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The High School for Girls

Year 7

Curriculum Booklet

2011-2012

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

The Year 7 Curriculum booklet has been put together as part of the Home-School partnership. This booklet contains a brief summary of the curriculum for all our students in Year 7. This includes information about 'The Deal', a skills-based learning programme which incorporates aspects from a number of subjects. Please note that for each subject there is a suggestion of the level the students should be working at by the end of Year 7 at the High School for Girls and nationally. On each Progress Monitoring Report and Full Report during the year students receive a National Curriculum level to indicate their current attainment, the levels contained in this booklet should provide a guide for comparison.

I hope you find this booklet both informative and useful. It can also be accessed electronically on the High School for Girls' website at www.hsfg.gloucs.sch.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Thornton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, diagonal stroke that extends to the right and slightly downwards.

Mrs J Thornton
Assistant Head

The DEAL

The DEAL is an integrated skills-focused course designed to ensure that all our students are equipped with the skills needed to become confident and successful life-long learners. The programme focuses upon further nurturing the skills of independence and self-motivation already in development at primary school, and the development of competencies in a wide range of other essential skills.

The programme integrates the subjects of History, Geography, Religious Studies, Drama and Personal Social, Health and Financial Education (PSHFE) and Citizenship in six themed modules that are delivered through a varied range of in-school and off-site activities. The modules allow students to develop a broad understanding of the world around them, whilst making links between subject areas. Topics covered over the year include:

- How the brain works, preferred learning styles and types of intelligence
- How each of us is a unique individual
- Personal health, fitness and well-being
- The history of our city and the development of other cities around the world
- Global and local environmental issues and sustainability
- Conflict in relationships and strategies for resolution
- Global conflict and peace organisations
- Justice and the legal system in the UK
- A study of culture in other countries

The competencies we aim to develop in our students are those outlined in the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills Framework. For Key Stage 3 these include developing the skills of teamwork, self-management, independent enquiry, effective participation, self-reflection and creative thinking. The DEAL comprises 5 hours of a weekly timetable and is delivered by two members of teaching staff. In order to monitor students' development in this area of the curriculum, progress will be assessed against the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills Framework and reported to parents/carers at regular intervals.

Art

Students are encouraged to develop and extend skills and processes learnt throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. A series of projects will allow them to develop observational skills, imaginative powers and the use and control of media in two and three-dimensional work. Many practical projects during the year also involve art critical studies which develop students' understanding of the work of individual artists, designers and craftspeople. Sketchbooks, linked to the projects, will be developed during the year and used for homework.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 4 by the end of Year 7. Most of our students are expected to be working at level 5.

Design and Technology

In Year 7 students develop their understanding of the design process as well as learning practical skills. They will design and make a range of products using a design brief and written specification, which reflects appropriate design factors. They will develop and communicate a range of ideas using annotated freehand sketches which display colour and form; one of these will be selected to produce a quality finished product using a range of hand and machine tools.

Design and Technology contributes towards citizenship and work related learning by enabling students to take into account how products will be used and their target audience.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 4 by the end of Year 7, while most of our students are expected to be working at mid level 5.

English

In Year 7 students study a wide variety of thematic units, each lasting about a term and stemming from the Framework for English. They have the opportunity to write imaginatively, for many different audiences and purposes, to read new and challenging authors and texts and to develop their spoken skills. They will also experience a complete play by Shakespeare, usually *The Tempest*. Each of our units has an accompanying reading project in which all students are involved.

Nationally, most students would expect to achieve National Curriculum level 4 or low level 5 during Year 7, with students at the High School typically attaining a secure or high level 5.

French

In Year 7 students study introductions, giving personal information, free-time activities and describing one's house. They will develop their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. They will also tackle basic grammar such as adjectival agreement, regular present tense verbs and the more common irregular present tense verbs. Emphasis will be placed on accurate writing, and classroom activities will include work with ICT, games, song and drama.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 3, while most of our students will be working at level 4 by the end of Year 7.

Geography

The main focus of study throughout Year 7 is the UK. This will involve students developing their map skills in terms 1 and 2 through the study of Ordnance Survey maps and atlas work. We will then study settlements, where students will have opportunities to look at the history and development of settlements within our local area and in the UK. Weather and Climate will be our next topic and we will study the different types of rainfall within the UK, microclimates and cloud types. Students will finish the academic year by studying Rivers and Flooding which will involve students visiting a river to develop further their geographical skills.

In Geography, whereas nationally most students in Year 7 will achieve a National Curriculum level 4, we expect our students to reach level 5.

