



CURRICULUM POLICY

Last reviewed:	September 2021
Next review due:	September 2022
Reviewed by:	Deputy Academic Director

In line with our desire to provide a broad and balanced education for our students, this policy touches on our extra- and co-curricular provision as well as the academic curriculum.

As a general principle, our academic curriculum subsumes and extends beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. At KS4, our students prepare for GCSE (Year 11) and IGCSE (Year 11i in the International School) examinations. Our Sixth Formers prepare for A levels.

This policy is in two sections: the first sets out the overall aims and principles that inform our approach and practice throughout the school. The second sets out details of the curriculum for the different age groups.

1. Overall aims and principles

- To offer a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum with a strong academic core with which all students have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
- To take into account the individual needs and aptitudes, and to develop the particular talents, of all of our students as far as we possibly can, including any who may have an EHC (Education, Health and Care) plan;
- To ensure that, through our curriculum and our approach to teaching and to our extra- and co-curricular provision, we actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- To promote a broad, tolerant and open-minded understanding of the world around us, including an appreciation of the democratic process and precluding the promotion of partisan political views in the classroom, in extra- and co-curricular activities, or in any other aspect of the school's activities;
- To offer full-time supervised education for students of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which offers a wide range of subjects, giving students experience in linguistic, mathematical, technological, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Also, where appropriate, to offer students a wide range of options and as much flexibility as we can in subject choice;
- To offer a programme of activities appropriate to the needs of students above compulsory school age;
- To ensure students acquire speaking, literacy and numeracy skills;
- To maintain the highest standards of teaching;

- To ensure a curriculum that offers continuity and progression of learning within and across Key Stages;
- To maintain a vibrant and effective learning environment in which students are engaged and stimulated both by the curriculum and by the teaching;
- To ensure that every student is able to achieve to the maximum of his or her potential throughout the ability range, with effective differentiation to account for varying abilities, paces and styles of learning;
- To provide ample opportunities to stretch and challenge the most able whilst also providing all the necessary support for those who need it;
- To make learning an enjoyable experience, and to stimulate curiosity and an enthusiasm for active and independent learning;
- To foster the intellectual and study skills and habits on which students will be able to draw in higher education and in the workplace;
- To ensure that students with learning difficulties and disabilities (SEND) and those whose first language is not English are appropriately supported;
- To provide personal, social, health (physical and mental) and economic education which reflects the ethos of our school, which is appropriate, both in its content and the way in which it is delivered, to the age, experience and needs of the students, and which encourages tolerance and respect for others, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act, 2010 (see Appendix for the list of protected characteristics);
- To help our international students to adjust to the practical, cultural and academic consequences of living and studying in a different country;
- To provide all students with a learning environment that is inclusive and promotes and celebrates the diversity within and beyond our school;
- To supplement the taught curriculum by a diverse range of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that will provide further stimulus, richness and breadth to the students' educational experience;
- To provide accurate and up to date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, that encourages all students to fulfil their potential and enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of study and career options;
- To ensure that the educational experience we provide gives our students an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society in particular, and more generally in a world that is increasingly global in its outlook.

2. Actively promoting fundamental British values

The active promotion of the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of others, including those with different faiths and beliefs, has long been deeply embedded in our school's ethos and in our day-to-day practice, both in and out of the classroom.

3. A non-partisan approach to political, ethical and religious issues

A healthy understanding of the world around us is an important part of the educational experience that we want to provide for our students. In doing so, the emphasis will always be on open-

mindedness, tolerance and critical evaluation – encouraging students to appreciate that, where moral, ethical, religious or political questions are concerned, there is always likely to be a multiplicity of viewpoints, and stressing the need to respect the views of others.

When such issues arise, in subject teaching or in the context of co-curricular or extra-curricular activities (such as Debating Club) we will always ensure that we offer a balanced presentation of opposing views which precludes the promotion of partisan opinions or dogma.

Personal, social, health and economic education

The detail of our policy and practice in this area is set out in the schemes of work for the Personal Development programme and in the school's policy on the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students.

4. Careers education

Preparing our students for the future is central to our mission. We therefore have a comprehensive careers and higher education programme which aims to provide all our students with the information, experiences and opportunities to help them make the right decisions for their future. This begins in Year 7 and continues all the way through to Year 13.

We aim to ensure that such guidance is accurate, well informed and up to date. It is also delivered impartially, with the aim of encouraging students to fulfil their personal potential and helping them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options.

