Cothill Policy Documents

ISSR 3 & 4 Teaching & Framework for Pupil Performance

Date: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

Persons Responsible for the Policy:
The Head and Deputy Head (Academic) are responsible for the management of this policy and all teaching Staff are entrusted with its effective implementation.

Overview
Refer to 'Teaching Standards' (PDR 1 in this booklet), which outlines what is required of all teachers, as specified in the government publication *Teachers' Standards* (2011).

At Cothill we believe that school life should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone, staff and pupils alike. Through our teaching and pastoral care we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to develop into well-rounded young people, possessed of good manners and a range of interests. We strive to ensure that the pupils at Cothill grow up happy and motivated to learn, whilst also developing an awareness of the wider world around them. They are also prepared for life in the country's major day and boarding schools. We provide a rich curriculum, delivered by enthusiastic and professional teachers who are role models for their pupils; excellent pupil-teacher working relationships are at the heart of our happy, thriving school.

Aims of the Curriculum

- To nurture and fulfil the potential of each pupil in our care
- To teach pupils the values of hard work, humility and good manners
- To teach respect for the needs, feelings and property of others
- To teach pupils to respect and show kindness to others

Additionally, a mnemonic of COTHILL reflects our core values:

Courage; Originality; Teamwork; Humour; Integrity; Love of Learning; Love of Life. More specifically:
Courage - To help pupils to have courage on the sports field and the courage of their convictions in the classroom
Originality - To promote the creative side of every pupil
Teamwork - To create an environment in which teamwork is highly valued
Humour - To ensure the challenges of everyday life are tackled with a sense of perspective and good humour
Integrity - To develop confident, self-disciplined pupils who understand and value integrity
Love of Learning - To instil in pupils a passion for learning about the world
Love of Life - To help pupils acquire knowledge & skills that will enable them to prosper in later life

Effective Learning

We believe that children learn most effectively when they are stimulated, motivated, can identify the ***progress*** they are making and have a clear sense of purpose. It is understood that children learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to have strategies that allow this. To achieve this we encourage teachers to vary their teaching and to use the widest possible variety of activities and tools; a sense of humour being one of the most important.

We aim to set the bar as high as possible for both our pupils and our teachers. We recognise that ***excellence*** is achieved first by helping pupils to develop well rounded, positive attitudes to learning and secondly by ensuring our teachers are highly knowledgeable, motivated to grow and develop and looking to make improvements year on year.

It is expected that:

- Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject or areas they teach; specialist subject teachers are employed throughout the School
- **Teachers have high expectations of all children such that all are actively encouraged to achieve and make continual progress**
- All teachers are actively involved in the development of their department and have input into their subject's scheme of work
- Departments meet regularly to share ideas, resources and to plan
- Planning is thorough and due regard is given to those with special needs
- Teaching and assessment are differentiated according to need
- Teachers have the resources that they need to provide a rich learning environment
- Teachers are encouraged to be creative in their delivery of the curriculum, to show flair and imagination, as long as the learning objectives are met
- Teachers are expected to manage pupils well and to maintain high standards of discipline
- Teachers are to assess pupils work thoroughly and constructively as per this policy, to return work asap and to use assessments to inform teaching (AfL)
- Teachers are to use prep effectively to reinforce and/or extend what is learnt in lessons

INSET

All Staff are encouraged to attend courses and undertake visits to other schools as part of their CPD, and also to keep abreast of current trends and initiatives in education. The Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible for inviting speakers and professional trainers to deliver INSETs on current research-backed teaching strategies and wider pedagogical matters. The Deputy Head (Academic) runs Insets and shares good practice and regularly invites others to do so also. The recently added, since January 2023, Teacher's Toolkit Tuesday slots during our regular staff briefings allows members of staff to share an aspect/s of their pedagogy with other teachers.