History

During terms 1 and 2 students study the impact of the Norman Conquest on England, the nature of kingship in the Middle Ages and medieval village life. In terms 3 and 4 we investigate the impact of the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt, followed by a study of the impact of European settlers on the Native Americans. Terms 5 and 6 conclude with an investigation into castles and castle life.

History makes a significant contribution to citizenship, exploring how different societies have governed themselves and how beliefs and cultures have influenced people's actions. Students learn about the diversity of human experience in order to inform their personal choices, attitudes and values.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 4, while most of our students will be working at level 5 by the end of Year 7.

Information Technology

In Year 7 we undertake projects using communication software, the Internet, data handling, modelling and graphics. Through these projects we will develop students' understanding of which software is the most appropriate for the task set and the target audience. Students develop a set of transferable skills to enable them to use any new software they encounter. We also study the implications of ICT in society.

The national expectation for Year 7 is that they will reach National Curriculum level 4, however our students would be expected to reach a high level 4 or level 5.

Mathematics

In Year 7 students study topics from the broad areas of number, algebra, handling data and shape, space and measures. Students will deepen their understanding of concepts which they met in Key Stage 2, whilst also beginning to develop abstract concepts like algebra. In parallel with the development of these skills, students also begin to develop their ability to apply mathematical processes to solve problems.

Nationally, most students would expect to achieve National Curriculum level 4 or low level 5 during Year 7, with students at the High School typically attaining a secure or high level 5.

Music

In Year 7 students will study six units in order to develop the skills of composing, performing, listening and appraising. The focus of the work is to develop basic skills, and knowledge of the elements of music.

The year begins with a 'Rhythm' unit to consolidate and extend KS2 skills and to develop knowledge of the elements of music. Students will then study graphic scores and melody writing, composing their own graphic score and melody using Sibelius software as well as instruments. Later in the year, students will progress to writing accompaniments, and performing a solo piece in a class concert.

It is expected that all students will perform as a massed Year 7 choir in the annual charity concert. There are also chamber concerts throughout the year in which students can perform solos or duets.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 4, while most of our students will be working at level 5 by the end of Year 7. Some of our most able musicians will be able to achieve up to level 7 in performing.

Physical Education

Throughout the Key Stage students will experience a wide range of activities. They are encouraged to improve their skills and tactics in both practice and competition situations. They use this experience to transfer skills and tactics to new games and activities. Alongside this, students also learn to evaluate their own performance, that of others, and to suggest areas for improvement. Throughout the Key Stage students are given the opportunity to begin to develop leadership and officiating skills.

As students progress through the Key Stage the principles taught to each group will be the same, however some groups will be taught more new games and activities, whereas other groups will follow a more traditional programme. Each activity will be taught for a term (6 week unit of work). The activities taught in Year 7 are netball (incorporating core skills) gymnastics, dance, rounders, athletics and tennis.

The large majority of students will be working at level 4 on entry to the school. A small percentage of students will be working above level 4 and a small percentage may be working at level 3.

Nationally it is expected that students will progress by two levels of attainment across Key Stage 3.

PSHFE/Citizenship

PSHFE/Citizenship in Year 7 is largely taught within 'The DEAL', and, to an extent, as part of the active tutorial programme. The aim of PSHFE/Citizenship is to help students become:

- Successful learners who will achieve, enjoy learning and make progress.
- Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

Students, through active methods and a variety of teaching styles, learn to take part in decision-making and different forms of action which are designed to help them contribute to the life of the school and wider society. How to deal with bullying, living a healthy lifestyle and recognising cultural diversity are some of the topics covered.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies (RS) at the High School follows the agreed syllabus for Gloucestershire. There is, therefore, continuity and progression between primary and secondary religious education, learning from and about religion.

We start with an understanding of what RS is, and then move onto the study of big questions such as how did the world begin and was Jesus God on earth? During terms 3 and 4 we will be studying symbolism and religious belief, which will incorporate a trip to Coventry cathedral. Finally, we will study Islam and the issues of wealth and poverty.

Nationally, most students will be working at National Curriculum level 4, while most of our students will be working at level 5 by the end of Year 7.

Science

Students enjoy studying Science in our specialist laboratories. There is an emphasis on practical work, and students are introduced to chemicals and bunsen burners from the first topic!

In Year 7 students have all their lessons with the same teacher so they get to know them well. The topics which are covered are from the traditional disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. We are developing the curriculum to encourage creativity, and students may be expected to present their findings by making posters, leaflets, presentations, or video interviews.

Topics studied in Year 7 are acids, creature features, forces and motion, growing up, matter and space.

Nationally, students should be working at National Curriculum level 4. Students at the High School will be working at level 5 or 6 at the end of Year 7.



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