We seek in our career guidance to avoid any form of stereotyping, ensuring that girls and boys from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those that have traditionally tended to have a bias towards the opposite gender.

As well as offering guidance on choosing GCSE and A level subjects, careers education at d'Overbroeck's provides students with opportunities to discover and develop their aptitudes and interests, to meet with a wide range of employers, to engage in work experience, to find out about different post-16 and post-18 options and to learn about the experiences of the school's alumni.

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THE CURRICULUM

5. [Years 7-11](#)

5.1 The Taught Curriculum

a) Years 7-9

In Years 7-9 pupils are taught in mixed ability groups except for Maths where classes are setted according to ability.

All students follow a broad curriculum, embracing Mathematics, English (including Literature), Geography, History, Latin and Classical Civilisation, Computing, Art, Music, Drama, Physical Education, Personal Development and Religious Education. A General Science course taught by specialists in Years 7 and 8 leads to the separate sciences from Year 9 onwards.

A commitment to fluency in foreign languages is reflected in the provision of French from Year 7 with the addition of Spanish from Year 8. Italian, Russian and Mandarin Chinese may also be studied either as part of the regular timetable or after school, subject to demand.

b) Years 10-11

The majority of our students study 10 GCSEs, but students are able to study fewer subjects where it is felt study periods would benefit them. These are supervised sessions and ones in which some students will receive coaching or individual or small group tuition. Option groups are created with a view to maintaining a good level of student choice. Students follow a balanced programme with Maths, English Language and Literature, a modern foreign language, and a humanities subject being mandatory. We also expect all students to study for Triple Award Science- effectively separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

During their GCSE years, pupils will also receive guidance on preparation for public examinations, careers and their options for Sixth Form and further education.

5.2 Personalised Learning

One of our most important aims at d'Overbroeck's is that we tailor what we do to the needs of the child – our aim is for each individual to meet their academic, social and personal potential. All children have learning needs that are particular to them and one of our strengths as a school with small class sizes is our ability to tailor the learning experience to the individual. So, if a child has a gift or talent for a subject or other learning needs we have strategies in place to meet these.

Where students need to be stretched we can employ three main strategies to do so:

Extension: this is about depth. We encourage students to apply higher order thinking skills. Students follow the standard curriculum but develop a deeper understanding.

Enrichment: this is about breadth and means going beyond the usual limits of a subject or topic. We will deliver enrichment through a programme of activities which might include, for example: Wednesday afternoon activities for KS3; entering and preparing for competitions such as the UKMT Maths Challenge, Salter Science projects, public speaking and debating; school concerts and dramatic productions; theatre visits; master classes; trips; one off days e.g. Nat West Financial Awareness.

Our enrichment programme is usually open to all students in that they may all apply to take part. In some cases there may be an element of selection e.g. where a limited number are needed for a team.

Acceleration: this is about pace. It involves students working at the level of an older age group. We will adopt this strategy only in exceptional circumstances where it is essential to meeting the needs of a particular student.

We maintain a register of students who have been identified by staff as outstandingly gifted and/or talented. Students may be added to or removed from the register as appropriate, and the register will be formally reviewed and updated annually. The register will include a summary of provision for individual students so that we can review the quality of our enrichment in particular.

We will support students through the usual pastoral mechanism of Form Teachers and staff are supported in differentiating effectively through ongoing CPD.

We are also happy to offer places to those children who will require curriculum support if they fulfil our wider academic criteria and if we are satisfied that we can offer them a complete

package of such support. Clearly, we will only accept students for whom we are confident that, as a school, we can make appropriate provision.

Our aim is to remove barriers to learning and to enable those students who require support to enjoy equal access to the curriculum and to achieve results commensurate with their abilities, so far as this is practically possible. We also want to build confidence and self-esteem and equip students with the necessary practical skills for future success.

Teaching staff are committed to, and experienced in, providing a classroom environment which enhances the learning opportunities of all students. This means that although some children may benefit from one-to-one support sessions, many will find that their needs can be met through the medium of small mainstream classes with differentiated activities.

All children receiving learning support in Years 7-11 are provided with an Individual Education Plan, which is reviewed termly, and we monitor need and progress very carefully. No additional charge is made for learning support lessons.

