



OUNDLE

School

The Oundle Curriculum

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. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

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 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.

The School seeks to ensure that pupil progress and achievement is in no way held back by education support issues. Staff will differentiate their teaching as a matter of course to cater for the needs of the individual child.

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

The Core Curriculum:

The School is divided into seven year groups, and for curriculum purposes these are grouped into three distinct 'phases' of education. There is an intake of about sixty pupils into the First Form, with that number swelling to around two hundred in the Third Form; the first three years make up the 'foundation phase'. The Fourth and Fifth Form represent the 'GCSE phase', with the Lower and Upper Sixth making up the senior part of the School. 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.

Pupils with special educational needs are offered support throughout their time at Oundle by the specialist Education Support department. The Education Support department is not seen as a separate department but is fully integrated into all other academic disciplines. It is essential that all teachers are aware of the specific techniques they should employ to ensure that all pupils are able to reach their academic potential. Where a pupil has a statement, we ensure that the educational requirements of the pupil's statement are met.

The Examined Curriculum:

All subjects are examined as IGCSEs, which we believe is a superior alternative to home-grown GCSE. A broad range of subjects are studied in the junior years and though choice exists, it is limited. We do not wish to be overly-prescriptive, but the choices on offer to pupils in Forms One to Three still ensure that all pupils gain an educational grounding in Mathematics and logic, Scientific method, English Language and Literature as well as the practical and creative disciplines. All pupils sit IGCSE in Mathematics, English, three Sciences and at least one modern language, thus all pupils acquire advanced skills of speaking and listening as well as firm foundations in numeracy and literacy.

Subjects in the Sixth Form are assessed either via A levels or as a Cambridge Pre-U. The course offered is the one 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 Oxbridge) but that they are also prepared thoroughly for the type of work they will encounter at university.

Further external qualifications may be gained (such as the AQA Extended Project Qualification) through the programme of extension that runs through the Lower Sixth.

The Extension Curriculum:

Non-examined courses and '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.

All pupils from the First to Fourth Form enjoy (paradoxically) a compulsory programme of 'voluntaries'. These 'voluntaries' comprise a large range of extra-curricular academic, cultural and physical activities, and are available through the first three Quarters of the year. All pupils are encouraged to 'go beyond' what is possible in the classroom, either to further 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. A secondary arm of the voluntaries programme allows pupils in all year groups to gain one-on-one academic assistance (either to support or to extend) in departments on Tuesdays and Thursdays before supper.

Senior pupils all study a timetabled extension course in the Lower Sixth year, which either provide a chance for expertise (Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)) or breadth (our bespoke Oundle *Trivium* course (from 2016)). All Upper Sixth Form pupils follow a Sixth Form Lecture course which involves weekly talks from eminent speakers and follow-up discussions in small groups, with guidance from

teachers. Tuesday and Thursday evenings are set aside for senior academic societies. Almost all subjects studied at Sixth Form level have an accompanying society.

Pupils are encouraged to think about university applications and potential career choices at an early stage, and a full careers programme exists through the Sixth Form. Pupils engage with the careers process from as early as the Fourth Form through the *Cambridge Occupational Analysts* programme.

PSHE lessons are delivered to all pupils up to and including the Fifth Form, either in Houses, Form periods or in a specific lesson set aside for this purpose. Our PSHE programme helps to mould young people who are aware of their responsibilities to society and are ready to make a full contribution both during their time with us and when they leave Oundle.

Curriculum development:

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.