



COTTESMORE SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

The Curriculum at Cottesmore encompasses a variety of elements, ensuring the experience for pupils is both broad and balanced. The Curriculum is viewed as having a great deal of 'value-added' quality and reflects the Mission Statement and Aims of the School.

The Curriculum has a blend of academic pursuit, artistic and creative endeavour, sporting activities, and personal and social education.

The academic curriculum covers aspects of mathematical, linguistic, scientific, technological, human and social, and aesthetic and creative 'areas of experience'. The sporting curriculum supports the physical area. The activities and hobbies programme provides further access to a number of areas. The life of the Chapel and PSHE/RSE programme provide support for human and social areas. No single part of the curriculum will necessarily cover any one particular area, or in fact only one area. The broad nature of the curriculum contains a number of cross-curricular and cross-'areas of experience' links.

Pre-Prep

The Academic Curriculum covers the following subjects:

PP-English (PP-Eng)

PP-Mathematics (PP-Mat)

PP-Science (PP-Sci)

PP-Topic (PP-Top)

PP-TPR (PP-TPR)

PP – Relationship Sex and Health Education (RSE)

PP-Visual Arts (PP-VA)

EYFS-Literacy (LIT)

EYFS-Mathematical Development (MatDev)

EYFS-Communication and Language (CL)

EYFS-Understanding the World (UTW)

EYFS-Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

EYFS-Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

EYFS-Physical Development (PD)

PP-French (PP-Fre)

PP-Sport (PP-Spo)

PP-Music (PP-Mus)

PP-Swim (PP-Swim)



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Prep School

The Academic Curriculum is timetabled as shown on the *School Timetable*. It covers the following subjects:

English (Eng)
Mathematics (Mat)
Science (Sci)
French (Fre)
History (Hist)
Geography (Geog)
Theology, Philosophy & Religion (TPR)
Relationship Sex and Health Education (RSE)
Latin (Lat)
Visual Arts - Art (VA-Art)
Visual Arts - DT (VA-DT)
Coding / ICT (ICT)
Sport (SP)

The timetable is viewed as 'balanced', with one major aim being the final academic goals of Common Entrance and Public School Scholarship. Greater emphasis is given to the core subjects of Mathematics, English, Science and French. Latin, History, Geography and Religious Studies receive a lesser allocation. The other subjects receive an allocation thought to be appropriate. Opportunities exist in the academic curriculum to develop strength in a wide variety of the 'areas of experience', e.g. aesthetic and creative. ICT is integrated into other subjects as is evidenced by the ICT Suite being booked for specific subject lessons for a high percentage of the time available. One example is the use by the Geography Department in preparing the projects sent to senior schools as part of CE. Aspects such as word processing, spreadsheets and internet resources are incorporated into projects. Alongside the academic curriculum the SEN Department works to provide support for pupils who have such needs. Classroom support is provided in some Mathematics and English classes and a number of pupils have extra 'coaching' lessons to aid their progress. Support is given also to EAL pupils both within lessons and in extra coaching sessions.

The subjects are taught mostly in dedicated rooms/areas and in the main by specialist staff. The allocation of staff in some cases is governed by the needs of the curriculum and the staffing available. The current year's staffing allocation can be seen on the *Timetable Allocation* document.

The Sporting programme is very varied, encompassing both team and individual sports. The major team sports are football, rugby, hockey and cricket for the boys, and netball, hockey and cricket for the girls. All pupils swim and a number are involved in the Team squad. All pupils do athletics, partaking in a range of track and field events. Physical fitness is part of the sports programme along

with the development of the relevant skills of the sport. Pupils can choose also to take part in a number of other sports, including squash, tennis, small-bore rifle shooting and archery. Other sports are offered as 'paid extras', including table tennis, golf, riding and real tennis. Where a pupil shows promise and an interest in pursuing a particular sport, the possibility of finding coaching sessions is investigated. The staff coaching the various sports are a mixture of experienced school staff and other professional coaches from outside the school. In all sports pupils are taught to appreciate and develop the concept of 'sportsmanship' in competition.

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Team sports happen on a daily basis within the working day of the pupils. Some other sports also happen within the day. Others are allocated suitable time slots. The pupils take part in a full set of team fixtures against other local schools throughout the year. There are also competitions for individuals, e.g. in golf. A number of local and National finals for teams and individuals exist in which pupils become eligible to compete. It is often the case that every pupil in the school will have been involved in a school match or other competition within any year.

The activities and hobbies programme provides other opportunities to develop 'areas of experience'. There is a great range of activities on offer. Just a small selection includes indoor hockey, 5-a-side football, master classes in Art and DT, craft, choral and instrument groups, improvised drama, circus skills, model making, cookery, outdoor pursuits and survival skills.

