

Curriculum Policy

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The aim of the curriculum at Radley is to provide boys with a stimulating and broad education. We want to exceed the expectations of Prep Schools and parents, and the value added data at GCSE demonstrates that boys are indeed challenged and encouraged to develop their potential. The end **results** – average of over 90% A/B at A level over the last three years, and well in excess of 80% A*/A at GCSE – place Radley in the top academic schools nationally; yet the pass mark at Common Entrance remains at a relatively low hurdle of 55%. **Excellence is achieved** first by inculcating a strong work ethic; boys are trained to work on their own and to aim to do all assignments thoroughly. Secondly, teaching dons are trained and motivated to teach excellently, and are led by Heads of Department ambitious to improve their department teams and results each year (see [Teaching Policy](#) below). Thirdly, we have developed a strong Learning Support Department (see Learning Support Policy) whereby all boys are diagnostically tested on entry and all who are deemed to need help and support from the LS team have sessions outside timetabled time to ensure their particular difficulties are addressed. Fourthly we set boys carefully according to ability in each subject separately and we continuously assess boys and adjust to ensure we are differentiating precisely according to need.

The **curriculum** has been constructed to ensure that boys at 13+ when they arrive at Radley have **a broad and balanced education**. They will in all likelihood not have encountered a second or third modern language; many will have had an uneven experience of Design Technology and Electronics; some will need understanding of Maths or Science addressing; and some will not have had curricular music. So this Shell year (**Y9**) is deliberately broad and catholic, and our 8 day, 48 period, cycle, enables a large number of subjects to have exposure in the Shell Curriculum. Strong emphasis is placed on English and on mathematical skills, but all three sciences (Chemistry, Physics and Biology) are taught, as are the Humanities, History and Geography (three periods each per cycle), and Design Technology, Art and Music each have timetabled periods to develop boys' creativity. All boys do Latin or Classical Civilisation; they also all have a PHSE period (taught by Biology teachers) and Religious Studies, so ensuring that their personal moral, spiritual education is catered for. In addition they all have an IT session per cycle.

Boys' **physical education in Y9** is provided for by introduction to a comprehensive range of sports; in the first term all will be taught the rudiments of rowing, fives, golf, squash, real tennis, but in addition to that virtually all boys play rugby and represent the school (7 Midgets – under 14 – rugby XV's are turned out on a Saturday). Boys play sport on 5 days of the week. In the Lent Term all boys either row or play Hockey. In the summer they play cricket, run, play tennis or row. Thereafter, in the next 4 years (Y10 to Y13) boys play sport 4 or 5 times a week; they are fit, well exercised and well coached.

At the end of Y9, boys continue with a core of subjects to GCSE or IGCSE: the able boys are stretched with early IGCSEs in Y10 (Remove) in Maths and French, and in Y11 (Fifth) they will go on to take AS modules in those subjects. Other boys in Y10 and 11 groups take two years to GCSE or IGCSE in the other core subjects of English and Science. All boys take IGCSE Dual Award Science; it has proved a very sound base for boys to go on and take Science A levels and thence to read Natural Sciences (Cambridge) or separate Sciences or Engineering (Oxford, Bristol, Durham, London etc) at university. The top set of English in **Y10 and Y11** will take IGCSE; other sets take GCSE.

Boys then choose 4 subjects from 12 **Options**. It has been policy to encourage boys to keep a broad education between 14 and 16, and to choose a humanity, a second language and a creative subject from the Option groups. Nevertheless, boys at that stage are already showing particular aptitudes, and some will choose to pursue strengths towards, for example, Latin and Greek; German and Spanish; DT and Art; History and Geography.

RS continues a compulsory part of the curriculum; so, too, do IT lessons, one per cycle to ensure boys have the skills to support their curricular GCSE work. **PHSE** education is, from Y10 onwards, delivered via the Form Master and by a sequence of keynote lectures on which the form master bases his Friday afternoon session (see PHSE policy).

