



**HORRIS HILL**

FOUNDED 1888

# Curriculum Policy

**Policy reviewed:** September 2020

**Policy approval:** Reviewed by Policy Audit Committee  
October 2020  
Approved by Full Governing Board  
November 2020

**Date of next review:** September 2021

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## **Introduction**

Horris Hill is a preparatory school, predominantly offering full boarding, which teaches boys from the age of 4 to 13, through the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), Key Stage One (Year 1-2), Key Stage Two (Years 3-6) and the first two years of Key Stage Three (Years 7-8).

Horris Hill is committed to instilling a love of learning in each boy in the school, and to providing a curriculum that not only enables our boys to achieve good results in school entrance exams, including pre-tests, Common Entrance and scholarships, but which also prepares them fully for their lives as pupils at senior school and, furthermore, as citizens of the modern world.

All children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression, takes individual differences into account and recognises the human aspect to education.

We aim to retain the older values of hard work and structured learning whilst keeping fully up to date with educational developments through a full-time and supervised curriculum.

### **A core aim at Horris Hill is to prepare boys well for entry to their senior school:**

- to deliver success in achieving places at the best senior schools
- to provide a rigorous and extensive academic, musical and artistic foundation
- to offer a wide variety of sports and extra-curricular activities, so that every boy has the opportunity to develop interests away from the classroom
- to promote personal qualities that allow the boys to get the best from each other and their surroundings

## **Key staff**

Giles Tollit is the Headmaster.

Peter Boyle and Sam Moss are the Deputy Headmasters. Peter Boyle has specific responsibility for all academic matters.

Harriet Uwalaka is the Lead Teacher in the Lower School (Reception to Year 3).

Each academic department has a Head of Department, responsible for policy and delivery of the curriculum in each area. The heads of department have responsibility for their subject throughout the age range of the school.

### *Departmental Heads*

English	Peter Shaw
Mathematics	Peter Boyle
Science	Mark Wiesendanger
French and MFL	Philip Bates
Classics	Sam Moss
History	Felix Beardmore-Gray

Geography	Cath Christopher
Design Technology	Jonathan Salisbury
Music	Tom Bennett
Art	Jo Omar
Director of Sport and PE	Paul Hayes
Learning Support	Jane Chatfield

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to ensure that our curriculum complies with statutory demands and that we provide a curriculum that is matched to the needs of our boys. To this end he is assisted by the Governors who monitor the curriculum through the Education Committee, consisting of Mr Mike Grenier (Chair, Eton College), Mr Simon Dalrymple (Radley College) and Dr Ian Fraser (Winchester College), Mrs Amanda Block and Mrs Lucy Lee (parent) which feeds back to the full governing board.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to monitor the delivery of the curriculum, working closely with curriculum Heads of Department and the Lead Teacher in the Lower School, encouraging them to develop the management of their team and their discipline. The SMT is responsible for pupil progress and assessment and work with the curriculum Heads of Department and the Lead Teacher in the Lower School to develop their evaluation of progress.

## **Curriculum**

All of our boys should have the opportunity to receive a curriculum that is broad in its range of subjects, balanced, relevant and differentiated to meet their needs. The National Curriculum forms the foundation for most of the teaching, but in many respects our teaching goes well beyond the bounds of the National Curriculum as we strive to provide the best possible education for boys of all ages and abilities in the school.

## EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception. At Horris Hill we adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS within Reception and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the setting:

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- learning and development

Under the guiding theme of Learning and Development there are seven clear areas. The three prime areas are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal and social emotional development

and the specific areas of learning are:

- literacy

- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The delivery of the curriculum by a class teacher should enable the children to realise they have power and ownership over learning and their own progress. Children should ultimately learn how to learn. To achieve these aims we deliver the curriculum through child led topics. At Horris Hill we are constantly observing the children and their learning (referencing the *Development Matters* document) and adapt topics to reflect the children's interests. The topics within Reception are not fixed and change according to the cohort's interests.

#### Early learning goals (ELG)

Most children are expected to fully achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. This prepares them for learning in Key Stage One and is consistent with the National Curriculum. If a child reaches the ELG level before the end of the Reception year they will start to work on the Year One objectives stated in the National Curriculum.

#### Key Stage One and Year 3

The curriculum delivered by the class teacher is organised and planned for using a thematic approach through which many subjects are taught. This approach promotes curiosity and creativity. There are strong links between subjects and children see their work as being connected, relevant and purposeful. The Child Led, Creative Curriculum is skills based and knowledge supported, making learning motivational and successful. Children will be encouraged to lead their own learning and research independently.

