



OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

# CURRICULUM

## COMMON ENTRANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP

We prepare pupils for entry to a selection of the UK's leading Senior Schools at 13+. Most children take Common Entrance, which is set in a comprehensive range of subjects at high level. English, Mathematics, Science, French, Latin, History, Geography and Religious Studies are examined. Every year, a few pupils take Scholarship papers instead, and in most cases these are set by the senior schools themselves so that they require specialist preparation from our staff who have covered these before.

Coursework for Common Entrance in most subjects is covered from Year 5 onwards, building on the firm foundations laid in the preceding years. There is examination practice in all of these year groups, with particular emphasis upon revision and exam technique in Years 7 and 8. Potential Scholarship candidates are usually taught separately from the start of Year 8, and the ability-streaming and setting in place from Year 5 onwards allows children with differing levels of ability to be grouped appropriately and challenged in a variety of subjects.

## CLASSICS

Latin is taught to most pupils in Years 6 to 8. Greek is taught as an optional, additional subject to some pupils who show a particular linguistic aptitude. The courses which pupils follow are designed specifically for the syllabuses for the Common Entrance and Common Academic Scholarship examinations. From the start pupils are exposed to the syntax and grammar of an inflected language in which logic and reason are paramount. The knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and syntax which pupils acquire helps them to develop a fuller command of English and other modern foreign languages. It is also beneficial to pupils to study the languages and culture of the civilisations which form the cornerstone of our common European heritage.

## ENGLISH

The aim is to develop the necessary skills to use the English Language confidently, appropriately and accurately to the best of a pupil's ability: this involves the parallel skills of writing, reading and speech. The emphasis is on good grammar, punctuation and spelling, together with a creative imagination and effective communication skills. In addition, a strong emphasis is placed on encouraging the habit of reading to lay the foundations for a beneficial and enjoyable lifetime asset.

## HISTORY

*"People will not look forward to prosperity who will not look back to their ancestors".*

The main aim of the History department is to instil in the children a level of enjoyment and stimulation concerning historical studies that will remain with them throughout the duration of their academic life and beyond.

History at Old Buckenham Hall allows children to develop their investigative skills to discover the past. As such, the children are given a broad range of cultures and periods of history to study both ancient and modern, both of this country and abroad. Chronology is reinforced so that children can identify how all these different episodes fit together to shape our modern world.

Special emphasis is placed upon the study of our own country's past: our own "Island Story". Children study the history of our country and people from 1066 to the Civil war and many links are made to our country today, giving the children a sense of identity and empathy with the past.

This syllabus is enriched by a host of visiting speakers and trips. Roman and Victorian workshops have been held at the school whilst the children have visited castles, museums and battlefields.

## GEOGRAPHY

Geography is an exploration of the relationship between the Earth and its people. It studies the location of the physical and human features of the Earth and the character of place – the subject's central focus – is derived from the interaction of people and environments. Studying Geography helps pupils to make sense of their surroundings and to gain a better appreciation and understanding of the variety of physical and human conditions on the Earth's surface. It has direct relevance to pupils of all ages because it relates to many aspects of their own lives and of the environment in which they live. The over-riding aim in teaching Geography is to foster their sense of wonder at the beauty of the world around them and stimulate an interest in their surroundings. Pupils are also encouraged to develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat which in turn enhances their sense of responsibility for care of the Earth and its people.

## MATHEMATICS

As one of the core subjects, the importance of children understanding the basics in their Mathematical studies at an early stage cannot be overstressed. From the youngest in the Pre-Prep department through to preparation for the higher-tier papers in Year 8, children are encouraged to think for themselves and present material which is well-presented and accurate in content. To this end, great emphasis is placed upon thorough knowledge of tables, number bonds and mental arithmetic and its use of solving problems.

A combination of new and traditional maths is taught with the syllabus being based on the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. The majority of pupils work at even higher level in order to achieve the excellent results that have been achieved in Common Entrance over the past few years. Maths is set by ability from Year 4 and taught by mathematics specialists from Year 5. This enables teachers to address specific needs and stretch each child individually. Extra assistance is offered to those children throughout the school who require additional time to master the basics with all children being encouraged to seek advice and assistance at all times to further their mathematical studies.

## MODERN LANGUAGES

French is the major language we teach and all children from nursery age up to Year 8 have scheduled time learning the language of our nearest neighbours. We begin teaching it through games and songs, introducing a more structured approach in Year 3. By Year 5 we move onto a new interactive course which will take pupils through to Year 8 and Common Entrance or Scholarship. Throughout the School we use audio and video material, interactive whiteboards, computer software and safe website material to involve the pupils in the practical use of the language. We also encourage awareness of the culture of France and indeed other countries to foster a lasting interest in the way other peoples live.

## PE

PE provides each pupil with purposeful and enjoyable experiences through a broad range of physical activities, offering each individual the opportunity to reach their full potential. Co-ordination, self-assurance and confidence in body movement are developed through participation in activities such as gymnastics, lacrosse, long distance running, tennis and athletics. Social awareness, self-discipline and a sense of fair play are encouraged by allowing children to work individually, in small groups or as part of a team. Theory sessions are incorporated where appropriate to increase understanding and reinforce the promotion of a healthy, active lifestyle – thereby encouraging pupils to pursue involvement in physical activity during their time at OBH and beyond.

## ICT

We are fortunate in having a large and well equipped ICT room and our pupils' use of ICT was commended in our recent ISI report. All the children have one timetabled lesson of ICT per week. In these lessons we teach them the basic tools such as word processing, use of spreadsheets and databases but also include a considerable amount of graphics work including vector drawing and digital photo editing.

The Learning Support Department at OBH caters for the needs of a range of pupils, be they scholars (Gifted and Talented), foreign students (EAL) or students experiencing a specific difficulty such as Dyslexia or Dyscalculia. We believe that the most important thing we can do is raise a child's self esteem so that, by the time they leave OBH they feel able to hold their head up high and are ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies seeks to affirm Christian principles and nurture a respect for other cultures and faiths within a supportive learning environment. The academic challenges of the curriculum encourage our children to achieve not only the best they can but also to enable them to relate their life experiences within a contemporary social and spiritual understanding. The Christian ethos of OBH forms a key part of community life and pupils taken an active role in preparing, leading and participating in diverse forms of worship, both at school and in the local Church. Many pupils in Year 8 take the opportunity to prepare for their Confirmation under the guidance of the local parish priest. Biblical studies and the festivals in the Christian year form a core component of the curriculum in all Year groups. A comprehensive study of Judaism and Islam is also undertaken and their learning from this course work is consolidated with visits to the respective places of worship and in-depth interviews with a variety of speakers from these faiths. The children gain a broad knowledge of three major world religions, which facilitates their understanding of the values and skills they need to be compassionate and responsible citizens within the global community.

## SCIENCE

Science helps us understand the world around us and can extend and enrich our lives and our aim is to capture the imagination of our pupils so that they are able to develop a real interest and excitement in Science and its applications and relevance to everyday situations. Our children are encouraged to develop their natural sense of curiosity about the world around them.

At OBH, pupils are introduced to Science in the Pre-Prep and from Year 3 are taught in one of three specialist laboratories. Modern teaching methods, including plenty of ICT, are employed and the children are given as much "hands on" work as possible: through this they learn how to handle equipment safely and how to observe and record.

As children progress through the school, so their science time increases. By Years 7 and 8, they have 175 minutes of Science per week