



## **WOODCOTE HOUSE SCHOOL**

### **CURRICULUM POLICY**

**Aims of the Curriculum:** our aim is to foster a desire within each pupil to enjoy learning for its own sake, rather than simply a means to pass examinations, and as far as is possible to fulfil the potential of each and every child that enters the school.

- Woodcote provides full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (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
- We offer a broad curriculum that challenges and extends the pupils but is sufficiently flexible to be differentiated to suit their individual needs. Where a pupil has a statement we will offer a programme appropriate to requirements
- We ensure pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- We aim to create a stimulating teaching environment where our pupils develop a love of learning and strive to achieve the highest standards
- Our curriculum is designed to prepare our pupils thoroughly for their schools but, most importantly, for life beyond that
- We offer a broad and balanced curriculum which in addition to academic subjects includes the arts and music as well as practical and sporting activities.
- We have personal, social, health and economic education in dedicated PSHEE and Religious Education lessons, which reflects the school's ethos and encourages respect for other people
- We aim to be able to provide an education that combines the best practices of traditional teaching methods with those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to give the children the skills required to access knowledge and to develop their practical and problem-solving skills.
- In Year 8 the boys are introduced to impartial information about jobs and careers
- We aim to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British society. Furthermore, to ensure that the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are not undermined.

## **Curriculum Plan**

Year 3: 1 form

Year 4: 1 form

Year 5: 1 or 2 forms

Year 6: 2 forms (plus scholarship set)

Year 7: 2 forms (plus scholarship set)

Year 8: 2 forms (plus scholarship set)

Form Teachers in Years 3 and 4 emphasise the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, but all subjects (English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Art Music) are taught (except Latin and Spanish).

From Year 6 children are placed in form groups relative to their ability, thereby allowing all children to perform at the speed that suits them best and enabling an individual approach for each child. Maths is set independently in Year 5.

Spanish is taught from Year 4 and Latin from Year 6. Music is taught from Year 3 to 6, as Years 7 & 8 focus more upon the Common Entrance standard. French is taught on a more individual basis if a particular senior school requires it for entry. ICT is taught from Years 3 to 6, as is Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning.

From Year 7 the two forms will follow schemes of work that are based upon ISEB syllabuses in preparation for 13+ exams in Year 8.

When a scholarship form is required this starts in Year 6 and enables a faster-paced syllabus that prepares them for the scholarship examinations of their chosen senior schools in Year 8.

Every year group has a tutor period four times a week for half an hour before supper/Day Boy departure to explore issues that affect their school lives, PSHEE and current affairs. Each form group does one assembly/Chapel Service each term on a Wednesday morning. Every boy will have the opportunity to say a prayer at morning assembly. There are also full school chapel services on Saturday's. All this is to further encourage pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as part of their broad education.

As part of their learning and development all children take part in Games every afternoon, with matches on Wednesdays and Saturdays; details of this are published separately.

Appropriate schemes of work for individual subjects are separately available.

Syllabuses: the syllabus for each academic subject is planned with regard to the curricula laid down by the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB) and the National Curriculum. The ISEB syllabus for Common Entrance is based upon the KS2/KS3

programmes of study as laid out by the NC. This guidance forms the basis for each department's schemes of work which is the responsibility of the head of each department.

Preps: In addition to the morning session, year 8 are set two 35 minute preps after tea on Mondays and Thursdays. After tea on Tuesdays, there is an extra Maths session for those boys in year 8 sitting the higher level at CE or scholarships.

Progression: in general pupils transfer from one year group to another on an annual basis (in September). In exceptional circumstances it may be felt necessary for a boy to repeat a year (in consultation with the parents) if he has struggled severely with the work. Occasionally a pupil may be accelerated from one year group to the next, and staff would ensure that extra tuition would be provided in order to fill in the topics that have been missed by such a transference. However, we are always mindful of harming a pupil's confidence and any decision to move a boy is given careful consideration. The majority of pupils move into Year 8, take Common Entrance and move to their senior schools. Those who are felt to have particular talent in certain subjects or across the curriculum may enter Remove in Year 7. The teaching in Remove is designed to prepare the form for the exigencies of scholarship work and a decision is taken at the end of Year 7 whether such boys should enter Shell and be prepared for PSS in Year 8, or whether they should progress to the Common Entrance 6<sup>th</sup> Form sets.

