



Curriculum – Subject Rationales



English

“Books give a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything”

Aristotle

At THS we believe communication and reading are fundamental life skills that can develop engagement in. We aim to enable pupils to develop the language and communication skills that will allow them to navigate everyday life effectively. We do this by recognising the diverse challenges our pupils can face, and tailor our curriculum to enhance their confidence, expression and interpersonal interactions, ultimately supporting both their academic and social development.

Pupils embark upon a journey experiencing English in a variety of different forms, and access learning through a similar variety of different activities. Pupils develop the skills to enhance their communication skills and explore different dimensions of a typical English curriculum by exploring the power of stories and writing to build emotional literacy. We strengthen writing skills through a variety of different practical activities, and work with pupils to develop critical thinking and comprehension which they can apply both inside and outside of the classroom. Throughout all aspects of the English curriculum, we strive to make the learning relevant to our pupils, adapting and personalizing learning to the individual.



Mathematics

"Good numeracy is the best protection against unemployment, low wages and poor health" Andreas Schleicher

At THS we believe that every pupil should develop the skill and numerical literacy they need to not only cope, but flourish in life. We recognise that many can find numeracy a challenge, and aim to build confidence through development of practical mathematical skills structured to build confidence, resilience and engagement through a supportive and adaptive learning structure.

To achieve this, we focus on the development of a structured and sequenced order of learning, drawing on understanding of the effectiveness of manipulatives and the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA) model. These principles underlie the development of practical mathematical skills to aid daily decision making and problem solving, whilst also ensuring pupils are prepared for life with the numeracy skills they will need. Pupils are encouraged to put learning in practice, and consider how the skills and concepts they are learning apply to everyday life to enhance their understanding. We also allow pupils the opportunity to put their learning into practice – through educational visits and offsite activities, to project work on-site, pupils experience frequent and relevant opportunities to practice their learning.



Science

“Science may set limits to knowledge, but should not set limits to imagination” Bertrand Russel

At THS we believe that Science is a subject that captures both key skills for exploring the world and essential knowledge for accessing it. We recognise that we live in an increasingly technological world, and that our pupils will need the skills and confidence to both live and question the world in which they find themselves. From understanding our environment and how we can use and look after the world in which we live, to developing understanding of the power of collaboration across nations around the world, to how it impacts the individual pupil on a day-to-day basis: our pupils learn key concepts and processes that underpin a scientific understanding of their world.

To achieve this, we aim to promote positive attitudes towards science by encouraging curiosity, open-mindedness, perseverance and responsibility, as well as working both independently and cooperatively. Pupils also develop their scientific skills through expanding pupil awareness of the scientific process, including developing practical scientific skills - to become investigators, and develop the skills of creating a hypothesis, experimenting, measuring, recording and reporting, as well as explaining and evaluating.



Phonics

“If a child memorises 10 words, the child can only read 10 words. But if a child learns 10 sounds, the child will be able to read 350 three-sound words, 4320 four-sound words, and 21650 five-sound words”. Martin Kozloff

At THS we recognise that learning to read opens countless doors for children, shaping their cognitive, social and emotional development. Our phonics programme helps pupils to develop language, improve cognitive skills, boost academic attainment and success, enhance empathy, increase in confidence reduce stress and prepare for the future. Learning to read can also strengthen parent/carer and child bonds, encourage a life-long love of learning, and help prepare pupils for the future.

We support students with an individual and personalised phonic programme, based on Little Wandle. Our phonics approach tailors learning to the needs of the individual student to enable them to make accelerated progress, whilst developing confidence in reading and the skills to access other areas of our curricula.



PSHE

“Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching” C.S.Lewis

At THS our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic) curriculum is designed to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to navigate life confidently and successfully. Recognising the diverse Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs of our pupils, we provide a supportive and therapeutic approach to personal development, ensuring that every learner feels safe, valued, and empowered. Through PSHE, we foster emotional resilience, social skills, self-awareness, and independence, helping pupils build positive relationships and make informed life choices.

Our pupils are provided a safe and nurturing space where they can develop emotional literacy, self-regulation and resiliency, enabling pupils to manage challenges effectively, building upon this by giving pupil the opportunity to reflect and develop skills to resolve personal and interpersonal conflicts. This works alongside developing interpersonal skills and relationships, fostering empathy, respect, and healthy communication. We also aim to equip our pupils with the skills they will need to ensure success at life, such as promoting and understanding of both physical and mental health; as part of this, we also offer Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) tailored to the needs of the individual. As pupils progress through the skill they also learn to identify themselves and their **place within** the world, developing a sense of responsibility, citizenship and an understanding of rights and responsibilities (including diversity and equality) within modern society.



