



Wychwood School

## **CURRICULUM POLICY**

**Author: SWD, AKJ, AP**

**Last Reviewed: February 2020**

**Date of next Review: February 2021**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents: Admissions Policy, Marking and Assessment Policy, Disability Inclusion Policy, Special Educational Needs (including Differentiation in Practice), Equal Opportunities, Careers Education and PHSE programme, Sex Education and SMSC policies.**

### **Aims**

To promote the aims of the School by providing a high-quality education as outlined in the Mission Statement by providing a curriculum which

- fosters a life long love of learning and enables pupils to be well-informed, cultured, civilised and equipped with the skills necessary for higher education, the workplace and the challenges of life.
- provides a broad, balanced and relevant education and which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education.
- gives the pupils the opportunity to acquire numeracy, literacy and linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) leading to effective communication.
- provides continuity and progression and the ability to manage transitions between stages.
- nurtures individual pupils, from the most academically able and talented to those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including any with an EHC plan, enabling them to achieve at their highest possible level.
- creates an environment in which the whole person can flourish in a balanced way and where her talents will be recognized and valued.
- complies broadly with the requirements of The National Curriculum, while still retaining the maximum possible choice and flexibility so that individual programmes of study may be developed by pupils in consultation with their teachers.
- creates opportunities for self expression and creativity, both in and outside lessons to build self confidence, powers of expression and aesthetic appreciation.
- creates an environment in which pupils increasingly develop independence and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning and planning for the future, with levels of supervision and support commensurate with their age and stage.
- provides an atmosphere of mutual respect and support so that all may feel able to voice their opinions, ask questions and critically evaluate arguments, information and outcomes, as well as analyse processes and evaluate academic and personal progress.
- develops common sense and a sense of duty and responsibility to others, both in and outside school.
- provides a range of enrichment and subject-based wider activities to complement the main curriculum subjects.
- helps pupils to be adaptable and to solve problems alone or as a member of a team, using appropriate resources including technology.

- provides a framework for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and fosters attitudes and beliefs that create good citizens preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of life in British society. (Please refer to the relevant sections in the departmental handbooks and the lists of assemblies and school activities for examples of where this can occur.)
- provides pupils with both intellectual challenge and a sense of achievement;
- enables pupils to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and learning skills which will facilitate further study;
- allows pupils to receive impartial, accurate and up-to-date careers guidance and preparation for university and adult life.
- enables pupils to understand the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

### **Curriculum Characteristics**

We recognise that to facilitate these aims, each student is entitled to a curriculum characterised by breadth and balance, continuity coupled with the opportunity to progress and develop learning and learning style, relevance and both curricular and cross-curricular co-ordination and development. Hence, the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities within the range of ability accepted at Wychwood, Oxford. Pupils' progress and achievements are monitored to ensure each has access to the curriculum in accordance with their needs and ambitions and taking into account their prior knowledge and experience. The curriculum for those pupils above the statutory school leaving age is designed to fit them for university, tertiary or other education and, coupled with the increasing responsibility and freedom offered as part of the boarding experience, to offer pupils a progressively independent lifestyle in preparation for life after Wychwood, Oxford. See Appendix A.

### **Supervision**

During lessons, pupils are supervised by a member of staff. They may be permitted to work in the library where there is a part-time librarian or cover staff on duty. During weekday preparation time a member of staff supervises junior and senior prep. During Saturday morning preparation time, girls can always contact a member of staff on duty in the library. At all times pupils are aware that there is a member of staff available in the school office or staff room.

### **Curriculum Review**

It is Wychwood, Oxford's policy to review the whole curriculum regularly by the SLT. Where it is felt to be appropriate, further consultation takes place with the heads of subject and a curriculum review committee investigates new proposals. A whole school curriculum review took place in the academic year 2012/13 and has resulted in a change in the timetabled day to allow more contact time. This process of review and evaluation is embedded in the School Development Plan.

