



DANES HILL SCHOOL
STRONG & SAGACIOUS

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Curriculum Policy

DANES HILL SCHOOL

ACADEMIC DOCUMENTATION FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022

1) INTRODUCTION

Contents:

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This document seeks to place academic issues into a whole-school context so that staff, parents, governors and other interested parties may more fully understand the way in which the school's approaches towards teaching and learning, are managed, reviewed and developed.

The position of the school in the national Preparatory School context

Danes Hill achieves excellent results in 11+, Common Entrance and Public School examinations, together with a variety of nationally recognised tests and examinations. That said, the fact that the school is relatively unselective (the majority of children starting at the age of 3 or 4, although later entrants do sit tests in English and Maths as required – see Admissions Policy) means there is a wide ability range within each year group. Teaching and learning arrangements underpin two key objectives:

- That all pupils reach their potential in academic, physical, spiritual, creative, technical and aesthetic realms.
- That the school stands for academic excellence. This means that *results do matter*, but these results should reflect breadth and opportunity across the curriculum.

2) CURRICULUM POLICY

The curriculum for the school is overseen by the Assistant Head Academic. The Heads of Departments are responsible for the curriculum, the syllabi, resources and standards of teaching and learning and assessment within the individual subject areas, working in liaison with the subject coordinators in Pre-Prep and the SENCO where appropriate. The Assistant Head Academic will oversee and facilitate all online learning as required.

OBJECTIVES

- Danes Hill seeks to provide a broad and balanced education for all boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 13. This curriculum seeks to develop the intellectual, social, physical, moral/spiritual, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, physical, aesthetic and creative awareness of each pupil by the promotion of a wide range of appropriate opportunities across each curriculum area. This broad range of opportunities should enable a child to develop and acquire appropriate skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy at a level commensurate with national standards and in the vast majority of cases well beyond.
- In common with many independent Preparatory Schools, Danes Hill implements a modified National Curriculum academic programme across Bevendean and the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools. Some statutory assessments may be used, where appropriate. Danes Hill does, however, aim to provide an appropriate education for both the boys and girls taking into account their age and ability and employing several methods to achieve this, including streaming, setting and specialist individual support as required by educational statement or appropriate internal or external assessment.
- The school seeks to give significant curriculum time to non-core National Curriculum subjects that include a general humanities course in the Pre-Prep and Lower School, encompassing History, Geography and Religious Studies. All Danes Hill pupils follow courses in Art, Design and Technology (including Food Technology from Year 4), Drama, Music, IT, PSHEE; including RSE, Physical Education, Swimming and Games. A Citizenship course is taught to all pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 and elements of it are included from Year 2 as appropriate. From Year 5 and until the end of the first term of Year 6, a significant amount of effort is made to prepare the boys and girls for the various pre-tests for senior school entry.
- The school seeks to provide additional curriculum opportunities for its pupils with the study of classics and modern languages. French and Spanish are taught throughout the school and Classical Civilisation in Year 6. Children in Years 7 and 8 have the option of choosing any two of the three languages. Academic scholars will be expected to study all three languages. Other linguistic provision can be made as required, for example, Danish, Mandarin and Japanese.
- Curriculum time recognises the need for each pupil to have the opportunity to learn and make progress at a level suited to him or her and ultimately to achieve the necessary level required to reach the independent school of their (guided) choice. In addition, the curriculum encompasses a comprehensive programme of social and cultural visits and internal and external speakers that prepare the boys and girls for both their senior school and indeed their life beyond the confines of traditional education. It is also recognised that extra-curricular activities of all **types have an important role to play in a child's** education.
- **The school seeks to modify its overall curriculum in the light of each pupil's age,** ability and aptitude in English, Maths and Science and other areas. It is accepted that considerable differentiation should be practised at each stage in the educational process so that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs including gifted and talented children (see relevant policies), pupils with specific learning difficulties and behavioural and/or emotional needs.

- The curriculum seeks to provide equal opportunity of access to the curriculum for both boys and girls, bearing in mind the different physical and emotional stages of pupils.
- The curriculum supports the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. See SMSC section.

The Curriculum Policy aims for appropriate breadth and balance but equally, for a well-rounded, distinctive education, which promotes opportunity, self-worth and confidence. The curriculum is under constant review and change is actively promoted.

- A formal annual report and development plan is written by each Head of Department in September, updated in early summer and presented to the Academic Committee of Governors, which meets three times a year. That committee, which includes the Head of Pre-Prep, Head, Deputy Head and Assistant Head Academic, also has a rolling programme of presentations given by Heads of Departments on their own curriculum area and broader educational matters. The committee then reports back to the governing body. There are also formal and informal meetings between Heads of Departments on cross curricular matters and with the Assistant Head Academic.

BALANCE OF CURRICULUM TIME

Pre-Preparatory
Totals in minutes

	Numeracy	Language	KUW	Physical	Creative	French	ICT
Transition	125	140	75	90	130	15	*
Reception	270	270	150	120	160	20	30
Year 1	270	270	150	120	160	60	60

* ICT is covered as an activity with sometime in the ICT suite.

