



Castle Newnham School

TRADITIONAL VALUES, BRIGHT FUTURES, ONE JOURNEY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **If a pupil needs additional help, what support is there to help them get their performance higher?**

We are fortunate in having subject specialist teaching in all our subject areas with staff who love their subjects and are willing to offer additional help. At some point, all pupils may need some additional help, either to support or to extend their learning. In some cases additional support outside the classroom is given. Expectations are very high for all our pupils.

- **Is there an orchestra in secondary? If so, when do they meet up?**

The development of an orchestra in secondary is a high priority for us. We have recently expanded the music department with 3 specialist music teachers in school to make this possible as soon as protective measures allow. Having the Bedford Music Hub on site is a big advantage in making this possible as is having higher numbers of our pupils learning a musical instrument.

- **Does GCSE study start in Year 9?**

Our curriculum is based on building on the learning done in primary to go right through to GCSE. As the range of subjects do not change significantly from Year 9 to Year 10 there is a clear progression from Year 7 to Year 11, which leads into GCSEs. Pupils can choose two additional subjects in addition to their core programme, either one they have studied already or a new subject for Year 10 and 11.

- **Is GCSE science taken as three individual subjects, i.e. biology, chemistry and physics?**

There are two options for science either combined science or triple sciences. With both routes physics, chemistry and biology are covered as separate subjects but combined science leads to 2 GCSE grades and triple science leads to a grade in each science subject.

- **What language options are there?**

All pupils take French to GCSE and there is the option of choosing German from Year 9. We also value home languages and will be offering opportunities for pupils to take these as qualifications where appropriate.

➤ **Can pupils sit GCSEs early?**

Due to mastery of the curriculum we do not advise pupils to sit GCSEs earlier. There may be some exceptional circumstance where this could be considered on a case by case basis.

➤ **How many can GCSEs can pupils choose?**

The core curriculum of English language, English literature, mathematics, combined science French and, History or Geography leads to 7 GCSEs. Pupils can then choose two further subjects giving 9 GCSEs in total. These subjects include: German, Design Technology, triple science, Art and design, dance, drama, music, classics, film studies, GCSE PE and Hospitality and catering. However if pupils decide to take triple science as an option, the total number of GCSEs will be 10.

➤ **How much homework will my child get in Year 7?**

Homework for Year 7 pupils is usually around 1-2 hours per week but builds up gradually throughout the year.

➤ **Will my child get the opportunity to play in team sports for the school in Year 7?**

There are usually a variety of sports clubs for pupils to participate in. However due to current restrictions only co-curricular sport is running as part of the house system.

➤ **Why is computing not taught at GCSE?**

For pupils interested in a career in computing the most important qualifications are strong GCSEs in maths and science. Although we currently do not teach computer science for GCSE this may change in the future.

➤ **Do you offer pupils the opportunity to do the Duke of Edinburgh award?**

Pupils have the opportunity to do the DofE from Year 9 (bronze) and then progress through to the silver award and on to the gold award at Post-16.

➤ **Do pupils take part in work shadowing?**

Rather than work shadowing, pupils have a day where they go to work with a parent or family friend. In some cases, more extensive work experience can be arranged. Careers advice and Post-16 links are strong as are our links with universities. We usually undertake visits to universities in Bedford, Oxford and Cambridge on a regular basis.

➤ **Can the GCSE results from 2020 be published for the school to help inform choices?**

The 2020 results are not being published by any schools this year, as there are no national results to compare it to. We can however confirm that our pupils were pleased with the grades they achieved and were able to go onto sixth forms and colleges to continue their chosen path of study.

➤ **What plans are there for developing the site in the next few years including buildings and leisure facilities?**

The school has recently undergone extensive building works in the past few years. We have a new sports hall, new classrooms for our SEND provision and including a brand new lab and a recently refurbished cookery room as well as a new teaching space for our expanding performing arts department in the form of a new drama studio/green room, music practice rooms and an acoustic music room. We have also created a very modern 'café' area where the pupils love to meet and catch up with their friends at break time.

We are always looking to develop our on-site facilities and an all-weather pitch is in our plans as well as ideas for developing the dining facilities and teaching spaces.

➤ **Are there plans to introduce a 6th Form on the north site?**

There are no plans currently for a sixth form as Post-16 options in Bedford and the surrounding area are already very strong as are our links with these providers. [Please click here to view a short video of some of our past pupils talking about their post 16 destinations.](#)

➤ **Which subjects are children taught in sets?**

Pupils are not taught in sets and grouping at GCSE only happens where there are different tier entries to exams, for example in maths and French. As a school we are committed to mixed attainment teaching for a whole range of reasons which include supporting our higher attainers in mastering their subject knowledge and ensuring excellent models of behaviour, participation, work ethic and attainment in every classroom.

➤ **Are the external gates secured at weekends and during the school day to prevent intruders?**

The school gates onto the main playground are secured during the school day and there are also secure internal doors which can only be opened with a key fob specific to the school. The school is used by several community groups during the weekends and evenings but there is an on-site caretaker who assists these groups with security and locking up.