### **Differentiation**

A variety of teaching and learning approaches are used in order to suit pupils' different needs and to enable them to achieve their potential. See also individual subject departmental handbooks and the document 'Differentiation in Practice'.

### **Areas of Experience**

We aim to give access to the following areas of experience – aesthetic/creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral and spiritual, physical, scientific and technological.

Wychwood, Oxford has a very strong aesthetic and creative tradition and it is school policy to promote subjects reinforcing this within the curriculum and in the extra-curriculum. Drama and Music are emphasised with every child in the school being involved at some stage of their school career both within the curriculum and in the extra-curricular Form Plays, Shakespeare for Schools, Junior and Senior Plays, the Carol Service and Performing Arts evenings. Within the curriculum art, music, photography, textiles, drama, and the study of English literature in the core curriculum to GCSE are all taught subjects.

The ability of all pupils to communicate in English is assessed on entry by the Learning Support department and English language and literature are part of the core curriculum. Communication and linguistic skills are reinforced by the teaching of drama in the curriculum, the work experience presentations, the widespread uptake of Speech and Drama, debating and Model United Nations in the extra-curriculum. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the linguistic and literary areas of experience are further promoted by the presence of French, Spanish, and mother tongue languages coupled with Latin and Ancient Greek within the examined curriculum. These are supplemented by extra-curricular clubs, foreign trips and outreach days for local schools, where pupils are encouraged to use their language skills, while developing an appreciation of other cultures. English language is compulsory to GCSE to support our intention to produce literate and articulate users of English, whatever the mother tongue. Mandarin, Cantonese, Hebrew and Farsi are available and EAL is a requirement for those pupils who will otherwise under-achieve.

An understanding of mathematics is an essential life skill and so is part of the core curriculum to GCSE. The use of mathematical skills permeates the curriculum – physics, chemistry, biology, geography and psychology use mathematics directly while other opportunities to use number, logic, to understand patterns and spatial dimensions and to develop and deepen mathematical understanding occur in art, textiles, history, music and PE. Curriculum lessons are supplemented by extra-curricular clubs, trips and practical activity days to develop the capacity to think logically, and to understand number, three-dimensional space and other mathematical concepts essential to living in the twenty-first century.

Physical education is essential to a healthy and well-balanced life. PE is an integral and fundamental part of the curriculum for all years and school policy is to develop co-ordination and control skills, and to integrate physical activity into all pupils' lives, so that when they leave Wychwood, Oxford, it has become a necessary and valued part of each girl's lifestyle. PE also plays a vital role in teaching girls to evaluate their own performance with a view to improving it, which is an essential transferrable life skill. To this end, PE is also widespread in the extra-curriculum with sports fixtures and practices. Wychwood, Oxford girls regularly compete at county level and where a girl shows a particular talent or aptitude then the school will support her in terms of time off to train or compete. If a girl competes at a high level in any sport or activity not offered by the school, then the school will again support her aspirations and achievements by allowing time off for training and competition.

In the scientific area of experience, we aim for all pupils to leave Wychwood, Oxford with the knowledge and understanding required to inform their interaction with an increasingly scientifically-based society while providing a platform for in-depth study of science to those who wish to pursue scientifically-based careers. To support this aim, study of the three main areas of scientific thought, biology, chemistry and physics is part of the core curriculum to the Shell and pupils' curricular experiences are supported and developed through a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme of lectures, both in-house and external, industrial and museum visits and field trips. Pupils should also have an appreciation of the ethics and morality of scientific issues and be competent to evaluate scientific and pseudo-scientific arguments for themselves. In the technological area of experience, Wychwood, Oxford

acknowledges the central role played by ICT today and recognises the need for all twenty-first century pupils to be computer literate. ICT is part of the core curriculum to KS4 and knowledge, understanding and application of these skills can be developed further optionally thereafter. ICT, photography, and textiles are all taught curriculum subjects and all are important presences in the extra-curriculum. Photography and textiles both enhance the aesthetic vision and planning and manipulative skills of the girls.

