

Winchester House School

Curriculum Policy

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Oct 14 ECG
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Introduction

The school provides a continuous education for children between the ages of 3 to 13 and in the main prepares children for the 13+ Common Entrance (CE) examinations and a range of scholarship exams and awards. The school also ensures that students are properly prepared for transfer to other schools when the need arises, for example by CE entry at 11+ or through other school pre-assessment or transition procedures.

The curriculum which we offer is broad based and aims to provide a quality educational experience for all the students in our care. Recognising each child as a unique individual, we strive to match learning tasks to appropriate levels of ability and attainment so that all children can gain a sense of achievement and pleasure from their learning and make progress. The curriculum gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Students have opportunities to experience a range of responsibilities as they move through the school and these opportunities are extended and enhanced through our Learn to Lead programme. A wide range of exciting educational visits, in house subject specific and cross-curricular events and an ever expanding range of extra-curricular clubs all support and enhance the learning experience for children at Winchester House.

Our school aim is:

To develop lifelong learners with a spirit of resourcefulness and self-reliance within a warm and purposeful community.

As a school we aim to help the children:

- Develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to ask questions, solve problems, argue rationally and apply themselves to tasks.
- To use language and numbers effectively and with understanding.
- To build their confidence in speaking and listening activities.
- Develop a critical understanding and respect for the environment and the world in which they live and an awareness of the inter-dependence of individuals, groups and nations.
- Appreciate the significance of human achievements and aspirations.
- Develop self-awareness, a sense of self-respect and a willingness to be self-motivated and contribute to the welfare of others.
- Develop a respect for other people acknowledging that differences in their abilities, background and beliefs bring richness into our own lives.
- Gain pleasure from joining with others in games and outdoor activities and develop the social skills needed to live and work cooperatively
- Appreciate the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Be creative, through creative teaching but equally through opportunities to express themselves through designing, creating and performing their work.

Our Approach to Learning

High aspirations are fundamental to our approach to learning at Winchester House School. From the early stages of learning in Pre-Prep to the top of the school in Year 8, we are focused on developing lifelong learners who thrive on challenge, adventure and a dynamic range of educational opportunities and experiences.

Creative teaching, delivered by passionate teachers, ensures that the learning experience is active and engaging for all ages and abilities. There are ample opportunities for students to pursue their strengths and interests in addition to developing their curiosity, confidence and perseverance when meeting new challenges. From Nursery to Year 4 a cross-curricular approach creates meaningful connections in learning. Students have opportunities to investigate, collaborate, communicate, reflect and evaluate. Above all, they are mentally and physically busy, fully involved and fully engaged in their learning. This stimulating start in their learning journey develops learners who are inquisitive and independent. It develops learners who have the stamina, resourcefulness and resilience to engage with the deep and memorable learning and skills required for Common Entrance and Scholarship exam preparation and for the world in which they live.

Our Learners are confident communicators. They are creative, resourceful and inquisitive. They show empathy towards others and embody the School's motto 'non nobis solum', they do not think of themselves alone. Winchester House learners collaborate, share ideas and opinions and work together as a team. We believe in the concept of life-long learning and believe that our challenging and creative approach fosters the desire and hunger to engage with the world around us.

The Learning Environment takes place inside the Pre-Prep and Upper School classrooms, the school grounds, our Secret Garden, local woods and forests, the Art and Design block, the ICT suite, the Science laboratories, the Music block, the Sports Hall, the Games fields, the Library, theatres, the Forum, Drama studio, the playgrounds, in prep, in tutor group time, at meal times, in chapel and in assemblies. In fact learning happens all around us at Winchester House, all day and every day.

NURSERY AND PRE-PREP

The curriculum in Pre-Prep follows the thematic, joined up, cross-curricular, Creative Curriculum approach.

Early Years – the Foundation Stage

Children in Early Years follow the teaching and learning requirements of the Early Years Framework. They learn through a variety of exciting, first hand learning opportunities and play based experiences which stimulate their imagination and engage their attention, within the context of a creative, cross-curricular curriculum.

The primary focus in Nursery is on the core areas of learning which are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Whilst these remain central to the children's learning in Reception, the specific areas of learning which are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design, become more prominent.

As part of their communication and language curriculum, children in Nursery develop their phonological awareness skills through a variety of listening activities, rhyme, rhythm and alliteration games (Letters and Sounds Phase 1). In Reception children rapidly progress through a structured phonics programme (Letters and Sounds Phase 2 and 3), learning to blend sounds together to read simple words and to segment sounds to spell. Consequently, strong foundations are laid in early reading and writing skills.

In reception, children read on a regular basis with their Key Person and begin to take books home to share with parents. Children also begin the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme, building on the gross and fine motor skills as well as core strength which have begun to develop in Nursery. This offers a multisensory approach to learning letter formation.

