

BUILDING WORK OFFERS NEW FACILITIES TO STUDENTS



The major building works continued over the summer with the LRC being refurbished and the staff room moved to its new location. The new look LRC is a big improvement on the old one and is very popular at break and lunch time.

Much needed drainage works to the football pitches also took place over the summer. These will require a 12 months strict maintenance regime but should resolve the issue of water-logged pitches and make them useable for more of the year in the future.

Over October half term the

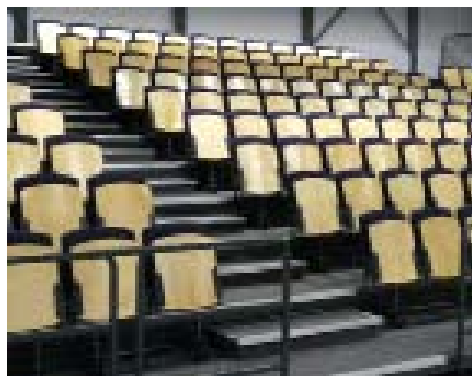
kitchen was moved to the back of the building and the old kitchen, dining room and staff room were handed over to Wates Construction to convert into new science labs and science prep room. The new kitchen now provides food to 4 serving points in the Multi-Purpose Hall. Additional seating was put into the Multi-Purpose Hall, and new seating was purchased to create an additional eating area in the Inspire Zone at lunch time. Two additional serving points have been added, one to serve in the Inspire Zone and a further one for students wishing to use the seating in the 'street' area. The change has worked well with students quickly adapting to the new arrangements. The loss of the old dining area has had very little impact on waiting times with the vast majority of students being served before 12.15pm.



Work on the new science labs is now well under way with the roof due to be completed by the end of January. This new state of the art science facility is due for completion at Easter and will include 7 new science laboratories, 5 of which will have moveable walls to create large super-labs. When the science works are completed works move on to converting the old science block into a fit-for-purpose Inclusion Area.

EXTENDED SERVICES

School Resources for Community Use



We have a number of excellent facilities which are available to hire outside school hours. These include:

- Multi sports hall & dance areas
- A variety of rooms for various activities or studies
 - IT & media suites
 - Venue for hosting presentations/events etc. including banked seating for 200 people
- Large outdoor area with sports pitches



For more information contact Rob Smith on 01782 233595 or call in at Main Reception

Out of Hours Activities

We have a varied menu of activities & clubs for all students to access outside lesson time. Some current examples of these are:

Breakfast Club
Music Production
Let's Get Cooking
Street Dance
Movie Night
Rugby Club
Knitting
Chess & Board Games
Vocal Group
Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Football
Reading Club
Keyboard & Guitar
PLUS

lots of subject specific sessions



New for 2012

Along with one of our partner agencies, year 8 students have been learning how to write a blog for the Blitz website. Articles on a range of news or interest stories will then be uploaded to the site by our budding journalists.

A full timetable of out of hours activities can be found on the BHHS website under the Community tab.

TILT Update

All of the Trust member groups are now well established and feeding back into the Trust Forum. The main focus for everyone is to develop their leadership skills and grow membership of their own particular group.

The TILT website will be launched in 2012 and will enable you to stay in touch with all the projects and activities going on in and around the school.

If you haven't yet become a member of TILT and would like an application form, please collect one from reception or ask your child to take one home for you.

Community Classes

Our IT for beginners sessions are for people who want to learn computer skills at their own pace.

Starts again in January
Every Tuesday 3 – 5pm

Top up your IT skills in a friendly & relaxed atmosphere

For more information all of the above, or level 2 qualifications, contact Rob Smith on 01782 233595.

PARENT'S PAGE

Feedback from Parent Consultations 2011

	NOV 2011	MAY 2011
The discussion with my child's personal tutor was informative	99%	98%
My child enjoys school	95%	90%
My child is making good progress because the teaching at the school is good	97%	92%
I feel my child is safe and well cared for at the school	97%	92%
Behaviour at the school is good	93%	90%
The school recognises when students do well	95%	91%
The school is well led and managed	97%	93%
The school communicates effectively with parents/carers on attendance/punctuality	99%	95%
The reports I get on my child's progress are useful	100%	97%
I am satisfied with the homework arrangements for my child	92%	83%
There is a good range of out-of-hours activities and booster classes for the students	91%	85%
I always read the school newsletter	79%	74%
The Parent Gateway is useful	92%	84%
The new school website is useful	93%	87%
I am aware of the Parent Forum on the Parent Gateway	79%	-



The Parent Group is now well established and meets each half term on Wednesdays, from 6-7 p.m. All parents are very welcome. Check out dates for next year on the website. If you are not able to attend then you can use the forum on the Parent Gateway. Here you are invited to share your ideas, thoughts and opinions about school and the local community. Log on and see what is being discussed!

Parents are also working with students, staff and other external partners as representatives on the Trust Forum. The Trust, or TILT, is continuing to generate lots of opportunities for both our students and our local partners. Parents are currently working on a new trust website which will be developed next year and also promoting the school for use by parents outside school hours.



ATTENDANCE NEWS

House Attendance

At the end of term 1.1 whole school attendance had improved on this position last year.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate everyone whose attendance is 95% and above.

Whole School Attendance

93.5%

1st: Fire House - 94.2%

2nd: Air House - 93.1%

3rd: Water House - 92.5%

Fantastic attendance from Fire House students!!

Cohort and Gender Attendance Figures

It is important to recognise the efforts of gender and different year groups.

Year 7 – 95.8%

Year 8 – 94.7%

Year 9 – 93.1%

Year 10 – 93.2%

Year 11 – 90.6%

Well done to year 7 for achieving attendance above 95%

Let's now look at gender that is better at regularly attending school Boys or Girls?

Whole School

Year 7: Girls – 96.7%

Year 8: Boys – 95.1%

Year 9: Girls – 95.2%

Year 10

Girls - 93.5% Boys - 93.3%

Year 11

Girls – 90.9% Boys - 90.6%

Well done girls but I hasten to add that boys are not too close behind now - come on boys you can do it!

Number Of Sessions Lost Due To Holidays

During the first half of the autumn term 358 sessions were lost through unauthorised holidays, which amounts to 179 days been lost in total. Parents do not have automatic right remove students from school for holidays during term time.

Please remember that holidays taken during term time has a detrimental impact upon the academic progress of your child.

Persistent Absenteeism from School

Previously, students whose attendance was below 80% (absent from school for 20% of the time) should have received several levels of school interventions at different stages throughout their absences from school – Some parents and students maybe aware of these.

From this academic year onwards the Government are now stating that students whose attendance is below 85% are within the Persistent Absent Category.

All students whose attendance is 90% and below should now receive interventions from the school.

These interventions are at various levels from school such as:

- A letter of concern
- An Attendance Clinic request with the Attendance Officer
- An Attendance Clinic request with your child's House Learning Manager
- A letter stating that no further absence will be authorised
- An urgent attendance meeting with Strategic Director: Student Services and/or Integrated Education Welfare Office
- An Education Welfare Referral made

As we all know students who attend school regularly have a better chance of achieving to their full potential and beyond

Holidays In Term Time

If you took a two week holiday within term time you attends cannot be higher that 94.7% attendance for that academic year!

If a holiday request is declined by the school, parents/carer could be faced with a Penalty Notice if they still take their child on holiday and have further unauthorised absence from school.



SCHOOL GOVERNORS PAGE

It has been a real treat to be able to applaud once more the achievements of the pupils and staff 2010-11. The GCSE results were the best ever-again. Improvement such as this shows that parents, pupils and teachers are pulling in the same direction: when everyone is asking what needs to be done and what support is needed for it to be done successfully. All the information tells us that the present Year 11 can set new records in terms of achievement; capable of hard work and able to do well. It was a joy to interview so many Year 11 pupils for the post of Head Boy and Head Girl. Competition was fierce and standards of presentation very high. The presentations put on for awards evenings and for new intake parents show off the skills of pupils- they were all very professional. Many parents commented upon how valuable the answers to their questions had been from the pupils who led groups on New Intake Parents' Evening.

It has been rewarding during the term to see how many families value BHHS. The school has welcomed children and young people who have moved into the area and some who have needed to be given a second chance due to difficulties encountered elsewhere. We ask only a willingness to work hard in lessons and an attitude that supports the community by upholding its values.

