

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY 2025-2026

Date of issue:	November 2025
Trust Board approval:	November 2025
Review date:	November 2026

Aspiration Perseverance Kindness Respect Positivity
Community - Family - Relationship

Rationale:

The whole curriculum is concerned with the holistic needs of our students focussing on developing knowledge and understanding whilst embracing a growth mindset to promote independence, confidence and resilience. At Hitchin Girls' School our aim is to ensure we retain the best of our historic practice, whilst ensuring we provide a curriculum which is modern, relevant, purposeful and balanced. Our curriculum needs to be capable of responding to the needs of our intake and be sufficiently inclusive to meet the requirements of all our students.

As a school we strive to be exceptional and provide an exceptional experience for all students and the curriculum is central to this. We aspire to have a curriculum that through its flexibility and breadth nurtures and develops skills and interests to promote high levels of success and enjoyment for all.

Aims of the secondary curriculum:

The national curriculum, published 2014, states the following aims:

- The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.
- The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

As an academy Hitchin Girls' School does not have to follow the national curriculum in its entirety though the above aims have informed our planning and development of the curriculum offering and this continues to adapt following constant monitoring and evaluation. The underpinning principles have been to ensure that our students have the opportunity to access a broad and balanced curriculum which includes English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education (RE) (delivered in-line with the Hertfordshire agreed syllabus) and Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE) as the statutory components of the national curriculum. Through the PSHE offer, and the wider curriculum, we deliver the statutory components of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), Health education and citizenship. This is accompanied by effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helping to prepare our students for life in modern Britain, whilst simultaneously exploring the freedoms that being an academy affords us to develop curriculum opportunities to engage in learning and provide a clear pathway for progression, ensuring stretch and challenge for students as they move from one key stage to the next. We have a strong commitment to providing extensive extra-curricular opportunities which are a significant component of our curriculum.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible enough to meet the needs of every student. It encompasses every aspect of learning, in and outside the classroom, and aims to provide an exceptional educational experience and build an exceptional culture for all. We pride ourselves on the strength of the relationships that exist within our school community and these relationships are at the heart of all we do, including the delivery of our curriculum.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum (Years 7-9):

At Key Stage 3 students study the following subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Ancient Civilisations
- Art and Design
- Computing
- Design and Technology (inc. Food)
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- Learning for Life (inc . Citizenship, PSHE and RSHE).
- Music
- PE
- Philosophy and Ethics
- Spanish

Distinctive to Hitchin Girls' School is the opportunity for students to study Classical Civilisation, Latin, Spanish and Drama for part of the year throughout Year 7. Two of these subjects may be selected for study in Year 8 with students selecting just one for study in Year 9.

Students requiring a greater focus on developing 'literacy and language' and 'numeracy and mathematics' may experience a reduced timetable and/or individualised support in these core areas. Additional interventions are also in place to support students in developing these key skills through our Thrive and Fly intervention programme.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is embedded at all transition stages to ensure appropriate choices are made.

Enterprise education is incorporated into the Key Stage 3 curriculum and celebrated at our whole school Founders' Day via our annual Enterprise stalls.

Setting arrangements - The majority of subjects are taught in mixed ability groups with the exception of Maths, Science, MFL and PE (In PE and MFL there is a combination of mixed ability and setting by ability). Setting arrangements are reviewed annually to ensure that the grouping structure effectively meets the needs of each cohort.

Curriculum Hours by Subject for Years 7-9:

The table below shows the allocated hours for each subject:

	Y7	Y8	Y9
English	7	6	6
Maths	7	7	7
Science	6	6	6
Comp	2	2	2
History	4	4	4
Geography	4	4	4
Language	4	4	4
PE	4	4	4
P&E	2	2	2

Music	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
AC/Sp/La/Dr	3	4	4
Technology	2	2	2
L4L	1	1	1
	50	50	50

The Key Stage 4 curriculum (Years 10 & 11):

All of our students undertake the core curriculum of:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
- PE
- Philosophy and Ethics (Non-examined)
- Learning for Life (inc. Citizenship, PSHE and RSHE)

In addition to this students select their options following one of two option routes. Typically, the learning routes on offer are as follows, although we do adopt a flexible approach to meeting the needs of individuals:

- Route 1 (Blue Route) includes the core plus 4 more GCSE subjects from an extensive choice
- Route 2 (Green Route) includes the core plus 3 GCSE subjects and personalised support in Literacy or small group support in Mathematics.

Since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), students have been advised of the combination of subjects required to obtain this 'wrap-around' qualification. English, Maths and Science are already compulsory, however to meet the criteria students need to also select a foreign language GCSE and take either History or Geography at GCSE level. We regularly review the options' process and currently it will remain a free choice for the individual students to select the combination of choices which best suits their future aspirations. However, in light of the Government's response to the consultation on 'Implementing the English Baccalaureate' (published July 2017), our curriculum has been organised so that all students have the opportunity to study the Ebacc subject combination.

Choosing KS4 options is an important stage in our curriculum and all students receive 1:1 guidance on the choices they have to make. Parents are involved and guided with the process through attendance at the Year 9 options' evening and also through the GCSE information evening at the start of Year 10. Partnering this is our work with Connexions, through which we provide all our students with bespoke careers advice and guidance.

