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## The Oundle Curriculum

*The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Oundle School.*

At the heart of the School's educational philosophy is a clear understanding of how pupils learn. The intellectual, social and emotional needs of the pupils drive the educational agenda. We provide full-time supervised education for all pupils; the pupils gain experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills are developed throughout all stages.

The School's curriculum equips its pupils to think, and we believe in providing a curriculum that is organised by learning rather than by assessment. The curriculum is flexible enough to allow each pupil to plot an individual academic path through the School, and all pupils are given the opportunity to excel. We place great emphasis on the 'craft of the classroom', and it is important that teaching is effective for all pupils, taking into account their educational needs. We understand the need for pupil-driven as well as teacher-centred learning, and we aim for pupils to become independent learners, capable of thinking and debating and who are prepared thoroughly for higher education and the responsibilities of adult life.

Throughout the curriculum we wish to promote excellence and achievement through delivery of subject matter that is appropriate in its level of challenge for the ages and aptitudes of all pupils. We aim for efficiency in preparing our pupils for public examinations; success in public examinations is deemed important as a worthy aim, as a platform for future success at university and beyond. We understand that education is about far more than examinations however, and strive to ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to explore areas of intellectual interest.

This written policy is supported by schemes of work: from First Form upwards, these take the form of departmental schemes produced by Heads of Department and coordinated by the Deputy Head Academic. Relevant Heads of Department ensure that the content of the courses is suitable for each year group and promote Fundamental British Values. Syllabuses for First to Third Form are created internally and appropriate GCSE and A level syllabuses are followed thereafter. Schemes of work are seen as working documents, open to flexibility and amendment as appropriate.

To ensure effective implementation, Heads of Department hold regular departmental meetings, conduct lesson observations and quality assurance checks, and review their individual Departmental Development Plans on an annual basis. Pupil progress is monitored through on-going formative assessment that forms a natural part of lessons, regular summative end of topic testing and internal examinations. Every cohort is reported on formally every term through annual Parents' Receptions, and full or short reports. External examination results are analysed and used diagnostically in Exam Meetings with the Deputy Head Academic every September. Individual department budgets, overseen by Heads of

Department, ensure resources necessary to the effective delivery of the curriculum are provided. The governing body provide oversight of the academic curriculum through the Education Committee, to which the Deputy Head Academic reports on a termly basis.

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is received by every pupil through our Learning for Life programme, and is coordinated by the Head of Learning for Life. The programme is delivered by teaching staff who are trained to deliver the content, who are aided by experts in particular areas from both inside and outside the school. Please refer to the School's [Learning for Life Policy](#) and [Relationships and Sex Education Policy](#) for further details. All pupils participate in thrice weekly games sessions as outlined in the School's [Sport Policy](#). In addition, the School's [Oundle Opportunities](#) programme provides further avenues for personal development.

All pupils, irrespective of their need, ability, aptitude, gender or age have equal access to the curriculum and are supported in making continuous progress through the teaching and learning experienced in lessons, co-curricular opportunities and the formal tracking, monitoring and reporting structures in the School. The School seeks to ensure that pupil progress and achievement is in no way held back by education support issues. Pupils with special educational needs are offered support throughout their time at Oundle by the specialist Educational Support department. The Educational Support department is not, however, seen as a separate department but is fully integrated into all other academic disciplines. Teaching staff differentiate their teaching as a matter of course in accordance with the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils, including those who are more able or with SEN and/or an EHC plan or IEP. Please refer to the [Educational Support Policy](#) for further details on the School's provision in this area, and on the support provided for children who may face additional safeguarding challenges owing to their SEN.

To ensure that all pupils are able to derive maximum benefit from their Oundle education, the School uses English Language Placement tests to screen non-native speakers. The results of these assessments, together with information provided about each pupil's education and language background, will guide decisions as to who would benefit from EAP (English for Academic Purposes) provision. Please refer to the [English as an Additional Language \(EAL\) Policy](#) for more information.

The curriculum is structured into two distinct but mutually reinforcing strands: the examined curriculum and the extension curriculum.

