



St Catherine's  
School & College

*Specialists in Speech, Language and  
Communication Needs*

# St Catherine's School

## KS2 – KS4

The Modified  
Curriculum 2024-2025

## THE MODIFIED CURRICULUM

### INTENT

#### Background

St Catherine's is a non-maintained residential special school for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs. The curriculum offered by the school takes into account the requirements of the revised National Curriculum, the 0-25 Special Education and Disability Code of Practice and the individual needs of each child as detailed in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

This document relates to St Catherine's main school for students aged seven to 16. St Catherine's College has its own document setting out its integrated programme of education, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and residential care for students aged 16 to 19. Post-19 provision is also detailed separately.

#### Our Approach

St Catherine's believes that it is essential for all students to receive as broad and balanced an education as possible and has created a bespoke curriculum that:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school, and
- prepares students at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The specific difficulties faced by our students mean that it is necessary to take the National Curriculum recommendations and create a curriculum that is modified in terms of content, pace and levels of support.

At St Catherine's, all National Curriculum subjects are covered through Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, with the exception of Modern Foreign Languages, using a topic based approach. Throughout all Key Stages, great emphasis is placed upon literacy and numeracy. Staff promote a whole-school approach to improving standards in literacy and numeracy, believing that these basic skills underpin the whole curriculum. Whilst English and Mathematics are taught as discrete subjects, in line with the revised curriculum, St Catherine's view is that it is the responsibility of all staff to encourage improvement in these basic skills within their own subject areas. To this end, all education and therapy staff are involved.

#### Overarching Principles

This document outlines the role that each subject plays in the Modified Curriculum. Separate individual policy documents give the full intent, implementation and impact for each subject area with students in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 studying the full range of subjects. Due to the nature of the speech, language and communication needs of the young people at St. Catherine's, Modern

Foreign Languages (MFL) is not taught as a discrete subject in the curriculum. Instead opportunities are sought, where possible, to explore the language and culture of a range of different countries.

Because St Catherine's students are generally working at levels below their mainstream peers, we believe it is important to maintain the full range of curricular subjects to ensure they leave with the breadth of knowledge necessary for them to be successful after their time at special school.

### Equality of Opportunity

St Catherine's has a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice that relates to all kinds of discrimination. Opportunity for achievement will be created for each student regardless of age, disability, race, sex, religion, cultural beliefs or sexual orientation.

### Multicultural Awareness

We live in a multicultural society and therefore believe that the education provided at St Catherine's should reflect this. We encourage all students to appreciate that learning about other cultures enhances their own. At the same time, it is important that students gain a sound sense of identity and the concept of being British is included in the curriculum.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### Delivering the Modified Curriculum

Speech and language therapy and occupational therapy are an integral part of the programme offered to our students and each is very carefully woven into the curriculum. Every individually tailored programme aims to help each student directly with their speech, language and communication needs as well as support him/her in accessing the curriculum as independently as possible. This integrated multi-disciplinary approach ensures that the individual needs of every student are met, and that their access to the National Curriculum is enabled. Staff across departments use Sign-Supported English to promote understanding and work together to provide students with visual resources and other strategies where appropriate to maximise learning opportunities.

Therapy is delivered in different ways: individually, in one-to-one sessions through withdrawal from the class; in therapist-led group therapy sessions; and, through in-class therapist support.

Teachers and therapists are involved together in the planning and delivery of the curriculum, to ensure that the best approach is adopted. Additional support in class from teaching assistants, therapy assistants and some residential staff provides high adult to student ratios, and helps to ensure that students are best able to access the curriculum that is being delivered.

## **SUBJECTS TAUGHT AT ST CATHERINE'S**

### English/Literacy

Literacy, in its many forms, is at the heart of the curriculum at St Catherine's. In order for our students to progress in any subject, a solid foundation in communication skills is essential. Spoken language, phonological skills, reading, writing and vocabulary are taught both as discrete areas of English and as an integral part of all other subjects.

Students receive lessons in English covering all aspects of language and literature but they also receive Speech Therapy Group sessions, which support the development of their spoken language and in particular their receptive and expressive language and social skills. Literacy is a focus across the whole school and most days involve specific literacy lessons. Teachers, therapists, and assistants work collaboratively to ensure a whole school approach with high adult to student ratios in class. Great emphasis is placed upon helping students to become fluent and confident readers, who read not only for acquisition of knowledge but also for pleasure. Suitable reading programmes have been developed as part of the English curriculum and other subject areas are text rich with quality materials to support the development of reading throughout St. Catherine's. Writing skills are developed not only during English lessons but across all subjects where students are supported to develop their stamina and skills and expand their range of writing and the variety of its content.

