



**West Lothian  
Council**



**St Margaret's Academy**  
Howden South Road  
Livingston  
EH54 6AT  
Tel. 01506 497104  
Fax. 01506 497103

Email: [james.cameron@wled.org.uk](mailto:james.cameron@wled.org.uk)  
[stmargarets.ac@wled.org.uk](mailto:stmargarets.ac@wled.org.uk)

**Head Teacher**  
James Cameron

Parents' Newsletter – A Curriculum for Excellence

March 07

## **Dear Parent**

You will recall from my last newsletter that I informed you that as a staff we were considering how best to respond to the opportunity to shape the curriculum so that St Margaret's Academy can provide a Curriculum for Excellence.

The Curriculum for Excellence is an ongoing national curriculum review that hopes to build on the four 'capacities' of our young people to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. The Curriculum for Excellence is as much about **how** we learn and teach as **what** we learn and teach in our schools. As such it will remain a high priority in our improvement planning over the coming years.

For session 2007-2008 there are a number of significant changes that we as a staff wish to see implemented to improve the quality of learning and teaching, to update the curriculum and to raise attainment, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.

When we consider how the school curriculum should look there are a number of key principles that we should pay attention to. Among these is the requirement to retain the breadth of subjects that is the strength of the Scottish system. Alongside this however we must provide opportunities for young people to exercise choice so that they can personalise their learning and study parts of the curriculum in greater depth.

In addition to the Curriculum for Excellence we need to respond to other initiatives. First, a welcome reduction in average class size in English and mathematics classes, secondly to work toward increasing the amount of physical activity in the school week through increased time in PE S1-S4.

Taking all these new developments into account the significant changes to the school curriculum and timetable for next session are as follows:-

- Increased time in English and mathematics during the school week
- Increased time in PE S1-S4
- Introduction of an element of choice at the end of S1
- Introduction of drama and business education into S1 & S2 to strengthen the expressive arts and technologies

To accommodate these changes we require to alter the shape of the school week. The amount of time pupils have as class contact remains unchanged. It is set by law at 27.5 hours a week, but how we arrange this time over the week will be as follows:-

- School will start at 8.35am each day as at present
- Monday to Thursday the pupil day will end at 3.20pm instead of current 3.35pm
- The pupil day on a Friday will end at 12.20pm in place of the current 12 noon
- We will change our lunchtime arrangements to allow for three sittings

The time pupils currently spend in Registration classes (35 minutes a week) will now be transferred to teaching classes, the main beneficiary being increased time in English and mathematics.

This short newsletter can only describe the main changes and I appreciate that parents require more detail of the reasons for change and the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. There will be an opportunity therefore at the following Parents' Information Evenings, some of which are currently on the calendar but will now include a session on the curriculum for excellence. Parents of Second Year pupils were provided with information at their evening on 12 March.

First Year Parents	23 April 07
Third Year Parents	14 May 07
Fourth Year Parents	26 March 07
Primary Seven Parents	6 June 07

I hope to meet you during one of these information evenings. If you require any further information following these events then please e-mail me or write to me at the school.

Yours sincerely

**James Cameron**

James Cameron  
Headteacher