



# COTTESMORE SCHOOL

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## *Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils*

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### Introduction

Cottesmore School has a legal duty to uphold the law on equal opportunities for pupils and staff alike. By virtue of paragraph 3 of the ISSRs (which relates to quality of education provided) teaching at the school must not discriminate against pupils contrary to part 6 of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, paragraph 5 of the ISSRs (which relates to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils) requires schools to ensure that 'principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The school therefore needs to have rigorous policies and procedures in place that are regularly reviewed by governance advisors and senior management. The Headmaster and the senior management team will ensure that everyone is actively engaged in implementing the policy.

The school's equal opportunities policy will be made available upon request.

The school has separate equal opportunities policies for staff and pupils as different laws apply to each.

### Discrimination

The main types of unlawful discrimination cover acts of direct and indirect discrimination and harassment on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. A failure to make reasonable adjustments also amounts to unlawful discrimination.

Age discrimination law does not apply to pupils.

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Cottesmore School ('the School').

The School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity (\*protected characteristics).



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## Aims

The aims of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy.

All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

## Admission

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. Although an academically selective School, each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the School's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their gender, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs ('SEN').

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School. The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

## Educational Services

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School



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- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:
  - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
  - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

## Religious Belief

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community.

The senior leadership team actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

## Requests for variation in the school uniform

All pupils are required to wear a uniform. The Headmaster will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the School's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## Reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils.

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's SEN and Disability Policy.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place which can be found on the School website and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take



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advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

There are three separate strategy documents that fall within the auspices of the school's 'Equal Opportunities Policy', i.e. SEN/G&T(MA)/Differentiation, Gender and Multicultural education. In addition to these three policies there are several other areas of education that need to be separately mentioned in a policy on Equal Opportunities, i.e.

1. Streaming;
2. Teaching styles;
3. Entitlement of access to the whole course of study;
4. Progression within the course of study.
5. Special educational needs.

## 1. Streaming

Ways need to be found of catering for the needs of pupils of all abilities which will fully challenge the most able pupils, and encourage those of average ability and below to higher levels of achievement. At Cottesmore the pupils are streamed from Form 1 upwards, although in Forms 1 and 2 the streaming is less rigorous. Streaming alone will not ensure equality of opportunity, e.g. the Form of a particular pupil may not be the one that would have been chosen with respect to ability in Science. (Some 'setting' does happen with Maths and English). For this reason certain pupils may need support in some way or other to maximise their potential.

## 2. Teaching styles.

The following can be taken as a central theme:

*"Pupils should experience a variety of experiences/activities during a course of study and during a lesson if possible. There should be opportunities for individual and/or group activities. Staff should encourage pupils to pursue a piece of work over a period of time, e.g. project work, where research is carried out - possibly using a library or computer".*

The staff of each department regularly exchange their experiences of the schemes of work at Department meetings - the successes and failures of different strategies are a part of this exchange. For further details on a variety of teaching style see the policy on ***Differentiation*** and each Department's schemes of work.

## 3. Entitlement of access to the whole course.

All pupils follow the same Scheme of Work in each Department. The higher ability groups may work at a faster pace and/or study more extension work than lower ability ones. Differentiation in lessons is used and support may be available for SEN/EAL pupils.

## 4. Progression within the course of study.

There is an implication in the way in which the I.S.E.B. syllabuses/National Curriculum is set out, that pupils learn fundamental concepts in a linear fashion. This is not necessarily the case and care is exercised in the construction of a scheme of work. Some pupils make what appears to be erratic progress through the levels. Also, pupils join the School at a variety of ages. For this reason, our schemes of work should be a 'spiral' system, allowing revisiting and reinforcement of concepts and



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the extension to a more advanced level. Tests, and particularly examinations, might include one or two questions from a previous year's work, so allowing for achievement in statements that were experienced/assessed previously. The schemes of work should satisfy the needs of pupils of all abilities. Also, they should be sufficiently demanding to test the most able pupils to the full, and encourage those of average ability and below to new levels of achievement.

