



ORCHARD HOUSE
SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

September 2024

CURRICULUM POLICY

To offer a broad and balanced curriculum in order to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, promote enjoyment in learning, and equip our pupils with the skills and character that will prepare them for their next stage of education and enable them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Status

This policy reflects the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (October 2024, effective November 2024).

Consultation

This policy was originally drawn up following a curriculum review and in consultation with all the staff and, in particular, with the SLT. The aim is to ensure progression, continuity and learning. In addition, fellow Heads of independent preparatory schools in the area contributed their views. The requirements of the secondary day schools, including those grouped together under the North London Consortium, those testing using the ISEB Common Pre-test, the independent day schools with their own entrance system, the ISEB for those taking Common Entrance for boarding schools, The Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics, DfE circulars and guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority also informed the policy.

1. The curriculum offered gives children the opportunity to achieve the highest possible standards of mathematics and English whilst ensuring they can become confident in physical, artistic, practical and social skills. The school provides a broad and balanced education allowing for the individual needs of each child to be met within well-planned learning experiences. Areas of learning include:

- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- Knowledge (Incorporating History and Geography)
- STEM
- Art & Design
- Reasoning
- Philosophy and Oracy
- RSHE

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- PE
- Computing
- Drama & Performing Arts
- Music
- French

Assessment

Elements of the curriculum are assessed using National Curriculum criteria but assessments will also be made with regard to other external influences e.g. 11+ entrance exams and common entrance. Formal assessments are conducted termly focusing in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics. In addition, annual summative tracking takes place for foundation subjects, English and Maths across Key Stage 1 and 2.

See Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy

Equal Opportunities

Access to programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief.

Orchard House School also seeks to promote community cohesion.

Disabilities: In accordance with the statutory requirements the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils as far as is reasonably practicable.

Differentiation

Most subjects are taught in mixed ability classes and a variety of differing teaching and learning methods and materials are used in all subjects to adapt to pupils' different needs and learning styles.

The only subject that is set is Mathematics. Each year group has one faster moving set and two other mixed ability sets. These sets are fluid and can change throughout the year and pupils are allocated a set according to assessment results and teacher judgement.

Learning support is provided in class and by specialist teachers for pupils who need help in a specific area of learning. (see SEND Support policy)

Early Years

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The curriculum is planned with reference to the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (October 2024, effective November 2024) covering the following areas of learning:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

- **Communication & Language**

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

- **Physical development**

Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives⁷. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.

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Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

- **Literacy**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

- **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

- **Understanding the world**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

- **Expressive Arts & Design**

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The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

(see EYFS policy for details)

KS1 & KS2

The curriculum is planned with reference to the National Curriculum across KS1 & KS2 with the addition of supplementary resources to support the National Curriculum areas of learning.

Mathematics

The national curriculum for mathematics aims to ensure that all pupils:

- become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that pupils develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately
- reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language
- can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions

English

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information

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- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

At Orchard House school our English curriculum consists of resources from CLPE Power of Reading and PKC (Primary Knowledge Curriculum). Teachers use a variety of texts from these schemes to link with learning in other subjects, promote a global perspective, showcase diversity and provide a model of high quality literature for children.

Science

The national curriculum for science aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science through different types of science enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them
- are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future

Alongside the national curriculum for science, Developing Experts and PKC are used as a supplementary resource to enhance scientific enquiry and application.

RSHE

The revised curriculum will begin in the summer term of 2021 with statutory elements integrated into the existing scheme of work, focussing on the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, including family and friendships, in all relevant contexts, including online. This sits alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy and awareness of the wider world we live in.

This forms part of the wider work of the school in fostering pupil wellbeing, developing resilience and life skills fundamental to pupils being happy, successful, and productive members of society. This also complements the ethos of the school and its values, helping to develop personal attributes including kindness, integrity, generosity, and honesty. The school follows the Jigsaw PSHE program.

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Knowledge

At Orchard House School we are committed to teaching a knowledge rich curriculum. History and Geography units are well sequenced throughout the year groups and are knowledge broad in nature. Our Knowledge curriculum is guided by the PKC with ambitious topics further enriched with oracy and philosophy opportunities. Our Art curriculum also promotes knowledge of artists and the context in which art is created whilst also developing skills.

STEM

The school has created a bespoke project based learning STEM curriculum. Children will encounter a diverse range of projects designed to nurture the skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, craftsmanship, commitment and creativity. They are challenged to engineer solutions to real-world environmental and societal problems promoting a global perspective and awareness. Through work in this subject, our pupils can earn CREST Awards and the ISEB iPQ project qualification.