Due to the needs of the children in Mini Transition and Transition, there is a great deal of small group work and cross-curricular work and the timings above are, therefore, flexible. Subject time is also added where children stay for the whole day. The requirements of the EYFS are met and laid out in the documentation at Bevendean, Pre-Preparatory School.

Preparatory School
Totals in minutes

Subject	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6CE	Year 7/8 CE	Year 7/8 Sch
Maths	275	275	275	275	240	240	240
English	275	275	275	275	240	240	200
Science	80	120	160	160	240	240	240
Geography	55	55	80	80	80	120	120

History	55	55	80	80	80	120	120
RS	55	55	80	40	80	120	80
ICT	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
PE	40	40	40	40	40	40	40/0
Swimming	40	40	40	40	40	40	40/0
Music	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
DT	40	40/0	80/0	80/0	80/0	80/0	80/0
Drama		40	80/40	80/0	80/0	80/0	80/0
Games	160	160	200	200	240	240	240
French	40	40	40	80	120	120	120
Latin/CC					120	120	120
Spanish	40	40	40	80	120	120	120
PSHEE	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Library	40	40	40				
Handwrg	40		40				
Verbal R				40			
Art	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Stem			40				
Reasoning				40			

Notes

- Y2/3 – Geog/Hist/RS – combined total 160. Y2 French/drama combined.
- DT/Drama taught in half classes, timetabled against one another.
- Y4 DT/Drama/Reading/Handwriting rota.
- Verbal Reasoning time varies over the course of the year within PSHEE, Form Time, Tutor and Reading Periods and is also done in the Autumn of Y6.
- Pupils in Y7/8 have a choice of two languages from three. Scholars will do all three. All Y6 pupils are introduced to Latin through Classical Civilisation lessons.
- Y7/8 Scholars have combined Drama and Music sessions, set against DT.
- Academic potential scholars in Y7 + 8 have PE set against swimming, doing half a year of each.
- Y2-5 have a dedicated reading period four days a week where individual reading, group discussion and guided reading sessions take place. Individual children are heard reading daily by either the form teacher or specialist Reading Assistants. The Librarian and a Reading Committee aims to promote and develop reading throughout the school with several initiatives, for example, book clubs which can involve parents as well as children.
- Y5 one lesson of VR & NVR replaces an RS lesson for a year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT DANES HILL

Objectives

- A learning school is more effective than a teaching school. All schools teach but not all schools teach children to learn. Danes Hill aims to create the best ethos and climate for learning, to raise the self-esteem and standing of each child and to provide a full range of activities to allow children to succeed in their own way.
- The policy acts as an umbrella to all facets of teaching and learning at Danes Hill, while detailed policies are available under the various headings in the appendices and other document areas.
- Active learning should involve multi-sensory dimensions across the curriculum. As children learn using a variety of techniques, **the school's role is to provide them** with as many opportunities as possible to experience assorted styles of learning.
- In the Upper School, focus is also put on study skills to help the pupils learn how to revise and maximise their learning preferences.

PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

The programmes of study at the school are based initially on National Curriculum principles where appropriate, although by Years 6, 7 and 8, the attainment of many Danes Hill pupils is at a higher level than expected for children of that age – a factor explained by the examination demands of Common Entrance and Public School Scholarship. Heads of Department oversee the continuity and progression across Key Stages Two and Three, and there is considerable discussion between subject co-ordinators in the Pre-Prep and Heads of Department to achieve similar objectives between Key Stage One and Two (for example setting in Year 2 Maths and English is informed by assessments carried out by Year 1 teachers in the summer).

Whilst not accepting that each programme of study should adopt the same layout, the strands are similar.

- Objectives
- Content – knowledge, skills and understanding
- Resources – practical's, activities, supporting materials
- ICT – the use of ICT within subject delivery
- Assessment – monitoring pupil progress
- Homework – to support and develop knowledge and understanding.
- **Reference to our aim to 'educate the whole child' and activities that support British values**

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The PSHEE curriculum and assemblies are instrumental in helping our pupils **understand the school's aims and ethos in respect of SMSC, and strongly encourages respect for others. Across the curriculum and through opportunities afforded to Danes Hill pupils, we seek to actively support our pupils' development in these aspects:**

- Spiritually: Explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect. E.g. **Y6's 'Discover You' workshops, RS lessons, circle time, visits to places of worship, assemblies**
- Morally: Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views. E.g. classroom and whole school rules (Golden Rules in the younger years), talking through why a punishment is given when a rule is broken, talks by community police officers, the Eco Committee, Y8 prefect duties
- Socially: Use a range of social skills; participate in the local community; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the 'British values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance. E.g. through School Council, debating issues in class, **Charities Committee, Year 7's study of Magna Carta, the mock General Election, BHM**
- Culturally: Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. E.g. visit Parliament, celebrate themed days e.g. **Y4's Chinese Day, international lunches**

Throughout the school, but more commonly in the Upper School, pupils are encouraged to think about the future career paths they may wish follow. This is also touched on by outside speakers who come from a range of professions which are subsequently discussed with pupils as they prepare to move on to their senior schools. In this way pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

GROUPS FOR LEARNING

Danes Hill aims to provide a broad and inclusive curriculum, offering as much opportunity as possible for the children to experience different subjects and meet with success. To allow each pupil to access the curriculum provided by Danes Hill, the school groups the children by many means – setting, differentiation, inclusion and, where appropriate, extra tuition. This enables the children to work to the best of their ability in a group of like-minded children and to receive the appropriate level of support necessary to achieve their full potential.

