

# Parents' Information for Year 6



St. Margaret's  
Preparatory School





**Welcome to Year 6** - the final year at St. Margaret's Prep School! This guide is designed to give you an overview of life in Year 6 and to inform you so that you and your child know what to expect. This means that together, we can ensure that your child is happy and makes good progress to achieve his/her full potential. The children will receive lessons in a range of subjects with many being specialist taught. Each subject is outlined below with the topics to be covered, though staff reserve the right to make alterations without consultation.

## **Entrance Examinations:**

Year 6 can be a very exciting and challenging year for the pupils—their last year at prep school. Each child will have been given a badge, tie and responsibility at Speech Day and the Form Teachers work hard to ensure each feels valued, they are familiar with their roles and perform them superbly. Throughout the year we give our children new perspectives on their skills and abilities, develop their teamwork and show them that challenges should be welcomed!

Entrance examinations always present a few worries and a great deal of excitement for the children. They are always very well prepared for their exams by us—tackling many Maths, English, VR and non-VR papers as appropriate and, in addition, receiving interview and public speaking rehearsals during the Autumn Term.

In order for the process to proceed smoothly, it is essential that you keep the Form Teachers informed (by e-mail) of the following:

- dates of any taster days
  - dates of interviews
  - dates of entrance examinations
  - requirements for entrance exams / interviews
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- dates and requirements for scholarship applications
- results of offers as they are made
- any schools from which you have withdrawn

Secondary Schools do not communicate with feeder schools directly, only with parents, except to request references and it is therefore essential that you keep us informed in this ever-changing situation. Please don't feel you are over-burdening us with information - it really helps us all if we know the latest facts.

### **Uniform:**

The day-to-day uniform for pupils in Y6 is the same as for the rest of the Prep Department except children are required to wear the Y6 tie they were presented with at Speech Day. It is important that the children look smart both within school, outside in the community and when attending open days and entrance exams at Secondary Schools. Once again, it is important that children have their puffa jackets, school gloves and warm school hats available on cold days and sunhats in Summer. In addition to this, all pupils will require an Art overall (an old shirt from home) and a Science overall (purchased from the uniform supplier). The Art overalls are kept in the classroom whilst the Science overalls are kept in the Lab so please ensure both are clearly labelled. Overalls are brought home at the end of each term for washing unless they become particularly dirty during the term-time.

All uniform can be ordered from the online supplier.

### **Classroom Kit:**

In Y6, we expect our pupils to be very independent and organised. They continue to move around the Department each

day for their lessons as they are in sets for Maths, English and VR, so it is particularly important that they have the correct items with them for each lesson. Children are asked to ensure that they have the following:

- school rucksack which remains in the Cloakroom
- school bookbag which is taken to each lesson
- pencil case
- pencils (HB)
- 15cm and 30 cm clear rulers
- sharpener
- rubber
- clear protractor
- good quality pair of compasses
- colouring pencils (not fineliners or felt tips)
- named water bottle to place in tray in Form Room
- several handwriting pens - black Berol pens or similar (please consult the Form Teacher for details)
- dictionary and thesaurus (see later for details)

All their belongings must be labelled and stored appropriately.

### **Games Kit:**

Children are responsible for their own kit, but please help them by ensuring that everything is clearly labelled. Kit should be stored in a PE bag which is hung on their labelled peg in the Changing Rooms (boys near the Music Pods, girls at the rear of the Hall). Pupils will need:

- sports top/shirt
- shorts
- tracksuit
- short blue socks
- outdoor trainers and indoor mostly white footwear (second pair of trainers or plimsolls)

- Reversible hockey / rugby shirt
- long blue and yellow socks
- shinpads
- gum shield (please speak to your dentist for further advice)
- studded boots
- skorts (girls)
- cricket whites (boys)
- a royal blue 'skin' that can be worn underneath the rugby shirt is very useful in colder weather.
- hair bands to ensure hair is tied off the face for the girls

On the first day, pupils will be taken to the changing rooms by the Form Teacher where they hang their bags containing their PE Kit on their peg and place their footwear in the boot box below their peg. Parents are **not** allowed into the changing rooms at any time.

