



**Curriculum Booklet**  
**Llyfr Cwricwlwm**  
*Year 7 and Year 8*

**"What your child really does at Cowbridge  
Comprehensive School"**

September 2019

Dear Parent

Welcome to the Curriculum Booklet for Year 7 and Year 8, "What your child really does at Cowbridge Comprehensive School".

At Cowbridge we realise the importance of maintaining the partnership between home and school and we also realise the importance of the transition from primary to secondary education for you and your child. To this end we feel sure that this booklet will provide you with a thorough insight into what your child is learning in each subject during the first two years.

We have also tried to give you some tips on how you can help your child to improve in each subject. If you have any other ideas, please let us know.

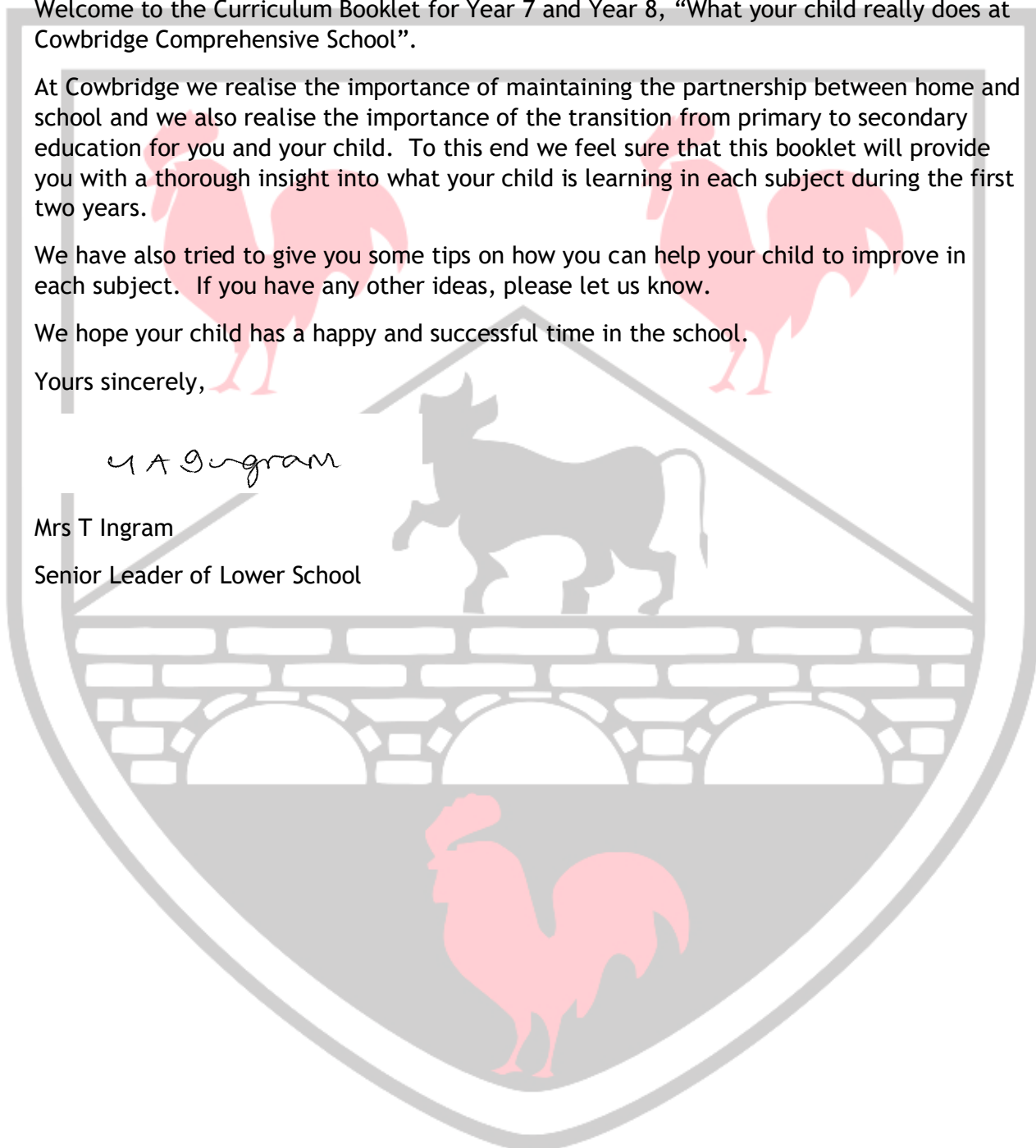
We hope your child has a happy and successful time in the school.

Yours sincerely,

*T A Ingram*

Mrs T Ingram

Senior Leader of Lower School



# School policies

## *Provision for additional learning needs*

- At Cowbridge Comprehensive School the principles underpinning ALN provision are those upon which the whole ethos of the school is based. We strive to be an inclusive school, engendering a sense of community and belonging by recognising, rewarding and valuing diversity among our students. In addition, we believe that maximum success and progress can only be achieved by the joint cooperation, understanding and planning of staff, parents, pupils, governors, support services and the Local Authority.
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a whole school priority. Central to the work of every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation that takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the pupils. The majority of pupils will learn and progress within these arrangements. However, for pupils with additional learning needs it may be necessary to provide an enhanced level of provision that supports and develops their learning abilities. Resources are generally allocated according to a hierarchy of need and support may take one or more of the following forms:
  - The use of differentiated learning materials and/or specialised equipment in mainstream classes.
  - Teaching assistant support for groups or individuals in lessons.
  - Access to external agencies, including LA services, for targeted support of individual students and/or advice on strategies, equipment and training.
  - Staff development aimed at improving and updating classroom practice in relation to ALN issues.
  - Literacy and numeracy intervention for small groups of identified students in each year group.
  - Twice weekly sessions of 'Lexia', a differentiated software package to hone basic literacy skills. This is an online programme and is accessible from home.
  - 'Catch-up Literacy', a highly-structured one-to-one intervention programme for learners who find reading difficult.
  - 'Catch-up Numeracy', a highly-structured one-to-one intervention programme for learners who find numeracy difficult.
  - Twice weekly spelling support sessions during form time to work on the basic rules of spelling.

The Additional Learning Needs team comprises of an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator, a pupil support co-ordinator and a number of learning support assistants. They share a wide range of expertise in ALN, including experience and qualifications in teaching students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, Speech and Language difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The department is located in a well-resourced teaching and support area that provides for small group or individual programmes of study, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. The area also functions as a resource and advice base for all members of staff.

Copies of the ALN Policy are available on the school website.

## **Assessment**

This is an important area for your child's development. Assessment aims to inform the student, teacher and parents of levels of achievement and progress. It can either be formative (on going) or summative (final). Examples of formative assessment include comments on pupils' work that will enable them to improve their performance and 'working at' levels that give an indication of how your child is currently doing. Further information on levels can be found in the Welsh Government booklet 'How is your child doing at Secondary School?' The assessment programme for each subject is included in the subject information.

Every department will set standardised assessments. These are pieces of work that cover a variety of skills and topics. They also will require your child to work in different ways; for example, research work followed by a presentation to the class. The assessments are recorded as a National Curriculum Level and will enable the department and the school to track your child's progress throughout the whole of the Key Stage.

Departments will mark your child's work regularly. The grades/levels that are given are explained in the pupils' exercise books. This will help you to follow progress and help your child to understand what has to be done to achieve the higher levels.

There are also specific areas in the planner that enable your child to track progress. You will receive one annual report and three computerised reports (one per term).

If you have any issues regarding assessment please contact either the Head of Department or your child's Leader of Achievement.

## **Rewards**

Everyone likes to be told they are doing well. Praise is an important facet in the developmental process. At Cowbridge Comprehensive School we acknowledge the importance of praise and reward and seek to promote and reinforce our expectations of students at every opportunity.

Three times each year, pupils are rewarded for having an excellent attitude to learning, for achieving 100% attendance and for demonstrating outstanding behaviour.

## **The planner**

Every pupil will be given a planner. This is a homework diary, a means of home school communication, an information booklet and an assessment/ review tool. It contains information about the School, important dates, rewards, attendance records, school policies (in brief), spelling lists, factual information and The Home School Agreement.

