



Cothill House Policy Documents

ISSR 2a, b, c Curriculum

Date: November 2018
Next review: summer 2019

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 instill in boys a passion for learning about the world
- To nurture and fulfil the potential of each boy in our care
- To help boys acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to prosper in later life
- To create an environment in which teamwork is highly valued
- To develop self-confident, self-disciplined boys who understand and value integrity
- To teach boys the values of hard work, modesty and good manners
- To teach respect for the needs, feelings and property of others
- To teach boys to respect and uphold one of the school's most treasured qualities: being kind to others
- To help boys to have courage on the sports field and the courage of their convictions in the classroom
- To promote the creative side of every boy

The Juniors: Years 4 and 5

Year 4 (Fours): 8 to 9 year-olds (one or two classes)

In the Fours it is hard to differentiate ability levels when the pupils first arrive and so 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.

General Studies is begun in year 5 and offers a breadth which goes beyond the core curriculum across three themes: politics and current affairs, ethics and the history of art. As these are taught, a number of areas of the boys' PSHE curriculum are also covered such as understanding about democracy and banking.

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.

The Seniors - Years 6 to 8

Year 6: 10 to 11 year-olds (3 or 4 classes)

Year 7: 11 to 12 year-olds (2 or 3 classes in the autumn and spring, 4 or 5 classes in the summer)

Year 8: 12 to 13 year-olds (4 CE classes and 1 Scholarship class)

Pupils in Year 6 are under the academic and pastoral care of a Form Teacher. Mindful of their performances during the previous terms and in exams, the boys will be streamed into a potential scholars' class and then mixed ability classes. These classes will follow schemes of work that are broadly based on the core of the ISEB's syllabuses in preparation for 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.

Global Citizenship is encouraged through General Studies. This focuses on raising awareness of issues facing the world and the environment.

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.

In Year 7 all boys spend a term at Sauveterre, in France. Here, all subjects are taught in French and cultural excursions and exchanges are frequent. Being immersed in French for a whole term, 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.

Classes often take turns to lead an assembly. This may take the form of a presentation, role plays, or a short sketch on a topic of the boys' choice. The aim is for assemblies to be informative, enjoyable and memorable.

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

The aims and aspirations of each department can be found in the Departments' Schemes of Work.

Years 7 to 8 receive some input with regard to careers. All boys at Cothill House are encouraged to fulfil their potential and, to that end, receive impartial advice and support from all Staff with regard to the choices they will have to make in the future. It is particularly true that at the top of the School where boys begin to discover their real strengths.

The lectures from visiting speakers provide an opportunity for all boys to hear from a wide range of professionals with no particular bias. Thus, inspirational speakers in the last few years have included soldiers, authors, scientists (from a number of disciplines), musicians, teachers, explorers, sportsmen, charity workers, etc.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Cothill prides itself on the number of extra-curricular activities which are offered.

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.

Minor 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. Two choir tours are being held in 2018, one to Durham & one to France. This is in addition to other choral events 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. The greatest trip of all is in Year 7, when boys spend a whole term at the Château de Sauveterre, in the south of France, but other residential trips include the Leavers' trip in June (at an outdoor activity centre), camping & canoeing trips on the River Wye, Oppidan camps in Year 5 and weekend trips to Vienna.

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. Most years, the school spends one whole day walking a 10 mile section of the Ridgeway, often raising money for charity. In 2018, a major fundraising initiative for the RAF Benevolent Fund is being held.

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 a 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. Outside speakers are booked and deliver these lectures during evening prep time. Other outside agencies visit on an occasional basis, to run workshops in theatre, puzzling, rowing, drumming, etc.

Class assemblies run throughout the year, and classes will be expected to devise and present at least one assembly - on a topic of their choice - each year.

In the autumn term, the Director of Studies organises a 'Theme Week', where a whole raft of activities, including visiting speakers, special meals, events & unusual lessons focus the whole school upon the chosen theme.