#### Upper School (from Year 4)

On joining the Upper School in Year 4, boys are increasingly taught by teachers who are subject specialists, or at least semi-specialists, often in specialist rooms. All boys belong to a Form with one or two Form Tutors, who usually act as the boy's academic tutor, monitoring their academic progress and well-being.

From Year 6 (Forms 5 and 4) the amount of time the boys spend with specialist teachers is increased although they retain regular contact with their Form Teachers and Tutors, who are always at hand to assist and encourage them.

We provide a traditional subject-based curriculum. The examined academic subjects are English, Maths, Science, French, Latin, History, Geography and Religious Studies; boys may also study Mandarin, Spanish, German and Ancient Greek.

Art, Music, Drama, Design Technology, Physical Education, Coding, Reasoning and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) complete the formal curriculum, enriched further by trips, visits and lectures. We run additional clubs and activities such as coding, debating, drama and chess.

## British values

Boys at Horris Hill come from many different cultures and backgrounds, all of which add to the richness and the diversity of the community. As a British school, the values that are central to life in our country are at the heart of all that we do. Pupils receive formal teaching in the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society through PSHE lessons, and into the richness and diversity of world faiths and beliefs through Religious Studies lessons, but also less formal teaching through a wide variety of assemblies, such as recent assemblies on British life under Margaret Thatcher, an assembly on the role of elections in our society, and trips such as a visit to a Crown Court in action, underlining the importance in our society of the rule of law.

## **Subjects**

### English

At Horris Hill we aim to develop boys' communication skills and increase their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing, by giving every boy full exposure to everything the language has to offer. Reading is at the heart of all that we do. Besides instilling a love of books and reading, boys enjoy regular Library lessons. English is a subject with a massive scope of materials and possible approaches but ultimately the aim is simple – to teach our boys to read, write and speak to a high standard, to communicate successfully, and to appreciate and enjoy the richness, diversity and beauty of the English language.

### Mathematics

The study of Mathematics helps boys to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics are developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion. Besides developing sophisticated skills of numerical reasoning, problem-solving lies at the heart of the boys' studies.

Our aim is to give each boy a solid mathematical foundation on which to build, so as to foster a love of and interest in Maths. The Common Entrance syllabus (revised 2016), itself based on the National Curriculum (September 2013), forms the basis on which mathematical activities and experiences are developed. Boys in the younger forms follow an ambitious, broad-based syllabus developed by Horris Hill, using the Galore Park Mathematics (Years 3 to 5) books as a core resource. At a suitable point, usually during Year 6, boys embark on the Horris Hill Common Entrance mathematics syllabus, which is in two parts, all boys completing the Level 2 syllabus and abler boys following the Level 3 syllabus and then in some cases a bespoke scholarship syllabus in their final year, which is matched each year to the specific needs of the boys, depending on the schools for which they are entering scholarship examinations. Exciting maths challenges and competitions provide further enrichment and opportunities for our abler boys.

### Science

In Science we aim to increase boys' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry, such as observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording findings.

Lessons are taught by subject specialists in our fully equipped laboratories, along with regular use of the outstanding natural facilities at our disposal.

### French and MFL

French is introduced to Horris Hill boys from the very start. In the younger forms the aim is to provide a fun introduction to language learning and to promote awareness of the culture of France. As they grow older teaching becomes more formal and boys develop a love of the language along with proficiency in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Boys also have the opportunity to study other modern foreign languages such as German and Mandarin, as individuals or in small groups.

### Latin

All boys at Horris Hill study Latin, with an introduction to classical civilisation in Year 5 and formal study of the Latin language in Year 6. They acquire an understanding of its structured grammar and vocabulary upon which much of the English language is based, and also access the wonderful stories, history and culture of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Study of Latin offers an insight into how modern languages work, but also helps to train the developing mind in analysis, logic and precision. We aim for all boys to sit either the Level 2 or 3 Common Entrance paper, or scholarship papers for their chosen school. At Horris Hill Latin is taught using a blend of traditional and modern methods to ensure that it remains fresh, vibrant, stimulating and accessible.

### Humanities (History, Geography, Religious Studies)

The area of Humanities is concerned with people and with their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. At Horris Hill, History, Geography and Religious Studies are taught as individual disciplines.