Art

"Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known" Oscar Wilde

At THS our Art curriculum is designed to foster creativity, self-expression, and emotional well-being. We recognise the importance of Art as a therapeutic and expressive subject, providing students with opportunities to communicate thoughts and emotions in a safe and supportive environment. Our approach encourages exploration, resilience, and confidence, helping students develop their artistic skills while supporting their social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Through engaging, accessible, and inspiring lessons, students will discover the power of Art as a means of self-discovery, communication, and personal growth.

Pupils experience an inclusive and supportive space that allows them to develop confidence in a variety of artistic techniques, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and digital media. Pupils develop resilience, independence and problem solving, and learn about diverse artists, cultures and movements within the art world, fostering cultural awareness and appreciation. Our curriculum equips students with the skills to use Art for personal enjoyment, emotional regulation, and potential future career opportunities.



Computing

“The Purpose of computing is insight, not numbers” Richard Hamming

At THS our Computing curriculum is designed to equip students with essential digital skills while fostering confidence, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. We understand the challenges our students face due to their Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and we tailor our approach to ensure that all learners can engage safely and meaningfully with technology. Our curriculum emphasises practical applications, online safety, and responsible digital citizenship, preparing students for further education, employment, and independent living in an increasingly digital world.

Over the course of their computing journey, our students will develop confidence and competence using technology for communication, creativity and problem solving. We promote digital literacy and critical thinking to allow students to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Pupils will be equipped for an increasingly digital world, with practical skills relevant to modern life and employment.



DT

The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences". Loris Malaguzzi

At THS our design and technology (DT) curriculum is designed to develop creativity, problem solving skills, and practical knowledge in a safe and supportive environment. We recognise the diverse Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs of our pupils and ensure that our approach to DT foster resilience, confidence, and a sense of achievement. Through hands-on experiences, pupils learn to design, create and evaluate products, helping them to develop essential life-skills and prepare for future opportunities.

We provide engaging and accessible practical experiences that develop problem-solving and creativity, allowing students to foster a sense of achievement through the hands-on learning, and see the results of their hard work and perseverance. Pupils develop confidence, resilience and patience by using a process of trial and error, in turn developing concentration and focus, turning mistakes in learning moments. Pupils will gain key life skills, including teamwork, and understanding of the importance of communication, and the ability to follow instructions and safe procedures. Learning is made meaningful by linking projects to individuals' interests, real-world applications and vocational opportunities.



Geography

"The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents" Barack Obama

At THS, we believe that geography plays a crucial role in helping students develop a strong sense of place and responsibility for the world they live in. Our curriculum is designed to be engaging, accessible and nurturing, whilst ensuring that all students can explore connections between people, places, and environments. Through geography, we strive to provide a supportive environment that fosters curiosity, resilience, and a love for learning. By exploring physical and human geography, our students develop critical thinking skills, an understanding of sustainability, and an appreciation for cultural and environmental diversity.

We explore both physical and human geography, allowing students to develop and appreciation for how environments and societies interact. They access this through the development geographical skills, including map-skills and fieldwork, and relate learning to their own experiences and local environment. As students progress they develop a strong understanding of key concepts, as well as a sense of belonging and appreciation for diversity and sustainability.



History

"There is a history in all men's lives" William Shakespeare

At THS, we believe that history plays a vital role in developing our pupils' sense of identity, place, and belonging. Our curriculum is designed to be engaging, accessible and nurturing, whilst ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their emotional or social challenges, can develop a deep understanding of the past and its relevance to their lives.

We strive to provide a supportive environment that fosters curiosity, resilience, and a love for learning. By exploring key historical events, significant figures and historical concepts, we aim to help pupils develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and a broader perspective on society.

Pupils learn a chronological understanding of key events from world history through the development of enquiry-based learning. They build empathy and develop perspective by experiencing diverse experiences and viewpoints, and access this through a variety of engaging methods such as artefacts, roleplay and visual media. This then allows pupils to develop a strong understanding of key historical concepts, the ability to analyse information critically, and to place themselves within an understanding of the world and how its events can impact us all.



MFL

"A different language is a different vision of life" Federico Fellini

At THS our Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity, build confidence, and develop communication skills in a supportive and inclusive environment. We recognise the unique challenges our students face and tailor our teaching to ensure that all learners, regardless of their Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, can access and enjoy language learning. Our approach prioritises engagement, emotional well-being, and real-life language application, fostering cultural awareness and preparing students for the wider world.

