



Balcarras

From strength to strength

YEAR 7
SUBJECT INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS

2021 - 2022

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NOTES

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Dear Parents

I hope that your child is beginning to settle into life at Balcarras and has enjoyed the start to the year.

This booklet has been written so that you are well informed about all the courses your child is following. I hope that you will find it helpful. It is intended to be no more than an introduction: where you need further information the head of department concerned will be pleased to provide it.

In almost every case groups in Year 7 are mixed ability. Your child is therefore being taught in their tutor group, which is made up of a cross-section of all the pupils in the year. The one exception is mathematics, where the pupils have been grouped into sets of similar ability.

I hope that Year 7 will prove to be the start of a bright career for your child here at Balcarras.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Elizabeth Cullis
Assistant Headteacher

October 2021

Art

Work in the studio

The art department has four specialist studios. The rooms are light and airy and provide a stimulating environment for all the different key stages. All the rooms are equipped with data projectors and computers.

Students will be introduced to a range of different materials and working practices. The department works hard to instil a confidence in the students and encourages them to develop a curiosity into why artists make their work. Pupils are introduced to art history as the starting point for practical work of their own.

A typical unit of work could therefore look at the expressive nature of the drawings of Van Gogh and translate his mark-making into paintings of the surrounding countryside. A characteristic three-dimensional assignment would begin with the observation of a cityscape and go on to break that down into sections which can be represented in clay. Mixed media work would result in a combination of materials being used on a single piece of work.

Resources used

These are wide-ranging and can include drawing, painting, collage, print-making and clay work. Stimuli for lessons include objects, books, reproductions and demonstrations using ICT.

How parents are able to help

For most work in the studio, pupils will need an apron or an old shirt to protect their uniforms from any damage. As homework often involves drawing, a 2B pencil is recommended. Sketchbooks are provided in Year 7. A glue stick and scissors will prove invaluable. Pupils are encouraged to use word processing for written projects and internet research.

Head of Department: Mr D Hazael

How will your child be assessed at KS3?

- We will have **TARGET GRADES of 1-9** (1 being the lowest, 9 the highest) instead of levels.
- We will use the CAT4 cognitive ability test to inform the targets set. This is the UK's most widely used test of reasoning abilities for children aged 6 – 17+ years. Year 7 pupils will sit this test in their first term at Balcarras. No revision is needed before a pupil sits this test. We will also consider any department 'baseline tests' and set them a target at Christmas of Year 7.
- The target grade (e.g. grade 6) remains the same grade for all three years (7, 8 and 9) but the work and assessment criteria to meet that grade gets progressively tougher year on year.
- We will report progress on whether the pupil is successfully below/on/above that target using 'interim' and full written reports throughout the three years.
- Targets may be raised over the years if pupils achieve them too easily. But they will rarely be lowered as we think every pupil should strive to reach their potential with our help.
- Many styles of work – not just official assessments will be marked using the numbers 1-9. However, other marking techniques can also be incorporated to assess progress as subject teachers see fit.
- There will be no assumption that a Grade 7 at KS3 should mean a grade 7 at GCSE (however, it will give us an indication of their ability).
- Heads of Department have all designed their own sets of assessment criteria for the grades which have been passed through the Senior Management Team to ensure consistency, fairness and rigour.

Study Skills

During their time in Year 7, pupils will be introduced to the main ideas and principles of Independent Learning. They will be introduced to **The 5 Rs**. Most children will have already had some experience of being encouraged to be independent in their learning at primary level and this is something we wish to build on further.

In your child's planner you will find an explanation of what skills we think an independent learner should have. The 5 R's will be integrated into lessons. Pupils will be taught the skills they need in order to develop their learning, and will be given lots of opportunities to review their learning.

The 5 Rs are: Resourceful, Resilient, Reflective, Reciprocal, Responsible. A more detailed explanation of each of these can be found in your child's planner.

What you can do to help

- ✓ Look at your child's planner
- ✓ Ask them about what they have learnt
- ✓ Encourage them to be more independent when completing homework
- ✓ Look at the school website, which has a Homework Board link on the home page

Computing

The first year of computing is dedicated to establishing the core concepts and theories of computer science and graphic design to enable students to develop a strong platform on which to build layers of further skills and understanding later in the key stage. The learning that takes place in Year 7 enables students to become informed, discerning and efficient users and creators of digital content! There is a focus on practical skills in Year 7.

