

Curriculum

Fourth Form Curriculum: Key Stage Three

In Years 7, 8 and 9 (LIV, MIV and UIV Form), pupils experience a balanced curriculum which broadly follows the guidelines of the National Curriculum. They are taught mainly in their Form groups, with setting across the year in Mathematics, French and Latin from MIV upwards and Science from UIV upwards. Particular care is taken with the integration of the new pupils who join in Year 9 (UIV Form); after an initial period of teaching in Mathematics and Science, a common assessment is carried out across the year before the girls are placed in their appropriate groups. All sets are kept under review on a regular basis.

Pupils study a choice of French or Spanish and are introduced to Latin and Mandarin Chinese in LIV Form. German is an option in the MIV Form, where most pupils study two languages and some may decide to study Classical Civilisation instead of Latin. Pupils have the option to study Classical Greek in the UIV Form. Computing is a timetabled lesson for the Fourth Forms. Pupils follow a course in Critical Thinking from the LIV Form. Three Enrichment Weeks (called Donaldson Weeks) are spread throughout the year to offer the opportunity for deep thinking and deep learning with a more thematic and cross-curricular approach.

The LIV and MIV Forms follow a flexible programme on Friday afternoons (known as 'Flexible Fridays'). This comprises: Critical Thinking and the St Mary's Challenge and Adventure Scheme (CAA). The CAA programme is preparation for the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award which many pupils go on to take up in the UIV Form.

The total number of periods in the week is 33. Each lesson is 1 hour long.

Fifth Form Curriculum: Key Stage Four (I/GCSEs)

All Year 10 and Year 11 (LV and UV Form) pupils follow a core curriculum comprising English Language, English Literature, a Modern Foreign Language, Mathematics and Triple Award Science (although some pupils sit Double Award Science). Full or Short Course Religious Studies is taken by all pupils.

All pupils are instructed in Physical Education and follow a course in Personal Development. This involves Study Skills, Mindfulness, Personal Development and Citizenship. Information Technology leads to the internationally recognised ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification and is taken by pupils not studying Computer Science GCSE.

Most pupils choose three option subjects from the following: Art, Drama, French, Geography, German, Classical Civilisation, Classical Greek, History, Latin, Music, Computer Science, Mandarin, and Spanish.

All courses except Personal Development lead to an externally accredited qualification.

Pupils are set for Modern Foreign Languages, Latin, Mathematics and the Sciences and are taught in their option groups for the remainder of their subjects and in mixed ability groups for English.

Sixth Form: Key Stage Five (A Levels)

Year 12 (LVI Form): Pupils follow a non-examined course in Critical Thinking in addition to taught and independent elements of the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). Careers, Physical Education and Personal Development lessons are also compulsory. Most pupils study three A Levels, Donaldson Electives and an option from the Supra Curriculum.

Year 13 (UVI Form): All pupils must take part in two hours of Physical Education per week and one lesson of Personal Development. There are no other core subjects in order to allow more time for pupils to pursue and develop their wider reading, personal development and research.

Subjects at A Level: Academic subjects are most often taught by two teachers sharing the six hours allocated per subject. If any subject group at either level consists of three girls or fewer, the normal expectation is that the teaching delivery will be via five hours per week.

Subject choices are: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Drama, Economics, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, German, Politics, Ancient Greek, History, History of Art, Latin, Mandarin, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies and Spanish.

Supra Curriculum: The opportunities available in the Supra Curriculum include: EPQ, GCSE Photography, GCSE Italian, Mandarin for beginners, Advanced European Computer Driving Licence, AS Level Mathematics, non-examined Mathematics skills courses, a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).

Donaldson Electives: From September 2021, all pupils in the LVI Form will participate in short courses running throughout the year on a range of subjects designed to complement their A Level studies.

The amount of Private Study time will vary according to the number of options studied; total number of periods in a week is 33.

All pupils are expected to be involved in the school's Lecture Programme as part of their enrichment activities. Many also choose to pursue the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.