



Stella Maris School

CURRICULUM POLICY

REVIEWED: 2018/19

REVIEW DUE: SEPT 2020

Stella Maris School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and well-being of all members of the school. All school staff and volunteers who work in the school are expected to share this commitment and vision.

This Policy was written in consultation with the Trustees, Headteacher and the staff of Stella Maris School with due regard to our mission statement.

“At Stella Maris we endeavour to put the children at the centre of everything we do. Our mission is to educate, nurture and instil traditional values and cherish our children. We inspire them to achieve their best in every aspect of their lives.”



CURRICULUM POLICY

1. Introduction

The Curriculum Policy at Stella Maris is a statement of our aims and principles relating to the Curriculum taught in our school. It will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated when necessary.

The Curriculum is planned to provide a structured and well-balanced education for all our children from Pre-Prep 1 to Year 6. We provide a wide range of activities and opportunities for our children to ensure they make progress academically, socially, physically and morally. We endeavour through our school Curriculum to stimulate our pupils' interests and imagination and motivate them through a high standard of teaching and learning to realise their potential and achieve success.

One of our main academic aims as a school is to ensure that each of our pupils move on to a good Grammar School, which caters for their individual needs and abilities. In order to achieve this we concentrate on exam preparation and technique as the children progress through K.S. 2.

2. Curriculum Statement

The Trustees, Headteacher and Staff of Stella Maris School aim to provide a rich Curriculum which is tailored to individual needs.

Every child will have access to a broad, rich and exciting Curriculum which is differentiated according to age and ability.

PLANNING OF THE CURRICULUM – PURPOSE/VALUES

At Stella Maris we have a set of common purposes and traditional values which underpin everything we do. All teaching and learning is based on these strong foundations.

- The Curriculum is designed to increase the knowledge, skills and understanding of our children.
- The Curriculum is designed to help our children develop as well-balanced individuals who will make a contribution to society.
- The Curriculum is carefully planned and structured at Pre-Prep, K.S.1 and K.S.2 to ensure that our children make maximum progress and achieve their full potential.
- The Curriculum is designed to engage the children and help them take ownership of their education and to promote a love of learning.
- The Curriculum is designed to offer stimulating and exciting opportunities to encourage and motivate children by providing a programme of extra-curricular activities.



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Throughout the school opportunities are regularly taken to extend the Curriculum beyond our statutory requirements. These include:

- Visitors, musicians, and themed assemblies by visitors.
- Use of the outside classroom area, locality/wider environment.
- Educational visits, trips to museums, the cinema, and other places of interest.
- Parental support in classrooms.
- Class trips and whole school trips to National Trust properties.
- Participation in local and national competitions, e.g. Young Writers', National Maths Association Challenge and Heaton Mersey Youth Festival.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the Stella Maris Curriculum programmes of study.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

This policy reflects the requirements for Independent schools to provide a broad and balanced Curriculum.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

They will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting Curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the core Curriculum subjects
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the Curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching a balanced Curriculum is adequate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all requirements as laid down by the Board



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- The Board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the Curriculum
- The Board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

4.3 Other Staff

The Curriculum Leader and the staff will ensure that the school Curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

5. Organisation and planning

PLANNING OF THE CURRICULUM

Delivery

The school week provides 23 hours and 45 mins teaching time for K.S.1 and K.S.2. Lessons begin at 9 am and continue until 3.05 pm, with a 15 mins morning break and an hour break for lunch. It is delivered across a standard independent school year. The Pre-Prep Department operates the normal morning and afternoon sessions for Pre-Prep 1. (Nursery) and Pre-Prep 2. (Reception) children, with an extra 15 mins for their lunch break. All aspects of the Curriculum are taught in classes or mixed year groups with differentiated work.

