



## Year Eight Curriculum News - Autumn 2009

Dear Parents

Firstly, I hope you have had an enjoyable summer holiday. At our first assembly I welcomed all the pupils and adults who work and learn here, hoping they settle quickly to the new school year and find it both enjoyable and successful.

Thanks to suggestions and discussions by our Home School Partnership we are changing the format of our Parents Evenings, a letter will follow soon. On 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October we are offering two nights of appointments between 4pm and 6pm, when you will be able to talk with your child's class teacher on pastoral and academic matters. Academic information will have been passed on by subject teachers, and examples of your child's work will be available. The school will also be open for parents on 15<sup>th</sup> October from 4pm to 5pm when you are welcome to look around classrooms and meet some staff on an informal basis.

Due to our changes in timetable and staffing we are also making some changes to our Parents evenings in January and February. For parents of children in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8) there will be no change; 5 minute appointments with subject teachers of your choice. For parents of children in Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6) there will be longer appointments with your child's class teacher who again will be supplied with an account of academic progress from subject teachers.

I trust that you will enjoy and be informed by the following newsletter. We are all looking forward to a term of hard work, achievement and enjoyment. Please contact us if there is any matter you wish to discuss with us about the education and welfare of your child.

Yours sincerely

David Watson.

### English

Calvin Worthington's biographical story My Father's Hands is the source from which pupils will develop their thinking about character and plot. Other short stories including Janni Howker's Badger on the Barge will be used to explore relationships between old and young, including a focus on old age. A variety of activities, writing in different forms, and drama will follow these themes.

### Maths



The Year 8 pupils will continue the Framework maths scheme. The high school use the same scheme in Year 9, providing good continuity for our pupils.

The topics for the autumn term are: -

- **Numbers and sequences** - powers and roots, sequences, functions and graphs.
- **Angles and triangles** – geometrical reasoning, lines, angles and shapes.
- **Probability** – calculating probability, experimental probability.
- **Fractions, decimals and percentages** – simplifying fractions, percentages and fractions of amounts, equivalents.
- **Expressions and formulae** – simplifying expressions, substitutions, deriving formula.
- **Measures and measurement** – metric measures, perimeter and area, cubes and cuboids.

As always we have an enormous amount of work to cover. We will be working hard throughout the term!

## Science

Key Stage 3 Science is following a new and condensed curriculum; this will be the first year group at HMS to complete their KS3 science in 2 years. As we prepare the pupils for life we hope to use everyday examples of problems and dilemmas and how they can be explained by the topics covered in science. If your child engages you in some deep ethical discussions you'll know we've done our job.

The topics covered this term will be: Food and Digestion, Respiration, and Heating and Cooling. As you see, we have a lot to fit in and so it is important for pupils to catch up with any work missed due to absence and to complete homework, which is all in the homework booklet, on time. Each pupil's performance will be assessed over a wide variety of practical skills and written and oral tasks so pupils will always be encouraged to do their best.

## History

The themes of Power and Conflict between Sovereign, State and the Church continues at the beginning of Year 8. Pupils will study the Tudors and Elizabethan period from this perspective and then move on to the origins of the Civil War.

## Geography

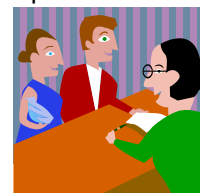
In Year 8 pupils will be studying Development with particular emphasis on Brazil. Pupils will investigate the economic status of countries and think about the indicators of development. Pupils will then conduct a study into the country of Brazil to discover that development appears at a local scale as well as national. They will study the physical and human characteristics of Brazil and look to the ways Brazil is changing.

## Life skills

In this slot, pupils study units of work covering material from Religious Education, Personal and Social Education and Citizenship.

During the year, pupils will cover six units of work. These will cover subjects such as relationships, rights and responsibilities, drug education, bullying and environmental issues as well as looking at aspects of Christianity and other faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam to prepare children to live in a multi – cultural society.

Pupils will start by looking at their own moral values and society's codes of behaviour. They will look at how their own values are formed and influenced and what rules they feel are necessary for a fair society. We will use examples from 'Lord of the Flies' to explore ideas about what can happen when society breaks down. They will investigate some of the laws relating to young people and study codes of behaviour from major religions such as the Ten Commandments.



## French

To start the year pupils will study selected francophone countries around the world, formulating and responding to more complicated questions. They will create a Powerpoint presentation of one of the francophone countries studied during lessons. They will then complete the project, "La Culture, ça dure", which is based on aspects of French life, such as art, music, sport, science and innovation, and the work will focus on famous people in these areas. Tasks are based on an investigative approach to language in line with current developments in language teaching nationally. The main emphasis of the theme is the use of verbs in various tenses. As the theme progresses the pupils will complete their own research on a French person of their choice with a view to producing a presentation.