The core of our curriculum is based around four strands; computer science, IT, digital literacy and graphic design. Computer science is learning how digital systems work and how to use this knowledge via programming. Information technology is becoming equipped to create a range of content. Digital literacy is understanding the importance and dangers of technology. Graphic design develops both creativity and software skills.

Work in the classroom

Year 7 pupils have one computing lesson every two weeks. The multimedia course that pupils follow is designed to interest, engage and challenge pupils' understanding and knowledge of modern information technology, the internet and computing. We expect pupils in Year 7 to develop a broad foundation of skill and understanding and greater independence using IT.

Curriculum

- Problem solving
- Code breaking
- Bebras Challenge
- Graphic design principles
- Creating interactive media
- E-safety

Access to resources

Pupils can access computers throughout the school and have access to a wide range of IT resources. The school's VLE and network can also be accessed from home. The school offers a homework computing room which can be used if required.

How parents can help

All pupils have access to their personal workspace on the school network from home. This means pupils' work can be opened with parents and worked on from home. Parents can help by checking work and giving guidance and solving small technical issues.

Head of Department: Miss A Hinton

Design and Technology

Work in the classroom

There are three aspects to design and technology: food and nutrition, product design and textiles.

In food and nutrition, pupils will follow a programme where they will learn basic food preparation skills, with the emphasis on healthy eating guidelines.

Work in product design and textiles focuses on teaching pupils the skills needed to solve problems by following the 'design process'. Much of the work is organised around projects which may teach specific skills or allow pupils to develop an imaginative response. There will be opportunities to work with a wide range of materials, including electronics and 3D printed components.

Resources used

Pupils will be expected to undertake written work using a variety of media, including project booklets and ICT applications. There is a growing emphasis on the use of ICT for design and manufacture (CAD/CAM). Pupils will be required to wear a protective apron during practical lessons to comply with health and safety regulations. These will be provided by the department. The department uses a wide range of text books and online resources to support learning, both in and out of the classroom.

How parents are able to help

Parents can support learning by showing an interest in the work their children undertake in the classroom, and by discussing homework tasks which are used to reinforce and develop this learning. It is recommended that the VLE is monitored on a regular basis.

In **food and nutrition**, it would be helpful for parents to carefully check ingredient lists to ensure the correct resources are available for practical activities. Parents are expected to provide ingredients for practical work. If there is a financial problem with this, then please contact us to see if we can help.

In **product design and textiles**, pupils should be encouraged to consider the familiar products we use every day in a more critical way. It can be useful to explore how these products are made, where the raw materials came from to make them and how well they do the job they were designed for.

There is some technical vocabulary in this subject, and pupils need to practise so that they can use it correctly and with confidence.

Head of Department: Mrs J C Swanepoel

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

The VLE is an online extension of the classroom, which can be accessed by students, parents and staff, and aims to share information and resources in a simple, clear and intuitive way. Any device which has internet access can view the site at the following address: **balcarras.fireflycloud.net**

The system, called Firefly, allows the opportunity for personalised learning for students and the ability for them to become increasingly independent and responsible for their learning and self-organisation. It also enables parents and guardians to support them at home, by viewing their homework, resources and potentially see their progression through the school. This has been redesigned over the last few years to be simple and easy to navigate. To log on, new parents should visit the site address, and activate their account, using the email address the school holds on record as part of your contact information. Current parents should have their children added to their account already.

In September, every new student will be allocated a username and password to access this site and this is their normal student network login. When logging in from outside of school, students must include the last part of their email address that follows their username (#####@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk).

There are also mobile apps available for both parents and students, which can be downloaded from the appropriate app store. These are called Firefly for Parents and Firefly for Students, and are free. When logging in for the first time, the same username and password must be used and the school code: **balcarras**, to link successfully with our system.

