal, social, physical, spiritual and moral development of our pupils. It includes not only the formal programme of lessons but the informal programme which includes extra-curricular activities and all the features contributing to the school's ethos. There is a clear scheme of work and policies for PSHE education, which reflects the school's aims and includes Relationships and Sex Education. In addition, there is appropriate and clear guidance for Career's education. Careers education at MTGS enables all pupils to identify how their own strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work. Pupils have access to impartial, up to date, accurate and individual guidance, and learn about different careers and opportunities. At MTGS all pupils have access to the full range of experiences provided in the curriculum; the staff give guidance to girls and their parents so that programmes of study for pupils relate closely to their interests and aptitudes.

The curriculum at MTGS is characterised by breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, differentiation and progression and as such consistently leads to success in public examinations.

Breadth	Bringing all pupils into contact with a range of areas of learning (knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes) and experience (aesthetic, creative and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific and technological).
Balance	Ensuring that pupils have an opportunity to study subjects representative of all disciplines.
Coherence	Planning the curriculum as a whole, embracing the different areas of learning and experience, so that these do not appear as discrete and unconnected but as contributing to overall progress and achievement.



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Relevance	Taking into account the previous learning of pupils and their readiness for new experience.
Differentiation	<p>Matching teaching, assessment and tasks to pupils' abilities and aptitudes. Differentiation requires variation in teaching approaches, classroom organisation and individual support as appropriate to pupils, taking into account pupils' learning difficulties or disabilities and, where a pupil has a personal learning plan, providing an education which fulfils its requirements.</p> <p>Setting to assist differentiation takes place in Maths, while in all other subjects pupils are taught in mixed ability classes. Provision for gifted and talented pupils takes place through differentiation in the classroom and the wealth of extracurricular opportunities on offer. Pupils on the Learning Support List and EAL register will be provided for through in-class differentiation and, where appropriate, specialist support from the SEND department.</p>
Progression	Providing continuity within the curriculum from Year 7 to Year 13, to enable the pupils to learn and make progress.

Various curricular areas reinforce and complement each other so that the concepts, skills and attitudes developed in one area may be put to use and provide insight in another, thus increasing pupils' understanding, competence and confidence. There is a keen awareness amongst girls and staff of the potential for IT in the school, which is reflected in the use of IT across the curriculum to support learning. It is the school's policy to encourage judicious use of ICT to support learning and to regularly review provision as technology develops. The general aims of the curriculum are recognised in each section of the school, though at the different stages the emphasis will vary in an age appropriate way:

Year 7

All subjects are taught in mixed ability form groups following the same broadly-based curriculum: English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, two MFL (girls choose either French or Spanish and either German or Mandarin) History, Geography, Religious Studies, Classical Studies/Latin, Art, Music, ICT, Design Technology, Physical Education, Drama, PSHE.

Year 8

Mathematics is taught in sets from Year 8.

Year 9

Global Perspectives is introduced into the curriculum for all pupils. All girls continue to study at least one language as well as DT, Music, Art, Drama, Computer Science, Latin, Classical Studies



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Years 10 and 11

All pupils have equal entitlement to the curriculum and follow a programme of studies leading generally to examination in 9 GCSE subjects. Staff advise girls on subject choices at GCSE level, encouraging as varied a curriculum as possible in order to allow both a wide choice of A-level subjects and a wide choice of career opportunities later. Parents are always consulted. A booklet setting out the aims and content of all subjects is available to each girl /parent and final decisions are made following an evening meeting involving girls, staff and parents.

All girls up to Year 11 continue with English, English Literature, Mathematics and 6 optional subjects, which must contain at least one Science, one Language and one Humanity.

Sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Languages: French, German, Mandarin, Spanish or Latin

Humanities: Geography, History, Religion Philosophy and Ethics, and Classical Civilisation

Other options: Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, Drama, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education and Psychology

Movement between sets in Mathematics and MFL occurs if staff feel that a girl would benefit from such a move; setting in MFL is dependent upon the structure of the option blocks which are created following the submission of option choices in the Spring Term of Year 9.

