

Curriculum Policy



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL

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The curriculum at Sutton Valence is broad and balanced, offering all students the opportunity to study an extensive range of subjects appropriate to their age and ability. We cater for a wide range of academic aptitudes, so our curriculum is necessarily diverse and flexible. Lessons are taught by specialist teachers in a stimulating and challenging environment that is conducive to a positive, enjoyable learning experience for the students.

Morning lessons are 55 minutes long, there is a single one-hour lesson in the afternoon followed by a lesson of one hour 20 minutes which incorporates the opportunity for prep. There are 33 periods per week including Saturday morning for students in the Third to Sixth Forms. PE, games and activities are timetabled during this time with the majority of sports fixtures being on Saturday afternoon. We run a very extensive sporting programme and offer a comprehensive selection of clubs and societies to enrich the quality and breadth of the students' education; we timetable these to maximise the benefit to the students by ensuring an equitable spread of resources and specialist teaching staff.

Digital Strategy means we use OneNote as repository for all schoolwork which includes students' work, electronic textbooks, teaching resources and on-line mark books.

The Lower School: First and Second Forms

Approximately half our students enter the First Form at the age of eleven; the majority come from our Prep School whilst the rest enroll from a diverse range of other feeder schools. Our junior curriculum is a broad and varied programme, where we aim to educate the whole child and provide them with experiences, inside and outside of the classroom that will develop the skills required for success at GCSE and beyond.

For the majority of their subjects, students are streamed into an A stream with two or three parallel mixed ability streams of about twenty. In these classes, the students study Geography, History, Religious Studies, PE, ICT, and Science. The exceptions are English, Mathematics where students are set by ability and Modern Foreign Languages where they are set according to language choice. The First, Second and Third Forms will study either Spanish or French. The development of leadership, teamwork and personal skills are promoted via the Junior Leadership Course and our PSHE programme. The First, Second and Third Forms all choose to study two out of the four creative subjects: Art, Design and Technology, Drama and Music. These choices can change year on year.

The culmination of the first two years at the Senior School is the Junior Diploma, which recognises achievement and participation in our Junior Curriculum, where all students work towards achieving this award at three different levels – pass, merit and distinction.

A range of personal interests and pursuits (PIPs) will be available for First and Second Form students, on a voluntary basis, each Saturday morning via a termly published sport and music programme that will require sign up on SVEP. These will allow students to develop new talents and provide them with opportunities to further pursue existing interests and skills beyond the realms of the classroom.

First and Second Form students have lessons in Online Safety and the Prevent Strategy as part of the curriculum.

The students are housed in separate accommodation to foster a sense of identity and purpose in a safe yet challenging environment. They are assigned to one of four Houses at this stage where they will remain until they leave the School.

Students with specific learning difficulties and overseas students requiring additional English lessons receive extra support as appropriate. We timetable specialist Learning Support teachers alongside English and Maths classes to allow us to get some of our less able students up to speed as quickly as possible. A special programme of activities for our gifted and talented scholars runs throughout all year groups. In addition to their timetabled classes, a large number of students, of all ages, take Music and Drama lessons.

The Middle School: Third Form

We have a second, large intake of students at the age of thirteen from our local prep schools; these students are carefully mixed with those who have been with us for two years into an A stream and five parallel mixed ability classes for most of their subjects. The exceptions are the same as for the younger years, namely Maths, English and Modern Languages. We introduce the CCF to the Third Form curriculum on Wednesday afternoons and teach the three science specialisms separately. In the Michaelmas Term students are taught for a ‘Discovery Term’ which will enable them to study exciting aspects of the different subjects in each of their timetabled lessons. The teachers have produced a curriculum which will not only prepare students for GCSE study but also really inspire and engage them. Students are also encouraged to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award through CCF.

From the start of the Lent Term of the Third Form, students will begin most of their GCSE courses. This will enable classes to complete the course content well before the start of the Summer Term in 2026 and offer plenty of opportunity for consolidation, examination technique practice and revision. By starting some GCSEs courses slightly early, we also allow students to have a very good taste of the subjects on offer and this will help them to decide which to continue, alongside the core subjects, into the Fourth Form. Some subjects will be started in September 2024 where applicable.

