Overview of the Cotham Curriculum Offer and Organisation 2026/27

CONTENTS

Introduction **6**
Overviews
The KS3 Subject Curriculum
The KS4 Subject Curriculum
The Post 16 Subject Curriculum
Blocking and Grouping Arrangements
KS3
KS4
Post 16
SEND Interventions
Reading, Writing, and EAL Interventions
Tutor Time and Assemblies
Years 7-11
Post 16
Careers Education and Guidance (CEAIG)
Extra Curricular and Enrichment
Year 11 Period 6 Lessons

Introduction

Cotham School seeks to provide an education of the highest quality for all its students by offering an aspirational, broad and balanced curriculum. This includes a stimulating range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits to support wider learning.

The curriculum at Cotham goes beyond the national curriculum, and consists of all activities within the school. It is designed to ensure coherence, relevance, appropriate challenge and progression between the Key Stages, to enable our students to access further and higher education of their choice and to give them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed there and subsequently in society and the workplace.

In each Key Stage the curriculum intent and how the curriculum will be implemented and reviewed to support the best possible outcomes for students has been carefully considered for each Subject area. Cotham's curriculum is designed to help students to become confident and resourceful young people, so that they:

- are ambitious for themselves and their peers
- are proud to be Cotham students
- develop lively, enquiring minds and get excited about learning and the world around them
- work hard, are articulate, courteous, considerate and kind
- develop resilience, self-care strategies and positive mental health and wellbeing
- are working towards great futures and are well prepared to be active citizens of the world
- Make excellent progress throughout their time with us and achieve strong examination outcomes at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5

At Cotham we strive to do this by:

- Organising the curriculum and staff deployment to provide a high degree of consistency and quality in all Key Stages;
- Ensuring our staff have access to a high quality Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme which is responsive to their own and our students' needs;
- Teaching our students a well considered rigorous, creative and engaging curriculum that meets their range of needs and which motivates, challenges and supports their aspirations;
- Assessing our students in order to diagnose needs, group students for learning, plan and adapt appropriately, chart progress and give them targets to support their continued progress;
- Helping our students to develop strong literacy and oracy skills so that they are able to read and write well and express themselves confidently ;
- Helping our students to stay safe and to acquire understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to adult life, citizenship, employment and the world around them through excellent Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Careers Education and Guidance (CEIAG).
- Helping our students to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural values based on respect for others, an appreciation of the diversity of cultures, religions and ways of life; and by understanding of the causes of inequality;
- Offering a broad and bespoke Personal Development provision at Post 16 (overview linked here);
- Raising our students self esteem by instilling the belief that they can achieve highly and promoting equity of opportunity for all by countering racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination through the curriculum;

- Helping our students to embody Cotham's core values of Achievement, Respect and Diversity and to develop personal values based on honesty, trust, tolerance, understanding, courtesy and respect for others and the environment;
- Ensuring that the taught components of the curriculum are enriched by and influenced by the communities in which our students live and by the wider community and which encourages respect for religious and moral values and other races, religions, social classes and ways of life;
- Cultivating lasting relationships with local Arts organisations, businesses, community organisations, local Independent schools, colleges and universities to provide our students with additional opportunities and activities beyond our curriculum that enrich their educational experience and further develop their social and cultural capital;
- Keeping the school community informed of our curriculum and involving them in the process of review;
- Continually monitoring the curriculum and evaluating our performance in raising our students' outcomes

Curriculum Access and Delivery

All students have equality of access to the curriculum. Appropriate progression is available for all students from their particular Key Stage, course or pathway including progression to further education, higher education, training or employment. Adaptation, enrichment and support are available for all students to ensure that the learning needs of all students are met. Appropriate assessment, reporting and recording arrangements are designed to support the progress of all students.

Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation

The curriculum is subject to ongoing evaluation throughout each academic year and is also subject to annual review to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our students. The standards reached and progress made by students are also carefully monitored so that priorities for further development can be identified.