At the end of Year 8, our pupils take Common Entrance, Winchester Entrance or Scholarship exams. Our success in teaching, and the children's progress during their time with us, has in part to be measured in terms of their passing successfully these exams; it should also be noted that for initial allocation of a place, most schools now ask that the candidates sit a test aged 11, that the Headmaster write a report about each of them and that they have an interview. A well-rounded pupil with a range of interests and talents is looked for, not just the academic in them.

That said, the school's record of success at Common Entrance and Scholarship to a range of the country's top public schools is excellent. Three pupils have won King's Scholarships to Eton in the past three years. In that time we have also won two Music scholarships to Eton, an Academic

Exhibition to Winchester and scholarships to Harrow, Radley, Rugby, Oundle, Abingdon, Marlborough, Stowe and Monkton Combe in Academic, Sport, Music, Drama, Art and All rounder categories.

We offer opportunities for all pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills by:

- providing a positive, relaxed atmosphere where they feel safe and valued, they enjoy being challenged and stimulated and their efforts and achievements are celebrated
- offering a stimulating and exciting curriculum, enriched with internal and external competitions, trips to the arts and sites of interest, outside visitors, and cross-curricular themes
- employing a range of teaching styles so as to cater for those who prefer a visual, auditory or kinaesthetic approach
- using a wide range of resources to enrich the learning experience
- encouraging pupils to work together in class so as to learn from one another
- helping them gradually to take responsibility for their learning, for reviewing their work and identifying how they can improve in future
- teaching pupils how to learn and to develop their metacognitive skills
- encouraging them to communicate their answers and ideas clearly orally and on paper, to be inquisitive, to problem solve, reason, evaluate and empathise
- providing a classroom environment that is organised and conducive to learning
- Celebrating progress and achievement by displaying examples of these in our classrooms alongside eye-catching and relevant displays that engage and challenge the pupils
- offering an exciting range of extracurricular activities which provide opportunities for the pupils to explore their interests, discover new ones and be challenged both physically and mentally
- offering one to one support for those with identified learning difficulties who need a boost
- providing study skills lessons to make their learning as effective as possible.

A week's lessons at Cothill for any one pupil might include opportunities to:

- take part in class discussions, work in pairs, research a topic, etc
- play whole-class games
- prepare for a debate, presentation and act out role-plays
- work independently
- use ICT
- make use of multimedia (e.g. short video clips, respond to musical or recorded material)
- to undertake fieldwork outside for Art or Science
- visit places of educational interest;
- take part in three or four different sports and represent the school in matches

Cross-curricular

We try to encourage and develop the links between subjects as this helps the pupils to see the bigger picture and to place what they are learning into a wider context. Opportunities for this are regularly discussed at Heads of Department meetings and within departments.

For many years there have been annual whole school theme weeks that have played a major part in the linking of subjects and ideas. These are led by the Deputy Head (Academic). Themes have included The Renaissance, The Victorians, Power, Flight and in 2020 a celebration of the school's

150th anniversary. In Autumn 2023, there was a very successful Lego theme week held. General Studies is an invaluable vehicle for cross-curricular links as its scheme of work ranges across issues in Politics, Ethics and Art.

Gifted and Talented
Cothill is largely non-selective and so benefits from a wide range of ability levels in all areas, academic and extra-curricular.

With respect to definitions for Gifted and Talented, these vary widely. The following is one such broad example that informs our policy for supporting these children:

"Pupils who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, at a level significantly in advance of their peers. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range." Professor Deborah Eyre, Director of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth.

At Cothill, we recognise that pupils have gifts and talents that are not fixed and which don't always reveal themselves in baseline tests. Gifts and talents often only become apparent down the line for a number of complex social, physical and intellectual reasons and the changing dynamic between each of these. pupils mature at different rates and develop interests at different times as a response to different stimuli.

So, we believe that all pupils should receive an education that stimulates and inspires them and, naturally, which challenges them all the time to become the best they can be. This means delivering lessons across a broad curriculum that are rich, challenging and rewarding.

