

Introduction

The curriculum that Ercall Wood provides is broad, balanced and differentiated appropriate to the needs of individual students. The curriculum is designed around national guidelines with curriculum enrichment opportunities.

The curriculum for all students takes account of the National Curriculum which consists of ten subjects: Design & Technology, Music, Art, ICT, History, Geography, Physical Education, Citizenship and a Modern Foreign Language. An option programme in Key Stage 4 leads to a variety of GCSE and vocational qualifications. This year we are introducing, for the first time, a A/S level qualification in ICT, taken in Year 11. This shows our commitment to stretching the most able pupils and is a good example why Ercall Wood is seen as one of the premier schools for Gifted and Talented provision. Additionally, there are number of special curriculum days to cover the key elements of Enterprise education and Personal, Health, Social and Economic Education, when the normal timetable is suspended.

Years 7, 8 and 9

All students study the full range of National Curriculum subjects including a modern foreign language.

Core Subjects –

- English
- Maths
- Science

Foundation Subjects –

- Technology (including ICT, Textiles and Food, Resistant Materials and Graphics)
- Modern Foreign Language (German)
- Geography
- History
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Citizenship

Additional Subjects –

- Religious Education
- Learning to Learn
- Drama

Years 10 & 11

Careful guidance is given in Year 9 to advise students on their subjects in the Upper School. Very close consultation with parents helps this process to work smoothly. Students in Years 10 and 11 are able to follow subjects within a broad framework of English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Humanities, Languages and Creative Arts. All students take part in a PE programme as well as a Religious Education course.

We also enrich the National Curriculum requirements by offering a variety of courses, from Triple Sciences (Chemistry, Biology and Physics) to vocational awards, ensuring that we cater for the needs of all of our students. New subjects and approaches are under constant review.

Religious Education

Religious Education forms part of the curriculum for all students from Years 7 to 11. At all levels there is study of Christian and other world religions as well as moral and ethical issues; all are looked at from a non- denominational standpoint. Regular assemblies for all students are an important part of our school week. It is possible for parents to withdraw their child from RE lessons and assemblies if it contradicts any other beliefs, however this can only be done after consultation with senior staff and parents.

Moral Issues

Education in matters relating to health and sex is given in two ways. Certain aspects are dealt with fundamentally within the Science course from Year 7, picking up, on the whole, where primary schools left off. The moral, ethical, emotional and social aspects arise within the RE, English and PSHE courses, and are considered with equal care. Parents have the right to withdraw their child/children from Sex Education lessons and the Sex Education policy is available from the school upon request.

Parents are welcome to discuss with us in more detail these vital but sensitive areas of their children's education.

Citizenship

The aim of Citizenship education is to enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to become informed active and responsible members of local, national and global communities.

At Ercall Wood we have developed a programme of study for Citizenship in line with statutory requirements, which builds upon and recognises work already done in subject areas and considers the values already promoted through the pastoral system. Teaching of Citizenship currently takes place within discrete curriculum time and through the rich diversity of extra curricular activities and events.

We are currently in the process of devising assessment and reporting procedures for Citizenship in order to satisfy the statutory requirement.

Meeting All Learning Needs Outside the Curriculum

Many students, including some of the most able, may benefit from individual help at some stage of their careers. Our aim is to monitor each child's development carefully and to identify and meet his/her needs, as and when they arise. All students, as far as possible, follow the full mainstream curriculum. Only those with substantial learning difficulties pursue alternative courses, which are usually individually negotiated through Annual Reviews of their Statements of Special Educational Needs.

The School has a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. There are three principles which are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

- 1) Setting suitable learning challenges.
- 2) Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- 3) Overcoming whole school and subject specific barriers to learning and assessment for both individuals and groups.

Some children come to us with considerable reading barriers and our aim is to work with these pupils intensively, often in small groups, so that they can join ordinary lessons as soon as possible. A range of support strategies are available, from placement within a small class for English lessons, to some time spent weekly with a Teaching Assistant and/or peer support. This support continues as necessary and as resources permit, throughout the school. Similar strategies are employed to help those with problems in arithmetic.

There may also be occasions when children of above average ability need help on specific areas of their work. Specialist subject staff consult experienced teachers in the Special Educational Needs area on these issues. Further support for pupils with learning difficulties is sought through the external agencies including the Community Health, County Psychological, Learning Support and Sensory Impairment Services.

Sometimes pupils do not have a 'problem' in the formal sense, but, as very bright students, need to be extended to the full. The work of subject departments and their specialist staff in the school is structured to take this into account, but in addition to ensuring involvement of such students in extra-curricular opportunities, teachers are always on the look out for children who need extra stimulation and are keen to give whatever help is needed. We believe that extending and challenging gifted and talented students is an important part of our work.

Outside the National Curriculum

Ercall Wood is a busy and vibrant school. We firmly believe in enriching our curriculum and in providing opportunities for all students to participate fully in the life of the school.

A planned programme of events and activities exists to involve all students during the year and encourage responsibility, enjoyment and self-development. This means that, in Year 7, your child has the opportunity to spend an induction week at Arthog Outdoor Education Centre in Snowdonia. This allows them both to make new friends and to get to know tutors and staff through team-building and problem-solving activities.

Field trips and visits are arranged to places of interest - historical sites, art galleries, museums and theatres - whenever they are relevant to coursework or are of wider educational value. In addition, all students may take part in trips and improve their language ability through visits and 'exchanges'.

The School runs many clubs and societies, from Choir to Fantasy Football League, which reflect the expertise and interest of both staff and students.

The School offers many different sports with students having the opportunity to participate in traditional school games such as football and netball, as well as tag rugby and many others. Competitive sport is encouraged with students being selected regularly at County level.

Music is a very important part of the Ercall Wood scene with well-qualified staff as well as specialist instrument teachers. No previous experience is necessary and every opportunity is taken to encourage students to participate and develop their individual talents.

Outdoor pursuits are increasingly popular and are supported by a programme leading to the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Careers & Educational Based Work Experience

Careers Guidance is introduced gradually from Year 7, and intensifies in Year 9 when students begin to think about their choice of option courses. In Years 10 and 11 it forms an important aspect of PSHE (Physical, Social & Health Education). All students are interviewed in Year 11 by experienced staff responsible for careers work and benefit from individual and group counselling. At all stages we have the co-operation and support of the Connexions Service.

All students undertake a 1-week work experience placement in year 10, which helps to develop the attitudes and habits needed when they enter the world of work. We work hard to maintain our many contacts with employers in industry, commerce and agriculture, who generously offer opportunities to our students and ensure that the time they spend with them is valuable and worthwhile.