



Cothill House Policy Documents

ISSR 2 Curriculum

Date: September 2023
Next review: September 2024

Introduction

The curriculum at Cothill House amounts to all the knowledge and skills that the boys are expected to learn both inside and outside the classroom. It is our primary aim to provide as broad and exciting a curriculum as possible that exposes boys to a very wide range of subjects, activities and challenges. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Teaching Policy.

Our ultimate goal is to prepare the boys for the entrance and scholarship exams to some of the leading independent senior schools in the country. We are also responsible for guiding and preparing them for their lives beyond. In addition to the academic subjects, which form the core of the curriculum, there is also a strong focus at Cothill on non-core subjects and activities. Throughout their time at Cothill, our boys receive specialist teaching in art and ceramics, Design Technology, woodwork, ICT, music, music technology, drama and sport.

Aims of the Curriculum

- To nurture and fulfil the potential of each boy in our care such that, whatever their starting point or ability level, they make the most progress possible
- To teach boys the values of hard work, humility and good manners
- To teach respect for the needs, feelings and property of others
- To teach boys to respect and show kindness to others

Additionally, a mnemonic of COTHILL reflects our core values:

Courage; Originality; Teamwork; Humour; Integrity; Love of Learning; Love of Life.

More specifically:

Courage - To help boys to have courage on the sports field and the courage of their convictions in the classroom

Originality - To promote the creative side of every boy

Teamwork - To create an environment in which teamwork is highly valued

Humour - To ensure the challenges of everyday life are tackled with a sense of perspective and good humour

Integrity - To develop confident, self-disciplined boys who understand and value integrity

Love of Learning - To instil in boys a passion for learning about the world

Love of Life - To help boys acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to prosper in later life

The curriculum takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

We do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Indeed, these values are actively inculcated via the school curriculum, the relationships between boys and staff and the everyday interactions that occur as part of life in our boarding school community.

We provide a full-time, supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. All boys acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

We offer the boys a rich and varied curriculum with numerous opportunities to learn to see the world from other cultures' points of view and to learn about the achievements of other cultures in addition to those of England over the last thousand years. An example includes the world as viewed through the eyes of an immigrant child in the recent novel, *The Boy at the Back of the Class* (Year 6 English).

A programme of personal, social, health and economic education is planned and delivered that:

- (i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
- (ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act(a).

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

RSE is fully embedded into our curriculum and is taught as part of PSHE as well as having standalone sessions. The scheme begins in Year 5 and carries on all the way through to Year 8.

In Year 5, the focus explores how loss and change are part of the cycle of life, moving on to the changes involved in puberty for both genders as well as hygiene, healthy diet, movement and sleep. It also covers conception, pregnancy and birth.

In Year 6, the framework of Year 5 will be reviewed and expanded, and the boys explore the differences between adolescence and puberty, how we all change at different times and develop skills to manage the physical and emotional changes. Changes at puberty for both genders are discussed as well as managing feelings.

Year 7 includes two whole year group sessions rather than the smaller groups which are the hallmark of Year 5 and 6. This looks at the Virtual Revolution/ Internet and its impact on sex education. The second session is about our relationship with our parents during the adolescent years.

Year 8 is again 2 sessions, the first of which examines wellbeing and adolescence, looking at taking care of our minds and our bodies and exploring the role of emotions and how to manage them. The second session looks at sex, sexuality, contraception and the law. This session looks at exploring different relationships and covers orientation and sexual fluidity.

Parental involvement is encouraged and a session with Julie is available to them. This session complements the sessions with the boys and in 1.5 hours examines how to talk to your children about puberty, sex and sexuality.

The Juniors: Years 4 to 6

Year 4 (Fours): 8 to 9 year-olds

Year 5 (Fives): 9 to 10 year-olds

Year 6 (Sixes): 10 to 11 year-olds

In the Fours it is hard to differentiate ability levels when the pupils first arrive and so, if there is a two class intake, the classes are organised chronologically in the beginning with necessary changes being made at the start of the spring or summer terms. Mathematics is usually set.

Emphasis is placed on the development of core literacy and numeracy skills, but balance and breadth in the curriculum are not neglected.

Verbal and Non Verbal reasoning are taught through English and Maths respectively, to develop boys' analytical and problem-solving skills. Resources used are both paper and IT-based.

French is taught throughout with a special emphasis on building confidence through songs and games and acquiring basic, everyday vocabulary.

Generous allocations of time are given over to Art, Design Technology, Music LAMDA and Sport, all of which are taught by specialists.

Religious Studies and PSHE are also included.

Boys attend assemblies each week that cover an array of themes and that celebrate recent achievements. These will be led by the Headmaster, a member of staff or a class.