Sixth Form – Years 12 and 13

A booklet setting out the aims and content of all subjects is available to each girl and final decisions are made following an evening meeting involving girls, staff and parents. Parents are always consulted. Since A-levels were reformed, we encourage girls to study 3 subjects to A2 and an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification).

The following subjects may be studied at A-level:

Art and Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Drama and Theatre Studies, Design Technology, Economics, English Language and Literature, English Language, French, Geography, German, Government and Politics, History, Latin, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish.

Some subjects may be taught jointly with Merchant Taylors' Boys' School.

Enrichment lessons for Years 10 & 11 enable some G&T students to study an additional GCSE. Please see an example of an Enrichment programme in the appendix.

In addition to the curriculum above, all students in the school study PSHE at the same time in the week allowing for the programme to be structured according to Year group and also for vertical lessons and discussions to take place e.g. House activities and meetings.

3.2. SMSC statement



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Our Curriculum ensures that we support students in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Spiritual Development - students are encouraged to develop their own belief systems and their own understanding of their place within the context of the wider world, whether faith based or not. Students are encouraged to discuss these, as freely as they feel able and comfortable. Whatever a students' beliefs the school values of Academic, Excellence and Character – encourage respect for themselves, others and the environment, utilisation of girls' individual talents and a contribution to the broader community as well as development of individual, inner strength and resilience.

Moral Development - moral development takes the form of encouraging students to develop their own sense of right and wrong, based on human rights, our common humanity and a respect for both civil and criminal law. Students are encouraged to show respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and encouraged to demonstrate respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England. Students are also encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality and to wider society.

Social Development - social development is seen through development of social skills, working together in lessons, contributing to lesson discussion and communicating with teachers and peers. The girls are encouraged to make a positive contribution in community life, through the school community and the wider community to help them develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. These experiences and their participation in the PSHE programme enable them to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.

Cultural Development - encouraging our students to recognise the value and richness of cultural diversity in Britain and worldwide, whilst recognising, respecting and actively promoting the fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. The school's ethos is very much one that encourages respect, appreciation and acceptance of all diversity. The expression of views or behaviour that undermines British Values is challenged. By assisting students to acquire an appreciation of respect for their own and other cultures, the school promotes understanding and harmony between different cultural traditions and between those with different faiths and beliefs. The school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils while they are in attendance at the school or while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, 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, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. As part of



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its safeguarding responsibilities, the school also takes seriously its responsibility to prevent students being radicalised by political groups and being drawn into terrorism.

3.3. Citizenship education

The school acknowledges its obligation to prepare pupils to participate in society as responsible and well-informed citizens. The school's many co-curricular activities contribute to the development of the skills and attitudes necessary to foster citizenship in pupils. Other areas beyond the formal curriculum in which pupils have the opportunity to develop citizenship skills are:

- Through leadership roles and participation in elections. Form Captains, and house and school leadership teams are elected by girls and take on important community roles.
- Older pupils learn to take responsibility for younger girls, for example by becoming Mentors and Anti-bullying Ambassadors.
- Sixth Formers participate in community service and at all ages girls are involved in the school's charity fund raising events. This enables girls to develop an awareness of the wider community beyond the school.
- Speakers from a wide a range of different professions and walks of life are invited into school to speak to pupils.
- The School Council enables girls to make suggestions and to put their opinions about issues relating to school life and therefore forms an important practical part of citizenship education.

Citizenship is addressed in a range of academic subjects and most explicitly in PSHE.

3.4. Actively promoting British Values

We ensure our School fulfils the Government's 2014 "clear and rigorous expectation...to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs." In addition to the points described above in the SMSC Statement and the description of our approach to Citizenship Education, the School actively promotes British values in the following ways:

- Through our core values of Academic, Excellence and Character.
- By providing a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the Key Stages.
- In the themes and concepts covered as part of our assembly programme.
- In our Behaviour Policy.
- In the PSHE curriculum.
- By promoting critical thinking skills across the curriculum.
- Through School Council and Pupil Voice.
- Through active promotion of the Equalities Act 2010.