## Art and Design

Year 8 will be looking at portraits this term ultimately leading to the production of a photographic self portrait image. We will concentrate particularly on the work of Stanley Spencer to examine the process of drawing from observation. We will then look at the work of Freda Kahlo before using computer software to create a self image.



## Food Technology



This year the pupils will learn about nutrition and how it affects their daily lives. The object will be for them to design a healthy meal based on a new restaurant opening in Hexham. This will build on their previous knowledge gained in Years 6 and 7. The pupils will design, plan and make a small first course, main course and healthy dessert. They will be required to keep to current government guidelines of '5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day' and to make a low sugar or low fat food option. During the spring term there will be a 'Master Chef competition' where 6 pupils will cook one sweet and one savoury dish. A chef will judge this and prizes will be awarded. The pupils will have a chance to use the skills they acquired when they designed their healthy meals.

## Technology

Year 8 will investigate and use Control Technology during the first term. They will use two different packages to perform this task. One system, from Economatics is called **PIC** – Logicator (**P**rogrammable **I**ntegrated **C**ontrollers) and provides a graphical environment for designing, testing, editing and downloading control sequences for PIC micro controllers. They will then use these chips to perform tasks with buggies, lights, seven segment displays, sounds, motors, security locks and infra- red control situations.

Some analogue and digital control will also be experienced. The other package from TEP will use the IQ board to control up to three devices in a project that they will build with a chosen partner.

## Music

Year 8 start the year with revision of their 'Keyboard Skills' work from year 7. In this project pupils also learn about the sound and appearance of keyboard instruments through the ages. They also take part in a class performance of Beethoven's Ode to Joy arranged for 7-part keyboards; compose a piece for keyboard or their own instrument based upon the Ode to Joy in an AABA form. This piece will also provide an opportunity to use a computer software programme to write their music using conventional music notation. This is also a useful revision piece of work based on writing and understanding music notation.



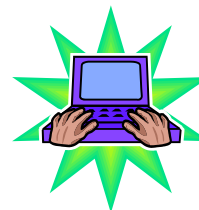
## Physical Education

Year 8 pupils will continue to develop their skills in games activities; football, netball, basketball, rugby and hockey. As in previous years individual skills continue to be developed using maximum participation i.e. one ball per pupil. Skills are transferred into small group practices and small-sided games. This allows for maximum practice and expression of skills.

Rugby concentrates on passing and movement skills in small-sided games situations and tag rugby. The game is developed into a more recognisable version of the full game with contact situations introduced. In all areas a sensible approach to health issues is encouraged.

## ICT

This term pupils will be working on an integrated project. Pupils will choose a news story to research, explore the impact of the story locally through use of a questionnaire and present the story through a podcast, video, wiki or web page. The project will involve various stages: research, data collection, data analysis, production of resources and evaluation. The project will bring in some new software, allow pupils to develop and refine existing skills and ask pupils to focus on Key ICT concepts such as fit for purpose, audience, refinement and selection of tools.



## Homework

Homework is set on a more or less weekly basis in Maths, English and French; some tasks are set in the form of reading, research, preparing a talk, completion of classwork. Extended pieces of Maths work, will be set from time to time, taking more than one week to complete. French homework will arise directly from work covered during lessons and will be set according to the ability of the pupils. Science homework is more flexible depending on the work being followed. Teachers will check regularly that the commitment is being met.

Geography and History alternate, with homework set once every two weeks by both subjects. Food and Textiles Technology, ICT and Art set work as and when the need arises whilst Design Technology plans homework at the beginning and end of a project. The Music department uses homework to support one project per term.

There will be times when pupils are asked to finish off lifeskills class work. Pupils are also encouraged to read independently at home (see planner) using good quality fiction and non-fiction books.

Where possible, pupils will be given at least two evenings to complete tasks, and the day on which the work is to be handed in will be recorded in the Home/School planner. The amount of time spent on each homework will vary but should, in general, take up to an hour, with French taking about thirty minutes.

## **Year Group News**

The new Year 8 will spend the first two or three weeks becoming accustomed to being the eldest year group in the school. This is a unique position to be in because this marks the beginning of a gradual preparation for transition to High School. To help develop Year 8 pupils, staff give opportunities for them to have responsibility for some of their learning and for their behaviour. Generally speaking, all Year 8 rise willingly and with commitment to the challenge. If any pupils should find difficulty with this ethos, parents are contacted as soon as possible.

Year 8 do have advantages as the oldest pupils but along with these privileges go extra responsibilities: all pupils are expected to set a good example, at all times, to the rest of the school by their attitude to work, their appearance and their behaviour towards other pupils and adults. They are mainly responsible for taking care of the Beaumont building.

The election of House Captains and Vice Captains is an important event in the school year. At times, these positions can be an enormous and, sometimes, inconvenient commitment but it IS a commitment for the whole year. Pupils who take on these positions do need to understand the role and be not only willing but also conscientious in taking on the responsibility, which includes being a role model for other pupils.