

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

1 How we teach

1.1 Excellent teaching at St George's

At St George's we believe that excellent teaching is underpinned by 6 key principles

- High expectations of all pupils
- Motivational and inspiring lessons
- Teacher clarity
- Differentiation for all pupils
- Effective feedback
- Development of independent learners

The sharing of best practice among colleagues is highly valued at St George's. The Teaching, Learning and Innovation group is led by the Learning Innovation Lead and meets on a monthly basis. This group is open to all staff to join. In addition, we organise regular observation opportunities such as Open Door Days and Learning Walks. This is an opportunity for all staff to observe and be observed by colleagues for approximately 10 minutes. Observation opportunities are always given a school-wide focus.

In addition, the Learning Innovation Lead organises initiatives via the Teaching, Learning and Innovation group for staff to share best practice and carry out Action Research into pedagogical initiatives.

The Academic Management Team (AMT) consists of the Deputy Heads (Academic and Co-Curricular/Connections), Learning Innovation Lead and the Head of Sixth Form. It is chaired by the Deputy Head (Academic). The AMT meets on a fortnightly basis to discuss academic strategy.

1.2 Class sizes

At St George's, we provide a caring learning environment, where every pupil can learn to work hard, to cooperate with others and to develop self-reliance. Our classes are small and our generous staff:pupil ratios are specially designed so that every child receives all the individual attention in the classroom, on the sports field and in informal discussions, that is appropriate for her needs.

Optimum class size varies greatly according to the nature of the subject, the year group and the demand for the subject. In Years 7, 8 and 9, there will usually be a maximum of 20 pupils in a class, except for Art and Food & Nutrition classes which should usually have a maximum of 14 pupils.

Year 10 and 11 class sizes vary much more because they depend on the number opting for the subject. However, groups will not usually have more than 20 pupils. A subject will not normally be offered at GCSE or IGCSE if three or fewer pupils have opted to study it.

A Level (Sixth Form) classes depend entirely on the number opting for the subject, however, groups will not usually have more than 15 pupils. A subject will not normally be offered at A Level if only one pupil has opted to do it. Occasionally a subject may run for just one pupil if others who had opted for it withdraw at the last moment, once the subject has been promised to a pupil; it is nevertheless recognised that one-to-one teaching is often not as stimulating as a larger class. If numbers are too great, a second class may be created as long as it can be staffed. The normal number of lessons per week for an A Level subject is five.

1.3 Timetabled lessons

It is the policy of the School that pupils should be taught, as far as circumstances allow, by qualified teachers. Curriculum lessons are expected to be planned according to a scheme of work, co-ordinated by the Head of Department (or his/her delegated representative). A lesson would normally use a variety of media and/or resources, and would devote more time to pupil activity than to the teacher leading the class in a didactic manner.

1.4 Differentiation

Differentiation, defined by the Training and Development Agency for Schools as 'the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning', should be present in every lesson and should take particular account of pupils who have Special Educational Needs (SEN), for whom English is not their first language (EAL) or who are able, gifted and talented (AGT or SGA Stretch as we know them at St George's)

1.4a Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Principles

Teachers strive at all times to do the following:

- take account of the different ways in which pupils learn, using a variety of activities and teaching styles;
- recognise and understand each pupil's individual learning profile;
- foster an atmosphere of understanding and respect, where there is no discrimination against pupils with physical, sensory or learning disabilities;
- be proactive in identifying pupils with Special Educational Needs in cases where this has not already been picked up prior to entry to the School. This involves the Head of Learning Support encouraging and responding to referrals from teachers. In some cases, difficulties only become evident with the increasing demands of the curriculum as pupils move up the School;
- have in place a continuous cycle of assessment and review, in line with the four-stage approach of **assess, plan, do, review** so that changes in provision are made where necessary.

Procedures. St George's has close links with the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre. One-to-one lessons are delivered by specialist teachers from the centre and coordinated by the Head of Learning Support. The number of lessons is decided on the basis of prior assessment and made in discussion with parents.

Coordination and liaison. The Head of Learning Support works closely with the Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Pastoral, Heads of Year, Heads of Department, subject teachers, tutors, school medical team and Examination Officer to plan for pupil provision. She also liaises with parents to discuss progress and relay relevant information to teachers.

Communication between specialist teachers and curriculum teachers. Communication between the specialist teachers and curriculum teachers is regular and happens both formally and informally. In addition to grade cards and reports being read by specialist teachers, minutes of department meetings and year group team meetings provide invaluable information to the Learning Support Department regarding the progress of girls with learning difficulties. All curriculum teachers can refer any girl who they believe may have a learning difficulty to the Head of Learning Support. Pupils can also refer themselves and this will be followed up by a round-robin questionnaire to teachers and discussion with parents.