#### History

At Horris Hill we aim to promote an interest in History through the acquisition of knowledge and through the development of historical understanding. The programme is intended to encourage interesting and broad-based teaching of the subject as well as act as a preparation and incentive for further study. In addition, it is important that pupils should develop an understanding about their heritage and understand the ways that the past influences the present.

#### Geography

Geography is a fascinating, lively and practical subject which makes a distinctive contribution to the school curriculum by stimulating curiosity about the natural and human world and introducing pupils to people, places and environments. It provides a link between the sciences and the arts and is a key contributor to environmental education, education for citizenship and for sustainable development.

We aim to develop our pupils' knowledge and understanding of places and people and how they interact and

interrelate, the significance of the human and physical environment and the causes and consequences of changes in environmental conditions, teaching the boys the skills that they need to carry out geographical investigations, including the observation, collection and recording of data, the analysis of evidence, decision making and critical evaluation.

### Religious Studies

Through Religious Studies at Horris Hill, boys have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Bible and the Christian faith in general, along with the study of a range of world religions and philosophical thinking. This allows them to come to a greater appreciation of the nature of belief and to develop a deeper sense of their own religious convictions, hopefully making a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

As boys reach their final years, a greater emphasis is placed on the appreciation of a range of moral dilemmas, viewed within the Christian ethos of the school. Boys should by now have the necessary knowledge and analytical skills to be able to form cogent arguments concerning a variety of ethical questions. They are addressing fundamental issues, and are expected to appreciate the difference between literal and symbolic truth.

It is important that Religious Studies at Horris Hill also has a deeper purpose beyond examinations, preparing boys to face the wide range of moral and ethical dilemmas that they will encounter throughout their lives.

### PSHE

All boys follow a programme in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, following a broad based syllabus to help them to develop fully as individuals and as members of families and social and economic communities. Its goal is to equip young people with the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthily, safely, productively and responsibly. A core theme is the understanding and development of core 'British values'. The programme is delivered through a carousel of lessons and presentations delivered by a wide variety of staff. However, the development of PSHE education pervades all aspects of the school, through forms, the tutor system, the boarding houses and Assemblies.

### Coding and Information Technology

The ICT teaching room is fully equipped with new multimedia computers, interactive whiteboards with access to colour laser printing facilities, scanners, digital cameras, broadband internet access and a large number of relevant software applications.

The teaching of commonly available software programs, such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint, is integrated into core subject lessons.

Older boys are introduced to the discipline of Coding: creating a list of instructions in order to control a computer. Scratch and MakeCode languages are used to create interactive games and to program micro:bit computers.

## Physical Education and Games

Physical Education aims to develop the boys' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses and to help them to evaluate and improve their performance. Boys should also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health.

As boys progress through the school they have opportunities to develop physical, swimming, gymnastics skills, along with a host of sporting opportunities.

Our major sports are football, rugby and cricket and we have a full calendar of fixtures. Boys are coached by our enthusiastic, qualified and regularly trained members of staff. We also have visiting specialists in their fields.

Our facilities include 3 full sized football grass pitches, 6 Under 11 football Pitches, 4 dedicated cricket squares, 1 astro cricket pitch, 1 floodlit pitch, a sports hall with 3 cricket net strips, a 9 hole golf course, squash courts, a heated outdoor swimming pool, an all-weather pitch and cricket nets.

The Games programme is as follows:

Autumn Term: Football, Squash, Orienteering, Tennis, Swimming, Golf, Judo, Fencing, Climbing

Spring Term: Rugby, Hockey, Squash, Cross Country, Orienteering, Golf, Judo, Fencing, Climbing

Summer Term: Cricket, Tennis, Swimming, Athletics, Golf, Judo, Sailing, Climbing, Triathlon

## **Creative Arts**

We aim to offer boys as many opportunities as we can in the areas of making, composing and inventing. There are aesthetic and creative aspects of all subjects, but some make a particularly strong contribution, including art, music, dance, drama and the study of literature, because they call for personal, imaginative, and often practical responses.

### Music

In the Music Department at Horris Hill we aim to provide a learning environment in which every pupil has the opportunity to develop their musical creative skills. In the classroom, pupils have the opportunity to perform, compose and study many aspects of music including singing, ukulele and pBone/pTrumpet lessons. They learn to compose on instruments and using technology. We emphasise music theory learning and pupils are able to sit theory examinations. We study different music genres through listening, researching and performing.

Boys have the opportunity to learn musical instruments. They are taught by visiting music specialists, on an individual basis as well as in various ensemble groups. Larger scale groups include the Chapel Choir, the Junior Choir and the School Orchestra, in which boys of all abilities and experience are encouraged to join and develop their performance skills alongside more experienced boys and members of staff.

