



**HORRIS HILL  
SCHOOL**

# **Curriculum Policy**

<b>Policy reviewed:</b>	<b>April 2025</b>
<b>Policy approval:</b>	<b>Approved by Forfar November 2021</b>
<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>April 2026</b>

## **Introduction**

Horris Hill is a preparatory school, offering full boarding, weekly and transitional boarding and day attendance, which teaches children from the age of 2 to 13, through the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery-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 child in the school, and to providing a curriculum that not only enables our children 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.

School Structure:

- Nursey
- Lower School – Reception to Year 2
- Upper School Transition – Year 3 to Year 4
- Upper School - Year 5 to Year 8

Within the Upper School we wish to retain the values of hard work and structured learning whilst keeping fully up to date with educational developments through a full-time and supervised curriculum.

## **Aims of the Curriculum**

- To identify, nurture and fulfil the potential of each child in our care
- To have the highest expectations of our children and our teaching
- To enable all children to have the opportunity to learn and make progress
- To develop confidence, self-discipline and application in our pupils
- To acquire knowledge and understanding that will help them in later life
- To provide adequate preparation of the children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- To acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy, and numeracy
- To engender a passion for independent learning, enquiry and responsibility
- To engender an environment which encourages healthy and supportive relationships between staff, pupils, parents and other members of the school community
- To respect the needs, feelings and property of others

- To teach children the values of honesty, hard work, modesty and good manners
- To value and respect children from all cultures, races, ethnicities and backgrounds
- To enjoy a happy and secure learning environment in which children want to learn
- To encourage and develop a thoughtful and inquiring attitude towards the wider world
- To provide pupils with subject matter appropriate to their ages and aptitudes including those with additional and special needs.
- To effectively prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British society.
- To ensure that the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are not undermined.
- To respect and uphold the school's most treasured quality: Being kind to others.

### **Members of the SLT:**

- Mrs Helen Wilkinson is the Headteacher.
- Mrs Laura Wowk is the Head of Lower School (Nursery to Year 2 ).
- Mrs. Paola Bright is the Bursar.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the curriculum complies with statutory demands and that we provide a curriculum that is matched to the needs of our children. To this end he is assisted by Jo Storey, the Forfar Director of Education, who advises and monitors on behalf of the Board.

It is the responsibility of the SLT to monitor the delivery of the curriculum, encouraging everyone to develop the leadership and management of their team and their discipline. The SLT is responsible for pupil progress and assessment and work with the curriculum leads to develop their evaluation of progress.

### **Curriculum**

All of our children 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 children of all ages and abilities in the school. From Year 6 content is based on the Independent Schools' Examination Board Common Entrance Syllabus, which mirrors the National Curriculum – but which also goes beyond it.

### **EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of Reception. At Horris Hill we adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS within Nursery and 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 enables 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 Nursery and 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

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. Please refer to the HHLS handbook.

### Upper School Transition ( Years 3 and 4)

From Upper School Transition, children are increasingly taught by teachers who are subject specialists, or at least semi-specialists, often in specialist rooms. All pupils belong to a Form with Form Tutors, who usually act as a child's academic tutor, monitoring their academic progress and well-being.

From Year 5 upwards, the amount of time the children spend with specialist teachers is increased although they retain regular contact with their Form 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 Theology, Philosophy and Religion.

Art, Music, Drama, Computing, Reasoning, Physical Education, and RE/RSE (Relationships Education for Year 3 to 6, and relationships and Sex Education for Year 7 & 8), PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) complete the formal curriculum, enriched further by trips, visits and lectures. We run additional clubs and activities which include Debating , Kitchen Garden, Golf, LAMDA and Chess.

### British Values

Children 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 Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies lessons, but also less formal teaching through a wide variety of assemblies and trips such as the Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey and to the Houses of Parliament.

## **Subjects**

### English

At Horris Hill we aim to develop communication skills and increase the command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing, by giving every child 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, children 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 children 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 children 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 activities, exploration and discussion. Besides developing sophisticated skills of numerical reasoning, problem-solving lies at the heart of the children's studies.

Our aim is to give each child a solid mathematical foundation on which to build, so as to foster a love of and interest in Maths. The Common Entrance syllabus, itself based on the National Curriculum (September 2013), forms the basis on which mathematical activities and experiences are developed. Within the Lower School year groups adopt a mastery approach based on the White Rose scheme. Children in the younger forms of the Upper School follow an ambitious, broad-based syllabus developed by Horris Hill, using a combination of the mastery approach from the White Rose Scheme and the Galore Park Mathematics (Years 4 to 5) books as an additional resource. At a suitable point, usually during Year 6 after the completion of ISEB pre- tests, the children embark on the Horris Hill Common Entrance mathematics syllabus, which is in two parts, all pupils completing the Level 2 syllabus and more abler children 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 children, depending on the schools for which they are entering scholarship examinations. The children are entered for challenges and competitions such as the ones provided by the UK Maths Trust to provide further enrichment and opportunities.