Pupils are required to have their full Games/PE kit (appropriate for the term) at school **every day** from Monday to Friday inclusive as timetables can alter at short notice. All washable kit should be taken home by the children on Friday (collecting after dismissal), so it can be washed, checked and returned on Monday morning.

### **Lost Property:**

Children are encouraged to take care of their uniform and Games kit, by keeping their possessions neatly in their rucksack or PE bag. If, however, named items are mislaid they will be returned by the PE Staff wherever possible. If the item is unnamed, however, it will be placed in the Lost Property Basket which is situated at the foot of the spiral staircase. Pupils should search there when items have been lost, and



parents can help by checking the labels of their child's PE kit when they wash it each weekend and contacting each other when 'lost' kit is discovered.

## **Registration and Dismissal:**

Registration is at 8:45 but we would like the children to arrive as soon after 8:30 as possible so that we can hear readers on a regular basis, and help with any difficulties that have arisen. Parents are asked to leave their children at the cloakroom, or preferably safely on the path leading from the small netball court and allow them to make their own way to their classroom, unless you need to urgently speak to the Form Teacher. Each morning, pupils need to give their Form Teacher their Homework Diary and Reading Diary, both of which must be signed by a parent on a daily basis, please. If you have any messages for the Form Teacher, please use the Homework Diary or email direct. Any permission slips can be returned by asking pupils to give them to the Form Teacher. Where directed, fees and Summer Ball bookings, for example, should be placed in the basket in the Gallery.



Dismissal is through the Conservatory at 3.55pm and pupils are encouraged to ensure they have all their belongings with them at the point of dismissal. This is particularly important if they are attending a potential Secondary School the next day to avoid an early morning panic! If you have a younger child, they will be held at Sibling Waiters until 3.55pm so that you can collect both children at the same time. Prep pupils who have not been collected by 4pm are escorted to Late Waiters, which is held in the Reception classrooms, and parents may collect from there.

You will be asked to complete a Dismissal Permission Form at the start of the academic year, detailing which adults are



allowed to collect your child. Please contact the Form Teacher if you would like to update this during the year. If your child is going home with another adult on a one-off basis, please can you write a note in your child's Homework Diary giving permission. If this is not given, we need to contact you by telephone before releasing your child, and this may cause a delay at the end of the school day.

### **Clubs:**

We offer a range of clubs, both before school (starting at 8am and usually free) and after school (for which there is a charge), details of which are published in the termly calendar. Generally, clubs begin on the second week of term, and end on the Friday of the penultimate week, but further details are available online. In addition, there are a number of music activities held at lunchtime that children may join in, usually

- when they have reached a sufficient standard in an appropriate musical instrument. Attendance at early morning sports and music activities (such as rugby training and choir) is not compulsory but we would encourage our pupils to attend to improve their skills in these areas. Once a pupil has expressed an interest in attending one of these clubs, we require them to attend promptly every week for the term as it is important that all develop their skills and repertoire together. If poor weather demands that a morning sports club is cancelled, parents will be informed via ParentMail, otherwise sessions will be held.

### **Homework:**

In Year 6, written homework is set five nights a week, with each homework taking 30 minutes of concentrated effort. We encourage parents to support their children when they are undertaking homework, but if you feel that your child has found the work particularly inaccessible, then please write a note in

the Homework Diary. A second homework is issued for the weekend.

Homework will either require the pupil to undertake some research in preparation for the next lesson, to consolidate a technique learnt in class, or to stretch them with a challenge. It is useful to use Science homework to write up an experiment, as this allows the pupils to undertake practical experiments in school, taking advantage of our wonderful facilities. Science write-ups have to be completed in a standard format with which the pupils are familiar but a copy of the template is available on the school website.

All homework is due in the **following day**, unless instructed otherwise, and it is the pupil's responsibility to remember to hand their homework in to the Form Teacher. In addition to written homework, pupils are required to read every night (and record this in their Reading Diary), practise their spellings and revise their times tables ready for the weekly tests. If pupils are absent for part of the day, for example on a Taster Morning, we expect them to find out what the homework is for that evening and ensure they have the correct books and sheets. Holiday homework is issued and this must be completed in addition to practising tables, spelling and undertaking significant amounts of reading. In the event of a Snow Day, appropriate work is available on the school website for downloading.

