



ORWELL PARK SCHOOL

Nacton, Ipswich IP10 0ER

CURRICULUM POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Orwell Park ('the School') welcomes children with a very wide range of talents and abilities. We recognise and celebrate the fact that every child comes as a unique person who needs to be nurtured and encouraged and our aim is to meet their differing academic needs and help them to achieve their full potential.

Academic study forms the core of the education process at the School and we aim to make every lesson as challenging and exciting as possible, encouraging our children to think, question and discuss. We work very hard to make the atmosphere in the classroom and other learning areas friendly, stimulating and supportive, so that each child feels valued, and able to contribute without fear of failure or ridicule if they 'get it wrong'. These principles enable pupils to become more resilient and through active, open-minded participation, to become the best that they can be.

We firmly believe that immediate recognition of instances of good effort and / or achievement, in the form of verbal praise and encouragement is one of the most powerful ways to motivate a child to learn and to build confidence and self-belief. We also have a reward system to recognise particular instances of good effort or achievement.

2. THE CURRICULUM

Pre-Prep

The Pre-Prep is organised into year groups:

- Nursery 1 (starting at age 2.5+)
- Nursery 2 (3+)
- Reception (4+)
- Year 1 (5+) (National Curriculum Year 1)
- Year 2 (6+) (National Curriculum Year 2)

Nursery 1, Nursery 2 and Reception follow the EYFS framework from age 2 to 5.

Full details of the curriculum and other matters specifically relating to the Pre-Prep are given in the Pre-Prep Information booklets, which are issued to all Pre-Prep parents.

Middle School

The Middle School is organised into three year groups, starting with Year 3 and followed by Year 4 and Year 5.

Middle School pupils are taught in a mixed ability group by their own class Teacher for most subjects and are supported by a Teaching Assistant in some lessons. There is setting for Maths in Year 5. The Class Teacher is responsible for the timetable within the class and though the National Curriculum forms the basis of the teaching, our curriculum is considerably broader. In Years 3-5 the children's Class Teacher is also their Tutor.

Senior School

The Senior School is organised into three year groups: Year 6, Year 7 and Year 8.

Senior School pupils are taught by subject specialists. There are three subject blocks and pupils are set within these subject blocks according to their potential in the subject areas (English and Humanities block, Maths and Science block, and Languages block. Potential academic scholars are streamed in Year 7 and join 7P. In Year 8, academic scholars are also streamed and join the “8s” class (further information on this can be found in section 6 (Scholarships and Potential Scholars).

Years 7 and 8 pupils follow a two-year course leading to the Common Entrance examinations set by the Independent Schools Examinations Board for 13+ entry to public schools (see further information in the section ‘Guide to Common Entrance’) or Academic Scholarship examinations. Some Senior Schools use Common Academic Scholarship Papers, set by ISEB, whilst others set their own papers.

The examined subjects at Common Entrance (CE) are English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, Geography and Religious Studies. Latin is an optional subject at Common Entrance but one which Orwell Park pupils are expected to take, unless there is a good reason for them not to. In addition to the CE subjects, the children have timetabled lessons in PE, Design and Technology, Art, Music, Drama, Life Skills, Philosophy for Children (Year 6 only) or General Studies (7P/8s), and Digital Skills (also taught within subjects across the curriculum). It is our belief that children should learn to use computers naturally when the need arises. Pupils are encouraged to use computers and/or tablets in their free time and use of the Internet is increasing in lessons for individual research and investigations.

3. ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Fundamental British Values

Orwell Park is committed to reinforcing the fundamental British values of tolerance, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect for, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. We strive to support these values throughout the day, in assemblies and tutorials and throughout the curriculum.

Literacy

The ability to read well and acquire good comprehension skills not only, of course, enables children to access fully the curriculum, but also opens doors to whole new worlds of imagination, creativity and inspiration. We encourage all our children to develop a passion for reading and a reading period is included as part of the daily School timetable. Activities during these periods include individual silent reading, paired reading with other pupils and reading to a member of the academic staff. Some lessons take place in the School Library, which is stocked with a wide variety of books and other reading materials. The children are also encouraged to have a book ‘on the go’ at all times and to read as often as possible. Book Fairs are also a regular feature of the School calendar.