5.3 Personal Development (PD)

The PD curriculum is broad and wide-ranging and covers personal, social, moral, health and economic education. It is designed to inform, to help develop life skills, to stimulate students into thinking critically about moral, ethical and social issues, to appreciate that different people may hold different views, to develop the ability to articulate one's own opinions while being able to listen to others and to respect their points of view, and to foster tolerance of other people and lifestyles, with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The PD curriculum also helps students to reflect upon their aptitudes and interests and to use this knowledge to make good decisions about their GCSE, A level and post-A level choices. Other opportunities to support this process, include attendance at events, such as the annual careers evening which is open to students from Year 9 upwards, and participation in the FutureSmart career guidance programme in Year 11.

5.4 Religious Education

d'Overbroeck's is not associated with, or committed to promoting, any one particular faith or religious belief. However, we believe that it is important for young people to gain an open-minded understanding of a range of religious and spiritual traditions as well as investigating social and moral issues. REP (Religion, Ethics and Philosophy) is therefore a part of the core curriculum up to and including Year 9 and available as an option thereafter.

5.5 Relationships and Sex Education

We provide relationships and sex education as part of the Personal Development programme. The PD curriculum is designed to help young people to develop self-esteem, self-responsibility as well as the understanding and attitudes that will help them to form caring stable relationships.

As in other aspects of school life, we aim to offer a broad and balanced view which reflects the nature of the world in which we live and which fosters a respect for the rights, beliefs and lifestyles of other people, reflecting current legislation and paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

5.6 Physical Education

All students are expected to take part in the Physical Education programme. We see this as a crucial part of a child's physical, intellectual and social development. The aim is to encourage participation and skills development through enjoyment and good sportsmanship.

All year groups enjoy a minimum of two double lessons of Physical Education per week with the possibility of extra-curricular sport on Wednesday afternoons. The sports taught are the traditional seasonal sports of rugby, hockey, football, netball, swimming, tennis, cricket, rounders and athletics although in recent years we have rung the changes with handball, climbing, dance, trampolining, squash, martial arts, yoga and pilates classes.

Year 10 students also have the opportunity to gain the Sports Leaders Award and to follow the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

For those students wishing to follow the academic route for Physical Education, the GCSE course is offered. Students choosing this option will follow separate additional theory and practical lessons with a view to examination after two years.

In addition to curriculum-based sport, we offer a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme which has included/includes sailing, sculling, riding, archery, golf, judo and dance, depending on staff availability and expertise. Our fixture list is growing steadily and we play a variety of schools, believing that a degree of healthy competition is useful for developing individual skills and team spirit. We regard it as vital, however, that everyone has the chance to play in a team and that they enjoy the experience.

Students can only be excused from Physical Education lessons for medical reasons, (for which a note from a parent will suffice), or for other reasons agreed with the school. This, however, does not exclude them from making a contribution to lessons as a coach, official or assistant, or from gaining additional knowledge through observation.

5.7 The Extended Curriculum

A range of clubs and activities is on offer both during the school day and afterwards, designed to broaden students' experience and improve their skills and knowledge. Students have opportunities to participate in activities that may be closely related to the subjects they study during the day, for example in our range of subject 'clinics' and clubs, or that may open up a new experience as in our debating society, chess club or the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

One afternoon a week is also devoted to extra-curricular activities with students being required to opt for a different activity each half term. These may include football, basketball, netball, table tennis, archery, sailing, golf, sculling, cookery, art & crafts, plastic kit modelling, photography, drama, judo, choir and orchestra. In addition, a number of other activities take place after school from sports fixtures to music, dance or riding clubs.

Homework forms an important part of the extended curriculum. It will be concerned with research, problem solving, the reinforcement of learning, and encouraging students to use their initiative. Homework follows an agreed appropriate timetable, known to parents, students and staff.

Cross-curricular activities will also be developed in which students investigate particular themes that transcend conventional subject and timetable boundaries.

Work experience in Year 10 is also an integral part of the extended curriculum.

5.8 Work Experience

The overall aim of work experience is to contribute to students' education by giving them a foretaste of working life, and helping to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adulthood.

Students in Year 10 are given the opportunity to go out on a one week placement usually in May. Staff are encouraged to visit students on placements. Employers are asked to give us information on students' performance which can prove very enlightening.

Work experience is arranged under the aegis of the Oxfordshire work experience partnership who organise placements and insurance and deal with Health and Safety issues.