As Danes Hill has children with a wide range of abilities, various forms of setting take place across Key Stages One, Two and Three. Initially in Year 2, children are set only in Maths and English. By Year 5 they are set in Maths, English, French and Science. At the end of Year 6, children are selected based on internal and standardised test results, and teacher assessment (including discussion with parents), for the Scholarship stream. These children follow a slightly modified and accelerated curriculum to meet the

requirements of scholarship level entry to the senior school of their choice. Setting takes place across either Common Entrance streams or Scholarship streams in Years 6 to 8 in Maths, English, Science and languages.

Initial discussions with parents regarding choice of senior schools are held by the Head of Middle School and Head and/or the Head of Upper School. We will only consider a formal written request for a reference from another school, prep or senior, and information will only be provided to that school on a confidential basis.

Heads of Departments are informed and updates noted to ensure that individual entry requirements are met.

3) DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

The following section deals with the extent to which programmes of study embrace principles of differentiation and inclusion to achieve maximum pupil performance and participation.

It is a truism that all children are different. Yet equally, society expects all children to have equal access to areas of opportunity within the curriculum so that each child may achieve his/her potential. This is particularly true in the context of a co-educational school. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. At Danes Hill, **differentiation still reflects the curriculum notion that 'results do matter'** – for the child, home and school. We wish children to reach their full potential. Inclusion is governed to some extent by personal choices made by pupils, whether in the realms of Modern Foreign languages, sport or activities programmes.

Differentiation has to take a number of factors into account:

- A child's attainment within one subject area may be obscured by specific learning needs.
- Different children react more or less favourably to distinct styles of teaching either preferring, for example, visual stimuli or alternatively speaking and listening.
- Levels of cognitive maturation differ – and therefore children progress at very different rates.
- A school must be prepared to challenge the more able as well as support the less able. 'Each according to their need' is a maxim which is valued and acted upon fully.

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL

- Year 1 may, where appropriate, divide children in the classroom into groups of similar ability so that children can study at an appropriate pace within a context of co-operative learning.
- Based on diagnostic testing (see Assessment policy) pupils with evidence of specific learning needs are given appropriate support both within and outside the classroom. There are a number of extension and support groups for example, for reading and basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Considerable opportunities are given to pupils to develop their talents in technology, art, music, gymnastics, dance and other creative activities.

DIFFERENTIATION ACROSS KEY STAGES TWO AND THREE

Danes Hill operates a sophisticated system of setting across all core subjects by the beginning of Year 5. In practice, the school tries to achieve a balance between the pastoral security provided for children by a form-based system and providing appropriate teaching strategies for children, which challenge the most able and provide the weakest with support. Setting also gives the school with the opportunity to provide smaller teaching groups for many core subjects. Setting takes place as follows:

Year 2	Mathematics, English
Year 3	Mathematics, English
Year 4	Mathematics, English
Year 5	Mathematics, English, Science, French, Spanish
Year 6	Mathematics, English, Science and languages
Year 7/ 8	CE is set in Mathematics, English, Science and languages. Where possible, scholars will be set for maths, English and languages.

At every stage of the setting and streaming processes, arrangements are made as flexible as possible. Scholarship entry can depend to some extent on the choice of the **pupil's senior school and/or the extent to which that school has a particularly competitive entry**. Considerable attention is given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst there is no doubt that the setting system embraces their **needs to some extent, individual pupils receive extensive support from the school's Learning Support Centre**. The school uses evidence from Educational Psychologists' Reports to obtain amanuenses or laptop usage in important examinations in compliance with JCQ guidelines. (See LSC Policy)

N.B. Whilst setting (and eventually streaming) remains central to the school's differentiation policies, staff use a plethora of methods and activities to develop further pupil response. These include:

- By OUTCOME – giving a common task to elicit different levels of response.
- By RATE OF PROGRESS – allowing children to work at their own pace.
- By ENRICHMENT – giving children extra tasks intended to broaden their understanding of the material.
- By SETTING DIFFERENT TASKS – such tasks would be based upon a common topic but allowing children to work at different levels.
- By UTILISING PERSONAL PUPIL PREFERENCE (e.g. competitive versus solo situation) to enhance individual and group understanding.

Differentiation is considered an important element in school life but is weighted with the desire to provide appropriate pupil opportunity across the curriculum. Equally, it is felt important to identify and harness particular pupil talents. Appropriate opportunity for talented pupils is provided in the following forms:

- Extension activities in all subjects.
- A timetabled provision and/or after school provision for talented individuals to prepare for Public School Art, DT and All-rounder awards in Years 7 and 8.
- Individual instrumental tuition and appropriate opportunity for ensemble/orchestral work (classical, jazz, pop) and regular performance opportunities for pupils of varying degrees of musical ability.
- There are choirs in the Lower and Middle Schools, and a Chamber Choir in the Upper School. Each performs for parents throughout the year and competes in local and national competitions, with the Chamber Choir touring abroad annually.

