



# **An introduction to our curriculum offer at The Sacred Heart Language College**

**September 2023**

**'Confident in God's love for us  
we commit ourselves to His service'**

At The Sacred Heart Language College we offer a challenging and academic curriculum to all our pupils. We are committed to providing pupils with a broad range of subjects that engage and excite all learners. We believe that all can achieve, therefore all are supported to develop and nurture their God given gifts and talents.

Alongside the traditional academic subjects, we look to develop a positive attitude to learning and excellent learning habits from the outset of Year 7. This is a focus across all subject areas as well as a key part of our creative and innovative Pastoral Curriculum Framework.

This booklet provides an overview of the key aspects of teaching and learning in subjects on offer here at The Sacred Heart Language College.

## ART

*“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”*

*Pablo Picasso*

Pupils learn about the work of artists, architects, designers and craft people from past and present. They explore a variety of different countries and cultures. They work from direct observation, looking at objects, people, the natural and man-made environment and gradually build their observational drawing skills. Experimenting with new techniques, styles and materials, gives pupils the opportunity to use the acquired visual language not only as a form of self-expression but also to create successful art work responding to a range of inspirational themes.

Galleries and/or museum visits are organised by the department to give pupils opportunities to have direct experience of viewing art work and to benefit from a team of educators who engage pupils through observation and discussion and practical workshops.

In art pupils practice line and tonal drawing, they observe shapes, forms, texture and patterns, they use paint and design and make sculptures. Art is not only taught to build skills and techniques but also to help pupils to acquire a critical understanding of how art, craft and design reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation.

Art, craft and design represent some of the highest forms of human creativity. The art department aims to inspire and engage pupils, and to have pupils gaining the knowledge and skills to experiment and create their own works of art, craft and design.

The Arts Council of England states ‘when we talk about the value of arts and culture to society, we always start with its intrinsic value: how arts and culture can illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world’. This commitment to creativity, deepening spirituality and the power of art to enrich our lives is core to the teaching of art here at The Sacred Heart.

## CLASSICS

*“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.”*

*Aristotle*

GCSE Classical Civilisation is the study of the culture and literature of the classical (Greek/Roman) world, drawn from the time period of 3000 BC to 500 AD. Pupils learn about ancient myths, drama, romance and betrayal. Pupils also explore the legacy of the classical world and its relevance to modern culture.

The GCSE option depends on the skills taught in both History and English. In the ‘War and Warfare’ topic, pupils are challenged to explore the impact of war both the political and human aspect. In ‘Women in the Ancient World’ pupils consider the role of women, both mythological and historical figures, and their roles within the ancient world.

The Classics curriculum offers the opportunity to develop and sharpen the essential analytical, evaluative and higher thinking skills that are required for many subjects at A Level, as well as developing deep thinking skills that are helpful in all areas of study.

## COMPUTING

*“Computers themselves, and software yet to be developed, will revolutionize the way we learn.”*

*Steve Jobs*

The computing curriculum reflects our belief that all should be creative and analytical equipping our pupils with the skills to be lifelong developers of the power of the digital world. The topics we cover include:

### **Year 7**

Introduction to code, E-safety, programming using Light Bot, a MS PowerPoint presentation project (in groups) using MS Word, MS Excel basics, presentation of PowerPoint project and Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML) revision for assessment and an assessment.

### **Year 8**

Introduction to Python programming, hardware, software, algorithms (including flowcharts and pseudocode), emerging technology, app creation, sustainability, networks, inputs and outputs, revision for assessment and an assessment.

### **Year 9**

Further programming using Python, Legislation (including: Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns), advanced presentations, computer systems (including: CPU and memory), network topology, computational thinking, system security (passwords), binary, denary and hexadecimal, databases, social networking, assessment and discussion about GCSE Computer Science.

### **Upper School - Years 10 and 11**

Pupils can opt to study OCR GCSE Computer Science (9-1) J277. This is assessed by two written one and a half hour examinations (100% of the award) and a programming project.

## DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

*"Design is intelligence made visible."*

*Alina Wheeler*

The Technology department aims to encourage good practice through a range of designing and making activities. We aim to encourage enthusiasm and confidence and for the girls to take a pride in their work.