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6. [The Sixth Form](#)

6.1 The Taught Curriculum

Despite the demise of modular AS and A levels and the national move to linear A levels, our core A level curriculum continues to be based on the majority of students studying four A level subjects in the Lower Sixth, normally reducing to three in the Upper Sixth.

We believe that the opportunity to study four subjects for at least part of the Sixth Form is important, both from the educational perspective of providing a greater breadth of study and a wider educational experience; and from a more pragmatic one, whereby students have time to identify where their aptitudes and interests lie and to select their best three subjects for completion as A levels in the Upper Sixth.

In practice, we always respond to individual needs, so some students will drop the fourth subject somewhat earlier than the end of the Lower Sixth year and others will continue with four subjects right through to A level (especially where one is Further Maths). On occasions it is possible for student to complete a fifth A level.

6.2 Choice of subjects

We offer a wide range of subjects at A level. The timetable does not operate on an option-block basis, allowing maximum freedom for students to select the programme most suited to them. We work with each student and their parents to give the best advice and support in guiding subject selection.

6.3 Progression to the Upper Sixth

- Our expectation is that students who embark on the A level programme will complete it, so progression is in the great majority of cases assured; only if there are strong reasons to indicate that this is inappropriate is progression brought into question.
- Having said that, a strong academic performance at the end of the Lower Sixth provides the best platform for progression to the Upper Sixth. Conversely, a weak performance at the end of the first year would suggest that a student has not done enough to be able to make a success of the generally more demanding work they will encounter in the second year. We therefore monitor students' progress very carefully throughout the Lower Sixth, using a range of indicators, including attendance, performance in homework assignments and

progress tests at various points in the year and we attach particular importance to the summer term mocks in May.

- Where progress indicators over the year have given significant cause for concern, we will need to discuss their future plans during the course of the summer term of the Lower Sixth. We will, of course, take account of any genuine extenuating circumstances such as a serious illness during the year. Where there are no such extenuating circumstances, a student who does not meet the minimum requirement for progression to the Upper Sixth may be required to repeat the Lower Sixth if she/he is to remain at the school.

6.4 Breadth and extension

Stretch and extension activities are part and parcel of our classroom teaching. In addition, we regularly enter students for national competitions such as the UK Maths Challenge, science and maths Olympiads, essay, poetry and other creative writing competitions, etc. The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) offers a valuable opportunity for students to pursue their interest in a particular topic and to develop a host of higher-level academic skills in the process. Extension classes, under the umbrella of the 'Plus Programme', are targeted at the more able and ambitious, including but not limited to Oxbridge candidates. In the Autumn Term of the Upper Sixth, the focus of these sessions is targeted specifically at Oxbridge applicants. Similar groups take place for Medics and Engineers.

Speakers, often from our local universities, are invited to speak to students on topics of particular interest – either as part of our Personal Development programme or as stand-alone events. Subject departments also frequently arrange to take students to events, lectures, talks and performances both locally and further afield.

6.5 Provision for students with SEND – the Learning Development Department

Our small classes and our emphasis on teaching to every student in the class mean that, in the majority of cases, we are able to cater for the needs of students with SEND in classes without the need for additional learning support sessions. However, where we feel a student would benefit from such support, and this applies whether or not the student has been identified as having a specific SEND issue, the student will have the opportunity to Work with a member of the Learning Development Team. Students and parents can request this support. Alternatively, teachers or Directors of Studies may contact the Sixth Form Learning Development Team Lead, Lisa Pearson, in order to discuss the possibility of additional support. LDT will work with the student to identify particular needs and goals and will typically set short term, supported targets with the student. More complex or specialist support is likely to be referred specifically to Katie Vingoe, the Head of Learning Development.

The Learning Development Department will help students to explore different learning techniques, to find those that work most effectively for them and then to develop the ability to use these independently to aid their own learning - at A level, at university and in their working lives beyond that.

6.6 Provision for students whose first language is not English

Prospective students whose first language is not English are first assessed at the time of application. Only those whose English language is sufficiently strong to enable them to embark

successfully on an A Level programme will be offered a place. EAL support is then offered to these students as part of their course here.

The primary aim of the EAL programme is to equip our international students with the language and communication skills that we believe are essential for academic success at A level and in their further studies beyond.

All students whose first language is not English will be expected to attend classes in EAL for the full duration of their first year in the Sixth Form. Exceptions will be made only where we are fully satisfied, at the point of enrolment, that the student's command of English is already of a very high standard and that s/he has a formal qualification in English at a standard that is sufficient to meet the academic entry requirements of good UK universities.