- Regular and extensive pupil participation in national and regional competitions across the whole range of sports activities undertaken by Danes Hill pupils. These include gymnastics, swimming, athletics and indoor rowing as well as team sports.
- Individual pupils do LAMDA exams in Speech and Drama. Extensive work is carried out by the Drama Department to provide considerable pupil opportunity to perform on stage with each year group staging a musical performance each year.

INCLUSION

Where children with a recognisable specific learning difficulty find access to the Danes Hill curriculum problematic, in whatever sense, a negotiation takes place with the child and parents to plan a way forward. Such negotiations can include appropriate individual support, extra-time in examinations or dropping a particular area of curriculum activity (e.g. Latin, a second Modern Language). Central to teaching and learning is the notion that all pupils can experience success in the classroom notwithstanding their individual strengths and weaknesses. Equally, each pupil should receive unambiguous feedback about ways forward for future development.

Children have considerable equality of opportunity across the curriculum in every possible degree. The school, however, enjoys a tradition of excellence in certain team sports, and fixtures take place against both single-sex and co-educational schools. Appropriate opportunities are therefore provided in games, which traditionally have distinct gender participation, however, there is more parity across most sports. There has been no demand for boys to play netball or rounders but boys play hockey in Games lessons and external matches, and as an after-school activity; this has proved very popular. Both girls and boys compete very successfully in cross-country, indoor rowing and skiing competitions. The school provides as many opportunities as possible for children to represent the school in matches. The range of sports on offer is wide and expanding, for example, the addition of golf, show jumping, shooting and wall climbing. The achievements of all are celebrated publicly within the school community.

Inclusion and differentiation are integral to lesson planning throughout the school. Danes Hill acknowledges that children learn in many different ways and the school tries to develop many strategies to allow the children to do this in ways that suit them best. These forms of intelligence are taken into account in the provision of **a variety of learning styles** e.g:

- investigations
- whole class activities
- role-play
- problem solving
- group activities
- fieldwork and trips
- research
- paired activities
- creative activities
- ICT/DVD/music

- independent work
- sporting activities
- questions and answers led by the teachers
- talks and debates
- questions and answers led by the children
- presentations

In practice, therefore, children's activities are planned to challenge individuals via a whole pattern of different activities and opportunities. Pupil self-esteem is built up by a varied and enjoyable curriculum which seeks to promote identifiable success for individuals both in and out of the classroom.

It is recognised that schools with a religious ethos will want to reflect that ethos in the teaching they provide and the current framework allows that. There is no curriculum requirement on independent schools to teach about marriage but when they do so, they must ensure that what they teach accords with the Independent School **Standards, including on pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.** A balanced curriculum is one that, amongst other things, reflects the nature of the world we live in. If marriage were to be discussed in lessons, we would expect teachers to reflect the fact that marriage for same sex couples is part of the law of this country, but there is no requirement on them to endorse it. There is nothing in the Equal Marriage Act that inhibits the rights of teachers or schools to express religious or philosophical views about marriage in lessons. Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and religion or belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, teachers and schools must ensure their conduct recognises their responsibilities under those duties to others. Teachers are expected to respect the rights of others and to respect those with different beliefs; expressing a view in an unprofessional way that involved singling out pupils on grounds of sexuality, or presenting extreme views without balance on a topic such as marriage for same sex couples, would be considered inappropriate. Danes Hill has a Head of Equal Opportunities and a separate policy that can be referred to.

GIFTED AND EXCEPTIONALLY TALENTED CHILDREN

Danes Hill is committed to equal opportunities and aims to maximise the potential and achievement of each individual pupil. It seeks to establish a rigorous, systematic and effective response to the challenge of providing for the very able. Gifted and exceptionally talented pupils need identification and monitoring in order that the school may provide such pupils with an appropriately challenging education and opportunities, to develop their particular talents to ensure that their potential is translated into performance. It is recognised that such pupils may display exceptional ability and talent in some curriculum areas such as Mathematics, Music or Art, whereas pupils whose all-round performance is well above average respond well to the rich, comprehensive and stimulating education offered by Danes Hill School. (See G & T Policy). The G&T coordinator works under the Assistant Head Academic to monitor and develop this provision.

4) ICT AT DANES HILL

Danes Hill has always taken positive steps to embrace and utilise ICT in teaching and learning. Tentatively, current research indicates that schools “rich in ICT” can make marked improvements in pupil attainment across the curriculum as well as preparing children for the world of study and further education and work. This two-pronged approach underlines the way in which the school is formulating its current strategies towards ICT. Cyber safety is paramount and several steps are taken to maintain it. (See ICT Policy)

It therefore follows that the school teaches ICT formally to all pupils in purpose-built ICT suites. During these lessons, children are taught ICT skills according to National Curriculum and ISEB schemes of study. These main skills include:

- **Word Processing (incl. ‘Touch Typing’)**
- Spreadsheets
- Data Bases
- Desk Top Publishing
- Presentations
- Control Technology
- Graphic Skills
- Internet and E-mail Skills.
- Coding

All schemes of work throughout the school are expected to integrate ICT as a tool for learning and all subjects use subject specific software or scaffolded tasks to enable children to find out information in a directed way using the internet.

