

CURRICULUM POLICY

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Introduction

Our purpose is to teach our pupils knowledge, skills, and values to thrive and confidently contribute at Oakham School and beyond. We will provide exceptional, contemporary co-education with a global outlook, offering experiences to learn in a caring and inspiring boarding and day community.

We encourage all pupils and staff to articulate and embody our core values, which shape our curriculum. *Care* lies at the heart of everything we do. *Courage* and *contribution* are behaviours we wish to inspire, while we want pupils to seek and find *connection* in all aspects of their education and future lives.

Our Strategic Objective is to deliver an innovative, ambitious and challenging education fit for the 21st Century; one that fosters a love of learning through a broad, balanced and connected curriculum underpinned by our core values. We believe this objective is already well met with our current curriculum but will improve further as curriculum design continues.

1. Academic Curriculum

Across the School, there will be an increased focus on the explicit teaching of knowledge, skills and values, and the development of healthy habits through our Connected Curriculum. We are mindful of the growing importance of quality of grades versus quantity of grades, as well as the benefits of providing pragmatic choices for pupils in the number



of subjects studied. It is hoped that this combination should lead to greater academic progress by pupils, while also promoting their emotional and physical development.

These changes will encompass academic, pastoral, and co-curricular learning, and are designed with purpose to enable positive outcomes for all pupils; a holistic approach mindful of promoting pupil mental health and wellbeing throughout, enabled through a Connected Curriculum.

The Connected Curriculum maps five key skills across our curricula to ensure pupils embed and master these competencies as appropriate as they move through each stage. The five skills are Communication, Social, Self-management, Research, and Thinking. These skills are drawn from, and strengthen, the IB ATL and Oakham School's objectives and values.

In the **Lower School** (Lower 1, Forms 1 and 2), pupils study a full range of subjects, including Mathematics, English, Modern and Classical Languages, Science, Humanities, Computer Science and Creative and Performing Arts. In **Forms 1 and 2** the curriculum balance, as well as explicit delivery of Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, meets the requirements of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP), notably, 50 hours per subject group per year.

The individual subject curricula are set by departments and, whilst there are broad similarities between these and the requirements for Common Entrance and the National Curriculum, there is no formal alignment. However, the curricula must tie in with Middle School work and the IB MYP.

Inquiry skills are developed through the explicit use of the FOSIL (Framework Of Skills for Inquiry Learning, see link [here](#) for details), with elements of the FOSIL cycle considered either separately as appropriate, or together with the production of a research project.

Whilst **Lower 1** is not, formally, an IB MYP year, the curriculum is designed and taught in line with the MYP approach and Oakham School's Connected Curriculum.

The **Middle School (Forms 3, 4 and 5)** curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced, and to widen pupils' knowledge, understanding and experiences.

In **Form 3**, pupils continue to study a full range of subjects. This develops their academic skills and allows them to explore their own specific interests and strengths and provides a sound basis from which they will be able to choose their GCSE courses. Alongside the core academic curriculum, the Community Project provides opportunities to work outside the classroom, to tackle problems in teams, and to develop and improve communication and leadership skills.



As part of the implementation of IB MYP, the entire Form 3 academic curriculum includes the delivery of each of the subject groups for the required time, as well as the development of ATL skills. This will be enabled by incorporating core MYP values, bridging Lower School and Upper School experiences, and embracing the best of the IB philosophy.

In **Forms 4 and 5**, pupils follow either GCSE or IGCSE courses. They are required to study Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, a Modern Foreign Language, plus a selection of optional subjects, making up eight-to-ten GCSEs in total, with the majority studying nine GCSEs. It is possible for pupils to take Dual Award Science or the three Separate Sciences at GCSE.

This flexibility in number of GCSEs selected will benefit those who would previously have considered a reduction in subjects owing to aptitude or total academic load, creating time for learning outside of the classroom, a better balance of work rest and play and improved likelihood of thriving in all they do.

The available subjects ensure that pupils maintain a broad range of skills and subjects, whilst allowing some specialisation, in a fashion that enables their successful progression to the Upper School.

Independent learning and research skills are developed with reference to the FOSIL framework, aided by the Form 4 Individual Project, and will, as pupils graduate from the IB MYP in Forms 1 to 3, aim to refer to and maintain ATL skills.

Study periods will also be used to strengthen pupil skills through the Connected Curriculum, namely through academic coaching, RSE lessons, and other support networks.

In the **Upper School (Forms 6 and 7)**, pupils may choose between the IB Diploma Programme (IB DP) or from a selection of standalone courses (including A-level and BTEC). Most Upper School pupils opting for the standalone courses route will select the equivalent of 3 A-levels, the normal practice at this stage and common in the sector. The options available are reviewed annually to ensure that this remains the case. The provision of academic enhancement activities, such as Extended Projects and other department-based opportunities, are reviewed regularly. This includes provision for elite pupils aiming for Oxbridge or other competitive institutions or courses.