Students studying EAL will be entered for the IELTS examination, usually at the end of their first year in the Sixth Form. We expect most of our students to achieve high IELTS scores at this point.

All students enrolled on the EAL course will continue to have one lesson a week for one term of the Upper Sixth, to enhance and support their academic studies. Students who have not achieved a result that is sufficient to ensure that entrance requirements to top universities are met, will continue to have additional EAL lessons in the Upper Sixth, until they have achieved the necessary qualifications.

6.7 Classroom teaching

We believe strongly that small and interactive classes are very important. Our maximum class size in the Sixth Form is usually 10. This gives students the opportunity to debate ideas and to form and share their own opinions, and enables us to generate an academic atmosphere of collective support and engagement whilst also allowing the time and opportunity to address the individual needs of each student.

6.8 The Extended Curriculum

A busy and wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities is an important feature of life in the Sixth Form. We believe that involvement in these activities promotes a sense of teamwork, individual confidence and collective goodwill.

- A number of clubs and activities take place each week including a range of individual and team sports, drama, music, art, yoga, debating, environmental awareness, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise – and many more besides. There are also several weekend trips, activities and visits during the year.
- Lower Sixth students are expected to take part in at least one activity of their choice each week with two slots being provided in the SF timetable, exclusively for activities. When they reach the Upper Sixth, students are free to decide whether or not to take part in the Activities programme, though participation continues to be valued and encouraged, and we hope that most students will carry on with their chosen Activities throughout the Sixth Form.
- We also run a Personal Development programme for Lower Sixth students. It is intended to broaden students' horizons and to encourage them to engage more fully with the wider world around them. It consists of a series of talks and workshops covering a wide variety of topics that could include anything from cutting edge science to challenging talks on moral,

political and social issues, sexual consent, and from drugs and alcohol awareness to the adventures of polar explorers.

6.9 Careers and Higher Education Support

The great majority of our students go on to higher education at a university or other institution, such as medical school or art school. We see it as a crucial part of our responsibility to devote a great deal of time and resources to guiding and supporting students through the process of gathering information, thinking through options, making decisions and completing the necessary applications.

Students who choose not to go on to higher education but who wish instead to pursue more vocational alternatives are equally supported and helped to explore options and to make the necessary decisions and applications.

The Careers and Higher Education programme in the Sixth Form includes the following elements:

- The programme begins in the autumn term of the Lower Sixth when students have the opportunity to take part in FutureSmart. This is a personalised career guidance and planning service run by professional, independent career advisers. The programme helps students to identify the career directions that are best suited to their interests and strengths. Students can opt for the guidance-only package or the package which also includes Morrisby psychometric testing.
- Throughout the Lower Sixth year there is a series of events and trips designed to inform and galvanise students to start thinking about their options in increasing detail. For example, we hold career insight webinars with industry experts in a range of sectors. Traditionally, the department has run trips to careers and higher education events in London. However, due to the pandemic, most of these events are currently happening online. Students also have the opportunity to speak to the school's alumni about their experiences of university and the world of work.
- A traditional highlight of the careers and higher education programme is the annual careers evening. This provides students the opportunity to meet and network with representatives from a wide-range of careers. It is also a great opportunity for current and former d'Overbroeck's parents to get involved with this important aspect of the school's provision. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the careers evening has not been able to run for the past two years but it will be reinstated when it is deemed safe to do so.
- During the Lower Sixth year, students and parents are fully briefed about the UCAS application system for entry to British universities. Directors of Studies, supported by subject experts, spend a good deal of time working with each student to give guidance and advice on choice of courses, universities and the personal statement, in order to ensure that students are able to submit strong applications in the first term of the Upper Sixth.
- Potential Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Engineering and Law candidates are identified early on and a special programme of preparation is put in place for them, in order to maximise their chances of gaining places on these competitive courses.
- The careers and higher education programme also includes advice and information on gap year opportunities and on applications to universities in the US and elsewhere in the world for those who are interested in exploring these options.

- While the vast majority of our students go on to study at university, the careers and higher education programme also enables students to explore alternative routes, such as apprenticeships and direct entry into full-time employment.
- All sixth form students have access to the Careers and Higher Education Hub on Microsoft Teams. Here they can find up-to-date information on events, opportunities and resources.
- All sixth form students have access to Unifrog, an online platform which helps students to research university choices, apprenticeships and career paths. Parents are also able to access this resource.