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This approach gives pupils a range of opportunities to develop and demonstrate skills, attitudes and behaviours that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

3.5. Protocol for dropping subjects

A pupil may only drop or change a subject under the following circumstances:

- it may be advisable for a pupil to lighten their academic workload by dropping the number of subjects studied. E.g. they drop from 9 to 8 subjects
- it may be advisable for a pupil to maintain their workload but change the subjects they study e.g. at GCSE pick up a new subject such as psychology or business studies and drop one of their other subjects
- a pupil may wish to change/drop one of their GCSE or A level choices shortly after starting their GCSEs or A levels. **Please note that no changes will be allowed after the first 4 weeks of term.**
- it may be advisable for a pupil to pick an additional subject as part of their enrichment e.g 10 GCSE rather than 9

The possibility to drop/change a subject may be raised by the pupil, the pupil's teachers, tutor, parents or Head of House using the appropriate Permission Form. No changes will be considered unless this form has been completed.

The issue must be considered in the first instance by the Head of House who will consider the best academic and pastoral interest of the pupil in question as well as their overall academic performance based on their baseline data and RAG scores. The pupil's Head of House will consult with the relevant HOD, tutor and teachers involved, as well as the parents, and come up with the final recommendation. This will then be passed on to either the Assistant Head Academic or Assistant Head Teaching and learning who will make a final decision and keep the Head of School informed. The decision will be communicated by email or in person as appropriate to all parties (including parents), as soon as possible after the decision has been made. The Assistant Head Academic or Assistant Head Teaching will also inform any changes to the timetabling team and data systems manager so that information on the Portal and databases can be amended.

4. Delivery of the Curriculum: Teaching and Learning at MTGS

In order to ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively the School seeks to create a culture in which learning is highly valued and well supported so that all students fulfil their potential and leave school with a love of learning. Learning is the central function of the School. Teaching is distinct from learning. The role of teachers is to facilitate the learning of the students. This policy sets out how teaching is to be undertaken so as to best promote learning. This policy also considers the role of agents other than the classroom teacher in the learning process.

4.1. Objectives in order to promote learning effectively



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A student can only be an effective learner if she is involved in the process of learning and can then apply that process to different contexts. To achieve this we strive to meet the following eight learning objectives:

1. Students learn with a sense of purpose and are interested in the subject matter
2. Students have a belief that their attainment is a function of the manner in which they approach their learning and not pre-determined by personal characteristics
3. Students recognise that they have a range of learning skills and an awareness of which ones they should employ in a given context
4. Students have a clear understanding of the success criteria when undertaking a learning activity
5. Students are informed as to how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve
6. Students learn in an environment which is purposeful, open, collaborative and respectful so that they feel safe to test their ideas, ask questions and take risks. Mistakes are viewed as an inherent part of the learning process.
7. Students have access to high quality learning resources
8. Students are set tasks which challenge all students regardless of prior learning and natural abilities

4.2. Roles and responsibilities

The eight student focused objectives rely on a range of agents fulfilling their roles and responsibilities which are designated as follows:

4.2.1. Teachers

The learning objectives students are working towards should be shared with a class. Teachers should have high expectations of their pupils.

The teacher should ensure that students are active learners by setting tasks which focus on the learning objectives and are both accessible and challenging to all students rather than merely presenting information to passive students. Teachers should set a range of different tasks over a unit of study.

Assessment by the teacher of students' learning plays a key role in the learning process. It should be used to inform the teacher when planning future lessons and tasks. It should be used by the teacher to give informative feedback to students. Feedback should help students and teachers to set targets for future learning. Success criteria should be clearly communicated.

Assessment should take place during a lesson via listening and observing students' work. In Senior School, each department has its own assessment policy that is approved by the Assistant Head Academic or Assistant Head Teaching and learning and sets out the average



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minimum frequency a student in a given year group should receive written feedback from a teacher over the course of an academic year. Section 5 (Ensuring curriculum progress is assessed and recorded in line with our wider aims) of this policy and the relevant departmental assessment policy will give further guidance to the form written feedback should take.

Teachers should provide opportunities for peer and self-assessment to encourage students to be reflective and to understand better success criteria. Teachers should encourage and support students to give constructive feedback to their peers. Both homework and classwork is suitable for peer or self-assessment.

