



Education is that which liberates

# 2a Curriculum Policy (A3)

## The Swaminarayan School

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**Introduction**

- 1.1** The Swaminarayan School was founded in 1991 by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj to provide education along the lines of Independent British schools, whilst cradled in Hindu culture, values and ethos. It is a non-profit making co-educational school for children aged two and a half to eighteen years.
- 1.2** The overall aims of our school are:
- To promote both Hindu culture and way of life and British fundamental values.
  - To enable pupils to become “lifelong learners” who are lively, imaginative, enquiring, confident, independent, and display self-esteem and self-discipline.
  - To continue to raise our academic standards by having high expectations of teaching and learning.
  - To give our pupils an opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, performing arts and cultural experiences so that they become good citizens of the country.
  - To send well-adjusted and well-rounded young people to higher education.
  - To instil a sense of concern, awe and wonder about the world within our pupils and establish strong links with the parents, Mandir, and the wider community.
- 1.3** The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the school’s timetabled curriculum, but also the range of extra-curricular activities and the ‘hidden curriculum’, or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave.
- 1.4** For our timetabled curriculum, we have taken up the desirable elements of the National Curriculum while reinforcing the cultural identity of our pupils. The cultural subjects unique to the school give it a special dimension – students have lessons in the Indian Performing Arts (tabla, dance and singing) up to Year 8 and all students study Gujarati and Religious Education up to GCSE level.
- 1.5** The Foundation Stage includes the Kindergarten for the rising threes, Nursery for the rising fours and Reception for the rising five year olds.

The aim of the Foundation Stage is to plan a curriculum using the EYFS 2012 to provide the children with learning experiences of the highest quality, considering both individual children’s needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences that will help them to make progress towards (and, where appropriate, beyond) these goals. The seven foundation stage learning and development areas are grouped under Prime and Specific areas:

**Prime Areas:**

Personal social and emotional development

Communication and Language

Physical development

**Specific Areas:**

Literacy

Maths

Understanding of the world

Expressive Arts and Design

The emphasis on Prime areas supersedes the focus on Specific areas. All learning will promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning, i.e. play and exploration, active learning, activity and critical thinking.

See the Provision for the EY Foundation Stage Policy for more detailed information about each area.).

- 1.6** From Year 1 onwards, we have taken on board the desirable elements of the National Curriculum while developing the best practices of independent education. For example, in the Prep school pupils do formal SATs at Key Stage 2 only, but not at KS1.
- 1.7** We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.
- 1.8** We have also taken on the best aspects of a rounded independent school education. For example, pupils in Senior 1 to 5 have a timetabled lesson in LAMDA (reciting prose and poetry) and take examinations in it. The Prep school take part in LAMDA from year 2, with year 5 & 6 pupils sitting examinations. We take part in inter-school sports competitions against both state and independent schools. We have day outings, clubs afternoons, and residential trips to Europe. Our senior school students take part in public speaking competitions and the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme.
- 1.9** The educational philosophy of The Swaminarayan School is to provide meaningful experiences in the following educational areas:-

**Linguistic**

Concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of English language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. While English is the medium of instruction, we also teach Gujarati as a second language to the majority of pupils. French is also taught from Nursery to Year 13.

**Mathematical**

Concerned with helping pupils not only to be numerate but also to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Mathematics is a particular strength of the school.

**Scientific**

Concerned with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces, technology, environment and with developing their skills of enquiry such as observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings. The three science subjects are taught separately in the Senior School.

**Technological**

Concerned with the use and development of information and communication technology, developing, planning and communicating ideas, working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce and evaluate processes and products. ICT is taught at all ages through the school.

### **Human and Social**

Concerned with people and their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. History and Geography are the main subjects where this area is taught. All students study these subjects up to Year 8 and can choose to take one of the subjects at GCSE.

### **Physical**

Concerned with the development of pupils' physical control and co-ordination, as well as tactical skills and imaginative responses, and to help them evaluate and improve their performance. This includes the study of the basic principles of fitness and health and participation in team activities.

### **Aesthetic and Creative**

Concerned with aesthetic and creative aspects in pupils' learning. This includes art, music, dance and drama. All pupils study these subjects from Year 1 to Year 8. Pupils are able to take art or drama up to GCSE.

### **Personal Development**

Concerned with allowing opportunities for pupils to gain insights into the origins and practices of their own culture and those of the wider community, and ensuring that pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity, promoting mutual respect, tolerance and harmony, the rule of law and individual liberty of life in British Society.

