

10. CURRICULUM POLICY AND PLANNING

CURRICULUM POLICY

The aim of the School curriculum is to offer all pupils an outstanding, broad and demanding academic education that will lead them to their chosen school at 13+. The curriculum reflects the ethos of the school and considers the principles of the National Curriculum as well as the requirement for Senior School entry via pre-testing, Common Entrance, or Academic or Music Scholarship.

In its most narrow definition, the School's remit is to prepare its pupils thoroughly for the academic entrance examinations of their chosen senior school. However, the School believes in preparing children not only for their senior schools, but also for the life that lies beyond them. We therefore aim to give our pupils as broad an education as possible during their time with us.

To this end, we place a strong emphasis on a broad curriculum, with Art, Drama, Music, Games and Religious Studies all taught by specialist teachers from a child's first day in school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also given strong emphasis through *Alive to the World*, the School's PSHCE programme, which reinforces the aims and the delivery of the curriculum.

An outstanding, broad and demanding curriculum

The School seeks to make comprehensive provision for the development of each pupil's personal qualities according to their age, aptitude and abilities, by providing academic teaching across a broad range of subjects but balanced by extra-curricular activities to enrich the experience of the children. It draws on both the school's facilities and the wealth of opportunity provided by the city of London and Westminster Cathedral. Rooted in a firm spiritual belief, it also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach our children how to grow into caring, responsible people, with a love of learning, who

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Westminster Cathedral

Choir School

can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they can achieve their true potential.

In preparing its pupils for Common Entrance, the school is committed to meeting the demands of the syllabus as prescribed by ISEB. This requires a level of competence across subjects in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Presentation of written and word-processed work is also considered. The School maintains rigorous standards, while employing sensitive and supportive methods: the Curriculum fulfils roles that are at once academic, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual.

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

September 2011

Linguistic

- This area is largely addressed by the core English curriculum which provides for teaching and progression in reading, writing and speaking and listening. It emphasises at all year levels the intimate engagement with and detailed analysis of language to promote aesthetic perception, imaginative practice and clarity of thought and argument
- The discipline of close reading of a wide range of literature in all genres is tackled alongside the opportunity to write creatively and imaginatively
- Moreover, pupils are encouraged to see the craft of writing as an ongoing process, exploring the evolution of their work as they redraft it
- Further opportunities for learning occur through Drama clubs after school or by entering creative writing competitions. The School also holds dramatic productions which enable pupils to develop their spoken skills
- Periodic book weeks, theatre visits, poetry competitions, readathons and handwriting activities are held to provide additional stimulus
- Writing skills are rehearsed across the curriculum
- Linguistic skills are further taught and encouraged through the teaching of foreign languages: French from Year 3; Latin and Greek from Year 6; and Mandarin is available as an optional after-school club. 'Polyglot' lessons are also taught in Year 4 and year 5. The purpose of Polyglot is to reinforce vocabulary and grammar taught in French and English by focusing on the Latin and Greek derivations and syntax as a means of achieving a better understanding and command of languages

Mathematical

- This area is largely addressed by the core Maths curriculum which provides for making calculations, understanding and appreciating relationships and patterns in number and space, developing a capacity to think logically and express thoughts clearly
- Mathematical skills are also addressed where appropriate in other areas such as Science, ICT and Geography

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Scientific

- This area is largely addressed by the core Science curriculum which covers topics including nature, materials and forces, through the teaching of topics within Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- The development of scientific skills, such as enquiry, observation, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording findings also form an important part of the Science curriculum

Human and social

- This area is largely addressed by the core curricula in History, Geography and Religious Studies and is supported by PSHCE
- In History, pupils are encouraged to recognise historical links within the curriculum so that they can begin to appreciate how human action now and in the past has influenced the planet and its development. Educational trips and visiting speakers develop in pupils an awareness of history, the physical environment, society and religion
- Geography stimulates an interest in and sense of wonder about places in a complex and dynamically changing world. It explains where places are, how places and landscapes are formed, how people and their environments interact, and how a diverse range of economies, societies and environments are interconnected. It links with PSHCE to tackle issues relating to environment, racial discrimination, public transport and personal safety, and world poverty; such themes are explored through whole-School assemblies
- Religious Studies presents a formation in Catholic Christianity, placing human and social questions in a context of human dignity and the existence of an all loving Creator. One week is spent in the Michaelmas term dedicated to teaching about other religions. In line with Diocesan guidance, pupils at KS2 should have knowledge of one other religion (Judaism) and pupils at KS3 should have knowledge of two other religions (Judaism and Islam). Other religions may be studied to some degree in other subjects such as Geography, English (stories from other cultures), and History (the gods of Ancient Greece, Egypt and