THE KEY STAGE 3 SUBJECT CURRICULUM

Cotham has a three year Key Stage 3 curriculum which is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

NB:

- Maths teaching groups are set according to ability in maths from the beginning of Term 2 in Year 7
- Three Modern Foreign Languages are taught in tutor groups in Year 7 (Spanish, French and German via carousel). Students select one of these languages in Year 8.
- Dance is an option within PE in Year 9.

Key Stage 3 curriculum subjects and time allocations
(25 hrs per week, 50 periods per two week cycle)

Subject	**Year 7 Subjects** (Periods per fortnight)	**Year 8 Subjects** (Periods per fortnight)	**Year 9 Subjects** (Periods per fortnight)
English	9	8	8
Mathematics	7	7	7
Science	6	6	7
Modern Foreign Languages (French, German or Spanish)	4	5	5
Geography	2	3	3
History	2	3	3
Philosophy and Religion	3	2	2
Art and Design	2	2	2
Design Technology / Food Technology	2	2	2
Computing and ICT	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
Dance	1	1	0
Physical Education (PE)	4	4	4 (includes dance)
Personal, Social, Health Education (Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)	2	1	1
Total	**50**	**50**	**50**

Key Stage 3 Subject Blocking and Grouping Arrangements		
Subject	**Blocking**	**Grouping**
English	Tutor group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Maths	Taught in half year blocks	Setted from the start of Year 7 Term 2
Science	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability teaching groups
PE/Dance	Half year block	Single sex mixed ability groups. Dance included as an option in Year 9
Modern Foreign Languages (French, German or Spanish)	Tutor group/teaching group pool in Yr 7. MFL Option introduced for Yr 8 and Yr 9 (in groups).	Mixed ability tutor groups in Year 7. Mixed ability teaching groups by language in Years 8 and 9.
Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
History	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Geography	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Religion, Ethics and Philosophy (REP)	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Music	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Dance	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Drama	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Visual Arts	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Design Technology / Food Technology	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability
Computing and ICT	Tutor group/teaching group pool. Half year blocks	Mixed ability

THE KEY STAGE 4 SUBJECT CURRICULUM

Students in Year 9 are carefully supported to select their Key Stage 4 pathway with appropriate advice and guidance. The KS4 Pathways Portal contains all the guidance on how students select their preferences for Key Stage 4 courses.

Key Stage 4 curriculum subjects and time allocations (25 hrs per week, 50 periods per two week cycle)		
	Year 10 Subjects (Periods/ Hours per fortnight)	**Year 11 Subjects (Periods/ Hours per fortnight)**
English	8	8
Mathematics	8	8
Science	10	10
Core Physical Education/ Games (PE)	4	4
Core Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)	2	2
Pathways (Option) subject	6	6
Pathways (Option) subject	6	6
Pathways (Option) subject	6	6
Total	**50**	**50**

Key Stage 4 Blocking and Grouping Arrangements		
Subject	**Blocking**	**Grouping**
English	Half year blocks in Years 10 and 11	Mixed ability
Maths	Half year blocks in Years 10 and 11	Setted
Science	Half year blocks in Years 10 and 11	At the end of Year 9, students choose whether to study Combined Science or Separate Sciences. In Year 10 and 11, there are two groups for Separate Science and two groups for Combined Science in each half year block.
Core PE	Half year blocks in Years 10 and 11	Mixed ability groups
Core Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)	Taught in half year blocks with science	Mixed ability
GCSE Modern Foreign Languages (French, German or Spanish)	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE History	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Ancient History	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability

GCSE Geography	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Religious Studies	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Sociology	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
CNAT Sports Science	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Physical Education	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
iMedia Vocational Certificate	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Computer Science	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Business	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Art and Design	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Music	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Media Studies	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Drama	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
Engineering Vocational Award	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability
CNAT Child Development	Taught in option blocks	Mixed ability

THE POST 16 SUBJECT CURRICULUM

Every Year 11 student has a 1:1 curriculum guidance meeting during Year 11 to support them in making Post 16 curriculum choices that match their aptitude, interests and future aspirations.