When pupils enter Year 5, any split in the form is based more on social rather than academic aspects. This gives the boys a chance to settle into the new regime and to allow them to demonstrate where their strengths lie. From Form 4 upwards pupils are streamed in 'A/B' forms principally according to ability. However, Maths is taught in 'sets' in the upper school; this allows pupils of similar ability to be taught together which enables them move at a pace appropriate to their ability. This also allows class sizes to be adjusted in favour of those who require more individual attention.

Special Educational Needs: Woodcote is fortunate in having a dedicated SENCO and where boys are identified as having academic weaknesses arising from disabilities such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, or have low confidence and need extra help, they are given learning support. Pupils in this position do not learn Latin (and in some cases Spanish) which allows them to use this time to be supported and encouraged to make progress. One of the reasons for introducing Spanish in Year 5 was to give such boys a linguistic experience that was more relevant to the modern world. Pupils may arrive in the school with documentation from their previous school showing their SEN or it may be flagged up during their first profile tests after entering the school; however, due to the small class sizes and the intimate nature of the school, it will often become apparent to teachers that a pupil is struggling with numerical or literacy issues, and this information will be acted upon as appropriate. The SENCO supports staff in identifying pupils' difficulties and also in planning teaching strategies and she also liaises with parents.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Woodcote has a number of boys joining the school from other countries and cultures, and we make every effort to integrate them into the life of the school; the other boys are particularly effective in helping this process. From the educational point of view they are supported by a dedicated EFL teacher. Their lessons include extra support in learning English, both oral and written, as well as help with

learning about life in England. These sessions may take place on an individual basis or as a small group and are generally during Latin or Spanish lessons, which these pupils do not usually study.

Preparation for Exams: Although the ultimate aim of our pupils is to achieve the necessary pass mark to their senior school, Woodcote aims to provide as wide a variety of extracurricular activities as possible, catering to the needs of the individual, especially in music, sport and the arts. This gives our pupils the opportunities to excel in many different areas and to be educated in a rich and stimulating environment. Nonetheless, we do not lose sight of the importance of this ultimate aim and, to this end, each pupil is helped to prepare for two exams in each year group (towards the end of the Michaelmas and Summer Terms). The Juniors only complete formal exams at the end of the Summer Term. Each department provides revision notes and tests to help every pupil prepare, and this regime is designed to encourage pupils to learn strategies to make the best of exams. In the run-up to Common Entrance and the PSS examinations, the candidates are provided with a wealth of revision material, subject workshops and holiday work, and they have regular access to their subject teachers in order to be able to go over work on an individual basis. In a boy's final year he will have two 'trial runs', one as school exams in early December, and one in March.

Field Trips/Visits to the School: Woodcote aims to provide its pupils with a wealth of experiences and, to this end, departments organise trips away from school as well as visits from lecturers, travelling drama groups and the like. Details of these will be found in the policy document pertaining to each department.

Assessment and Reporting: Regular assessments are an important part of the teaching process both in helping to identify progress in learning, or difficulties therein, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum. As well as Preps and twice yearly exams, all boys undergo VR, NVR, Reading and Spelling Age Assessments on an annual basis. Records of these assessments are kept by the SENCO and are distributed to relevant staff. At the end of each term the parents receive a report on their child covering academic subjects, games, extra-curricular activities, music lessons, etc.; these reports are designed to give clear and accurate information on their child's progress as well as an overview of the work they have been engaged upon that term. In addition, the boys are given a Performance Grade and Effort Report at Half Term each term - a snapshot of their attainment and effort in each subject at that point in time. In addition to opportunities to meet and talk with teachers on regular occasions throughout the year, there are formal Parents' Meetings for each year group on an annual basis. This gives teacher and parent a chance to discuss the child's progress in more detail and make provision for the year ahead.

Staff: In Years 3-4 boys are taught by a mixture of class teachers and subject specialists. From Year 5 upwards the boys are taught exclusively by subject specialists, as this helps to engender a greater degree of independence and therefore, within the more forgiving framework of the prep school, prepare them better for their senior schools. The personal development of staff within their subject is aided by attending ISEB or similar courses as well as days offered by relevant departments at senior schools. Such in-service training helps to ensure that the teachers are well-equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.

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