

COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY

At Colchester High it is believed that all pupils are entitled to the very best education that we can provide.

This means that within the resources and time which are available to us, staff strive to supply each pupil in every class with a curriculum which is rich, varied, challenging and inspiring, and the conditions in which each individual can fulfil his or her potential to the highest possible standard in every respect of their lives.

We firmly believe in the regulatory requirements for the curriculum set out by the DFE, and we provide for:

- Full time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.
- A wide selection of GCSE Subjects in Key Stage 4 and a wide choice of A Level subjects and enrichment for students wishing to study in our Sixth Form.
- Subject matter appropriate for ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan). Each subject has a detailed plan as well as schemes of work.
- Pupils to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. This is done in all lessons, with some pupils benefitting from extra help given by the Learning Support department.
- Where a pupil has a statement or EHC plan, education which fulfils its requirements.
- Personal, Social and Health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos. In particular, we encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
- Access to accurate, up to date careers guidance for pupils in the Senior School and Sixth Form that is presented in an impartial manner and enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, and helps them to encourage them to fulfil their true potential. This is covered in more detail in the 'Careers Education Policy'.
- Where pupils are below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.
- Where pupils are above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.
- All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- Effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British Society. To this end, every opportunity is taken to actively promote Fundamental British Values in the school.

These requirements are met in the curriculum we offer, and this is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work.

We believe that these ideals are best achieved by close attention to local expectations and to the National Curriculum, in classes where much of the work is from first hand experience and is drawn, where appropriate, from themes designed to enable pupils to understand the inter-relationship of many areas of learning.

This policy, and the plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

We also ensure that this policy, the plans and schemes of work do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

In particular, the following areas of experience are woven into the school curriculum:

Linguistic

This area is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. As well as English lessons taught throughout the school, French is taught from Nursery onwards, and German and Spanish is taught from Year 7 onwards. Each of these foreign languages can be chosen at GCSE level in Key Stage 4, or at A Level in Key Stage 5.

Mathematical

This area helps pupils to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space, and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics is developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion in both Mathematics and Science lessons taught throughout the school. The most able mathematicians also have the option of sitting an extra GCSE in Further Mathematics.

Scientific

This area is concerned with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry. Science lessons are taught throughout the school, and pupils gain experiences in observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings.

Technological

Pupils are given experiences in developing, planning and communicating ideas; working with tools, equipment, materials and components to produce good quality products. They also evaluate processes and products. Lessons in Information and Communication Technology and Computer Science are taught throughout the school, and can be taken at GCSE level in Key Stage 4 or A Level in Key Stage 5. Design Technology is taught up until the end of Key Stage 3, and in Key Stage 4 a GCSE in Product Design can be taken, and followed through to A Level in Key Stage 5.

Human and Social

This area is concerned with people and with their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. Religious Studies, History and Geography make a strong contribution to this area, and all can be taken at GCSE and A Level.

Physical

This area aims to develop the pupils' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses, and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. Pupils also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. PE and PSHE lessons make a strong contribution to this area, and PE can be taken at GCSE level. A limited number of

Food Technology lessons have been introduced, and this will increase in the coming year. LAMDA qualifications in Drama are also available to pupils in Key Stage 4.

Aesthetic and Creative

This area is concerned with the processes of making, composing and inventing. There are aesthetic and creative aspects of all subjects, but some make a particularly strong contribution, including, Art, Music, Drama and the study of Literature, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical responses. Art, Music, and English Literature can be taken at GCSE level.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS principles are grouped into seven areas of learning which support each child's development. This approach ensures that the EYFS meets the overarching aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.

EYFS CURRICULUM

The following are our seven areas of learning:

[1] Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Every child entering the Nursery has already acquired a variety of personal and social skills. It is important for us to recognise and build on these. Being aware that they are valued as individuals, enhances a child's self esteem, therefore enabling them to form relationships and develop friendships. The children learn to take turns to share, to experience therapeutic value of working with malleable materials, and to explore their emotions through play with small world, the home corner and role play. During Circle Time they learn to listen and participate within the group thus developing their confidence.

[2] Communication and Language

Children's listening and communicative skills are developed as they talk and play with adults and peers. From working with careful questioning and asking open ended questions, adults are able to assist the children in their thinking. This helps to build their confidence and their use of language. Children are encouraged to talk about their experiences, ideas and feelings towards each other and adults in their learning environment.

[3] Physical Development

Children love to have freedom of movement. They reveal it in play that is inventive, adventurous and stimulating. Through physical movement, they develop fine and gross motor skills, hand eye co-ordination, together with self confidence and self awareness. The children have access to a safe open garden where they are able to access a variety of small and large equipment providing opportunities to extend their skills in running, jumping, climbing, balancing etc. Play is carefully planned so that activities are balanced to provide for individual abilities. There is sensitive adult participation and constant supervision. Fine motor skills are developed through activities using scissors, threading, pouring, construction play and jigsaws.

[4] Literacy

The children are encouraged to look at books, listen to stories and become aware that the printed word has meaning. They have access to a well stocked book corner which has a variety of story and informative books suited to their interests, needs and culture. They enjoy and share books with each other, and engage in role play.