Dialogue between a teacher and students and between a student and other students is a powerful learning tool: it reveals hidden misunderstandings, is useful in ensuring targets set are appropriately challenging, is an essential tool for assessment and can also be used to promote higher order thinking. Teachers should consider carefully the questions they ask do not just test whether students have absorbed information. Questions in lessons should include open ended ones designed to uncover students' insights and misconceptions and to push them towards a better understanding. This also helps students to learn new ideas from each other. Teachers should also promote written dialogue when they mark work by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate they have taken on board and acted upon the targets they have been set.

Teachers should consider the language they use. Praise should focus on the way students have completed a task rather than just the outcome or a student's innate qualities. Where possible teachers should try and appear to include themselves in the learning journey by using "we" rather than "you". Where appropriate they should consider language that promotes a culture of enquiry rather than an environment where there are only facts and falsities by using "it might be the case that" or "it could be that" rather than "it is" or "it isn't".

Teachers should maintain high standards of student behaviour so that students feel safe and are focused on their learning. Expectations of behaviour should be made clear and the teacher should model behaviour conducive to learning. If students are not meeting the required expectations of behaviour the teacher is responsible for taking action proportionate to the offence in accordance to the Behaviour Policy. If a student is either persistently and over a series of lessons failing to meet expectations with low level poor behaviour (e.g. talking when the teacher is talking) or is guilty of a serious offence (one considered potentially harmful to another person's wellbeing or school property) the teacher should inform the Head of Department, Form Tutor and the Head of House.



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Teachers should maintain records to inform themselves, parents, line managers or pastoral teams of each student's performance. This should be sufficient to track progress accurately, to inform report writing, completion of monitoring grids and lesson planning, and to enable the teacher to set meaningful academic targets. SEND and EAL information should be included.

Teachers should collaborate with peers to share good practice and useful learning resources.

Teachers should take advantage of opportunities to develop their practice such as: engaging with training, evaluating the impact of their pedagogy, observing others and seeking advice from colleagues

Teachers should be aware of and implement guidance from the Learning Support Department to help students with additional learning needs achieve their full potential. This includes adhering to the SEND and EAL Policies.

Teachers should follow the homework guidelines in the Departmental Handbook when setting homework.

4.2.2. Heads of Department

The Heads of Department should monitor the learning experience of students to ensure an appropriate level of consistency across the department. In order to do this they should undertake: lesson observations of their team members' lessons, exercises in pupil voice, and scrutiny of students' work and staff marking ("book looks"). The Head of Department should use this information to work out priorities for future departmental developments. If the Head of Department uncovers instances of standards not being met they should take action to address the issue and then continue to monitor the situation to check the issue has been resolved. The Assistant Head Academic and Assistant Head Teaching and Learning should be kept informed if instances of underperformance are not rectified, repeated or are considered sufficiently serious.

Records of monitoring activities described in the point above and minutes of department meetings should be kept.

If a teacher indicates that there is a student who is having problems in terms of their performance or behaviour then the Head of Department should offer support and advice and ensure that parents and pastoral teams have been informed. The Head of Department should actively try to find out from their team whether there are students who are a cause



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for concern. The Head of Department should facilitate department wide discussion about strategies to help students with difficulties to encourage the sharing of good practice. The Head of Department should review the monitoring grid submissions of their teams.

The Heads of Department should support the teachers of their department by facilitating the sharing of good practice and resources by all members of their team. They should help staff within the team to plan and build on existing skills, enhance performance and to provide a strategic input to MTGS's future success.

The Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum on offer is well-balanced, stimulating, challenging and interesting and fulfils the requirements of public examinations. They may delegate the writing of departmental schemes of work to willing members of the department but the Head of Department maintains responsibility.

Heads of Department should ensure that teachers and students have access to the most appropriate resources to support learning within the constraints of MTGS's budget.

4.2.3. Senior Management Team (SMT)

The SMT is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the different sections of the MTGS community to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

The SMT should facilitate and support the development of teaching skills.

The SMT is responsible for whole school curriculum decisions with the aim being to create a well-balanced, stimulating, challenging and interesting curriculum and fulfilling the requirements of public examinations.

The SMT should set the agenda for the future direction of teaching and learning in terms of: the focus of staff training, priorities set for Heads of Department to monitor, and annual evaluation of the learning experience of students across MTGS.