## 5. **Special educational needs** (see More Able & SEN Policies)

For staff working with pupils who have been formally designated as having Special Educational Needs and English as an Additional Language the policy on 'Differentiation', which is concerned with devising tasks, teaching in relation to those tasks, and assessing pupils' responses to them, is equally applicable. Sometimes necessary changes engendered by a pupil's specific statement of SEN/EAL will need to be made to the teacher's normal tasks, resources, responses, support or group structure. To ensure that pupils who have been designated as 'gifted/**More Able**' are appropriately challenged, teachers frequently modify the scale and/or the extent of the tasks with which pupils are presented. In addition, such pupils are encouraged or required to read, write and talk about subject matter and to engage in discussions and/or to work with similarly 'gifted' pupils. For the less able, tasks are usually presented or re-presented in several different ways. Teachers tend to afford these pupils more time, provide them with additional support by way of explanations and extra resources, and, as appropriate, allow them to complete their tasks at a relatively slower pace. Support is given also in out-of-class sessions.

Experience suggests that the vast majority of pupils in the School for whom English is an additional language quite quickly attain a level of understanding and a degree of fluency that make normal classroom communication possible. For the relatively few pupils for whom that is not the case, the staff rightly exercise considerable patience, and seek extra help, e.g.:

- by repeatedly re-wording and re-phrasing any discourse in English with the pupil;
- by employing, and encouraging the pupil to employ, non-verbal modes of communication, e.g. gestures and drawings, to support any attempts at verbal discourse;
- by enlisting the aid of any appropriately bilingual pupils in the group, or that of any available support member of staff.

Pedagogical and related decisions and actions regarding any pupils who have some sensory impairment, communication problem or physical handicap, are taken only after consultation with those in the School who have specific responsibility for their welfare and support. The School and each Department encourages any such pupils to use their normal aids to speaking, listening, reading or writing. In striving to meet individual needs, teachers make efforts to provide any recommended computational, technological or other facilities, in order to adapt work-spaces, equipment, instruments or furniture.

## **Pre-prep**

If a class teacher believes that a child might have Special Educational Needs then they can raise it with the Head of the Pre-prep department, the Principal, and also the Head of the SEN department in the Prep School. It is considered that children under the age of 7 should not be fully assessed but differentiated tasks can be created in order to help the child. If it is felt necessary, they can have extra 1:1 lesson with a member of the SEN department. If a child is thought to be gifted/more able then differentiated tasks can be set in lessons and also a close eye is kept on the child's progress and then when they transfer into the Prep school a more specialist programme may be created.

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To be reviewed December 2026



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## Differentiation Strategy

**Differentiation** occurs when there is planned intervention by the teacher with the intention of maximising the achievements of all pupils based on their differing individual needs. Differentiation can be described as having five main components: **Resources, Tasks, Response, Support, Group Structure**. Each of the five components of differentiation is explored in detail below. Schemes of Work should reflect current good practice.

**Resources** should:

a). *have an appropriate reading level.*

The language used in lessons, preps, tests and if possible, in examinations, is carefully considered for the ages and abilities of the pupils. New words used in each topic are emphasised. Staff aim to use familiar language and everyday examples from within their subjects in discussions with the pupils.

b). *be easy to use.*

Prep sheets, worksheets etc. should be typed/word processed on most occasions. Instructions should be clear to understand and to carry out.

c). *be well designed.*

Pupils use attractive full colour text books and quality worksheets. Departments produce a great deal of their own material as well as using published materials.

d). *be in many different forms.*

e.g. texts, worksheets, computer programmes, web-based/online learning and DVD recordings.

e). *have a scheme of work that uses available resources and shows progression and continuity within the course.*

Schemes of work include this element.

f). *be kept in well managed storage/retrieval systems.*

The resources of texts, worksheets and DVD's are housed in each department. Each Head of Department is responsible for managing the resources in their own area and for maintaining their relevance to the topics being taught. Computers are available in all rooms. They are linked to the School Network where central programmes are stored.

g). *prepare pupils for the methods of study that they will be expected to use.*

At their entry into school the pupils are informed of the methods of study they will be expected to use. Various 'help sheets' e.g. how to present work, are available.

h). *build study skills into the Scheme of Work.*

Pupils study and learn the main concepts of the topics covered in each subject. Exercise books and files are monitored to check pupils' presentation of work and progress with learning. Lessons are taught in the ICT Room when appropriate. Pupils revise for tests; these are perceived by the pupils as being important. Preps, tests and examinations corrections are done by discussion between the staff and pupils. The PSHE programme is used to develop study skills alongside the work done on this theme within each department.