In years 7, 8 and 9 (KS3) each girl experiences a range of designing and making opportunities in **Design & Technology and food preparation and nutrition.**

In years 10 and 11 (KS4) pupils can choose a GCSE in either Design Technology or Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Over the duration of the course, girls learn about materials, processes, design and manufacture. This is applied to a final project of their choice in the controlled assignment. The emphasis is placed on quality outcomes in the practical work.

Girls are also given opportunities to develop their talents, knowledge and skill during lunchtimes and after school clubs, making the most of the up-to-the minute facilities including an ICT suite.

## DRAMA

*"Drama is life with the dull bits cut out."*

*Alfred Hitchcock*

The Sacred Heart Language College's drama department continues to go from strength to strength with an increasing number of students selecting drama for GCSE. Previous productions have included: - *'Daisy Pulls it Off'*; *Willie Russell's 'Our Day Out'*; *Carol Ann Duffy's 'Grimm Fairy Tales'*, *'A Midsummer Nights Dream'*, *Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'* and *'The Demon Headmaster'*. We look forward to adding to our repertoire this year.

The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 covers a variety of genres including: - Melodrama; Elizabethan Theatre; Greek Theatre, which explores the dynamics of tragedy and comedy; Commedia del Arte (comedy of art) and issue-based drama. In Year 9, pupils are involved with devising a scheme of work where they learn to create their own plays and to perform them. The girls benefit from a purpose-built drama studio, which is equipped to a high standard with a state of the art lighting rig, sound system and a sprung dance floor.

Whatever the style of performance, the girls are rigorously taught drama techniques in their weekly drama lessons. Through drama class each student will have the opportunity to:

- practise communication and performance skills, growing in confidence with individual and group presentations;
- develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;
- work imaginatively and creatively in collaborative contexts, generating, developing and communicating ideas;

- mature as active citizens for their future in employment and society, as well as for the possible further study of drama; and

There are many extra-curricular activities provided for the pupils within the drama department including trips to local theatres and the West End, and regular weekly drama clubs which give the pupils the opportunity to further develop their confidence and team building skills.

## ENGLISH

*“The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.”*

*St Augustine*

English is a vital core subject as it provides our students with the tools they need to succeed in all subjects. The lower school curriculum is carefully planned, as it builds on the pupils' learning from Primary school at Key Stage 2. The lower school curriculum ensures that all students have a strong grasp of English before they start working towards their GCSEs. Students study a range of rich and engaging texts from a wide variety of authors. In lower school all students study at least three of Shakespeare's plays, Dickens, War Poets and celebrated classic and contemporary authors. We encourage the students to learn how to think for themselves and ask questions about the topics we are studying together. We want them to become creative learners, to be confident, articulate, to be able to discuss and debate intelligently.

We also encourage the students to become independent learners who will carry on loving English and Literature for the rest of their lives. All students have regular reading lessons in the study centre, all students are actively encouraged to read for pleasure and take part in many reading competitions.

The English department has a long history of excellent examination results and achievements. We are really proud of our students. These outstanding outcomes are as a result of the personalised well-balanced programme we offer integrating the core skills needed to thrive in English. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning. In class they will be exposed to a variety of literary and canonical texts. These will help them to develop their cultural capital as well as their analytical skills. Thus, when the students are examined in year 11 they have developed an ability to think independently drawing on all the solid foundations they have been given in the lower school.

As well as reading for pleasure the department runs a range of exciting competitions. We have a range of reading clubs, poetry clubs, and creative writing clubs. We also take part in national days like National Poetry Day and World Book Day. These punctuate the year so there is always something our students can get involved in.

## GEOGRAPHY

*“The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.”*

*Barack Obama*

The geography department aims to develop in all pupils, a real sense of place and an appreciation of the environment. Teaching is also designed to develop pupils as independent learners.

Across Years 7, 8 and 9 each course has been designed to encourage students to acquire knowledge and understanding of a variety of places at a range of scales from local to global. Pupils are introduced to different environments and will develop an awareness of the ways in which people and environments interact.

The geography GCSE course aims to develop an understanding of people and their relationship with the natural and built environment. It also gives students the opportunity to appreciate the importance of sustainable development and explore global citizenship.