Our G&T register is, in effect, all the pupils at the school. This relies on teachers really knowing their pupils, and how to challenge them. For some pupils the challenge should be just within reach, for others it should be just out of reach.

It is only by pushing at the boundaries of what each pupil is capable of – or thinks they are capable of – that we can find the extent of that potential.

Cothill provides for gifted and talented pupils in numerous ways, among them:

- Differentiation in lessons
- Specific programmes put on for a pupil or group of pupils with particular talents - e.g. music concertos, one to one coaching, extra out of school provision,
- Extension sessions and clubs
- Access to the school library of over 6,000 books
- Opportunities to be challenged amongst a wide field via competitions such as the Primary Maths Challenge and the Townsend Warner History Prize (won in 2021 by a Cothill pupil for the very first time)

Discrimination
The school is mindful of the advice in the DfE document: The Equality Act 2010 and Schools. Cothill will ensure that teaching does not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Teaching methods will ensure that the way in which issues are taught does not subject individual pupils to discrimination and the school will be alert to practices, behaviours and interactions which

may create or allow a hostile environment for pupils with protected characteristics and will intervene through appropriate action, such as disciplinary and/or educative action as the situation requires, with a view to creating a positive, inclusive culture in which every pupil can feel valued and flourish.

Unlawful discrimination (treating less favourably) can take various forms such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and failure to make reasonable adjustments (which applies to pupils with disabilities).

The school requires inclusive teaching practices to ensure pupils with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage

See **Policy Document ISSR 7 (Code of Professional Conduct)** which makes it clear that teaching staff will maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.

Making the most of Prep
In order to ensure that the pupils get the most from their prep teachers are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

Overarching principle: to set preps that have positive educational outcomes

• Differentiate according to class and **within** classes as appropriate (*see note below*)
• Consider setting a clear minimum amount with **extension** work to challenge the most able
• Expect the work to be completed in prep and handed in, not taken away afterwards
• Ensure the language used is appropriate and accessible to all (especially instructions)
• Ensure there is always a certain amount of **writing** involved, not just learning
• Minimise the amount of copying; if note taking, **require pupils to summarise / reword**
• Endeavour to set preps ahead of time, except when unavoidable

Three questions worth asking:
• Marking criteria: do pupils know what these will be?
• Are instructions on Google Classroom, paper or whiteboard very clear?
• Will pupils have what they need to hand? (e.g. maps, dictionaries, compasses)

Differentiation: the main four options in a prep:
• By task (what we ask pupils to do)
• By outcome (same task, different outcomes expected)
• By support (e.g. help sheets for weaker pupils)
• By timing (how long they have per task)

Use of Chromebooks by pupils in Prep
All pupils have a Chromebook to support their learning. Generally, they are not used in prep aside from for pre-test preparation, Quizlet vocab learning and Year 7 Geography projects. The exception

to this are pupils for whom typing is their usual way of working. Prep sessions are supervised by a member of staff (the class's form teacher in the main) who are able to monitor use of computers, via Securly software, and to encourage good practice.

Reporting progress and achievement

The pupils are encouraged to measure their own personal progress and achievement against their past results and against the standards of others in order to bring out the best in them.
There are numerous means by which information is reported to pupils, other Staff and parents, including:

Reporting to pupils:

Oral feedback during lessons
Written formative feedback in books
Weekly reports (a brief note written by each pupil's teacher for each subject every week)
Report cards every term with pupils' marks in each subject, together with class
average marks and individual effort grades:

Effort Grades are awarded as follows:

5: Outstanding attitude, motivation and degree of curiosity shown in this subject.
This grade must be earned.
4: Excellent approach to all areas of work; self-motivated; evidence of self-evaluation and ambition.
3: Good approach to all areas of work and regularly demonstrates a positive work ethic
2: Inconsistent or moderate effort; mixed results on paper. Could try harder
1: Very inconsistent approach to work and lack of effort too often witnessed; focus and determination need to be improved

