

## **Copthill Independent Day School**

### **Curriculum Policy**

#### **Copthill School's Educational Vision**

At Copthill, we will:

- **put the child at the heart of their education**, making the education fit the child rather than trying to make the child fit into a one-size-fits-all system;
- care for our children as individuals within a supportive family community, learning and growing together - happy children learn;
- have the highest expectations of all our children across all areas of their education and development but be flexible in our approach;
- challenge and support our children to be confident in recognising their own and each other's strengths and talents across the broad Copthill curriculum;
- acknowledge that learning can be difficult and reassure our children that making mistakes is part of the process of learning;
- instil in our children the curiosity, excitement, desire and drive to be lifelong learners, seizing every opportunity to pursue their dreams and to write their own success stories at each stage of their journey;
- grow as Copthill Learners (responsible citizens, independent explorers, team players, problem solvers, creative thinkers, reflective learners), respecting each other, our environment and ourselves and preparing for the next stage in life, whatever that might be.

#### **Introduction**

At Copthill School, we believe that education should provide the essential tools for lifelong learning and prepare our children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. To achieve this, we aim to deliver:

a broad curriculum, emphasising the importance of literacy and numeracy and designed to develop lifelong knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow our children to become responsible citizens, independent explorers, creative thinkers, problem solvers, team players and reflective learners.

(Educational Aims: 3)

Learning should be a positive and relevant experience. What we teach and how we teach it should allow children to experience the joy of discovery, problem solving, risk-taking and active participation in the arts, thereby developing their self-confidence as independent learners as they realise their educational potential and

mature spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically. This policy is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for high quality teaching and learning at Copthill School.

### **Aims and Objectives**

We believe that learning can be best facilitated in:

a welcoming, stimulating and happy environment which is friendly, caring and well-disciplined, in which every pupil is encouraged to achieve and motivated to succeed.

(Educational Aims: 1)

The following aims form the basis of our Copthill Curriculum:

- to deliver a progressive, engaging, whole-school curriculum which promotes the enjoyment of learning for a purpose and caters for the individual needs of all our pupils, providing equality of access and the opportunity for all to learn and make progress;
- to encourage a love of and commitment to learning and achieving;
- to enable all our children to develop and apply independent skills for learning across all curriculum subjects, inside and outside the classroom;
- to foster the creative development of all our children by providing opportunities for curiosity, open-mindedness, flexibility, risk-taking and perseverance;
- to promote the importance of the arts and provide opportunities for children to develop creative, artistic and musical skills and talents;
- to make children aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and provide opportunities for them to develop sporting skills and talents;
- to develop children's self-respect; respect of the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others and respect of our world, enabling them to build successful relationships as responsible citizens who can make a positive difference;
- to offer an extra-curricular programme that supports, extends and enriches the curriculum.

### **Curriculum Content**

The curriculum encompasses all the planned activities that we organise to promote learning alongside the spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth and development of our children and their personal, emotional, physical and economic well-being. It should actively encourage our pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It is the totality of our children's learning experiences.

Statutory curriculum content for maintained schools involves coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum for England (2014), the locally agreed syllabus for RE and provision for PSHE education. The 2014 National Curriculum Framework requires all schools to 'offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.'

PSHE education must encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Copthill Curriculum for Key Stages One and Two is based on the National Curriculum 2014 but is adapted to suit our unique children and develop their independence and responsibility. We keep abreast of educational reform and consider new initiatives, adopting those we feel will improve and enhance our curriculum.

Copthill School uses the *Dimensions* model for curriculum design. This theme-based framework ensures that we deliver the prescribed coverage and allows for clear progression across the school. Whilst being structured, it also offers us flexibility and ownership of our own Copthill curriculum.

Each subject has a policy and development plan. Subject policies are reviewed every two years. Development plans are reviewed and submitted annually. Major curriculum initiatives are detailed in the whole-school Development Plan.

## **Organisation and Implementation**

At Copthill School, there are two forms per year group from Reception to Year 6. Each form has a form teacher. Children in Reception and Years 1-3 are taught mostly by their form teacher but by subject specialists for French, Music, PE and Games (and sometimes ICT). Art is taught by a specialist in Year 4 when Spanish is also introduced. Children in Years 5-6 are taught by individual subject teachers across the curriculum although the English teachers also deliver the Humanities curriculum.

Children are taught in ability sets for Mathematics from Year 2 and in English from Year 5.

## Planning

We recognise that careful planning is essential because it ensures:

- curriculum coverage and progression;
- high expectations and levels of achievement;
- inclusion;
- a balance of challenge and support;
- personalised learning for all children that builds upon previous experiences and learning;
- a clear focus for teaching and assessment.

