

Cottenham Village College: Our Vision for Teaching and Learning

Our core purpose

Learning is the core purpose and function of Cottenham Village College. Staff are united in their desire to enable all pupils, regardless of their starting points, to make progress and achieve their full potential. We are committed to the comprehensive principle, supporting all pupils to learn together and have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Teaching staff at Cottenham are entrusted with inducting young people from our community into the subject disciplines which underpin human cultures and societies. This is the distinct contribution of schools to promote social justice. This is a significant and challenging undertaking and relies on a deep understanding of the relationship between academic disciplines and curricular school subjects. Teachers are working between these two worlds, mediating between subject communities and the classroom. The forms of knowledge all pupils are exposed to in school is often distinct from the knowledge and understandings that pupils might acquire in their daily lives. Our role is to support children to be curious about our complex, fascinating world, allowing them to become active participants in different types of conversations about it. In this way, we hope to provide our pupils with a well-rounded education.

What does this look like in the classroom? Our approach to supporting the development of teaching practice is based on 6 core principles:

1. Practice should be guided by a knowledge and understanding of all pupils' needs: the curriculum should be accessible to all.
2. Subject-specialist teachers are curricular thinkers that keep up-to-date with research and practice. They are best-placed to plan a curriculum that is a coherent, carefully sequenced journey;
3. Learning only takes place when material is committed to long-term memory;
4. Pedagogical choices should be informed by subject disciplines – the choice about 'how' should be informed by the 'what';
5. Opportunities for pupils to take an "active" role, be exposed to a variety of ways to process new material and be made aware of metacognitive processes should be built into lessons.
6. Pupils should be aware of how subject disciplines work and where they are within that curriculum. They should be able to articulate what they have learnt and what they need to do to develop as learners, underpinned by accurate, useful formative feedback from their teacher that they can respond to.

Learning in the classroom is supported by teaching that:

- Is delivered by subject experts and informed by the most up-to-date subject-specific and wider educational research;
- Is planned as part of a coherent long-term curricular journey in each subject discipline;
- Understands the interrelationship between different scales of curricular planning (individual lesson, lesson sequence, year, Key Stage);
- Recognises that the curriculum is the progression model;
- Recognises that the purpose of formative and summative assessment is different and both types should be planned across the curriculum;
- Recognises that learning is only possible where material is stored in the long-term memory and plans sequences of lessons that attend to that;

- Enables pupils to recognise the progress they have made over time so that they can articulate the subject learning they have secured and what their next steps need to be;
- Makes appropriate, varied pedagogical decisions based upon expert knowledge of the subject discipline and the prior attainment and dispositions of the pupils;
- Balances the tension between allowing pupils to build a coherent and substantial body of knowledge and allowing them to become active participants in their own learning through activities that demand that pupils manipulate and apply that knowledge for themselves;
- Deliberately plans opportunities for pupils to collaborate, encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning and aims to inspire them to want to learn independently of a classroom environment;
- Is skilfully tailored and adapted to support individual pupils, whether that is ensuring that the most able are challenged or supporting pupils with specific barriers to learning;
- Is inclusive and staff use their knowledge of how to meet the needs of specific groups of learners with specific barriers to learning, whether these are cognitive, social, emotional or behavioural.
- Is underpinned by high expectations of all pupils and striving to find ways to support everyone to “access the challenge”;
- Recognises and plans for opportunities to enhance or extend learning through meaningful homework activity or experiences outside the classroom;
- Makes the most of interdisciplinary connections where subject communities work together without forgoing their distinct contribution to a well-rounded education;
- Uses their subject expertise to provide precise, specific formative feedback which allows pupils to act on, and respond to, that feedback to make rapid progress and ensures that pupil misconceptions are addressed;
- Takes account of pupil voice via responsive feedback;
- Privileges the subject domain over “teaching to the test” to enable pupils to be better prepared for answering examination style questions when required.

Glossary

Pedagogy	Methods teachers use to teach material in lessons.
Metacognition	An awareness of how people learn/think.
Formative feedback	Feedback that informs the pupil about what they have done well and what they need to do next.
Summative assessment	Assessment that tells pupils what they have attained at a point in time e.g. an examination or test result.
Responsive feedback	Feedback that enables and encourages pupils to respond/ act upon the feedback to develop their understanding.
Long-term memory	Material that is stored for long periods of time. This material can be recalled when needed, even if it is not used every day.
Subject disciplines	The structure of each subject truth- how they are organised and the basic principles upon which the subjects’ truths are based upon.
Interdisciplinary	Connections between distinct subjects. These relationships show how subjects might relate to and support each other.
Subject domains	A wider scope of the subject discipline, rather than being solely limited to an examination specification or test.
Cognitive	The science of how people think and learn.