Reporting to Parents

Open House meetings twice a year.
Regular contact between parents and the Head, Deputy Heads and their child's form tutor.
End of term written reports

Additional information available to teachers and staff

School database (iSAMS)
Screening database

Celebration of Achievement

The pupils' progress and achievements are celebrated in a number of ways:

- Monday morning celebration assemblies
- Notable pieces of work may be celebrated on display in classrooms
- Works of art by the pupils and major displays are put together put up around the school
- Good Marks are awarded for good work or for helping around the School
- Merits and Distinctions awarded for notable or outstanding work.
- A Headmaster's Board in the dining-room celebrates pupils' successes
- The Headmaster writes a newsletter that is posted to parents and online twice a term with news of results, achievements and notices
- Prizes for internal and external competitions

- Colours are awarded for all the sports and for outstanding achievement in the arts, music and drama. A Colours tie is multicoloured.

Lesson Plan

Assessment

A Definition:
Assessment is part of the learning journey. As with most journeys, it helps to know where you're going, why you want to go there and how you plan to get there. It's also important to know where you are before you begin the journey. So assessment is the process by which pupils and teachers gain an understanding of progress over time.

There are three types:

Diagnostic: assesses what a pupil can or cannot do at the start of a syllabus or a unit

Formative (= Afl): reveals to both pupils and teachers what a pupil needs to do next

Summative: sums up what a pupil has achieved at the end of a period of time or unit

The method that is most relevant at Cothill on a day to day basis is Formative, or Assessment for Learning. Formative assessment takes place during learning, allowing teachers and pupils to assess progress on the learning journey.

Assessment for Learning (Afl)
What is AfL?
AfL is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by us and the pupils to decide where pupils are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

pupils become more involved in the learning process and from this gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard.

One way of thinking about AFL is that it aims to 'close the gap' between a pupil's current situation and where they want to be in their learning and achievement.

AFL involves pupils becoming more active in their learning and starting to 'think like a teacher'. They think more actively about where they are now, where they are going and how to get there. This is one aspect of metacognition, a term to which all pupils are introduced at an early stage.

Metacognition
Metacognition is a term used to describe 'thinking about thinking' and supports the idea of self-assessment. Metacognition suggests that all learners need to be able to reflect on their own learning, to understand how they learn best and to reinterpret any new knowledge, skills and conceptual understandings that they have acquired.

Learning happens when students are given opportunities to build upon previous knowledge and experiences. Research consistently shows that only telling learners what they need to know is much less effective than helping them construct meaning for themselves.

Five ways AfL is put into practice:

1.Clear objectives - so every pupil knows what they are aiming for and why

2.Shared success criteria - so pupils know on what basis a specific piece of work will be assessed and what a good one looks like

3.Effective questioning - this provides teachers with the opportunity to identify and correct misunderstandings and gaps in knowledge, as well as identify the need for extension work for those students whose knowledge and skills base demand it. It also provides information about student knowledge, understanding and skills that informs the teacher's planning and selection of teaching strategies to move students from where they are to where they need to go.

4.Peer and self-assessment - so pupils become more independent and self-reflective in their learning

5.Informative feedback and marking - which informs pupils on exactly how they can improve when they undertake their next task

Where a pupil is now > Where are they going > How to get there > Where a pupil is now > *etc*

Marking

Marking plays an integral role in the assessment of a pupil's work and the monitoring of their progress.

Aims

- To provide constructive feedback on a pupil's progress
- To reward & motivate pupils by valuing their achievements and encouraging them to aim still higher
- To help pupils make progress through positive as well as critical feedback and target setting
- To provide an assessment record (marks) which will also inform other teachers and parents

General Principles of Marking

- The marking of a particular piece should focus on a limited range of clearly defined objectives
- Learning objectives may be written at the top of a piece of work
- Teachers should insist upon high standards from the pupils and, where appropriate, ask for work to be repeated or finished by a pupil in their spare time.
- It will not necessarily be the case that every piece of written work need be comprehensively marked, or "deep marked", nor to correct every accuracy mistake; the teacher must decide - and make clear to the pupils - how the work will be assessed, by what criteria and by when.
- Teachers should endeavour to return work to pupils as soon as possible, minimising the time gap between the work and the feedback.
- Marks are not expected to be awarded for every piece of written work. Giving marks for every piece of work can be excessive and even counterproductive, as pupils can end up

concentrating on the grade rather than the formative comments. Thoughtful feedback (oral or written), which informs pupils on exactly how they can improve when they undertake their next task, without the distraction of a mark, is often most effective.