Enquiry based learning is a key feature across the geography curriculum. Therefore, field trips play a vital role in enhancing teaching and learning. Field trips in the past have included visits to London's Docklands where urban regeneration was investigated and an investigation of coastal management along the coast of southern England.

## **HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE (BTEC Tech Award)**

*“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”*

*Saint Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)*

In this subject, students develop their knowledge and understanding of the health and social care sector. They learn the essential skills needed to support people with a wide range of needs, from babies and toddlers to adults and the elderly.

BTEC courses are designed to provide specialist work-related qualifications as a preparation for future employment. The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Health and Social Care is for learners who want to acquire technical knowledge and technical skills through vocational contexts as part of their Key Stage 4 learning. The qualification recognises the value of learning skills, knowledge and vocational attributes to complement GCSEs. Students aged 14-16 can achieve a Level 2 qualification which is equivalent to a GCSE. This is a nationally recognised qualification and students can go on to complete the Level 3 BTEC post 16.

## **HISTORY**

*“This awful catastrophe is not the end but the beginning.  
History does not end so. It is the way its chapters open.”*

*St Augustine*

The history department offers every pupil in the school the opportunity to study a broad curriculum. We aim to develop in pupils an enthusiasm for the study of the past and an insight into how the past may inform the present. We also aim to embed key historical skills such as source analysis and research and the concepts of significance, change and continuity.

Across Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils follow a very diverse programme of study. As well as studying major political events such as the Russian Revolution and the World Wars, pupils also explore a range of social and economic history, investigating topics such as the position of women in Medieval England, diversity in the trenches and discussing the legacy of the British Empire.

A variety of teaching and learning techniques are used to engage pupils such as role play, group work and creative homework, for example pupils design their own First World War propaganda poster and make their own Faberge' Eggs. There is also an extended creative project for year 8, where they are free to present their understanding and interest of the British Empire. This presentation has sparked great creativity with pupils making models of ships, museums and even replicas of different settlements.

The department also runs History Film Club, where different historical events and periods can be learned through the art of film. This engages all learners and provides a bridge between the classroom and culture.

We provide the opportunity for pupils to study history outside the classroom with, a Year 7 trip to Hampton Court Palace, which combines their year 7 and year 8 learning. Furthermore, during their GCSE education, Year 10 pupils visit Whitechapel and are taken on a tour visiting the very spots that the infamous Jack the Ripper is believed to have committed his murders, followed by a visit to The London Dungeons.

At GCSE level we offer Edexcel History which allows pupils to undertake a broad and diverse study of the history of Britain and the wider world. This includes Anglo- Saxon and Norman England, Crime and Punishment throughout time, Weimar and Nazi Germany and the Cold War.

## **INCLUSION**

***“An inclusive education finds a place for all and does not select in an elitist way the beneficiaries of its efforts”***

***Pope Francis***

The aim of the inclusion department is to help improve the experience and outcomes for pupils with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities and for pupils learning English as an additional language. As a fully inclusive school we believe that all pupils, irrespective of their circumstances, are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum which enables them to achieve their best and make a successful transition to adulthood.

The department comprises four Learning Support Assistants and six Graduate Interns with a variety of specialisms and the Head of Inclusion (SENCO). We support pupils with a wide range of needs including communication, learning, sensory, physical and emotional difficulties. These needs are generally met through high quality differentiated teaching and support in the classroom setting but individuals and small groups may be withdrawn for focussed intervention as required. We work closely in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, teachers and outside agencies to overcome barriers to learning so pupils can reach their full potential.

## **MATHEMATICS**

*“Wherever there is number, there is beauty.”*

*Proclus, Greek philosopher*

Mathematics at The Sacred Heart is creative, challenging and designed to enable our pupils to display their curiosity and inspire them to be deep thinkers who marvel at the beauty and power of mathematics in the world around us.

Our aims are:

- to promote numeracy and confidence in handling mathematical ideas in ordinary life
- to learn how to use mathematics in scientific and technical fields
- to develop and encourage the ability to handle abstract concepts
- to appreciate the advantages the quantitative approach brings to a wider range of real life problems

We are fortunate to have a team of highly skilled maths teachers and five specialist teaching bases.

All pupils are challenged to achieve their best with problem solving and application of prior learning at the heart of all lessons.