From September 2023, each A-level and BTEC choice will receive 7 lessons per week, one more than in previous years. This provides the opportunity for subjects to provide greater extension, expansion, and support for pupils, and complements the more specific focus on Connected Curriculum skills. Pupils, just as at GCSE, will also receive the statutory RSE curriculum in some of their study periods. Teachers have prepared for this over the preceding 18 months. Tutors support this through their regular one-to-one discussions with tutees, alongside twice weekly contact with their tutees as a tutor group.



Detailed curricula for all academic courses, are the responsibility of the Head of Department. The different needs of a diverse cohort of pupil are met by employing effective contemporary pedagogies, enabling all pupils to be as academically successful as possible.

We are mindful not to 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. We consider this in our academic, pastoral, and co-curricular activities, and are aware of where in pupil's learning these values might be challenged, and how to address them with sensitivity and clarity.

2. Form 4 and Form 5 Options

Pupils select one option from each of the following option blocks:

- If intending to study 10 GCSEs, choose a subject from each of blocks A-E.
- If intending to study 9 GCSEs, choose four subjects from the five blocks A-E and must include a Modern Foreign Language.
- If intending to study 8 GCSEs, pupils may choose at least three from any of the blocks but must include a Modern Foreign Language or a Humanity.

All Pupils

English Language & English Literature

Mathematics

Physical Education (PE) – non GCSE

Pastoral Learning

Science Option 1: Biology, Chemistry and Physics (two combined grades awarded, know as Trilogy)

Science Option 2: Biology, Chemistry and Physics (individual grades awarded for each science, known as the Separate Sciences), this must be selected in Blocks B or D.

Science Option 3: Minimum of two sciences of Biology, Chemistry or Physics (individual grades awarded for each science chosen), this must be selected in Blocks B or D. Pupils would then choose a subject in each of the other blocks to have 9 GCSEs.

Block A	French, German, Spanish
Block B	Geography, History, Latin, Religion & Philosophy, Separate Sciences (Options 2 or 3)
Block C	Geography, History, French, Religion & Philosophy



Block D	Art (Painting and Mixed Media), Art (3D Design), Art (Textiles), Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Greek and Latin ('Gratin'), Latin, Music, Physical Education (IGCSE), Separate Sciences (Options 2 or 3)
Block E	Art (Painting and Mixed Media), Art (Textiles), Citizenship, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Geography History, Music, Physical Education (GCSE)

3. IB Diploma Options

Subjects are organised according to the IB Diploma subject groups. IB pupils should select one subject from each of the six columns, choosing 3 subjects at Higher Level (HL) and 3 at Standard Level (SL).

Subjects in the same vertical column are taught at the same time, hence only one subject from each column can be chosen.



Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Language A	Language (Other)	Individuals & Societies	Sciences	Mathematics	Arts/ Electives
English A Literature HL/SL	German A Language & Literature HL French B HL/SL German B HL/SL Spanish B HL/SL Italian <i>ab initio</i> SL Spanish <i>ab initio</i> SL	Business Management HL/SL Economics HL Geography HL/SL Global Politics HL/SL History HL/SL Philosophy HL/SL Psychology HL/SL	Biology HL/SL Computer Science SL Design Technology HL/SL Environmental Systems & Societies SL Physics HL Sports, Exercise & Health Science HL	Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches (AA) HL/SL Mathematics: Applications & Interpretations (AI) SL	Business Management HL Chemistry HL Economics HL Environmental Systems & Societies SL French B HL Geography HL/SL History HL/SL Latin* HL/SL Theatre+ HL/SL Visual Arts HL/SL

Notes: For timetable reasons, selecting HL Mathematics with HL English is not possible.

*Latin HL/SL has some flexibility in placement (group 6 or group 2 dependent on numbers)

+Theatre may only be offered if enough pupils choose it.



All pupils must choose Mathematics at either HL or SL. For SL, common core courses will run before pupils decide on one of two options: Applications & Interpretation (AI) or Analysis & Approaches (AA).

HL pupils will follow the Analysis and Approaches (AA) course.

German pupils wishing to comply with KMK regulations should confirm with their local authority, but they will need to take Mathematics OR Bio/Chem/Phys at HL. They should take German A Lang & Lit HL and English A Lit SL at Oakham, but do not need to take another language (though possible). They may choose either option of Maths at SL provided that there is a science at HL and university options have been checked. All subjects listed above in group 3 are accepted.

4. A-level/Pre-U/BTEC Options

Pupils should pick THREE subjects, no more than ONE subject from EACH column below. Some pupils will do FOUR subjects in agreement with the Head of Upper School or Director of Studies/Deputy Head (Academic).

