

Script

In Britain, young people start secondary school at the age of 11 when they go into year 7. They stay at school until they are 18. Most young people go to state secondary schools. King Alfred's school is a typical state school in a small town called Wantage. It has about 1800 pupils. A typical day begins with pupils arriving for classes which start at quarter to nine. Most young people live in the town and walk or bike to school. There are more than 10 school buses for those who live further away.

At this school there are 4 classes every day. Each class lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes with many different subjects on the curriculum including maths, English, science, French, art, physical education (or P.E.), drama, information and communication technology (ICT), and catering.

Practical work is very important for teaching and learning at this school. Pupils have the opportunity to carry out their own experiments in science – sometimes with unexpected results!

I think students enjoy practical lessons because it allows them to get more engaged in the subject, gets them up out of their seats – active learning – allows them to investigate and to try and come up with the answers to their questions themselves.

Catering is another subject which allows students to carry out practical work. The school has well-equipped kitchens in the class so that the students can make (and taste) their own food.

Most schools teach French. But more and more schools also offer Spanish and sometimes German, Latin and Chinese. The school also organises trips abroad for language students.

The first two classes stop at 11.15 when there is a break for 25 minutes. Students have a quick snack and catch up with their friends. All pupils must wear a school uniform until the age of 16. No trainers!

In the art class, students are making sculptures. Their work helps make the school look interesting and beautiful.

Lunch is at 12.55 and pupils can buy a hot meal or sandwiches or can bring something to eat from home. Registration is at 13.35 until 13.55 which gives the students time to spend with their class tutors or go to assembly to hear school news and announcements.

There is just one class after lunch.

In some ways, King Alfred's is a typical secondary school with sports including basketball and football, but in other ways it is rather different.

Take this sports hall. Not many schools have a sports hall like this one. With only air pressure to keep it up, it is like a giant balloon and no one can leave the door open or it will collapse! Not many schools have a climbing wall like this, either. But King Alfred's is a special sports school so it offers these extra activities.

I would have thought probably less than 10 schools in the UK have a climbing wall. We're very fortunate to have it, but it's how we enrich the different sports that we offer, through not just the traditional sports such as football, rugby, cricket, we also like to do lots of different activities like climbing, ultimate Frisbee, handball and sports like that.

The last class ends at ten past three and while some students go to one of the many afterschool activities and clubs, most make their way home.