Assessment. The baseline test results (outlined in section 3.6 below), in addition to Common Entrance results and information from preparatory/primary schools, in addition to meetings with parents, form the baseline for further assessment of progress. The Helen Arkell Centre provides parents with reports every term. Curriculum teachers' reports are shared with Helen Arkell teachers so as to keep them informed of progress within lessons.

Learning Support Pupil Profiles. The Head of Learning Support provides staff with a list of girls who need additional support. She also provides guidance on effective in-class differentiation. In addition to this, girls on the Learning Support List have a Learning Support Pupil Profile, detailing their areas of difficulty and the recommendations given in their Educational Psychologist's report. These reports are shared with curriculum teachers through the school database and a shared Google Drive.

1.4b Pupils with EAL

All pupils for whom English is not their first language have their English skills assessed prior to joining St George's and once again upon entry. From this initial assessment process, the pupil is assigned a 'Proficiency in English' code from a scale of E-A (E being the top of the scale) based upon those issued by the Bell Educational Trust. This code informs all teaching staff of the pupil's English-language ability and comes with a set of differentiation guidelines. The code is recorded on Schoolbase. The EAL department provides individual lessons to pupils who are codes E-A, the number of which depends upon their particular needs. The department also offers Cambridge proficiency examination preparation classes and IELTS preparation classes. When necessary, in-class support and lesson observation by EAL staff members also takes place throughout the academic year, as do training sessions for all new and existing members of the academic staff.

1.4c Pupils with AGT (SGA Stretch)

The School aims to encourage the individual development of each pupil, focusing on her strengths and abilities to produce the most appropriate educational profile for her. Great importance is placed not only on academic excellence, but also on moral and spiritual welfare.

Definition

There is no universally agreed definition of pupils who would be assessed as able, gifted and talented. We refer to the 2008 DfE guidelines that define this group of pupils as “Children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities)” Between 5 - 10% of our girls would meet this definition.

- Able pupils are those who regularly attain marks in the top 5–10% of their cohort for tests and examinations (or in baseline data).
- Talented pupils are those who show exceptional ability in a specific field of art, music, drama or sport.
- Gifted pupils are those students who possess an ability (not necessarily evidenced by marks) in a specific subject that is significantly greater than most of their peers.

Identification

We endeavour to obtain as much information about individual pupils as possible when identifying AGT girls.

- Holders of academic scholarships and exhibition awards
- Baseline data
- Monitoring of internal and external assessment records.
- Girls who receive a high number of high current performance reporting grades

Once pupils have been identified, the information is held centrally and shared with teachers on SchoolBase and via Dragonfly. Regular monitoring of this group occurs to ensure identified girls still meet our criteria and to include girls meeting our criteria.

Strategies

Strategies to support these pupils focus on enrichment activities and in lesson differentiation. Enrichment refers to clubs, outings and trips, extra-curricular projects and special events designed to stretch and stimulate. For example, AGT girls are invited to join the SGA Stretch group. These do not need to be exclusively for AGT pupils and wherever possible should be differentiated to allow wider participation. Stretch activities are coordinated by the SGA Stretch Coordinator.

Monitoring

Every Head of Department maintains a list of defining features of an AGT pupil. Their progress is discussed in department meetings. During the annual update of department handbooks, the Head of Department ensures that lesson plans or schemes of work are updated to reflect provision for AGT pupils. Heads of Department complete an annual audit of AGT provision in which current provision and improvements for future provision is assessed.

1.4 Library support

The Library is open from 8.15 am to 6.45 pm and is staffed by two Librarians. Boarders have out of hours access to the Library as a study space on evenings and weekends. The physical collection includes books, magazines, periodicals, DVDs, audio books, and a careers section. This is complemented by a digital presence offering access to online databases and resources such as JSTOR, MASSOLIT (English Literature), Drama Online and the Hodder A-Level online magazine archive. Pupils also have access to the Library Catalogue, Accessit and the e-reader and audiobook platform, Sora. Through Accessit they can renew items, make requests and search the library collection.

Staff from all departments are regularly consulted with regards to their subject collections and new acquisitions are made accordingly. Furthermore, pupils are encouraged to make their own requests for physical and digital resources; a request form is freely available at the main Library desk and on Dragonfly.