School Network

Students can access the school network shared area (known as the **R: drive**) and download electronic resources provided by their teachers. They can also access their personal network area (known as the **H: drive**). This is available by either clicking on the Network link at the top of the school website homepage (**www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk**) or by selecting the Network option located on the dashboard of the VLE (**balcarras.fireflycloud.net**). Users will be directed to the FoldR website and students need to use their school username and password to log in. FoldR (By Minnow IT) is also available as an app for Android and iOS devices. FoldR can also be used to change pupil passwords when away from school.

Literacy in the Curriculum

Balcarras has long believed that literacy has a key role to play in a child's progress. We are currently reviewing the provision we make in order to improve our already strong focus on literacy in the curriculum.

Literacy is important in all areas of learning. Being able to read and write accurately, to listen carefully and to talk clearly about ideas will increase the opportunities for young people in all aspects of life and will allow them to participate fully in learning and later in a work environment.

Literacy is more wide ranging than just being able to read and write, it involves listening and talking, reading and writing and is the responsibility of all subject teachers. Literacy may involve critical and creative thinking, competence in listening and talking, reading and writing skills in using language and personal, interpersonal and team-working skills.

At primary level pupils will learn the basic tools of communication. In their reading, they will learn how to explore sounds, letters and words, and how to contribute ideas and take turns when talking with others. In their writing, they will learn how to use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar and how to ensure their writing makes sense. We will continue to build on these areas and as young people become more skilled, they will learn how to find, comprehend and use information, and communicate more effectively.

There is more to good literacy than purely the understanding of printed texts. In the 21st century young people experience a wide range of information, so they need the skills to work with written or printed texts as well as other forms of text, such as web pages, social networking sites, films, graphs, and the spoken word.

Parents

Parents play a crucial role in helping children to develop literacy skills from an early age. You may be used to listening to your child read every day. Whilst we realise the time implications this may have, we would encourage you to continue with this, as it is sometimes lost in the early years of secondary school. Please encourage your child to read at home regularly and to continue questioning them what they are reading. Parents can contribute further by encouraging children to talk about their thoughts and ideas. Parents can encourage children to explore literacy outside the classroom.

Young people will enjoy reading different types of texts and all reading helps them to develop their skills. So whether they are reading a book, a blog, a magazine or a sports report, it will help if parents are encouraging and supportive.

If your child is struggling to find something to read, please encourage them to visit the Literacy Page on the VLE where they will find lots of age appropriate recommendations.

Drama

Year 7 and 8 drama focuses on encouraging pupils to work constructively in groups whilst acquiring a basic working knowledge of the subject as an art form in its own right.

In Year 7 pupils learn to work with every member of their class in a co-operative manner. This is done through team building exercises and teaching pupils to respond quickly and creatively to instructions. Improvisation and 'thinking on your feet' are actively encouraged. All activities explore the need to balance imaginative energy with good concentration and disciplined attention to detail. This should deepen levels of response and develop students' technical skills.

Work will naturally include physical movement projects to develop spatial awareness and trust – some actions will require mutual support and contact between partners.

Pupils spend the first part of the course learning about key safety issues related to such active pursuits. We then move on to developing still pictures (tableaux) in order to create an awareness of simple narrative structuring. Concentration and control is required in freezes and pupils learn to use their whole body to convey meaning. Later, pupils may be asked to explore and present more abstract concepts such as emotion tableaux.

Extension work will use speech and text to develop a full range of expression and control, thereby combining the movement skills learnt earlier with vocal techniques applied to the demands of specific texts and other stimuli.

How parents are able to help

As this course does not normally involve homework there can be great benefit if parents show an interest in the work and encourage discussion of it at home.

Head of Department: Mr A Bennett

English

Work in the classroom

Pupils are encouraged to develop the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. They will do this through the reading and writing of poems, plays and stories, as well as through role-play and dramatic activities. They will work on their own, in pairs and in groups, in the library, the computer room and in the classroom. In the course of the year pupils will learn how to write accurately and speak expressively for a variety of purposes.

Resources

Every pupil has an English book in which she/he will complete work in lessons, homework and end of unit assessments. The exercise book is a record of all their work and students are expected to maintain it to a high standard.