ICT

ICT forms an integral part of teaching and learning at Orwell Park and all children in Years 3-8 have access to their own individual iPad, as an integrated learning tool and to access the Internet for

individual research and exploration. The School will make every effort to keep children's electronic devices safe, but does not accept responsibility for them.

Use of the Internet by pupils is closely monitored and controlled by staff and the rules of Internet use are made very clear to all our children.

Children are guided towards websites suitable and appropriate for their age and stage of development. Everybody is well aware that the Internet contains numerous sites that are unsuitable, and sometimes potentially harmful to children. The connection to the School's computers is filtered by our server and any pupil found attempting to view, copy or distribute unsuitable materials will be subject to sanctions that may include permanent termination of their Internet account.

All children and their parents are asked to sign an Internet agreement. We do not allow the children to play computer games, except those that have a genuine educational element and these may only be played in free time during the evening or at weekends.

The use of computers and/or iPads is also integrated into the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum. We have individual subject software for all subjects and all our children are taught to be competent and confident in the use of emails, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, computer-aided design (CAD), presentation software, desk-top publishing and the Internet.

We have two ICT suites of 18 computers and some class sets of iPads for use in the Pre-Prep. The greatest majority of classrooms are also equipped with either an interactive panel, or a smart board or a projector, which are used extensively by the teaching staff.

ICT is taught as a discrete subject, Digital Skills, and is also incorporated into the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum. This includes:

- Use of computers/iPads for design and display work.
- Use of the Internet for independent research.
- Imaginative and creative use of Interactive Whiteboards.
- Use of laptops as part of Learning Support.
- Use of educational television programmes and DVDs, as part of lessons.

Academic Honesty posters are displayed throughout the school to remind pupils of the need to acknowledge all sources and to indicate if extra help has been received with a specific piece of work. The principles of academic honesty are discussed regularly as part of the Tutorial Programme.

Careers Education

Orwell Park School's ethos highlights that the purpose of education is to "encourage pupils to take on challenges, overcome setbacks and develop the resilience, initiative, flexibility, creativity and collaborative skills that will prepare them for the next stage of education and beyond". The curriculum fully supports this ethos through providing career education opportunities within the Life Skills programme, the Leavers' programme, school assemblies and the evening series of Orangery lectures.

4. TECHNOLOGY

The Design and Technology department incorporates an Art and Pottery suite, Workshop, Design area, Food Technology room and two separate ICT areas. The children have timetabled lessons in Art and D&T each week and the younger children also have Food Technology lessons. The children can also use these areas extensively out of lesson time (including during Activity time) and are encouraged to develop their interests in these areas.

5. THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning experience for pupils at Orwell Park is not restricted to the classroom. Staff and pupils are encouraged to make imaginative use of all areas of the School, both inside and out in the open air, to enhance their teaching and enthuse their pupils.

6. SCHOLARSHIPS AND POTENTIAL SCHOLARS

At the beginning of the Autumn term in their Year 7 year, pupils that have been identified by the Academic staff as possibly having the potential to attain an academic scholarship are taught as a group for all subjects, in order to challenge and encourage them to work together to the highest standard possible. Their progress and attitude to study are closely monitored and those pupils who are coping and progressing well, both academically and in their approach to their work, will remain in this group when they go up to Year 8, where they will continue their preparation for possible academic scholarship exams. Spanish and ancient Greek are also taught as optional subjects to more able pupils, who show a flair for, and an interest in learning foreign languages.

Parents are closely consulted at the end of Year 6, if their child is identified as a potential Scholar and this consultation continues throughout Year 7. We encourage every child to achieve their full potential, but the more intense programme of academic study in the potential Scholars' set may not necessarily be the best way forward for all children. Progression to the Year 8 Scholars' set is not guaranteed and the final decision on this will rest with the School.

7. ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Formal assessments indicating both attainment and effort are sent home to parents at half term and the end of term for those pupils in Years 3-8. These indicate a child's performance in each subject and the teacher's assessment of how much effort the child is making. Tutors review grades with their tutees and help them set themselves realistic targets for future improvement. Formal staff meetings take place after each assessment period to review grades and identify those pupils in need of monitoring.

Attainment and Effort Grade Descriptors

Attainment

A* Excellent understanding of recent topics- work is always of a very high standard

A Confident understanding of recent topics- work is usually of a very good standard

- B** Sound understanding of recent topics- work is usually of a good standard
- C** Variable understanding of recent topics- work is inconsistent and at times falls below the expected level
- D** Has found recent work very difficult

Effort Grade Descriptors

1. Excellent effort

- Always motivated and enthusiastic in class
- Makes a full contribution to class discussion
- Presentation and preparation of written work is consistently the child's best
- Homework is always punctual, often reflecting independent learning

2. Good effort

- Enthusiastic and motivated in most lessons
- Contributes well in most lessons
- Presentation and preparation of written work is usually the child's best
- Homework is punctual

3. Generally sound effort, but with areas for improvement

- Generally motivated and ready to work, but sometimes slow to engage
- Contributes quite well in lessons, though could participate more/ sometimes lack focus
- Presentation and preparation of written work is of an acceptable standard
- Homework is mostly punctual

4. Unacceptable effort

- Lacks enthusiasm and slow to start work
- Lacks focus in class and is easily distracted
- Written work is poorly presented and researched
- Homework is often handed in late

8. EXAMINATIONS AND NATIONAL STANDARDISED TESTS

PRE-PREP DEPARTMENT (EYFS to Year 2)

A 'Nursery Entry Assessment' form is used at the beginning of the Nursery and a 'Reception On Entry' form is used for the beginning of the Reception class. In Nursery, when a child starts at the age of 2 and a half years, a 2-year check is administered. From the age of 3 a baseline is completed on arrival for all ages and then it is re-administered at the end of the year to check the child's progress. A home visit and an 'All About Me' booklet is implemented for all children when they start Nursery and there is also a trial session to help practitioners assess a starting point for the children's learning. In Reception another 'All About

'Me' booklet is implemented to ensure a secure starting point is devised to help and assist with the children's transition and learning. Continuous tracking of progress is allocated daily and this is then recorded by using individual assessments for the children. All results are highlighted and recorded using the emerging, developing and secure method. Tapestry is also used to make the child's Learning Journey, which is then sent to the parents on a termly basis by email.

Early Years Foundation Stage

From Reception, The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is administered by the Pre-Prep School. Pupils are assessed on entry (Baseline Assessment), through the means of a home visit (Nursery only) and/or by completing an 'All About Me' booklet. This is then followed by continuous tracking of progress.

Foundation Stage Progress Tracker (EYFS only)

EYFS staff conduct this assessment with pupils at the beginning and end of the year.

Letters and Sounds (Pre-Prep)

In Nursery 2, a letters and sounds screening is implemented each term to check on progress.

In Reception, a screening of the children's sound knowledge is administered at the beginning of each term and at the end of the summer term to help assist the Year 1 teachers.

Reading and Spelling Tests

The Pre-Prep Department conducts termly reading and spelling tests. SRS2 (Suffolk Reading Scale for Year 2), and Single Word Spellings Tests are used in Years 1 & 2.

Maths Assessments

Years 1-2- progress in Maths is determined by ongoing teacher assessment. GL's Progress Test Series are being introduced this academic year and will take place at the beginning of the Summer term.

Cognitive Ability Testing (Year 2)

Year 2 pupils sit CATs in the Spring term of Year 2. The results are reviewed against all other evidence held to ensure the child's progress is in line with their ability. The Pre-Prep Coordinator and the Deputy Head Academic review these results and any discrepancy is monitored and/or assessed further.

