

# Curriculum Policy



St. Clare's aims to provide students with a stimulating, educational experience. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum to all students on the Preparatory International Baccalaureate course and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

This curriculum is appropriate to the age, ability and gender of the students and reflects St. Clare's mission to advance international education and understanding.

1) "Curriculum" is taken to mean organised learning opportunities within the College including:

1. timetabled classes
2. the activities programme
3. other events, such as Study Visits and International Days

2) The curriculum is supported by:

1. the appointment of appropriately qualified teachers
2. continuing professional development opportunities for those teachers
3. the provision of suitable learning resources in the Library and elsewhere
4. provision of teaching resources such as data projectors and laptops for teachers
5. seamless provision of on-line teaching and learning using MS TEAMS where necessary
6. monitoring of student learning using a range of assessment strategies involving subject teachers and Personal Tutors
7. an enrichment programme of visiting speakers, including the St Clare's seminar series
8. the embedding of student self-assessment and reflection into the progress tracking and termly reporting cycles

3) The College provides Programmes of Study appropriate to the needs of different students. Currently, these are within the:

1. International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
2. Pre-IB

4) Each Programme of Study will:

1. be of high quality
2. be broad, balanced and relevant
3. allow differentiation
4. ensure continuity and progression
5. incorporate the ideals inherent in the College's mission
6. contribute to intellectual, physical and personal development

5) Students enrolled on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme will:

**either** aim for the complete IB Diploma

**or** in very rare circumstances follow an IB Courses Programme that meets the requirements in 4 above. The College reserves the right to move a student from an IB Diploma Programme to an IB Courses Programme if the College feels this

is in the best interests of the student. Students sitting the IB courses programme can receive certificates for individual courses passed, but will not be awarded the IB Diploma.

6) Continuation from Pre-IB to IB1 and from IB1 to IB2 is entirely at the discretion of the College. A student may not progress from Pre-IB to IB1 or from IB1 to IB2 if, in the judgement of the College, the student's academic progress and/or behaviour are unsatisfactory.

7) The subject choices allocated to the applicant will be as stated in the offer letter. Final subject allocations rest with the College and any changes to the choice, allocation or availability of subjects will be entirely at the sole discretion of the College.

8) Diploma students will be required to comply with the regulations of the Diploma Programme as set out by the IBO. Students must study six subjects, three at Higher Level (with approximately 240 hours of classes over the two years) and three at Standard Level (with approximately 150 hours of classes over the two years) – see Annex 3. The six subjects must include representatives from each of Groups 1-5, plus either a subject from Group 6 or another subject from the other groups.

9) Students must also study Theory of Knowledge (approximately 100 hours of classes over the two years), participate in the CAS programme, (show evidence of achieving 7 learning outcomes) and write an Extended Essay. In addition, they will be required to:

1. include English as one of their subjects
2. participate in the PSHE programme
3. participate in special events such as International Days and study visits

10) IB Courses students will have a Programme of Study that includes but is not limited to:

1. classes in as many subjects as is feasible from the six subject groups depending on the needs of the individual student
2. participation in the PSHE programme
3. participation in special events such as International Days and study visits

11) International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme languages

1. we endeavour to offer each student tuition in the literature of their native language. Languages currently offered subject to teacher availability are:
  1. HL & SL: English, German, Italian, Russian, French
  2. SL only: Albanian, Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian, Danish, Greek, Latvian, Bulgarian, Korean
2. We review the provision of modern foreign languages in relation to demand. Languages currently offered are:
  1. Language & Literature HL & SL: English (This can replace Literature for native or fluent English speakers)
  2. B HL & SL: English, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese B
  3. *ab initio* SL: Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, German
3. From the start of the course teachers identify students who need English language support. This is then provided in small group or one to one teaching.