From time to time you may want to contact a member of staff or they might want to contact you. The planner is a simple means of doing this. The form tutors check planners regularly and will encourage your child to see particular members of staff that you have written to. Please sign the planner regularly - it keeps your child on their toes! Your child should write down any homework or requests they have been given. If you have any concerns, contact your child's Leader of Achievement/ Achievement Assistant.

## **Reporting**

We report on your child's progress using the online reporting system 'www.Go4Schools.com'. You will receive one written report and three data capture reports per year. These reports will provide you and your child with an insight into their current attainment and how they are progressing towards their target levels or grades. The written report will inform you of where he/she has done particularly well and also what needs to be improved in each subject. We hope that these reports help you to support your child in making progress across all subject areas.

There will also be the opportunity for you to attend a Parents' Evening where you can make appointments to see the staff. Staff will have indicated any major concerns or issues to you prior to the evening. This will allow you and the staff to prioritise appointments. Appointments are made, by your child, on a 'first come, first served' basis.

## **National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF)**

Both primary and secondary schools use the Framework to make sure that the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in all subjects of the curriculum rather than focused on English and Maths lessons alone. Pupils aged 11 to 14 sit literacy and numeracy tests in the summer term of each year.

## **Independent work**

The importance of being able to work independently cannot be overestimated. It is an opportunity for pupils to consolidate, reflect and expand on knowledge gained in lessons. Tasks might include research, project work, skills acquisition, reading and drafting stories etc. It might even include watching TV!

There is no absolute time for independent work undertaken at home, but at Cowbridge Comprehensive School we use the following time guidelines (all times per week):

Year 7	4 hours
Year 8	4 hours

Your child may spend more or less time depending upon the tasks set and the time it takes to complete it.

If your child has no set work they should be encouraged to read, go over previous work or further develop their own knowledge and act on any comments from staff.

Each subject entry in this guide details how you can help your child and support ongoing progress in school.

# Art

Subject Leader: Mrs C Parry

## **Department Organisation**

The department consists of five members of staff; Miss G Braden, Mrs S Davies, Mrs C Parry, Ms A Wilson and Mrs D Wilson teaching Art at all levels.



The department occupied three well equipped, specialist art rooms and a photography ICT studio.

The aims of the department are:

- To work from direct observation and from the imagination, thus developing the level of skill and a personal vision.
- To develop an imaginative use of materials, tools and equipment.
- To develop and awareness of cultural heritage and tradition using the works of artists and craftspeople to enrich and inform their own work.

## **Key teaching activities**

Students are given the opportunity to develop their skills of **understanding**, **investigating** and **making** through the planning of integrated activities based on a range of themes and topics. They will be inspired by and introduced to the work of other artists, craft workers and designers and their investigations and information collected should enrich and inform their own work.

Opportunities will be given to record from observation and the imagination whilst exploring the properties of materials and processes. Students are taught the skills and understanding the process of making art. Skills taught are drawing and painting, collage, printing, 3D construction and mixed media.

Experimentation with a variety of tools and media will be encouraged and they will be introduced to the creative process. Pupils will have the opportunity to work in different contexts as individuals and as group members, and will be required to keep a sketchbook as evidence of all of the above.

## **Assessment programme**

A variety of assessment tasks (both formal and informal) are employed throughout the three years:

- Observation drawing assessment
  - Year 7 - September
  - Year 8 - September
- Homework assessments throughout the year. Tasks will cover understanding, investigating and making
- Classwork assessments throughout the year
- A range of self, peer and group assessment activities will take place regularly throughout the two years and on a formal basis at the end of each project or topic.



## ***Homework policy***

Homework is set as project based tasks. Progress is checked regularly and a formal assessment is made on completion of the project. Oral or written feedback is given on progress as well as ways to improve.



## ***Equipment needed per lesson***

Students will be provided with a quality A4 sketchbook to complete classwork and homework tasks. This sketchbook **must** be brought to every lesson.

Equipment required for homework tasks:

- Pencils - a range of B pencils would be useful
- Fine point paintbrushes - Size 4 & 6. It would be useful to have your own set.
- Crayons, paints, scissors, and a craft knife (for use at home) are all very useful.

## ***How you can help your child***

1. Visit art galleries at home and abroad. Encourage the watching and listening to of Art programmes on TV and radio.
2. Provide a quiet place to do homework. One hour per fortnight should be sufficient time to complete art homework. Interested and involved students will take longer. If this is the case, make sure their time is planned carefully and that other subjects are not neglected - **art homework should be a pleasure, not a chore!**
3. If you wish to buy art reference books, **THE ART BOOK** - published by **Phaidon** - comes in large and pocket size formats. **Taschen** publish a range of Art books and postcards at reasonable prices. Avoid the **HOW TO** - type of book.
4. Encourage children to build up a bulletin board of postcards, interesting tickets, labels, objects, etc.
5. Display your child's 2D work, mounted on good plain paper and framed. It will look as good on your walls as any print you can purchase in the shops. The least expensive way to frame work is to use **CLIP-FRAMES**, they also allow work to be changed around easily, but it is often worthwhile to have a piece you really like professionally framed. Remember - most works will fade if hung in direct sunlight!

# Design & Technology

Subject Leader: Mrs K Mallows



## ***Department organisation***

The department consists of seven teachers: Mrs N Christopher, Mrs A Dunne, Mr D Edwards, Mrs K Mallows, Mrs C Pullen, Mr C Williams and Mr M Wrigley,

Design & Technology is made up of a variety of focus areas, such as Food Technology, Product Design and Textiles. The subject is compulsory under the National Curriculum in Year 7 and 8. It is then available in all focus areas at GCSE and through AS/A Level Product Design. The scheme builds on the knowledge, skills and understanding developed through the Key Stage 2 programme of study (primary school).

## ***Key teaching activities***

During Year 7 and Year 8, D&T offers opportunities to:

- Develop design and making skills.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of materials (using food, textiles and product design).
- Develop capability & nurture creativity.

## ***Assessment programme***

Pupils will be assessed through their theory/folder work and through practical tasks in each of these focus areas:

- Textiles technology
- Product Design
- Food and Nutrition

## ***Homework policy***

Homework will be set intermittently during the term and will either focus on revising work studied during the previous lesson, be preparation for the following lesson or will be an opportunity to respond to feedback from teacher's comments. The pupils will usually have until the following lesson to complete the task. Each task will take no longer than 20 to 30 minutes.