While we try very hard to help pupils to focus on learning, we are not able to allow children to remain at BHHS if they make

school unsafe for other pupils, and a small number of pupils have had to be permanently excluded this term. All information tells us that excluded pupils find it much harder to find future success, so we do not take this step lightly. We encourage all parents who are concerned about their children's deteriorating attitudes or poor behaviour to seek help from school early so that we can work together before it damages their education chances.

This term in particular has seen a focus on governance, investigating possible changes to secure the ability of BHHS to continue its positive trajectory into the future, led by a team that has shown such flair and ability.

Such a widespread range of issues to be understood calls for Governors with a range of experiences and passions. In spite of some illness during the term, the GB has maintained governors from parents, community, local authority and school staff: all volunteers, and are all committed to understanding the situation at BHHS and to supporting the school's drive forward with its improvement agenda. We are sorry to have to accept the decision of Beverley Anderson from Staffs University to leave the GB while she regains her health. She has worked with school for 2 years and she will be missed. We also wish to say

'Thank you' to Louise Eardley who has supported the GB during years of her children's education and who, having

reached the end of her term of office, has decided not to stand for re-election. Andrea Brownsword who has worked with us for the past year has made a difference to the work of the GB and again we say 'Thank you' for your contribution. On the other hand, we would like to welcome David O'Connell from the local authority onto the GB and also our new parent members Shaun Lees and Gayle Palmer.

Having a role on the TILT Board, Governors are happy to report that significant progress is being made towards the provision of seamless education from age 3 to post 21 through TILT partnerships with local nursery, primary schools, the Sixth Form College and Staffordshire University. Also, work with community groups and pupil groups in school are gaining momentum, meaning that the precious co-operative values can be evidenced throughout this area of activity.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Barbara Miller

Barbara Miller
Chair of Governors



HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS

Fencing to our extensive playing fields is now complete and has resulted in a huge benefit for the safety of students, PE lessons in particular, and other legitimate users and improved security of the school buildings.



Cars coming onto the school site too early at the end of the day remains a huge problem. The school day does not finish until 2.40pm and until then

the playground is a teaching space for the PE department. It is also the muster point for students in the event of a fire. Cars are arriving on site as early as 1.50pm to wait for students on the playground – this would cause us huge problems if we had to evacuate the building during the last lesson. In addition, when the playground is used for PE lessons on the last period of the day, traffic is backing up through school grounds and out onto Birches Head Road causing severe traffic congestion as shown on the photos.

In the event of an emergency in school, emergency vehicles would be unable to get to the

school and this could cost lives.



Can I therefore ask once again that parents please do not come onto site before 2.30pm at the earliest – this still leaves 10 minutes before the school bell goes. If the problem persists we may have to consider closing the gates until 2.30pm.

STAFF NEWS

In September we extended a warm welcome to a number of newly appointed staff;

Mr A Mountford
(Science Teacher)
Mr R Moors
(Maths Teacher)

Mr S Willis - House Learning
Manager (Fire House)
Ms R Manning
PA to the Headteacher and
Data Officer

Mrs S Lacey
Behaviour Support Worker
Mr J Reddish
Inclusion Support Assistant
Mrs N Lloyd
Inclusion Support Assistant
(joined us in November)

We also welcomed Mrs Lawton into her new role as LRC Supervisor. Mrs Lawton was previously employed as an

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

At the end of the summer term we said goodbye to Mr Jones, and Mrs Lawton took up post in October. The LRC underwent a huge refurbishment over August and is a very comfortable and pleasant space to read, work and research.

Year 7 have completed an induction to the LRC which involved completing an interactive team quiz; good fun was had by all, and hopefully students will visit the LRC to use and take part in all the facilities it has to offer.

There are a number of activities that students can participate in, (see the notice board outside the LRC) and more on the way; if you want to get involved or have any new ideas please come and share them with me.

Just some of the activities currently on offer:

- Reading club
- Knitting club
- Chess club/ board games
- Movie Night
- Mystery reader (back by popular demand)
- Seasonal craft activities;

Christmas card/ decoration making starting w/c 5/12/11 also we will be decking the tree.



Breakfast Club is proving very popular on these cold dark mornings; hot drinks, toast, fruit and yogurts are available. Newspapers, magazines and news channel to keep you up to date with current affairs to open up lively debate.



There are laptops and lots of books for aiding homework, research and revision, as well for reading for pleasure. Students were involved in choosing and ordering the latest fiction books to arrive in the LRC so why not come along to what's new in.



If you write a review on a fiction book (on a bookmark of your choice) you will receive 50 reward points and your review goes into the book to help other students decide if it's a book for them.



ICT SERVICES NEWS



Parent's Gateway

The numbers of parents accessing their children's attendance, house points and student assessment summary is increasing every term. Because so many of our pupils' parents have taken the time and effort to explore the parents page; we probably have the most successful online parents site in the city. Last month alone, there were six hundred and fifty five parents who logged on to their user area on our gateway. Thanks to everyone that logged on and continue to make the parents page a success.

If you would like your username and password for the parent gateway area or have any queries then please contact Mr D Johnson on 01782 864900 or alternatively you can email: itservices@dept.bircheshead.org.uk



Internet Security

Because of the ever increasing threat from computer viruses and spyware infecting the school network, we are investing in the latest internet technology. This new filtering and firewall system is at the cutting edge of internet security, and will add to the secure environment we aim to maintain at Birches Head.



Green ICT

Over the past few months we have been rolling out a program to shut down the computer network and projectors when they have been standing idle for long periods of time. This will reduce the amount of energy we use, and will also cut down on computer/ projector wear and tear.



E-safety

During October Mr Johnson and Miss Parker presented presentations on e-safety week in each house assembly. They explained the problematic issues that may arise when using instant messaging and chat rooms such as MSN, and social networking sites like Facebook/Twitter. They gave advice on keeping Facebook accounts private and the dangers of sending personal photos via mobile phones and the internet.

The e-safety week is carried out in conjunction with CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre). Videos that were used for the e-safety week and more are available on SPACE TV.



SEN - THE SUPPORT ZONE

The SEN team offers support in lesson for students experiencing barriers to learning along with small group interventions. During this term we have welcomed Mrs Lloyd and Miss Lacey to our team and they will be working with students to develop literacy, behavioural, social and emotional skills. We have worked intensively with some of our year 7 students to achieve a successful transition by providing daily small group interventions to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

Over the spring term we look forward to developing the newly launched Key Stage 3 Nurture Group. The group provides a highly tailored curriculum for a small number of students to enable them to overcome their barriers to learning in a nurturing environment, working with a limited number of staff and peers. Literacy interventions to target reading and spelling skills are now offered to an increased number of students and the skills of the team developed through training and consultation with external services.

LSU pupils have started to work with a new partner; Sporting Stars who deliver foundation learning, BTEC sports and Hair and beauty qualifications. Students are enjoying the courses and are working well towards their qualifications. We have had a new intake of students who have started to settle in well and are positive about their future in the LSU. Work on the poly tunnel has halted over the Winter but students are eager to begin growing once the weather improves.

CURRICULUM NEWS

Exams News

Years 11 & 10 have recently sat their exams in English, Maths and Science this past November. Results will be issued to students on the 12th January 2012.

The next set of examinations will be in January 2012 and these will be GCSE exams in English, History and Science. We will also be holding Progress Tests for all other years. Timetables will be sent home with students in December.

As a parent there are many things you can do to help your child prepare for their exam, you can help them to go through their notes for revision, make

sure they get a good nights sleep before the exam, give them a good breakfast before they leave the house (food feeds the brain and helps concentration) and also ensure they have all the right equipment for when they sit the exam, usually they will need a black and blue pen, a pencil, a ruler and an eraser. Results for the summer 2011 examinations for Year 11 were the best the school have ever achieved with 46% of students gaining at least 5A*-C including English and Maths, and a massive 75% gaining at least 5A*-C grades.

Well done to the Class of 2011.



PERFORMING ARTS TEAM

Music

BLACK VOICES

Last term 28 of our students took part in a project with the professional vocal group Black Voices. The project involved three workshops in school and a final concert. Our students did very well at the concert and received many compliments from the audience.

The school choir, with international recording artist Gillie Nichols, is going very well. Students enjoy singing a wide range of songs whilst developing their vocal techniques and harmonies.



This term the music department is going to start a parents' music group which will be a chance for parents to get together and enjoy music. There is the option to use the school's fully equipped recording studio.



In response to the large number of students requesting instrument tuition the school will be offering subsidized lessons on guitar and possibly drums from February half-term. Details are still to be organised and a letter will be sent out to all interested year 7, 8 and 9 students early in the New Year.