The SMT should set school rules and ensure they are enforced to ensure students feel safe and in the right frame of mind to learn.



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4.2.4. Learning Support (SEND) Department

The Learning Support Department should support staff in identifying those with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

The Learning Support Department should provide strategies for students and teachers to enact which will help SEND and EAL students fully access the school curriculum and learn as effectively as possible.

4.2.5. Library, IT, and Premises Teams and Departmental Technicians

The staff working in these areas of Professional Services are responsible for ensuring that the resources purchased, maintained and made available to students are focused on supporting learning outcomes, enriching the learning experience, and creating a safe and purposeful environment.

The Library and IT teams should support students and teachers to acquire the skills and knowledge to access and make use of information efficiently as possible.

The Librarian should support the development of independent learning skills and information literacy skills across the year groups by identifying specific needs and addressing them through targeted provision in PSHE and drop in sessions.

4.2.6. Pastoral House Teams

The Pastoral House Teams should monitor students' learning progress across the range of subjects by using school reports, exam results, pupil voice and work scrutiny.

They should communicate with parents and teachers if there is a cause for concern in a student's learning progress with a view to determining the cause and finding a solution.

They should help students monitor and evaluate their own learning and help them set targets or offer advice.

They should communicate with parents and teachers to help identify behavioural or emotional impediments to a student's learning and help find strategies to help students and



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teachers cope with these.

4.2.7. Governors

The Governors responsibility is to hold the SMT to account in its efforts to best provide for student learning.

5. Ensuring the curriculum is suited to those who are able, gifted and talented

We recognise that some of pupils at MTGS can be identified as gifted and talented. As they have a MidYis score on entry which is in excess of 125, the score usually used to define young people as mentally gifted and being in the top 5% of the ability range nationally.

In addition, many of our pupils are very talented in one or more co-curricular areas, including music, drama and sport. Consequently, we consider that it would be invidious for the school to characterise any one group of our pupils as “Gifted and Talented”.

Nonetheless, we recognise that pupils’ abilities will vary in different subjects and that it is essential to differentiate teaching and learning appropriately for the range of pupils we have in the school in order to stretch and challenge the most able and to provide support for the relatively less able. We acknowledge that pupils of very high ability have particular needs and we are committed to meeting them. All staff involved in delivering any aspect of the curriculum are expected to develop extension and enrichment activities which also take account of the need to differentiate between very bright pupils.

This process is overseen and led by the Assistant Head Academic and Assistant Head Teaching and Learning and the relevant Heads of Department. Head of Departments have the responsibility for ensuring that a programme of extension is integrated into the curriculum and through stretch activities, outside the formal curriculum, which may include the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Sixth Form Enrichment Classes
- Subject specific Olympiads
- Attendance at external academic (and career-related) workshops and lectures
- National and university competitions
- Problem solving projects
- Academic societies

We also cater for the top end by offering the possibility to take on extra subjects at GCSE or A Level so that some pupils can take 10 rather than 9 GCSEs or 4 rather than 3 A-levels. We also offer the Extended Project Qualifications (EPQs).

5.1. Indicators of High Ability

The following are seen as indicators of high ability and are fostered in all pupils where possible:



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- An ability to apply concepts to novel material and to make connections between ideas
- An independent, curious, questioning approach to learning
- The ability to think creatively and with originality
- The ability to think abstractly and analytically
- Persistence, insightfulness and resourcefulness in solving problems
- Strong evaluative skills, high quality reasoning
- A willingness to speculate and make hypotheses to extend understanding
- Domain-specific talents (physical coordination, musical aptitude, 'ear' for languages etc.)

5.2. Implications for Teaching and Learning

We aim to present challenge to our pupils at all levels. This is done by:

- Use of open-ended tasks, enabling all pupils to respond at their own level
- Encouraging evaluation and analysis and avoiding over-emphasis on right/wrong answers
- Open-ended questioning; asking pupils to justify their answers and respond in greater depth
- Problem-solving activities of varying levels of difficulty
- Focusing on process rather than outcome to encourage risk-taking In all areas of the curriculum the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think for themselves.