Reasoning

Lessons in Verbal and Non Verbal Reasoning take place weekly in KS2 to build confidence in problem solving and prepare for 11+ entrance examinations.

The following areas of the curriculum following a specific blend of the national curriculum and private schemes of work: Music; French; Technology; ICT; Physical Education; Swimming; Drama

Subject specialists teach Computing, French, Music, Art, Drama, Swimming, Physical Education

The Head, deputy head and SLT work to ensure that the timetable allows a balance of subjects and the time allocated for each subject is appropriate.

Extra-Curricular provision

A broad range of extra clubs and squads are provided across KS1 and KS2 to extend and support the curriculum across the school. These are provided by form teachers and specialist teachers throughout the school. The clubs vary from

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invitation only; clubs focusing on our MAT children, where potential scholars have been identified and those offered to all children.

Relationship to other policies

This Curriculum policy embraces policies and procedures for Admissions, Assessment, Assemblies, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Homework, Educational visits, SEN Support, Sex Education and Teaching and Learning.

Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress

The School aims to engender positive attitudes to learning by fostering a climate of enquiry where ideas are respected and can be freely shared. Through the delivery of our curriculum, we seek to ensure that learners:

- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding progressively and at a good pace
- are able to achieve standards commensurate with their potential
- are competent and increasingly independent learners
- can concentrate, co-operate and work productively with others
- are actively involved in a dynamic process of thinking and discovering for themselves
- are able to assess their own work or that of their peers during self and peer review
- and make progress appropriate to their potential.

To achieve this teachers are expected to ensure that their lessons and/or activities:

- have clear aims and purposes which are shared with the children
- cater appropriately for the learning of learners of differing abilities, interests and learning styles; resources and learning tasks will be suitably differentiated to match individual learning needs.
- create and sustain learners' interest and motivation
- strive to ensure the full participation of all learners
- signal high expectations to all learners and set high but attainable challenges
- incorporate regular feedback to learners through thoughtful marking and discussion with learners
- make observations to determine the next steps and inform future plans
- help learners to form useful assessments of their level of attainment and what needs to be improved
- encourage learners to display and develop learning skills such as observation and information seeking; looking for patterns and deeper understanding; communicating information and ideas in various ways; posing

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questions and solving problems, and applying what has been learned to unfamiliar situations, thinking skills.

- encourage learners to demonstrate independence and autonomy
- ensure that learners can make progress in accordance with their potential.

Teachers are encouraged to assess their own performance and make appropriate revisions and adjustments to facilitate the progress of learners.

Pupils' progress is reviewed at termly academic tracking meetings, where pupils who are not making expected progress are flagged for monitoring, along with actions or interventions to support each child.

Monitoring

Head of subjects may observe class teaching throughout the year across different Key stages. During the observation (approx. 20-60 minutes), the head of subject should make notes on the common subject observation sheet with particular reference to the children's learning and achievement levels, as well as lesson content. Feedback must be provided verbally and in writing on lesson observation forms.

Head of subjects are also responsible for "book looks" of their subject area. Maths, English, Science and Knowledge subjects are to be monitored twice yearly. Subject Co-ordinators are to choose three books from each year group, from a list of children's abilities provided by the form teacher. These scrutinies of work are to be logged in the school calendar in advance and as with observations, feedback must be given verbally and in writing.

Where subjects are non-book based, these Subject Coordinators are responsible for demonstrating the children's work through the use of Google Sites, creating an 'Evidence file' for their subject. These Evidence files are monitored by the Deputy Head, academic and SLT throughout the year.

Heads of subjects are to manage their subject in line with the Curriculum schemes of work and subject action plans throughout the academic year.

Heads of subjects create an action plan for the start of each academic year to set plans for development and enrichment of their subject area.

Head of subjects should review and monitor pupil progress across their subjects in both Key Stage 1 and 2.

At the end of each academic year heads of subjects are responsible for logging, which children's books are to be kept for reference.

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Rôles and responsibilities of head teacher, other staff, governors

The head teacher will ensure that:

- all statutory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met. This will include how the subject will be taught and assessed, the use of language, and the use of information and communications technology

Other staff, eg the Deputy Head Academic and members of SLT, will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy and is responsible for liaising with Subject Co-ordinators to discuss their subject's focus, in line with the Curriculum schemes of work..

The governors will ensure that:

- they consider the advice of the headteacher when approving this curriculum policy
- parents receive timely reports on the progress of their child
- they participate actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

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