Finally, Gillie Nichols, the vocal teacher, is working with a group of students to record a CD which will be available for sale around Easter.

Media



Year 11 are working on tying up the loose ends in their work taking in photography, video production, design work, animations and some seriously serious research work. Gaining 4 GCSEs is the aim, as well as getting ready for college; this means working independently and finishing off all outstanding units before Christmas.

Year 10 have impressed everyone with their powerhouse of ideas and enthusiasm with some amazing ideas from 1950s Cola beverages, army biscuits, Birches Head video games and chocolate mice stealing milk! Assessment is continuous, with the group having to be organised each week with a schedule to follow. Homework is part of that schedule and in response to student requests, the media area has frequently been a drop-in zone at break and lunchtimes.



Year 10 are deep into their Advertising Unit 18, exploring how adverts are made, the hidden meanings and working to a tight deadline. Each group will present their final work to the rest of the team at Christmas for a final assessment and grades for other units! Hurrah! Next term we move onto Unit 9 Photography, hopefully to include workshops at Stoke College and the Peak District.

Year 9 are developing some excellent video sequences in conjunction with Dance. The work includes moving pictures themed on Parkour and movement. The school is being used as a candy-striped wonderland to jump over, under and through! There will be a joint assessment between Dance and

PERFORMING ARTS TEAM

Media, with the groups critically looking at each others' work and developing a pro-active attitude to their learning. Students have worked hard to get to grips with digital photography and video editing. The groups rotate after Christmas, so we move onto our third group with hopefully bigger and better work!



Year 8 are also working creatively with another joint Dance venture focusing on 'Car Culture' making mutant dancers with half car / half human faces. The idea is to have a moving backdrop that moves and compliments the amazing robotic dance routines. Hugely enjoyable and creative! Homework has involved developing this work, collecting images of machinery and developing mood boards. The groups rotate after Christmas which means a fresh new group, but they will have danced before... this could be good!



Year 7 are getting to grip with their own animated classics, using professional work as a starting point the groups have embraced line animation, stop motion, cel animation, writing their own music and adding their own sound effects... phew! Students have found that they can overcome barriers with the use of some imagination. Homework has been of a good quality with many students creating props at home to create amazing worlds from under the sea, dancing pens, monsters and flying! Homework has been hotly chased and has supported the learning, this ranges from some amazing mood board work and students using the media area to drop-in at lunch and break times to do more work!



Dance

Christmas Show

A huge congratulations goes to all of the students involved in The Christmas Show. The event was organised by Y11 BTEC Performing Arts students and culminated in months of hard work and dedication of all performers. To the credit of all involved a massive £750 was raised and will be donated to the Matt Beeson Memorial Fund.

Btec Performing Art students prepare to take The Regent Theatre by Storm at the Dance 012 Festival on January 27th. All Y10 and Y11 BTEC Performing Art students are choreographing and performing an Urban and a Contemporary Dance based on a stimulus of The Olympic Games. Their commitment towards the project has been exceptional. Well Done!

Collaboration with the Media department is pushing the learning forward in years 8 and 9. Year 8 and 9 performing art students have been involved in a cross curricular project resulting in a performance that fuses both Dance and Media. The project is evolving through student feedback and we hope it gets better and better.



ENGLISH TEAM

Year 11 Booster Session

During the half-term break the English department offered a morning booster designed to polish the skills needed to succeed in November's English examination. Sessions were held for pupils targeted C grades in the examination. Their hard work during the session proved that Year 11 have the skills needed to improve on last year's record results.

Year 11 Period 6 Sessions

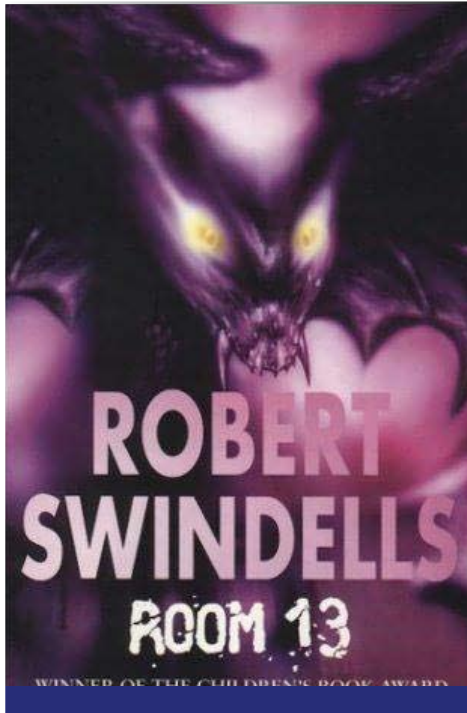
Members of the English department have been hosting after school sessions each Wednesday to ensure that Year 11 pupils have the opportunity to improve their English skills in order to achieve examination success. Regular attendee David Muller enjoys the "Advice given by staff to develop skills, it has really helped me."

Early Exam Entry for Year 11 and Record Coursework Marks

Year 11 took their GCSE English Language paper on the 8th and the 11th of November, which has meant that Year 11 has been a busy year, producing the coursework and speaking and listening tasks needed. Year 11 students have risen to the challenge, producing wonderful coursework pieces. Well done Year 11, a fantastic effort!

Future Events

Year 10 January 14th GCSE examination results.
Year 8 BBC School Report project
Year 8 Environmental project
Year 7 'Skellig' creative project



Year 7 Futures Curriculum English

Teachers have been taking the roles of hotel owners, Mr and Mrs Wilkinson, to launch the study of the text 'Room 13.' The novel reveals the story of a haunted hotel and pupils have been asked for ways to relaunch the hotel to make it a success once again. The ideas generated were simply wonderful, with the winning entry being a vampire themed hotel with a horror inspired menu.



Young Poets Rise to the Challenge

A record number of entries were sent to the Young Writers' Poetry competition this year with the majority of Year 7 sending their work. The entries that stand out will be published in an anthology of young poets work from the West Midlands. Many pupils are already excited to have received letters confirming their successfully entry into the anthology. Well done to all who entered.

Free Book Scheme

Every pupil in Year 7 received a free novel thanks to a national scheme. The pupils were able to choose from one of 12 titles and a book exchange scheme is running where students can swap their novels in Mr Cragg's room once they have finished reading their original book. Seeing Year 7 students reading their books whilst eating their lunch has been magical! Other measures taken to encourage our young readers have been the Reading Club run by Mrs Brassington and Miss Gibbs on a Tuesday lunch and the visits to the refurbished LRC run by Mrs Lawton. Keep reading Year 7!

HUMAN SCIENCES



Art

Twenty Five year 10 BTEC students enjoyed an afternoon off timetable to experience an Art and Design taster session at Newcastle under Lyme College before Christmas. The visit was a huge success with students wanting to experience more creative based sessions and potentially consider pursuing Art and Design at a higher level in the future

Last term a selection of year 7, 8 and 9 work was exhibited in the school reception area for visitors to the Christmas Show to view and appreciate; this proved a great success with more year students asking if their work can be exhibited when the Summer Show is calendared. Mrs Owen hopes that all artwork will soon become an important part of the school decoration, especially when celebrating student achievement as more and more work is being framed and hung around the school.



Mrs Owen has been working closely with Staffordshire University and three other Stoke-On-Trent schools on the

'Firing Up' project. It includes core elements such as a 'Kiln Rehab' and the rejuvenation of clay facilities at Birches Head High School and 'Project Clay' which is an innovative creative workshop programme delivered by an artist in residence in the spring term to enthuse and inspire our students through a collaborative project with other schools.



Society and Faith

During the Autumn Term, Y7 produced a project about their past, present and future while Y8 students investigated the religion of Rastafarianism and how religion and the law can collide, as well as what the world would be like without any religion at all. As part of the Key Assessment, students had to create a newspaper article on how Rastafarianism collides with the law and a mini billboard to show how Rastafarianism gives people an identity.

In response to feedback from student voice activities, we will now be showing example work. This will enable pupils to see what we expect from them in key assessments and help to guide them in their learning.

Human Development

Events to look out for this term:

Year 10 Child Development students having a visit from the CASH clinic (Contraception & Sexual Health) to reinforce learning about contraception.

Year 10 Child Development students having a midwife to speak to them about her role and other jobs within the health service.

Geography

During the Autumn Term, Y7 produced a project about their past, present and future while Y8 students visited Central Forest Park to find out how this former spoil tip has been reclaimed for recreation. As part of the Key Assessment, students had the option to create a 3D model of the site to help them understand ways of showing height on maps.