## ***Equipment needed per lesson***

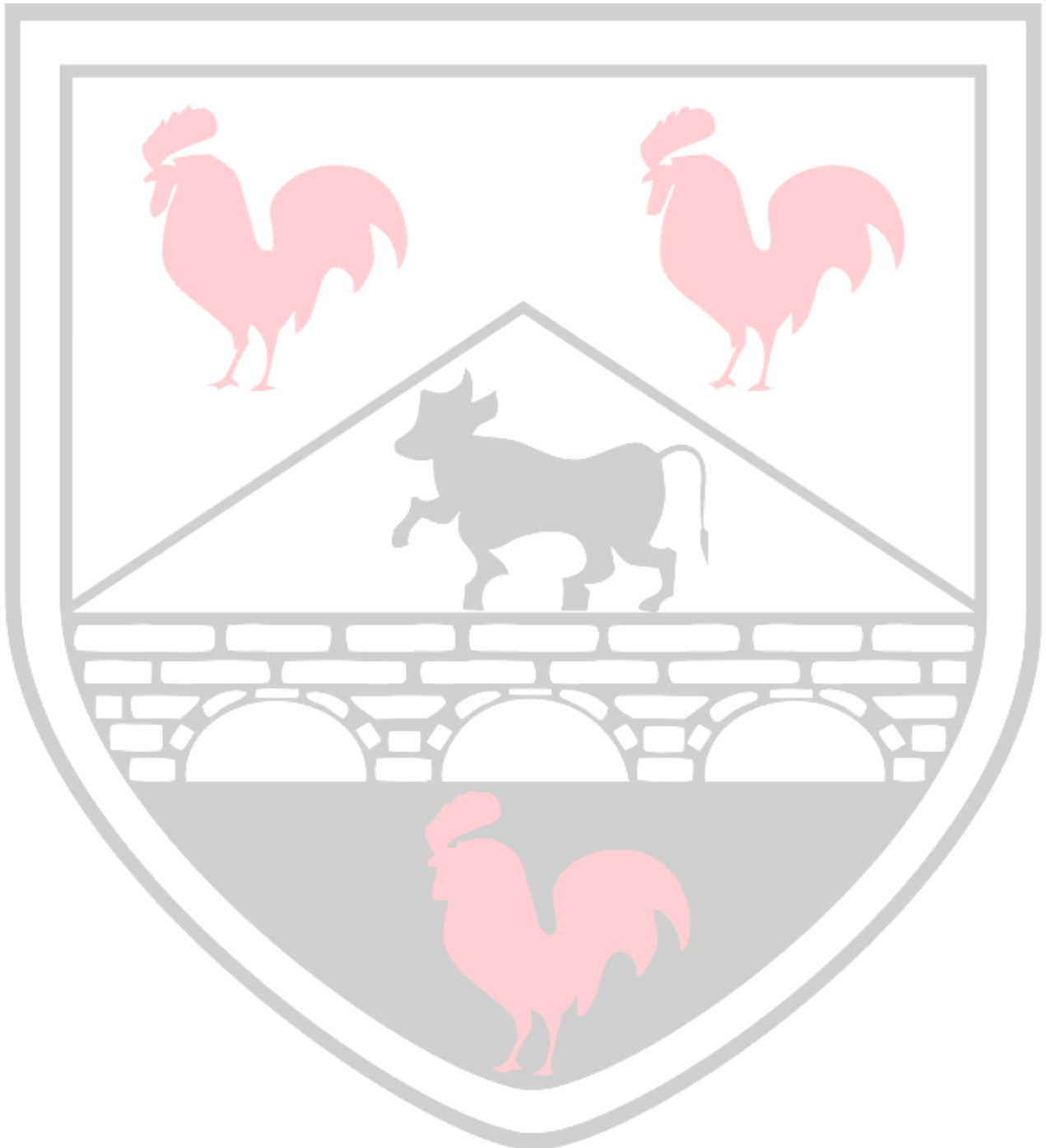
All pupils work in A4 booklets which are provided by the Department. Pupils will be expected, when required, to provide ingredients for Food Technology lessons and materials for Textiles projects. The components and materials for product design projects are costly and the department does ask for a minimal contribution towards these. All pupils will need an apron for practical work in Food Technology and Product Design lessons.





***How you can help your child***

- Check their planner regularly.
- Ask what he/she is designing and making in each area.
- Encourage your child to be creative and innovative!
- Contact the department if you have any concerns or innovative ideas yourself, or if you are an expert in our field!



# English

Subject Leader: Miss K Harper



## **Department organisation**

The department has thirteen members of staff: Ms C Bail, Mr A Davies, Miss K Harper, Mrs R Jenkins, Miss L Kenworthy -Neale, Miss C Razzell, Mrs P Richardson, Mr J Smith, Mr J Taylor, Mrs G Warren, Mr D Williams and Mrs R Williams

The department aims to build on the work of students in Year 6 and to lay firm foundations for the more demanding work of Year 7. Our scheme of work follows the skills based approach of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy.

The Literacy and Numeracy Framework will be embedded in your child's learning from September. It focuses on three key elements: reading, writing and oracy. Although these skills fall naturally within the English curriculum, in many subjects, not just English, you will notice, for example, that spelling, punctuation and grammar will be marked.

## **Key teaching activities**

English is split into the following skills areas:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing

Each area is further broken down into various specific elements, which are covered in 3 units, discrete across the three years. The units cover Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening skills and cover fiction and non-fiction elements. Each unit contains two assignments or assessments that allow the students to focus on the specific skills covered.

## **Assessment programme**

Where relevant, it is the Department's policy to identify one positive area of achievement and one area for further work when students have completed a piece of work. For each literacy skill area, two summative assessments are carried out to measure progress. All assessments are graded using National Curriculum Levels.

## **Homework policy**

The Department aims to set homework where this will consolidate or extend learning. The Department will also share 'Challenge Menus' for each unit and students can choose to complete a range of tasks to progress their learning and challenge themselves. When there is not an explicit writing task set, we expect students to complete additional reading independently. We encourage students to read for at least 20 minutes per day and there will be time dedicated to reading lessons and visiting the library.

## **Equipment needed per lesson**

Students must arrive with a fully stocked pencil case including a blue or black pen, pencil, rubber, ruler, sharpener, coloured pencils and highlighter. They should also bring a reading book and a small pocket dictionary to every lesson.



### ***How you can help your child***

In order to support your child at home, check through their school books at the end of the day. One of the most helpful things to do is to talk to them about what they have studied. Go through their books with them and identify any spelling errors and work through the correct spellings with them; they can use a dictionary to correct these independently or can revisit the spelling logs in the back of many of their exercise books. As always, independent reading - both fiction and non-fiction - is key! Encourage your child to visit the local library both school and local.



# Ethics & Philosophy

Subject Leader: Mrs D Cash



## **Department organisation**

The department consists of five full time specialist staff.

They are Miss A Butterworth, Mrs D Cash, Mr G Evans, Miss C Germain, and Miss S Nicholas.

The department has four specialist rooms.

The aims of the department are:

- To encourage the development of personal responses to, and evaluations of, beliefs, teachings and practices and fundamental questions.
- To engage pupils with questions that focus on the search for meaning, significance and the value of life.
- To explore religious beliefs, teachings and practices in relation to the wider world.

## **Key teaching activities**

- The main themes explored in **Year 7** include an Introduction to Religion; the Key Beliefs of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism; Religious Founders and Pilgrimage; Community; Inspirational Leaders.
- The main themes explored in **Year 8** are religious festivals - Ramadan, Diwali and Passover/Easter as well as an exploration into slavery and child poverty.

Teaching activities include:

- class discussions and debates about ethical issues and ultimate questions
- the use of artefacts and film
- PowerPoint and interactive white board resources
- developing empathy to the views and lives of others
- problem solving
- open ended challenges
- individual research

## **Assessment programme**

In addition to the ongoing informal assessment of regular class work, pupils will complete Standardised Assessment Tasks on the following topics:

### **Year 7**

1. Introduction to Religion
2. Key Beliefs: Hinduism & Sikhism; Islam & Buddhism
3. Inspirational Leaders - Speaking and Listening

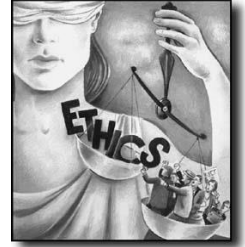
### **Year 8**

1. Ramadan
2. Diwali
3. Passover
4. Slavery - Speaking and Listening

### ***Homework policy***

Homework is set at 2-3 week intervals and includes a wide range of activities, some of which are listed above.

Final preparations for assessments are done as homework tasks.