We feel that depth of knowledge and good learning habits, which equip pupils for sixth form study and beyond, are more important than accelerated learning and the acquisition of a host of GCSEs.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement of Classroom Teaching

At MTS, we are committed to fostering a dynamic and innovative learning environment that empowers both our educators and students to thrive academically. Central to this commitment is our rigorous system of monitoring and improving classroom teaching practices. We believe that by continuously assessing and refining our teaching methods, we can better align our instructional strategies with the evolving needs and potentials of our students.

6.1. Learning Walks and Classroom Observations

One of the key mechanisms employed by [School Name] to gauge the effectiveness of teaching practices is the implementation of regular Learning Walks. These brief, focused observations, lasting between 10 to 15 minutes, are conducted by a variety of stakeholders within our school community, including staff members, senior teaching leads, and teaching



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and learning leads. The primary objective of these observations is not merely to assess what teachers are teaching but, more importantly, to evaluate what students are learning and achieving within the classroom.

6.1.1. Learning Walk Process and collation of data

All observations conducted during Learning Walks are documented and tracked through our centralized learning app. This ensures consistency and transparency in our assessment process. Teachers receive constructive feedback based on these observations to encourage continuous professional growth.

6.1.2. Self-Reflection and Collaboration

To foster a culture of self-improvement, staff members engage in self-reflection making use of the Teaching and Learning App, providing them with an opportunity to identify their strengths and areas for development. Furthermore, intra-departmental Learning Walks enable collaborative learning among colleagues, allowing for the exchange of best practices and the refinement of instructional techniques within specific subject areas.

6.1.3. Whole School Learning Walks

In addition to departmental observations, senior teaching leads and teaching and learning leads conduct whole-school Learning Walks. These comprehensive evaluations offer insights into cross-curricular teaching approaches and help identify school-wide opportunities for improvement.

6.1.4. Student Progress Monitoring

Parallel to our focus on teaching practices, we also emphasize the importance of monitoring student progress. Pupil book looks are regularly conducted to assess how students are progressing within their respective departments. This holistic approach allows us to tailor our instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs effectively.

6.1.5. Purposeful Focus on Student Achievement

At MTS, our Learning Walks and classroom observations are driven by a commitment to student achievement. We firmly believe that by focusing on what our students can do in lessons, we can better adapt our teaching methods to foster a learning environment that promotes growth, engagement, and excellence.

In conclusion, our dedication to continuous improvement in teaching practices underscores our commitment to providing the highest quality education for our students. Through the



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systematic processes outlined above, we ensure that our educators are equipped with the tools and insights necessary to inspire, challenge, and support our students on their educational journey.

7. Ensuring curriculum progress is assessed and recorded in line with our wider aims

Assessment is an integral part of any curricular planning. There are two key types; formative assessment to improve learning and summative assessment to assess learning.

Assessment should enable a pupil to know how well she has mastered the learning objectives on which she is currently working and what she needs to do to improve. It should also allow the teacher to check the students' learning and plan subsequent lessons appropriately. There are a number of different forms of assessment such as questioning techniques in class, peer assessment, self-assessment, comment-only marking and giving grades.

7.1. Assessment and recording of pupil progress

7.1.1. Assessment

In general, assessment at MTGS should follow the principles of Assessment for Learning. This means that most assessment by teachers should take the form of comment-only marking and should include comments about how far the pupil has been successful in meeting the learning objectives set by the teacher and what needs to be done to improve.

It is recognised that careful, detailed, comment-only marking of work takes time. Therefore, it is unlikely to be practical to mark every class's books in this way every week. This is especially true for subjects that have just one contact period a week at Key Stage 3. Different types of task requiring a range of assessment techniques should be incorporated in the departmental schemes of work.

In Years 10 - 13 teachers should avoid the systematic awarding of grades or marks unless the work set is answering a question from a public examination past paper. Grades should reflect the standards of the appropriate qualification (GCSE, A-level etc.). However, at regular intervals a grade should be awarded on a substantial piece of work that will best reflect recent learning objectives. Aiming to grade one piece of work each half-term would be appropriate. As public exams approach for those in Years 11-13, individual teachers might feel that the learning needs of their pupils will best be served by more frequent grading.



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In Years 7-9 the expectation is that marking will be predominantly comment only.