### **Reading:**

We feel that reading is essential for the development of vocabulary, a broadening of experience and also for pure pleasure. By Year 6, pupils are working through our Free Reader Scheme. It is, however, important that your child sees reading as an active pursuit, and develops the skill to read out

loud successfully and to understand the text. To assist with this, we ask you to:

- listen to your child read each night
- ensure the children complete the Reading Diary including a comment about what is happening in the story
- list unfamiliar words at the back of their Reading Diary so they can be checked
- ask questions about the plot and characters
- make predictions about the developing plot
- discuss why the author has used certain words
- take your child to a local Library and help them to select a range of suitable and interesting books.

Although children love reading a large number of books in the same series, it is important that their reading skills are stretched. At interviews, pupils are frequently asked to discuss their favourite authors and it is important they can draw upon a wide range of material. To assist with this, a copy of the Y5/6 Recommended Reading List is available on the school website and we feel strongly that children should select books from a **range of genres**. You can log on online to browse our catalogue at <https://u020502.microlibrarian.net/>

## English:

A reading book should be in the child's desk at all times during school and children are responsible for changing their books in the morning.

Regular visits to the school Library and Reading Room are encouraged, where there is a wonderful collection of fiction and non-fiction books for all reading abilities. Handwriting lessons continue and children are encouraged to sit up, tilt their book and use the correct grip and letter formation. We follow the Nelson style of handwriting as seen on the display



in the classroom. Berol handwriting pens with black ink are to be used.

In addition, during the first half of the year, time will be spent studying past entrance papers. Exam technique will be discussed and regularly practised in preparation for external examinations. Creative work will also be developed and spellings will be set and tested weekly. A novel study will be undertaken and children will be introduced to a variety of styles of writing, including an introduction to Shakespeare, in preparation for Year 7 work.

Written work is set out in accordance with school policy for all subjects, i.e. the date on the top line, a title on the third line. Each should be underlined with a ruler and then they add the learning objective. Formal lessons in grammar, comprehension and punctuation are taught with creative work developing alongside. Spellings are set and tested weekly and your help is needed to ensure that they are familiar with these words. The spelling sheets are given to the children each week, and copies are also available on the school website for you to print off if the spelling sheet becomes lost.

Verbal Reasoning, and non-VR, will continue to be taught and new techniques practised from a variety of resources. This is interspersed with test papers where pupils can practise their skills in a range of questions, under timed conditions. VR lessons end when the last pupil has sat their final entrance examination. At this point, the pupils will study Latin in the place of VR, and we use the Minimus scheme of work from the Primary Latin Project. This is an excellent resource promoting



speaking and reading Latin with historical information and myths and legends.

For English, and other subjects, we encourage the children to use dictionaries and thesauruses from the beginning of the year and recommend the Oxford (Colour English Dictionary) ISBN 978-0-19-960791-4 and Thesaurus ISBN 978-0-19-960792-1. Please ensure that your child has a copy of each.

### **Maths:**

From the start of Year 6, work already covered will be consolidated and examination papers practised regularly. Maths Prep 1 and 2, Bostock and Chandler Y7 book, and Abacus 7 are used during Y6, with additional support and extension materials. Algebra will be studied and a wide variety of topics covered during the first two terms. The aim of work in the Summer Term will be to give children some greater insight into Y7 topics and a confidence in their ability to tackle ‘real life’ Mathematics.

Pupils are tested weekly in Maths, with more formal exams taken in May/June as part of Exam Week.

### **Science:**

Year 6 will be looking at several topics each term. In the Autumn Term we will study Light, Electrical Circuits and a review of Forces. In the Spring Term micro-organisms, evolution and inheritance, and healthy living will be studied.

Finally in the summer pupils will have the opportunity to undertake project work on an area of particular interest to them and may have the opportunity to take part in the highly popular Forensic Science Day.

The Y6 core textbook is titled “So You Really Want To Learn Science”. We also thoroughly recommend you signing up for the free Planet Science Under-11 online newsletter (<http://www.planet-science.com/categories/under-11s.aspx>) for your child and allowing them (under supervision) to explore the site and undertake some of the experiments it suggests. Many pupils also enjoy the monthly National Geographic Kids magazine (<http://www.nationalgeographic-kids.co.uk>) to which you can subscribe as this contains a wealth of interesting facts about our planet.