History

Y11 students will be sitting their Unit 3 examination on January 25th 2011, this is a source based paper focusing on British history from 1903 – 28 and includes topics like the Suffragette campaign and Britain in World War One. Students will be provided with revision support packs before the Christmas Holiday and after school support and revision sessions continue after the Christmas Holiday.



MATHS AND SCIENCE TEAM

Maths

Winmarleigh Hall Adventure Study

Our residential trip is fully booked for February, with 30 Y8&9 students eager to take part in a 4 day challenge!

Students will be given the chance to apply their mathematical learning to outdoor experiences including abseiling, climbing and high ropes. They will also learn survival skills and have the opportunity to have a go at fencing and have fun on the zip wire.....which Mrs Montali is really looking forward to!

Y11 striving for success

Most of our year 11 students have worked hard towards their GCSE in November, and have appreciated the extra support they have had from all the Maths department and the team of tutors we have in on Tuesdays.

We were impressed by the number of students that turned out for our half term revision session in October.....lets hope the extra effort has paid off!

Engagement

Some of our KS3 students have made rice crispie cakes as part of an investigation into proportion....with messy results!

Also some KS3 students took part in a Rocket Racer Grand Prix, which had students working in teams to design and

produce a model car...then race it! This helped students understand the application of maths in terms of scale drawing, costing and budgeting, alongside the collecting of data during the race.

At KS4 some students have been completing a project on allotments, where they have investigated shape and measure, looking at the perimeter and area of a plot of land and the number of different plants that could be planted, depending on the space they need to grow.

Homework

We are trialing a new system with homework..... KS3 students will be issued with an A5 homework booklet every half term. This contains a range of activities and questions that will help consolidate and extend students learning around the topics covered in lessons. Y10 students have GCSE workbooks with a range of practice questions in. (If you haven't purchased one yet, can you please do so ASAP)

Students will be asked to complete a section each week and will be given a deadline by which it needs to be completed and brought back into school. It is important that students take responsibility for these booklets and look after them carefully.

Science Science Club!

Earlier this term we re-launched the Science Club.....

We have 2 people from Staffordshire University who help run the projects with Mr Williams, Mr Storer and Miss

Kent....so far students have made rockets, had a paper aeroplane competition and made parachutes for an egg drop. Coming up students will have the chance to help develop a weather station, amongst many other things!

Science Club is on every Wednesday after school from 2.45 til 3.45 in R11 for year 7&8 students....so come along and enjoy the fun!

Student voice

Students on the whole said they enjoy science. They like the range of activities, especially practical work. They like that they get to work in groups regularly, and can share ideas. Students said that they know what is expected of them in terms of SMILE routines and attitudes to learning, showing that there is a consistency across the department of high expectations!

Homework

Just a reminder that all students have Science homework....

Students are issued with an A5 homework booklet every half term. This contains a range of activities and questions that will help consolidate and extend students learning around the topics covered in lessons.

Students will be asked to complete a section each week and will be given a deadline by which it needs to be completed and brought back into school. It is important that students take responsibility for these booklets and look after them carefully.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEAM

PE

Lunchtime and after school extra curricular clubs such as football, rugby and badminton continue to well attended by all year groups. The following boy's football fixtures have taken place all across the Staffordshire region:

Year 7 County Cup
Year 8 County Cup
Year 8 City Cup
Year 8 National Cup
Year 9 League Fixtures
Year 9 Staffordshire Cup
Year 10 County Cup
Year 10 English Schools Cup
Year 11 League Fixtures
Year 11 Sentinel Cup

Other football tournaments for boys and girls have included:

Year 7 boys 5 a side
Year 7 girls 5 a side
Year 9 girls 5 a side
Year 11 girls 5 a side



Other sporting tournaments/ events that will have taken place by the end of the term have/will include:

Girl's badminton tournament
Year 9 partnership games.
Year 7 boys and girls indoor athletics tournaments.

Year 8 boys and girls indoor athletics tournaments.



Leadership continues to thrive with students running after school events and clubs in our partnership schools. 4 year 10 boys will be given the opportunity to become level one coaches in rugby and then deploy their skills to the youngsters of our partnership schools.

Intra house fixtures take place at the end of every half term in a range of activities. These tournaments are now going to be formalised with an overall winner at the end of 'Intra House Tournament' week.



Special Mentions

Year 8 boys Jack Harrison and Tommy Bailey were selected to represent Stoke -on-Trent City School Boys football. Tom Hawkins in year 11 has been selected to represent the county in darts. Kev Davies in year 11 has been selected to represent Staffordshire in Football.

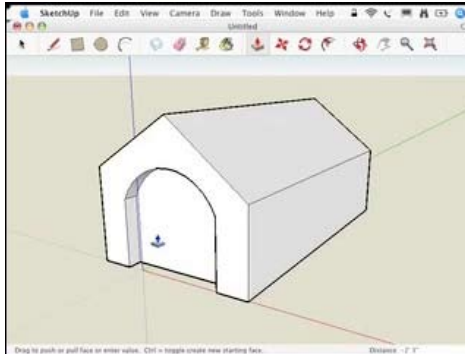


DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY TEAM



Design and Technology Year 7 – Moving Pictures and Isometric Drawing

Students in Year 7 have been busy learning about slides, levers and linkages and how they can be used to design and make their own winter scene "moving picture". This should be completed in the first few weeks of the New Year. The design brief is to use a selection of slides, levers or linkages to make a object to "move". Some of the ideas so far include a dancing snowman and a Santa that never gets stuck up the chimney!



Upon completion of their product they will move on to the topic of isometric drawing where students will learn all about 3 dimensional drawings and presentation techniques. The techniques of shade and tone will also be developed. This should be an exciting time for our Year 7 students in technology and give them a sound understanding of many ideas and techniques they will carry forward into Year 8 and beyond.



After the success of the card models produced by year 8's last term, pupils are now embarking on the designing and making of their wooden models or automata. Pupils are using their understanding gained from making a card model to produce a unique moving toy out of wood. The frame has

been assembled using a variety of tools and processes including a disk sander and pillar drill, pupils have learnt a variety of fixing methods and are currently learning to shape and finish materials.

In the second D&T lesson students are finishing making their Celtic pewter jewellery. All good pieces of jewellery are presented in a gift box. Students will take knowledge about 'nets' in Maths lesson to good use as they design and make their own gift box.

Year 9

After successful manufacture and evaluation of enamel insects, Y9 students are now setting their sights further afield, in fact 35 million miles in their quest to design, manufacture and programme their own mars exploration vehicle. The project allows students to find out about the solar system they live in, control systems, computer programming, working as part of a team, pupils are encouraged to work as part of a team and adopt different roles and responsibilities, explore a variety manufacturing techniques and using the design process to solve problems.

ICT, BUSINESS AND MFL

ICT Homework

All students will be set homework on a weekly basis which can be accessed / viewed via the ICT department Gateway pages. Students in Y9, 10 and 11 studying for the ICT GCSE will continue to have formal homework tasks during the theory part of the course and research /planning tasks during controlled assessment sessions.

Year 8 ICT

Year 8 have enjoyed finding out about Global warming and developing their Spreadsheet skills to create Public

Information Systems with live links to weather websites.



MFL French trip

The French trip last summer was a success! Pupils saw the sites from the Bateau-Mouche on the river Seine. We also spent a day at Disney Land, enjoying the rides and special effects at Studio Disney. After a hard day

of entertainment, we relaxed on the beautiful grounds of the château La Grande Romaine, taking a dip in the pool. We completed our trip with a visit to a hypermarket.

First Contact!

A link has been established with French school and many pupils have already received a letter from their own French pen friend. We are encouraging pupils to communicate with French youngsters their own age to give a real feel to the subject and develop international relationships. Next term, we will extend it to all pupils.

FIRE HOUSE NEWS

Introduction from Me

Hello everyone, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Stephen Willis and I am the new House Learning Manager for Fire House. It has been a great pleasure meeting the students and many of the parents of students within Fire house so far and I look forward to the opportunity to meet more of you soon. It has been a great start to the school year and I already feel that we are forging our own personality as a house. It is exciting to be a part of this and I invite every one of you to contribute in maintaining

Attendance

At the end of the previous school year Fire house were the best attending house in the school. It is Best attending house

Good News Stories

Caitlin-Rose Patten is in the process of having some of her poetry published by Young Writers. This is a great achievement and comes after entering and winning a competition.



