



## **JAMES ALLEN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL (JAGS) (DfE Number 210/6002)**

### **JAGS WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY**

Our school curriculum comprises all learning and experiences (including trips and visits) that we plan for our pupils. It is designed to fulfil our School Aims, providing opportunities for all our pupils to learn and to achieve. Our curriculum is firmly rooted in the values of our school as described in our Aims and through it we seek to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. Our curriculum should enable all pupils to make good progress from one stage of their education to the next, allowing them to develop their individual strengths, talents and passions.

We regularly review and update our curriculum both to meet the evolving needs of our pupils and to incorporate appropriate national educational developments and recommendations.

#### **Inclusion - Principles**

We are a selective school and we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for **all** our pupils. In planning and teaching our curriculum, we have due regard to the following principles:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and providing appropriate assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

#### **JAPS CURRICULUM (Pupils aged 4-11, Years R-6)**

##### **Building on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum**

Our Reception Year follows the national Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which set out what children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception Year. The Early Learning Goals contained within the EYFS are organised as 6 areas of learning:

- 1) Personal, social and emotional development
- 2) Communication, Language and literacy
- 3) Problem Solving, reasoning and numeracy
- 4) Knowledge and understanding of the world
- 5) Physical development
- 6) Creative development

##### **Overall Curriculum Structure**

*Throughout JAPS (i.e. from Reception to Year 6, through the 6 areas of learning, in KS1 and KS2) we teach the following subjects:*

- English (including some Drama)

- Mathematics
- Science
- Design and Technology (DT)
- Art
- Physical Education
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- History
- Geography
- French
- Music
- Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)
- Religious Education
- Drama (either formally via Drama lessons or via participation in large-scale productions).

In addition, in Year 6 we teach Sex Education and from Year 5 pupils' Reasoning and Thinking Skills (Verbal and Non-Verbal) are developed.

At Key Stage One and in Reception, in particular, many of the subjects are taught as part of **Topics** such as "People Who Help Us", "Animals" or "The Stuarts".

### **Learning across the Curriculum**

We also develop and promote the following areas of learning across the curriculum:

- Spiritual, moral, philosophical and cultural development
- Personal, social and health education and citizenship
- Key skills and thinking skills

### **Use of language across the curriculum**

Pupils are taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding. Since Standard English, spoken and written, is the predominant language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learned, pupils are taught to recognise and use Standard English.

In addition, pupils are taught the technical and specialist vocabulary of subjects and how to use and spell these words. They are also taught to use the particular language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects (e.g. language to express causality, chronology, logic, exploration, hypothesis, comparison, and how to ask questions and develop arguments).

### **Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across the curriculum**

Pupils are given opportunities to develop their ICT capability by using ICT tools to support their learning across the curriculum.

### **Health and Safety**

Especially in Design Technology, ICT, Art, Science and Physical Education (when working with tools, equipment and materials, in practical activities and in different environments), pupils are taught:

- about hazards, risks and risk control;
- to recognise hazards, assess consequent risks and take steps to control the risks to themselves and others;
- to use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risks;
- to manage their environment to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others;
- to explain the steps they take to control risks.

### **Relationship to National Curriculum**

Although we do not follow the National Curriculum *per se*, we teach all the subjects required in the National Curriculum and seek to go beyond the confines of the National Curriculum in many areas. However, our pupils do all the Key Stage One and Key Stage Two NC external tests (audited by Edexcel at KS2) and achieve outstanding results. We adapt the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as best suit the needs of our pupils.

### **CURRICULUM PLANNING**

When planning the curriculum we consider the following principles:

- **Pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum**
- **Breadth and Balance**
  - how the different subjects contribute towards children's whole curriculum experience
  - how the subjects are planned to ensure breadth and balance within each Key Stage.
- **Continuity**
  - across the Key Stage
  - with previous and following Key Stages
- **Progression**
  - building on previous experiences
  - developing a greater depth and range of knowledge, understanding and skills
  - planning for more challenging material and activities
- **Coherence**
  - a vision of pupils' development in the subjects
  - avoiding fragmentation in the curriculum
  - linking subjects or units of work to facilitate holistic learning
- **Access/Differentiation**
  - how the details of activities ensure access to the curriculum for all
  - how these ensure all pupils reach their potential through creative teaching to meet the needs of all pupils
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - collecting observations and other evidence to support evaluation
  - agreeing strengths, weaknesses and ways forward
  - conducting regular review

Our Gifted and Talented provision is an integral part of our curriculum policy and is based upon the premise that best practice in gifted education can be applied to all learners for universal benefit.

Children can be identified as highly able across any subject. Identification takes place through a combination of methods and provision will be the most appropriate for each pupil.