A	B	D	E
Business	Biology	Biology	Art & Design
Chemistry	Business	Business	Biology
Design & Technology	Classical Civilisation	Chemistry	Business
Economics	Critical & Contextual Studies	Economics	Computer Science
Geography	Economics	English Literature	Design & Technology
German	Maths & Further Maths+	French	Economics
History	History	Geography	English Literature
Philosophy	Mathematics	Maths & Further Maths+	Geography
Physics	Music	History	Latin
Psychology	Physical Education	Mathematics	Mathematics



Politics	Politics		Physics
Spanish	Psychology		Politics
Drama and Theatre	Religion and Philosophy		Psychology
	Spanish		
BTEC Sport and Exercise Science^	BTEC Sport and Exercise Science^	BTEC Business Management~	

+If pupils wish to study **A-level Further Mathematics**, please select 'Maths and Further Maths' in both columns B and D. The course includes A-level Mathematics, so do not select Mathematics elsewhere. Further Mathematics **must** be taken as a fourth A-level.

^BTEC Sport and Exercise Science must be selected in both columns A and B, as it is the equivalent to two A-level courses.

~BTEC Business Management may be chosen as the equivalent to one A-level subject.

5. Wider Curricula

Oakham aims to provide pupils with a Connected Curriculum that encourages their development through a broad range of activities and skills, envisaging one curriculum through which the range of school activities is delivered.

The Connected Curriculum exists to provide pupils with a variety of challenging and fulfilling experiences, to stimulate their interests and skills - perhaps some of which they did not previously know they had - to encourage them on occasion to put their energies to the service of others, and to develop aptitudes of teamwork and leadership. Sport, Music, Drama and Activities all have priority time within the school day to nurture inspiration and excellence.

As pupils go through the school and start to develop their specialism some may need to spend more time in a particular area. This is supported through various elite programmes. Great care is always taken to ensure both short- and longer-term views are taken to support pupils in their aspirations.

6. Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Tutorial Programme

The aim of our pastoral care is to provide a supportive, safe, and challenging environment for every pupil. Houses are the focal point of pastoral support and should be places in which pupils feel safe, confident and happy.



Virtually all members of staff are responsible for a tutor group, and it is through these meetings that the PSHE program is primarily delivered.

Tutor groups are arranged by year group by House to help ensure appropriate topics are being covered at the right time for each pupil, with PSHE including RSE delivered in the Lower School and Form 3 through Form Time/Perspectives, delivered by trained teachers. There are a range of external specialist speakers to support the tutorial programme and days off-timetable allow deeper exploration in topics such as e-Safety, adolescent mental health, developing resilience and the understanding of others, with particular regard to protected characteristics.

The PSHE including RSE policy gives greater details on this topic.

7. Careers

The School's Careers provision, described in more detail in the Careers Education policy, ensures that impartial and broad advice and information is given to all pupils, in order that they have the best possible opportunity to access post-school options; this provision is also available to pupils after they have left the School.

8. Special Additional Educational Needs (SAEN)

The provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or Learning Support needs is detailed in both the Inclusion and the Language policies and requires that all pupils are facilitated to access the curriculum and its delivery at all levels.

9. Scholarship

The provision for our most able and enthusiastic pupils occurs formally and/or informally across all year groups, as scholarship – the curiosity to ask questions, the insight and inspiration to think broadly and the drive to seek answers - is encouraged for all.

Formally, academic scholars' seminars run throughout the academic year, challenging each year group to consider off-syllabus questions and learn to critically challenge their own ideas, as well as others.

Informally, there is a wider range of opportunities for pupils who want to enhance their learning and engage with subjects outside of the classroom. These include external competitions and preparation for competitive universities (such as Oxbridge) or competitive courses (such as medicine and related courses, and for engineering).

10. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)



The School uses Microsoft Teams as our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) across all year groups, allowing pupils and staff ready access from any device. All homework details are shared via Teams Assignments, helping pupils to manage their workflow effectively. Software packages are used across the School to help pupils access high-quality resources and to develop their academic knowledge and skills, and pupils use Microsoft Office to prepare written documents or presentations.

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to evolve at a rapid pace, it is important that schools stay up-to-date with developments, and are as aware as possible of the risk and opportunities this new technology brings. We will respond in a manner that provides clarity for teachers and pupils, aided by suitable policies; our first AI policy is under development Winter Term 2023.

11. Future Curriculum Development

For pupils to understand how to learn and make the best progress possible, drawing on contemporary educational advances in what works, for instance, understanding and employing cognitive load theory, metacognition and neuroscience to help them learn.

For pupils and staff to make effective use of age-appropriate digital learning software and hardware to aide their learning whilst also developing life-long IT skills, as well as centrally managed learning resources.

For all teachers – novice, developing and established – to be suitably expert in teaching knowledge and skills, including the evolution of the Connected Curriculum (Communication, Social, Self-Management, Research and Thinking). For teachers to be suitably expert in digital teaching, using software and hardware effectively themselves, while facilitating effective digital learning by pupils.

Working to develop a coherent and embraced approach to staff development, linking individuals' Performance Review and Development (PR&D) to effective professional learning and development.

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V1.0

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