Curriculum

Students in Y7 will study the following units of work:

- The World Today (Non-Fiction Writing)
- Ghost Stories (Speaking & Listening)
- Treasure Island (Novel/Reading)
- Identity Poetry (Reading & Writing)
- Shakespeare & The Tempest (Reading)
- Public Speaking (Debating Competition)

Assessment

Students' work will be marked in a variety of ways including the highlighting of both achievements and errors, focused and summative written comments, specific targets, verbal feedback and progress set against assessment criteria. Students will be guided and encouraged to review their own work so that they have a clear idea of how to improve.

How parents are able to help

Homework usually includes some reading, writing or researching. Parents can often help by showing a genuine interest in the assignment and discussing it with their child. It would also help to reinforce their children's learning if parents discussed any corrections that teachers have made and any individual targets that have been set.

Head of Department: Mr D Sharkey

Science

Work in the classroom

In Year 7 pupils cover six units of work: 2 each in biology, chemistry and physics. Unit titles include; basics of life, the particle model and forces.

Initially students complete a unit of work that focusses on working scientifically skills, such as identifying experimental variables and drawing graphs. The students then get an opportunity to practice these skills throughout the 6 units taught in the year.

At the end of each topic pupils sit a test for which they receive a grade (1 to 9). They will also complete 12 graded homework tasks throughout the year and sit a Year 7 exam. Students achieving a grade 9 will typically have achieved 90% or above in an assessment, grade 8: 80% etc. This gives us a clear picture of their progress and helps us set targets for Year 8.

Resources

Each pupil is issued with a revision guide. Additional worksheets and resources used in lessons can be accessed at home via the Balcarras School VLE and are also available on the R: drive. The topic front sheets and homeworks for each topic are also available on the VLE, along with a multiple choice revision test for each topic. The BBC bitesize KS3 website is also a useful resource:

<https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zng4d2p>

How parents are able to help

We issue front sheets for each topic which show parents what their children will be learning. The revision guides can be used by parents to help support homework. These can also be used to help pupils revise for the end of unit tests. Parents can use the information on the science area of the VLE to see what their children will be studying and keep track of the homework set on the VLE.

Head of Department: Mr A Spring Wallis

Religious Education

The Religious Education Department at Balcarras aims to produce religiously educated and aware pupils who also value truth, seek justice and honour, respect themselves and others and who care about British values and the world they live in. Our aim is to educate pupils so that they are interested in and can understand the religious beliefs, values and traditions of others whilst also being willing to assess their own beliefs against conflicting opinion. As a result of this, religious education helps our pupils build their sense of identity and belonging and allows them to explore world issues in a secure background. Moral and spiritual growth is at the heart of our teaching and pupils are encouraged to show that they are learning from world religions, not just learning about world religions.

Although religious education at Balcarras School explores aspects of Christianity and other core world religions including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism, we do not presuppose individual commitment. Indeed, we seek to make the content accessible to all pupils whether they belong to a religious tradition or not. In addition, while we are fully conscious of an increasingly diverse and changing society, we are keen to highlight the important role of family and community in religious belief and activity. The work of the department is underpinned by the recently updated Gloucestershire agreed syllabus for key stage three and key stage four and five follow the OCR religious education examinations.

Parents are able to withdraw their sons and daughters from this personal development if they have strong religious or conscience grounds. These must, however, be discussed in detail with the Headteacher.

Work in the classroom

Year 7 Religious Education focuses predominantly on Christianity, however, this is done through reference to the beliefs of the six major world religions as well as pupils own ideas. The approach is first made through an investigation into the Philosophy behind religious belief itself. Pupils will be asked to question what God is, as well as consider their own beliefs on a number of subjects, for example miracles and life after death. Students then investigate the Bible as a source of guidance and authority for Christians and will become familiar with the life and teachings of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels. Then pupils focus on the teachings and methods of worship in the Christian Church and the role of local faith communities.

Head of Department: Mrs H Ebanja

French

Work in the classroom

We aim to introduce French in a practical way. The focus is on how languages work and aims to equip pupils with the skills they need to become successful language learners both in French and in their second language, which they will begin in Year 8. This includes encouraging pupils to become independent in their language learning and fostering an interest in foreign cultures. The skills are taught within a context of topics which are relevant to the pupils and which will help them to communicate information about themselves.