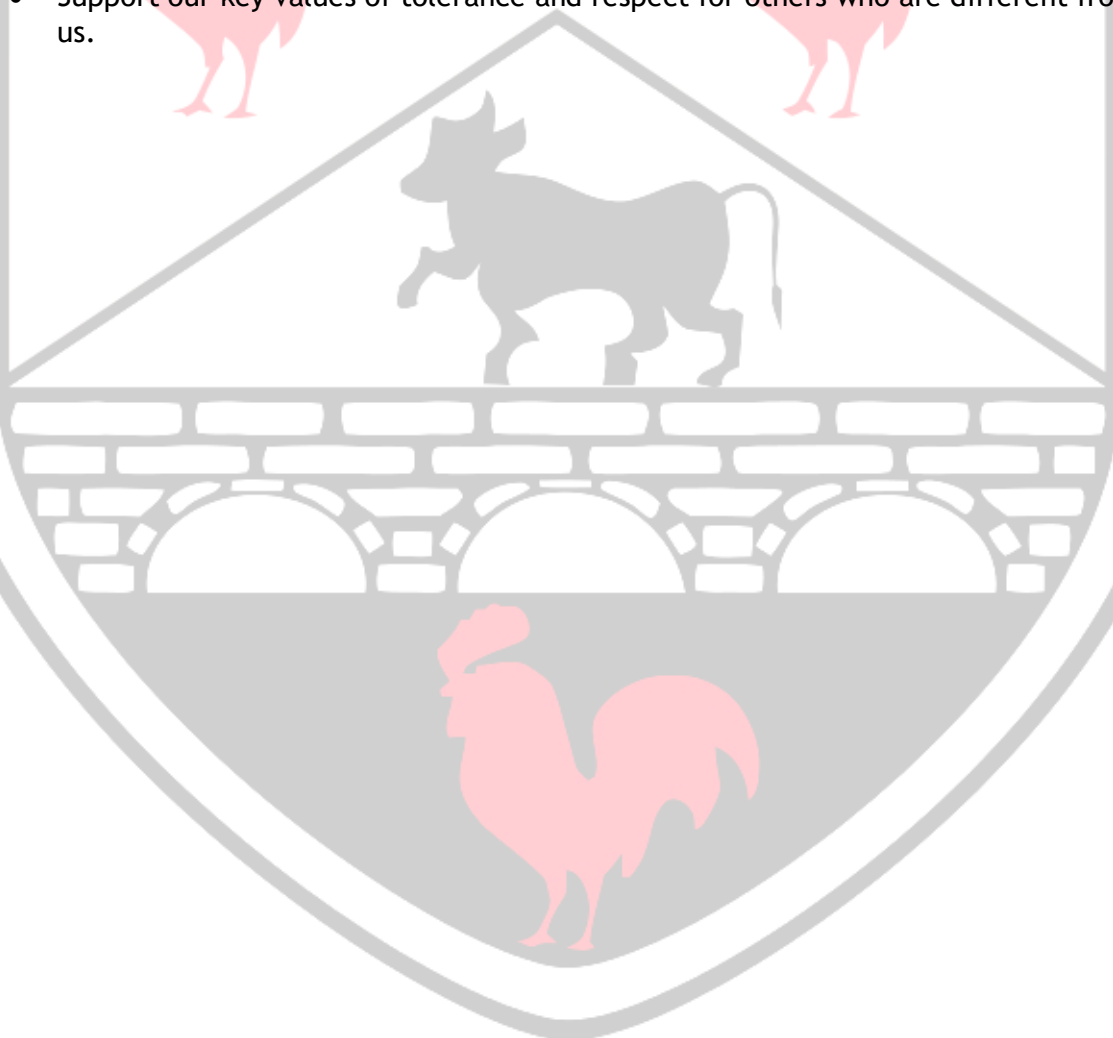


### ***Equipment needed per lesson***

Every student will have an exercise book, which must be brought to every lesson, along with essential writing equipment.

### ***How you can help your child***

- Encourage your child to explain to you what he/she is doing.
- Encourage your child to show you their exercise book which includes his/her marked assessments.
- Give any help and encouragement you can with homework tasks, including research and the use of ICT (where possible) and encourage the use of good literacy skills.
- Support our key values of tolerance and respect for others who are different from us.





# Geography

Subject Leader: Mrs C Smith



## **Department organisation**

The department has six members of staff: Mr D Griffiths, Mr A Fowles, Miss K Hanney, Miss K Rees, Mrs C Smith and Mr M Walsh

The department has four specialist rooms. Each room has a range of textbooks, interactive resources and access to digital technology.

The aims of the department are:

- To explore a sense of place.
- To encourage an awareness of different types of environments and cultures.
- To develop a range of geographical skills.
- To recognise and explore the causes and consequences of geographical issues.

## **Key teaching activities**

The main themes explored in **Year 7** are:

- Volcanic Activity
- Weather Hazards
- Changing population
- Migration
- Environmental fieldwork project

The main themes explored in **Year 8** are:

- Map skills
- Antarctica
- Renewable energy
- Geography of crime
- Earthquakes

Geographical issues are examined through a variety interesting activities both class based and in the field.

Pupils undertake a number of assessments throughout the year, which are aimed at testing understanding and developing geographical skills through enquiry. There is the opportunity in every year for fieldwork. For example, in Year 8 we examine how crime is managed in the school and how further improvements can be made.

## **Assessment programme**

A variety of assessment tasks are employed throughout the year. Informal tasks include homework, research, video analysis and presentations; formal tasks form the basis for the standardised assessment tasks outlined below:

**Year 7:**

1. Volcanic Activity (Assessment test) - Christmas Term.
2. Weather Hazards (Extended writing piece) - Spring Term.
3. Changing Population (Assessment test) - Spring Term.
4. Fieldwork Project (Data presentation) - Summer Term.



#### Year 8:

1. Map Skills (Assessment Test) - Christmas Term.
2. Antarctica (Data presentation and analysis) - Christmas Term.
3. Renewable Energy (Map skills & Problem solving) - Spring Term.
4. Earthquakes (Extended writing piece) - Summer Term
5. Geography of Crime (Presentation from Fieldwork) - Summer Term.

The Geography Department are committed to improving student's **literacy and numeracy** skills and so all assessments help students to build on these skills.

#### ***Homework policy***

Homework in Geography is given at least once a fortnight.

A wide range of homework is set which fulfils the departmental aim of encouraging geographical enquiry.

#### ***Equipment needed per lesson***

- Every student has an exercise book, which must be brought to every lesson.
- It is important that students have coloured pencils, a ruler, compass, pencil and a pen.

#### ***How you can help your child***

- Discuss the themes explored in the classroom with your child.
- Check your child's exercise book and planner regularly, signing to say that you have seen his/her books and that the standard of work and presentation is good.
- Test your child on geographical vocabulary.
- Develop map skills with your child, allowing him/her to plan routes and map read on a journey.
- An Atlas would be of great benefit, especially for home.
- Explore websites dedicated to Geography, read and collect articles from newspapers, describe photographs from holidays and watch relevant television programme which will encourage a dialogue of discovering all about the Earth.

# French

Subject Leader: Mme H Thomas

## ***Department organisation***

The department consists of four teachers: Mme C Goncellin, Mme J Jenkins, Mr J Ling and Mme H Thomas



The department has four specialist rooms which house projectors, interactive whiteboards, language learning displays and other French teaching materials such as dictionaries and textbooks.

The aims of the department are:

- To enable pupils of all abilities to understand and use French effectively for practical communication
- To encourage enjoyable learning of other languages and cultures
- To stimulate pupils into showing an interest in discovering other countries
- To raise European awareness and appreciation

## ***Key teaching activities***

The skills taught in the French classroom are Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. Through interactive, pupil-centred activities the department aims to enable all pupils to use French both actively and receptively. Lessons are delivered in French as far as possible, we do appreciate that Year 7 pupils may need extra help and support at first, however.

Forty Year 7 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a French trip to Northern France in the July of Year 7.

The department maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm with a varied use of resources and approaches; pair and group activities and games are all used extensively.

The department uses software and internet packages such as Boardworks, Teachit, Task magic and Quizlet as a way of motivating pupils and enabling them to learn independently at home. We use Quizlet as a means of setting homework and we ask all pupils to join our virtual classes: pupils will be shown how to sign up to their teacher's class.

## ***Assessment programme***

The department focuses its schemes of work in Years 7 and 8 on building skills and knowledge. Work is differentiated to cater for the differing needs of all pupils. Pupils are assessed in at least one skill per half term. They will complete approximately six assessments in any one year. At the end of Year 7 these assessments will form the basis of setting in Year 8. Those who have performed well in class work and assessments throughout Year 7 in both French and Welsh may have the opportunity to study German in Years 8. Assessments cover a variety of activities and topics.