We are also very proud in Fire house to congratulate Amelia Dykes-Meredith. Amelia has been chosen by the Steelworks dance and performing arts academy for a role in their

production of Aladdin at the Regent theatre. This promises to be a great show running from the 15th December to the 15th January with past 'I'm a celebrity get me out of here' winner Joe Swash as the lead man in the Christmas pantomime.

Events

The rewards day will have taken place by the time this newsletter goes to print and I am very happy to say that we have arranged many activities for the students to be involved in for their achievements so far this year.

AIR HOUSE NEWS

Air House students have been focusing on their A2L (attitudes to learning) booklets this term. The students created a strategies tool kit within their personal tutor groups, to enable them to be responsible and prepared for school. They have made a self assessment on Consultation Day, on their organisational skills, showing a positive interest, preparing to work and following instructions etc, they will be able to see how effective these are by the next half term with their achievement and progress levels increasing.



We have nominated new student Tilt/House Representatives who will be responsible for the organising of the ideas for the Tilt group ideas within school and the community. Their role encompasses the monitoring activities during registration; checking students have the correct equipment, uniform and planners, also, ensuring each student has their correct reward points entered on to the system.

This term, Personal Tutor Groups have chosen a charity that they would enjoy raising awareness with in school. Some tutor groups will be visiting the local dog's home with treats for the animals, raising money by being sponsored to walk a neighbour's

dog. One tutor group will be having "afternoon tea," with the elderly residents in a near by residential home, taking home made cakes and scones. We will also be fund raising for the following charities; Air Ambulance, NSPCC, Make a Wish and Cancer Research. We had some original costumes and a fun day when students were invited to take part in the Children In Need fundraising day by exchanging an item of clothing for something spotty or fancy dress.

Y7 students took part in the S-O-T schools Indoor Athletics tournament at Fenton Manor and were amazing, our students will now represent S-O-T in the regional Staffordshire indoor Athletics meeting in the new year.



The main themes the students have participated in during Assemblies and registration have been Remembrance Day; we raised money by prefects selling poppies and wrist bands during Lunch times. Anti-Bullying Week raised awareness by students creating a banner to join in the Beat Bullying rally

also choosing the lyrics to a song, which will be displayed around school. Aids awareness week this year concentrated on students "spreading the facts not the fear" which encouraged students to discuss the issues surrounding the illness.

Students are competing within the Air House for the most rewarded personal tutor group with the points reward system for good attendance, uniform and equipment, which is fantastic, as those students will be taking part in the rewards celebrations at the end of term.



We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, looking forward to seeing you in January, from the Air House Team.

WATER HOUSE NEWS

It's the end of the winter term and the students have been working very hard these past few weeks doing a variety of different things both inside and outside of school hours. Here are just a couple of activities students of Birches Head High School have been in.



Halloween Ball

After the half term, the water house prefects worked hard with their House learning manager Miss Winters, to put on a Halloween Ball following the success of last years'.

Many students came with friends dressed in their finest Halloween costumes and danced in the aptly decorated hall while snacking on spooky treats. Everyone had a fantastic time and can't wait for next years!

Sponge The Teacher

The year 11 BTEC Business Studies group thought of a very cunning way of raising money for their end of year trip by throwing soaking wet sponges at teacher while behind a wooden board the students made with popular cartoons SpongeBob Squarepants and Patrick Starfish bodies on. The student would like to thank all

the teachers who braved the cold weather and wet clothes.



Children In Need

On Friday 18th November both students and teachers came to school in fancy dress, pyjamas or something spotty and gave a pound donation to the charity. There was a bake sale at break time as well to raise a little extra for the cause. Students were very imaginative with their costumes; there were Monkeys, pirates, various super heroes and many other recognisable characters all to support Children in need. In total we raised £441!! Well done to everyone who made an effort!



The Christmas Show

On Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8th some students from every year took their chance to show off their skills in our talent show. Acts varied from urban and contemporary dance groups, duos and solos as well as singers and musicians. These very talented individuals

practiced very hard to make the show a success. The show was organised by Miss Hallam, head of dance and by some members of the year 11 BTEC Performing arts group. All money raised from ticket sales and the raffle will be donated in loving memory to the Matthew Beeson Memorial Fund.

Preparation for 2012

Over the last week or two, students of all years have been concentrating on their end of term assessments in their subjects. This has been especially important for years 10 and 11 who have been taking mock exams for their GCSE's in the new year... We wish them the best of luck!



From everyone here at Birches Head High School we wish you all a happy and safe holiday and hope to see you back in the new year on **TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY 2012.**



SCHOOL CALEDAR 2011-12

What's Happening	Dates
School reopens after Christmas break for staff and students	03/01/2012
January Exam Season for all students	09/01/2012 until 26/01/2012
GCSE Results release to students from November Exam Season	12/01/2012
Year 11 Results Evening for Parents	16/01/2012
Year 11 Reports sent home	Week commencing 23/01/2012
Year 11 Consultation Evening	02/02/2012
School closed for Spring half term break	13/02/2012 until 17/02/2012
School reopens after Spring break for staff and students	20/02/2012
Army Insight Week	20/02/2012
Year 9 Options Market Place	29/02/2012
March Exam Season for students in Years 9, 10 and 11	01/03/2012 until 09/03/2012
GCSE Results release to students from January Exam Season	08/03/2012
Yr 9 Option Interviews	Week Commencing 12/03/2012
Year 8 Reports sent home	19/03/2012
Rewards Day Activities	30/03/2012
School closed for Easter holidays	30/03/2012 until 13/04/2012
School reopens after Easter Break for STAFF only	16/04/2012
School reopens after Easter Break for Students	17/04/2012

BHHS BEATS BULLYING

The badges for the Beat Bullying Team have arrived in school and the team are eagerly creating their team logo, the Technology department is helping to support us with creating the badges. This will enable the Beat Bullying Team to encourage the vulnerable students of the school to meet and chat with us during break and lunch times.

The members of the team will be manning the following areas of the school; atrium, street and student reception on a rota system and will endeavour to resolve some of the minor issues around bullying during these times.

The team are currently planning an Anti-bullying Charter, which will promote the school's ethos around bullying and how we deal with the issues that arise. We will conduct a survey with student's staff and parents, with the most prevalent issues rose becoming the focus for the Anti-Bullying Charter. To assist

with the Charter the team has received some training and support from the Local Authority Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator; this will become a working partnership whilst the Charter becomes established within the school.

We would like to thank the members of the Birches Head Beats Bullying Team for their extremely valuable work in establishing the new team this year, providing an interface in supporting students and members of staff in resolving issues around bullying.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Art

Year 7 – Abstract Art

Students will be undertaking a thought-provoking and innovative project based around the theme of Abstract Art. They will research the artist Kandinsky and discover unconventional processes used to print, paint and colour to represent emotions and feelings through art.

They will learn how to create personal action plans, particularly in relation to their behavior and attitude to learning. They will gain confidence in their ideas and actions and learn how to work in a group. Students will also learn how to communicate effective ideas and work creatively using relevant presentation skills.

Year 8 – Textile Project

Students will be undertaking an exciting and creative painting project that involves the designing and making of their very own 'Aboriginal Wall Hanging'.

Students will learn how to experiment with different mixed media techniques such as collage, printmaking and batik to produce innovative and colourful outcomes in the style of aboriginal art. They will gain confidence when using the printmaking tools and be able to demonstrate good use of health and safety procedures when using technical equipment.

Year 9 – Cakes, Confectionary and all things Sweet

Students will be imagining that

they are a working artist who has been commissioned by the society of food to develop a sculptural piece based on cakes and confectionary.

Students will experiment with lots of 2D and 3D techniques. This process will be presented and annotated within a sketchbook. They will research the work of several different artists who will influence and impact on their work. Finally students will construct a 3D final outcome that fulfils the brief.

Year 10 – Wrapped, Trapped and Woven.

Students will be finalising and refining their ideas towards a final response to the 'Wrapped, Trapped and Woven' project. They will all follow a development programme that is intended to stretch their imagination and thought-processes through the manipulation of different techniques and materials in art. The project is aimed at facilitating independence and creativity which all students in the group have successfully achieved so far and will need to sustain as all final outcome ideas will need to be different, quirky and interesting.

Students will begin to make their final response to the project and learn how to master new techniques, present and construct their outcome and use creative impulse to develop original work. Finally students will evaluate their work, thinking carefully about strengths and weaknesses and any areas for future refinement.