Writing Tests – Cold writing assessments are termly in Years 1 & 2

SENIOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT (Year 3-8)

Years 3 and 4 have formal examinations in English and Maths in the Summer term only.

Year 5 has formal examinations in English, Maths, Science, French, History and Geography in the Summer term only.

Years 6 and 7 sit examinations at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms. These are based on coursework covered in class.

Year 8 sit examinations at the end of each term. These are mostly based on Common Entrance or Scholarship papers and ensure that by the time the 'real thing' takes place in June the children are confident and well versed in the necessary procedures and exam techniques. Scholarship examinations take place either in late February/early March or in May as some senior schools set their own papers.

Children sit Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) in Year 4, Year 6 and Year 7. These standardised tests help us gauge a child's overall ability and ensure that each individual child reaches adequate levels of attainment. New entrants to Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 are tested using CATs, as soon as they have settled into their new routine, usually in their first term at the School.

Year 3 to Year 7 pupils sit PTE (Progress Test in English), PTM (Progress Test in Maths), SWST (Single word spelling test) and NGRT (New Reading Group Test) twice a year, in the Autumn and Summer terms. These tests give an indication of each child's underlying ability and help us to assess their potential relative to other children in their age group, as well as to track their own progress. We refer to these particularly when advising parents on future schools. If a child's scores are significantly low in these tests, they will be re-tested, if appropriate, and monitored by the Tutor, Head of Middle School and Deputy Head Academic. If the scores remain low in spite of increased intervention, they may be referred to the Learning Support department for further tests and discussions with parents.

Internal and external examination results are sent to parents, either as part of the term's subject reports or by mail for external examinations, enabling them to build up a realistic picture of their child's current academic achievement levels and possible future potential.

9. REPORTING

In the Pre-Prep, subject reports are sent to parents at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms. A brief report is sent home at the end of the Spring term.

In Years 3 to 7, subject reports, together with a Tutor's report, are compiled and sent to parents at the end of the Autumn and Summer terms. In the Spring term, parents receive half-termly Effort and Attainment Progress Reports.

In Year 8, Subject Reports are sent at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms, with a short leavers' report sent at the end of their Summer term.

In the Prep School (Years 3 to 8), each report comprises a cumulative summary of the child's attainment and effort statistics for the year, a course statement (a factual outline of the work done and topics covered during the course of the term in each subject), and teachers' comments. The accompanying Tutor's report reflects on these and incorporates information and comments on the child's extracurricular activities and social progress. The Headmaster adds brief further comments.

In the Pre-Prep school (EYFS to Year 2), each report comprises a course statement and teacher's comments. The Head of Pre-Prep reviews the report and comments on the child's overall performance. The Headmaster adds brief, further comments.

Tutors discuss each report directly with their tutees, drawing their attention to the salient points of the reports and agreeing targets with them. Parents are also encouraged to discuss reports with their children and the tutor.

10. GIFTED AND TALENTED

This section should be read in conjunction with the School's 'Nurturing Gifts and Talents' policy.

Academically Able and Gifted

The School uses a system of setting from Year 5 in Maths and from Year 6 in all other subjects, which aims to maximise opportunities for each and every pupil, including the most able pupils. We use differentiation within sets and also within mixed ability classes to engage, stretch and challenge pupils. Setting is decided by the School.

We use the results from the standardised tests, in conjunction with the evidence of performance in class and examinations, to help identify pupils for appropriate sets. We make our decisions on an individual basis and the more able, as reflected in test scores, can be placed in top sets even though their current academic performance may not always appear to warrant this.

In the Potential Scholars' set (Year 7P) and the Scholars' set (Year 8s), pupils are given an accelerated programme to prepare them for the scholarship examinations of senior independent schools. The ability to analyse and discuss is as important as the accumulation of knowledge.

We continue to investigate ways of providing a more challenging curriculum to ensure all pupils are catered for.