## **The Examined Curriculum**

### *First and Second Form*

All pupils follow a broad range of subjects, comprising of:

- English and Mathematics
- A carousel of the three principal sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and Computing
- The humanities subjects of Geography, History and Theology, Philosophy and Religion (TPR)
- Latin
- The creative subjects of Art, Drama, Music and Design, Engineering and Technology (DET)
- Modern Foreign and Classical Languages. Here:
  - Pupils opt to study either French or Spanish for both years
  - In the First Form, pupils follow a carousel of German, Chinese and Ancient Greek. Pupils then select which of these three languages they will study in the Second Form.
- Dedicated reading time
- Physical Education (PE) lessons, in addition to thrice weekly games sessions.

To supplement the academic curriculum, pupils in the First and Second Form follow Omnia, a bespoke enrichment programme designed to benefit our youngest pupils in both their academic progression and their wider development as they move up through Oundle. Delivered on Saturday mornings, Omnia is founded on four pillars of character education, namely Intellectual, Moral, Civic and Performance. A broad range of activities, delivered by academic staff and external experts, seek to develop the traits of critical thinking, curiosity, resourcefulness, compassion, courage, respect, citizenship, responsibility, volunteering, teamwork, resilience and leadership.

### Third Form

In the Third Form:

- All pupils study the core subjects of Biology, Chemistry, English, Geography, History, Latin, Mathematics, Physics, TPR and Trivium (see *The Extension Curriculum* below).
- Pupils select three optional subjects from Art, Computing, DET, Drama, Music and Physical Education.
- Pupils select two language options from Arabic, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Ancient Greek.

Some pupils who show particular proficiency in languages, often as a result of being bilingual, are permitted to take an appropriate (I)GCSE in that language at the end of the Third Form.

Pupils may select English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as an option in place of one of their modern language options. Pupils following the EAP course in the Third Form will continue to study their chosen Modern Foreign Language as one of their (I)GCSE options in the Fourth and Fifth Forms.

### Fourth and Fifth Form

Subjects are examined at the end of the Fifth Form as GCSEs or IGCSEs. The choice of the examination board is at the discretion of each Head of Department in consultation with the Deputy Head Academic: each choice is made on the basis of what is felt to be a suitable fit for our pupils and what provides the best preparation for Sixth Form study. Pupils are not entered for public examination in the Fourth Form, so as to maintain the continuity of teaching and academic study during that year.

All pupils sit (I)GCSE examinations in Mathematics, English (Language and Literature), the three principal Sciences and five optional subjects, at least one of which must be a Modern Foreign Language. The optional subjects are Ancient Greek, Arabic, Art, Chinese, Computing, DET, Drama, French, Geography, German, History, Italian, Latin, Music, PE, Russian, Spanish and TPR. This broad curriculum ensures all pupils acquire advanced skills of speaking and listening as well as firm foundations in numeracy and literacy.

In the Sciences, the majority of pupils are entered for individual sciences, leading to three separate qualifications. Following the Fourth Form and GCSE Mock examinations, a small number of pupils will be advised, by the Head of STEM, to follow the Dual Award Science curriculum.

### Sixth Form

Subjects in the Sixth Form are assessed via A levels. The courses offered are the ones we believe to be the most coherent and intellectually stimulating. It is important that pupils are given the best chance to gain the grades they require for top universities (including, but not limited to, Cambridge and Oxford) but that they are also prepared thoroughly for the type of work they will encounter at university.

The vast majority of Lower Sixth pupils begin the Sixth Form studying four principal subjects and an extension option (see *The Extension Curriculum* below). The principal subjects, which can be chosen in any combination, include: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Classical Greek, Computing, DET,

Drama and Theatre, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, Government & Politics, History, History of Art, Italian, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Mathematics and Further Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Russian, Spanish and TPR.

Pupils have the opportunity to drop a subject at the end of Michaelmas Term, at the middle and end of Lent Term, or at the end of Lower Sixth. Pupils are advised to continue with the study of four subjects for as long as possible to maintain breadth and ensure effective decision making. Pupils are awarded final UCAS predictions at the end of their Lower Sixth year.

A small number of pupils who require extra support and encouragement in the transition from GCSE to A level may begin the Lower Sixth studying three A level subjects alongside Study Assistance. This internal course aims to provide a sound foundation for Sixth Form studies by encouraging pupils to improve study methods, organisation, approach, attitude and effectiveness.