### Science

In Science we aim to increase 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 in our fully equipped laboratories, along with regular use of the outstanding natural facilities at our disposal.

## French and ML

French is introduced to Horris Hill children from year 3. 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 children develop a love of the language along with proficiency in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

## Latin

Children at Horris Hill study Latin, with an introduction to classical civilisation in and 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 children 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, Theology, Philosophy and Religion (TPR) )

The area of Humanities is concerned with people, their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. At Horris Hill, History, Geography and TPR 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 children 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.

### TPR

Through TPR at Horris Hill, children 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 children 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. Children should by now have the necessary knowledge and analytical skills to be more 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 TPR at Horris Hill also has a deeper purpose beyond examinations, preparing children to face the wide range of moral and ethical dilemmas that they will encounter throughout their lives.

### PSHEE

Throughout their time at Horris Hill, the way pupils develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally are very important aspects of their broader education and this therefore forms an integral part of the curriculum. This learning is delivered through a variety of mediums such as weekly chapel services, assemblies (house, school and year group), PSHEE, charity awareness activities, community outings, guest speakers, tutorials, teambuilding exercises and debates.

Year 8 leavers also receive a comprehensive programme covering adolescence, drugs and sex education.

All children follow a programme in Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), 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 central 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 PSHEE pervades all aspects of the school, through forms, the tutor system, the boarding houses and Assemblies.

### RE/RSE

Relationships Education (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) and relationships and Sex Education (Years 7 & 8) are blended in their delivery with PSHEE. The overall curriculum map shows that a wide range of topics is delivered through the year, coordinated so that concepts are built upon each year.

### Physical Education and Games

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

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

Our most popular sports are football, rugby and cricket and we have a full calendar of fixtures. Children 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, a heated outdoor swimming pool, an all-weather pitch and cricket nets.

### 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 using technology. We emphasise music theory learning and pupils are more able to sit theory examinations. We study different music genres through listening, researching and performing.

Children 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 children of all abilities and experience are encouraged to join and develop their performance skills alongside more experienced children and members of staff.

### Art

All our children at Horris Hill benefit from the guidance and enthusiasm of art education that encourages young artists from their start in the school until they leave for their senior schools.

The Art 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 Art 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 children 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 children 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 and sets.

We work closely with visiting teachers from Love Lamda, who offer small group and one-to-one drama lessons, including preparing children 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.

### More able and Talented

Children at Horris Hill have a wide range of abilities and attainment. Children with particular abilities, whether academic, musical, sporting, cultural or other, may have as specific 'special needs' as children who have particular difficulties in such areas. Horris Hill does not use the term 'Gifted and Talented'. Much of our 'more able and talented' provision is organic within our structures, whereby more able children and groups are pushed well beyond the normal parameters for their age group. There may on occasion be children who need provision beyond this. In particular, children who show marked academic talent follow a deeper and even more challenging curriculum, eventually preparing for public school scholarships in Year 8.

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

### Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching process. At whatever age and whatever the level of ability, our aim is that children learn and make progress in all their endeavours.

Assessment takes many forms, both formal and informal. Teachers constantly assess progress, assessing what steps the children should take next. When marking work, our aim is to be constructive and to help the children 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 pupils are more able to apply it.

For information regarding assessment within the Lower School and Nursery please refer to the HHLS Assessment and Tracking documentation.

### Internal exams

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

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

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

In the Summer Term, all pupils in Years 4 to 7 take internal examinations in their academic subjects.

### External exams

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

CE is usually taken in June.

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

Most senior schools '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 in November of Year 6, followed by each school's own pre-test. Typically, pupils will then be offered a conditional place, subject to satisfactory performance in Year 8 at CE or scholarship, or they may be offered a waiting list place, or no place. The majority of pupils take the ISEB Common Pre-Test during the Autumn Term of their Year 6, although late entry pupils may often need to take the test later. A few schools start this process in Year 7 with the ISEB Pre-test.

### Standardised testing in the Upper School

Besides subject testing, Horris Hill judiciously uses standardised testing to assess progress and inform future planning. Children from Year 3 to Year 7 take the CAT4 reasoning tests at a suitable point during the school year. CAT results are shared formally with parents along with a guide to understanding results. Standardised tests also include GL Progress Tests in English, maths and science, the Suffolk Reading Scale reading test and the NGRT reading test. This enables us to assess the child's ability and potential against national benchmarks and senior school requirements.

### STEAM

At Horris Hill we believe STEAM encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills and positive attitudes. Developing this skills set is taught within lessons. Where possible links are made within the discrete subjects to enrich learning. There are opportunities each term for children to develop their investigative skills focusing on different aspects of enquiry through science, mathematics, art and music.