All staff at WCCS are committed to **Every Child Matters**: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Westminster Cathedral

Choir School

Rome, as well as more recent religious history such as the Crusades)

- PSHCE is taught, usually by the form teacher, during one period per week. Whole-School assemblies are structured around the themes of the course. Each form is expected to deliver at least one assembly each year, and in this way the ideas and experiences of different year groups are brought to life shared with the whole School community; parents are invited to attend assemblies. On certain occasions guest speakers deliver assemblies; for example, a local community policeman, or a worker at the School's local charity. Integral to the effective delivery of the PSHCE course is the personal witness of teachers themselves. Teachers act as positive role models for their students by demonstrating their own mature consideration of difficult questions and willingness to talk about ideas that might be unfashionable or even embarrassing. Most of all, the teacher is to enable the pupils to think for themselves according to the principles of natural reason

Technological

- This area is largely addressed by the core curriculum in ICT and also supported by cross curricular application. In ICT pupils are taught to use a range of applications including word-processing, DTP and multimedia, modelling, control, internet and email skills, spreadsheets and databases for information. Pupils are also taught to touch-type
- ICT is recognised as being an important tool across the curriculum and is used where appropriate in the teaching of other subjects

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Physical

- This area is largely addressed by the core curricula in Games supported by extra curricular activities, for example in tennis and martial arts
- Games lessons aim to develop pupils' physical control and coordination, their team skills, tactical ability and ability to evaluate and improve their performances in a wide variety of team and individual sports
- Pupils are also taught about the basic principles of fitness and health and are encouraged to adopt a healthy attitude through teaching in Science about diet
- From the age of seven pupils have many opportunities to play competitively against teams from their own and other schools and pupils of all abilities are encouraged to take part

Aesthetic and Creative

- This area is largely addressed by the core curricula in Art and Music with important contributions from English and Religious Studies
- Design is taught within Art where appropriate and pupils are given the opportunity to use tools and materials of different types, to plan and evaluate their own and others' work, and to consider processes and products. Artwork is displayed extensively to celebrate pupils' exploration of painting, ceramics, sculpture, modelling, printmaking, textiles and design, through themes such as viewpoints, self-image, symbolism, performance and architecture. An Arts' Week takes place in the Trinity term to stimulate cross-curricular engagement
- However, all subjects have a creative aspect and pupils are encouraged to explore and develop their creativity and their individual talents throughout the curriculum and in accordance with their skills and abilities
- Teachers seek to be aware of the talents of individual pupils and to foster them wherever possible both in formal lessons and in the wider school environment such as during extra-curricular activities and whole school contexts which may include Music and Drama productions and concerts, school music groups, art club etc

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Westminster Cathedral

Choir School

- All children are encouraged to learn a musical instrument just as all are encouraged to participate in the School choirs. Each year group celebrates their musical accomplishments at annual recitals organised by the Head of Music
- The Gallery and Junior Choirs have the opportunity to sing traditional choral music and popular hymns in the weekly School Mass in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Cathedral, which draws upon the visually stimulating mosaics to deepen the pupils' understanding of Catholic Christianity

Trips and outings

All classes are expected to go on at least one outing each term to complement an area of the curriculum and full use is made of the local facilities of museums, art galleries, theatres, historical sites and sites of scientific interest.

Transmitting the Curriculum

A particular strength of the School lies in the variety of talent and depth of experience of its teaching staff. Each has his/her own specialisms and interests. Traditional, solid and substantial concepts are communicated in innovative, engaging and stimulating lessons.