Students in Key Stage 5 all follow a full time programme of planned learning hours and non-qualification hours (the latter are not detailed here, falling outside of the term 'curriculum', but include Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) provision, CEIAG, enrichment, tutorial and directed study).

- **Our current curriculum offer (including entry requirements) can be accessed here.**
- **Our KS5 'Vision, Sequencing and Intent' can be seen here.**
- **Our Personal Development offer for Post 16 can be seen here.**

Post 16 Level 3 courses and time allocations (hours *per fortnight*)

	Year 12	**Year 13**
Level 3 Course 1	9	9
Level 3 Course 2	9	9
Level 3 Course 3	9	9
***Enhancement courses** *(EPQ, Global Perspectives EPQ, Core Maths, Community Language or BTEC extended certificate)** *These courses are offered as optional curriculum enhancement.	1-9	1-9

Post 16 Foundation route courses and time allocations (hours *per week*)

For Key Stage 5 students **who have not yet met the GCSE requirement to study at Level 3**, we offer a one year Foundation route, which is structured as follows	
Business BTEC (Level 2) *or* Science BTEC (Level 2) - both equivalent to 2 x GCSEs	8
GCSE English	6
GCSE Maths	8
Social Science Level 2	4
Skills	1

Key Stage 5 Grouping Arrangements

All subjects and courses at Post 16 are taught in mixed ability classes.

KS3- KS5 subject curriculum overviews

- KS3 Curriculum Content - link here
- KS4 Curriculum Content - link here
- KS5 Curriculum Vision, Sequencing and Intent here

Special Educational Needs (SEND) interventions

All students at Cotham are expected to follow the broad and balanced curriculum. Subject areas have schemes of work that show how learning difficulties within that subject area will be managed and supported, and how teaching and learning styles within the subject will be modified to take account of particular special educational needs and disabilities.

Students in mainstream are taught in mixed ability groups, others are placed in groups according to their level of attainment. Decisions on grouping are made by Faculty Leaders.

Teachers are issued with training and guidance on how they might adapt their teaching to take account of common Special Educational Needs, Impairments or Disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, hearing impairment, Autism Spectrum Condition). Work should be appropriately adapted to take account of the needs of the student.

The school employs a number of Higher Learning Teaching Assistants and funded Learning Support Assistants. Some of their work is with groups or SEND students in the classroom supporting them to access the curriculum. Research suggests that LSA support shows positive impact when in a shared, not individual, way. However, on rare occasions, students may receive 1:1 support in class, depending on their level of need.

Reading, Writing and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Interventions (Year 7 and 11)

At Cotham School, we know that strong communication skills are essential for students to access the full curriculum, express their ideas confidently, and succeed academically. Developing these skills also equips students to participate fully in society, build independence, and prepare for future education, employment,

and lifelong learning.

Reading
All students complete a reading test (NGRT) each academic year: this information is shared with teachers who then are able to adapt resources to stretch and support students in their lessons. Students whose reading proficiency falls below 85 on the standardised score will then receive intervention from specialist HLTAs. Intervention is bespoke so can be 1:1 or in small groups, and focuses on the foundational reading skills of phonics, fluency, inference, and automaticity.

Writing
Through assessments in English lessons, referrals from classroom teachers and using students' KS2 data, students with gaps in their writing proficiency are identified and receive intervention from specialist HLTAs. Intervention can be 1:1 or in small groups and focuses on the foundational writing skills of motor skills, handwriting and presentation; spelling, syntax and grammar; or writing stamina and coherence.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)
Many of our students are proficient in languages other than English. When students arrive at Cotham, if they have a gap in their English language proficiency, they are assessed by our specialist HLTAs against the Bell Foundation descriptors. Students' proficiency is shared with all teachers who can then adapt and support students' learning in lessons. Students whose proficiency is measured as A-C on the Bell Foundation descriptors will receive EAL intervention to focus on the core language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Oracy
At Cotham, we prioritise students' oracy (speaking and listening) as they learn to talk, and also learn through talk in their lessons. Teachers assess students through exploratory and presentational talk, and at times through formal speaking assessments. Where a need is identified, students are selected for workshops and extra-curricular opportunities to build their confidence, fluency and clarity, as well as develop skills in expanding, adapting and formalising their speaking and listening skills.