New uses and applications are continually sought; for example, banks of iPads across school have been introduced into each building in the school, which staff can book out for use with classes. Following online learning on MS Teams, the schools has moved its virtual learning platform to SharePoint – linked to MS Teams. This enables both the delivery and recording of work, as well as independent study for the pupils.

It is an expectation that all members of staff continuously update their ability to teach using ICT as a medium. For extended details, including resources and pupil ICT safety issues, see the ICT Policy.

After a full discussion with the Heads of Department, further investment has been made in ICT subject delivery packages, such as Doodle and Mathletics.

5) ASSESSMENT, REPORTING, RECORDING, TRACKING

ASSESSMENT

Assessment has gone through a whole cycle of change at Danes Hill over the past decade. Originally a “teach and test” philosophy favoured by traditional Preparatory Schools, it is now accepted that assessment (both formal and informal) is an integral part of the teaching and learning process i.e. assessment pinpoints strengths and weaknesses in order to maximise efficient pupil progression.

Assessment provides the school with detailed information about each child. This information is used in a variety of ways e.g.:

- To allocate a child to an appropriate set.
- To identify the child’s strengths and weaknesses so that help or guidance may be given.
- To define individual learning objectives.
- To give feedback to parents and importantly, pupils
- To help track pupil progress within and across years.
- To provide evidence for departmental and school effectiveness.
- To test the effectiveness of curriculum planning and indicate areas for departmental and school improvement.
- To maintain standards.
- To offer advice to parents re pre-tests and appropriate choice of senior school.

There are many types of assessment used by the school. They are either external (viewing pupil achievement in terms of national or future school standards) or school-based, assessing learning outcomes in terms of particular skills and knowledge. Such assessment can be:

- Diagnostic – to identify children with learning difficulties or gifted children
- Formative – to allow recognition of positive achievement and to make decisions about future steps
- Summative – to record the overall achievements of children systematically and to use this information to communicate with others.

Chronologically children will be assessed in a variety of ways between the ages of 3 and 13: this data is centrally stored on the schools MIS, updated regularly and available to staff for scrutiny in support of teaching and learning objectives for each pupil. A wide range of external tests are administered throughout the whole school to track progress and identify areas of concern, special talent and academic potential. The results of such tests are relayed to the appropriate teaching staff and might lead to a referral to the LSC or inclusion in the Gifted and Talented groups. Such tests include Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4/5) and INCAS. The results of many of these tests are reported directly to parents, for example, on formal reports or in interviews such as the future school choice interviews with the Head of Middle School and the Head. The use of these tests is reviewed on an annual basis by the Assistant Head Academic in conjunction with, where appropriate, relevant Heads of Department and the SENCO. (See LSC Policy)

School-based Assessment and External Examinations

The school has devised a system of formal assessment for all pupils between the ages of 6 and 10. These assessments (known as Common Assessment Tasks (CATS)) take place in English, maths, science, humanities from Year 3 and languages from Year 5. Common Assessment Tasks are set and standardised by Heads of Department in conjunction with subject co-ordinators in the Lower and Middle Schools. A schedule is published in advance by the Assistant Head Academic to avoid over – assessment in a given period. To avoid potential anxiety in the younger years, no notice is given of the tests. As the children get older, more notice is given so that they develop some preparation and revision skills.

At Key Stage Three, pupils are assessed more formally in Mathematics, English, Science, Modern Foreign Languages, Classics, History, Geography and Religious Studies. Year 6 sit formal maths and English exams at the latter end of the Autumn Term in preparation for the pre-tests. Year 7 pupils sit formal assessment tests at the end of the Autumn Term and summative end-of-year examinations in the Summer Term. Year 8 pupils sit either Scholarship examinations for individual schools or the Common Entrance examination, devised and administered by the Independent **Schools' Examination Board**. **The timings and format of the examination process are kept under review each year by the Assistant Head Academic, in conjunction with the Heads of Department.** Recently, Year 8 Scholarship pupils and Common Entrance candidates have sat mock examinations early in the Easter term, prior to CE registration.

Formative assessment is supported and encouraged by the Danes Hill marking policy, placing emphasis upon positive comments and feedback with clear instructions on how to improve performance (see Marking and Reporting policies).

REPORTING

Danes Hill places great value on both informal and formal contact with parents. We believe that information presented to parents should be accurate, user-friendly and never promote false expectations. The school also believes that reporting should include comments on potential as well as progress alongside comments regarding personal and social development. Reporting to parents takes place in many forms at regular intervals throughout the year. The current pattern is as follows:

Autumn Term (October/ November)

Staff/Parent conference for Years 2-7 **parents in the Main School. Y8 CE parents' evening. Y8 Scholarship parents' evening.**

Staff – parent conference for all pupils in the Pre-Preparatory School.

Autumn Term (end)

Data cards for pupils Y2 – Y8

Progress report for Pre- Preparatory School.