Planning takes place at three levels:

- Long Term Plans - Curriculum Theme Cycle documents for EYFS, Key Stage One, Lower Key Stage Two and Upper Key Stage Two are split into terms and give an overview of the themes that will be covered.
- Medium Term Plans - these provide an overview of each theme unit. Medium term plans focus on learning objectives and on the learning experiences that will enable these to be achieved. A list of key skills and concepts, an outline of activities and suggested resources are included on medium term plans.
- Short Term Plans – teachers are allowed flexibility regarding their methods of short term planning. Effective short term plans focus on key learning phases - the skills and concepts to be introduced, developed or reinforced; key questions and words; differentiation; the activities that will engage pupils and facilitate learning for all children (identifying as many opportunities for pupil-led learning as possible); Assessment for Learning opportunities and techniques and the evidence that will demonstrate successful learning. A sample format is provided for teachers to use. It allows the teacher to focus their planning for a week, a day or a lesson, depending on the need. The sample format is based on three headings - Purpose, Process, Product. 'Purpose' relates to skills and concepts; 'Process' focuses on activities tailored towards children's particular learning needs and 'Product' identifies success criteria and how the learning will be recorded.

The literacy programme, *Read Write Inc. Phonics*, is taught in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The *Maths Makes Sense* learning system is introduced in Reception and followed by teachers up to Year 4. Children in the core Maths sets in Years 5 and 6 also use the *Maths Makes Sense* approach. Eventually, it will be used throughout the school. The Abacus toolkit forms the basis for teaching and learning in Maths for more able pupils in Years 5 and 6. These programmes provide comprehensive long, medium and short term plans for teachers to use as a guide and adapt to meet the needs of their learners.

## **Effective Learning**

We recognize the need to implement a wide range of strategies to make learning possible. These include:

- independent work;
- paired work;
- group work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions using a variety of questioning techniques;
- research;
- investigation;
- problem-solving;
- designing and making;
- role-play;
- oral presentations;
- debate;
- music;
- drama;
- physical activity;
- use of ICT across the curriculum;
- learning outside the classroom;
- inviting visitors into school;
- visits.

## **Assessment for Learning to Promote Effective Learning**

We believe that children learn best when they:

- feel safe and secure in a positive learning environment where there is a clear structure to their role in assessing their own learning and where their opinions are valued;
- understand what they are learning and what is expected of them;
- are involved actively in what they are learning and know where to find help if they need it;
- are given effective feedback about the quality of their work and what they can do to develop further;
- are encouraged to take responsibility for the progress they make as learners who are able to work effectively independently and with others.

We aim to encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, reviewing and reflecting upon what and how they have learned. Children assess their own learning and that of their peers informally, often through discussion. They respond to targets set by their teachers.

## **Effective Teaching**

At Copthill School, teachers endeavour to provide a variety of high quality learning experiences for our children to enable progress to be made and promote a lifelong love of learning. Teachers:

- focus on providing positive learning experiences for all their children by knowing their children well;
- carefully plan, prepare and deliver well-paced lessons with clear objectives, building upon children's prior learning (**not** prior teaching!) and experiences;
- differentiate effectively using a range of techniques - for example: setting; support of teaching assistants; through questioning; by task; provision of resources; by outcome; through open-ended challenges and investigations etc.;
- use a range of good quality classroom resources effectively;
- offer effective feedback about the quality of work and what can be done to develop further;
- allow opportunities for children to review and reflect upon their learning;
- know their subject(s) well and keep up-to-date with developments in the subjects they teach through their continued professional development;
- act as positive role models for their children.

## **Assessment and Recording**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning – the term 'assessment' comes from the Latin 'assidere' which means 'to sit beside'. Assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses many informal and formal activities designed to monitor and provide evidence of pupil attainment, track progress and drive improvement and development.

Assessment is carried out in many ways (the list below is not exhaustive):

- teacher observation
- questioning and discussion
- marking of children's work (not always in exercise books!)
- self-assessment
- peer assessment
- standardised tests

We use an online package, Classroom Monitor, to manage assessment, track pupil progress and report to parents. Teachers record assessment judgements into curriculum-mapped online markbooks. We refer to the Rising Stars National Curriculum 2014 Progression Framework and Maths Makes Sense End of Unit Objectives which provide a breakdown of the national curriculum in small steps to show pupil progress and next steps.

Nfer baseline assessments are used in Reception and standardised tests in Reading (PIRA) and Mathematics (PUMA) are administered termly in Years 1 to 6 and during the Spring Term (PIRA) and Summer Term (PIRA and PUMA) in Reception.

In 2015-16, the data generated from PIRA and PUMA tests was saved in a shared Google Sheet and the Hodder Scale Score was used to track the progress of each individual child across the academic year. From academic year 2016-17, Rising Stars online marksheets and reporting software will be used to analyse the evidence collected from these assessments. Age standardised scores from a range of assessments administered over previous years can be analysed using the Classroom Monitor Attainment and Progress tracking tool. This evidence can be used to track pupil performance against targets and expectations and to compare groups and cohorts.

