St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Setting Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Data and Operations) and the Head of Juniors.

Last review: April 26

Next review: April 27

Ethos

A central tenet of Roman Catholic education is that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, should be treated as a unique human individual. St Mary's school, Cambridge (the School) is committed to the belief that by embodying this principle in the delivery of the curriculum we are taking necessary steps to fulfilling Mary Ward's vision that in time women will come to do much. Therefore, we are mindful of maximising all pupil's ability to learn.

Rationale

Setting can enable teachers to match their teaching to the needs of their pupils more closely. Through a more personalised learning experience pupils are able to reach or exceed their academic targets.

Pupils have an entitlement that:

- teaching and learning will be adapted to meet their needs;
- they will have opportunities to experience personal success;
- they will be treated with care and encouragement by teachers with high expectations of them.

In addition, parents and teachers are entitled to expect that class sizes will be managed so that pupils will be known as individuals and that time can be taken to support them with their learning.

Junior School Procedure

Setting is not generally employed in the Junior School; however, children are grouped from time to time as appropriate.

Senior School Procedure

Criteria for Setting

Setting is used in Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies and Modern Foreign Languages as required. When timetabling, the Deputy Head (Data and Operations) is advised by Heads of Department about how best to group pupils to achieve these goals. Heads of Department will use their professional judgement and will consider, but not limited to, the following evidence when allocating pupils to sets:

- Entrance examination results (where appropriate)
- Additional entrance information (where appropriate)
- Topic tests
- End of term internal examinations
- Class work marks
- Home learning marks
- Pastoral needs
- SEN needs

Sets may be determined before the start of Year 7, during the Autumn Term of Year 7 or at any further point. In languages, although some pupils arrive with several years' study behind them whereas others arrive as beginners, all pupils learn at different rates and setting will need to be reviewed frequently.

Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of Department guide their teams on how to apply assessment policies. They determine the character of common assessment tasks. They take an overview of the pupils studying their subject in consultation with their departmental teams and in response to this advice draft set lists for discussion among their team. Where setting is determined by an issue such as learning English as an additional language then this must be acknowledged within the department and the pupil's Head of Year is consulted. Heads of Department are responsible for communicating set changes to parents.

Heads of Year are informed of setting changes so they can form an overview of any patterns in a pupil's progress across the whole curriculum. They inform the Deputy Head (Data and Operations) of any concerns arising from setting arrangements.

The Deputy Head (Data and Operations) is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and for its annual review. The Deputy Head (Data and Operations) should follow up any concerns passed on by Heads of Year regarding patterns in a pupil's academic progress.

Setting and Public Examinations

The School enters pupils for public examinations at a level best suited to gain the highest grades possible commensurate with the current ability of the pupil. The set into which a pupil is placed does not, of itself, determine the level of paper sat or the highest grade available to a pupil.

Review of Setting

Setting arrangements will be reviewed regularly but no less frequently than at the end of each term.

To gain a holistic view of the needs of the pupils and to share the responsibility for decision-making about setting changes this discussion forms an agenda item at a department meeting.

Discussions relating to setting changes are recorded and submitted to the Deputy Head (Data and Operations).

Communication with Parents

Heads of Department are responsible for communicating setting changes to parents.

Parents will be informed of changes to sets by written communication prior to their taking effect.

Right of Appeal

The School recognises that setting is a matter of great importance to parents and every care is taken to ensure pupils are placed in a set where provision is matched to their needs.

If a parent believes that this Policy has not been applied properly, the School welcomes the opportunity to investigate the matter further. An initial query should be addressed to the Head of Department. If the query is not investigated to the parents' satisfaction, then parents should contact the Deputy Head (Data and Operations). Where this policy has been followed a pupil would not normally be moved sets until clear evidence emerges that this step would be appropriate. The Head reserves the right to make a final decision on any query relating to setting.

Setting decisions involve comparative judgements about pupils. Parents should note it is the School's policy not to disclose information about the progress of pupils other than the daughter of a parent making a query.

Setting decisions can raise the question of the relative merits of teachers and the pupils' preference for one teacher's style over another. Parents should note that pupils are expected to adapt to any teacher assigned to them and that preferences for one teacher over another cannot be allowed to influence a decision about which set their daughter is placed in.