## **2 Values**

- 2.1 Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear at our school. Non-violence in any form is our highest ethical code. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.
- 2.2 The Swaminarayan School, as an independent school, has chosen to offer a curriculum based upon aspects of the National Curriculum best suited to us while also giving pupils the opportunity to develop their religious, cultural, spiritual and moral potential.
- 2.3 These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum:
  - We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
  - We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
  - We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

The Prep School also has Five Values for the purpose of character building: friendliness, teamwork, honesty, respect and humility.

- 2.4 At the Swaminarayan School, the value programme extends with a weekly theme or value, which is supported, in both the Prep school and Senior School, by assemblies from teachers, Forms and the Santos at the temple. The Head Teachers of the respective schools write about the weekly theme or value in the newsletter, so that parents are also involved in reinforcing and nurturing the value at home. It is further expressed in Senior Student Planner which all students carry with them.

### **3 Aims and objectives**

#### **3.1** The objectives of our school curriculum are:

- to enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability;
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;
- to teach children the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology (IT);
- to ensure that each pupil will have the opportunity to learn
- to read fluently, with understanding, feeling, discrimination and enjoyment a variety of materials written in different ways for different purposes;
- to write legibly and with a good standard of spelling, syntax, punctuation and usage;
- to communicate clearly and confidently in speech and writing, in ways appropriate for various occasions and purposes;
- to listen attentively and with understanding;
- to acquire information from a range of sources, and to record information and findings in a variety of ways;
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- to teach children about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- to help children understand Britain's cultural heritage and British values;
- to enable children to be positive and responsible citizens;
- to deliver a curriculum based on the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum but with our own cultural subjects including our own syllabus for Religious Education (Hinduism);
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong;
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.
- to raise awareness amongst all the pupils about personal safety in Pastoral Lessons, Assemblies, visiting speakers, House Tutors and PSHCE lessons.

## **4 Organisation and planning**

### **Prep School**

- 4.1 We plan our curriculum in three levels. We agree on a curriculum map outlining the long-term plan for each subject in each key stage. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of children. We review our long-term plan on an annual basis.
- 4.2 With our medium-term plans, we provide a breakdown of the various skills that will be taught for each subject throughout each term. We use the national curriculum as a guideline for the skills required, however have amended or added to these as necessary to meet the needs of our pupils.
- 4.3 Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session, the success criteria by which they children will be assessed, and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson.
- 4.4 We seek to add value in our planning by ensuring that we are catering to all pupils through differentiation in various lessons to meet various learning needs, including our More Able Gifted and Talented (MAGT) pupils. Additionally we are aware that all pupils have different strengths and cater to this by using Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy in helping us devise our lessons.
- 4.5 As a thinking school we are always striving to improve the way in which our children think and approach problems. To this end, in our planning we incorporate a series of thinking maps that pupils use to help them visually display information in a clear and coherent manner. We also utilise Tony Ryan's Thinker's Keys which provide different ways of approaching learning that require pupils to think about and approach problems from different angles.

### **Senior School**

- 4.6 The senior school curriculum is organised with a view to the requirements of GCSE examinations. Each department has a clear plan, schemes of work, marking and assessment policies written in their departmental handbook, which is reviewed annually. The frequency of these changes requires us to ensure flexibility in the way the curriculum is organised.
- 4.7 The KS3 curriculum is compressed to two years, in Seniors 1 and 2. This gives us the added benefit of starting the teaching of the GCSE curriculum at Senior 3, thus enabling teachers to spend more time with the essence of each topic, more time to practise past papers, more time to carry out CAs and in generally, better prepare pupils for examinations.
- 4.8 At Seniors 1-2 the curriculum at our school places a greater emphasis on the core and foundation subjects. At the end of Senior 2, children make their option choices for the subjects they will pursue to GCSE.
- 4.9 At Senior 3, 4 and 5 children study the subjects chosen only by them in preparation for their GCSE. Though this limits the breadth and balance, the school has consciously

decided that it allows greater focus from the children since they are now studying the subjects which interest them. It also enable pupils to complete some GCSEs by the end of Senior 4 and focus on a fewer number of GCSEs in Senior 5.

- 4.10 In the sixth form students will normally study at least four subjects at A level in their first year, and can carry on with the same four on to A2. We believe, however, since only three good A Levels grades are required for most conditional offers from universities, most pupils should concentrate on three subjects in A2.
- 4.11 All pupils in the senior school receive appropriate careers guidance, which is progressively allocated more time as part of the PSHCE programme and AIG Lessons. (See Careers Guidance Policy for details).”