## **The Extension Curriculum**

### Voluntaries

Voluntaries form an important part of the School curriculum. We operate a full programme of activities that are appropriate to the educational needs of the pupils in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. We aim to teach beyond the prescribed curriculum, thereby broadening the intellectual horizons of our pupils.

The Voluntaries system enables pupils to access both directed academic support (Academic Surgeries: one-to-one or small-group support sessions) and a large range of extra-curricular academic, cultural and physical activities (Electives). Voluntaries take place largely between 1715 and 1845 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

A programme of Electives that run twice weekly throughout the first two terms of the year. Pupils in the First and Second Form are encouraged to participate. For those in the Third and Fourth Form, participation is compulsory. As pupils progress in to Fifth Form and beyond, they are encouraged to engage with the programme and assume positions of responsibility through leadership roles.

All pupils are encouraged to go beyond what is possible in the classroom, either to extend their education in an area of interest or to try something completely new. There are also occasional one-off lectures from outside speakers. The strong relationship that exists between pupils and their tutors ensures that the pupils gain appropriate guidance with their choice of Voluntaries. Further information about our Voluntaries programme can be found [here](#).

### Trivium

Trivium is a timetabled Third Form (Year 9) programme with no syllabus and no prescribed content. It is a course based on 'interestingness'. The brief is to educate; to introduce pupils to ideas and culture, to sow seeds and to broaden the educational experience. Pupils study one of ten different course per term with examples including: the music of protest movements; the history of the Olympic games; identity; mindfulness; Chinese architecture; surrealist art; Italian cinema and AI. As part of the Trivium course, all Third Form pupils are involved in an introduction to British parliamentary style debating, competing as part of an inter-House team.

### Sixth Form Extension

Senior pupils all study a timetabled extension course in the Lower Sixth year, which for the majority provides a schedule of supervisor-guided self-study of a particular topic, using the Extended Project

Qualification (EPQ) framework, or Quadrivium, our bespoke teacher-led programme that facilitate deeper study of niche areas of interest.

Other Sixth Form extension options include learning a new language *ab initio* to GCSE level, and study for a music diploma.

All Upper Sixth Form pupils attend a Sixth Form Lecture series, which involves weekly talks from eminent speakers.

Tuesday and Thursday evenings are set aside for Senior Academic Societies, primarily aimed at Sixth Form pupils, but open to inquiring juniors. Almost all subjects studied at Sixth Form level have an accompanying society.

### **University and Careers preparation**

The School is committed to providing a planned programme of careers education for all pupils and which incorporates information, advice and guidance so that they make the right choice of career path for themselves and develop an appreciation of a range of careers and of the world of work.

Led by the Head of Careers and Higher Education and supported by members of Academic Staff, the Careers Department provides an effective and accessible careers information resource to the whole school community through various initiatives, and seeks to engage and motivate young people to take ownership of their own choice towards careers and further education. Sessions are delivered in a variety of ways including assemblies, academic lessons, Learning for Life lessons and small group sessions with dedicated staff. Alongside a number of large, high-profile in-person annual events such as *Ask the Experts* and the US Universities Fair, work experience and higher education opportunities are advertised regularly through dedicated channels on Teams. Parental webinars are also offered on an annual basis.

Careers education begins in the First and Second Form with subject teachers delivering sessions on what careers opportunities are available from studying their subject. In the Third Form, pupils attend a series of lessons in a dedicated *Careers Week* which explore employability skills and 'dream jobs'. In the Fourth Form, pupils are introduced to the Unifrog platform, which helps them begin to explore a range of careers and university options. Fifth Form pupils are given detailed advice on obtaining work experience, CV writing and A level options. In the Sixth Form, in addition to half-termly assemblies and small group sessions on all aspects of UCAS and university applications, pupils submit a CV in advance of attending a workplace interview, given by local business owners. The UCAS day at the end of Summer Term provides pupils with subject-specific personal statement workshops along with the opportunity to meet with individuals from a range of leading UK universities.

### **Curriculum developments**

These are discussed and monitored by the Academic Development Committee (ADC, concerned with academic strategy), which is chaired by the Head and the Academic Curriculum Committee (ACC, the Heads of Departments' committee), chaired by the Deputy Head Academic.

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