Children in Year 4 complete *CAT4*. The information generated from these assessments helps us understand more about our pupils' developed abilities and likely academic potential. Results from *CAT4* help with intervention, monitoring progress and setting targets for future attainment.

Regular formal assessments of children's progress in Maths, Read Write Inc., writing and spelling take place. Refer to the Assessment and Reporting Schedule in the Tracking Progress folder on the staff server for an overview of the annual assessment and reporting schedule:

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Assessment data is analysed by teachers, subject leaders, the SENDCO, the More Able and Talented Coordinator and Senior Management.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Head of School/Director of Studies is responsible for the leadership, management and development of the curriculum in liaison with the Principal, subject leaders and subject teachers.

- The **Subject Leader** provides a strategic lead and direction for their subject by:
  - keeping up-to-date with government initiatives and current research in their subject;
  - writing, reviewing and updating their subject policy and overview;
  - auditing existing resources and suggesting and sourcing new ones;
  - monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in their subject;
  - reviewing and submitting an annual development plan;
  - supporting and offering advice to colleagues on issues related to their subject.

Subject Leaders are given non-contact time each term so that they can carry out their role effectively. (See also *Subject Leaders* and *Subject Leader Role*)

- **Curriculum Working Parties** provide a structure within which every member of our teaching staff can participate in and contribute to curriculum planning, thus promoting a partnership approach to curriculum development. As a team, members of the working parties are involved in tasks outlined below, although this list is not exhaustive:
  - planning - schemes of work; medium term plans; planning scrutiny; planning of opportunities and experiences to complement our curriculum - visits, visitors etc.
  - scrutiny and moderation of children's work
  - peer development and CPD
  - budgeting
  - compiling of termly/half yearly reports for Head of School

The Curriculum Working Parties are organised according as follows:

Humanities	Physical	STEM
English Humanities Languages Art	RE PSHE Music Games/PE Playtime Clubs After-School Care	Maths Science DT ICT Forest School

Staff are expected to join at least one Curriculum Working Party but are free to sign up to more than one if they wish. They choose an area in which they are most interested, enthusiastic or skilled or in which they particularly want to develop their own expertise through research and shared practice.

- The **SENDCo** ensures that children with specific learning needs have access to the curriculum, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. If a child displays behaviours indicating a specific learning need, in the first instance, his/her teacher adapts the planning and delivery of learning experiences accordingly. When necessary, appropriate external agencies might be involved.
- The **More Able and Talented Coordinator** ensures that pupils with a particular talent in any curriculum area are suitably motivated and challenged.

- All teaching staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis, amending planning in order to optimise learning opportunities.

### **Resources**

The Head of School/Director of Studies, in liaison with the Bursar, has control of the budget for providing resources to support and enhance the delivery of the curriculum. It is the responsibility of the Subject Leaders to source new materials and submit a Purchase Request Form. This is authorised by the Head of School and forwarded to the Finance Department for ordering.

### **Co-Curricular Activities**

A huge range of enrichment activities complement the timetabled curriculum, including:

- themed days – for example, Classical Garden Celebration;
- visitors - for example, guest speakers in Assembly; History Off the Page; The Young Shakespeare Company;
- visits – for example, Music days at local prep and secondary schools;
- residential visits – for example, Bushcraft and France;
- an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs.

### **The Role of Parents**

The relationship between School and Home is of fundamental importance. We offer:  
 an open-door policy, providing the foundations for effective  
 communication and co-operation between Home and School  
 (Educational Aims: 2)

We inform and involve parents in the following ways:

- providing parents with email addresses of members of staff;
- encouraging the use of the Homework Diary as a channel of communication;
- blogs;
- newsletters;
- website;
- workshops;
- class or musical Assemblies;
- various events, plays and concerts throughout the year;
- Parents' Evenings in October and February;
- an interim report in February;
- a detailed report in June.

### **Inclusion**

We value the fact that every individual within our school is unique. All are treated fairly and with respect. Our Copthill Curriculum is designed to provide equal access

and opportunity for all children, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation and identity so that all pupils learn and make progress. If we think it is necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of an individual, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Evidence to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy in practice is collected and reviewed in a variety of ways, including:

- informal discussions;
- staff meetings;
- curriculum working parties;
- meetings with Subject Leaders;
- monitoring of planning;
- analysis of a range of assessment data (generated in a number of ways, from informal observations to formal tests) used to monitor pupil progress and inform planning (from individual lesson plans to the subject and whole-school development plans);
- work scrutiny;
- lesson observation;
- pupil questionnaires;
- parent feedback and questionnaires.

### **Policy Review**

As an inclusive, self-evaluating and reflective school, committed to development and improvement, we review and strive to better our provision for every child. The curriculum at Copthill School will continue to evolve according to the needs of our children and the aspirations of the staff and the wider community. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Written September 2015

Reviewed September 2016

Next Review: September 2017