At the end of Y11 (Fifth) boys choose their **A level** options. There are several **unusual features to Radley's 6th Form curriculum**. All boys – with a very few exceptions – do 4 A levels. Occasionally, under the guidance of the Head of Learning Support, a boy will do 3½ A levels. Secondly, **all exams**, AS and A2 are taken **at the end of Y13**. The benefits are very considerable: boys are more mature at 18+ and do especially well on their AS modules accordingly; they gain extra teaching time (6 to 8 weeks) through having no exams to revise for or take before the summer of their 6.2 year; they can have a normal summer term in 6.1, playing sport, playing music, directing plays; and they see their A levels holistically, linking the modules together and seeing patterns as they revise all their papers from March of their 6.2 year. Thirdly, we encourage boys to broaden their A level studies by doing **a complementary A level**, three A levels from one side of the Arts/Science divide, and one from the other. c 80% of boys have done this (and have had no difficulties with our policy of not taking AS levels at 17+). Finally, in 6.1 boys take a course – 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants' – which is unique to Radley. A series of lectures by pairs of teaching dons, followed up in small seminar groups, addresses major issues in world civilisation and thought. At the end of the Lent Term of 6.1 boys choose to research and write their own 6000 word Extended Project. They are supported in identifying the issue and researching the material by dons who have an interest in that area. They write their project in the summer term for submission to Edexcel in Autumn of their 6.2 year. This scheme is designed to ensure that boys are intellectually stimulated beyond their A level studies, and are taught to work independently.

In **6.2** a different non-examinable course runs for all boys; for 19 years now there has been a **weekly lecture cycle** given by visiting speakers on a range of issues each year designed to awaken boys to important questions through expert insight. We have welcomed a Cabinet-full of politicians from a Prime Minister (John Major) and a prospective Prime Minister (David Cameron) onwards, as well as judges, bishops, prominent journalists, ambassadors, foreign policy experts, top musicians and artists.

At the heart of the 6th Form curriculum, however, lies the **A level programme**. Subjects are spread across 5 blocks; boys generally choose from 4 of these, though each year some boys take 5 or even 6 A levels, according to ability. We still encourage the traditional combinations: for an aspiring Scientist, Maths Physics Chemistry Biology, for a budding linguist French + a second language + English or History or Latin; but we also encourage Further [Triple] Maths when a boy is able as a mathematician, for this is an excellent formation for PPE and social sciences at top universities, and FM can be taken either with the Sciences or with Arts subjects like English. Throughout the 5 years at Radley the **Learning Support** team looks after boys with a diagnosed difficulty. Many boys with difficulties in written English or in structuring their work go on to top grades at A level thanks to his weekly support. All boys also have a Form Master through their 5 years at Radley; he/she monitors progress through the three weekly reports written on all boys throughout a boys' career, and also advises on the next step, GCSE, A level or UCAS. This close monitoring in small groups (11 in the Shells, 6 thereafter) pays dividends.

Radley College Teaching Policy

The aim at Radley is to ensure that every boy achieves his full potential. Excellent teaching, and the setting of consistently high standards, is the means to realising this goal.

- Teaching dons at Radley should know their subjects thoroughly, and by their enthusiasm seek to excite in the boys an abiding academic curiosity. They should encourage boys to think and research for themselves, the better to prepare them for life-long learning.
- Lessons should be thoroughly prepared; well judged in content and duration; have a clear purpose, beginning and end; and a variety of techniques should be used including – where appropriate – ICT. Instructions and clarification should be clearly indicated, usually through the white board, OHP or data projector.
- Assignments should be set regularly and marked conscientiously in accordance with department marking policies. Poor work should not be tolerated but returned for rewriting. Teaching dons in all departments have a responsibility for ensuring that spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are corrected. Nevertheless it is very important to encourage, motivate and reward boys for good work wherever possible.

- Teaching dons must ensure that all boys are equally involved in a lesson, by judicious questioning, and by managing discussions and debates appropriately. They should differentiate, within a given set, between those who can be stretched more than the rest of the group and those who clearly have difficulties. The setting of tasks, the pace at which work is done, may be varied accordingly. Dons should be aware of boys receiving learning support, and should discuss the progress of such boys with R.W. Schofield and the Support Team. Form Masters and Tutors have an important role in monitoring boys' teaching and progress.
- The quality of teaching at Radley has been immeasurably helped by mutual classroom observation, by regular training (each don must attend at least one training course a year) and by regular professional discussion of subject matter and of the craft of teaching. There is a detailed induction programme of observation, mentoring and meetings for new dons, and the head of department is responsible for monitoring the teaching in his subject area.
- Each department has a Literacy policy. It is very important for the school literacy strategy that all dons follow the guidance on spelling and grammatical corrections and on the inculcation of the techniques of comprehension and organisation.