CURRICULUM PROVISION

PRE-PREP

- The Pre-Prep Department's Curriculum is planned around the 7 areas of learning and development:

PRIME AREAS:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

SPECIFIC AREAS:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We support the understanding that Pre-Prep children learn more effectively through play and practical experiences. Within the Pre-Prep stage the children are encouraged to become independent and confident. Activities are undertaken both in the classroom and outside of the classroom, in the designated Pre-Prep play area.

To assist the transition between Pre-Prep and K.S.1 the Pre-Prep 2. children spend some time during the Summer Term working with the Year 1 children and teachers in the Year 1 class so they can become familiar with the new environment and K.S.1 expectations.



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K.S.1

Within K.S.1 the children are taught a full range of Curriculum subjects - English, Mathematics and Science as core subjects and R.E., Geography, History, ICT, DT, Art, Music and P.E. as foundation subjects.

Although teaching is more formal in K.S.1 than in the Pre-Prep Department there is still a focus on practical activities in Year 1 to stimulate the children and help them to develop through this type of experience.

K.S.2

Within K.S.2 the children continue to be taught these same core and foundation subjects with the addition of Verbal and Non-verbal Reasoning in preparation for the senior school examinations which take place during the Autumn and Spring terms of Year 6.

Within Yr.5/Yr.6 a considerable amount of curriculum time needs to be spent on exam preparation and developing exam techniques. For this reason the Curriculum at this stage is geared towards this important aspect with emphasis on Maths, English and Reasoning. During the Autumn term of Yr. 6 these key subjects will take precedence over the foundation subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

All children from Pre-Prep 1. through to Year 6 have the opportunity of learning a foreign language. This is currently French. The weekly 30 minute lesson for each class is delivered by a French teacher who works in school each week.

RSE

Sex Education is not taught in the school as a separate subject but the foundations are laid as the children progress throughout the school. We follow the standard Catholic School guidance in this area.

Topics and issues are dealt with across our Science and R.E. Curriculum, which include growth, birth, life and death.

Children have access to the PSHE curriculum and are encouraged to develop citizenship, respect for themselves and others, the difference between right and wrong and a strong sense of self-worth.

During our form time, R.E. lessons and PSHE lessons the children are taught about the value of lasting relationships. We help children develop the skills whereby they can form lasting relationships and understand the importance of social and emotional intelligence.

By educating our children to be aware of the world they live in and by giving them an open forum to ask questions and seek answers they feel comfortable in approaching teachers and other adults within school if they need advice or help.

In line with the current changes coming into effect in Sept. 2019 surrounding the teaching of RSE in independent schools we will be reviewing our Policy to incorporate the proposed changes.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Trustees, Headteacher and Staff are keen that all our children from Pre-Prep 1 to Year 6 are provided with SMSC opportunities, both within the planned Curriculum and through independent work, extra-curricular activities and a wide range of opportunities and events.

We are a Catholic school which teaches the values and principles which underpin the Christian tradition. The children also learn about world religions as part of their R.E. lessons. Catholic children are instructed in the Sacramental Programme in line with the Salford Diocesan Guidelines if parents request this.

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SMSC Values at Stella Maris School

Value	What does it mean?	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Spiritual</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Explore experiences and reflect</i> <i>Respect faiths, feelings and values</i> <i>Enjoy learning about each other and the surrounding world</i> <i>Use imagination and creativity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. investigate and discuss values of other faiths during an RE lesson or a history topic</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Moral</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Recognise the differences between right and wrong</i> <i>Respect the law</i> <i>Understand consequences</i> <i>Investigate moral and ethical issues</i> <i>Offer reasoned views</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. work with children so they recognise that every action has a consequence, either good or bad</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Social</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Be able to use a range of social skills</i> <i>Participate in the local community</i> <i>Appreciate and understand diverse viewpoints</i> <i>Participate and volunteer</i> <i>Be able to cooperate and resolve conflicts in their age appropriate ways</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. looking at friendship and how they make new friends etc.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cultural</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Appreciate cultural differences and influences</i> <i>Appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system and democracy</i> <i>Participate in cultural opportunities</i> <i>Understand and respect diversity</i> <i>Show respect to all individuals regardless of race, gender or their family circumstances</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. explore how places/countries have evolved and diversified</i> <i>Encourage children to celebrate different religious festivals and understand that Britain is a multi-cultural society and that all people are accepted</i>