Some schools interview the children to ascertain their level of interest in Science, and these resources are invaluable in providing topics for discussion. In the summer, Y6 pupils take an exam in Science as part of Exam Week. We recommend that your child uses the CGP KS2 Science Study Book or corresponding pages in The Important Bits that they were introduced to in Year 3. Your child will need to know the contents of the whole Study Book for their exam.

## **Computing:**

Computing lessons take place in our Computer Suite which is well equipped with computers, printers and scanners. As well as a timetabled lesson each week, staff may take classes into the room for research, word processing or work in other subjects. Staff will also have additional timetabled lessons each week with access to the class set of laptops, should the Computer Suite not be available.

Children will continue to develop their touch-typing, gain a basic understanding of Microsoft Office software and will also be encouraged to develop their independent research skills. There is a strong emphasis on coding using Scratch

software and children will have the opportunity to manipulate digital media to create films and e-books. E-safety will form an important part of many of the topics and will be discussed on a regular basis.

In the Prep Department children are encouraged to use the internet to research information. As always, we encourage parents to be vigilant whilst their children are using a computer at home. Should you require any information about staying safe online, please visit the E-Safety section on our website, which can be found in the Parents' Area.

### **History:**

Britain since 1930 will be studied this year with a detailed look at The Second World War. The reasons for, and ways in which life in Britain was affected by the War are explored. For example the children look at what life might have been like for an evacuee and see how rationing would have affected them. In the Summer term, we look at a local history project and the Mayan civilisation. There are a number of excellent online resources that your child may find interesting, and these include the BBC site, ([www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory)). History is evaluated through continual assessment—tests, class participation, discussion and independent research projects.

### **Geography:**

The children study a varied range of topics this year and these include rivers in Britain, Europe and the Nile. Map reading skills are developed and the children are exposed to new information on Mountains and Coasts.

Children are encouraged to look beyond the classroom to put learning into context. They will be set tasks involving research in order to add information to their books and develop

their skills.

Map-work continues to form an important part of the syllabus and you can help by encouraging your child to look at maps before travelling on trips, examine locations using resources such as Google Earth and to read maps during your travels. Again, the BBC website for Key Stage 2 offers interesting activities and information for the children. We will begin to use more advanced Geographical skills. In Mapwork we will practise 6 Figure Grid References, calculating distance using Scale and Compass Points in order to build a deeper knowledge of the UK and the wider world. Geography is evaluated through continual assessment—tests, class participation, discussion and independent research projects.

## **RE:**

In Y6 Religious Education will focus on the Christian faith whilst broadening their knowledge of other faiths. They will then look at the Creation of the World and discuss matters of ethics and philosophy, so developing their debating skills further. In addition to weekly RE lessons, pupils attend two assemblies per week and either a third assembly or a hymn practice on Mondays. Each day, a prayer is said at the end of lunch, and the school prayer recited at the end of the day.

## **Modern Foreign Languages:**

French lessons this year will be half an hour, and will build on knowledge already gained over the years as well as introducing new topics such as directions and simple instructions. Pupils will further their knowledge of French grammar, learning to use different French verbs, and will also be introduced to a bi-lingual dictionary.

A further half hour of Modern Language Study will be dedicated to Spanish. Children will continue their introduction to the language; practising correct pronunciation as well as learning basic vocabulary and phrases on common topics. A termly topic sheet for both languages will be sent to parents in order to inform them of key vocabulary used.

## **Music:**

Music continues to be an important part of life at St. Margaret's. Recorder lessons are replaced by learning keyboard skills in both hands. The different families and relevant instruments that make up an orchestra will be looked at, as well as major composers from different eras and genres. Contemporary music comprising jazz and 'blues' will also be studied, in addition to looking at the 'blues' scale and chord progression. Children will compose their own piece for their chosen instrument, using computer software.

Singing continues to play a significant role in class music leading to the majority of the summer production, which falls on Year 6. Focus will be on diction, breathing, rhythm and phrasing and listening to others with sensitivity and awareness while singing in parts. Advanced aural skills will be touched upon, as well as the theoretical aspects of music such as signing and singing 'Sol-fa'.