Topics and Grammar will include:

### Year 7: Levels 1-4

- Introducing oneself
- Describing yourself and others
- Family and pets
- Numbers including age, birthdays and time
- Giving opinions about school subjects
- The verbs 'être' and 'avoir'
- Adjectival agreements
- Singular/plural
- Masculine/feminine nouns



### Year 8: Levels 2 - 7

- Sport and leisure activities
- Town, house and home
- Food and drink and ordering food in a café
- Irregular verbs in present tense
- Opinions in present tense
- Partitive article (some)
- Simple future

### **Homework policy**

- Much of the homework set in Year 7 consists of learning vocabulary and grammatical patterns.
- In Year 8 pupils are expected to complete more complex written work for homework tasks.

### **Equipment needed per lesson**

- Every pupil will be given an exercise book and a work booklet which will be needed for every lesson. We ask pupils to provide an A4 plastic/cardboard folder to keep all their work safe.
- A fully equipped pencil case (glue, scissors, and coloured pencils) is also invaluable.
- Every pupil will have an assessment recording sheet and vocabulary test sheet where they record their marks and levels and reflect on their assessments and learning.

### **How you can help your child**

- Encourage your child to share the new subject with you.
- Help him/her to learn vocabulary - spelling and pronunciation.
- Please check your child's planner and progress grid regularly.
- Encourage your child to practise French on a variety of language learning websites available.

# German



Subject Leader: Mme H Thomas

## **Department organisation**

There is one member of staff in the Modern Foreign Language department who teaches German: Frau J Jenkins.

In Year 8 German is taught in one lesson per week to those pupils who have shown by their Year 7 performance in French and Welsh assessments that they would benefit from the study of a second modern foreign language.

Our specialist German room houses a projector, interactive whiteboard, language learning displays and other German teaching materials such as dictionaries and textbooks.

The aims of the Department are:

- To encourage pupils to make full use of German.
- To promote interest in Europe generally and the German-speaking countries in particular.
- To foster appreciation of different ways of life, attitudes and viewpoints.
- To encourage enjoyment of language learning and of using skills.
- To promote transferable language skills.

## **Key teaching activities**

Via pupil-centred interactive activities and themes, learners are taught the essential language skills of Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing. The department aims for all students to use German actively and receptively.

The Department maintains enthusiasm for German by using a wide variety of activities, games and teaching methods to promote enjoyment and learning, independent thinking and motivation. Pupils will work as a class, in groups, pairs and independently, using online listening and reading resources as well as online vocabulary practice and games and the course book `Echo Express`; worksheets are also used to build up vocabulary and grammar understanding.

Forty Year 8 pupils who study German also have the opportunity to take part in a visit to the Rhine Valley in July. This trip is a cultural and linguistic enrichment opportunity for pupils to discover more about German and this beautiful area of Germany.

## **Assessment programme**

Topics and Grammar will include:

### **Year 8: Levels 1-6**

- Introducing oneself
- Describing yourself and others
- Family
- Numbers including age and time
- Giving opinions about school subjects
- The verbs haben and sein
- Masculine/feminine/neuter nouns
- Singular/plural





### ***Homework policy***

- Much of the homework set in Year 8 consists of learning vocabulary and grammatical patterns.
- In Year 8 pupils are also expected to complete more complex written work for homework tasks.

### ***Equipment needed per lesson***

- Every pupil will be given an exercise book and a work booklet which will be needed for every lesson. We ask pupils to provide an A4 plastic/cardboard folder to keep all their work safe.
- A fully equipped pencil case (glue, scissors, and coloured pencils) is also invaluable.
- Every pupil will have an assessment recording sheet and vocabulary test sheet where they record their marks and levels and reflect on their assessments and learning.

### ***How you can help your child***

- Encourage your child to share the new subject with you.
- Help him/her to learn vocabulary - spelling and pronunciation.
- Please check your child's planner and progress grid regularly.

Encourage your child to practise German on a variety of language learning websites available.



# History

Subject Leader: Mrs B Middleton

## **Department organisation**

The Department consists of the following members of staff: Ms C Best, Miss S Gibson, Mr O Lewis, Mrs B Middleton and Miss F Thomas.



The aims of the Department are:

- To develop a long-term interest in History.
- To develop a critical approach to the use of evidence in the study of History.
- To develop an awareness of different points of view about people and events in the past. This is historical interpretation.

## **Key teaching activities**

Year 7 - Medieval History.

We start with a 'What is history?' section.

All pupils are introduced to some basic historical ideas like dividing history into different periods, and different types of evidence. After this, we look at the story of 1066 and then move on to the development of castles. We cover many aspects of medieval life, including the importance of the Church. The study of Life on the Manor is always popular as is the controversy surrounding the nature of the reign of King John. At the end of the year we study the Tudor Monarchs.

Year 8 - C17th-C20th

Pupils will study 'The Making of Modern Britain', which includes the growth of the British Empire and the Slave trade. This is followed by an in- depth study of World War One and World War Two. We firstly study **World War I**, concentrating on the Western Front. In the Spring Term we look at the era of the **Second World War and the Home Front**.

## **Assessment programme**

In History, students need to acquire knowledge, understanding and evidence skills. These will be assessed in class time although preparation will often need to be done at home.

The assessments are mainly skills-based. Pupils learn to work with evidence i.e. primary and secondary source material. They are encouraged to develop their written skills for homework and there is an assessment based on each historical skill.

There will be assessment guidance sheets, which give details of some of the key ideas and vocabulary. Every student will have detailed revision notes in their exercise books. We hope that pupils and parents will find these useful!

## **Homework policy**

Homework enables pupils to build up their written skills before they are formally assessed. The type of task will vary from answering questions based on the lesson, to some sort of basic research or preparation for an assessment.

All homework will have a focus in line with the key elements of the National Curriculum e.g. knowledge and understanding or historical enquiry.

### ***Equipment needed per lesson***

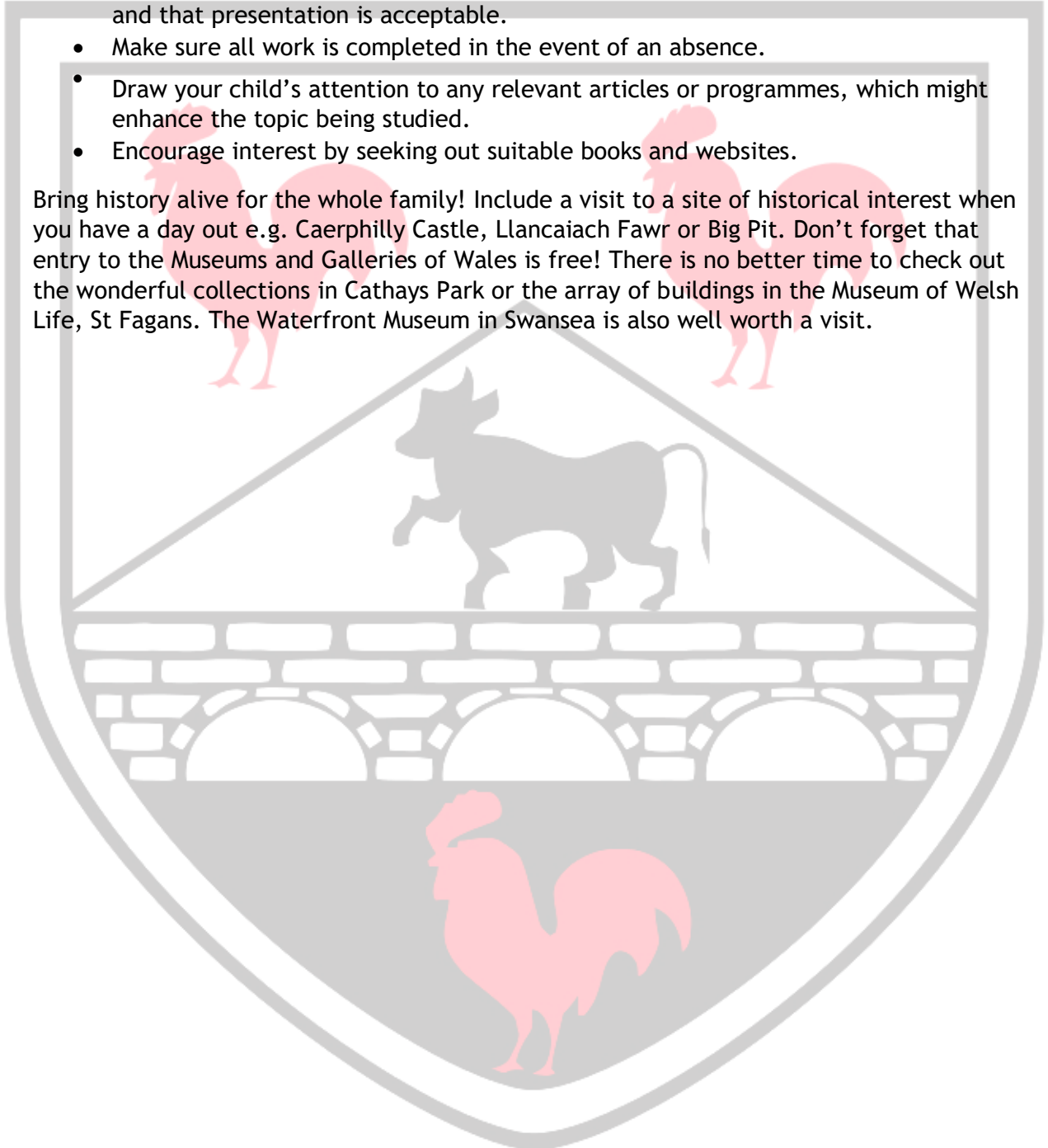
Pen, pencils, coloured pencils, ruler - just the basics!