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7. [The International School](#)

Students from around the world join the International School for one of four different programmes:

- a) An intensive, one-year IGCSE programme (Year 11i)
- b) A two-year IGCSE programme (Years 10i and 11i)
- c) A pre-IGCSE programme (Year 9i)
- d) A Study Abroad programme for students who would like to come for 1 or 2 terms for a British boarding school experience.

Additionally, there is the flexibility for students to do a 4 or 5 term IGCSE programme.

For most students who join the International School, this is their first experience of life and study in the UK, and the International School's programmes have been specifically created with this in mind, with the aim of providing:

- A strong academic core curriculum which will allow our students to improve their English, develop a range of academic, communication and independent study skills, whilst gaining nationally and internationally recognised qualifications so that they may progress successfully on to the next step in their education, whether in the UK, their own country or elsewhere.
- A strong framework for personal development, underpinned by caring pastoral support and a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme, which encourages the students to extend their learning beyond the classroom and to develop life skills such as personal responsibility, team-working and creativity. This strand comprises the taught curriculum of sport, PSHE, TRACK and the extra-curricular activities and excursions which form part of the Extended Curriculum.
- A supportive and respectful learning environment, which welcomes diversity and recognises the contributions of every individual. This involves providing culturally inclusive teaching and learning so that the transition from one educational system to another is supported and students become skilled and informed future participants in global society.

7.1 The Taught Curriculum

a) One-year IGCSE programme (Year 11i)

Our one-year IGCSE programme is designed for students, generally 15 – 16 years of age, who arrive with an Upper-Intermediate level of English language (B2 on the Common European Framework / IELTS 5.5). Students with a level of English below this may also be considered, although they may be required to do a pre-sessional programme prior to starting at the International School. Some students on this course will progress into our own Sixth Form while others aim to gain a place in another UK independent school, either to study A levels or for the IB Diploma.

The intensive one-year IGCSE programme contains a core curriculum of:

- IGCSE English as a Second Language;
- IGCSE Mathematics;
- IGCSE Science: Students must choose at least one of Biology, Chemistry or Physics;
- IGCSE First language (where available);
- Personal Development, PE and TRACK (these are not examined).

IGCSEs have been chosen specifically because they have a distinct international element and are particularly suited to our students. They allow teaching to be placed in an international context and are more relevant to our diverse student body. Having said that, in subjects where the Head of Department believes that a GCSE specification in that subject offers significant advantages over the available IGCSE specifications, students may take a GCSE exam instead.

Our timetable structure and careful planning of each student's study programme allows maximum flexibility so that our students are able to complete a combination of subjects most suited to their needs, interests and long-term goals.

Choice of subjects

Our aim is for all our one-year IGCSE students to complete their programme of study typically with at least 6 IGCSEs, although some may achieve up to 8. Students are asked to choose their subject options before arriving at the school, and to confirm these options during the start of year induction period. The following IGCSE subject options are available:

- Art & Design
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Physics
- Spanish

Students in Year 11i are set into ability groups for English and Maths, based on the results of an English and maths test taken at the start of the programme, but study in mixed-ability groups for all of their other subjects.

Providing for academically able and talented students at IGCSE level

We aim to stretch all of our students and to encourage them in developing their potential. We are able to provide greater challenge to our most able and talented students in a number of ways.

- The most capable mathematicians will complete both Edexcel IGCSE Maths and either Edexcel IGCSE Further Pure Mathematics or the AQA Further Mathematics certificate in the same year of study.
- The most linguistically able students will complete both CIE IGCSE English as a Second Language and the AQA English Language GCSE exam normally taken by native speaking UK students.
- Students have the option of completing an extended project qualification (the HPQ) over the course of Year 11i, which helps them to develop their research, academic writing and time-management skills and further prepares them for the next stage in their education. This programme includes both the teaching of academic research and writing skills and the production of a 2,000-word report. The school is careful to ensure that only those students with the potential to do so complete an HPQ.

b) Two-year IGCSE programme (Years 10i and 11i)

Our two-year IGCSE programme is designed for students, generally 14 – 15 years of age at the start of the programme, who arrive with an Intermediate level of English language (B1 on the Common European Framework / IELTS 4.5). Students with a level of English below this may also be considered, although they may be required to do a pre-session programme prior to starting at the International School. The structure of the two-year IGCSE programme mirrors that of the one-year programme, except that students will be studying for their IGCSEs over the course of two rather than one year, and thus are able to study twice the number of option subjects. Consequently, similarly to the one-year programme, students study a core curriculum of:

- IGCSE English as a Second Language;
- IGCSE Mathematics;
- IGCSE Science (students must choose at least 2 different science subjects, of biology, chemistry or physics);
- IGCSE First language (where available);
- Personal Development, PE and TRACK (these are not examined).