Numerical marks can be awarded when:

the assignment was made up of a series of short answers that are either right or wrong (such as vocabulary test or a maths test) so that the student would be capable of counting the number of right answers themselves;

the assignment is a substantial piece of work and the awarding of a mark is considered helpful for students to understand success criteria. Marks for assignments of this nature should always be accompanied by a document giving clear descriptions of how marks are awarded generally and a clear written explanation so that the individual understands how their mark has been awarded; awarding of marks in these circumstances should only occur half termly in any one subject.

Effort grades should be not used as research has shown that teachers are more likely to award high grades to students at either end of the ability spectrum. Students' perceptions are that such grades rarely reflect the amount of time that has been spent on a piece of work.

Comment-only marking should explain clearly what has been achieved with regards to the learning objectives, giving specific examples, and indicate as far as possible what needs to be done in order to improve, again giving specific examples.

It is essential to give pupils time to read a teacher's comments when the homework is given back and ideally to give the students time to improve the work either immediately in class or for homework. Students should be encouraged to annotate their work to record any oral feedback when they get work back.

Students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have understood and made progress towards targets set. For example:

- Students could be encouraged to write replies to written teacher comments and teachers could respond to create a dialogue;
- Students could be asked to redraft work;



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Students could be required to write some targets on their next piece of work or in a learning diary.

The form of assessment will tend to vary depending on whether it is short, medium or long term:

- **Short term assessments** might take the form of questioning in class or observation of the pupils' work in class or for homework. It allows the teacher to monitor the pupils' learning and plan appropriately.
- **Medium term assessment** might take the form of an end of unit test or a substantial piece of written work. Its aim is to review the progress that the pupils are making over time in relation to the main objectives set out in the departmental schemes of work. Clear feedback should be given by teachers so that pupils can set themselves new targets.
- **Long term assessments** take the form of an examination and are set towards the end of a school year for Years 7 to 10 and 12 and towards the end of the Autumn Term or during the Spring Term for Years 11 and 13. They are used to assess progress against school and national targets. Parents and students do not receive grades for Years 7, 8 and 9 end of year exams, grades are for internal use only. Instead, Year 7, 8 and 9 parents are informed of progress via the reports. For Years 10 to 13 grades are awarded.

7.2. Recording

Where comment-only marking is the norm, the issue of what to record in mark books can be problematic. Some staff record marks in their mark books even when not writing marks on pupils' work. Others record a summary of their comments on the pupils' work. Others have a system for recording whether work is excellent, good or deficient (or similar) with ticks, crosses etc. The key thing is to have a record of the progress that pupils are making. It should be remembered that mark books may need to be shown to Heads of Departments or to an Inspector. Departments may wish to have online shared mark books, this is the decision of the Head of Department.

A student's exercise book, file or electronic portfolio e.g. EPQs should provide a record of progress so that a teacher can look back at previous advice and see how well the pupil has used it in subsequent pieces of work. It is also possible for the pupil to communicate with the teacher by responding to the latter's comments.



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Both internal and external exam results are stored on the portal. The girls' MidYIS and ALIS scores are stored in a shared area and portal. MidYis and ALIS scores are not routinely shared with students. The decision to share ALIS or MidYis data with a student or their parent can only be made with the approval of the Head of School.

School reports are written by subject staff. Reports should be positive and point to future development. They should be detailed and couched in everyday language. Specific, achievable and personalised targets should be set for girls. These should be discussed and explained to girls.

There is a regular pattern of reports and parents' evenings. Both the format of the report and the schedule of reporting are kept continuously under review with a view to keeping parents fully informed on their daughter's progress and to focus attention on appropriate learning targets.

Entry examination marks and key stage results, where known at entry in Year 7, are further important sources of information about individual pupils.

Individual target setting is also important, whether recorded at the foot of a piece of work or in a report to parents. The teacher should keep a record of the target and note when it has been achieved.

7.3. Expectations of Staff

It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department to ensure that departmental handbooks contain assessment policies reflecting the school's overall policy as outlined above, whilst at the same time incorporating specific departmental needs.

Assessment and feedback on progress should be an integral part of lesson planning.

It is the responsibility of every teacher to consider how achievement will be assessed and to explain this to his/her students.