### ***How you can help your child***

- Keep an eye on their planner to check that homework is being completed on time and that presentation is acceptable.
- Make sure all work is completed in the event of an absence.
- Draw your child's attention to any relevant articles or programmes, which might enhance the topic being studied.
- Encourage interest by seeking out suitable books and websites.

Bring history alive for the whole family! Include a visit to a site of historical interest when you have a day out e.g. Caerphilly Castle, Llancaiach Fawr or Big Pit. Don't forget that entry to the Museums and Galleries of Wales is free! There is no better time to check out the wonderful collections in Cathays Park or the array of buildings in the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans. The Waterfront Museum in Swansea is also well worth a visit.



# ICT

Subject Leader: Mr M Gittins

## **Department organisation**

The department consists of four members of staff: Mr J Carolan, Miss A Davies, Mr M Gittins, and Mrs L Vaughan.

Teaching is carried out in five computer rooms.

Students have an ICT lesson every week in Years 7, and 8.

The aims of the Department are:

1. To develop students practical skills in ICT.
2. To develop students understanding of how ICT is used in both in the world of work and the social environment.

The computer facilities are open to students some lunch times for school and personal work.

## **Key teaching activities**

The course focuses on teaching the following practical skills:

- Desk Top Publishing: using Word Art, borders, transparency, complex frames and other features of DTP software to create posters, business cards and brochures.
- Spreadsheets: exploring the various facilities including replication, 3D referencing and sorting, and using both simple and complex formulas. Students set up several spreadsheets and use them to model situations or solve problems.
- Presentation software: setting up slide shows and giving presentations to others in their group using Microsoft PowerPoint.
- Animation and Graphics software: creating their own bitmap and vector images, manipulating images, stop frame and key frame animation.
- Programming constructs using a range of languages.

The practical work in Year 7 focuses mainly on the development of skills using spreadsheets, desktop publishing, databases and graphics software. The students will also get the opportunity to do some programming in html.

The emphasis in Year 8 is on the further development of skills but more importantly on students using their skills to solve problems. In Year 8 students will get the opportunity to do some programming using Visual Basic. They will also look at interrogating a database and using a spreadsheet to carry out investigations.

## **Assessment programme**

A variety of assessment tasks are undertaken throughout each year. Five tasks in each year are used for standardised assessment.

All practical tasks are assessed using National Curriculum levels.



The department also encourages self-assessment particularly with major pieces of work such as the Mobile Phone Shop. Learning Ladders are available for all assessment strands to inform pupils on the requirements for their next level.



### ***Homework policy***

Homework is given in relation to some practical work. It may take the form of design (designing spreadsheets, data structures, poster layouts etc.), or it may involve investigation and data collection. Some investigation and data collection may involve students using the Internet.

### ***Internet policy***

The Internet is used during lessons, at lunch times, and may be needed for research at home. All students are taught how to search using the Internet search engines.

The department teaches all Year 7 students how to use the Internet and school email systems safely. Guidelines are given and reinforced for all year groups. Students have filtered Internet access in School.

### ***Lunchtime clubs***

The computer rooms are open some lunch times for student use for both school and personal work. Students are encouraged to use these opportunities to develop confidence and competence in ICT.

A Games Club is run once a week where pupils get experience of using Scratch to construct computer games. This is an excellent introduction to computer programming.



# Mathematics

Head of department: Mrs C Clode



## **Department organisation**

The department consists of twelve members of staff: Mrs S Booth, Mrs C Clode, Miss S Davies, Miss K Hougham, Mrs T Ingram, Miss A James, Miss L John and Mrs S Morgan, Mr S Perry, Mrs J Sage, Miss E Thomas and Mrs C Williams.

The subject is taught in six one-hour lessons. The classes are loosely set based on pupils' prior-attainment data and on-going assessment data.

The aims of the department are:

- To build on pupils' knowledge and provide appropriate challenge to continue mathematical development throughout the key stage
- To encourage pupils to question, experiment, discuss and enjoy their mathematics

## **Key teaching activities**

The mathematics subject content is divided into four areas: Number, Algebra, Shape and Space and Data Handling. We rotate these topics approximately every two weeks to ensure breadth across the curriculum. Developing pupils' problem solving skills is integral in all of the curriculum.

Throughout Years 7 and 8 teaching focuses on developing pupils' numerical skills. There is a focus on developing pupils' procedural skills and on their ability to recall numerical facts and procedures. We also focus on developing pupils' numerical reasoning skills and on their ability to apply facts and procedures within a wide range of contexts. This is about 'making sense' and requires active engagement from the learner to think mathematically, choosing what to do and how to do it. The numeracy component of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) sets out expectations for the development of numerical reasoning. It requires learners to:

- Decide for themselves what numerical skills to use.
- Apply their method to work towards a solution.
- Give coherent mathematical explanations.
- Reflect on the outcomes.

We use the Cambridge Essentials series of text books throughout the key stage. We also make use of the interactive Mathematics website My Maths. Pupils are given login details to access information, activities and worksheets.

## **Assessment programme**

Throughout Years 7 and 8 there is a series of standardised assessments to assess pupils' progress in mathematics. All results are recorded in levels. In Year 7 the assessments target Levels 3 to 6. In Year 8 the assessments range from Level 3 to 7. Pupils will be set assessments appropriate to their ability. In addition, all pupils in Years 7 and 8 will sit national procedural & reasoning tests in Numeracy.

## ***Homework policy***

We aim to set at least one homework assignment per fortnight. This will take a variety of forms - finishing off a piece of work, a set exercise used for consolidation purposes, a revision exercise in preparation for an assessment or an investigative piece of work.



## ***Equipment needed per lesson***

A pen, pencil and ruler are needed at ALL times. At various times in the year we will also make use of a protractor, a set of compasses and a calculator. A scientific calculator, preferably CASIO, is highly desirable as they will be used frequently throughout all key stages.

## ***How you can help your child***

Regularly review your child's exercise book and encourage your child to tell you what he/she is working on.

Encourage your child to practise mental arithmetic techniques - if your child is confident with multiplication tables, bust stop division, number bonds, etc. it will have a positive impact in all areas of the curriculum.

Parents have a vital role in developing numerical skills in managing money. Encourage your child to use maths in real-life situations such as spending and managing money. Listed below are some of the skills and knowledge that pupils at Key Stage 3 need to have:

- Advantages and disadvantages of bank accounts, including bank cards;
- Make informed decisions relating to discounts and special offers;
- Appreciate the basic principles of budgeting, saving and borrowing;
- Calculate using foreign money and exchange rates;

Websites to support your child's learning of mathematics are:

[www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk) - This has lessons and task to be completed online.

[www.natwest.mymoneysense.com/parents/](http://www.natwest.mymoneysense.com/parents/) -Financial mathematics thought games & videos.