Music lessons are taught by specialist teachers in Nursery and Reception. French and P.E. are also taught by specialist teachers in Reception. In Early Years, learning dinosaurs are introduced to the children (Triatops, Explainosaurus, Pretendosaur, Explorosaurus, Thinkodocus, Askaraptor) to help them understand what the characteristics of good learners are and to begin to take responsibility for their own learning. Dinosaur footprint challenges are sometimes offered to children in Reception to enhance their learning potential during periods of child led learning.

Years 1 and 2

Children are allocated to a class teacher, with whom they start every day. All children enjoy a full and exciting 'joined up', cross-curricular curriculum. The children are immersed in a topic each term with a Stunning Start (eg an alien spacecraft landing), Marvellous Middle (eg a trip to the Farm) and Fabulous Finish (eg medieval banquet for children and parents). Wherever possible, all learning in that term relates to the topic including Geography, History, Art and DT and Science. Use of the Learning Dinosaurs continues.

Throughout Years 1 and 2, children read aloud in some form every day and regular assessments are made to ensure progression. We continue the Kinetic Letters handwriting scheme. We aim to build fluency and speed through this structured programme.

We continue the Letters and Sounds programme for our Phonics teaching up to Phase 6. The Rising Stars spelling scheme is also introduced in both Years 1 and 2 to support the teaching of effective spelling strategies. We focus on the acquisition and retention of spellings and the implementation of these spellings into the children's independent writing. Speech and Language is taught and assessed within all subjects as children share ideas and collaborate in group work. Students have a weekly Drama lesson too and have opportunities to perform throughout the year

We follow the White Rose Maths scheme which aims to shape assured, happy and resilient mathematicians who relish the challenge of maths. They become independent, reflective thinkers, whose skills not only liberate them in maths but also support them across the curriculum. Children apply their mathematical knowledge in a flexible way.

RS and PSHE are an important feature of each week and we support the children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social awareness and their understanding of the school's Winchester House Way.

Specialist teaching develops further in Key Stage 1 with the addition of Swimming lessons to the curriculum which still contains ICT, Music, French and PE. Years 1 and 2 children enjoy the early stages of team sports in their PE sessions and after school clubs programme.

Regular reading practice at home is encouraged and word and tables work in Year 2 will also be sent home to enable parents to support their child's learning.

At any stage in their development throughout Pre-Prep some children can benefit from contact with our Learning Development staff. Parents are always advised of this and individual appointments can be arranged to discuss details.

SELIGMAN

The curriculum in Years 3 and 4 follows the thematic, joined-up, cross-curricular, Creative Curriculum approach.

Year 3

Children in Year 3 will find themselves tutor groups, based in The Seligman Building, where they learn the bulk of the curriculum, delivered mainly by the Year 3 class teachers. The day is longer: children finish at 5.00pm or 6.30pm. Children are grouped for guided reading English and Maths within their tutor groups. The children enjoy a broad range of subjects including Science, History, Geography, RS, Art, Design Technology and Drama all contributing to the Creative Curriculum theme each term. The themed lessons and PSHE are all taught in tutor groups by their tutor or subject specialist teacher. Swimming, Music, PE, Games and French are all taught by specialists and ICT is integrated into lessons with specialist support. Children sometimes begin to be taught a musical instrument at this stage. Tables, spellings and reading work are completed in school and often encouraged at home and or weekends to support work in school. There are designated reading slots in school time. Children are taught the Kinetic Letters programme for handwriting and continue to focus on phonics "Letters and Sounds" programme that is started in Pre-Prep.

Year 4

Still based in the Seligman Building, and taught the majority of the curriculum by the Year 4 teachers. As the curriculum expands, the allocation of curriculum time to particular subjects increases. Year 4 children begin to get a real flavour of Upper School life as they move increasingly to the specialist teaching areas but still enjoy the Creative Curriculum approach. Setting and grouping is the same as for Year 3.

Year 4 children still experience the longer day, if parents choose this, with a 6.30pm finish available. Tables and Spellings will be set during lessons and practised in enrichment or homework slots (prep) in preparation for weekly tests. Children will read to an adult at least once a week and have set reading times built into the timetable. Guided reading sessions also take place weekly and children continue with the Kinetic Letters programme for handwriting in lessons.

UPPER SCHOOL

Year 5

At this stage much of the teaching is delivered by specialists. This development requires greater independence and organisation and, with plenty of assistance from tutors, the children quickly adapt to this more mature school experience. Children are now in sets for the core curriculum subjects. Set lists are regularly reviewed and changes can be made where appropriate. The formal day ends at 6.30pm (although students have the opportunity to go home at 5:00pm should their guardians choose) and all prep is completed at school, under the supervision of their tutor. Some children will still be keen to read at home and brush up on work for tests. It is during Year 5 that the majority of parents begin to discuss their children's future schooling with the head.