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**Tasks** should:

a). *show variety throughout a topic and within a lesson if possible.*  
A variety of approaches to the teaching of concepts are used in lessons.

b). *be suitable for the abilities of the pupils..*

The work of the pupils is reviewed as they work through each topic. Problem areas are followed up either as a class or in small groups, or with individuals. A variety of texts and worksheets can be used to match resources/tasks with a pupil's ability. Streaming allows us to offer the pupils an appropriate learning pace and depth of content. In lower ability groups, we make a particular point of starting from a position of existing knowledge within a familiar context and then moving on to new tasks. Both written and spoken questions/vocabulary are structured to enable pupils of all abilities to understand and respond.

c). *have a structure that enables the pupil to stay on task.*

Lists of what is to be covered in a lesson can be highlighted at the start of a lesson. The use of structured worksheets etc. can help.

d). *identify possible outcomes.*

Work done by other pupils can be used to illustrate possible outcomes and to inform and motivate pupils, e.g. producing posters about a concept or poems. Project work could be accompanied by a brief to illustrate the areas that must be covered and to show the types of outcome that might arise, e.g. a poster, a report, a presentation, a play, a game or a magazine.

e). *match the pupils' interests.*

Pupils can do 'self-assessment' to review the areas they 'enjoyed' or 'did well at'. Following Common Entrance, the pupils have a special programme of study for their time in 'Remove'. This special programme of study should allow the pupils to leave the School with a positive image of each subject.

f). *allow for some choices to be made by the pupil.*

Pupils may, with the teacher's guidance, have some choice in their programme of study, e.g.

- i. a study route through a topic,
- ii. the order in which to do various parts,
- iii. the type of outcome if they are doing project work.

g). *allow the teacher to build a learning route through a study topic.*

The scheme of work is designed to allow for continuity and progression. The teacher can pick his/her own route through a topic.

The **Response** should:

a). *make course objectives clear to pupils.*

Each topic lists the details that will be studied.

b). *make assessment criteria clear to the pupils.*

Preps, tests and examinations are marked and feedback is given so pupils know how they are doing and if they are working towards success in that particular year or at Common Entrance/Scholarship.

c). *create an atmosphere where pupils discuss their own and each other's work.*

Pupils can be encouraged to comment on and discuss each other's work, as long as the process is supportive.



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d). *be given to pupils in small groups.*

During classwork pupils may work in small groups of two, three or four. Even within a broadly similar ability Form such groups can be 'set' with respect to their potential understanding of scientific concepts. Also, different members of a group can use their particular skills to help other members of the group.

e). *allow for individual action plans to be built for the pupils.*

The pupils can review their own work and set their own targets. Hopefully there is sufficient time for staff to effectively work with more than a few pupils in formulating individual action plans. However, targets are set for the majority of the group when work is marked.

f). *reflect what the pupil has achieved and consider the pupil's previous achievements.*

Staff endeavour to use constructive criticism and advice at all pertinent opportunities.

**Support** can be:

a). *from the teacher.*

This can occur during a lesson or often in staff's own time, e.g. at break times and lunch times.

b). *from an SEN/EAL teacher.*

Help with certain areas, mainly literacy and numeracy, is available on a one-to-one basis. This can include going over the understanding of the wording of prep questions, examination questions etc. Support is provided also in some whole-class lessons. EAL support is provided on a one-to-one basis and in lessons.

c). *from appropriate resources.*

e.g. texts, worksheets, computer programmes, web-based learning, DVD recordings are integrated into the scheme of work.

d). *by celebrating achievement.*

Achievement is praised in many different ways, e.g. by Stars, stickers and Show-ups. Pupil's work is regularly displayed in each room and in public areas.

**Group Structure** can support differentiation by:

a) *the structure of the teaching groups.*

The Forms in the school are decided on a whole-curriculum basis. Pupils are taught for most subjects in their allocated Form. The broad streaming is seen as a way in which pupils are grouped with respect to their overall potential ability. The streaming allows some groups of pupils to work together on more challenging aspects and increase their rate of work whilst allowing other groups to reinforce knowledge and skills, work at a slightly slower pace and/or gain the extra support they need from slightly smaller classes. However, this streaming may not necessarily correspond to the way in which each subject would 'set'. Maths is the major department that does 'set' in most year groups. If a pupil is struggling in their particular Form with regard to any subject then extra help is available.

b) *teaching in small groups.*

During some classwork, pupils work in small groups of two, three or four. This helps to support the co-operation between the pupils and hopefully builds up the confidence of the less confident pupils. The need to express their thoughts to others often helps pupils prepare for oral work and the more open-ended tasks.