Teacher assessed homework and tests must be marked and returned to students within two weeks unless the piece of work is unusually extensive, for example a termly project. In the case of a large project the Head of Department can judge how long work should take to be returned. Ideally, routine homework should be returned within one week. The frequency at



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which teachers should mark work is set by each department's own assessment policy. Each department's policy must be approved by the Assistant Head Academic and Assistant Head Teaching and Learning. A guide to the frequency at which work is marked in each department will be made available to parents at the start of each academic year via the school portal.

When marking work that contributes to the awarding of a qualification (a Non-Examined Assessment) a teacher must follow departmental guidelines. The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring departmental guidelines follow the Merchant Taylors' Girls' School Non-Examination Assessment Procedure found on the Exams area of the parent portal.



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8. Ensuring student progress towards meeting the curriculum objectives is properly reported

The school recognises that regular written reports are essential to promote students' learning. Written reports enable staff to give students structured and positive feedback and advice for future improvement in a way which complements the regular communication achieved through marking and assessment of work and interchanges in class. Reports provide students with the opportunity to take stock of their progress and to set themselves targets for their future learning through the report reading sessions which are held with staff as part of every reporting occasion. Reports are also an essential element in the school's communication with parents. They give vital information on girls' performance and cement the essential partnership between school and home, assisting each student to achieve her "personal best" in line with the school's objectives for pupils. Reports provide data to add to our understanding of a pupil's progress over time.

Detailed instructions to staff on the procedures for writing reports are provided to staff at the start of each academic year. The report system is an organic one and is kept under review to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The Reporting Schedule should therefore be regarded as a statement of current practice, which may change from time to time, rather than as fixed and final.

Parents are informed of their daughter's progress across the year in line with the Reporting Schedule that they are sent at the start of each academic year.

Data on pupil progress, such as termly assessment points such as end of unit tests and end of year exams, is kept internally to track progress. Parents are informed if this data indicates a cause for concern by the Head of House (if the problem is across the board) and/or Head of Department for specific subjects.



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SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF PERIODS (5 x 65min periods/day)		
	Year 7 (3 house teaching groups)	Year 8 (3 house teaching groups)	Year 9 (3 house teaching groups)
English	6	6	6
Mathematics	6	6 (sets 1 – 3)	6 (sets 1 – 4)
Language 1	3 Spanish, French, German or Mandarin	3 Spanish, French, German or Mandarin	4 Spanish, French, German or Mandarin
Language 2	3 Spanish, French, German or Mandarin	3 Spanish, French, German or Mandarin	4* Spanish, French, German or Mandarin
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Health and Wellbeing	2	2	
Religion, Philosophy and Ethics			2
Classical Studies			2*
Latin	2	2	2*
Physics	2	2	2
Chemistry	2	2	2
Biology	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2*
Drama	2	2	2*
Art	2	2	2*
Design Technology	2	2	2*
Computer Science	2	2	2*
Games	4	4	4
PSHE	2	2	2
Assembly/Form Time	2	2	2
Global Perspectives			2
	50	50	50
			* Options (12 periods in total, inc Language 2)



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CURRICULUM: YEARS 10 & 11

SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF PERIODS (5 x 65min periods/day)	
	Year 10	Year 11
English (Language & Literature)	6 (not set, but timetabled together)	6 (within options blocks)
Mathematics	6 (sets 1 – 3)	6 (sets 1 – 4)
Science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics	5 (one Science is mandatory)	12 (3 sciences) 8 (trilogy)
Humanity: History, Geography, RPE or Classics	5	4
Language: French, Spanish, German or Mandarin	5	4
Additional Option 1	5	4
Additional Option 2	5	4 (only if doing Trilogy)
Additional Option 3	5	
Enrichment or extra GCSE		4
Games	4	2
PE		2
PSHE	2	2
Assembly/Form Time	2	2
Global Perspectives		2
	50	50

OPTIONS:

Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Drama, DT, Music, PE, Psychology, extra Science(s), Humanities or Languages

CURRICULUM: YEARS 12 & 13:

Students have 10 periods/fortnight of their A level subjects (usually 3) in addition to PSHE, Games and EPQ.