12) Students enrolled on the Pre-IB course will:

1. have classes in the core subjects of English language, Maths, Science and Humanities course
2. have classes in World Literature and the Arts e.g. Visual Arts, Drama and Music

3. include classes in English Literature and in a second language, if they are native English speakers
4. participate in the PSHE programme
5. participate in a minimum of 3 Activities that include at least one each from the Creativity and Activity categories
6. participate in special events such as International Days
7. participate in a group research project and exhibition in trimester 2
8. at the college's discretion have the opportunity to sit the Pearson Edexcel IGCSE in English Language

### 13) Students on all programmes will

1. have scheduled classes for at least 20 hours/week unless there are special educational needs for a specific student that indicate a lesser load is required
2. have classes for 35 weeks per year
3. normally be placed in classes that do not exceed 15 students
4. be taught in either mixed ability groups or groups that have been set in relation to ability in specific subjects
5. be set appropriate homework tasks to facilitate learning and its assessment
6. be required to make appropriate use of ICT for developing, planning and communicating ideas in both classroom and homework activities
7. have opportunities for individual consultations with teachers
8. have opportunities for additional support in the acquisition of English (see Annex 2 EAL learners)
9. have appropriate provision made for them should they have significant learning difficulties or disabilities (see Annex 1 SEND learners)
10. be prepared for appropriate external assessment
11. be able to select from a range of Activities that include several related to each of Creativity, Activity and Service as well as other cultural, linguistic and intellectual opportunities
12. be encouraged to participate in outdoor education opportunities and study visits
13. have opportunities for appropriate, individual careers and higher education advice (see Annex 3)
14. have weekly one-to-one meetings with their Personal Tutors

## Annex 1

### Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A new college SEND policy was introduced in November 2022 and can be found here: [SEND policy](#)

St Clare's values the abilities and achievements of all its students, and welcomes any student, regardless of their SEND, who wishes to attend the college, within the constraints of the criteria set out in our admissions and accessibility policies, and the staffing and relevant resources which we have available to support that particular student.

## Annex 2

### EAL Learners

The majority of students at St. Clare's will have a language other than English as their mother tongue yet they will be taught a range of subjects through the medium of English. Some students will have reached a high level of proficiency in English, including English for academic purposes. Other students will have developed basic interpersonal skills in English but still require support with cognitive and academic language proficiency. There are no students at the very early stages of English language development as a minimum of at least two years of studying English is required to be admitted onto the IB. A Pre-IB course is also provided for students who still need to develop their cognitive and English language skills. All students on the IB are given, where possible, the opportunity to continue to develop their mother tongue and to gain formal qualifications in their mother tongue.

As the majority of students at St. Clare's are EAL learners, all teachers are responsible for the students' English language development and their learning. All teachers should aim to provide:

- a welcoming environment that is responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity in their classroom so that EAL students feel confident to contribute
- effective models of spoken and written language taking into account the language demands of their subject in their teaching
- appropriate contextual support
- suitably differentiated materials for students at lower levels of English language development while at the same time allowing EAL students should be given the opportunity to engage with cognitively challenging work
- learning opportunities that meet the ongoing needs of more advanced learners of English, such as managing more complex concepts and language register
- opportunities for EAL students to work and talk in small groups
- suitable language and learning targets

The English B department assesses all students on arrival and disseminates the information gained from this assessment to all subject teachers and personal tutors. EAL students who are likely to require greater support are identified and further support is provided either in the form of Extra English or Subject Specific Support if there is a referral from a particular department or the student self-refers and their needs are prioritised. There is some liaison between subject teachers and English B teachers with regard to the needs of the learner and the language demands of the subject. There are regular assessment meetings with regard to all students and the HOD of the English B Department adjusts support if students are identified as being at risk of failing or under-achieving.

The Pre-IB course provides students with eight lessons of English that develop academic skills. Additional English lessons can be allocated if students are weaker.

The English B course develops inter-cultural understanding and, through teaching language through a wide variety of topics and literature, encourages critical thinking. The English Language and Literature course is for native speakers or students with a much higher level of English language proficiency than those taking English B (though sometimes students with intermediate levels of proficiency attempt the course as well) and involves the study of topics and literature in greater depth.

### **Annex 3**

#### **Allocation of teaching hours**

Each class is expected to operate for a specific number of teaching hours.