Year 11 – Urban Art Project

Students have been imagining that they are a working designer and have been commissioned by the school to design an outdoor sculpture which shows clear links with the work of Banksy, Medway or Swoon. In this project they will also study unique architecture, paying particular attention to urban architecture and related street art.

Students will begin to design a personal response to the project by developing their ideas and using a range of 3D media and mark-making techniques. Finally students will evaluate their work, thinking carefully about strengths and weaknesses and any areas for future refinement.

Assessment: One to one discussion with teacher and peers to establish strengths and weaknesses of their work plus regular marking of work against the national curriculum.

Homework: All additional learning can be found in the 'Additional Learning Packs' but will be discussed and clarified during lesson time each week. Students will also need to think about attending art club (Period 6) at least once a week to refine, amend or develop any missing pieces of coursework or past pieces of work.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

PE

Year 7

Students will be completing a series of accurate replication activities, problem solving activities, invasion games and safe and effective exercise. The futures skills that are being focused on are evaluating performance with regard to their own and other people's performances in a variety of activities. Students will focus on strengths and areas for development of practical performances.

Year 8

Students will be developing their performances and learning in outwitting opponent activities, problem solving activities and accurate replication activities.

Year 9

Students will be developing their performances and learning in outwitting opponent activities, problem solving activities and accurate replication activities.

Year 10 & 11

Students have completed the theme 'outwitting opponents' and 'fitness testing' to gather evidence for their BTEC accredited qualification. This qualification is non examination based and evidence is gathered through a series of practical tasks. They have performed in both individual and team activities including football, basketball, aerobics, badminton and handball. They will also begin to complete a fitness

testing and training module which forms the second module of the 2 required to gain their BTEC in PE. Some of the year 10 are also following a GCSE pathway and they have made an excellent start to this course.

Design and Technology

Year 7

Future projects: Steady hand games

Year 8

Future projects: Metal Balancing objects and plant soil moisture sensors.

Year 9

Future projects: Be seen at night flashing badge.

Year 10 Product Design

Students will continue to explore a range of topics such as smart materials and standard components. This term we will be focusing on graphic communication techniques to include the following:

- Rendering with markers
- Application of colour and tone to convey a meaning
- Thick and thin line techniques
- Computer aided design (CAD)
- Concept modelling
- Drawing onto photo's
- Exploring construction details

Students will be taking their mock exam in March 2012 and there exam on the 25 May 2012. Product Design exams are 'themed' and from April till the exam students will be preparing. Students who do not reach their target grade will retake the exam next year. The exam is worth 40% of the over all grade.

Year 11 Product Design

This coming term is the busiest and most important for year 11 students who are taking product design. Student should have finished the design and research section before Christmas and now it's time to model and build final products. This section carries the greatest marks in the coursework element of the GCSE 60%. Students will need to take images of every stage of development. Testing at key stages will be necessary and products will need to go home and back to school. P6 sessions and homework for all missing coursework pieces will be mandatory so that students can achieve the maximum marks possible. All course work is to be finished for the 23 April 2012.

Humanities

Year 7 Human Science

Map skills with help from a local Ordnance Survey map. Different faiths from within our community.

Year 8 Society & Faith

Students will study the beginnings of the Buddhist religion which includes, Siddhartha and the many Religious practices and festivals.

Students will create a diary entry of Siddhartha's early life and the beginnings of Buddhism.

Students will also create an information board on Buddhist religious festivals

Year 9 Society & Faith

Year 9 are now doing the GCSE full course with the



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Welsh examining board WJEC. However we are now offering a varied, tailor made pathway for students to enable them to achieve their full potential.

GCSE - Religion and medicine; Issues of medical ethics and the sanctity of life. This will be investigated by examining differing religious views on the matter.

Pathway 'B' - Wealth and poverty – charity and human rights. Pupils will investigate life of people living in Koo Bay Sierra Leone. They will identify charitable agencies working with the people and how they impact on the people lives.

Year 10 Society & Faith

Year 10 will be continuing with the GCSE full course run by Edexcel. However we are now offering a varied tailor made pathway for students to enable them to achieve their full potential.

GCSE – Religion and Community Cohesion. Students will investigate the roles of men and women, racial harmony, religious harmony and the media.

Pathway 'B' - Ethical issues – an in-depth study on the views of others.

To create a booklet/scrapbook that identifies attitudes and religious views on one and/or two of the following; Euthanasia – Abortion – Capital Punishment

Year 11 Society & Faith

Year 11 will be continuing

with the GCSE course run by Edexcel. Students will complete topics that have been missed or correct any misconceptions. Re-visit areas that students found challenging. Revise how issues are portrayed in the media [especially newspapers]

Each class will have personalised lessons that will equip them for the final GCSE exam.

You can support your child this term by asking them about their Key Assessment work, what they are required to do and how they intend to complete this. Support them with time management in terms of meeting deadlines for the work to be completed.

Also, encourage them to take an interest in the world around them via reading newspapers or watching the news on TV to enhance or improve their awareness and understanding of current ethical issues.

Music Year 7

This term students will be using the musical skills they have developed in the first term to compose a short piece of music.

Students will be assessed on their composition using the NC Levels. Additionally they will be assessed on the music theory they have developed to support their composition and performing.

The students will be given a homework pack to work through to develop their grasp of musical theory. Please help your child by discussing your music tastes with them.

Year 8 and Year 9

This term students will be learning to play the electronic keyboard. They start with simple songs and build up to current popular songs.

Students will be assessed on their playing using the NC Levels. Additionally they will be assessed on the music theory they have developed to support their playing and performing.

The students will be given a homework pack to work through to develop their grasp of musical theory. Please help your child by discussing your music tastes with them.

Year 11

This term students will be using the musical skills they have developed during the course to write their second composition. They will also be developing their solo and group performance ready for assessment in March. Additionally, they will continue to develop their musical appreciation skills by work both in lessons and for homework. Homework will consist of completing listening exercises from the practice exam booklet. Please ensure that your child completes the practice questions and they need to develop their skills regularly rather than just two hours a week in lessons.

The final assessment is two compositions (30%), two performances (30%) and the final listening exam (40%).



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Human Development Year 7 Futures curriculum (Licence to Cook):

Students will continue developing practical food skills as part of the government's 'Cooking Entitlement'. Skills being focused on are the 'rubbing - in' method and students will make fruit crumble and a pizza. Students will also make macaroni cheese to learn how to make a sauce/healthy snack. Students will also be taught about 'Wise food shopping' and will complete an on-line assessment.

The above will be underpinned by the ECM agenda themes of 'Positive Contribution' and 'Economic well-being' during term 2, developing Emotional & Social skills of flexibility and adaptability. Language & Communication skills being developed are visual and presentation. Thinking skills being developed are reasoning and giving reasons for opinions and actions.

Recipes will be communicated to parents weekly and will be put on the gateway.

Homework will involve developing organisational skills, by getting ingredients ready.

Year 10 Child Development

Students will complete a unit of work entitled 'Preparation for Pregnancy and Birth' which looks at reproduction. Pregnancy, ante-natal provision, preparation for the birth of a new baby and post-natal care. We will then complete a

'Controlled Assessment' which is worth 10% of the total marks.

Year 11 Child Development

Students will complete the 'Individual Study - Controlled Assessment' which is worth 30% of the total GCSE marks. We will also look at how children learn through play.

Year 10 Health & Social Care

BTEC Health & Social care students will be completing unit 2 entitled 'Individual Needs within the Health & Social Care Sectors'. This involves completing a portfolio of work looking at needs of individuals in society, factors influencing the health & needs of individuals. We also focus on how diverse needs are met equally within society.

Year 11 Health & Social Care

BTEC Health & Social Care students will be reviewing all units of work and making appropriate improvements in order to achieve the highest grades possible.

Food & Nutrition

Year 10 food students will spend this term looking at the relationship between diet and health and the amount of energy in foods. Incorporated into this will be a number of pieces of practical work to develop practical skills. We will also complete a 'Controlled Assessment' which is worth 10% of the total marks.

Sociology

Year 10 and Year 11 are both

completing a one year course (worth half a GCSE) and the topic for this term is 'Education'. Students will learn about how education has changed over the years. Homework tasks will include research on education, revision articles and exam type questions.

English Years 7 - 8

Less confident readers: read with your child for 15 minutes every evening and ask questions to confirm understanding. Reading matter can be whatever interests them: stories, football magazines, teen magazines, comics, newspapers etc.

Confident readers: encourage regular and wider reading.

Encourage your child to read aloud their writing tasks to you to raise their awareness of the necessity to use accurate punctuation and correct grammar.