Date of this version: January 2017, to be reviewed January 2018. Reviewed by David Young

Pre writing skills develop as the children play and have the opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of media such as pencils, felt pens, crayons, chalk and paint brushes. They are encouraged to help themselves to paper and writing materials to make patterns and pictures. We encourage them to be aware of print in the environment, and always label their work.

[5] Maths

Many important mathematical concepts are to be found in play situations and other activities, such as stories, rhymes and daily routines. Children use their own every day language to talk about mathematical concepts, and adults encourage them to use mathematical language as they develop an awareness of space, size, order, pattern, number and relationships. The children are encouraged to sort and group objects; be introduced to counting and number games, to notice simple shapes and patterns, and be introduced to early concepts of addition and subtraction. Using daily activities, the children are encouraged to solve practical problems.

[6] Understanding the World

Children are naturally curious about their environment and the people who live in it. In order for them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, the children are given the opportunity to:

- Children are made aware of the World in which they live. (Environment)
- Experiment with a wide variety of materials, learning the names of the materials and equipment and how to use them safely.
- Talk about holidays, festive seasons and birthdays.
- Explore natural materials such as shells, plants etc.
- Talk about the weather and seasons.
- Talk about themselves and their families, events in their lives, past and present.
- Use their senses to explore the environment.
- Learn all about Nursery environment, the names of people who work in it, and the Lower School, to which they will transfer
- Play with materials associated with different places, e.g. the seaside, the farm.
- Talk about the work of different people in the community, such as dentists, doctors, shopkeepers, traffic wardens.
- Take some responsibility for caring for their environment, being aware of litter, cleaning up, tidying and recycling.

Through their natural curiosity and by providing them with a wide variety of activities and experiences, children begin to develop skills and concepts in science and technology. The children are given opportunities to experience water and sand play, making models, malleable play, and putting things together and taking them apart. They also have the opportunity to acquire some basic ICT skills using a computer.

[7] Expressive Arts and Design

Children experience the joy of achievement through creative play. It promotes aesthetic awareness and self expression. Creative play enables children to experiment with colour, shape and texture. They are able to choose what they want to make, and are encouraged to use their imagination. Their work is displayed in the Nursery, discussed and valued by other children and adults. They work at both

vertical and horizontal levels, with different colours and textures of paper, and different tools such as fingers, brushes, sponges etc. They are given opportunities to work with different malleable materials, such as clay, salt dough and plasticine.

Music also interests children. They enjoy singing and participate in music and movement. They quickly develop a sense of rhythm, delight in the music and movement sessions, and learn to use musical instruments. This is further enhanced by our specialist Music Teacher who teaches the children.

Whole School Summary

Our curriculum encompasses all of the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. This includes the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and are expected to behave.

As such, we aim:

- To teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they can achieve their full potential.
- To make the school a warm, welcoming, friendly place, creating an atmosphere of security, stability and trust; where co-operation is encouraged and everyone in the school, regardless of position, race, gender or creed will feel valued and confident that their contributions are respected.
- To ensure a love of learning is fostered and pupils feel that the learning experiences in which they are involved are important, carefully planned, relevant to their needs and abilities and give them the opportunity to grow towards autonomy at their own individual pace.
- To ensure that responsibility is developed and self-discipline expected.
- To ensure pupils are praised for their effort and successes, encouraged where they encounter difficulties and treated in a fair and consistent way when their behaviour is unacceptable.
- To ensure that realistic goals are set, helping pupils to acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which will enable them to understand the world and their responsibilities in its future.
- To ensure that all the pupils can gain strength from belonging to our school family and the understanding that this fellowship extends to their parents, guardians and to our wider community.
- To ensure that staff work for continuity and progression through a structured curriculum and by effective liaison with the other departments within the school and schools in the area.

The school believes that in order to deliver such a programme, it must recruit and retain teachers and support staff of the highest calibre and ensure that they are given adequate training, time, resources and recognition for the work that they do.

The school appreciates that teachers and support staff have particular strengths and to provide them with opportunities to share their expertise and experience with colleagues. Similarly, it is acknowledged that teachers will need help and support in their roles, covering the whole curriculum and embracing a variety of strategies.

The School seeks to maintain a strong team spirit that will sustain co-operative professional development and a process of on-going review. It endeavours to build on the achievements, recognising the professional responsibility to adapt to changing circumstances and to rise to new challenges.

PUPILS STUDYING GCSEs

In the past there has been an issue with some pupils 'dropping' GCSE options late on in Year 11. The following procedures have been put in place:

- Teachers should never instigate a discussion about a pupil dropping a GCSE that the pupil has chosen.
- If a parent enquires, every effort will be made to persuade the pupil to sit the examination, remembering that a grade D or E at GCSE is still a considerable achievement for some pupils.
- Any final decision will be made by the Principal or Head of Senior School in consultation with the parents.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Director of Studies, Head of Senior School and Head of Lower School are responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum, and liaise with the subject leaders and subject coordinators, who ensure close monitoring of the way the school teaches their subjects.

The subject leaders also examine long-term and medium term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.