Spring Term (February)

Letter for all children in the Pre-Preparatory School. Year 8 mock examination data cards and parents' evenings. Full report for Scholars.

Spring Term (end)

Data report Years 2-7.

Staff/Parent Conference for Years 2-7. Full final report for Year 8 CE.

Summer Term (end)

Full academic reports for all children Y2 – Y7

Final report and CE grades for Year 8.

Pre-Prep staff-parent conference, including EYFS feedback.

In the Upper School there are also 'Orders', completed periodically on SIMS. These are for internal use and comprise achievement and effort grades and, where required, a brief comment for follow up by a child's tutor and where appropriate, Heads of Department and/or Heads of Year.

Written reports

Pre-Preparatory Reports are written sensitively, generally without reference to a numerical system for achievement. Pupil achievement, however, is expressed in terms of national and Danes Hill published standards wherever possible.

Main School reports utilise teachers' professional judgements to allocate a TERMLY ACHIEVEMENT GRADE (TAG) for all taught subjects. The TAG is given a number between 1 and 5 and is based on the knowledge, skill in and understanding of the curriculum. In addition, the child receives an EFFORT grade from 1-5 based on their efforts throughout the term. These grades are based on a combination of national standards (where such things exist) and the high expectations of Danes Hill as a school. Marks of Common Assessment Tasks are also recorded and a median and range for set, **class and year given so that a more accurate picture of a child's achievement is** garnered by parents.

In recent years, the school has taken great pains to distinguish comments regarding learning outcomes and areas for development. In so doing, we hope that reports will provide positive indicators for parents and, as importantly, to the children themselves. The Assistant Head Academic closely monitors the awarding of grades across the staff and subjects. Tutors and form teachers regularly review **children's work and attainable** targets are jointly set.

Other key stages in the reporting progress

At various times within a child's career at Danes Hill, parents are invited to meet the Head. The purpose of these meetings is to explain children's progress in broader terms than is possible with data extracted from formal school assessments. For example, in Year 5, the meeting considers future senior school selection. In addition, parents are free to contact by e-mail or make appointments with key members of staff, such as Heads of Departments and Heads of Section, at any time.

RECORDING

Records are kept to enhance the formative teaching and learning process and to track the development and achievement of each child. They are used to communicate progress, strengths and weaknesses and any concerns, to both the child and parents, and provide continuity as they move up the school and between tutors, form teachers, subject staff and beyond that to their senior school.

The following records are kept at Danes Hill:

- **Teachers' mark books for day-to-day** recording of marks, comments and completion of work.
- The school keeps centralised records of annual reading, spelling tests and other standardised data.
- Summative assessment data is recorded on ladders, which present the information vertically so that staff can evaluate performance across a set or year.
- Each interview or formal contact with parents is recorded as a File Note. Such material can include important issues of child welfare.
- All data is stored centrally on both the Main School and Pre-Preparatory sites and available to all staff.
- The records kept by the school are fully compliant with General Data Protection Regulations introduced by the European Union.

TRACKING (See also separate policy on assessment and tracking)

Recording without evaluation of the data achieves little purpose. We believe that the performance of a child should be tracked continuously, within and across years. Pupil progress is tracked by the academic and pastoral staff working closely together – see tracking policy. Some of the fundamentals are:

- Tracking within academic departments – at the start of each academic year, all subject teachers have the relevant information regarding the prior attainment of children in each class. These will include TAGs, Common Assessment Task results and examination results. Past reports are available via both the pupil files and in Pupil Profiles on the centralised computer system. Such information is used to influence teaching, for example, with set changes. After full consultation with the Head of Department, the subject teacher will contact the parent to advise a set change and explain why it would be appropriate. Where a teacher does not feel able to do so, the Head of Department will contact the parent.
- Tracking by the pastoral team – at the start of each year, form teachers and tutors familiarise themselves with the previous year's results and extra-

curricular activities. These provide a reference point for both staff and students each year. This is especially important at key points in time, such as the handover from Years 1 to 2 and from Years 5 to 6.

- Tracking literacy development via a number of means, such as spelling scores, reading records and examination results.
- Tracking informal teacher assessment of current levels achieved across Key Stage One and Two.
- Meetings to discuss INCAS, COGS and progress tests in Year 1.

6) OTHER FACTORS WHICH PROMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT DANES HILL

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Danes Hill believes children learn most effectively in a stimulating, vibrant yet safe environment. Within the Pre-Preparatory School, most pupil activity is classroom-based with classroom arrangements facilitating both independent and co-operative learning. The curriculum allows for extensive outdoor provision. Wherever possible, dedicated rooms are used for specialised teaching, such as ICT. There is a constant drive to renew, improve and create outstanding facilities to facilitate and support the teaching and learning in the school.
- On the Main School campus, many departments enjoy spacious specialist accommodation. Whilst Years 2, 3 and 4 children pursue most of their activity in the form base, Science, Art, DT, Music, ICT, Drama and PE take place in dedicated areas. All subjects have dedicated areas and rooms as bases, although not necessarily exclusive use.
- All classrooms are equipped with appropriate resources. At Bevendean and in Year 2, 3 and 4 classrooms, these can include class libraries, (there are also well stocked reading areas for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5), specialist reference books and integrated ICT facilities. All classrooms are equipped with DVD systems, alongside interactive SMART boards. Each classroom has access to ICT, including wireless internet via iPads and laptops. Purpose built ICT suites are also used.
- The children enjoy access to excellent library facilities both at Bevendean and the Main School. A fully qualified librarian keeps a **detailed record of a child's leisure** reading activities and are available to offer advice on a daily basis. They also offer advice to parents, run parent and child book groups, and play a key role in the promotion of reading in the school by competitions, charity readathons and author visits.