From Year 5, students are in sets for English, Maths, the Sciences and French. In groups for ICT, Art, DT, Music, Drama, PSHE, RS and PE. Other subjects are either in sets for that subject or in sets linked to other subjects. The number of sets, and the use of parallel sets is determined by the makeup and ability of the students in that subject in that year. Where parallel sets are used, the nomenclature 1a and 1b or 2a and 2b is used in lieu of sets 1, 2 and 3. Reasoning skills are taught as a discrete subject in year 5 to ensure that students are fully prepared for senior school pre-testing.

Year 6

The programme at this level is similar in structure to Year 5. Latin is introduced to the curriculum. So, too, is Key Skills – an alternative and invaluable programme focussing on additional English, Maths, Science, French and study skills for those students who have been identified to benefit from this intervention. Classwork and examination scores, along with standardised tests and teachers' observations are all taken into account as every child approaches the final few years of their time at WHS. It is helpful, though not essential, if a child's future school is decided by the end of Year 6 and we would certainly bear this in mind as we decide who might proceed to sit scholarships in Year 8.

Year 7

The final two years of CE and scholarship assessment preparation demand increasing independence and involvement from the students in directing their own learning. In year 7 students have timetabled independent learning time, utilising a published programme of support from teachers, students direct their learning to the greatest areas of need. Students are also directed to certain subjects as required by their teachers and tutors support with this intervention directing students as instructed by subject teachers. Some children, particularly those aiming at a scholarship, will begin Greek in year 7. Towards the second half of Year 7 the potential scholars will be confirmed as certain schools expect specific preparation for the scholarship examination. Every year, some children change course at this stage to sit Common Entrance instead of a scholarship.

Internal assessments in year 7 are designed to best prepare students for the next steps in a formal assessment setting and under timed conditions. Decisions regarding setting for year 8 and scholarship applications are made using this data alongside formative assessments, standardised data and observations from teaching colleagues.

Year 8

Scholarship exams take place between January and May of Year 8, depending on the particular school. Common Entrance is timed for the first week in June. Specific programmes are built in where necessary, but the majority of children have similar schedules aiming at CE in June. It is a demanding year for the children and we ensure that the exam preparation, along with interview practice and non-academic scholarship preparation (Music, Art and All-rounder awards, for example) is all built into their programmes. Independent learning time remains on the timetable for students in year 8 and this forms a vital opportunity for further support and challenge from teaching staff.

All Year Groups

Through our PSHE programme, visiting speakers and assemblies we provide personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equal Opportunities Act 2010. We take every opportunity to make students resistant to extremism and radicalisation and actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs throughout our assemblies, curriculum and whole school systems and structures.

We have regard for 'Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools' (March 2015). Careers guidance features in the form of inspirational 'Ignite' talks and visits by selected speakers from a range of professions as well in our post-CE and Scholarship programme. Discussions between class teachers and/or tutors with students and parents also take place. These conversations enable the students to make informed choices about a broad range of career options with the ultimate aim of inspiring them to fulfil their potential. Children also volunteer and are encouraged to fundraise for charity, increasing their awareness of the needs of others.

From time to time some children may benefit from tutoring to help them have full access to the curriculum. As an educational establishment we do not endorse 'hot-housing' children through over-coaching as the child's well-being has to be our primary consideration. Winchester House School provides a number of pathways to support students either through learning support or from subject teachers. If a parent is considering tuition, this should be raised with the Deputy Head (Academic).

The School's Learning Development team gathers evidence and undertakes screening and assessments to support intervention. Details regarding provision for students with SEND and EAL are located in the Special Needs and Disability Policy.

There are times when pupils are unable to come into school. When a pupil is at home due to illness, no work will be sent home or expected to be completed as the priority is for the pupil to get better. A hybrid lesson, with some pupils online and the majority of pupils in-person in school, provides a worse learning experience for those pupils in school and the learning benefit for those pupils online is limited and tends not to negate the need for further support and catching up once back in school. Given that Winchester House has specific routines built into the structure of its day to allow pupils to catch up with missed work and to provide additional support to those pupils who need it, online lessons for individual pupils who are not in school will not be provided.

Curriculum Policy

There are occasions when it will be appropriate for pupils to be working at home. Within the digital classroom spaces, Tapestry, Google Classroom or MS Teams, pupils will find work that can be completed independently at home. If the school is safe to open, we will always open; however, if the site is not safe or if travel is not safe and therefore we are unable to provide appropriate levels of supervision on site, the school will not open. Snow is a rare treat for children, therefore for at least the first 24 hours of the school being closed, there will not be any learning provided so that snowmen can be built, snow angels can be drawn and cold hands can be tended to. Learning will then start to shift online. WHS will communicate if the school will not open or will need to close via email and text messages sent through the School Portal.

The Independent Learning policy sets out how and why all school work is completed during the school day. Inevitably, there will be occasions when it will be appropriate for work to be completed at home, and such requests for work should be directed, in the first instance, to the pupils' tutor.

Departmental Sections

English

Maths

Science

French

History

Geography

Classics

Art

Design and Technology

ICT

Music

Drama

PE and Games

RS