Girls begin the formal study skills programme in the Remove (NC year 7). The programme is intended to promote understanding of time management, prioritisation and study methods appropriate to the individual and these skills are developed throughout the Key Stages.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education**

The school's aims, PSHE programme, extra-curricular and cross-curricular programmes combine to produce a universally permeating ethos. The school places an extremely high value on whole school assemblies which take place three times a week. The function of these is to foster a sense of community and to inform pupils on a wide variety of topics, particularly of a religious or moral nature, and to facilitate communication between different members of the school community. The content varies and can include collective worship, possibly including the singing of a hymn, presentations by different forms and by members of staff on worthwhile topics of their choice.

An appreciation of morality, courtesy and consideration for other people in the closer and wider communities is a fundamental building block in the preparation of all academic lessons and in all aspects of daily life at Wychwood. Topical and historical ethical considerations occur naturally in a wide number of academic subjects and ethical debate is actively encouraged. In the curriculum SMSC is reinforced by the teaching of compulsory geography, history and religious studies in the Remove to Lower Transits, the compulsory short-course religious studies GCSE and history of art in the VIth form. The beautiful environment, history and culture of the city in which we live actively supports the whole ethos.

### **Personal, Social and Health Education**

All girls take personal, social and health education which is taught in the curriculum as informal lessons up to the Lower Transits and then as a wide-ranging series of forums and activities based on external speakers from the Upper Transits through Wychwood Sixth. The programme provides activities that are appropriate to pupils' educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills. This programme supports the school's aim of preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Within the programme, trained PSHE specialists and biologists teach Sex Education. Where appropriate, parental permission is sought and obtained before embarking on the Sex Education programme. Please see the separate PSHE schemes of work.

All girls of whatever background and nationality are encouraged to understand the fundamental British values both within the curriculum, for example, in subjects such as business studies and economics, history and geography and outside the curriculum by means such as trips (The Houses of Parliament in 2013), visits (Local MP in 2015), Model United Nations, and school assemblies.

### **Careers Guidance**

Please see the separate Careers Policy.

The careers guidance offered is intended to help the pupils to understand themselves, to know their strengths, weaknesses, interests and aptitudes and how these would relate to the worlds of tertiary education or work. Individual impartial guidance is offered by the Careers Teacher and by the use of Morrisby Fast Tomato in the Shell in preparation for KS5 choices. Pupils are offered individual support from the Careers Consultant, the heads of subject and

their teaching staff and each pupil has guidance from a member of the SLT during the process of choosing their GCSE subjects. This process is repeated when choosing A level subjects. Our policy is to offer pupils the opportunity to begin Study I studying for four KS 5 Courses, but the majority of girls will drop a subject between the first half term and Christmas holiday of Study I. They are supported through application to tertiary education or work as appropriate by the Head of Wychwood Sixth form, the Director of Studies and the Careers Consultant and this support will continue after the pupil leaves if required. Parents are always required to give permission for any subject choices or changes. As pupils move through their school career, they will be prepared for the future by use of work experience after their GCSE examinations and careers events like the biennial University Fair and the Careers Fair.

### **Learning Support**

Please see the separate SEND policy.

Wychwood, Oxford will ensure that subject matter and teaching methods are relevant and appropriate for pupils of the ages and aptitudes within the school. Pupils at Wychwood, Oxford possess a range of abilities and aptitudes from the academically able to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school would accept a pupil with an EHC plan if, in our judgement, the educational provision at Wychwood would be appropriate. All pupils are tested on entry, their needs are assessed and further action is taken and information disseminated to staff according to the results of these assessments. See Appendix C.

