



RADLEY

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

January 2026

Curriculum

The aim of the curriculum at Radley is to provide boys with a stimulating and broad education. We want to exceed the expectations of Preparatory 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 c.92% A*-B at A-level over the last five years, and well in excess of 80% 9-7 at GCSE – place Radley among the top academic schools nationally.

Excellence is achieved by first inculcating a strong work ethic; boys are trained to work on their own and to aim to do all prep 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 Academic Support Department (see Academic Support Policy) whereby all boys are diagnostically tested on entry and all who are deemed to need help and support from the AS team have sessions outside and inside timetabled lessons to ensure their particular difficulties are addressed. Fourthly, we set boys carefully according to ability in some subjects where we feel it is appropriate. Some subjects will have more mixed sets. Maths, English, Science and Languages differentiate as precisely as possible according to need. Movement within these sets will occur over an academic year.

The **curriculum** has been constructed to ensure that, when boys arrive at Radley at 13, they receive a broad and balanced education. They will in all likelihood have not encountered a second or third modern language; many will have had an uneven experience of Design Engineering 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 our two week 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 - and Design Engineering, Art and Music each have timetabled periods to develop boys' creativity. Shells are not required to study French (though most do) and therefore it is no longer compulsory at GCSE. They elect to study two Modern European Languages – from French, Spanish and German. All boys study Latin or Classical Civilisation, and Theology. In addition, they all have Critical Thinking classes, and IT. PSHE Education is taught via Form Masters and lectures.

Boys' **physical education in the Shell year** 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 these virtually all boys play rugby and represent the school (seven under 14 rugby XVs are turned out on a Saturday). Boys play sport on four days of the week, including, for the most part, on Saturdays. 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 – Remove, Fifth, 6.1 and 6.2 (Y10 to Y13) - boys play sport four or five times a week; they are fit, well exercised and well coached.

At the end of the Shell year, boys continue with a core of subjects to GCSE or IGCSE: the able boys are stretched with early IGCSEs in the Remove year in Maths. Other boys in the Remove and Fifth years take two years to GCSE or IGCSE in the other core subjects of English and Science. Boys take IGCSE Dual Award Science or separate Sciences according to a decision which is made at the end of the Remove year. Either path allows boys to take and succeed in Science A-levels and thence to read Natural Sciences (Cambridge) or separate Sciences or

Engineering (Oxford, Bristol, Durham, London etc) at university. The majority of boys in higher English sets also take English Literature.

Boys then choose four subjects from 12 **options**. Boys are encouraged to keep a broad education between 14 and 16, and to consider 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. Computer Science is also available.

PSHE Education is, from the Shell year onwards, delivered via the Form Master and by a sequence of keynote lectures on which the form master bases their Friday afternoon session (see [PSHE Education policy](#)). Theology continues as a compulsory part of the curriculum to ensure boys have the skills to negotiate ethical issues in society and to introduce them to the views of different world faiths.

Boys are encouraged to think about **careers** throughout their time at Radley. Details of activities can be found in the [Careers policy](#).

Academic Priority Time

This exists on Monday of each week, allowing for academic stretch and support activities organised by dons or boys. It is usually (but not always) on a departmental basis, overseen, for Lower School, centrally. Guest speakers may be invited. These have included Cabinet ministers, top scientists, intelligence and military professionals and leaders from the worlds of business and commerce (see Appendix).

Fifth Subject Clinics

Departments offer specialised subject clinics for boys in the Fifth Form in preparation for their GCSEs. These are coordinated to minimise, as far as possible, the risk of clash so that boys in the Fifth Form can attend any subject clinic that they need to. Boys may be compelled to attend clinics if dons are concerned about their academic progress. The clinics offer support with exam technique as well as re-teaching in areas of the course where boys are struggling academically.

Supervised Study

All boys in the 6.1 and some boys in the 6.2 are required to attend Supervised Study. This provides a quiet and focussed place of study, under supervision, in boys' study periods. We use the 6th Form to teach the boys how to work independently moving from more to less supervision over their time at the College. In 6.2, supervised study is 'dynamic' meaning that boys can move in and out of it as their Form Masters, Tutors and Heads of Department deem appropriate.