Choice of subjects

Our aim is for all our two-year IGCSE students to complete their programme of study typically with at least 9 IGCSEs, although some may achieve up to 11, putting them on a par with UK students and providing them with the maximum possible number of options for their future studies. Students are asked to choose their subject options before arriving at the school, and to

confirm these options during the start of year induction period. In addition to English, maths and science, the following IGCSE subject options are available to our two-year IGCSE students:

- Art & Design
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Spanish

As with the one-year programme, students on the two-year IGCSE programme who are capable of doing so have the option of taking a further mathematics IGCSE, English Language GCSE, or the HPQ in the second year of their course.

The above means that students studying on the two-year IGCSE programme will take a minimum of 8 IGCSEs at the end of Year 11i. Those doing Further Mathematics or English First Language will take 9 IGCSEs.

c) Pre-IGCSE programme (Year 9i)

The Pre-IGCSE programme is designed for students, generally 13 – 14 years of age, who arrive with at least an Elementary level of English language (A2 on the Common European Framework / IELTS 3.5). The programme gives students the skills they need to move on to the two-year IGCSE programme, especially an improved level of English and familiarity with living in the UK and being part of a boarding school community. The programme serves as an effective introduction to IGCSE study whether students choose to continue their studies at the International School or elsewhere in the UK.

On the Pre-IGCSE programme, students study a rich and varied curriculum which consists of the following:

- Intensive general and academic English;
- Mathematics;
- Science, including Biology, Chemistry and Physics;
- Introduction to Humanities & Social Sciences;
- Modern Foreign Language (French, German and Spanish);
- Drama;
- Art & Design;
- Computer Science;
- TRACK;
- Personal Development;
- PE.

By the end of the Year 9i programme, students will have developed a solid foundation in the subjects which they may wish to pursue at IGCSE level and beyond. Equivalent to Year 9 in the UK education system, the purpose of the Pre-IGCSE programme is to support students so that they can access UK Key stage 4. They will therefore develop the social and language skills necessary for the next stage in their education, as well as a foundational knowledge of the subjects which they may wish to pursue at IGCSE level and beyond.

d) Study Abroad programme

The Study Abroad programme allows students to complete one or two terms of study in the UK to give them a flavour of living and learning in a UK boarding school. These students leave the International School with a better understanding of British culture, society and values as well as a certificate of studies which can be used to co-validate the course content against the educational qualifications of their own country.

The Study Abroad programme is intended for students between the ages of 14-15, who will join classes at Year 10i, or 13-14, who will study at Year 9i. Students can commence their Study Abroad programme at the start of the autumn, spring and summer terms. Due to the intensiveness of Year 11i, and the focus on exams during this crucial year, Study Abroad students are only accepted into Year 11i for the autumn term. The minimum language requirements for entrance to the Study Abroad programme are the same as for other students applying to join the full-year programmes.

The Study Abroad programme can be combined with other programmes, meaning that students may join part way through Year 10i for a 4 or 5-term IGCSE programme.

7.2 Personal Development (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education)

All students at the International School have a 45-minute Personal Development lesson every week throughout the year, generally taught by their form tutor. The course covers topics ranging from coping with culture shock, staying safe online and internet etiquette, personal health and safety, sexual health and relationships, drugs and alcohol, economic education and British law. The course is run in a relaxed fashion with students working together, and content is presented through discussions, activities and role play so that potentially culturally difficult topics may be addressed in a sensitive fashion. Year groups are kept separate for PSHE lessons so that students can study in the way that is most appropriate to their age group. A focus of PSHE at Year 11i is developing the study and revision skills necessary for IGCSE success, writing personal statements, and preparing for entrance exams and interviews to other schools.