Regular assessment helps to identify those students who need additional help and an individual programme is set up for them. This involves regular withdrawal from selected parts of lessons for one to one input. Many students have individual support to help them develop their literacy skills and students are given scope to express themselves creatively in this subject.

The curriculum dimensions of media and creativity are a particular focus in English and some elements of drama are included within English lessons. Events and workshops have brought professional groups into school to give students wider experiences of dance and drama. Each year there are various performance opportunities within school for students; these include performances such as plays and recitals and students are encouraged regularly to showcase what they can do during assemblies.

In Key Stage 4, most students gain accreditation through the Entry Level Certificate, although there is the opportunity for the more able to attempt GCSE English Language and/or GCSE English Literature or Functional Skills English if appropriate.

### Mathematics

Numerical skills are often poorly developed in students with speech and language impairments and occupational therapy needs and yet are essential for them both to make progress in other subjects and to be successful when they leave school. Mathematical skills and mathematical reasoning are taught both as discrete areas of Mathematics and as an integral part of all other relevant subjects.

Students attend Mathematics lessons on most days of the week wherein they are encouraged to develop a firm foundation in number, ratio, proportion and rates of change, geometry and measures, probability and statistics in line with the National Curriculum. The programme of Mathematics at St. Catherine's aims to ensure that students become fluent in the fundamentals of Mathematics, are able to reason mathematically and can solve problems by applying their Mathematics to problem solving looking at real life contexts. This focus on Functional Mathematics exists to help our students cope in the real world and prepare them for life away from St Catherine's.

Students at Key Stage 4 work towards gaining qualification through the Entry Level Certificate although students that are more capable can work towards a GCSE qualification in Mathematics.

### Science

Science is a subject of significant importance for our students that seeks to provide them with the foundations for understanding the world around them. It develops scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding as well as an understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science so that students are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science today and for the future. A fully equipped laboratory allows delivery of the programme, with much emphasis placed upon gaining a secure understanding of each key block of knowledge and concepts through practical work and working scientifically, so that students are supported to progress to the next stage fully prepared for higher-order content; students are often more engaged and can develop their understanding from a hands-on approach.

Students are able to work towards the Science Entry Level Award/ Certificate/ Diploma through the Entry Pathways Scheme, as well as a BTEC Level 1/2 course in Applied Science where able – which covers elements of the three subject areas of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

### Technology

Technology is important in allowing students to express themselves imaginatively and creatively and much emphasis is placed on designing and making products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts. During technology projects students are supported to develop creative, practical and technical expertise as well as build on and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding. They are also encouraged to critique, evaluate and test their own ideas and the work of others as well as develop a critical understanding of the impact of the development of technology through time. Technology is well-supported by the occupational therapy team and much work is completed collaboratively across departments to help improve students' fine and gross motor skills as well as develop their life skills in terms of their understanding of nutrition and their levels of independence in the kitchen.

Students are taught Design Technology in a fully equipped workshop covering Graphics, Textiles and Resistant Materials.

Accreditation is through the WJEC Entry Pathway and BTEC Level 1/ 2 programmes have been developed for more able students as appropriate.

### Geography

Lessons in Geography promote the development of a curiosity and fascination about the world around us, our place within it and the environmental issues which affect us all. Teaching provides opportunities to gain knowledge of significant places, explore the characteristics and processes of physical and human geographical features and learn about the contextual interaction and interdependence between them. Through the delivery of a range of practical activities, students are encouraged to apply their geographical knowledge and skills to collect, analyse, interpret and communicate geographical information in a variety of ways.

In Key Stage 2 Geography is delivered through topic-based planning whereas in Key Stages 3 and 4 Geography is taught alongside History as part of Humanities. From Year 9, the students work towards an Entry Pathway qualification in Humanities. This is a course during which they complete a number of units and assignments for their portfolio. More able students are given the opportunity to complete further units in order to obtain a higher level of qualification through the scheme.

## History

History is important so that students gain a sense of time and an understanding of the importance of key events from the past in shaping the present world. Our students often find the concept of chronology difficult and much effort is given to helping them to acquire this understanding. Elements of identity, cultural diversity and global dimension fit into the History curriculum. Project work helps students to become independent enquirers, critical thinkers and reflective students and where possible, students gain hands-on experience through the use of artefacts and site visits.

In Key Stage 2, History is delivered through topic-based planning whereas in Key Stages 3 and 4 History is delivered as part of Humanities. In the Upper School, units studied contribute to the acquisition of accreditation through the Entry Pathway Scheme. Students that are more able are given the opportunity to extend their learning and obtain a higher level of qualification through this scheme.