Teaching and Learning is further supported by the availability of Librarian guided information literacy classes. Classes are tailored to the needs of each subject and level of study. Topics include, but are not limited to, digital research skills, assessing a website for reliability and accuracy, referencing, what is plagiarism, fake news in the information age and use of online databases.

The Extended Project Qualification is supported by the Library through contribution to the Taught Skills programme of study. In addition, pupils are encouraged to utilise Librarian expertise in order to develop their independent research skills and for help finding suitable materials for use in their projects.

The Library supports the UCAS process, and facilitates learning that prepares pupils for university, by providing further reading materials on a variety of subjects and university courses.

All Key Stage 3 English classes visit the Library on a regular basis for Library lessons. These lessons promote reading for pleasure, as well as develop information literacy skills.

Many events and activities take place through the Library; including author visits, World Book Day events, the Scholastic Book Fair, and competitions to promote engagement in a number of different initiatives.

There are roles of responsibility available to pupils if they wish to help in the Library and this is supervised by an Upper Sixth Library Prefect.

2 e-Learning

2.1 Mobile Devices

Girls in Years 7 to 11 are provided with a school Chromebook. They are asked to purchase a stylus and an insurance plan to cover their device. Girls in the Sixth Form are invited to bring in their own device which must be registered on the School network. A minimum specification for pupil owned devices is provided to girls and parents prior to joining our Sixth Form. Chromebooks are managed by the School and those apps which are installed can only be installed by the Network Manager using the School's Mobile Device Management System.

Girls may use their Chromebooks in lesson and prep time - provided they have permission from the member of staff. All classrooms display the School's Chromebook Code of Conduct and girls are expected to abide by this at all times. A failure to do so should be recorded on Schoolbase as "misuse of the Chromebook" and an appropriate sanction should be issued.

2.2 Google Suite and Dragonfly

Emails and documents are housed in the Google cloud thereby enabling staff and pupil users to access their work anywhere. Girls receive training on how to use G Suite before being given their Chromebook. Tutors hold regular Google Drive tidy up sessions in order to encourage girls to keep their work in good order.

Dragonfly is the School's Virtual Learning Environment. It is provided by a company called Firefly and can be accessed via any internet enabled device. All prep tasks are set via Dragonfly and departments use their subject pages on Dragonfly to provide support and extension materials for girls of all year groups. In addition to subject resources, Dragonfly also provides a "one stop shop" for members of the School community. Paper planners have been replaced for pupils by Dragonfly as a place for girls to store merits and check their timetable, the School menu and information about clubs, clinics, sporting fixtures and day to day information about the School.

Staff are able to access information such as baseline data, reporting procedures, absence and CPD request forms, policies and procedures from the staff area of Dragonfly.

Parents have access to the Dragonfly parent portal. All weekly letters are now sent to parents via Dragonfly on Friday afternoons. In addition, parents are able to see their daughter's prep tasks and view recent reports via the portal.

2.1 ICT rooms

There are two ICT rooms in the School. One is in Markham, the second is the Cormack ICT suite. The room in Markham can accommodate a full class. These rooms are all bookable and are mostly used by the Computer Science and Photography departments.

3 Marking and Feedback

3.1 Notes and Work

The term *notes* indicates that the pupil's writing forms a record of learning but does not necessarily provide evidence of progress. Notes in exercise books are not assigned a mark, although they should be checked and ticked on a regular basis. GCSE and A Level notes

should also be checked by the teacher regularly. The term *work* indicates that the pupil's writing (or equivalent) provides evidence of progress. Work is to include exercises completed during class and during prep.

3.2 Teacher Feedback

- Verbal feedback is invaluable with small class sizes such as those at our School. It should be positive in tone, motivating and encouraging. It should focus on what has been done well, and how further progress can be made. As with written feedback, pupils should be encouraged to respond to verbal feedback, where possible by making a note in a workbook or similar as to the actions they will take as a result of the feedback.
- There are four stages to written teacher feedback at St George's:
 - i) a grade is given (where appropriate). This may be a word grade (see appendix 1), an examination grade or a score. It may be a combination of all three.
 - ii) the teacher will identify what a pupil has done well.
 - iii) the teacher will identify area(s) for development in order to move the pupil onto the "next level".
 - iv) the pupil will be given the opportunity to respond to the feedback. In most cases, this should take place in the lesson and should be easily identifiable to anybody inspecting the book at a later date.
- Errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar should be identified (rather than corrected), ideally using the EAL SPAG codes (available on Dragonfly and in Appendix 2). Girls should be asked to make their corrections in the same way as (iv) above.