## Art

All our boys at Horris Hill benefit from the guidance and enthusiasm of specialist trained art teachers who educate and encourage young artists from their start in the school until they leave for their senior schools. The Art Studio is a spacious room in a modern building. The room is stocked with a comprehensive range of the very best tools and materials. Large equipment includes a book press, an offset press, a kiln, two potter's wheels, a wet cupboard, twelve easels. Boys produce work using lino-print, acrylic on canvas, oil pastel on board, water-colour, papier-mâché, mod-roc, terra-cotta and stoneware clay, collage on board and batik.

The school arranges regular gallery visits as a valuable source of inspiration and information. We aim to arrange one trip each year to an exhibition or other suitable venue.

## Design and Technology

The Design and Technology programme at Horris Hill encourages creativity. We aim to achieve this by developing our pupils' understanding of materials, processes, tools and machines. They solve problems, making high quality products by combining design and making skills. They learn to use a range of presentation skills for communicating design information to a range of audiences.

The Design and Technology department has a well-equipped workshop and design projects are focused primarily on the development of hand tool skills, with machines used at appropriate times. Pupils are taught how to work safely as they aim for high quality outcomes. We aim for pupils to build their appreciation of the importance of design in our lives through their work.

## Drama

Drama forms an integral part of the Horris Hill programme, both within the English programme and increasingly in opportunities for the boys to perform on stage and in Drama lessons. School productions play a central role in the life of the school.

The School opened the new David Brownlow Theatre in 2020, which provides state of the art drama facilities. All boys receive weekly Drama lessons in the Theatre, as well as opportunities to perform and assist in school productions. Each year group will study a 'technical unit' in which they will look at a different feature of theatre such as costume, sets.

We work closely with visiting teachers from the nationally renowned Watermill Theatre in Newbury, who offer small group and one-to-one drama lessons, including preparing boys for LAMDA performance examinations. In which we have a proud record of success.

## **Learning Support and special needs**

For full details, see the separate Learning Support Policy.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator leads the Learning Support Department.

### English support

The principle aim is to support any boy who has been identified with a Specific Learning Difficulty. This support can be achieved in a variety of ways:

- educational psychologists' reports are summarised and circulated to all staff to ensure understanding of the boys' difficulties and any recommendations
- frequent discussions are held between staff members and the department, with information going both ways
- one-to-one, tailor-made lessons are given by specially trained teachers, working primarily on reading, spelling, writing and comprehension skills; typically boys come to these lessons missing timetabled academic lessons on a rotation basis
- assistance is provided with organisation, exam and revision skills, memory techniques
- Education Care Plans are written for each boy, listing their difficulties, strengths, weaknesses and any special provisions
- work is differentiated in the classroom as appropriate
- extra time, where appropriate, is given for tests and exams
- there is support and advice for all teachers across the curriculum
- encouragement to acquire a good, cursive handwriting script.

### Maths support

Where specific difficulties in maths are encountered, teachers should raise concerns with the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the Head of Maths with a view to assessment by PJB or an external expert.

We have introduced a comprehensive set of progressive, formative unit tests throughout the school to assess progress. These are used judiciously to identify boys who may be struggling, so that any problems can be sorted out before they become serious. Additional support may take the form of differentiated tasks or one-to-one sessions.

### EFL

A small number of boys at Horris Hill do not speak English as their first language. In particular, a number of Spanish boys enrol at the school for a term, a year or more. Where appropriate, additional support is provided for boys who do not speak English as their first language, with specialist one-to-one language teaching.

## Gifted and Talented

Boys at Horris Hill have a wide range of abilities and attainment. Boys with particular abilities, whether academic, musical, sporting, cultural or other, may have as specific 'special needs' as boys who have particular difficulties in such areas. Horris Hill does not use the term 'Gifted and Talented'. Much of our 'gifted and talented' provision is organic within our structures, whereby able boys and groups are pushed well beyond the normal parameters for their age group. There may on occasion be boys who need provision beyond this. In particular, boys who show marked academic talent may be placed in forms following a deeper and even more challenging curriculum, eventually preparing for public school scholarships from Form 1.

Many senior schools offer scholarships in a range of disciplines, including music, art, sport, design and all-rounder awards. These offer boys an opportunity to pursue their talents at a deeper and broader level.