Westminster Cathedral Choir School teachers:

- Have high expectations of the pupils and themselves
- Raise levels of attainment for all pupils, enabling them to achieve their full potential
- Prepare pupils for the entrance examinations of their destination school, taking into account the standard and style of the examination within the Common Entrance curriculum, and the ability and temperament of the pupil
- Develop confident, disciplined and enquiring pupils who have a love of learning
- Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others
- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community
- Provide a safe, happy work place
- Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

Presentation

All pupils' work is to be presented as follows, as per the instructions in prep diaries:

Presenting your work

1. The date should be written in full at the top right hand corner of the page and underlined once.
2. Leave a single line after writing the date.
3. You must then write the 'Focus' of the lesson and underline it once. This is the material you will be studying or the skills you will be learning in your lesson.
4. The 'Focus' must be centred on the page. Leave a line after the 'Focus' before beginning your work.
5. If you are answering questions, leave a line between each response.
6. Always underline using a ruler.

Great presentation makes a great impression!

Staff development

In-service or external training is provided in order to update and improve standards of teaching and learning. Training needs are regularly assessed. Initiatives in curriculum development and teaching and learning styles are monitored to ensure teachers are well-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Further relevant curriculum documents

- Responsibilities of Academic Staff
- Responsibilities of Form Tutors
- Monitoring Pupil Progress: Marking, Examinations & Reports
- Prep
- Gifted and Talented

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

- Special Educational Needs and EAL

PLANNING

Each subject has a policy of its own, including schemes of work which can be found in Subject Handbooks.

Departmental planning consists of

- Long-term planning
- Medium-term planning
- Short term-planning
- A departmental action-plan

Long-term planning

Long-term planning outlines broad topics or schemes of work for each half-of-term (see pro-forma 1). The long-term plan must include the following information

- Which topics (given as headings, perhaps with a very brief explanation) are being taught during each half-of-term, and to which Year Group
- Potential cross-curricular links between different academic departments and PSHCE/SMSCD
- The progression of topics between Year Groups

Long-term planning must be submitted to the Deputy Head and will be publicly available to parents on the School's website.

Medium-term planning

Medium-term planning outlines teaching to each Year Group or class on a week-by-week basis. At WCCS medium-term planning consists of a scheme of work and is completed on a standardised form (see pro-forma 2). Schemes must include:

- Weekly aims
- Weekly activities
- How the planning relates to the DCSF policy *Every Child Matters*, and, where appropriate, the themes of the School PSHCE programme *Alive to the World*.
- Specific planning for 'gifted and talented' pupils

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

- Specific planning for SEN pupils
- Resources that you will need
- What prep will be set
- How you will assess the schemes
- Some evidence of having reviewed that scheme of work after delivering the lessons

Medium-term plans must be submitted to the Deputy Head and will be available to all members of staff.

Short-term planning

Short-term planning (see pro-forma 3) expands upon the activities outlined in medium-term planning schemes, perhaps noting how teaching and learning, in practice, deviates from what was originally planned. It must be submitted to the Deputy Head on a weekly basis every Friday afternoon. Short-term planning must include:

- Individual lesson plans (only when required, for example during an inspection or lesson observation; see pro-forma 4)
- The ‘focus’, starter and plenary of the lesson
- What activities will be carried out
- How individual pupils will be challenged and supported

It will also be a working document for the subject teacher to annotate and comment informally on:

- Which aims of the week were achieved
- What may need to be amended for the following lesson
- What opportunities for learning arose, or require further reinforcement
- The strengths and successes of the lesson, or ways in which the lesson could be improved

Short-term planning should be available for the Head of Department or Deputy Head to see upon request.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTION PLANS

A departmental action plan is a tool to outline departmental weaknesses and how the department plans to develop and improve.

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being

This document (see pro-forma 5) is also an opportunity to note what action the department has already taken during academic year. Action plans should include

- Curriculum development issues (with dates of identification and action)
- Professional development issues (with dates of identification and action)
- Cross-curricular links
- Resources required
- ICT

Departmental Action Plans should be available for the Deputy Head to see upon request.

All staff at WCCS are committed to ***Every Child Matters***: the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and in later life: Being Healthy, Staying safe, Enjoying and achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being