



THE ORATORY

THE ORATORY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

The Oratory School aims to give its pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.

We ensure that all pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and use of ICT.

Religious Studies is a core subject for all pupils up to GCSE, and members of the 6th Form also receive a period a week of Religious Education.

Pupils receive personal, social, health and citizenship education which reflects the school's aim and ethos. This is delivered partly through academic tutors (particularly in Years 10 and 11), partly through PSHE lessons in Years 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13, and partly through visiting speakers. (See separate PSHE policy). All pupils have a period a week with their Academic Tutor, which is partly for the purposes of academic monitoring, and in Years 10 and 11 partly to deliver the personal development programme. The personal development programme is also delivered to other year groups through separate timetabled PSHE lessons.

Pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual abilities and differences into account. We take into account not only the intellectual, but also the social, personal, emotional, cultural, moral and spiritual needs of pupils.

We aim to provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, and to provide appropriately for pupils with different needs: SEND, Able Gifted and Talented, EAL.

Where a pupil has a Statement of SEND, we provide for them an education that fulfils its requirements.

All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and to provide an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We provide appropriate careers and universities advice to pupils at all stages, in accordance with their ages and individual needs.

We believe in the enduring value of traditional academic subjects, and use these as the framework for our curriculum. Equally, we regard physical and creative experience as being vital in the full development of our students. Sport is integral to the structure of the week, and all pupils who are fit take part in an extensive sports programme.

Opportunities are encouraged across the curriculum for pupils to develop study skills, and to engage in active and independent learning.

Examination courses are chosen largely by individual departments, under the supervision of the Deputy Head Academic, in accordance with the needs of pupils. Departments are encouraged to consider alternative boards and examinations, including the IGCSE or the PreU, if these are appropriate.

The school uses 35 minute periods (with a 5 minute break between), since for some subjects e.g. Mathematics and Modern Languages, it is believed that 'little and often' is better than 'much and rarely.' Double periods are generally available for subjects that prefer these.

In St Philip House (1st and 2nd year) pupils follow a common curriculum which is based on national norms. In addition, all pupils study Latin (except a small minority who do extra EAL or Curriculum Support). Pupils have a period a week of Music, 2 periods of DT, and 2 periods of Art, encouraging the creative element in education. The three sciences are delivered separately throughout.

In the 3rd year, there is a largely common curriculum. In addition to the subjects inherited from the 2nd year, pupils study two languages – French, Spanish or Latin. Pupils continue to have 2 periods a week of Art, and 2 of DT. There is a period a week of Computer Studies, and 2 of PE. All pupils study a period each of Drama and Music.

In the GCSE years, all pupils study English (Language and Literature) or English as a Second Language, Mathematics, and Religious Studies as core subjects. In most cases, pupils study at least one Foreign Language, and are given a free choice between those they have studied. Pupils are required to do either three separate sciences, or may choose to continue with either two or one single sciences. Otherwise, pupils are allowed to choose subjects as freely as the timetable will permit, with the advice of their tutors and housemasters. Pupils may usually study up to 11 GCSEs within the timetable; most do 10 or 9; in a small number of cases, fewer. Pupils not doing a full complement of subjects have supervised study periods, in which they may have support from Curriculum Support.

In the 6th Form, there is a wide range of subjects on offer for A Level, and pupils are allowed to choose combinations freely, being constrained only by what can be timetabled. L6th pupils do either 3 or 4 subjects. Most pupils do 3 A Level subjects – a minority do 4. There are also a number of enrichment subject options available to boys studying 3 A Levels. IELTS is taught as an option for EAL pupils requiring it. Extended Project is available to boys wishing to take it. Special preparation is provided for pupils aiming at Oxbridge, medical school, etc.

Setting by ability is preferred in many subjects, other things being equal. From the start, setting is used in Mathematics and English. In the 3rd year, all subjects are setted, though not always by ability in the subject area: some subjects inherit English sets, and Maths/Science are set together. In the GCSE years, there is setting for the core subjects of Maths, English and RS, and where possible also partial setting for Science and Modern Languages; it is not generally possible to set for other subjects, owing to the policy of giving pupils a wide choice of options. There is rarely setting in the 6th Form.

In the 3rd to 6th years, a dozen or so pupils meet for 'Scholars plus' sessions of extension for the academically gifted, particularly when aiming for scholarship preparation. Scholarship preparation is provided weekly for the small number of 2nd years who need this, and 5th Form pupils who are seeking scholarship into 6th Form. There is a range of societies and clubs, some of which are academic, to encourage those who want extension or enrichment in various directions. These may take place in dedicated Co-curricular Activities sessions as well as evenings.