## Forms

Boys are placed in forms partly on the basis of their age, and partly on the basis of their academic ability, especially as they grow older. What was until recently called the 'termly remove' has evolved into the current system, in order to ensure appropriate progression, ambitious programmes of study and thorough completion of schemes of work.

In 2020-21 we are moving to a system whereby all boys in Years 6 and boys in Year 7, apart from those beginning our academic scholarship programme, are taught in mixed ability forms where this is considered beneficial for the broad majority, but in ability sets for subjects in which we believe that it remains very important to match work to ability levels: Maths, Science, French and Latin. We believe that this system, which should in due course be extended to Year 8, will improve the educational experience of boys who are relatively weaker academically, without losing any of the excellence or rigour in the teaching of relatively abler boys.

As at September 2020 the form structure of the school is:

Form 10	Reception	Working to achieve ELGs
Form 9	Year 1-2	Establishing and reinforcing basic skills and knowledge
Form 8	Year 3	
Form 7	Year 4	
Form 6	Year 5	
Form ST	the lower Year 6 form	explicit preparation for senior school pre-tests and building a strong academic platform;
Form 4OB	the upper Year 6 form	boys are taught in one of two mixed-ability forms for much of their teaching, and in ability sets in Maths, Science, French and Latin
Form 3CH	mixed ability Year 7 form	CE syllabus – lower levels
Form 3M	mixed ability Year 7	boys are taught in one of two mixed-ability forms for much of their teaching, and in ability sets in Maths, Science, French and Latin

	form	
Form 2c	the upper Year 7 form	accelerated CE syllabus, foundations for academic scholarship
Form 2b	the lower CE form	CE syllabus
Form 2a	the upper CE form	CE syllabus (higher levels where set) and Winchester Entrance
Form 1	the scholarship form	final preparation for senior school scholarship examinations

### Assessment

The following is a brief summary of our policy on assessment. Full details are found in the school Assessment Policy.

At whatever age and whatever the level of ability, our aim is that boys learn and make progress in all their endeavours.

Assessment takes many forms, both formal and informal. Teachers constantly assess progress, assessing what steps the boys should take next. When marking work, our aim is to be constructive and to help the boys understand how to take the next step forwards. Formative assessment also takes place through regular class based tests, assessing whether recently taught material has been understood and how well the boys are able to apply it.

Four times a year we publish Orders, which gives each boy his mark, position and effort grade by subject. These are sent to parents.

### Internal exams

As the boys get older, they undertake a greater number of formal tests and examinations. The emphasis remains on finding out what the boys are able to do, to help us to plan how they will make the next steps forward.

In November, all boys in Years 7-8 sit internal examinations in academic subjects: Common Entrance candidates in Year 8 take a 'first step' towards full CE mocks; candidates for Spring academic scholarship take a full set of mock papers.

In February the Year 8 boys sitting summer Common Entrance have their full mock exams and candidates for Summer academic scholarship take a full set of mock papers.

In Summer Term, all boys in Years 3-7 take internal examinations in their academic subjects.

### External exams

Most boys leave Horris Hill at the end of Year 8 to a wide range of public and senior schools. For most public and senior schools, boys need to pass Common Entrance, or are exempted CE on the basis of scholarship exams.

CE is usually taken in May.

Scholarship exams are held either in February - March or in May, depending on the school:

*February - March*

Bradfield (Common Academic Scholarship)

Harrow

Magdalen College School

Radley

Sherborne (Common Academic Scholarship)

Wellington

*May*

Charterhouse

Westminster

Winchester

Eton

Pre-testing

Many public and senior schools now 'pre-test' candidates through a battery of reasoning and assessment tests and interviews, often in two stages, the first stage using the ISEB Common Pre-test, usually during Year 6, followed by each school's own pre-test. Typically boys will then be offered a conditional place, subject to satisfactory performance in Year 8 at CE or scholarship, or a waiting place, or no place. The majority of boys take the ISEB Common Pre-Test during the Autumn Term of their Year 6, although late entry boys may often need to take the test later.

Standardised testing

Besides subject testing, Horris Hill judiciously uses standardised testing to assess progress and inform future planning. These tests also enable us to assess our boys' ability and potential against national benchmarks and senior school requirements.

Standardised tests may include NFER Reasoning tests, NFER Progress in English and Mathematics tests, the Suffolk Reading Scale reading test and the GL Single Word Spelling Test. All boys from Year 4 to Year 7 take the CAT4 reasoning tests at a suitable point during the school year. CAT results will be shared formally with parents along with a guide to understanding results.