We aim to encourage pupils to develop a love for languages through engaging, multi-sensory, and interactive teaching methods. Pupils build confidence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing a foreign language at an accessible and personalised level. MFL learning at our school promotes an understanding and appreciation of different cultures, broadening students' horizons and preparing them for life in a diverse society, and equips students with essential language-learning skills that can be applied in real-world contexts, increasing their future opportunities.



Music

“Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them - a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement” Gerald R. Ford

At THS our Music curriculum is designed to inspire creativity, self-expression, and emotional well-being. We recognise the profound impact music can have on our students’ social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs and aim to provide an inclusive, engaging, and therapeutic approach to music education. Through listening, composing, and performing, students develop their confidence, communication skills, and ability to regulate emotions while fostering a lifelong appreciation for music in its many forms.

We aim to provide a supportive and supportive environment for students to express themselves through music, where they can develop listening, performance and composition skills at an individually appropriate level. Pupils will explore a diverse range of musical styles and traditions, focusing on encouraging cultural appreciation and broadening pupils’ horizons. Pupils will build confidence and teamwork skills through solo and group performances and collaborative music making.

Pupils will ultimately develop their confidence, emotional intelligence and social skills, as well as being able to use music as a **positive outlet** for emotions or as a means of communication.



Physical Education

“Intelligence and skill can only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong”

John F. Kennedy

At THS we recognize that physical education (PE) is essential within Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) schools because it plays a critical role in promoting physical fitness, social skills, and emotional well-being, all of which are essential for students with SEMH needs. Regular physical activity both benefits physical and mental wellbeing, and can be used to support self-regulation strategies. PE also allows pupils to develop social skills and resiliency through structured activities and positive rules-based team sports and games.

Within each lesson we have a focus on ‘Me in PE’:

Physical ME – allowing students to acquire, develop, select and apply skills in a variety of different activities.

Thinking ME – developing students’ knowledge and understanding around tactics, strategies, rules, and choreography.

Social ME – to develop students’ social skills, promoting teamwork, collaboration, and leadership.

Healthy ME – to increase awareness of health and fitness, and to give students are greater understanding of healthy participation.



RE

“You cannot simultaneously cherish peoples’ cultures while discarding their beliefs” Alex Acutain

At THS we understand that Religious Education (R.E.) plays a vital role in the holistic development of students with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. At The Harbour school, R.E. is designed to foster a sense of identity, belonging, and understanding in a safe and inclusive environment. We believe that we have a responsibility to prepare the boys for the outside world and provide them with empathy and understanding. It encourages respect, tolerance, and self-reflection, equipping students with the skills to navigate a diverse society while supporting their emotional well-being and personal development.

Our R.E. curriculum is based on the Cambridgeshire locally agreed syllabus (LAS) and is adapted for the needs of our pupils. Throughout pupils’ RE journey, we aim to promote self-awareness and reflection; develop empathy and respect; enhance emotional literacy; encourage critical thinking, and support positive behaviour and relationships.

As a result, pupils will develop confidence in holding and expressing different beliefs and respecting those of others; develop ethical reasoning skills and be able to apply them to their own lives, and foster resilience and a sense of belonging in a diverse world.



Food Technology

"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." — Marian Wright Edelman

At THS Food technology teaches essential life skills such as cooking, nutrition, and food safety. These skills are vital for students' independence and self-sufficiency. Engaging in cooking and food preparation can be therapeutic. It helps students manage stress and emotions through a structured and creative activity.

Collaborative cooking projects encourage teamwork, communication, and social interaction, which are essential for students with SEMH needs. Food technology integrates various academic subjects, including science (understanding food chemistry), math (measuring ingredients), and literacy (reading recipes). Teaching about nutrition and healthy eating habits supports students' physical health and well-being, which is closely linked to their mental health. Successfully preparing a meal can boost students' self-esteem and confidence, providing a sense of accomplishment and pride.



Careers

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela

At THS our careers pathway enables and supports students to envision and plan for their future, providing them with a sense of direction and purpose.

Careers education at THS equips students with essential skills such as resume writing, interview techniques, and job searching, which are crucial for their success in the workforce. By exploring different career options and understanding their strengths, students can build self-confidence and motivation.

It promotes social skills and teamwork, preparing students to interact effectively in professional environments. Teaching students about various career paths and the skills needed for them supports their journey towards economic independence and self-sufficiency. Understanding career options and having a plan can reduce anxiety and stress related to the future, contributing to better mental health.