Teachers should maintain a complete record of the work set and marked for each of their pupils. Formative marks should be translated into a subject-specific grade (see Appendix 1) for the mark book. Mark books (whether paper or electronic) should be maintained with care, and be intelligible to the Head of Department who will inspect them from time to time.

Departments should conduct regular work scrutiny, to ensure that each member of the teaching staff is applying the marking policy consistently. In addition, there will be at least one whole school work scrutiny every academic year to ensure standards are consistent across all departments.

3.3 Assessment

Assessment is undertaken to monitor and maintain pupil progress, and typically takes place at the end of every scheme of work; as a minimum there should be one assessment for each class every academic year. The Head of Department issues an assessment, and it is used for the whole year group. This will be marked according to an issued mark scheme. A subject-specific grade (see Appendix 1) should be recorded in the mark book.

3.4 Internal examinations

Mock examinations for Year 11 and Upper Sixth take place in January. Examinations for all other year groups take place in the summer term. The examination percentages for Years 7 to 10 and Lower Sixth Form are compared with baseline scores and prior knowledge of the girls and those results which are anomalous may be discussed either as 'AGT' or as 'causes for concern' at subsequent department meetings. Results from mock examinations are discussed within departments and within year group meetings, with action plans for individual girls drawn up as a result of these meetings. The Deputy Head (Academic) maintains an overview of these action plans.

3.5 Reporting

In reporting to parents, staff should aim to focus on: quality of work and progress made relative to previous performance and baseline ability; quality of organisation of notes and general presentation of work; contribution and behaviour in lessons.

3.6 Tracking and baseline data

Baseline data is collected as soon as possible after a pupil's admission to the School. The MIDYIS test is taken by new pupils in Years 7 to 9; the YELLIS test is taken by all pupils in Year 10 and those who join Year 11; the ALIS test is taken by all pupils in the Sixth Form. This data is posted onto the Baseline Data page on Dragonfly and uploaded to Schoolbase, by the Data Manager as soon as possible after the test is taken. Academic and pastoral staff are able to consult this data; Heads of Department and Heads of Year are required to do so. The only exception is the Year 7 MIDYIS data which is published to Dragonfly after the Christmas holidays in order to encourage staff to form a view of their pupils before seeing the data. Identification of SEN and AGT pupils may refer to the baseline data; lesson planning and class setting may also use the data. The data is also useful for those teaching EAL girls. Performance data from reporting cycles is posted to the Schoolbase tracking system where it is compared with the baseline data with the result of being able to easily identify underachieving pupils in particular, so that strategies can be put in place for pupil-specific support. The Heads of Year maintain an overview of pupils underperforming within their own year group. The Deputy Head (Academic) oversees this process for the School. Baseline data is also used (alongside historic department specific value added analysis) to help draw up Minimum Target Grades for girls in Year 10 and above.

3.7 Minimum Target Grades and UCAS Predicted Grades

- Minimum Target Grades (MTGs) are calculated by the Deputy Head (Academic) early in the Spring Term of Year 10 and Lower Sixth. The grades are designed to encourage pupils to aim high and do not form part of the School's tracking data. MTGs are calculated by adding the subject's 3 year mean value added to the YELLIS/ALIS baseline predicted GCSE or A Level grade. Departments meet to discuss these grades. Any proposed alteration of MTGs must be approved by the Deputy Head (Academic). MTGs are reviewed at every assessment point and can be raised if it is felt to be appropriate.
- UCAS Predicted Grades reflect what teachers feel a pupil could realistically

achieve, on a good day, with a standard A Level paper. Initial UCAS Predicted Grades are given to pupils at the end of the Lower Sixth in the light of all available data (for instance, GCSE grades, ALIS scores and departmental value added history) as well as the performance of a pupil in the Lower Sixth and the professional judgement of their teacher(s). These grades are then confirmed in September of the Upper Sixth with the caveat that clear evidence of improvement in the first term can see grades altered.

4 Prep

4.1 The purposes of prep are

- To help students to develop good work habits and personal independence in study;
- To enable students to develop self-discipline and to motivate themselves in study;
- To permit students to practise and to reinforce skills learned in the classroom;
- To permit students to consolidate and extend work begun in the classroom;
- Above all, prep should encourage and permit students to take responsibility for their own learning.

4.2 The nature of prep

Prep should be valuable, achievable within the time allocated by the prep timetable and bearing in mind the pupils' ability and age profile, understandable and integrated within the scheme of work.