1. The number of teaching hours per week ("**Hrs/wk**") are allocated as follows:

IB teaching:

- Classes with 5 or more students:
  - 4 hours/week for HL classes or classes that combine HL and SL
  - 3 hours/week for SL classes in IB1 and for ToK classes
  - 2.5 hours/week for SL classes in IB2
- Classes with less than 5 students:
  - HL or HL/SL combined 3 hours/week with 2 or more students; 2 hours/week with 1 HL student
  - SL 2 hours/week

## **Annex 4**

### **Policy for Gifted and Talented Students**

#### **Introduction**

St. Clare's is a largely non-selective school. All students are admitted on the basis of a study of school reports and an interview. Mathematical ability is measured by a placement test but this is simply to ensure that students are placed in the appropriate set. If a student is judged to have the potential to achieve a diploma pass and it is felt that they will live and work effectively with other students, they are offered a place.

The very high levels of students' achievement nevertheless is, we believe, attributable to the strong academic ethos, individual support and the challenging targets which are set for all students.

We strongly believe that it is our responsibility to provide as wide a range as possible of enrichment activities (academic, intellectual, creative, sporting and altruistic) so that every student has the possibility of finding an area in which s/he can excel. We urge students to follow the spirit of the IB Learner Profile and take on new challenges in a supportive environment that celebrates success but also rewards participation.

We believe that this wide-ranging enrichment provision and the stimulating international environment allow Gifted and Talented students to flourish and achieve their full potential.

#### **Definition of Gifted and Talented pupils**

The ISI definition equates Able & Gifted as being those students who have strong intellectual & academic abilities, roughly the top 5% nationally. The Independent Schools Inspectorate report of March 2019 described the St Clare's intake as being "slightly above average" for the UK population so we would expect a slightly larger proportion than 5% of our students to fit this category. In fact, roughly 25-30% of St Clare's students gain 40+ points in their final IB exams.

The term talented relates to those students who excel in creative or sporting areas.

#### **Identification of Gifted and Talented students**

Gifted and Talented students are identified by examination performance, teacher recommendation and self-selection.

- Robust data are maintained to ensure that all students are achieving. The following data are kept:
  - initial Maths placement test
  - a further mathematics test on arrival
  - an assessment of English over the first week with a language level assigned which is updated through the two or three years along with a brief description of language competence
  - internal exams in terms 1, 3 and 5
  - an ALIS assessment on arrival which produces predicted grades and (on completion of the course) a measure of added value
- Student achievement is discussed regularly at assessment meetings.  
Report writing has target-setting built into the process.
- High achieving students are publicly congratulated at weekly assemblies.
- Each term and at Graduation a wide range of awards (for sporting and academic excellence) is made in front of the student body.

- Students who wish to apply for Oxbridge, Medicine or Veterinary Science are given additional support. Staff are consulted about suitable candidates.
- All students have regular one-to-one careers' advice consultation with the Careers Adviser who is able to ensure that their programme is appropriate for their career ambitions.
- Students who wish to apply for the most selective universities in the USA are counselled in addition by the US Careers Adviser who ensures that they are following the most challenging curriculum possible.

## Provision

As a rigorous academic and extra-curricular programme the IB is a highly suitable programme for Gifted and Talented students. At St. Clare's, our design and delivery of the programme makes provision in many ways including the following:

- Students choose their own programme of 6 subjects, suited to their needs, so it will contain the appropriate level of challenge for their ability and ambition.
- Theory of Knowledge is open-ended in terms of the scope for extension of those who are critical thinkers and interested in philosophy.
- Streaming is built into our programme with Maths offered at 3 levels, Languages at A, B and *ab initio* levels as well as at HL and SL.
- Pre-IB students are challenged by streaming in English and Maths, with the top English group being prepared for English A at IB level. Native English speakers are further stretched by extra lessons in a foreign language.
- Two members of staff have shared responsibility for ensuring that those students who aspire to apply for Oxbridge or medicine or the USA are further challenged by a special preparation programme including:
  - visits to Oxford University for lectures and open days
  - specific, tailored courses to prepare for university entrance tests (BMAT, LNAT, TSA etc.) and SATs for USA
  - the maintenance of and contribution to a blog and frequent group meetings which allow Gifted and Talented students to interact with and stimulate each other
- The Extended Essay allows all students to do in-depth research on a topic of their choice. For more able students this permits independent work at a level similar to university work.
- A range of music, sporting and drama opportunities is available to students e.g. drama productions, concerts, individual music lessons and opportunities to be involved in Oxford Music School as well as compete in the Oxford Music Festival.
- The CAS programme (applying to IB and Pre-IB) rewards students who show initiative. A list of typical activities is show below
- Students are encouraged to take on the challenge of learning a new language or deepening their current level of ability by using the language network where students teach others. They are encouraged to take part in summer academic and cultural experiences (course at the University of Santiago, for example) and to prepare for officially recognised language certificates such as DELE
- St. Clare's organises various international trips to areas of the world of cultural, historical or political importance such as Israel, Northern Ireland and Barcelona.
- External speakers frequently attend the college to debate with students about issues of the day.
- Music lessons are available for a wide range of instruments.
- Involvement in CAS activities with IB students also provides Pre-IB students with an extra level of challenge.
- The interactive nature of teaching at St. Clare's allows staff to differentiate and challenge the most able students with suitable questioning and extension work as part of the normal teaching process.

## Opportunities for students provided through the CAS programme

**The CAS programme enables students to establish links with the local Oxford community.**

- The Model United Nations group organise their own MUN conference held each year at the Oxford Town Hall. Students prepare for this event during the preceding weeks by researching the positions of the countries they represent on a variety of issues.
- The Visiting the Elderly group visit two local residential homes in Summertown.
- The Teaching Assistants Volunteer Scheme continues to send volunteers to:
  - St. Nicholas Primary School in Marston, Monday to Friday,
  - the German language school for kids on a Saturday morning
  - Oxford City Football Club on a Sunday morning. Our students assist the teachers in offering relevant activities for the children.
- During the week over 30 students are volunteering in 7 local charity shops based in Summertown and the City Centre.
- At the weekend, our students work for the Oxford University KEEN group. The KEEN group provide three different activity sessions for disabled young people in the Oxfordshire area.
- A number of the St. Clare's musicians perform for the Oxfordshire Youth orchestra and big bands over the weekends.
- The Chess Club compete in the Oxfordshire Chess league and play a number of home and away matches in the autumn and spring terms.
- The Debating Club takes part in the Oxford Union Schools and MACE UK Debating competitions.
- The Maths Club participate in the UKMT Individual Maths Challenge and the Senior British Mathematical Olympiad.
- The Dance group have performed at the Oxford Christmas light festivities and at the Regal Theatre, Oxford. The group have also had guest instructors in Flamenco, Street and Morris dancing.
- The Homework Support Group welcomes local African families to student led sessions in the library each week
- The Literary Walks around the city have proved very popular with students exploring the links with Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Philip Pullman and Colin Dexter.
- The Eco Schools and Environmental Action Groups are contributing towards sustainability initiatives at the college including achieving Eco Schools Green Flag status
- St. Clare's students participate in the Ox Clean Spring clean initiative. This involves working with other schools and business in cleaning up the local Summertown area.
- Our students participate in the Abingdon Dragon Boat competition raising money for local Oxford charities.
- The Basketball Club participates in the Oxfordshire Schools league.
- The Running Club participates in a number of local charity 5km and 10km runs.
- The male footballers participate in the Oxfordshire Schools league and the females participate in the Independent School's Association Cup and tournaments. Both squads train at our shared facility with Oxford City Football Club.
- The Badminton club and the Volleyball club play friendly fixtures against neighbouring schools.
- The Rowing Club work with the Hinksey Sculling School offering a number of introductions to sculling courses in the summer term.

### **The CAS programme enables students to establish links with the International community.**

- The Student Council regularly donates to charity. The money is raised throughout the year through the sale of St. Clare's branded hoodies, social events such as International Evening and the sale of roses and chocolates on Valentine's Day.

**Most recent review / amendment**

**VPA January 2023**

**Reviewed by the Governors' Education Committee Feb 2023**

**Date of next review: February 2024**