SELF-ESTEEM

Each week the whole school takes part in a themed assembly, led by the Headteacher. During this assembly children's achievements are recognised and two members of each class receive a merit badge for a range of different reasons. Merit marks are awarded for good work, effort and behaviour for Years 1 - 6. These marks are collected for each class and the winning house team get a special mention and win the trophy for the week. The Pre-Prep children have a system of rewards, called "Dojo Points" which are



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awarded for good work and behaviour. These systems of rewarding children’s efforts and recognising achievements reinforces our Curriculum and motivates the children to give their best at all times.

Children are given opportunities to hold positions of responsibility as they move through the school. We have an elected Yr. 6 Head Boy and Head Girl and Deputies at the beginning of each school year. Two of our Year 6 children also hold the position of House Captains for our school teams, Matthew and Mark. Year 6 children act as Buddies for the younger children and help them to settle into school life when they first join our school. We also have a Sports Captain to promote the importance of participation in school sporting activities and clubs. We feel that these positions help the children to develop a strong sense of responsibility towards each other and enhances self-esteem.

BRITISH VALUES

The DfE reinforce the need for all schools to create and promote the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for all, regardless of race, gender or faith.

The Government has set out the definition of British Values in the Prevent Strategy of 2011 and Stella Maris School is committed to ensuring these values are supported and promoted throughout all our learning and in all aspects of school life.

The promotion of these values underpin everything we do and the children are taught these values through various topics and subject areas. We also celebrate our traditions and values through celebrations and assemblies at key points in our school year, for example Remembrance Sunday.

BRITISH VALUES AT STELLA MARIS SCHOOL

Value	What does it mean?	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Rule of Law</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To understand the importance of rules and laws</i> <i>To abide by them</i> <i>To realise that laws are there to protect us and keep us safe.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. devise a set of rules for using the new playground equipment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Democracy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Everyone has a right to voice their opinions and make choices</i> <i>In a vote the majority will always win</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. election of Head Boy and Head Girl carried out by a vote</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Individual Liberty</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Everyone has a right to an opinion</i> <i>Everyone should be listened to</i> <i>Freedom of speech</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. children are encouraged in their right to free speech in the safe environment of school</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mutual Respect</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Everyone is respected</i> <i>Everyone is listened to</i> <i>Everyone is equal</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. when someone else is speaking in a class discussion we ALL listen.</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No-one is more important than anyone else</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tolerance of other Beliefs and Faiths</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We promote Catholic values but celebrate all faiths</i> <i>We listen and learn about other beliefs</i> <i>The children are taught to respect and tolerate all beliefs and faiths by celebrating differences and learning about World Religions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e.g. all children are given the opportunity to tell the class about their religious festivals etc.</i>

HOMEWORK

Homework is set for year groups, according to ability and age. It is used as a tool to reinforce and develop skills which have been covered during class lessons. Each year group has a recommended amount of time to be spent on homework each week. It is expected that each child will read every evening. Homework activities are spread across the week, depending on the age and ability of the children.

Details of homework expectations and time allocations for each year group can be found in the Parents' Handbook.

See our Pre-Prep Policy for information on how our Early Years Curriculum is delivered.

6. SEN and Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessments to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study all subjects, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil accessing all areas of the Curriculum and achieving their best.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our **SEN Policy**.

Where there is a need for SEN provision individual requirements will be met across the Curriculum. Every child is encouraged to develop at his or her own pace, relative to their ability.

Where a child is identified as having a particular need, whether academic, social, physical or emotional, a programme of support will be agreed by the class teacher, the SEN teacher and the Headteacher. Parents will be informed at regular intervals about their child's progress and will be fully involved at every stage.



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If this programme of support fails to provide the necessary foundations for the child to make progress than help will be sought from the appropriate outside agencies, following consultation with the parents.