Encourage them to watch the news on the television and discuss current events

Help them to access resources for the areas being studied

Year 9

Direct your children towards Internet resources such as B.B.C. Bitesize and SAM Learning. Encourage pupils to read newspapers and watch television news programmes in preparation for the media sections of the examination. Be positive about the Shakespeare and Dickens texts they will be studying for their coursework tasks. Encourage your child to use quotations from the text in their coursework, stress the importance of the PEE



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

structure (Point, Evidence and Explanation).

Year 10

Take an active interest in their work – read your child's writing and ask them about the task and their homework to ensure that effort is being shown. Encourage your children to read a range of text types e.g. leaflets, novels, newspapers, poetry. Encourage your child to use quotations from the text in their coursework, stress the importance of the PEE structure (Point, Evidence and Explanation).

Year 11

Encourage your child to share their revision tasks with you – ask them if they have spent enough time or effort. Ask your children to tell you about the texts and poetry they are studying – what are the characters like? What themes are discussed by authors? Encourage your children to read a range of text types e.g. leaflets, novels, newspapers, poetry. Discuss with them matters in the news and encourage them to formulate balanced opinions.

Modern Foreign Languages

Year 7

Descriptions: All about physical descriptions and personality of yourself and friends

Food and drinks: names of food and drinks (snacks, fruit, main meals) and your opinions of them

Ordering food: in a café or a restaurant

Shopping: buying clothes

How will they be assessed:

Pupils will be set writing, listening, reading and speaking tests taken just before the half-term and Easter holidays. There will be also mini-tests to assess whether they have learnt their vocabulary homework.

Year 8

Ordering food in a restaurant: starter, main meal, dessert, drinks, opinions, problem solving, prices

Shopping: clothes shopping, preferences, pros and cons

Project-base: Pupils will be filmed in a role play that they have created in groups.

How will they be assessed:

Pupils will take the writing, reading and listening FCSE exams – Unit 9 – Food and Drinks. They will also be tested through mini-tests to assess their grasp of grammar.

Year 9

Food and restaurants: They will learn to learn about different food dishes according to the region of France. Express opinions and discuss the pro and cons of healthy versus unhealthy food.

How will they be assessed:

Pupils will take the writing, reading and listening FCSE exams – Unit 9 – Food and Drinks. They will also be tested through mini-tests to assess their grasp of grammar.

Year 10

Free-time and the media

Free time activities

- Talking about leisure at

home

- Talking about leisure outside the home

Grammar: Perfect tense with avoir, Recognising time expressions, Perfect tense with etre, Two tenses in one sentence

Relationships and Choices

Shopping, money, fashion and trends; Advantages and disadvantages of new technology

- Talking about money and shopping

- Discussing fashion

- Talking about new technology

Grammar: Perfect tense of irregular verbs, Using all three time frames, Adjectives before nouns, Working out the meaning of words, Comparative adjectives, Justifying your opinions`.

How will they be assessed:

Pupils will be set speaking and listening tests at half-term, and writing and reading tests at the end of term. There will be also mini-tests to assess whether they have learnt their vocabulary homework.

Year 10 Spanish

Education and future plans

School life: future plans, description of the school buildings, problems at school, uniform and opinion, school rules, future plans.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Home town

My town and the environment: All about where they live, description of their town, pro and cons, issues about the environment, leisure activities.

Grammar: high-frequency verbs in the present tense ending in AR, IR, ER, irregular verbs, introduction to past and future tense.

How will they be assessed:

Pupils will be set writing, listening, reading and speaking tests taken just before the half-term and Easter holidays taken from past GCSE papers. There will be also mini-tests to assess whether they have grasped specific grammar points or learnt their vocabulary.

How you can support your child's learning:

- Get involved by checking their homework regularly
- If your child experiences problems with his/her homework, write a note in their planner so that they can be given extra help.
- Encourage your child to explore the internet to reinforce their learning (www.linguascope.com). They can get the password and user name from their teacher
- Encourage your child to use the school computer club if they have no laptop or computer at home.
- Obtain a bilingual dictionary with table of verbs in the middle.

ICT

Year 7

Students will be embarking on a "Journey around the World" this year.

In the second term they will develop their data handling skills and create a database of countries around the globe using information gathered during the previous term.

Year 8

Exercise and Wellbeing is going to be the project which students focus on for the second term. Students will begin by looking at a range of issues that affect young people and create a informational website and help guide.

Year 9 GCSE ICT

Students will be starting the new academic GCSE course in 2011-12 which comprises theory, skills practice and controlled assessment, with a final written exam during Year 11.

In the second term students will learn about how ICT is used when on the move including planning trips, navigational aids and staying in touch with people at home. They will be assessed each lesson based on class work and also undertake end of unit tests and a practical assignment to develop skills required for the Controlled Assessment.

Year 10 GCSE ICT (core)

Students will be continuing the academic GCSE course in 2011-12 which comprises theory, skills practice and controlled assessment, with a final written

exam during Year 11. In the second term students will complete their movie and a digital information point for the controlled assessment tasks (activity 3). They will then complete an evaluation of the whole project (activity 4).

Year 10 Option: GCSE ICT

Students will explore the design of interactive digital products such as websites, computer games and databases. They will begin work on the controlled assessment researching, designing and creating a digital product of their choice based on a theme given by the examination board.

Year 11 GCSE ICT (core)

Students will be continuing the academic GCSE course in 2011-12 which comprises theory, skills practice and controlled assessment, with a final written exam in the summer. In the second term students will complete an evaluation of the whole project (activity 4).

Business Studies

Year 10 GCSE Business

Students will be continuing with GCSE theory in preparation for their Unit 1 exam: introduction to small businesses.

They will cover this term:

- Obtaining finance.
- Customer focus and marketing mix.
- Limited liability.
- Start-up, legal and tax issues.
- Customer satisfaction.
- Recruitment.
- Demand and supply.
- Interest rates.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

- Exchange rates.
- Business cycle.
- Stakeholders.

Year 10 BTEC Business

Students will be continuing with BTEC coursework. They will cover this term Unit 4 People in Organisations. This unit introduces learners to the variety of job roles that exist within organisations and the various functions performed by individual roles. Learners will discover that there are a number of important roles in any organisation which have to be performed effectively for that organisation to be successful. Organisations use person specifications and job descriptions to ensure that they recruit the best people to fill job vacancies. Learners will be given the opportunity to produce these important documents for given job roles. They will also have the opportunity to complete an application and an interview for a specific job role. Learners will also learn about the types of organisational structures used in business organisations. Learners will also consider how they should prepare for interview and employment and the necessary

Year 11 BTEC Business

Students will be continuing with BTEC coursework they will cover this term Unit 22 Visual merchandising. This unit is designed to give learners an understanding of how different types of retail outlet make the best use of space to give customers the best opportunities to buy a range of goods. Learners will investigate and experience,

through practical application, the techniques retailers use to entice customers into retail outlets and into buying goods. Careful consideration needs to be given to the merchandising and display techniques retailers use to enable customers to move naturally and freely from one area to another in order to make purchasing decisions. The unit is intended to develop learners' understanding of how visual merchandising has to be attractive and appropriate, while the clever use of space can stimulate customers into purchasing, simultaneously meeting business objectives. Learners will also have the opportunity to plan a layout, and to assess whether real outlets comply with health and safety regulations.

Geography

Year 7

Map skills with help from a local Ordnance Survey map. Different faiths from within our community.

Year 8

Fantastic Places- students will investigate some of the most interesting and fantastic locations on the planet.

Year 9

Antarctica- what's it like? Who owns it? What does the future hold? Should the UK government extend the Antarctica Treaty, signed in 1998?

Year 10

Drainage Basins- how river systems work, causes and effects of flooding and how

people respond to floods. Coasts- processes operating at the coast and how people interact with this environment.

Year 11

Settlement patterns in UK cities (including Stoke-on-Trent) and abroad (eg. Sao Paulo in Brazil) Shopping- how it has changed over the years and what the future holds.

You can support your child this term by asking them about their Key Assessment work, what they are required to do and how they intend to complete this. Support them with time management in terms of meeting deadlines for the work to be completed.

Also, encourage them to take an interest in the world around them via reading newspapers or watching the news on TV to enhance or improve their awareness and understanding of current geographical issues.

Media

Year 11

Next term, the CAM Diploma team will be working on their Campaign / Festival units preparing to stage a one day festival at the Victoria Hall, Hanley. The BTEC group complete their last unit to boost their grades.