Tutor Time and Assemblies (Yrs 7-11)

Tutor time and assemblies take place for all students on a daily basis. Each year group follows a set programme that may include the following, depending on the Key Stage:

- Year Group Assembly
- House Assembly
- A reading programme
- Additional teaching of a PSHE-related tutor period programme: a programme of study for each year group including a focus on positive mental health and wellbeing meets the statutory requirements.
- Messages and key updates
- Guest speakers
- Academic Review and Monitoring Days
- Drop-down days to intensively deliver elements of the SMSC curriculum

Tutor Time and Assemblies (Post 16)

The Year 12 programme is compulsory for all Year 12 students (unless they have a period 1 lesson at RGS) and is designed to support Post 16 transition, Post 18 transition ('Futures') preparedness and as an additional space for personal development.

The intent of the Year 13 programme is 1:1 is a bespoke and personalised support structure which ALL Year 13 students can invest in as they prepare to leave compulsory education, affording increasing levels of independence and self-direction. Students direct the focus and priorities of their 1:1 sessions, accessing support with academic progress and Futures planning.

Year 12 tutoring comprises of five directed elements:

- Monday - The Big Question (structured debate of topical issues)
- Tuesday - Attendance support and accountability
- Wednesday - Assembly / Futures (alternate weeks)
- Thursday - 1:1 Meetings with tutors (T1 - P16 readiness; T2 - progress and personal targets; T3 - attendance; T4 - mock exam preparation; T5 - Post mock actions; T6 - Y13 readiness).
- Friday - inter-tutor quiz league!

Year 13 students attend on allocated dates for their 1:1 with their tutor (5 times through Y13).

Careers Education and Guidance (CEAIG)

At Cotham and we employ a dedicated CEAIG Leader and a Work Experience Coordinator who oversee a comprehensive CEIAG programme. A full outline of the provision is included in the appendices of the Cotham Careers and Employability Policy. Cotham school has always prided itself in the CEIAG provision as evidenced in the Quality in Careers Standard national kite mark- an award that we are in the process of gaining accreditation for. The CEIAG leader has also been collaborating with faculty leaders to ensure that the Careers in the Curriculum offer is broad and deep as outlined by the Gatsby Benchmark 4. The ongoing work on this is captured and updated in the Careers in the Curriculum Topic Map.

Years 7 and 8

In their first two years at Cotham, students assess and build their core employability skills and confidence. They try out new subjects that they have not studied before, and encounter careers and real world application in their lessons. They are also introduced to Career Pilot, which they use to capture who they are and what their dreams and current skills are; this then develops into guided research into future career aspirations and how these fit in with their current learning.

Beyond this, students begin to identify ways to develop as a person through meeting a variety of leaders from different occupational sectors as well as Cotham School alumni. They also have the chance to apply to be a student leader and develop leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

Years 9, 10 and 11

From Year 9, this work develops to support Cotham students to make informed choices about their options for the future. Through the Careers curriculum, students relate their abilities, attributes and achievements to their career plans, while exploring how the world of work is changing and evolving. They learn to describe how the world of work and different types of business contribute to the economy, as well as how to challenge stereotyping, discrimination and other cultural and social barriers to choice. Students are also provided with the opportunity to prepare for interviews and practise these skills with real employers and businesses.

This phase contains significant decision points for Cotham students. During Year 9, they attend KS4 pathways information evenings and 1-1 meetings to choose the GCSE options that are appropriate to their

interests and talents. Once into their GCSE studies, our students are supported to identify and evaluate a range of Post 16 options.

Key Stage 5
In Key Stage 5, the curriculum has been mapped to offer a depth and breadth of courses which support students in accessing a wide range of ambitious pathways within global, national and regional contexts. These Post 18 links are mapped by subject here. In addition to CEIAG within the core curriculum, all students follow our Futures programme. The vision for the Futures programme is to ensure that development towards Post 18 progression routes underpins the Post 16 learning journey for ALL students at ALL stages with careful reflection about all available pathways. For a summary of implementation, please see the Cotham P16 Futures Overview. The programme is of significant scale and runs throughout the Post 16 learning journey.

