Developing a 21st Century Curriculum

Charles Bailey – Director of Studies
Hannah Fox – Academic & Universities Director

Preparing our boys to be real-world ready
Context

- Founded in 1572 under a Royal Charter granted by Elizabeth I;
- A full boarding school for boys aged 13 to 18;
- One of only three all-boys, all-boarding schools left in the UK;
- Academically selective;
- Values driven.
Harrow School Values

- Fellowship
- Honour
- Humility
- Courage

“Preparing boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities for a life of learning, leadership, service and personal fulfilment.”

- the School’s purpose
Who is the average Harrovian?
The average Harrovian

Articulate

Confident

 Academically able

Opinionated

Well-motivated
Background

Between Spring 2019 and Summer 2020, we conducted a no-assumptions Curriculum Review with the aim of future-proofing the curriculum and ensuring that every boy leaves the School ready to positively contribute to society, to thrive in a competitive job market and to live out the values of courage, honour, fellowship and humility.

The areas of focus included:
- Qualifications
- Knowledge Skills, Attributes and Qualities
- University and Employment
- The Wider World
Curriculum 2025

- From September 2021 onwards;
- Underpinned by a commitment to interdisciplinarity and academic breadth;
- Underpinned by three key literacies:
  - Social
  - Cognitive
  - Digital
The Shell (Year 9) Curriculum

- Greater departmental collaboration and coherence;
- Integration of key literacies through curricular mapping;
- Occasional disruption of timetable for inter-disciplinary problem-solving activities to develop innovation, intellectual agility and to replicate workplace scenarios.
Shell Academic Conferences

- 3 days off-timetable per academic year;
- Boys engaging with a zeitgeist real-world problem;
- An emphasis on interdisciplinarity, problem-solving, and innovation.
Qualifications

Removes and Fifth Form (Years 10 and 11)

- GCSEs remain important “passporting” qualifications;
- Ten GCSEs remain the ideal quantity;
- Boys should seek to widen their experiences rather than seek to accrue more GCSEs than ten.
- Remove and Fifth Form electives.
The Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13)

▪ A Levels remain the gold standard for post-16 qualifications; they provide rigour and depth which aligns with the UK university system;
▪ However, qualifications are insufficient by themselves to make boys real-world ready;
▪ For that reason, all boys must be immersed in the three key literacies.
The Harrow Diploma

- Credits-based programme throughout a boy’s time at the School;
- Components include:
  - Electives (modelled on liberal arts programme)
  - Work experience
  - Project work
  - Academic societies
  - MOOCs
The Elective programme

- Five different subject groups:
  1. Individuals and Societies
  2. Maths, Science and Technology
  3. Literature and the Arts
  4. Life Skills and Wellbeing
  5. Interdisciplinary Courses

THE HISTORY OF THE ESSAY
(FSW)

Course duration: short course (8 lessons)

The essay (from French ‘essayer’, meaning ‘to attempt’) is the foundational writing style of our time. It began in France in the late 16th century, and the format spread across Europe like wildfire. This course will look at key essays from the 16th to the 21st century, considering the form of the essay, its purposes, and its importance in the history of medicine, science and philosophy.
Individuals and Societies

GROUP A: INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES
A Cultural History of the Suit
20th- and 21st-Century Political Ideas
Exploring the Silk Road
The Reception of Greek Tragedy
'Because It Is There': A Brief History of Mountaineering
Empire and Identity
Globesity
GROUP B: MATHS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Human Evolution: Seven Million Years of Change
The Chemistry of Cooking
Recording and Sound Technology
Conserving Biodiversity
Life on the Ice
An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
Enriched Physics
GROUP C: LITERATURE AND THE ARTS
Reading the Screen: Film Studies
On the Road to Find Out: An Exploration of Culture, Music and Religion Through the Works of Cat Stevens
The History of the Essay
Classical and Romantic Music
The Vampire in Literature
The Power of the Pen: Eight Books to Expand Your World
Life Skills and Wellbeing

GROUP D: LIFE SKILLS AND WELLBEING
Thinking Fast and Slow
Army Leadership
An Introduction to Psychology
Critical Thinking
The Strength of the Mind
GROUP E: INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES
Medieval Science Fiction
Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*: Music Meets History, Theology and Mathematics
The 450 Million Dollar Painting
Faith, Ethics and Short Stories
Architecture 101
Next steps…
Symposia, collaboration with girls’ schools, and academic enrichment

- Harrow Academic Journal
- ‘Alexandria’
- ‘Gender like you’ve never seen it before’
The Three Key Literacies

- **Cognitive literacy:**
  - Critical thinking; problem-solving; creativity and innovation; communication and presentation skills;

- **Digital literacy:**
  - Microsoft Office; coding; data analysis and interpretation;

- **Social literacy:**
  - Leadership; responsibility; democracy and society; emotional intelligence; ethics; values and behaviours.
Mapping and Embedding

- The literacies will be mapped and embedded in the following four areas:
  - The core curriculum (i.e. taught lessons);
  - The Super-Curriculum;
  - The Co-Curriculum;
  - School and House structures.
Teaching and Learning Hub
Charles Bailey:
cegb@harrowschool.org.uk

Hannah Fox:
hrf@harrowschool.org.uk