Year 10

Next term we move onto using Photoshop and making an ad campaign, using posters, video and radio adverts



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Year 9

Next term sees the last rotation of the groups working with dance on the year 9 Parkour project, with the expectation that they will do even better.

Year 8

Next term as with Year 9 sees the last rotation of the groups working with dance on the Year 8 Cog project with the expectation that they will do even better.

Year 7

Next term sees students developing skills in presentation and evaluation through researching and creating their own magazine and after half term extending the ideas into a video magazine.

How you can support your child's learning Years 7, 8 and 9

When watching television discuss with your child how they think the programme was made.

Discuss how advertisements are targeted at a specific audience e.g. Fisher price aimed at young children

Watching animations on film, the internet or DVD and discussing the different techniques being used e.g. The Simpsons compared to Toy Story 3 or borrow a resource from Mr Keeling in the Media Room

Years 10 and 11

BTEC share family photographs and discuss aspects of culture and how times have changed: fashion, music, TV, films, Stoke-on-Trent etc

Talk about the TV programmes, adverts, films and internet that you share encourage them to develop a critical analysis.

Dance Year 7

All students in year 7 will look at the components of performance, appreciation and choreography through a variety of styles and professional dance works. They will look at the issues of Bullying making specific reference to Christopher Bruce's Swan Song, and they will also study the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira. Assessment is ongoing in every lesson and formally takes place at the end of each half term.

Year 8

All students rotate every half term between Music, Media and Dance. Through their dance rotation students take inspiration from a Honda Accord Advert to choreograph a whole class dance piece. Throughout the unit they work alongside their peers in Media to produce a multi media performance that is shared to an audience. Assessment is ongoing in every lesson and formally takes place at the end of each half term.

Year 9

All students rotate between Music, Media and Dance for the first 3 half terms of the year prior to selecting which subject they want to focus on for the remaining on the year.

Through their dance rotation students will take the stimulus of Parkour, otherwise known as Free Running, to choreograph short dances to. They will look at clips from the channel 4 documentary Jump Britain to gain inspiration and through a creative enquiry approach. Past students have created some fantastic work. Assessment is ongoing in every lesson and formally takes place at the end of each half term.

Y10 and Y11 Btec Performing Arts

Students in Y10 and Y11 are rehearsing a dance piece based on The Olympic Games through both Urban and Contemporary styles. This will be premiered at The Regent Theatre on January 27th as part of The Dance 012 Festival, tickets are available from The Regent Theatre for anyone who wishes to support the students.

Additional rehearsals will take place on the following dates:

- Wednesday 4th January 2012 (2.40pm – 3.30pm)
- Wednesday 11th January 2012 (2.40pm – 3.30pm)
- Wednesday 18th January 2012 (2.40pm – 3.30pm)
- Wednesday 25th January 2012 (2.40pm – 3.30pm)

Parents can support this terms work by ensuring that students are consistently prepared for lessons by bringing the appropriate kit and to encourage their child to actively participate in the dance extended learning programme as outlined above.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

History Year 8

students will continue to study the nature of Tudor and Stuart monarchy, exploring topics like the Spanish Armada, Mary, Queen of Scots, the Gunpowder Plot and the English Civil War. Through their studies students will develop independent research and source-handling skills.

Year 9

Students will continue to explore the key features of World War One, in particular examining the events of the Battle of the Somme and judgements made about Field Marshall Haig. Students will continue to explore key events in early Twentieth Century before beginning a depth study on Nazi Germany.

Year 10

Students will continue to learn about differing aspects of Twentieth Century History in preparation for their Unit 1 examination in June, these will include the work of the League of Nations and the causes of World War Two before beginning their Controlled Assessment task.

Year 11

Will be completing their preparation for their Unit 3 source-based exam before beginning their final topic, Weimar and Nazi Germany. Those students who require a retake of the Unit 1 examination will be supported in after-school revision and support sessions.

How will students be assessed?

In Y10 and 11 assessment is specific and linked to their exam requirements and their controlled assessment, both yeargroups will practice a series of short and extended responses which reflect their modular exams. In Keystage 3 students will be assessed using source-based tasks which explore key events and more extended writing which examines historical change over the period studied.

Homework

One new aspect of Keystage 3 homework is revision for in-class tests, students are frequently set revision tasks based on the topic they are studying, the revision practise will help them prepare for their formal History tests during the year. Other areas covered include source analysis skills, empathetic and creative writing, imagining you are part of the history you are studying. Year 10 will have a number of homeworks relating to their International Relations exam and Year 11 will have a number of homeworks relating to Weimar and Nazi Germany. Both Y10 and Y11 homeworks will also be based around exam-based questions and will build on the work in lessons and identified student need.

Key information for parents

Revision and support continues for Y11 after school on Wednesdays, revision support will begin for Y10 based on individual student need.

How can you support your child with this half terms work and homework?

Encourage Y11 students to attend revision and support sessions and to use their revision packs in the lead up to the examinations.

Support students with research and revision tasks, if you have the internet, encourage them to use it as a resource, taking time to read information and select the most relevant pieces. Encourage students to read around the topic or watch programmes of relevance so as to gain a greater knowledge.

Maths Year 7

Students will be looking at questionnaires and handling data collected from them. They will be learning about BIDMAS, long multiplication and division, square roots and square numbers.

Year 8

Students will be learning about linear functions, straight line graphs, powers and decimals, congruent shapes and transformations, before moving on to solving algebraic equations.

Year 9

Will be learning about frequency diagrams, area of quadrilaterals, volume, powers and decimals, before moving on to solving algebraic equations.



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

All students will complete assessments regularly throughout the term, including the use of SATS questions, levelled written assignments and end of term tests.

Year 10

Students in sets 1&2 will be learning about 2D and 3D shapes, including area and perimeter, angles, circles, transformations and Pythagoras' theorem, before moving on to looking at how we collect and record data, before processing and presenting it.

Students in sets 3&4 will be having an introduction to algebra before moving on to patterns and sequences, quadrilaterals and parallel lines, fractions, decimals and percentages.

All students will be taking a Mock exam in January, and sets 1&2 are preparing to take their real GCSE in June!

Year 11

Students will be continuing to improve on their past performance by identifying gaps in their knowledge and following a more tailored route through to success at GCSE.

Some students are working towards achieving A* - B on the higher paper, and need to be pushing themselves at every opportunity!

Those who have not yet achieved the C grade that they are aiming for, need to make the most of the support that is on offer through coaching groups during school time and P6 on Thursdays after school. We have revision guides and workbooks available for those who have not yet purchased them.....a great tool to help with revision at home!

Science

Year 7

Students will be working together to investigate electricity and magnets, which will hopefully involve a trip to a museum.

Year 8

Students will be studying the rock cycle, which will hopefully involve a trip out to a local site to see some examples at first hand.

Year 9

Will be revising in preparation for end of key stage 3 exams, before moving on to start studying for their GCSE in CORE Science.

All students will complete assessments regularly throughout the term, which will be either self or peer assessed, before being assessed by the class teacher. At the end of term students will take an end of term test.

Year 10

GCSE Core and Additional Science

Students will be continuing to study unit C1 which covers the earth and it's atmosphere, the useful products we get from

it and the effects of pollution on it. Students will also study production and use of acids, extraction of metals and the production and uses of fuels. This will include a range of activities, including research and practical activities to help students develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific process and investigative techniques associated with Chemistry. Students are preparing for a GCSE exam in March.

Year 11

GCSE Core and Additional Science

Students will be studying the earth and it's atmosphere, the useful products we get from it and the effects of pollution on it. They will also be studying chemical reactions and chemical bonding, in particular how this is used to produce new materials and products. This is in preparation for their C1 and C2 exams in March.

BTEC First Diploma

Students will be studying Units 4 & 5, which look at Applications of Chemical Substances (chemical bonding, endo/exothermic reactions, organic compounds and specialised materials) and Applications of Physical science (motion, force, waves and electricity). As always this is portfolio work and therefore students need to ensure all work is completed by the deadline and improved in response to feedback. This next term is extremely important as the final deadline for course work is soon after Easter!



AUTUMN TERM CURRICULUM INFO

Double Award GCSE

Unit 3 – Science at Work

Students will be producing 2 examples of pure dry substances, using 2 different chemical reactions. They will then be constructing and testing both a mechanical and electronic device. These activities will involve writing a report for their portfolio. Students will be able to improve assignments in response to feedback. Some students will be taking their Unit 2 Exam in January, either for the first time, or as a re-sit.