Scholars' Programme

The Junior Scholars' Programme is organised for the benefit of both award holders and those who show exceptional talent and/or interest on arrival at Radley. It seeks to promote deeper engagement with academic thought among members of the lower school. The Head of Junior Scholars reserves the right to add or delete names according to levels of engagement.

Boys are invited to attend thinking suppers with other schools where a topical issue is discussed or a problem is collaboratively solved. Members are encouraged to attend lectures and take part in academic competitions. Members are expected to contribute to Serpentes and

the Junior Project Prize. The Warden holds regular discussions with Junior Scholars where topical and philosophical ideas are debated.

Sixth Form Curriculum

Overview

The educational course at Radley is designed to teach boys the value of hard work and an intelligent management of time.

We aim for breadth in a boy's academic programme, and we try to ensure intellectual stimulus both inside and outside the curriculum. Beyond that we hope to awaken in Radleians an appreciation of literature and the arts so that they can gain real pleasure from pursuing these interests in their adult lives. When a Radleian leaves the Sixth Form, it is expected that he will have those attributes necessary both to command a worthwhile place in Higher Education and – beyond that – to compete effectively in the market place for jobs in the 21st century. A-levels are complemented by a broad range of options in the [Curriculum Extension Programme \(CEP\)](#).

Unless a boy is doing Further Maths, he will not be expected to take more than three A-level subjects. Of course, if a boy wishes to study four subjects other than a combination that includes Further Maths, we shall not try to hinder him, but it is not necessary to take four to enter the best universities.

In addition to taking his A-levels, every boy will generally be expected to undertake two CEP options. (See the Curriculum Extension Programme document.) On top of that, we have innovative Joint Study Days with local schools, notably St Helen and St Katharine, Abingdon, Downe House, Newbury and Broadway Academy, Birmingham.

Sixth Form Work

There is something of a gulf between GCSE and A-level work. Lower School academic life is tightly structured. The Sixth Former has to learn quickly how to be independent, manage his time, meet prep deadlines, write essays and take notes from directed reading. Sixth Form Study Skills resources are provided for time management, noting, reading, essay writing and revision. All this supplements the usual subject-specific advice and guidance given by departments. The Head of Teaching & Learning gives regular talks and provides resources.

Equally significant is a boy's choice of a Form Master (who may teach one of his A-levels), and whose brief is to help him:

- develop independent working habits;
- monitor work and time spent outside lessons through weekly tutorials;
- give specialist university advice (alongside the Tutor and Director of University Entrance);
- foster study beyond the scope of A-levels and;
- promote the boy's cultural enrichment.

A number of boys will emerge early in 6.1 as possible Oxbridge candidates (although they will almost certainly have been receiving extension work long before this) and each year we determine a long list at the end of the Lent Term. Competition for Oxbridge places is intense. The departmental academic societies and the school-wide 6.1 Crowson Society and the Upper Sixth Society aim to broaden boys' minds by introducing them to moral, philosophical, literary,

scientific and historical problems at fortnightly meetings, where they are hosted by some of our most accomplished dons.

Additionally, each term 6.1 boys attend lectures on ethical or moral subjects which are designed both to educate and stimulate discussion. This is part of the Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic programme which runs through Radley from the Shells to 6.2.

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, are 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.

Lessons should be thoroughly prepared; well-judged in content and duration; have a clear purpose, beginning and end. Instructions and clarification should be clearly indicated.

Prep should be set regularly and feedback provided 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 good spelling, punctuation and grammar is taught. It is important to encourage, motivate and reward boys for good work wherever possible, particularly through the use of distinctions.

Teaching dons must ensure that all boys are equally involved in a lesson, by judicious questioning, and by managing discussions and debates appropriately. The setting of tasks and the pace at which work is done, may be varied accordingly. Dons should be aware of boys receiving Academic Support, and should discuss the progress of such boys with the Academic Support Team. As far as possible, assistance for boys with SEND and other learning issues consists of a partnership between the relevant academic department and Academic Support. Regular updates on SEND and other learning issues are sent to teaching dons. 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 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 their subject area. The Head of Teaching & Learning works alongside the Deputy Head (Academic) to ensure that continuing professional development and innovation in teaching and learning are integral to all areas of the Radley curriculum.