Nurturing talents

We seek to identify, develop and nurture talent in Music, Art, Design & Technology and PE & Sports.

We aim to identify talent as early as possible and to develop it through differentiation in lessons, and extra individual lessons and activities. We also provide opportunities to perform in music groups and orchestras, in plays, in sports teams as well as numerous other areas. Our activities programme provides children with the opportunity to develop their talents further and where appropriate, we use outside resources and facilities.

Excellence for all

As well as a variety of in-class activities, the Orangery Lectures, which are open to all pupils from Year 3 onwards and to the greater community, enable our pupils to further their general knowledge and to feed their natural curiosity. The lectures are given by a variety of speakers from all walks of life, from senior school teachers to explorers and adventurers.

11. LEARNING SUPPORT

This document should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

- The Learning Support Policy
- The Admissions Policy
- The Equality and Diversity Policy which also contains the Accessibility Plan

The School welcomes children with a broad range of abilities and talents. The School's Admission Policy makes provision for the disclosure of disability and or special educational need. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's needs and share any existing reports such as those from Educational Psychologists or Speech and Language Therapists, or indeed multi-disciplinary assessments and Education and Health Care Plans (EHC Plan), prior to the child visiting the School. No child should be discriminated against on entry to the School because of their special needs. Where necessary, we make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants sitting the entry test, such as, for example allowing it to be completed on computer rather than by hand. However, independent schools may select on the grounds of both ability and aptitude and all pupils must therefore satisfy the academic criteria set out in the School's Admissions Policy. When offering a child with a disability a place at the School, a letter will be sent to parents setting out the proposed support for that child, including the reasonable adjustments that the School will implement to ensure that the pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Current children at Orwell Park School may also be referred to the Learning Support Department by staff or parents if concerns arise. After an in-house assessment and discussion with parents and staff, where necessary, an individualised programme of support is implemented for the child. This may include the arrangement of further assessment by visiting specialists who may then work with the child.

A team of specialist teachers, including Maths specialists, work with the children in many ways, tailoring the lessons to suit the children's needs. These include withdrawn lessons, supported prep sessions, occasional support in the classroom, essay planning sessions and other small group work, interactive study times and revision sessions for Year 7 and 8 pupils. An annual revision session for Year 7 parents and their children is also offered. Touch typing courses are organised by the department and children can borrow keyboards to link to their iPads from the department. Furthermore, the department liaises with outside agencies and meets regularly with the visiting specialists such as the speech and language therapist and the occupational therapist.

In the Middle School and Pre-Prep Department, the teaching assistants work closely with the Learning Support team to ensure that the work of the Learning Support Department and visiting specialists is dovetailed into the child's daily school life.

The timetable for withdrawn lessons and other support is organised at the start of the Autumn Term, after discussion with staff and parents. It is the policy of the department, where possible, not to withdraw children from lessons in which they will sit examinations.

All children have a right to a broad and balanced education and provision for pupils with special educational needs is central to the curriculum planning including the consideration of alternative forms of assessment and presentation where necessary and possible. In the 2014 Code of Practice (COP) it states

that every teacher is a teacher of special needs pupils whether officially identified as SEN, disabled or just needing some extra support. Every teacher is asked to anticipate individual learning needs and help overcome barriers to learning. All staff at the School have long recognised the importance of their role and are totally committed to supporting children with individual learning needs, although the School does not have to comply with the 2014 COP, except in the Nursery where information for the local offer is given to the Local Authority to be published on their website.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The Learning Support team includes a specialist EAL teacher. When children arrive from overseas to study at Orwell Park School, an initial assessment is carried out by the EAL specialist. After discussions with staff and parents an individualised programme of support is implemented, which is tailored to the specific needs of the child. The School recognises the importance of both being able to access the curriculum as quickly and effectively as possible, and also being able to interact socially with the other children so that they can participate fully in the life of the School community. There is also the opportunity for children to sit the Cambridge English exams which are recognised by universities and schools around the world.