# Performing Arts: Music

Subject Leaders: Miss R Hughes, Mrs J Williams



## **Department organisation**

The Department consists of two full-time members of staff: Miss R Hughes and Mrs J Williams

The department consists of two specialist classrooms, five rehearsal rooms and a music computer room.

The aims of the Department are:

- That all pupils, whatever their previous musical experience, are encouraged to participate with enjoyment in the creation and performance of music;
- That they develop their aural perception and listen to a wide range of music in an informed and responsive way.

The Music department also benefits from the services of a number of peripatetic vocal and instrumental tutors under the auspices of CCVGMS\* and CAVMS #. Peripatetic lessons are currently offered in Harp, Piano, Guitar, Woodwind, Brass, Strings, Voice and Percussion.

## **Key teaching activities**

There are three Attainment Targets in Music: Performing, Composing, & Appraising (listening to & evaluating music and its performance).

Pupils engage in whole class, group, solo and paired work.

They are encouraged to sing, and to play a variety of instruments. The electronic keyboard is the main instrument used for class teaching. Where appropriate, guitarists and orchestral players are encouraged to participate on their own instruments.

They learn to distinguish between, and discriminate within, the Musical Elements: **Pitch, Rhythm, Timbre, Tempo, Texture**, etc.

They learn to listen analytically to music from a variety of cultures past and present: African, Indian and Chinese music, Jazz and Blues, Welsh folk song, Music for stage and screen, music from the western 'classical' tradition, and popular music of the 20th & 21st Centuries.

They learn to improvise music through echo work, and they play call-and response clapping games. They learn to analyse natural word-rhythms as a basis for setting words to music. They are taught how simple musical structures, such as binary, ternary and rondo forms, achieve variety through a balance of repetition and variation. They are taught to recognise and use compositional features such as drones, ostinati, and sequential repetition. They compose pentatonic marches, simple Christmas carols and waltzes. In Year 8 they compose and perform solo improvisations over a twelve-bar blues chord sequence and look at film music. They also, when appropriate learn to use Sibelius, MuseScore and more recently, Dorico 2 software to enhance their compositions.

## **Assessment programme**

Assessment tasks, both formal and informal, are set throughout the year.



## **Homework policy**

- Where pupils have access to musical instruments at home, they are encouraged to enhance their performing skills by practising pieces learned in class lessons; and to begin to compose their own music through improvisation.
- All pupils are encouraged to do background research into the historical and cultural origins of musical works studied or alluded to in class. The Internet can be an extremely valuable research tool.

## **Equipment needed per lesson**

- Pen, ruler, **sharpened** pencil, eraser, a log sheet/work sheet will be provided (where necessary) and School Planner should be available.
- **Personal Headphones** are desirable for work on keyboards.

## **Extra-Curricular Provision**

- There is an extensive extra -curricular timetable delivered in the morning between 8.20 and 8.55, groups include Boys Vocal Group, Mixed Vocal Group, Senior String Consort, Strings, Training Band, Big Band, Concert Band, Flute Group, Ukulele Group, Jazz Group and Theory Club. An up to date timetable will be advertised via ParentMail from September.

## **How you can help your child**

- **If possible**, arrange access to a working keyboard instrument, however small & basic.
- **If possible**, arrange access to the Internet for background research.
- Encourage your child to practise performing tasks and improvise (musical doodling!) on the keyboard.
- If practicable, participation in 'live' group music making at this age may form the basis of an engrossing pursuit, which can last a lifetime.
- Talk to your child about the music **you** enjoy.
- Encourage your child to listen to as wide a range of music as possible - jazz, folk, 'classical', ethnic - as well as 20th and 21st Century rock and pop. The demands of time and finances permitting, taking your child to concerts is enjoyable, stimulating, and educationally valuable.
- Help your child to use reference books, the Internet, human resources for research.
- There are many new, exciting (and sometimes expensive!) Music software programs on the market. (Sibelius 8, Guitar Pro 7 & Dorico 2, however, Muscore is free and downloadable.)

# Physical Education

Subject Leader: Mr N Thomas



## **Department organisation**

The Department consists of six staff: Mr S Davies, Mrs S Dickinson, Mr N Hopkins, Mrs C Kinseyward, Mrs H Musgrove, and Mr N Thomas

The aims of the Department are:

- To give all pupils the opportunity to develop a full range of skills leading to efficient body management through offering a broad and balanced range of activities in line with National Curriculum guidelines.

## **Key teaching activities**

During the Autumn Term boys are taught Rugby, Basketball, Football, Cross-Country, Orienteering, Gymnastics and Health Related Exercise. Girls are taught Hockey, Netball, Cross-country, Gymnastics, Dance, Orienteering and Health Related Exercise.

Over the Summer Term all pupils are taught Athletics, Cricket, Tennis and Health Related Exercise.

During Years 7 and 8 the emphasis is firmly on participation, fun and skill acquisition. Boys and girls will experience a very broad range of activities in line with National Curriculum guidelines.

## **Assessment programme**

Assessment is carried out through direct teacher observation, pupil self-evaluation, and teacher-pupil discussion.

National Curriculum levels are recorded on the school database for each activity.

Parents have an opportunity to discuss pupils' progress at an annual parents' evening although staff are always willing to discuss concerns at any time during the year.

Pupils and parents are also encouraged to be actively involved in the assessment process by reviewing pupil friendly level descriptors that are available on the school SharePoint system and targeting potential areas for improvement.

Reports to parents are also issued at various times throughout the school year.

## **Equipment needed per lesson**

Clothing may vary with each activity taught. A full kit list may be found on the school website. The department operates an "All in kit" policy. This means that all pupils who are unable to participate physically during that lesson will be expected to change into kit and to develop their skills in other areas of the Physical Education curriculum such as leading, coaching and / or officiating.