## EYFS

4.12 The on-going evaluation, observations and formative assessment within the seven FS development areas will provide the basis for our planning. Attached is the copy of The Planning Cycle (Vicky Hutchins, 1999) that provides a model for the foundation stage.

- a) Based on this, each year the class (key persons with children) decides which topics will be covered throughout the year.
- b) The topics are then mapped to show which Adult Initiated activities will be offered to cover Prime and Specific areas and meet children’s needs. The plans for the activities may be shown as a spider chart or in some other form to enable ideas to be discussed, selected and amended, as per weekly discussions based on formative assessments, children’s interests and parental feedback.
- c) The activities are then assigned to weekly and daily activity plans to show which Learning Intentions from Development Matters are being encouraged from the seven foundation areas and which children’s needs and interests are being met.
- d) Parental input on children’s needs, interests and achievements is also to be utilised.

## 4.13 Play and Observations

Most play activities help to encourage the development of children in different areas so that even when children seem to be just playing they are learning at the same time. All the activities selected by staff and children in the Foundation Stage cover certain areas of a child’s development within the seven learning areas. During the sessions, the children engage in child initiated and adult initiated learning that encourages development in these seven areas. The staff continually assess (observe, question, etc.) the children and use the information gained to monitor each child’s development. This, in turn, informs further planning.

### Broken Toys and Cleaning of Toys:

The co-ordinators and form teachers will be responsible for monitoring this; the daily Risk assessment ensures checks to ensure that toys and play equipment are safe for play, e.g. not broken. The cleaning cycle for toys and play equipment is listed in this regular Risk Assessment

## **5 Children with special needs**

- 5.1 Although we are a moderately selective school, from time to time some children will need additional support from their teachers. The curriculum and staffing ratio in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school.
- 5.2 If a child needs additional support, in most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities, which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation.
- 5.3 We have a part-time Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for Senior school and a Special Needs Teacher for Prep. School who assess pupils and write Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for each of the children who are on the Learning Support register. The teachers are fully involved in these discussions and implement her recommendations. Please refer to the Learning Support Policy for more information.
- 5.4 Pupils who have been identified as requiring a statement by the SENCO will have a statement compiled by the SENCO in conjunction with the class teacher and appropriate interventions put in place. Please refer to the Learning Support Policy for more information.
- 5.5 English as an additional Language: From entry to Year One class upwards, admission tests are based on the curriculum guidance in English and maths for the respective age group. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is carried out, as far as possible, by a staff member who is bilingual in the child's first language as this enhances the quality of the information gained about previous experiences and future needs. Those identified as requiring support receive this through a range of different interventions. Please see the Policy on English as an Additional Language for more information.
- 5.6 More Able Gifted & Talented (MAGT) pupils are identified in both the senior and prep schools and this information is stored on a register. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented are given opportunities both within and outside of the regular curriculum to develop these gifts and talents.

## **6 The role of the subject leader / head of department**

- 6.1 The role of the subject leader is to:
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
  - support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject;
  - monitor pupil progress in that subject area;
  - provide efficient resource management for the subject.
  - observe lessons and books and provide feedback to staff (Prep School)

Refer to the Subject leader job description for further detail.

- 6.2 It is the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They review the way the subject is taught in



the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school objectives.

## **7 Monitoring and review**

- 7.1 Our governing body's Education committee, which includes the Senior Management Team, is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. This committee reviews each subject area in its annual cycle of review and development.
- 7.2 The Headteacher of Prep School, the Assistant Head teacher in charge of curriculum, together with the management team is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The curriculum coordinator monitors the weekly/half termly lesson plans for all teachers in the Prep School.
- 7.3 In the Senior School, Heads of Departments and/or Subject Leaders have the responsibility for the delivery of their subject, dictated by the Schemes of Work which they prepare. Heads of Departments and/or Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed. The Headteacher of Senior School regularly inspects the schemes of work for each department and monitors the curriculum by visiting lessons.
- 7.4 **EYFS Audit and Monitoring:**  
This will be carried out using ECERS, EYFSP, cohort tracking, lesson observations (including peer observations), Reflexive staff activities, Brent EY advisor and inclusion officers input. All other elements will be monitored by the Head of EYFS. This will lead to annual EY action plans that will be reviewed once a term, as well as an EY report / SEF. After this, an annual EY development plan will be integrated into the School Development plan.
- 7.5 **EYFS Review**  
This will be carried out every two years in the Spring Term of each academic year by the Foundation Stage staff team. Feedback from parents, children, child observations and changes to Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 will be taken into account towards such a review.