- Rewards and praise for effort and progress should be offered freely and, where a pupil is willing, good work/progress is shared with the class.

Spelling and Grammar
It is the responsibility of all teachers in all departments to offer feedback on matters of literacy. Where they occur, a few key grammatical and spelling errors should be brought to a pupil's attention. Great care must, of course, be taken to avoid damaging a pupil's confidence through over-correcting.

Oral work
Staff should recognise the value of oral work in the classroom and offer praise and rewards accordingly.

Handwriting

Aims
To help pupils understand the benefits of a fast, neat script
To teach pupils a comfortable grip, writing posture and
To teach pupils to write neatly and legibly in a consistent, cursive script

What is expected
Staff should insist upon high standards of handwriting from all pupils. With the exception of some pupils with specific learning difficulties, a pupil's handwriting should be fluent and cursive (i.e. joined up), on the line, neat and legible.

The Teaching of Handwriting
All pupils are taught handwriting in their first year at Cothill. Once a child has been shown how to hold and control a pen, Threes and Fours' teachers and Learning Support Staff monitor progress carefully. 'Frixion' rollerball pens are extensively used until a pupil is able to manage a fountain pen, the latter being encouraged in the senior half of the school.

By the end of their first year at Cothill, pupils should be able to:

i. Form their letters with some control over their size, shape and orientation.
ii. Consistently produce legible and correctly formed upper and lower case letters in one style.
iii Join up their writing.

Special Needs
A pupil's English teacher and a Learning Support teacher should be notified by teaching Staff of any apparent issues with a pupil's handwriting. Pupils will not be made to change their handwriting style if it fulfils the above three criteria.

Left-handed pupils are expected to meet the same criteria as right-handers. A careful monitoring of their pen grip is maintained and a conventional grip is encouraged whenever possible. Teachers should be aware of those pupils who frequently change their pen. This is particularly important

lower down the school where left-handers may borrow from right-handers.

Typing

There is not a slot in the school timetable for a dedicated typing lesson. However, now that all pupils have their own Chromebook, they have access to typing programmes online and are encouraged to use these in free time and also clubs.

Spelling

Aim

To help pupils achieve a high standard of spelling in all their work and to achieve a spelling age at least commensurate with their chronological age by the end of the Fives.

Whole School Spelling Screening and Learning Support provision

At the beginning and end of each academic year, all pupils are screened using the NFER Single Word Spelling Test. The resulting spelling ages are made available to Staff on the Screening database. Those pupils with spelling ages of a year or more below their chronological ages are given individual learning support lessons. These pupils and the initials of their teachers are recorded in the Screening database.

pupils whose spelling is slightly below their chronological ages - and therefore not receiving learning support - should be given particular help within lessons.

Outline scheme

In the lower School - 6s, 5s, 4s and 3s - spelling is taught using the structured scheme *WordBlaze*. Each week a new letter pattern is learned using the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' method. These are tested weekly within dictation sentences where correct punctuation and tidy handwriting are expected and marked.

Pupils should be encouraged to proofread their work for spelling errors before submitting it for correction. On computers, pupils will learn how to operate the spellchecker.

Depending upon the nature of the work and the child's ability, teachers should aim to bring a proportion of incorrect spellings to a pupil's attention.

When possible, pupils should be asked to copy out correct spellings about three times using the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' method. A maximum of two to three words per piece of work should be considered sufficient.

JMP - Sept 2026