EAL is provided for those pupils who require it. All pupils who do not speak English as a first language are assessed on entry and offered EAL if required. The school will also ensure that they have access to appropriate dispensations for public examinations. Please see separate EAL policy

Academically able pupils are identified by the academically able co-ordinator and the register is issued to staff annually in the Michaelmas term. See Appendix B

### **Remove to LTs (years 7-9)**

The curriculum is intended to give a broad based foundation to all pupils as an introduction to the GCSE courses in years 10 and 11. To this end a common content is studied by all. This comprises in hours per week:

	<b>Remove (Year 7)</b>	<b>Inters (year 8)</b>	<b>LTs (Year 9)</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	4	3	3
<b>English</b>	3.5	3.5	3 + 1
<b>PE</b>	2.5	2	1.5
<b>Biology</b>	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>Chemistry</b>	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>Physics</b>	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>French</b>	2.5	2.5	2.5
<b>Spanish</b>	0	1.5	2
<b>History</b>	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>Geography</b>	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>RS</b>	1	1	1
<b>PSHE</b>	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>Drama</b>	1	1	1

<b>Music</b>	1	1	1
<b>Art</b>	1	1	1
<b>Textiles</b>	1	1	1
<b>Computing</b>	1	1	1
<b>Study Skills</b>	0.5	0.5	
<b>Careers</b>		0.5	0.5
<b>Library</b>	0.5		

Sex education and careers may be delivered explicitly as part of the PHSE content (lessons, forums and workshops) as well as integrated into subject teaching where appropriate. In addition to this, an example of further careers input is **The Real Game** a role playing life choices activity in careers lessons for Inters (Year 8).

### **UTs and Shell (years 10-11)**

GCSE courses will be followed in addition to regular PE lessons and PHSE workshops on an occasional basis.

Following extensive one-to-one discussions with their Progress Tutor or other senior and careers staff, pupils will be encouraged to take a broad range of subjects which will maximize their choices at A-level.

### Core Subjects

All girls will take as core subjects\*:-

- English
- Mathematics
- RS short course GCSE: counts as ½ a GCSE
- A Modern Foreign Language (which may be their first language)
- Science (either Trilogy or three separate sciences)]
- An Humanity
- and up to 3 (in exceptional cases 4) other subjects, depending on the blocks

Those wishing to study triple award science (separate sciences) must indicate this as one of their choices.

Those intending to study English at A-Level need to be aware that at Wychwood this is English Literature and therefore they must opt for English Literature at GCSE in preparation. There are also timetabled games periods and 1 Council period each week.

\* In some exceptional cases where a girl has particular educational needs, for example a specific learning difficulty, it may be decided that she will be better served by a tailored programme that does not include one or more of our core subjects. Such decisions are made in collaboration with the girl, her parents, her subject teachers, her form and progress teachers, the Head, Deputy Head and the Director of Studies

### Option Subjects

Geography                   ) Humanities  
 History                     ) (at least one)  
 Art  
 Drama\*  
 English Literature  
 Music  
 Photography

P.E.\*

Psychology

Science (triple award)

Spanish

Textiles

Computing

\* Dependent on numbers

The blocks are organised differently each year, based on girls' preferences as indicated in initial interviews with staff. Once these are set it is only possible to change subjects in the context of existing blocks.

#### Notes:

- English, mathematics and option subjects have three hours a week each at GCSE.
- Double Award Science is usually covered on 4.5 hours (1.5 hours per science) a week and triple award on 7.5 hours (2.5 hours per science) at GCSE.
- Short course RS has 1 hour a week.
- All pupils will learn about work and enterprise through preparation for and a period of one week's work experience which results in oral presentations to parents and staff.
- Residential Field Work forms an integral part of Key Stage 4, for example, the annual Geography expedition to a Field Work Centre, plus a French Trip and a Spanish Trip. Girls are expected to attend these.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award is also available.

#### Post 16

All students will have the opportunity to follow a broad based curriculum, according to their choice of A-level subjects, with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. (See lists of School Activities and Study Extension Programme). All Study I take part in the Young Enterprise Scheme. They are also encouraged to make appropriately supervised use of the wide range of cultural and sporting facilities within easy reach in Oxford City and to undertake voluntary community service. A-Level subjects are taught on 5 hours a week.

