



Welcome to the launch of our new Dixie 6 Curriculum - the result of a year of reflection, evaluation and planning. We are all very excited by this initiative and hope you and your children will leave today reassured and looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of life at the Senior School.

There is a long established tradition of excellent **pastoral care** at the Dixie and we have worked hard to ensure the transition from Junior to Senior School goes as smoothly as possible. The forthcoming Science and Induction days are a critical element of this as are the meetings that take place later this term between Junior and Senior School staff. As parents you can be confident your children will arrive in the Senior School as known individuals - of course they will have a fresh start and we will need to get to know them better but important details about their friendships, strengths and weaknesses will already be known to Senior School staff and those teaching Year 6 in particular.

What is different this year is that we have made some significant changes to our Year 6 **curriculum** to emphasise even further the sense of transition and to help your sons and daughters to settle easily and over the course of the year to rise to the challenges of secondary education. Such adjustments include:

- A strong emphasis on core subjects - Maths, English & Science - along with increased exposure to the diversity of a secondary curriculum - Home Economics, Design & Technology and much more.
- A form base for many of their subjects.
- Fewer teachers than experienced in Year 7 and beyond - we will prepare them for the wider range of teaching styles they will face as they move through higher years in school.
- A homework timetable designed to build directly on students' experience in the Junior School and prepare students for the demands of future years.
- An element of thematic study - we aim to maintain aspects of the topic based curriculum familiar to a Junior School whilst also pursuing the diversity and specialisms typical of Secondary School.

Houses

Just as in the Junior School all members of the School are in either York or Lancaster House. Whichever your child is in now, they will remain. Each house is led by a member of staff assisted by 6th Form House Captains. Houses form the basis for the sporting and co-curricular competitions in the School. Academic rewards also feature in House points.

Curriculum

Not all the details of the Year 6 curriculum are yet finalised and indeed we have the luxury of being able to make adjustments throughout the year if this is advantageous to our students. I am, however, delighted to let you know the theme for the first term will be centred around Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. This very popular topic will be launched with an after school screening of the film on **17 September** in our very own Great Hall! We very much hope to be able to round off the term's study with a trip to the Warner Brother Studios in December.

English (7 lessons including Drama)

There is a strong emphasis on continuing to build the key skills of English that are the foundation to all later study - reading, grammar and spelling. As well as this, a greater element of textual study is introduced and some lessons become more reflective with students drafting and redrafting a piece of writing to make individual progress rather than completing a piece which is marked and assigned to history. Feedback on some tasks is continuous and students are encouraged to have the confidence to experiment with language and ideas. Through Drama lessons all students have the opportunity to prepare for LAMDA exams in speech & drama. Students are taught in mixed ability forms as experience shows this to be most effective for developing the range of skills required for later success.

Maths (6 lessons)

In Mathematics we aim in Year 6 for pupils to have a solid grasp of all their basic numeracy skills through varied activities, puzzles and games. Enjoyment of the subject is key to ensuring that pupils flourish and become confident mathematicians. Students are taught in ability sets which allow us to differentiate tasks, supporting those that need it and providing challenge for all, including our more able mathematicians. In Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to take part in the Primary Maths Challenge.

Science (5 lessons)

Students have lessons in specialist science laboratories with practical work and an investigative approach taking centre stage throughout the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on developing scientific and thinking skills in a range of challenging and fun activities.

Humanities - Geography, History and RS (6 lessons)

There is a great deal of coordination between these departments to ensure that common skills are emphasised and reinforced whilst also acknowledging the discrete and distinctive subject content associated with each discipline.

Modern Foreign Languages (4 lessons)

Students continue their study of both Mandarin and French. Mandarin will be taught in a range of realistic and practical contexts, it focuses on the language related to personal description and family. In French, we will focus our study on discovering life at Hogwarts, while exploring French words for places and school items.

Art, Music, DT & HE (7 lessons)

In Music students will be exploring the different elements of music during the year gaining experience in performance, composition and also the use of Sibelius. There will be a focus on the different themed topics that are being used in other subject areas with a direct link to maths through rhythm and numbers.

At the heart of a creative curriculum is the engagement of children with practical tasks. Both in Art, and Design & Technology links will be made to the thematic studies. Projects have been specifically designed to encourage experimental learning and to provide ample scope for choice and personalisation. In Home Economics, students will engage in both practical and theoretical activities. The course covers basic safety and hygiene, looking at hazard analysis in the handling of potentially dangerous equipment and cooking techniques and a range of practical skills such as rubbing in, rolling, frying and more.

Computing (2 lessons)

Critical to a 21st century education the computing curriculum aims to embed key basic computing skills to ensure students can use such skills throughout the curriculum. Students will be taught how to use Google Classroom which will be increasingly relied upon as they progress through the School. Lessons in how to stay safe online critical for their safety and wellbeing are also a vital aspect of the computing curriculum.

Dixie Open Skies Education (DOSE) (3 lessons)

A distinctive element of the Year 6 curriculum and indicative of the #DixieDifference, DOSE builds vital skills such as resilience, problem-solving and independence in students which prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead. DOSE lessons continue outside whatever the weather so do please send your son/daughter fully equipped!

Personal and Social Development (PSD) (1 lesson)

PSD aims to teach students the knowledge and skills they need to be healthy and positive citizens to their communities and to lead successful independent lives as adults. This lesson will be taught by Mrs Billington - further support for your son / daughter during this transition year.

Games / P.E. (5 lessons)

In PE & Games students will experience a wide variety of individual activities and team games that will enhance their personal and social development in an active environment.

We have lots of exciting ideas for the remainder of the academic year including for a residential trip and a showcase event at the end of the year. You will of course be updated regularly on these developments.

Homework

Expectations around homework are as follows:

Students should spend **20 - 30 mins per night** to be set as follows:

Monday: Maths

Tuesday: English

Wednesday: Science

Thursday: Languages - we strongly advise this slot is completed as a daily 10min exercise - it will usually involve learning vocab and this is best achieved by the little and often approach.

Friday: An opportunity for students to catch up on any incomplete work from lessons. The demands of this will be communicated home to parents via Google Classroom providing an excellent opportunity for students and parents to master this communication tool which will become increasingly important as your child progresses through the School.

Extension Work - Each half term there will be some suggested extension tasks based on the curriculum. Please note this is not an expectation for all students but if your son / daughter is a fast worker and rarely has Friday work to complete then we would encourage them to extend their skills by tackling one or more of the extension tasks.

Students will be given at least a couple of days to complete homework since we understand that life beyond school is busy and not all students have time for homework on any particular evening.

Exams

At the end of the year, students will sit written exams in all their subjects but as this will, for most, be their first experience of such assessments the exams will be 'open book' - students will complete them with the aid of revision material specially provided by staff.

And finally . . .

If you have any queries or concerns now or when your child is at the Senior School, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Form teachers of Year 6:
Mrs Hillier hilliera@dixie.org.uk

Mrs Malde maldej@dixie.org.uk

Head of Lower School:
Mr Mellors mellorsm@dixie.org.uk

Director of Student Care:
Mrs Banton bantonh@dixie.org.uk

Deputy Head:
Ms Young youngc@dixie.org.uk

Headmaster:
Mr Lynn lynnr@dixie.org.uk