Pupils have access to a maths clinic and opportunity to share their knowledge in events such as the Junior and Intermediate Maths Challenges.

## **MODERN LANGUAGES**

*“To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world.”*

*Chinese Proverb*

Language learning is at the heart of our school curriculum. It not only teaches students the necessary skills needed for their GCSE but also enables them to develop a sense of international curiosity, both of which are essential to succeed in our multilingual and multicultural world.

In Year 7, French or Spanish will be allocated to students. They will then continue this language until their GCSE in Year 10. If other languages are being spoken fluently at home, these students may also have the opportunity to sit their home language as an extra GCSE.

Our department consists of a well-qualified and dynamic team of language specialists. Strong links have been established with the local community, including local primary schools, as well as wider world through our regular residential trips to Spain and France.

in addition to the excellent daily classroom experience, the Languages curriculum is brought to life through our many extra-curricular activities such as:

- regular residential trips to France and Spain
- a student leadership initiative called ‘Lead Learners’
- frequent whole-school cultural and linguistic events, such as Día de los Reyes and Mardi Gras
- students teaching French/Spanish to a local primary school
- extra-curricular clubs on French/Spanish culture and language

## MUSIC

*"To sing is to pray twice."*

*St Augustine*

Our curriculum is taught to all girls up to the end of Year 9, and can then be chosen as a GCSE option. Beyond the academic curriculum it inspires creativity, self-expression and a lifelong love for music. We follow a scheme of work that focuses on the interrelated skills of performing, composing and listening.

Across Years 7, 8 and 9 we study:

- a wide range of music including World music such as African drumming and Indonesian Gamelan, Western Classical music, and music from many genres of Popular music
- how to play instruments such as keyboards and tuned percussion instruments. Pupils will learn how to read staff notation and study other forms of notation
- how to create music using a variety of musical structures and stimuli
- how to use Music Technology software and use it to enhance all aspects of the music curriculum

Music is then offered as an option at GCSE. This is proving to be a popular option and results are consistently pleasing. The pupils continue to study performing, composing and listening with practical work making up 60% of the qualification.

All pupils are encouraged to attend a wide range of extended curriculum music activities. We currently run Concert, Gospel and Chamber choirs, Orchestra, Samba Band, Irish Music group and R'n'B band. These groups are open to all pupils and run at lunchtimes or after school. These groups present their work at regular concerts and events in school. The two large-scale events are the Christmas Carol Service and Summer Concert, which are strongly supported by parents and the local community.

## THE PASTORAL CURRICULUM

*"You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves."*

*Saint Francis de Sales*

### Citizenship, PSHE and Careers

At The Sacred Heart Language College students follow a pastoral curriculum. This is delivered in the following ways:

- in morning tutor lessons (35 minutes each day)
- in PSHE lessons
- through assemblies
- during lessons in other subjects, especially Religious Education, History, Geography, Science, and English

The pastoral curriculum is built around the Catholic Social Teachings of dignity, option for the poor, care for creation, solidarity and peace, dignity of work and community.

Each teaching provides a theme for a half term.

Our pastoral curriculum has embedded the citizenship and PSHE national curriculum. We have placed an emphasis on supporting pupils wellbeing and tackles issues that can affect their ability to learn, such as anxiety and unhealthy relationships. Furthermore, our pastoral curriculum also helps pupils to develop skills and aptitudes - like teamwork, communication, leadership and resilience - that are crucial to navigating the challenges and opportunities of the modern world

This curriculum aims to:

- encourage pupils to play a helpful part in the life of The Sacred Heart Language College
- help pupils to be aware of Catholic Social Teachings and understand how they can be lived out in our local and wider communities
- promote equal opportunities by encouraging respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities
- develop pupil self-confidence and decision-making skills
- through debate, discussion and other learning techniques, pupils are encouraged to develop key skills of communication, problem solving and decision making
- the curriculum also aims to develop students sense of self-respect and social responsibility

### **Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)**

- Education for personal and social development is essentially concerned with the development of inter-related qualities and dispositions which we believe are fundamental to living a moral life. Pupils explore values and attitudes across a range of subjects, e.g. healthy eating, bullying, personal safety, financial awareness. Sex education and drugs education are also integral to the programme. Students are also taught about the institutions and ideals that underpin the workings of a democratic society