Practical Work Experience : Years 10 and 12
In Year 10, students are supported to undertake 5 days of work experience. All Post 16 students commit to undertaking work experience during their first year of study; this may be paid, voluntary, in-person or online. In the case of our Foundation students on the business pathway, work experience is an accredited part of their curriculum. Students are supported in this via a timetabled Futures Hour, with guidance from the Post 16 team, as well as via the Post 16 'Hub' and weekly updates through the Post 16 Futures Bulletin and Work Experience Bulletin.

Enrichment Opportunities

Our aim is to offer our students a quality of experience that will enrich their lives and encourage every student to take advantage of the wider life of the school and to participate in at least one club. A wide range of subject and interest-based extra-curricular activities are available to all students in Years 7-13. These give our students the opportunity to play a full and active role in the wider life of the school.

Cotham has one of the biggest cohorts of Duke of Edinburgh participants of any state school in the country. As well as curriculum day trips our students can also take part in a range of residential trips. These include, Biology and Geography field trips, ski trips as well as culturally immersive trips for example, to Bavaria, France, and historical trips to the battlefields in Normandy, France and through the Holocaust Educational Trust to the Concentration Camp Auschwitz, Poland. Our cultural visits to Europe are always a very popular way to learn about other cultures, and history as well as improving linguistic skills.

Activities days, computing and science competitions and 'masterclasses', careers events including industry engagement programmes, sports fixtures and professional sports matches and events, Art exhibitions, music events, school productions and other performing arts events also enrich the curriculum and enable students to participate in a wide range of activities beyond the standard school day.

Cotham School is a founder member of the Bristol Education Partnership (BEP) and an active participant in the range of additional extra curricular opportunities which the partnership provides to its students.
Extra-curricular offer.

The school's extracurricular provision is managed and promoted through the Evolve Clubs platform, providing a centralised and accessible way for parents to explore the wide range of clubs available. As new clubs are added, Year 7-11 parents are kept up to date in real time, giving them the flexibility and autonomy to discuss opportunities with their child and book them onto activities that match their interests and aspirations.

The intent of enrichment at Post 16 is to ensure ALL Year 12 students (Foundation and Level 3) have the opportunity and allocated time to develop personal and employability skills beyond their classroom

curriculum. This is timetabled to promote the value, whilst offering choice and leadership opportunity. All Year 12 students commit to at least one hour per week of enrichment as part of their learning agreement. Some sessions are delivered by staff, while others are student run. Students are registered for their enrichment activities and a tutor reward system promotes engagement. Current offer can be viewed here.

Remote Education

It is our aim at Cotham School to ensure that, as far as possible, we adapt our pedagogy to mitigate the impact of remote learning on our students' progress while they are away from school.

Students can be asked to learn remotely for a number of reasons:

- Cotham school is closed during term time due to an unforeseen circumstance
- Schools are closed as a result of a national lockdown

Our aim is to ensure that all students continue to receive a high standard of education, albeit in an altered form.

Please see our Remote Learning Guidelines document here for further information.

Year 11 Period 6 Sessions

We provide an additional teaching session for Year 11 students during terms 1 to 4.

These sessions run on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 2.45 - 3.45.

6 sessions per fortnight are used to deliver an additional hour for each of the following subjects.

- Maths
- English
- Science
- Option X Subjects
- Option Y subjects
- Option Z subjects

Faculties select students to attend if they identify that they require additional support in developing exam technique.

There is an expectation that all students selected must attend. The students not selected will not attend Period 6 on that day.

The student groups will continue for terms 1 and 2, and new students will be selected for terms 3 and 4.

The focus of Period 6 sessions should be on retrieval and exam preparation activities.

Attendance to Period 6 is monitored by the Year 11 Team and absence messages are sent to parents of students not attending.