Instrumentalists are encouraged to become more involved in the school's musical life, although this is not compulsory. Mrs Morgan runs several choirs which each meet once a week and will be happy to discuss with your child which of these would suit them. In addition, when pupils have reached an appropriate level of competence on their musical instruments, they are invited to join before-school and lunchtime ensemble groups to further develop their skills and enjoy



playing with friends. We ask that all pupils involved in extra-curricular music lessons commit to attending each week, learning words and playing a significant role in the school concerts.

There are annual Christmas and Easter matinee and evening concerts that all pupils in the Prep Department are involved in and these usually occur on the penultimate Friday of term. All pupils are expected to attend in full school uniform, arriving at the specified time depending on whether they are instrumentalists or choir members. Everyone is expected to remain until the end of the concert. Parents are very welcome to attend the evening concerts, with Grandparents and very young siblings encouraged to come to the matinee performance held on the Friday afternoon. In addition, to the school concerts, musical pupils are regularly invited to perform at charity concerts or attend specialist development days. Details of these are available from Mrs Morgan.



It is unusual, but not impossible, for a Y6 pupil to begin lessons on a musical instrument and if your child would like to begin, then you need to speak to Mrs Morgan at the earliest opportunity. When pupils have reached the required standard, music teachers may recommend that pupils sit the appropriate ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal School of Music) examination, sessions for which are usually held on Saturdays in termtime, at school. If the pupil requires an accompanist for this exam, details can be obtained from Mrs Morgan. Parents are invoiced separately for ABRSM exams, and it is a condition of entry that the pupil will continue to work on their exam repertoire until the exam, to ensure that they represent themselves and the Music Department to the highest standard. The ABRSM Board devises the timetable and length of exam day for these sessions, however, Mrs



Morgan will take any written requests from parents for certain times into account, and will adjust the given timetable accordingly if she can. Pupils will be supplied with full written details of their exam in sufficient time but it is worth noting that pupils are representing St. Margaret's and full school uniform is required, even at a weekend exam. We have an enviable record of success in music exams and we're sure this will continue for years to come.

We have an outstanding record of obtaining Music Scholarships for our Year 6 pupils but it is important to recognise that Secondary Schools are looking for pupils with a talent, passion and commitment to music that will continue throughout their whole Secondary education. Pupils need to present two instruments to a very high level (one can be voice), and orchestral instruments are often in greater demand as they are more versatile. Preparing a written portfolio is also invaluable; if you would like to discuss this further with Mrs Morgan, then please make an appointment with her at the earliest opportunity. It is essential that, by the start of Year 6 we have a clear indication of which pupils are applying for Music Scholarships during the year.

### **Art & DT:**

Work produced during this year will depend on a child's ability and experience, creating many alternatives for pupils requiring a portfolio for entrance to their Senior School or for Scholarships. The beginning of the Autumn term is spent evaluating their existing work, and each pupil decides in which areas they need more practice, which areas they have missed, and their strengths and weaknesses, so that the rest of their curriculum can be planned for them. Areas for study include fine art, painting, sculpture, graphic design, printing, photography, computer art and history. Within these areas, topics such as Pop Art, Abstraction, Pen and Wash tech-

niques are studied along with many others. In Design and Technology, greater emphasis is placed on accurate and complete 3D designs and the aesthetic outcome of a projects.

We have a good track record of obtaining Art Scholarships in the Secondary Schools that we feed. In order to be successful with a scholarship application, the pupil must provide a portfolio of work across a range of media, completed independently both at school and at home, and demonstrating a genuine love of, and interest in, Art. The Summer holiday at the end of Year 5 is a good opportunity to collate and extend this portfolio, and it is essential that you remain in close contact with Mrs Howells so she can advise you appropriately on the scholarship process.

## **PE and Games**

In Games lessons boys will be taught skills for Football, Rugby & Cricket, whilst the girls will learn Netball, Hockey & Rounders. In PE lessons children will have the opportunity to develop skills in Gymnastics, Cross Country, Outdoor Activities and Athletics. Training sessions and pre- and after-school clubs are offered in a wide range of sports. Again, these are not compulsory but will develop the skills of the pupils and are encouraged. If a pupil does choose to attend, they must do so for the whole term, irrespective of the weather.

