



Curriculum Policy

Aims

Epsom College is a selective, co-educational, boarding and day school. Our mission is ‘to provide excellent all-round academic opportunities’ and to teach children “to aim for excellence” and “to value both achievement and endeavour.”

The College constantly reviews curricular provision to ensure that we offer a ‘modern and stimulating’ curriculum.

The Academic Development Plan for 2010-2012 highlights these key aims:

1. Improve the Quality of Teaching
2. To improve the quality and consistency of marking and assessment across departments
3. Review of GCSE courses
4. Refine use of ICT: in the classroom both in teaching and in pupils’ learning; for academic management; for academic monitoring; through the College’s VLE, intranet and website.
5. Extend academic, cultural, moral, social and creative opportunities through academic departments

The Curriculum in the Middle Fourth

The aim of the first year (the Middle Fourth) is to offer a broad balanced curriculum which builds upon prior learning where possible and gives pupils from a wide variety of educational backgrounds a sound basis for GCSE study. All pupils have lessons in English, Mathematics, French (or EAL), History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Religious Studies, Information Technology, Design & Technology, Music, Art, Drama, PE and Personal Social Health Education (including Careers, Citizenship and Study Skills.)

Given that the majority of pupils joining the College at 13 have no prior learning of Latin or have dropped the subject prior to entry, whilst those who have studied Scholarship Latin are close to GCSE standard, only those who have performed particularly well in Latin Scholarship or Common Entrance papers will study Latin and, if they opt for Latin GCSE, complete the GCSE by the end of the U4 year. Pupils select one from three modern languages Mandarin, Spanish or German – no prior learning is expected but those who have studied Spanish previously will be setted. Setting is generally mixed ability with the exception of Maths and Languages.

A Head of Transition has been appointed to ensure that the M4 year is one in which good social and study habits will be acquired. He works with the Deputy Head (Academic) to promote the importance of intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development in the M4 Curriculum.

Pupils are screened on entry to the College and those with Special Educational Needs are identified. The College is proud of its highly effective provision for Special Educational Needs which is based on one to one tutorials which take place outside academic lesson times. Those with English as an Alternative Language are offered additional English tuition either as an alternative to French or as a private tutorial.

The Curriculum at GCSE/IGCSE

Most pupils study 10 GCSE subjects. Pupils have lessons in English, Mathematics, French, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Religious Studies, as well as PE and Personal Social and Health Education. Mathematics is setted according to ability and Science and French are banded. Pupils select three subjects from History, Geography, German, Spanish, Latin, Religious Studies, Design & Technology, Information Technology, Art, Drama, Physical Education and Music. Photography is available as an additional option outside the timetable. Option subjects are taught in mixed ability groupings.

The curriculum is designed to offer challenge to more able pupils. In Sciences, Maths, Computing, English, English Literature and English as an Alternative Language IGCSE courses are offered. GCSE courses are offered in Physics and Chemistry for pupils who find the IGCSE course too demanding (at present, two thirds of the year group in Chemistry and one third in Physics.) In the fifth form, approximately a third of pupils take Maths IGCSE early and then continue with an AS module. Pupils may also study a module of AS Latin in the fifth form. At the end of M4, about 20% of pupils, those with high MIDYIS profiles and/or those who have performed particularly well in the M4 exams, are offered an AS course in Critical Thinking.

The Sixth Form

All students in the Lower Sixth should be capable of studying at least 4 AS subjects and many take additional courses in AS Critical Thinking and Extended Project, Young Enterprise, IELTS and, in the Upper Sixth, Further Maths and the Securities and Investment qualification. The Pre-U is now offered in English with an alternative one year AS course to be introduced in 2012. The provision of courses is reviewed to provide a 'modern and stimulating curriculum.' The College seeks to maintain its tradition of enabling pupils to access competitive university courses – and particularly its traditional association with the medical profession. Careers guidance begins in the Middle Fourth and is thorough and well informed at Sixth Form level. Tutorial preparation is given to those wishing to apply to Oxford and Cambridge and for those sitting BMAT or LNAT papers. SATs tuition is arranged for those applying for American universities.