7.3 TRACK (Theory of Research, Active Citizenship and Knowledge)

This is an innovative part of the curriculum for all students at the International School, incorporating a variety of academic areas including theory of knowledge and global citizenship and offering students the opportunity to complete some community service. Students also complete project work, researching a topic area (homelessness, language and communication, food, water and the environment) and working as a team to negotiate a viable plan and take some form of meaningful action. Studying this programme ensures that students are on the right track to develop key skills for their future studies in the UK or abroad, and means that they will be well prepared to embark on the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme if this is what they choose to do.

7.4 Study Skills & Examination Preparation

Throughout the year, form tutors support the development of students' study skills during registration sessions and one-to-one tutorials by regularly checking their students' planners to ensure homework is being completed, and helping their students to develop their planning, time-management and organisation. Learning styles, study strategies and organisation are also discussed during PSHE lessons and assemblies.

At key times in the academic calendar such as preparing for mocks exams and other tests, form tutors also cover skills such as memorisation techniques and managing stress with their form groups. As a close source of support to their students, form tutors report back any pastoral concerns that may emerge from these conversations to the Deputy Head (Pastoral). This information may then be shared with other members of staff, so that each student has a network of adults paying attention to their wellbeing.

Students with particular difficulties in personal organisation or independent study are given tailored support in additional sessions. The sessions are generally in a small group, either run in school lunch time or after school.

7.5 Onward placement and Next Steps

Throughout the course, we work intensively to get to know our students well and understand their aims and interests, in order to provide expert advice on the next stage of their studies. Regular progression events are laid on by our Sixth Form, where students can gain information on studying A levels at d'Overbroeck's and experience lessons in a variety of subjects not taught at IGCSE level, together with students from the 7-11 section. Students are also encouraged to attend Open Mornings and information events at other local independent schools. They are given support in exploring the full range of next steps available, including how to co-validate their studies if they are with us for a short period only.

Over each term a number of assemblies run by Sixth Form heads of department help students to develop a sense of how subjects which are new to them might relate to the world of work and to specific careers or vocations. They will also be helped to write personal statements, complete application forms and improve their interview technique during their PSHE lessons, so that they are knowledgeable about the options open to them at the next stage of their education, and confident enough to be able to capitalise on their talents and interests. To help students find out more about working in the UK, they are invited to attend our annual careers evening which hosts representatives from a wide-range of careers. There is also the opportunity to participate in the FutureSmart career guidance programme.

7.6 Sport and Activities

All students at the International School take part in PE lessons every week, during which they get to experience a range of sports including football, netball, rugby, cricket, tennis, trampolining, etc, and to develop their leadership and teamwork skills. As well as these weekly PE lessons, students in Years 10i and 11i take part in activities alongside Sixth Formers on Thursday mornings, at which time a very wide range of different activities are on offer. The aim of these activities is to encourage participation and skills development through enjoyment and teamwork.

Students may choose from a wide variety of sports, offering opportunities for socialisation with both British and other international students. International School students with strengths in particular sports are co-opted onto whole school teams and take part in fixtures against other

schools, and as part of our links with the local community we have had some students joining local sports teams. After-school activities such as the school drama production, vocal group and orchestra are open to all students across the school and are a great way of encouraging our international students to feel part of the wider school community.

7.7 The Extended Curriculum

The aim of the extended curriculum is to encourage our students to extend their learning beyond the classroom, to explore personal interests and discover new talents. In addition to the Thursday morning activities which students join with those from other parts of the school, extra-curricular clubs and activities are offered at the International School for all students on a daily basis. These clubs include debating, coding, knitting and music tech. We also give students the opportunity to complete a Duke of Edinburgh award. There are also regular inter-house competitions where students can showcase their talents, such as the annual International Arts Festival.

We also offer regular evening and weekend activities aimed at opening up new experiences to our students. These include school-based workshops and visits to places of interest in Oxford and beyond, challenging physical activities such as orienteering and 'outward-bound' sports, and purely social events such as theatre trips. These activities all offer opportunities for our students to reinforce their language learning and communicative skills whilst having fun, and as such are a vital part of the overall curriculum.

There is also a house system in place at the International School, providing opportunities for students to participate in a wide range of activities of a sporting, artistic and charitable nature. Students are able to stand for the position of House Captain and Vice-House Captain, giving them a position of responsibility within the International School community. There is also a Student Council, made up of elected representatives from each house, who meet with the Head of the International School on a weekly basis to provide input on food and catering, sports and leisure activities, and the school's learning environment and resources, and an events planning group who organise activities at times like Halloween and Christmas.

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