The subjects offered at A-level are:

- Art
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Drama (subject to numbers)
- Economics
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- History of Art
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Music
- Textiles
- Photography
- Physics
- Politics
- Psychology
- RS (Philosophy and Ethics)

- Spanish
- Sports Studies
- Textiles

Other modern languages may be taken by private arrangement.

### **Concerns and Complaints.**

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the pupil's Progress Tutor, and then with the Director of Studies or the Head.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, on a regular basis. The Head will report to the Governing Body on the progress of the policy and will recommend any changes.

## **APPENDICES**

These appendices are intended to give a brief indication of how Wychwood, Oxford achieves the aims of its curriculum policy.

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Breadth and Balance**

We present a broad and balanced curriculum at all ages which incorporates these elements of learning:

- the development of knowledge
- the understanding of concepts
- the acquisition of skills
- the ability to apply these elements in a variety of circumstances
- the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress.

#### **Continuity and Progression**

We will structure the curriculum in such a way as to allow for effective continuity and development through systematic co-ordination of key aspects within each area of study. Schemes of work will acknowledge and develop work covered in previous years. In the Lower Transits and the Shell the process of choosing GCSE or A level and AS level subjects is explained to the whole year group by the Director of Studies who also speaks to the parents at the annual parents' meeting. Pupils are offered individual support from the careers department and the heads of subject. Each pupil has guidance from a member of the SLT during the process of choosing their GCSE subjects and again when choosing their A level subjects. As A levels gradually become linear, pupils usually begin with 4 A level subjects, and drop a subject around Christmas of year 12. The choice of dropping a subject and the possibility of taking up an Extended Project Qualification is undertaken with close support from the teaching staff, heads of subject and the progress tutor. As pupils approach the end of their school career, they will be prepared for the future. They are supported through application to tertiary education or work as appropriate and this support will continue after the pupil leaves if required. Please see the separate Careers Policy.

#### **Cross-Curricular Co-Ordination and Development**

It is school policy that departments work together to promote the acquisition, development and application of skills and knowledge. These should include skills in speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking skills such as evaluation and analysis as well as practical, creative and imaginative skills. Where specifications have common or mutually reinforcing material, departments should aim to co-ordinate their teaching so that the overall programme of study for the pupils is coherent and enhanced by the co-operation.

#### **Monitoring**

Monitoring takes place formally by means of marking, assessment and reporting to parents and informally by supervision by progress tutors. Pupils can be placed "on report" if the staff feel this would be helpful in enabling progress. The system of academic alphas and majors provides a powerful motivational tool in encouraging progress

## **Appendix B**

### **SEND and Academically Able**

After the initial assessment, the SENDCo co-ordinates the production of individual summaries of all relevant Educational Psychologist's reports together with recommendations for the teaching and learning for each girl. These EP summaries serve as IEPs for each girl concerned. All staff are required to read, review annually and apply the EP summaries for all pupils that they teach. The SENDCo also monitors and progress and development of all pupils referred to it. All learning support is chargeable to parents.

Academically able pupils are identified by the academically able Co-ordinator from a variety of data, including preparatory school reports, baseline testing results, school examination results and departmental recommendations. The register is issued to staff annually in the Michaelmas term and staff are expected to review it at these times and to record those pupils in their mark books. In the classroom staff are expected to teach such pupils with due consideration of their needs and outside the classroom, these pupils are supported by the Honours Club. Able and talented pupils in areas other than academic work will be supported in the development of their talents both within and outside the classroom, according to their individual needs.

For most subjects the school policy is that subjects are not set in order to benefit from cross-fertilisation of ideas between pupils of different academic strengths and abilities. However, English is divided from the UTs dependent on whether the girls are doing English Language and English Literature; mathematics is set by ability from the Inters (Year 8), and biology, chemistry and physics are set into a triple science set and a double science set either from the beginning of the UTs or the beginning of the Shell. This is done to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum requirements in these subjects at a level that suits their needs and aptitudes.