When Games or PE forms the last lesson of the day, pupils may be permitted to go home wearing their Games kit, including full tracksuit. It is their responsibility to ensure they collect their school uniform from the Changing Rooms after dismissal. If Games or PE is the first lesson of the day, pupils are still required to attend school in full school uniform as they will be given an opportunity to change at the start of the

lesson.

Pupils attending early morning training sessions should arrive at the set time for an 8am start in the appropriate Games kit, but remember to bring all their school uniform with them including, in particular, their shoes. If they forget part, or all of their uniform, parents will be telephoned and asked to deliver the missing items. Cross-country running is held on Friday mornings at 8am, and pupils are permitted to wear non-school running gear if they wish. This prevents them having to wear potentially wet and muddy kit later in the day for a Games lesson. It is useful, for a sporty child, to have a second set of rugby shirt and shorts available for wet and muddy days where early morning training is held but the pupil also has Games or PE later in the day. Stock of good quality PE kit is always available from the Second Hand Shop at a reasonable cost. There is a kit check at the beginning of each term and parents are asked to check the school kit list for items required and how to label kit.

There are a number of matches organised throughout the year to develop match play, and these are held on a Wednesday for Year 6. Prior to the match, electronic mail will be used to seek permission from parents and giving details of the fixture. Mr Clark and Mrs Weaver will always select the most suitable team given the nature of the fixture. The selection policy is on the school website.

In the event of a match cancellation, parents will be informed by the School Office; you can assume that matches are proceeding unless you hear otherwise, even in poor weather. Parents are very welcome to support their children at matches, both at home and away games. They are reminded to limit any side-line instructions to their child as these training matches provide an essential opportunity for Mr Clark and



Mrs Weaver to observe the pupils, developing certain skills that have been practised in lessons. All parents are welcome to attend the match tea, where refreshments are provided. Dismissal from a match depends on the location and timing; Mr Clark and Mrs Weaver hold responsibility for the children until they are handed over to Form Teachers or directly to yourselves, and staff will keep you informed of the arrangements as the afternoon develops. Please ensure you keep your mobile phone on during match days.

We have a excellent track record of obtaining Sports Scholarships for our most able Y6 pupils to Secondary Schools - Mr Clark and Mrs Weaver will be delighted to discuss this aspect with you, and tell you of the wide range of opportunities within, and outside, school that your child can experience. It is essential that you keep them informed of your intentions for your child.

### **Form / PSHEE:**

This is where we will be discussing various issues which will help the children in their studies and within the classroom. Topics include: how to listen and improve concentration, study skills, being kind to one another, co-operation, being ready, solving problems and resolving conflict. This time may also be used for children to tidy their desks, collect merits and to organise themselves better, where appropriate. The PSHEE syllabus is wide-ranging and allows the children to learn about positive and negative effects on physical, mental and emotional health. It extends pupils' vocabulary to enable them to explain both the range and intensity of their feelings to others and to recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them. Change, including transitions (between



key stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement are examined along with modules on physical health and personal finance.

### **Learning Support:**

All the children are closely monitored, from observation, using their classwork and through regular testing. If any child's progress is beginning to slip and we are concerned, you will be contacted and strategies put into place to help them. Similarly if you have any specific concerns about your child's progress, please do bring this to our attention.

### **General:**

We believe that, for a child to succeed, a close partnership between home and school is essential. We hope that this booklet will help you to get an overview of life in Y6 and know what to expect. Form Teachers are always available if you have any queries and we are happy to see you.

You will receive progress checks in the Spring Term and a report at the end of the year, as well as invitations to Parents' Evenings in the Autumn (with all staff) and Spring Terms (with Form Teacher). We look forward to seeing you!

**Welcome to Year 6!**



Mrs Blackburne has taught at St Margaret's since 2008 and both her own children attended the school. In addition to being a Year 6 Form Teacher she is also the SENCo and as such gives additional support to children that find a particular area of the curriculum more challenging.

Mrs Moss has taught at St. Margaret's since 2005, and both of her own boys joined here in the Early Years Departments, and the eldest one has just finished secondary school. In addition to being a Y6 Form Teacher, she is Deputy Head and DLS and she is always happy to discuss the transfer of children to Year 7.



Mrs Revell first started working at St. Margaret's in 2014 and her two boys are pupils here.