## Physical Education

Physical Education helps students to improve their fine and gross motor coordination skills, as well as improving their spatial awareness, orientation and general fitness through a broad range of physical activities. It encourages healthy lifestyles and sustained physical activity through competitive team games as well as helping students with their social interaction skills and their team-working ability.

All students have two, one hour timetabled sessions of Physical Education each week. Students are encouraged to join local after-school training sessions and clubs and to take part in inter-school team events. In addition, all students are assessed for swimming capability and non-swimmers/improvers follow a programme. A variety of outdoor pursuits activities are arranged during club time on a Friday afternoon and at various times throughout the year.

When suitable, students work towards gaining a qualification in Healthy Living and Fitness through the WJEC Entry Pathways Scheme although students that are more capable can work towards a Sports Leaders qualification.

## Art

Art is a subject where students are able to express themselves creatively and achieve, despite the special educational needs they may have. It is regarded as a very important part of the curriculum and is also taught in Key Stage 4 even though it is not a statutory requirement. The curriculum focuses upon the dimensions of creativity, proficiency and analysis as well as historical and cultural development and diversity. The school is a member of Artsmark and has achieved the Silver Award.

Projects have taken place in conjunction with the Quay Arts Centre, Dimbola Lodge, Lift the Lid and the Carnival that each give students a wider range of experiences. Arts weeks within school are another feature of the school year and bring in artists from a variety of spheres. Students in Key Stage 4 gain certification in Creative Media and Performance Arts through the Entry Pathway scheme. More able students have the opportunity to take a GCSE exam in 'Fine Art' and/or a further GCSE course specialising in 'Photography'.

## Computing

Computer literacy is recognised as an important skill for all our students, and for many it acts as an

essential aid to communication.

To ensure these skills are embedded, our Key Stage 2 students are taught to use the full range of the Microsoft suite including PowerPoint, Publisher, Excel and Word enabling them to utilise these skills across the curriculum. Key Stage 3 and 4 students at St Catherine's also receive a discrete lesson in Computing each week in a fully resourced computer suite delivered by a specialist teacher during which they work towards adding modules to the Entry Pathway scheme or a BTEC Level 1 & Level 2 qualifications in Information Technology, if they are more able.

To bring the curriculum in line with recent changes to the National Curriculum, students are now taught the principles of information and computation, how digital systems work and basic programming skills. Across the school, Computing is a cross-curricular dimension in all other subject areas and all classrooms have access to Chromebooks. Students are given opportunities to use the internet under strict supervision with a strong focus on e-safety. The global dimension, technology and the media feature in the Computing curriculum and students work towards gaining units to build their own IT qualification.

### Music

Music is another creative subject that seeks to engage and inspire students to develop a love of music; it promotes self-confidence, creativity and a sense of achievement that is beneficial for many of our students. It is taught from Key Stage 2 throughout school, despite there being no direct requirement for it at Key Stage 4. All students receive at least one lesson a week and have the opportunity to receive individual vocal or instrumental tuition according to interest; at present, individual tuition is available in singing, keyboards, piano, drums and guitar with some tutors offering opportunities for accreditation.

By studying music from different parts of the world, students gain an understanding of cultural diversity. Students gain accreditation through either AQA Unit Awards or Entry Pathways at Key Stage 4.

### Religious Education

The school delivers a broad Religious Education programme across all Key Stages, which aims to give students a good understanding of their own beliefs, and those of others. It encourages respect and tolerance, and students gain an appreciation of identity and cultural diversity. The school has good links with the local church and the school also has its own chapel, which gives students first-hand experience.

During the year students experience a variety of activities during half termly 'R.E. Super Learning Days'. The six major religions are taught through a rolling programme with Christianity plus two other religions being taught each year.

In addition to these days, assembly content is selected with reference to St. Catherine's 'Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural' calendar and religious diversity and equality is studied through the PSHE curriculum.

Children of all faiths and denominations are welcome at St Catherine's and we endeavour to meet their specific religious requirements. Non-Christian children may be excused from parts of Religious Education, church services or chapel visits at parents' request. If a child has a particular belief that they wish to practise, we are happy to support them to attend services held locally wherever

possible.

### Life Skills/Cooking

Due to the nature of our young people's special needs, we offer support to our students to help them acquire many of the basic life skills needed for them to lead active, independent lives. Younger students experience life skills through topic-based activities in class whereas our older students have opportunities to develop these skills and achieve accreditation through AQA Unit Awards, WJEC Entry Pathways or BTEC qualifications as appropriate.

Much of the work focuses on functional literacy and numeracy. All students also follow an individualised life skills curriculum where units are delivered through occupational therapy programmes. Links with St Catherine's residential houses help students to work through independence programmes that feature a wide range of life skills elements.

### Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE offers students an awareness of a variety of key issues that are essential for them to develop so that they can live successful lives. All students receive a PSHE lesson once a week. The PSHE programme includes modules entitled Self-Awareness, Self-care, Support and Safety, Managing Feelings, Changing and Growing, Healthy Lifestyles and The World I Live In. An awareness of life in a multicultural society is a key element of this as well as an understanding of the concept of being British and students gain an understanding of identity and how to live healthy lives.

PSHE education also involves direct input from an independent careers advisor and the programme is complemented by visits from other relevant professionals (e.g. the police, Alter Ego Theatre Group and the NHS Sexual Health Team).

PSHE also looks at elements of citizenship. This focuses on many important areas that will help students to become active participants in society. A number of the curriculum dimensions are covered in citizenship including identity, cultural diversity, community participation and global dimension.

Should parents make a written request, young people can be wholly or partly excused from sex education lessons.

### Careers Education

Students follow a careers programme in Key Stages 3 and 4 within the PSHE curriculum, to help them make informed choices when they are preparing to leave St Catherine's. As part of this, the school arranges work experience for each student in Key Stage 4. The programme also includes direct one to one input from an Independent Careers Advisor who also provides 'Aspire' group sessions for those requiring some extra support. In addition, students have opportunities to engage in one to one therapy support to help them make informed decisions about moving on.

The careers programme is supplemented by a college links programme in Key Stage 4 whereby the students may attend The Isle of Wight College for short taster courses in a variety of vocational subjects.

### College programme



In Key Stage 4, students take part in a college links programme. Students attend the local Isle of Wight College and take part in a series of courses designed to give them a taste of the options available. They experience a variety of vocational skills that extend those experienced at school.

As part of their preparations for moving on at the end of Year 11, students are encouraged to use the college library and the cafeteria to experience what life is like in a busy further education setting. Like the careers programme, the college programme enables an element of community participation for students as well as an understanding of enterprise.

### Work Experience

All students in Key Stage 4 spend a period of time on work experience, which is usually in the Summer term during Key Stage 4. Work experience helps students to acquire and develop a range of independence skills. Examples of placements include those at cafes, supermarkets, local shops, pubs and visitor attractions across the Isle of Wight.

### **IMPACT**

#### External accreditation

The school offers a range of external accreditation options, which ensures that all students gain certification for their studies at an appropriate level so that they have as much access as possible to pursue their chosen pathway beyond Year 11 and St. Catherine's School. Options currently available are the AQA Unit Award Scheme, WJEC Entry Pathways, OCR Life and Living Skills, Entry Level Certificates, Functional Skills, GCSEs and BTEC qualifications.

The table below shows the different types of accreditation that can be offered at St Catherine's School and how they fit into the National Qualifications Framework.

<b>National Qualifications Framework Level</b>	<b>Accreditation offered at St Catherine's (according to individual need)</b>
<p><b><u>Entry level</u></b>  <b>Which is broken into:</b>  <b>Entry 1</b>  <b>Entry 2</b>  <b>Entry 3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Entry Level Certificate (English, Mathematics, Science)</li> <li>– Entry Pathways Award/ Certificate/ Diploma (Mathematics, Science, Creative, Media and Performance Arts, Humanities, IT Users, Healthy Living and Fitness, Personal Progress, Preparing for Work, Independent Living, Personal and Social Development)</li> <li>– Unit Awards (IT, Design &amp; Technology, Life Skills, Vocational Education, Media Studies)</li> <li>– Entry Level English Functional Skills</li> <li>– Entry Level Mathematics Functional Skills</li> <li>– BTEC Work Skills Entry 3</li> </ul>

<p><b>Level 1</b> (i.e. GCSE grades 1 - 3 or BTEC Level 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCSE (Maths, English, Science, Fine Art, Photography)</li> <li>- Unit Awards Level 1 (IT, Music, Mathematics, DT)</li> <li>- Level 1 Functional Skills Mathematics</li> <li>- Level 1 Functional Skills English</li> <li>- BTEC Level 1 Award/ Certificate/ Diploma (Science, Home Cooking, IT Users, Work Skills, Land-Based Studies, Vocational Studies)</li> <li>- Level 1 Sports Leaders</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Level 2</b> (i.e. GCSE grades 4 - 9 or BTEC Level 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCSE (Maths, English, Science, Fine Art, Music, Photography)</li> <li>- BTEC Level 2 Award/Certificate (Science, IT Users, Home Cooking)</li> <li>- Level 2 Functional Skills Mathematics</li> <li>- Level 2 Functional Skills English</li> </ul>
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For further information about St Catherine's, please contact the Admissions Officer on 01983 852 722 or email [admissions@stcatherines.org.uk](mailto:admissions@stcatherines.org.uk)

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