7. Monitoring arrangements

The Headteacher and the Curriculum Leader will monitor the way the Curriculum subjects are being taught across the school.

Class teachers also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Headteacher, Senior Teacher and Curriculum Leader. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Board.

ASSESSMENT

Please see our recently updated Assessment Policy for further information.

Continuous assessment takes place in all departments of the school, in a variety of ways. Assessment is always formative and summative. On-going assessment provides us with the evidence to track our pupils' progress on a regular basis and helps us to build a complete picture of a child's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.

Children in the Pre-Prep Department are tracked and assessed against the Early Learning Goals within the Early Years Profile. The EYFS Profile is broken down into seven specific areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development (PSE)
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Within each of these areas, there are specific Early Learning Goals – for example, in the case of Communication and language, these are Listening and attention, Understanding, and Speaking. Your child will be given an achievement level for each area of learning.

Within K.S.1 children are formally assessed in sight vocabulary, word recognition and spelling at key points in the year. On-going weekly assessments and tests also take place. NFER assessments are carried out in the Autumn Term, when the children are tested in Mathematics, English and Reasoning. Various units of work assessments are also used to track progress and understanding in the foundation subjects.

Within K.S.2 children are assessed in word recognition, reading comprehension skills and spelling on three occasions during the school year. NFER assessments are also carried out in the Autumn Term and foundation subjects are continuously assessed to ensure progress is being made. Our Curriculum Leader is currently rolling out a commercial tracking system (INSIGHT) across the school, on a trial basis, to enable us to monitor and evaluate how much progress our children are making from one class to the next and from one key stage to the next. This will inform how we prioritise our resources going forward and provide us with evidence for deciding on priority areas within our Development Plan.



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Year 5/6 take part in continuous examination assessments to track progress and ensure they are on target to pass the senior school entrance exams for schools of their choice. A variety of past papers are used.

Children with SEN provision will be assessed individually on a regular basis to ensure that programmes of support are working successfully.

REPORTING AND MONITORING

All work carried out by children is monitored and evaluated.

Reporting to parents takes place three times a year. Our Prep Department use parent interviews and one-to-one meetings to report to parents during the Autumn and Spring Terms. Year 1 to Year 6 receive written progress reports at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms. The parents also have the opportunity to formally meet with the class teachers and discuss their child's progress at specific times during each term. All children from Pre-Prep 1 to Year 6 receive an academic school report at the end of the Summer Term. Year 6 also have a comprehensive Headteacher's reference which is submitted to the Grammar Schools in preparation for transition.

We operate an open-door policy whereby a parent can drop in and speak to a teacher before or after school on an informal basis. Parents can also make an appointment at any time during the academic year to discuss issues at greater length if the necessity arises.

Individual and group target setting occurs on a termly basis. This helps to reinforce progression and helps children take ownership of their own learning and progress.

More detail of our monitoring and assessment arrangements can be found in the school's Assessment Policy.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities are available at Stella Maris. These include:

- Personal tuition in piano/singing/woodwind
- Infant/Junior Choirs
- Infant Multi-Sports Club
- Junior Sports Club
- Chess Club
- Computer Club
- Speech Lessons/Public Speaking
- Art Club
- Kiddy-Cook Club

Twice a year the infant and junior departments stage a school show for parents and friends. Every child has an acting and speaking role within the show and many of our children have the confidence and ability to sing solo on stage.

CONCLUSION

Stella Maris is "a small school with a big reputation." Our pupils leave in Year 6 as mature, well-balanced, successful children who achieve multiple offers of school places from the local Grammar Schools. This is the product of an exciting, robust and stimulating Curriculum, excellent teaching and an environment



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which encourages pride, respect, tolerance, positive thinking, good self-esteem and a thirst for knowledge and success.

7. Links with other policies

This Policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- *EYFS Policy*
- *Assessment Policy*
- *SEN Policy*

Updated 2018/19

To be reviewed Sept 2020