

## QUEEN MARY'S SCHOOL - ACADEMIC POLICY

Queen Mary's School aims to allow each child to develop academically as far as she is able. As well as a thorough grounding in English Language, Mathematics and Science, each child will be encouraged to develop her interest and ability in English Literature, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Languages, Art, Drama, Design Technology, Classical Civilization, Music and Physical Education.

### **Languages:**

Language is a core subject at Queen Mary's. Language learning skills are vital to the development of analytical thought, to lucid and accurate expression, and so to learning across the curriculum, especially English. They are particularly relevant to the learning of new languages later in life, whichever that language might be. A certain amount of English teaching will be language related. Each modern and classical language offers a different mix of skills. At Queen Mary's each child is presented with sufficient challenge to develop those skills to the limit of her ability, using the more complex languages (German and Latin) to develop her grammatical analysis. Fluency in a particular language is a desirable outcome, though the primary aim remains the development of the ability to learn. All language lessons, including the classics, include contextual material about the society, civilisation, history and literature of the parent countries.

All children learn French from Year 1. Those who join the school later are offered extra catch-up classes for their first term or two. In Years 8 and 9 German is taught to the more able linguists while Spanish is taught to those who would struggle with the greater complexities of German grammar.

In Year 8 all girls are also taught Latin. Some knowledge of Latin provides a vital understanding of the grammatical structures and possibilities of communication that are basic to all languages and affords skills which will support all academic subjects. There are also lessons in Latin, Greek and Classical Civilisation. Those who find Latin helpful continue with it as a language in Year 9; the remainder continue to study Classical Civilisation, history and literature.

All pupils take one language (usually French) at GCSE. Some may opt in addition to take one or more of Latin, German or Spanish (Spanish is available only as a Foundation Certificate of Secondary Education). Classical Greek is taught by request outside the normal timetable.

**ICT** is taught at Queen Mary's as a skill, in order to support other academic disciplines and to enable children to present their work independently. It is taught formally within the curriculum until Year 7. Children learn to operate independently the main Microsoft packages (Word, Excel and Powerpoint) and to use the internet safely. Computer programming, control and monitoring, and databases are also taught.

**GCSEs:** Options for GCSE are discussed with pupil and parents and decided when the child is in Year 9 (S1). All children take GCSE in at least English, Mathematics,

Religious Education and Science (Science and Additional Science – the more able taking the 3 separate sciences GCSEs). Almost all children will take English Literature and French or another MFL at GCSE. Children opt to take additional GCSEs from: German, Spanish (at FCSE only), Latin, History, Geography, Art, Music, Classical Civilization, Design Technology (Food Technology), and Drama. Children may also opt to do Critical Thinking as an AS Level award. Where exams are tiered (eg Foundation and Higher Tiers) children will be entered for the tier that gives them the best chance of achieving the highest grade of which they are capable. Most children will take 9 to 10 GCSEs. The aim is that each child will achieve GCSE grades averaging at least one grade higher than predicted by her YELLIS scores (the YELLIS tests are taken at the start of the GCSE courses in Year 10).

**SEN.** Children with Special Educational Needs can be given support by the SEN department as soon as their needs are identified (by their parents, by internal testing as they arrive, by their teachers, and/or by a qualified Educational Psychologist). These lessons are charged as an extra (£24 for an individual one hour lesson and £18 for a shared one hour lesson. Half hours pro rata). Their lesson times are negotiated with their subject teachers. Testing by a qualified Educational Psychologist for extra time during GCSEs is arranged as necessary. Readers or other support for examinations are provided for those who qualify for one (and charged as above). In the rare instance that a child is considered unlikely to be able to achieve a G grade at GCSE, examination for a Certificate of Achievement in English or Mathematics will be arranged (the child will normally continue to take other GCSEs as well).

**EFL:** There are no children at Queen Mary's for whom English is not their mother tongue. Children who have an identified problem with written English (because they have been educated abroad, or for some other reason) will be offered additional coaching by the English and SEN departments until they have caught up. If a foreign child were to come to Queen Mary's arrangements would be made for a qualified EFL teacher.