The principles of good teaching for all young people provide a foundation for effective provision for the gifted and talented/highly able. Staff provide appropriate creative challenge and support for these pupils in lessons and in homework.

### **JAGS' SENIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM (Pupils aged 11-18, Years 7-13)**

Our curriculum philosophy is to offer a very broad, but balanced, first-class education. In this academically selective school we aim to enable all pupils to reach their potential by teaching at a level appropriate to their abilities. We encourage pupils to maintain a balance between their academic studies and wider interests. While we keep ourselves informed about National Curriculum developments, we have not adopted the National Curriculum in its entirety. We have researched the International Baccalaureate and have agreed that it would not meet the needs of all our pupils. We are reviewing the newly created Pre-U and the long-established IGCSE qualifications and are piloting these in English from 2010. Some departments follow IGCSE syllabuses, where this qualification is more appropriate than the GCSE for our pupils.

- During Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3), in addition to English and mathematics, pupils have the opportunity to study two modern foreign languages (from French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish) and Latin, all three sciences, geography, history and religious studies and have separate weekly allocations of art, drama, music, physical education and technology (often offered within a carousel in other schools).
- At GCSE (Key Stage 4) all girls take English language, English literature, mathematics and the three sciences. In addition they have to choose at least one modern foreign language, at least one subject from the humanities group (classical civilisation, geography, history and religious studies) and at least one from the practical/creative group (art, drama, design technology, information technology, music and physical education). We also offer Greek, Latin and Japanese to GCSE.
- In the Sixth Form girls are encouraged to choose their own combinations of subjects, the emphasis being on studying what they enjoy and are good at and what enables them to pursue any desired future degree course or career, or at least does not close the door to any degree courses or careers in which they are interested. Girls take 5 subjects at AS level in Year 12 (many taking Critical Thinking as their 5th), usually followed by 4 at A2 in Year 13. We are currently offering the Extended Project as a pilot scheme in the Sixth Form. PE is compulsory in Year 12 and a Liberal Studies programme (shared with Dulwich College) in Year 13. There is also a Sixth Form lecture programme, including visits from recent past pupils to talk about their careers.

- We are committed to offering minority subjects, for example, allowing small groups to take A level examinations in Greek and Russian.
- Careers Education is provided from Year 9, including advice about GCSE and Sixth Form course options, work experience, careers talks and aptitude testing.
- We also offer a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils in Years 7 & 8 have early afternoon activity slots to enable an even greater participation in extra-curricular activities for this age group. Older girls undertake regular community action and many participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.
- We endeavour to keep abreast of new technology, but regard computers as tools to be used where appropriate to enhance pupils' learning, rather than as teaching machines. We recognise that there are enormous differences between information and knowledge and between knowledge and understanding and that pupils need and value human beings as educators.
- We include critical thinking and independent study skills throughout our curriculum, not only by having specialist sessions on these as part of our PSHCE programme, but also by using course materials such as "Thinking through Science".
- We endeavour to provide opportunities to "stretch" the most able (gifted and talented) with extension work in all lessons. While we are committed to girls taking their GCSE examinations together in one session in Year 11, we also offer an "express" GCSE for a French class in Year 9. This enables them either to choose an additional GCSE language (or other subject) or to take the AS French course in Years 10 & 11. Similarly, some girls take the MEI CI AS mathematics module alongside their GCSE Mathematics in Year 11. Our staff also encourage girls to participate in enrichment projects and competitions organised by external bodies, for example, Maths Challenges, Science Olympiads, poetry, translation and essay competitions and the Nuffield bursary scheme.
- A few pupils have identified specific learning needs, such as mild dyslexia. Our SENCO ensures that teaching staff are aware of these pupils' needs and use appropriate strategies to support them within lessons. We do not withdraw pupils from lessons for additional support and only those with a statement of SEN may have specialist support within the classroom. IEPs for girls experiencing difficulties are placed on the R Drive by the SENCO.
- All JAGS pupils are tested in English language as part of our entry procedures and they are normally expected to have reached a good level of fluency before being admitted to the school. However, we have some 50 home languages spoken by our pupils and we offer additional support in English to those who are in need of it. In the Senior School we have an EAL specialist within the English department. IEPs for girls experiencing difficulties are placed on the R Drive by the EAL specialist.

Above all, we try to balance the following three fundamentals:

- A commitment to high quality, wide-ranging education and to high quality teaching and learning

- A commitment to allowing individual pupils (and staff) to develop their own strengths, talents and passions and to providing enough flexibility for them to be able to do so
- A recognition that public examinations are a necessary “passport” enabling our pupils to move on to further educational courses and to progress in their later careers.

*Last reviewed: January 2011*

*To be updated annually*