Most students will study for nine GCSE subjects and top set mathematicians will gain one more (and a few take additional GCSEs out of the main curriculum). A stream mathematicians are given the opportunity to study for GCSE Further Mathematics alongside IGCSE Mathematics. Students who receive Learning Support within the curriculum work towards eight GCSEs whilst those who choose CCF on a Wednesday afternoon will take a Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) CVQO leadership qualification. Some of the GCSEs we offer are IGCSE qualifications and these have been chosen very deliberately by our Heads of Department because of the course content. They have exactly the same academic value as GCSEs. We offer one Btec course in Applied Science. This covers all three sciences but includes coursework and is graded from one to nine.

The Middle School: Fourth and Fifth Forms

It is the firm policy of the School that a bespoke programme of subjects should be studied to GCSE which play to students’ strengths and enjoyment and enables them to pursue either a traditional, baccalaureate-style curriculum or a curriculum which enables students to specialise, whilst also having a wide range of choice. We can accommodate those who would like to take three sciences just as easily as our linguists; those who want three humanities; our creative

students and those who may need a very bespoke curriculum. This individualised approach enables us to support each student. Students choose their options following conversations with parents, tutors and students. Those students who need a very bespoke curriculum due to their special educational needs will be advised by the Deputy Head (Academic), the Deputy Head in charge of the middle school and the Head of SEN. English, Mathematics, at least one Science subject either Biology, Physics or Chemistry or Btech or double award, and ICT lessons are compulsory.

The options taken by the current Fourth Form are:

Art and Design	Design and Technology
Drama	Film Studies
French	History
Media Studies	Geography
Photography	ICT
Spanish	Music
	Religious Studies

On Wednesday afternoons, in the final option block, approximately half of the Fourth Form will opt to continue in the CCF. The remainder of the year group can opt for academic subjects giving all our students considerable scope to tailor their timetables to their talents and aspirations.

The Sixth Form: Upper and Lower Sixth

The School follows the HMC recommended scheme of study with the majority of students taking three subjects for A Level. Those students who choose Further Maths may take four A Levels.

Students are asked to express their subject preferences before the option blocks are constructed so that as many combinations of subjects are offered as possible; the School aims to run any course that is economically viable. This gives a great deal of flexibility and does not restrict subject combinations unduly.

The following subjects are offered at A Level:

Art and Design	Biology
Business Studies	Cambridge Technical Sport
Cambridge Technical Information Technology	
Economics B	Chemistry
Design and Technology	English Literature
Film Studies	French
Geography	History
Mathematics	Mathematics (Further)
Media Studies	Music
Photography	Physical Education
Physics	Psychology
Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics	Spanish
Theatre Studies	

In addition to their A levels, students also have the opportunity to add to their curriculum by choosing the Crest Award. An enrichment programme adds breadth and interest to individual programmes. In addition, there are many lectures and other activities of an academic nature to enhance and broaden students' Sixth Form experience. Students are also able to opt to take the Extended Project in the Lower Sixth which is usually completed in the Upper Sixth. The CISI Finance level 2 qualification is also offered. The EPQ is delivered by a team of experienced supervisors and the EPQ Coordinator. Students applying for Oxbridge are monitored and supported by the Head of Academic Enrichment and departments and interview practices are provided as appropriate. All students receive extensive careers guidance throughout the two years of study. In addition, we also have a subscription to UniFrog allowing students to access information and support for university and further study.

The Whole School

All students receive PSHE delivered weekly by the Assistant Head, Wellbeing or by Junior Tutors for the First and Second Forms and involves the use of a variety of dedicated resources provided by the Assistant Head, Wellbeing. Topics covered are wide including sexting; anti bullying; self-esteem and self-image and anti-bullying. Outside speakers come in to talk to all year groups on a variety of topics in the PSHE curriculum.

Further information

There is a series of online booklets to help students and their parents understand how our curriculum operates throughout the School; these are available as downloadable PDFs which can be accessed through our website.

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Policy review date: September 2023

Approval date by Governors – November 2023

Review Date: September 2024