### **Careers**

Careers education encourages pupils to reflect upon:

- their own identity, feelings, characteristics and skills
- career aspirations and ambitions
- relationships in the wider world
- the world of work – careers education will prepare pupils for the challenges
- different pathways post GCSE

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

***“Remember that bodily exercise, when it is well ordered, as I have said, is also prayer by means of which you can please God our Lord.”***

***St Ignatius***

We aim to develop the physical talents of all the girls within the school and promote sport as an enjoyable and rewarding subject. All pupils will gain a comprehensive understanding of popular

sports, how their bodies respond to exercise and with a willingness to continue with a sporting activity post 16.

The PE staff work hard to ensure that every girl achieves her full potential and that all forms of natural talent are encouraged. The many clubs and practices form an integral part of our curriculum and many hours are dedicated to these, both at lunchtimes and after school.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award has been built into the extra-curricular activities and has encouraged the pupils to become independent young women.

Pupils can choose PE as a GCSE subject. The course comprises of 40% practical work and 60% theory. The girls have to study at least four activities in depth and also learn how their bodies respond and react to exercise, along with factors that may affect participation.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”*

*Psalms 32:8*

For the RE Department the mission statement is the fundamental basis of our work in the school. It underpins all we teach, believe and try to show in our dealings with the children in our care and with each other. Through the teaching of religious education, we hope to show pupils that it is not just a subject, but a **way of life** and something that will guide them spiritually, morally, socially and intellectually. In the RE Department we stress the dignity of all people and teach primarily about the Catholic faith. In addition, all students learn about the history and practices of other religions, and are taught to think critically from Year 7.

On Holy Days of Obligation, whole school masses are arranged so that pupils and staff may fulfil their obligations. There are also class masses arranged and prayer services are held at appropriate times and seasons throughout the liturgical year.

Every other year we organise a School Pilgrimage to Rome. In July 2019 we went to Rome and Sorrento. All pupils attend spiritual retreats during their time at the school.

At Key Stage 4 – all pupils are entered for GCSE Religious Studies. The syllabus is AQA (B): Catholic Christianity and Perspectives on Faith. This study involve three components of work:

- i. Catholic Christianity studies Catholic beliefs, teachings, practices, sources of authority and forms of expression. Pupils will examine these 5 areas of Catholic Christianity in the following topics:
  - Creation
  - Incarnation
  - The Triune God
  - Redemption
  - Church
  - Eschatology
- ii. Judaism. This will look closely at understanding Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices.
- iii. Religious Ethical Studies. Pupils will examine Catholic perspectives on two ethical issues such as Family Relationships, Human Rights and Social Justice.

Across Years 7, 8 and 9, we follow a syllabus based on the Curriculum Directory in accordance with the Diocese of Westminster. The department has contributed to the development of this syllabus, along with other schools in the Diocese. We constantly look towards bringing in new and

interesting ways of learning about Religion. A part time Chaplain works alongside the RE Department.

Pupils enjoy engaging with Catholic beliefs and practices and will grow in their knowledge and understanding of Catholicism in the world along with other faiths. They will develop an understanding of how religion is lived out in the world and expressed.

## **SCIENCE**

***“Nothing in life is to be feared, it only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more so that we may fear less.”***

***Marie Curie***

Our aim is to offer a broad stimulating science curriculum which is appropriate to the needs of every pupil in our school.

Across Years 7, 8 and 9 each student studies biology, chemistry and physics based on the National Curriculum. Each topic involves a range of investigative practical work which allows pupils to develop their scientific skills. The modules are assessed through written tasks and an end of topic test.

We offer separate and combined science at GCSE, which follows the AQA syllabus. Pupils study all specialisms.

We have an enthusiastic Science staff who offer extra help for all pupils during lunch times and after school. Science lessons are mostly taught in a suite of Science laboratories on the first and second floors of the Sacred Heart building.

The exciting world of science also forms the basis of our Science clubs where pupils can further test out their hypotheses in a range of experiments.

Those girls looking to the world of science and engineering for future careers are also encouraged to join our STEM club. This club is run in conjunction with the technology department where pupils explore and carry out extended projects and receive talks from STEM ambassadors.