Pre-Prep: The children have a weekly tennis lesson (Reception/ Year 1 30 minutes, Year 2/3 1 hour). They all also have 30 minutes of swimming every week, taught by qualified swimming teachers. They have class PE lessons (Reception to Year 2 half an hour and Year 3 have 45 minutes) which includes gym activities. There is also the opportunity of taking part in After School Clubs from Monday to Thursday, which include: ballet, French, gymnastics, construction, chess, and sports club.

Prep: Music is part of the academic curriculum but also happens at other times in the school day. Chapel Choir rehearsals are timetabled on a number of occasions each week. Various instrument groups take place also. Many pupils study instruments and formal lessons and practices are timetabled throughout the week. All the pupils are involved in 'conga', a time when hymns for Chapel services are rehearsed. Drama is part of the curriculum, both within the English curriculum and as part of the wider aesthetic and creative activities. The annual 'Set Plays' and School productions provide the public face of the work of the pupils. Many are involved in this area, some as backstage crew rather than actors. Some pupils take dancing lessons as part of their studies and these are integrated into the school day.

Pre-Prep: Every child in the Pre-Prep participates in 30-minute music lessons and 30 minutes hymn practice weekly. Children are also allowed to learn an individual instrument if they wish.

Prep: The life of the Chapel and the PSHE programme are a central core of the life of the school. Pupils attend collective worship on most days and there is always the opportunity for quiet reflection in the Chapel. There is a weekly service and the preacher is often a senior figure from one of the public schools. The school offers Confirmation classes to pupils in the second half of the year, culminating in Confirmation in the Chapel in June each year.

Pre-Prep: The Year 3 children join the main Prep School for chapel twice a week and the whole Pre-prep join the Prep School on Fridays for Musical Friday. On Thursdays, the children either have a Mindfulness assembly, reflecting on school values, or have a class led assembly where the children present their work to the rest of the Pre-prep. All assemblies end in prayer, giving moments for reflection. At the end of every day, the children say a prayer of thanks. The Pre-Prep children are welcome to any of the main Prep school services on Sundays too. On a Friday, they have a Celebration Assembly where 'Star of the Week' is announced for each class and any birthdays are celebrated.

Prep: The RSE/PSHE programme runs within the timetable. Weekly themes on a variety of issues supports the human and social 'area of experience'. The Head of Wellbeing leads this programme and together with other members of staff, including the Head of Boarding and matron team, co-ordinates the pastoral nature of the curriculum.



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Examination Procedures

The Cottesmore 'Forms' are not National Curriculum years:

Form 1 is equivalent to N.C. year 4;

Form 2 is N.C. year 5;

Forms 3 are year 6;

Forms 4 are year 7;

Forms 5 and 6 are year 8.

Some pupils are 'fast-tracked' to the year above their own age group.

Forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 sit examinations in each of the Common Entrance subjects in late November/early December and again in June.

Forms 5 and 6 sit examinations termly.

The examination block usually extends over three days.

The whole school sit papers at the same time in November/December.

Forms 5 and 6 sit a second set of papers in February.

Form 5 sit a final set of Common Entrance trial papers in early May.

The whole school sit their final papers of the year at the same time as the CE candidates sit their proper CE papers, in June.

N.B. Some pupils, particularly those taking scholarships, may be taking their entrance examinations anytime between January and May. These pupils might not sit the internal examination block near that time and instead might remain on timetable or do individual project work.

In Forms 1, 2 and 3 the aim is to assess the pupils on their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied in the Winter Term or during the whole year.

In Forms 4 and 5 the papers are based on past Common Entrance papers, building up to full C.E. Trials as pupils move through Form 4 and into Form 5. The papers used in the full trials are those set by ISEB the term before. If a new syllabus has come into being and no suitable past papers are available, papers appropriate to the new syllabus are created by the teaching staff.

Pupils in Form 6, studying for scholarships, attempt papers relevant to their chosen future schools or other scholarship papers deemed appropriate.

The results of these examinations are used to inform future programmes of study for pupils, to guide allocation of pupils to teaching forms, to aid with future school choice and to help advise future schools about the pupils coming to them.

Administration points:

- The examination timetable is published in draft form approximately two weeks before an examination block commences. Form 3 downwards, sit papers of 60 minutes maximum duration. Forms, 4, 5 and 6 sit papers of Common Entrance or scholarship timings. One aim is to spread out the subjects so pupils are meeting a variety of styles of paper in sequence, e.g. a maths paper might follow an English paper. Another aim is to provide staggered marking for the teaching staff.

The timings of the papers are fitted into the normal academic teaching hours of the day as much as possible. Three papers are sat before lunch and an additional paper after lunch if the afternoon would usually involve timetabled academic lessons. Pupils allowed extra time to complete papers either start a paper early or finish it later than other pupils.