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.

The Daily Routine

Five minutes are provided at the beginning of first lesson each day for the daily Bible reading. (This can be found each day on the Staff Hub). Dons may ask for it to be read aloud, may give boys time to read the passage themselves, or may allow for a 'reflective moment'. In any case, the custom should be observed.

Change-over

Between each lesson there is a five minute change-over. Dons should ensure that they release classes on time. Likewise **dons should be in their classrooms on time**, preferably before boys arrive from their previous lesson or a break. (Experience has shown that if bullying occurs at form level it tends to occur between lessons or when a don arrives late for a lesson.) On releasing boys, dons should remember that **tardiness has a knock-on effect on other dons' classes**.

Classroom discipline

Ten points to ensure good behaviour in class and high standards of work:

1. Boys should stand at their desks at the start of the lesson, before being invited to sit by the don.
2. Boys should come to a lesson properly dressed – with gowns, top button done up, shoes clean.
3. Their hair should be tidy/combed.
4. Eating, chewing gum, are not permitted.
5. They should be punctual (and so should dons).
6. Boys must bring the appropriate books and equipment to a lesson.
7. Dons should be properly addressed when spoken to (Sir, or Ma'am in the case of female dons); boys should not shout out in class, but wait to be asked to contribute.
8. Prep should always be completed by the time set by a don; and they should be done well.
9. Work should be neatly presented; **unsatisfactory work should always be returned to be done again.**
10. Boys should stand behind their desks before leaving the classroom in an orderly way, putting chairs under tables as they depart. (It is customary for a Radleian to thank a don at the end of the lesson.)

Pupil Use of AI

AI tools can help pupils to understand material more deeply, to test their knowledge, and to manage their time more effectively. Microsoft Copilot should be their first choice when using AI, as it operates securely within the school's system.

The fundamental questions students should always ask yourself before using LLMs are the following:

Is this helping my learning? Has using it caused me to think? Has it led to a change in my long-term memory?

Here are some ways in which LLMs, like Copilot or ChatGPT, can be useful:

To give students a list of questions to assess understanding/memory of a topic.

To give students a summary of a topic that you can then commit to memory with flashcards or 'look-cover-write-check'.

To help students with academic organisation, such as providing you with a revision plan over the Easter holidays.

Here are some ways in which LLMs are not useful and, in fact, are actively damaging to

students' education:

Asking ChatGPT to plan essays.

Asking ChatGPT to write all or some of students' essay.

Asking ChatGPT to give students the answers for mathematical or scientific problems.

The reason for this is that, if boys ask ChatGPT to plan or write an essay for them, they are not cognitively engaged. This is what is known as 'cognitive off-loading'. They are not having to think about the topic/question that their don wants them to think about and, because they are not thinking about it, nothing is being learnt.

Appendix

Visiting Speakers: Central Register of Speakers and Due Diligence Procedure

Before inviting a visiting speaker, staff must ensure that appropriate and proportionate due diligence has been undertaken to confirm that the speaker and the proposed content are suitable for a school context.

This process includes:

- Recording all visiting speakers on the Central Register of Speakers, including:
 - date
 - name of speaker
 - organisation
 - topic of talk
 - intended audience
- Undertaking basic due diligence, which may include a simple online search, to identify any potential safeguarding, reputational or Prevent-related concerns.
- Ensuring that visiting speakers:
 - are appropriate for the age and context of the audience
 - show due regard for protected characteristics
 - comply with the school's Prevent duty
 - are not referencing extremist views without appropriate balance and contextualisation
 - are supervised at all times and comply with the school's visitor procedures, including wearing a visitor badge.

Any member of staff organising a talk by a speaker who might hold views that could be regarded as extreme or potentially inappropriate for the designated age group, should ensure the visit has been approved by the Warden or Deputy Head (Academic). A note of this should be made on the register.

Where there is any uncertainty or concern, advice should be sought from a member of CMT before confirming the invitation.