TEACHING SUPPORT

Danes Hill recognises that there is more to effective teaching and learning than the teacher alone can provide. Danes Hill deploys a variety of support staff throughout the school, who work with individual children or small groups and provide essential support for subject teachers. In particular;

- At Bevendean and Year 2, the school provides full-time classroom assistants who offer support with reading, preparation of classroom materials and display. Year 3 share teaching assistants. Learning Support is integrated into the Pre-Preparatory School.
- Reading Assistants are provided in Years 3 and 4 (on occasion in Year 5) to support children's reading and guide them in their reading and appreciation of books generally. These reading assistants liaise with both class teachers and the librarian, **to enhance the school's literacy programme.**
- All teaching staff can access a full-time reprographics service, which delivers a full range of photocopying and in-house publishing services to provide high-quality teaching resources for teachers.
- A laboratory technician services the Science laboratories so that teaching staff can take full advantage of the wide range of practical equipment available. Danes Hill believes that experimental work enhances the learning process. Art and Design Technology departments also have the support of a technician to enhance the range of activities offered as part of the varied teaching programmes.
- Out sourced IT services offer technical support to staff throughout the school.
- The maintenance and grounds staff teams make extensive contributions to the sports provision, drama productions and special educational events.

CHILDREN

The school has high expectations of the children who attend the school. An ethos of responsible behaviour and positive commitment during the learning process is encouraged (see Discipline and Pastoral Care policies).

Children are taught key skills as defined by the National Curriculum incorporated into subject areas. There are 6 main areas:

- Communication – to develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Application of number – to develop skills in mental calculations and their application in a variety of contexts.
- Information and Communication Technology – to develop the ability to use a range of information resources and ICT tools to find, analyse, evaluate and present information for a range of purposes.
- Working with others – to develop the skills to contribute to small group or whole class discussions, to work with others and to meet a challenge.

- Improving own learning and performance – to develop the ability to reflect on and critically evaluate their own work. To identify ways to improve their own learning and performance.
- Problem solving – to develop the skills and strategies to help solve problems they face in learning and life.
- Thinking skills – to develop the ability to know what to learn and how to learn.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Danes Hill acknowledges the importance of learning at home and values parental support in assisting children to learn effectively. In this sense, parents are a valued resource. This resource is utilised both by keeping parents fully informed about their **children (see Reporting policy) and by encouraging support for the school's homework policy (see Homework policy).**

The homework timetable, drawn up by the Assistant Head Academic, is issued at the beginning of each academic year in order to keep the parents informed of the subjects and quantities set each night. The role of the parents with respect to the homework is laid out in the Homework policy. In addition to the homework timetable, at the beginning of each term, curriculum notes are made available to all parents informing them which topics are to be covered in each subject during the term and to enable parents to support the learning process via trips to museums and theatres, etc. Both documents are available on the Danes Hill website. Homework is communicated to children on SharePoint and supported by prep diaries.

Danes Hill offers **many opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and** encourages parents to make full use of them (see Reporting policy). Danes Hill also holds a series of Information Evenings each September for parents from Transition to Year 8, to explain the year ahead in both academic and pastoral terms, and to enable parents to meet the teachers.

COMMUNITY

In recent years, and in response to initiatives within the educational sector, Danes Hill **has aimed to increase and broaden children's** awareness and understanding of the wider community in which they live. The school provides opportunities for children to learn more about local, national and global issues and to participate in a number of projects.

- Within the Pre-Preparatory School children learn to take account of issues of **personal responsibility and the feelings of others via regular 'circle time'**, participation in school assemblies and the application of behaviour and bullying policies.
- In the Lower and Middle School, form teachers are responsible for developing pupil awareness of wider issues through designated form time for PSHEE.

➤ In the Upper School, PSHEE and Citizenship is embraced by tutors as an integral part of the school's Tutorial System, a scheme that is implemented and managed by the school's Head of PSHEE and Citizenship. Tutors work with groups of approximately 12 children. In general, children consider:

- Citizenship – this course provides children with the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to play an effective role in society in local, national and global contexts. It allows them to learn their own **individual rights and to understand Britain's economy, democratic institutions and values** (see Pastoral policy).
- Revision and Thinking skills – time is spent prior to examinations teaching children how to learn independently and to spend their revision time using a variety of techniques.
- Discussion – children are encouraged to research topics, form arguments and to listen to the views of others.