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c) *flexibility within the group when setting the task and responding to individual's needs.*

Project work can be produced by larger groups e.g. four pupils, if the teacher thinks that this is desirable and as long as the pupils know their own role in producing the project. One collaboratively produced piece of work helps to encourage commitment and responsibility in the pupils.

d) *allowing individual work.*

Pupils will be able to develop their independent working methods and increase their progress if some aspects of the course are taught in this way. The more able will benefit from the intensity of such work. The less able and/or less confident pupil will benefit from the privacy if he/she is making errors. It is important to match the task to the pupil's ability in each case if progression is to occur.



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## Multicultural Strategy

By its very nature some aspects of all subjects are concerned with different cultures. It is a challenge for everyone to acknowledge and respect cultural diversity, both with respect to subject content and to the different backgrounds of the pupils whilst promoting democracy, and individual liberty.

1. Each department operates within this whole-school multicultural strategy, ensuring that its work reflects these broad aims as closely as possible.
2. The staff use all appropriate opportunities to challenge prejudice as it arises and there is a consistent approach to dealing with racist incidents.
3. The staff draw upon material from a variety of cultures and countries in their schemes of work, e.g. in Science, the production of salt in Sri Lanka, and in Geography, land use in rainforests, providing a world view. The pupils themselves are an important multicultural resource within the classroom as we have pupils from a number of different cultural backgrounds, e.g. those from continental Europe and those from China and Korea. Their experiences are valued and shared.
4. The staff recognise the contributions that have been made by other cultures to the development of their subject. They adopt the view that cultural diversity has a positive advantage.
5. Resources are chosen which:
  - a. portray a world view as seen from different cultural perspectives and thereby communicate how it feels to be of another ethnic or cultural group;
  - b. are factually accurate and use up-to-date text, illustrations and data;
  - c. do not:
    - stereotype individuals or groups;
    - equate the 'white person' with "civilisation" or superiority;
    - use paternalistic approaches to other peoples or cultures;
    - reduce all non-western societies to the exotic, picturesque and primitive.
  - d. show the achievements and attributes of different societies, both past and present;
  - e. show children of different ethnic groups involved in the activities;
  - f. positively and realistically portray children from a variety of ethnic and cultural groups and class backgrounds;
  - g. have illustrations that avoid caricature;
  - h. accurately reflect the population of Britain today.



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6. Attention is drawn to ways in which evidence can be misused to assert a point of view, e.g. about the world food supply and causes of pollution.
7. Self-evaluation by departmental discussion is used to assess the implementation of this policy.
8. The staff can, by careful use of language, avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.



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## Gender Strategy

1. All the subjects form the core of education for all the pupils and so must be accessible for males and females alike. (Sports are taught both separately and conjointly where appropriate).
2. All Departments aim to provide equal opportunities for pupils within a broad, balanced curriculum, which does not discriminate against pupils because of gender. We aim for the schemes of work and their implementation to:
  - i. reflect the interests of both boys and girls;
  - ii. challenge sexist views but still respect cultural diversity;
  - iii. discourage boys from dominating lessons and encourage girls to view their contributions as having equal value - effective classroom management can reduce much of this 'domination' problem. Boys and girls working in mixed groups are viewed as a positive step, particularly in raising the achievement of boys;
  - iv. value equally the experiences of both girls and boys;
  - v. be set in a familiar context to which all pupils can relate, e.g. Physics topics are not just based on cars etc.
  - vi. show that the teacher can by careful use of language, avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of societies.
3. We use resources which:
  - i. portray a world view as seen from male and female perspectives and thereby communicate how it may feel to be of another gender;
  - ii. are factually accurate and use up-to-date text, illustrations and data;
  - iii. do not:
    - a) stereotype individuals or groups;
    - b) equate men with being the dominant gender or women the subservient gender;
  - iv. show the achievements and attributes of both genders, both past and present, e.g. by looking at the work of famous scientists, such as Marie Curie, famous musicians etc.;
  - v. show children of both sexes involved in the activities described;
  - vi. allow both boys and girls to find characters which enhance their self esteem, where males and females have important roles and hold positions of authority;
  - vii. show characters not having to justify their gender by being exceptionally virtuous or brave, etc.;
  - viii. have illustrations that avoid caricature.



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4. In order to appeal to all pupils we must:
  - i. provide opportunities to use personal, expressive language, in work such as projects, reports and posters and of course in classroom discussion;
  - ii. provide opportunities to discuss and explore opinions on social issues;
  - iii. demonstrate the importance of all subjects for everyone, showing the importance of them in everyday life and a wide range of careers, e.g. in healthy living, in environmental appreciation, in communication/I.C.T. skills and in wise consumer choice.

## Monitoring and Review

The Headmaster regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the proprietor and governance advisors annually on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

## Breach of this Policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.