Pupils in Year 6 are under the academic and pastoral care of a Form Teacher. Classes will follow schemes of work that are broadly based on the core of the ISEB's syllabuses in preparation for 11+ style exams during year 6 (internal only), leading to 13+ exams in Year 8. All pupils start Latin in Year 6. The learning of Classics enjoys a strong tradition and includes some study of the civilisation, history and mythology elements of the subject as well as a firm focus on the language side.

The Seniors - Years 7 and 8

Year 7: 11 to 12 year-olds

Year 8: 12 to 13 year-olds (CE classes and 1 Scholarship class)

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is largely, though not entirely, planned according to the Scholarship and Common Entrance requirements of the senior schools.

Pupils prepare to offer these subjects at Common Entrance:

English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Latin, Geography & History.

Sauveterre, near Toulouse in France has been, for 30 years, where all year 7 boys have spent one whole term, learning the language and the culture of France. Sauveterre was sold to Downe House School in 2021 and given Covid complications, there is some uncertainty surrounding this arrangement going forward. The expectation is that, in Year 7, all boys will spend the second half of the summer term in Sauveterre.

Here, all subjects are taught in French and cultural excursions and exchanges are frequent. Being immersed in French, boys make dramatic progress linguistically, and a deep affection and affinity for French culture is invariably the outcome.

In Year 8, maths is set. This allows all boys to learn at the speed that suits them best and enables a very individual approach to be offered.

School assemblies focus on events happening in the news and aim to raise awareness and understanding of cultures and peoples facing challenges in the wider world. They also promote moral and ethical understanding.

All boys in Year 8 are expected to be involved in a major theatrical production.

Schemes of Work

The aims and aspirations of each department can be found in the Departments' Schemes of Work. Schemes take into account the ages & aptitudes and needs of all boys. It is recognised that some boys will require Learning Support and/or EFL support. Differentiation will take place as necessary.

No Schemes will ever undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Cothill prides itself on the number of extra-curricular activities which are offered. These are provided by full time staff and some external staff.

Sport

Principal sports are football (autumn term), rugby & hockey (spring term), cricket, athletics & tennis (summer term). In addition to regular sports sessions in school time (one hour /day, five days a week), boys have opportunities to attend coaching sessions with local clubs and coaches off site.

Additional sports include: cross-country, swimming, golf, polo, table-tennis, basketball, squash & climbing. External tennis and golf coaches are employed. At weekends, school bicycles are used around the grounds, alongside ripsticks, inline skates, scooters & go karts. A series of ramps are available at these times.

Music and Drama

Up to three-quarters of the boys in the school receive tuition in a musical instrument from visiting peripatetic teachers. There is a Junior & Senior choir, an orchestra, brass group and other ensembles. Regular concerts and smaller recitals are held each term and ABRSM exams are sat each term, as well as internal music scholarships once a year. There is at least one annual choir tour but uncertainty remains for 2021-2022 given the ongoing Covid situation. This is in addition to other choral events we would hope to hold at local churches, nursing homes and pubs.

Between five and ten rock groups rehearse regularly and the highlight of their year is 'Rockhill', an event with a festival atmosphere, held in June on an outdoor stage.

Several dozen boys attend LAMDA lessons and take the associated exams.

In the spring term, two large stage productions are staged: one is for Years 4 & 5 (with every boy involved) and the other is the 'Leavers' Play' for Year 8, again, with each boy in the year involved. Smaller productions are occasionally produced in Year 7.

Outings

Throughout the year, boys go out of school on educational trips. Recent examples include camping & canoeing trips on the River Wye, Oppidan camps in Year 5, weekend trips to Vienna and a Leavers' trip in June (at an outdoor activity centre).

Day trips to Oxford, London and other local attractions occur regularly. These might include time at museums & galleries, in nature reserves, attending lectures, going out for a meal, etc. The school enters a team of Staff and boys each summer for fun runs at Blenheim and Oxford. In some years, the school spends one whole day walking a 10 mile section of the Ridgeway, often raising money for charity.

On Sundays, afternoon trips are organised to cinemas, activity centres, etc. A film is watched every Saturday evening. Opportunities for BBQs during the summer months are legion.

In School

For six days a week - including Sunday - boys can enjoy supervised free time in the pottery, a design centre and woodwork room. A computer room and library are also popular. On Sundays, boys are able to visit the woods to build camps and play.

Clubs afternoon is on Thursday. Clubs might include: art, board games, campcraft, cards, chess, coding, cookery, croquet, design, modelling, radio-controlled cars, revision, science, slacklining, sumo, wide games, etc

Lectures are organised several times a term. Other outside agencies visit on an occasional basis, to run workshops in theatre, puzzling, rowing, drumming, etc.

In the autumn term, a 'Theme Week' is organised, involving a whole raft of activities, including visiting speakers, special meals, events & unusual lessons that focus the whole school upon the chosen theme.