Throughout the whole school, a number of external agencies and the parent community supports such learning. Bevendean pupils regularly have visits from the Police and Fire services, whilst older pupils will hear talks from people involved in many walks of life. The **school's Nurse regularly gives advice on health issues including smoking and drugs**. There is also an extensive programme of talks, presentations and **themed days throughout the school to broaden a child's knowledge and understanding** of the world at an appropriate level. These often utilise the parent body, such as the banking industry, CGI in films, music production and recording techniques and visits by the local MP and local public services, such as the armed forces, Police and Fire Service.

The school has a notable record of aiding community projects and the children support a number of worthwhile causes. The children themselves choose many of these causes. An annual **Charities' Day** is organised by the children and other events (e.g. an annual **charity walk and regular 'mufti-days'**) are held. **Charities, which have benefited** from such activity include:

- CHASE – **a children's hospice service**
- Help for Heroes
- Cherry Trees
- Hearing Dogs for the Deaf
- RNLI
- Surrey Air Ambulance
- The Royal Marines

Most events are preceded and followed up by representatives from the particular charity e.g. in assembly, and the role of the charity discussed in class or tutor time.

Danes Hill makes extensive use of day and residential trips as a useful teaching tool and means to broaden the range of educational experience and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A full range of trips is organised to build upon learning within the classroom, such as visits to Hampton Court, the Tower of London, the Olympic Park, various places of worship, art galleries, musical concerts and theatres in **London. To broaden children's horizons, there are educational visits to places such as Rome and the Battlefields of the First and Second World Wars.** Annual sport training

camps and tours at home and abroad, including Lanzarote and Barbados, Chamber Choir tours to Europe. A full range of educational material is provided for each trip and specific learning objectives are set. Each year group from Year 4-8 has an annual residential trip in June.

7) THE HOMEWORK POLICY

Well-planned homework encourages children to develop the practice of independent study, perseverance and self-discipline. It allows children to complete the work started in school, to practise skills or to learn vocabulary taught in class. It also allows more ground to be covered by enabling pupils to concentrate during lessons on those **activities requiring the teacher's presence and can exploit materials not accessible in the classroom.** The Education Endowment Foundation reports that research has shown the value of homework is terms of increased pupil progress.

Homework must be set according to the homework timetables issued at the beginning of the academic year by the Assistant Head Academic and must not be set on any nights other than those stipulated. Homework is to be handed in either to the appropriate member of staff in person or during the lesson. Some homework will be set for completion by the next day, whilst others will have an extended deadline of up to a week. In addition to the timetabled homework, the school expects that all children from Years 2-8 should read for a minimum of 15-20 minutes daily at home, **with further reading at weekends. Good reading habits not only develop the children's reading skills, but also help to improve comprehension and written work across the curriculum.**

All homework should be related to the teaching in the class and should have its purpose explained to the children. Brief but clear instructions for it should be written on MS Teams and noted in the prep diaries. Throughout the term, there should be a broad range of well-structured tasks set to include reading, writing, learning and analytical assignments.

All homework should be marked and returned to the children as quickly as possible and certainly before the next homework is set. The teacher should include an accurate, positive comment to show where improvement is needed or where progress has been made. All homework marks should be recorded in a mark book so that they can be **used to monitor and evaluate the children's progress throughout the year, for reports and for setting purposes.**

Homework will be differentiated to meet the needs of the year group and set.

Parents should endeavour to provide their child with a suitable, quiet environment and the time needed for the child to complete their homework. They should be aware of **their child's homework timetable so they can check that all the work has been completed.** They should also be aware of when they can be actively involved with the homework, for example, by helping to test vocabulary or re-interpreting questions and

brainstorming solutions, but should realise that it is not helpful to do their child's homework for them.

All homework set should be recorded in the child's homework diary for the night the homework has been timetabled. The diary should be checked and signed by the Form Teacher (Years 2-5) or Tutor (Years 6-8) and by parents. The diaries create a quick and effective means of communication between the school and home, as any comments **(positive and negative) concerning the children's academic studies or home situation** can be noted on the appropriate weekly page. In addition, the parents should be able to comment upon any homework difficulties in the same space.

The Learning Support Centre monitors and helps many children throughout the school who have a specific learning difficulty. The LSC will often set short tasks to those children in its care in addition to the homework timetable. These tasks are appropriate **to each child's special needs and will aim to help but not over burden the child with work.**

The amount of homework set depends on the year group and set, and ranges from 20 minutes to 40 minutes per subject per night. In addition to this, it is expected that each child should, wherever possible, read for 15-20 minutes each night. Homework should not be set on the week of whole year Drama productions or when there are other approved school activities, such as evening theatre trips or outings, major sporting events or other special circumstances.

Additional targeted homework can be set in preparation for particular examinations, such as school pre-tests, 11+ and other guaranteed place examinations. Holiday homework should not be set, though Heads of Departments can do so, prior to the Common Entrance or Scholarship mock examinations.

A number of reviews have been carried out, surveying pupils, parents, staff, Heads of Department and Assistant Head Pastoral, as to the effectiveness of the duration, appropriateness and impact of the homework set. Changes were made to reduce the amount of homework set in some areas of the school, for example, Year 4 where History and Geography is no longer set. Such monitoring is an ongoing process in order to achieve a suitable balance for the benefit of the children in each year group.