Girls complete most of their prep during allocated prep sessions at the end of the School day. Prep should be set via Dragonfly according to the Prep Timetable. Teachers should make it clear when the prep is due to be completed and how long the prep should take. In most cases, there is one prep set per subject per week, other than in the Sixth Form when girls can expect to be set prep more frequently. Guidelines on the setting of prep are available for teaching staff on Dragonfly.

Teachers should mark, review and return work in reasonable time according to the marking criteria laid out below, letting girls know what to expect in this regard.

Appendix 1

GENERIC MARKING DESCRIPTORS

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

K – Knowledge, **E** – Examples, **U** – Understanding, **S** – Skills, **P** – Prior learning

Exemplary An exemplary level of achievement Outstanding knowledge and skills base. It can be used to create and construct new ideas. Grasps concepts quickly and can explain these to others. Shows flair, imagination, originality and interest in subject.	K	<i>Excellent</i> knowledge of theories and <i>always</i> uses subject terminology
	E	Detailed examples which are <i>specific</i> to the question
	U	<i>Complete</i> understanding of concepts and their complexities
	S	<i>Independent</i> skills are deployed to a high degree of accuracy
	P	<i>Always</i> makes clear links between prior knowledge and present learning
Very good A high level of achievement Strong knowledge and skills base. It can be used to evaluate ideas. Grasps concepts quickly and independently. Shows imagination, some originality and interest in the subject.	K	<i>Very good</i> knowledge of theories and <i>usually</i> uses subject terminology
	E	Identifies examples with a <i>high degree of relevance and elaboration</i>
	U	<i>Comprehensive</i> understanding of concepts and their complexities
	S	<i>Usually</i> works independently with a good success rate
	P	<i>Frequently</i> makes clear links between prior knowledge and present learning ^{*****}
Good A good level of achievement Good knowledge and skills base. It can be applied to unfamiliar situations. Grasps concepts quickly once explained. Shows imagination and interest in the subject most of the time.	K	<i>Good</i> knowledge of theories and <i>occasional</i> use of subject terminology
	E	Identifies examples with <i>elaboration</i>
	U	<i>Some</i> understanding of concepts and their complexities
	S	<i>Rarely</i> needs support for complex skills and is eventually independent
	P	<i>Occasionally</i> makes clear links between prior knowledge and present learning
Acceptable An acceptable level of achievement Developing a sound knowledge and skills base. It can be applied to familiar situations. Concepts are grasped with supported practice. Shows a general interest in the subject.	K	<i>Sound</i> knowledge of theories and <i>intermittently</i> uses subject terminology
	E	Identifies examples with <i>little elaboration</i>
	U	<i>Fundamental</i> but sound understanding of concepts
	S	Support <i>occasionally</i> needed for complex skills but is eventually independent
	P	<i>Limited</i> recollection of prior learning that has general relevance
Limited A limited level of achievement Some gaps in knowledge and skills base. Unfamiliar situations present difficulties. Difficulty in grasping some concepts. Work occasionally lacks detail, development or genuine understanding.	K	<i>Weaknesses</i> in knowledge of theories and <i>rarely</i> uses subject terminology
	E	<i>Limited</i> attempts at exemplification
	U	<i>Limited</i> understanding of concepts
	S	Skills required <i>frequent</i> support
	P	Recollection of prior learning is <i>rare</i>
Concern Monitoring by Head of Year needed Significant gaps in knowledge and skills base. Most situations present difficulties. Difficulty in grasping most concepts. Work frequently lacks detail, development or genuine understanding.	K	<i>Flaws</i> in subject knowledge and <i>never</i> uses subject terminology
	E	<i>Never</i> attempts to use examples
	U	<i>No</i> significant understanding of concepts
	S	Skills need almost <i>constant</i> support
	P	<i>No</i> evident recollection of prior learning

Each academic department should adapt the *white* boxes above to fit closely with the aims for pupils' progress in their subject. The letters KEUSP can be changed in accordance with subject aims.

Grades awarded to girls in Year 10 and above reflect public examination grades where appropriate. However, they may also wish to use these marking descriptors.

Appendix 2

EAL SPAG Correction Codes - also available for pupils and staff to see on Dragonfly.

Writing Correction Code	
WW	Wrong Word
T	Incorrect tense
Gr	Grammatical error
Wo	Word order
Sp	Spelling
P	Punctuation
X	Extra word
^	Missing word
?	Not clear
Pr	Preposition
RW	Re-write
=	Capitalise
()	Close space
~	Switch word order