Enterprise education is incorporated into the Key Stage 4 curriculum and celebrated at our whole school Founders' Day via our annual Enterprise stalls.

Setting arrangements – English, PE, LfL and the option subjects are taught in mixed ability groups. Maths is taught ability sets.

Curriculum Hours by Subject for Years 10 & 11:

Students following Green Route have one option block allocated to additional Maths or Literacy.

The table below shows the allocated hours for each subject and how this is changing over time:

	Y10	Y11
English	7	8
Maths	7	7
Science	9	9
L4L	1	2
PE	4	4
P&E	2	0
Option 1	5	5
Option 2	5	5
Option 3	5	5
Option 4	5	5
	50	50

The Key Stage 5 curriculum (Years 12 & 13):

All students are expected to study three full A Level courses and/or applied or vocational qualifications. We also offer an Extended Project Qualification, Core Maths and Sports Leaders to all of our students to supplement their studies.

Through working with our consortium partners students have access to a wide number of Level 3 qualifications.

Students joining the Sixth Form are encouraged to follow a broad, challenging curriculum. Most students will select 3 subjects for their studies from a selection of over 30 different A-Level and vocational courses available across the consortium. These courses are graded on a six-point scale from A* - E. All A- Level courses are now linear, with assessment by examination taking place at the end of two years study.

Our vocational courses are the equivalent to one A Level. These courses are graded as Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* and are assessed through assignments, and through both internally and externally marked examinations.

Our students are guided to take the appropriate courses within Sixth Form based on their KS4 results. Standard entry requirements to our consortium are five grade 9 - 4 GCSEs or equivalent, including a 4 in both English and Maths. Some subjects have additional entry requirements and all have recommended GCSE average Points Score which are detailed within the prospectus.

Throughout year 11 impartial advice is offered to students regarding their options through one-to-one interviews with teaching staff, support from careers advisors and relevant subject staff. In the summer term prospective students are invited to taster lessons so that they can gain a greater insight into their chosen subjects. They are also provided with bridging work over the summer to help support them with the transition from GCSEs to A-levels.

Within the Sixth Form there are a series of opportunities to support students in developing academic, vocational and personal skills. Students are encouraged and supported in taking responsibility for their own learning and time management. Furthermore, students are supported in exploring their post KS5 options through careers talks, workshops, and representation from industry alongside one-

to-one support from the careers advisors. Study programmes are focused on progression to the next level, whether in the form of traineeship, apprenticeship, Higher Education or employment. University visits, outreach visits, workshops, speakers, Unifrog and a careers fair are available to help students choose their pathway post-18. There is an integrated reference process for UCAS applications through Unifrog as well as individualised support for students that will be called to interview.

We have a detailed enrichment programme that is delivered in fortnightly lessons and assemblies. These focus on a range of themes, including study skills, core personal development topics, preparing for post-18 options, careers support and financial management. This is also supported by a form programme that complements the fortnightly lessons and assemblies.

Students in Year 12 are encouraged to seek work experience placements, volunteer locally as part of their Ambassador role and work with their chosen departments as Learning Champions.

Preparation for university and employment is an integral part of the Sixth Form programme. Employability or work-readiness is becoming more and more important to universities and employers. While qualifications remain essential, with very few exceptions, they are no longer the only consideration. Therefore, all Year 12s take part in work shadowing during the Summer term. By completing a placement in a relevant sector our students can gain a real advantage when applying for university, apprenticeships or work. While on the placement, they will be able to talk with and observe skilled and qualified people who can give them a better idea of what their job involves. It is also an opportunity to network and find contacts.

Enrichment:

Opportunities and experiences beyond the classroom are an important aspect of the curriculum at Hitchin Girls' School. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs for students to join and take part in complementing and extending upon the entire breadth of the taught curriculum. Details of these can be found on our website.

School trips, both day visits and longer residential trips, are also a significant feature of our curriculum. These provide students with the experience of learning in a completely new environment whilst developing skills and their relationships with peers and teachers alike.

Sixth Form students are encouraged to take an active role in supporting subjects across the school by becoming learning leaders, community ambassadors and peer mentors.

When appropriate off timetable enrichment activities are built into the school calendar at appropriate times throughout the year in order to promote cross-curricular links and application of learning.

Relationship to other policies

The school policy on the curriculum links closely to the following policies: 'Assessment, Recording and Reporting', 'Attendance', 'Behaviour for Learning', 'Careers', 'CPD', 'Homework', 'Literacy for Learning', 'Marking and feedback', 'SEND', and 'Behaviour for Learning'.

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating matters relating to the curriculum which is achieved through the school's self-evaluation programme and through bi-weekly line management meetings with Heads of Department.

Senior Leaders work together with Heads of Department to ensure that the offering meets with the requirements of our learners and that the time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate.

Proposed developments in the curriculum are outlined in Development Plans and follow consultation with appropriate stakeholders. The school has a strong CPD (Continued Professional Development)

programme to ensure the appreciation of current developments is secure and that the curriculum can be responsive to change.

Annual reports on examination performance are presented to the Headteacher, who then cascades this information to Trustees. In addition to this, termly reports on student progress are presented to the Trustees.

The policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if needed, by the Deputy Headteacher and will be presented to the Trustees for approval.