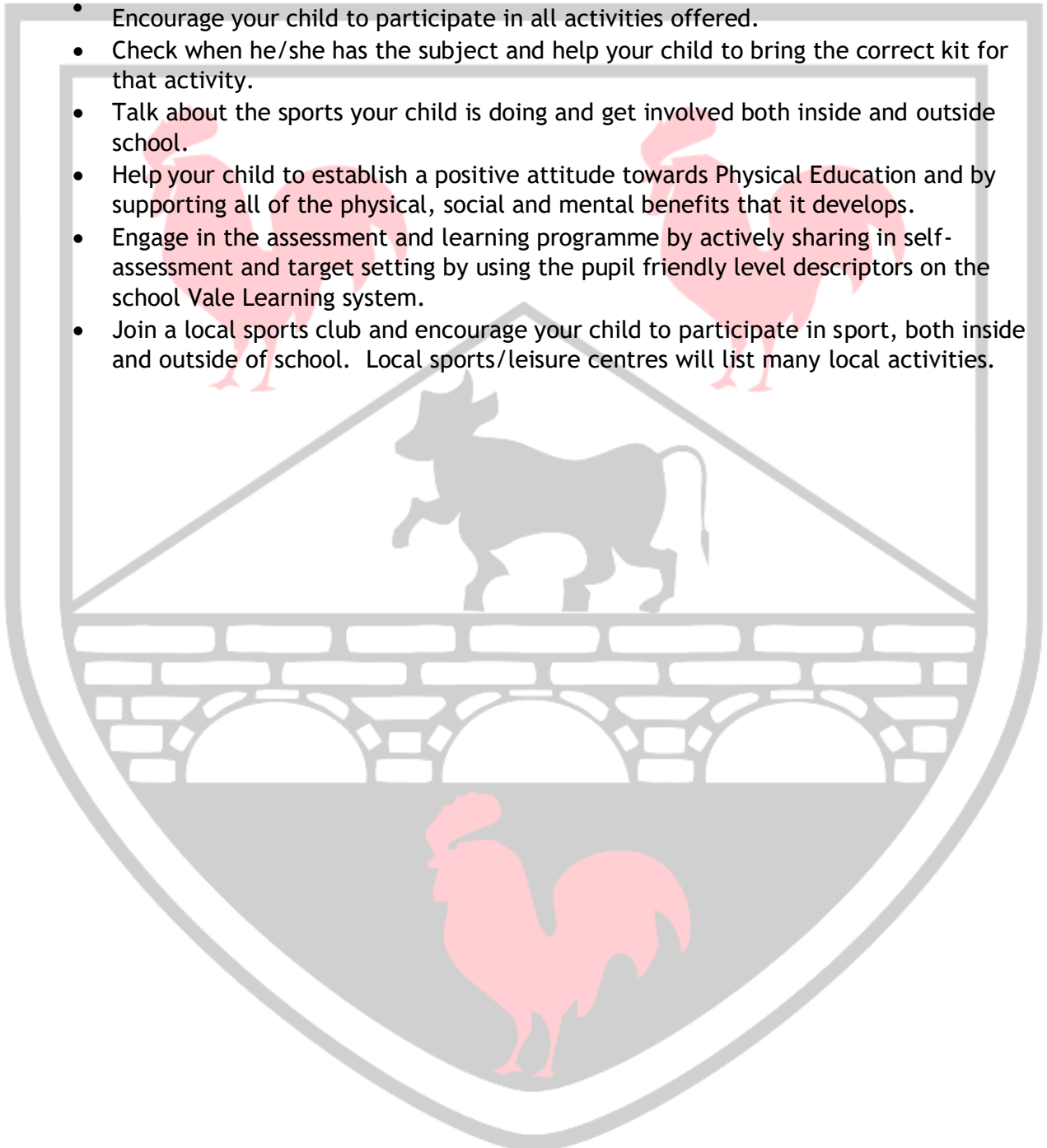




### ***How you can help your child***

The Department prides itself on the range and success of the extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils which relies heavily on parental support and help.

- Encourage your child to participate in all activities offered.
- Check when he/she has the subject and help your child to bring the correct kit for that activity.
- Talk about the sports your child is doing and get involved both inside and outside school.
- Help your child to establish a positive attitude towards Physical Education and by supporting all of the physical, social and mental benefits that it develops.
- Engage in the assessment and learning programme by actively sharing in self-assessment and target setting by using the pupil friendly level descriptors on the school Vale Learning system.
- Join a local sports club and encourage your child to participate in sport, both inside and outside of school. Local sports/leisure centres will list many local activities.





# Science

Subject Leaders: Mr C Cox, (Chemistry); Mr G Phillips, (Physics); Mr A Weeks, (Biology)



## **Department organisation**

The Department consists of the following members of teaching staff: Mrs S Booth, Dr J Brown, Mr R Burgum, Mr C Cox, Mr T Doey, Dr J Evans, Mr A Hansen-MacGillvray, Mr A Hodges, Mrs K Ireland, Dr N Patterson, Mr M Pullen, Dr N Stacey and Mr A Weeks.

The subject is taught via six, one-hour lessons, per two-week cycle. Most classes are taught as Science classes with one teacher delivering the curriculum, however some classes may be shared between two science staff. There are six fully equipped science laboratories and five demonstration rooms, all located in A block.

The aims of the Department are:

- To encourage and develop students interest in science and its impact in the wider world.
- To develop skills and ideas through practical activity.
- To develop awareness that science is an activity that seeks knowledge and applies scientific concepts and skills to solving problems.
- To provide an education that is in harmony with the aims of the school and that complements other areas of experience by establishing links across the curriculum.

## **Key teaching activities**

The science subject content is divided into the areas of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Examples of topics taught would include: Life, Fundamental Chemistry, Energy, Photosynthesis, Forensic science, Electricity and Magnetism.

Developing pupils' skills in relation to scientific thinking, inquiry and process as well as establishing a broad base of scientific knowledge and understanding is integral.

Activities support the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework in many ways, in particular researching, using measuring skills, organising ideas and information in a structure and writing accurately using scientific language. Numeric reasoning is developed throughout Years 7 and 8.

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## **Assessment programme**

For each topic studied students will sit a brief test and undertake a Levelled Assessed Task designed to develop their scientific skills. The Level Assessed tasks will be used to generate a National Curriculum Level. After each rotation of Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics there will be a more substantial exam-style assessment where students are tested on the content and skills from all three topics studied. These assessments will take place in February and July.

## ***Homework policy***

Pupils will be expected to prepare thoroughly for assessments and tests and will be set at least one significant piece of homework per topic studied.



## ***Equipment needed per lesson***

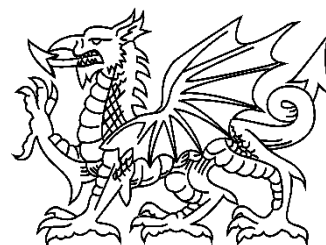
Every pupil will be issued with a booklet for each of the topics studied. This should be brought to each lesson. In addition pupils will need blue or black pen and a green pen, pencil, ruler, glue stick, scissors, calculator, rubber, sharpener and protractor. Coloured pens/pencils or highlighters and an A4 plastic wallet to keep their booklets together are also advisable.

## ***How you can help your child***

- Encourage your child's natural inquisitiveness about how things work and the wonder of the impact of science in all our lives.
- Encourage your child to visit websites, watch scientific programmes and use books in order to help him/her with homework.
- Encourage your child to bring ideas and questions to school. Check your child's booklets and planner regularly.
- Encourage your child to talk about science and get him/her to explain to you what he/she understands and what has been learned, especially as he/she prepares for assessments.
- Help your child learn the meaning of new scientific words. Quite often these will be recorded in a list in their exercise book or booklet.
- Contact the department if you have any worries.

# Cymraeg/Welsh

Subject Leader: Mr B Morgan



## **Department organisation**

This department consists of 5 staff: Mr B Morgan, Mrs E Broome, Miss E Cooper, Mrs L Ellis, and Mrs D Mantle. The department has 5 specialist rooms in the Languages Block.

The aims of the department are:

- To present the subject in an attractive, effective and fun way.
- To build upon the progress made at Key Stage 2.
- To enhance every pupil's attainment according to his/her ability.
- To develop cultural knowledge and empathy.
- To prepare pupils, for the world of work, in a bilingual Wales.

**Key Stage Three** - Welsh/Welsh Second Language is a compulsory subject for all pupils in Wales. Welsh Second Language only is offered at the school.

## **Key teaching activities**

The scheme of work is based on key themes. Our aim is to develop pupils' proficiency in listening, reading, writing and oral skills.

Other foci include language development, IT skills and enhancement of the Welsh cultural dimension.

Whole class teaching and group work provide the mainstream structures of class teaching and learning.

## **Assessment programme**

At the culmination of each theme a standardised assessment on one specific skill area is used (Accuracy/Reading/Writing). A level is given for each assessment. A graph is inserted in pupils' exercise books showing levels in order to track progress. After each assessment, pupils fill an evaluation slip to pinpoint strengths and areas for improvement. The main themes are:

**Year 7:** Fi Hun/Myself, Teulu/Family and Ysgol/School

**Year 8:** Gwyliau/Holidays, Rhaglenni a Ffilmiau/Programmes and Films and Ardal/Area

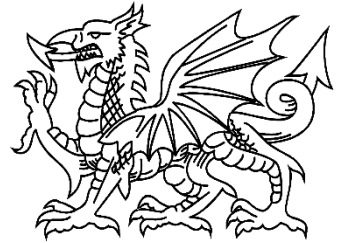
## **Homework policy**

The department sets homework every week. This will include revision, preparation, reading, writing and/or research tasks.

The tasks should take about 20 minutes, although some may take longer.

## **Equipment needed per lesson**

Each pupil has an exercise book and a Llyfr Iaith/Language Book and is expected to bring suitable writing and drawing materials every lesson.



### ***How you can help your child***

- Emphasise the cultural and vocational advantages of the subject.
- Ensure homework is completed properly.
- Encourage your child to use Welsh with you!
- Check the planner regularly.
- Watch Welsh channel programmes and use Welsh websites.
- Encourage the use of Welsh outside school.
- Visit the Welsh Department blog regularly at [www.cymraegybontfaen.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.cymraegybontfaen.blogspot.co.uk)