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- When the whole school is involved in examinations all the staff are 'off timetable', so an invigilation rota is devised where the invigilation is spread out as evenly as possible across the staff. One examination is usually equivalent to one invigilation session. When only a limited number of Forms are doing examinations the staff that would otherwise be teaching those Forms are involved in the invigilation.
- Once the draft timetable has been agreed the final version is published and placed in each Form Room and in the Gym. All pupils except those doing Common Entrance, sit their examinations in their Form rooms. Common Entrance candidates sit their trial papers and their CE proper in the Gym. An outside invigilator is used for the CE examinations proper.
- Where a pupil is sitting a scholarship 'at Home', i.e. at Cottesmore, the invigilation is done by staff in a quiet area, e.g. the Drawing Room
- Internal examination marks are recorded on the School Database. From here, a spreadsheet analysis of each Form is prepared to allow discussion of results. This informs 'pupil moves' from one Form to another. It highlights also pupils requiring extra support.

Pre-prep

Children undergo regular formal testing age appropriately to include end-of-unit maths assessments in Years 1–3, unaided writing which is moderated, and ongoing teacher assessment with reporting to parents. In Reception, we carry out the statutory Baseline assessment to evaluate children's early literacy, communication and language, and mathematics skills when they start school, providing an initial point from which to measure their progress throughout their primary education. EYFS assess through observations and the collating of written work in their learning journal. Data is shared with the LA in the summer term.

Prep and Private Study

Prep is set in all eight academic subjects. Mathematics and English have two prep times per week, the other subjects have one. The time allocation is 30 minutes per prep. Prep is done at the beginning of each working day and at a time after the completion of Period 8 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday and Saturday has prep just at the start of the day. Morning preps are supervised by the staff on Duty and the afternoon slots are supervised by staff on a rota system, one member in each Form room. A prep timetable is published annually. Day boarders do their prep before returning home. Staff are present in prep primarily to ensure good study practices by the pupils, as preps serve as a time for testing or extending knowledge and understanding, and informing staff of pupil progress. Often the work done serves to inform Assessments and aid

planning for pupil development in a subject. Staff also advise and support pupils when they are finding difficulty accessing the work being covered. Prep should encourage the development of pupils' self-discipline and their ability to work independently. If children complete the prep set then they are allowed to read a novel.

The effectiveness of prep depends on its quality:

- Staff ensure prep is set according to the prep timetable
- Preps should have a written element and could have other reading and learning tasks
- Prep should be set to last the appointed time (30 minutes), although consideration should be given to the support needs of pupils, e.g. will all pupils be required to complete the same quantity of work? Will some require extension material?
- Pupils should receive clear instructions on what is expected of them
- It is the responsibility of pupils who have missed prep for any reason to see the subject teacher and to complete any prep that has been set. If pupils have forgotten, missed or failed to do prep properly, then they can be put in 'soup'.

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The Library is set aside for 'quiet time' when private study can be done and it is reserved for CE and scholarship candidates nearer examination periods.

Pre-prep

Every child in the Pre-prep takes a reading book home every night. In Reception and Year 1 each child has one piece of homework to complete during the week. In Year 2 and 3 the children have up to three pieces of work to complete during the week. In Years 1 to 3 children are given spellings to learn which correspond with the NLS and also the phonics programme, Read, Write Inc.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Cottesmore accepts children with learning difficulties. As some children find learning work extremely difficult, it is important to help such children to devise and develop strategies which will best help them cope, bearing in mind that different strategies will suit different children and their various learning styles. A number of EAL pupils are on roll and their needs can include SEN. Support for SEN and EAL pupils is provided in certain whole-class lessons and in one-to-one extra sessions.

Staff refer to SEN and EAL lessons as 'coaching' and children receiving such help are not labelled as such but treated with sensitivity. The SENCO keeps staff aware of the children receiving SEN. Pupils have 'CAP's covering details of their particular needs. Feedback for the SEN Department helps to monitor progress. Staff alert the SENCO if they feel a pupil is having particular difficulties. It is possible for a pupil to be specially assessed, and for extra help to be provided. The SENCO attends weekly staff meetings where pupils are discussed both from an academic progress point of view and from areas of any other need.

Cross-Curricular Links and Support

Good communications between staff and departments is important, and opportunities for cross-curricular links have been developed. One key area has been the establishment of an annual 'World

Aware Week' where a theme is taken for whole-school study. A recent example was 'France-week'. Team teaching and observation of colleagues is encouraged as part of fostering cross-curricular links. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged and supported by the Director of Studies to regularly identify cross-curricular opportunities for teaching and learning in lessons.

LIFE Skills Programme

The LIFE (Learning, Independence, Focus, Enrichment) programme provides pupils with structured, practical opportunities to develop confidence and capability beyond the academic curriculum. It builds core competencies – such as organisation, communication, resilience, teamwork and leadership – through hands-on activities, real-world tasks and guided reflection. Its purpose is to foster personal responsibility and equip pupils with the habits and mindset needed for life in school and beyond.

School Partnerships

Our partnerships with local state schools are built on sustained, mutual benefit rather than one-way outreach. They enable shared learning experiences, joint enrichment initiatives, resource support and professional collaboration. The goal is to broaden pupils' horizons, raise aspirations and strengthen community connections through respectful, practical and long-term engagement.