The teacher will often speak to the pupils in French and they are encouraged to use it whenever possible as the language of the classroom.

Resources

One of our main resources is the text book 'Studio'. We also deliver activities on the interactive whiteboard and use a range of language learning websites.

How parents are able to help

Progress depends on a good stock of relevant French words and homework tasks often involve learning a list of new vocabulary or verbs, or practising it in a dialogue. Parents can assist by taking part in a French dialogue or by checking that revision has been carried out thoroughly. We will sometimes ask pupils to get a parent's signature as 'proof' that they have done this. We expect all pupils to have access to either a bilingual pocket dictionary or the website www.wordreference.com at home.

Holidays in France and participation in school trips can also be highly motivating!

We run a **Mandarin Chinese Club** at lunchtimes, and a **Latin Club** as well. Sometimes we also run a **Japanese Club**, depending on staff availability. All of these clubs are open to pupils in Year 7 and they are very popular. They are a lot of fun and present a marvellous opportunity for our pupils to diversify in their language learning experience.

Head of Department: Mrs J Hockenull

Geography

Work in and outside the classroom

During Year 7 pupils will be taught a range of physical and human geography topics. These have been designed to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum programme of study for KS3. Through these topics pupils will also improve their knowledge of places as well as basic map and graphical skills. Topics to be studied include: oceans and coasts, urbanisation and adventure landscapes.

Within the first term pupils will be studying the topic oceans and coasts as well as investigating the local area and its sustainability. The latter will involve a lesson being spent around Charlton Kings village. In the summer term there will be an optional field day to Cheddar Gorge which will compliment the adventure landscapes topic. Assessment in geography takes many forms, with students being supported in learning how to use self-reflection, peer assessment, group analysis, and target setting. These methods are used in addition to teacher assessment and students are encouraged to celebrate their success and set targets for improvement. Independent learning is a key priority and all students will be encouraged to develop these key skills through geography.

Resources used

A variety of resources are used to compliment the delivery of lessons throughout the topics. A combination of text and ICT resources are well integrated in to the schemes of work to ensure pupils are exposed to a wide range of academic materials. Pupils will use these resources to learn through a wide range of methods including pair and group work, role play, internet research and interactive games/activities.

How parents can help

Homework is set regularly in order to consolidate learning compliment and extend work completed in the classroom. Students should be encouraged to use reference materials such as an atlas, the internet, textbooks, magazines and newspapers alongside a dictionary when doing their homework in order to raise general awareness of continents, countries and cities, and improve overall literacy skills. Parents could encourage students to watch television programmes such as the news, Countryfile and other relevant documentaries to improve their knowledge of current affairs and events. Going for walks using an OS map also consolidates students' map skills. Wider reading of both non-fiction and fiction books that link to relevant topics is also encouraged.

Sharing holiday experiences and asking questions about places parents and friends have visited would broaden horizons and help students to grasp more difficult concepts such as different levels of development and the implications these have on everyday life in other countries.

Head of Department: Mrs N Lambert-Masters

Physical Education

Programme of work

Physical education is important in the life of every pupil. It not only encourages the development of athletic and sporting talent, but provides the basis for a healthy style of life at school and during the years beyond. Pupils are therefore introduced to dance, gymnastics and the study of topics related to health, as well as learning skills in the major traditional games.

The major games are:

Girls:

Netball
Hockey
Athletics
Rounders
Tennis
Handball
Football
Tag Rugby
Gymnastics

Boys:

Rugby
Athletics
Cricket
Tennis
Football
Handball
Gymnastics

How parents are able to help

Pupils should be encouraged to apply the lessons of this course in their everyday lives throughout the year. They should also be reminded of the importance of the extra-curricular programme and encouraged to attend the activities run by the department and the school sports development officer.

For pupils wishing to play sport at the highest level, the school has excellent links with outside clubs.

Head of Department : Mr M Harvey

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)

PSHE education is the school subject through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. The Department for Education (DFE) research report states that: *'A high quality PSHE provision has a significant effect on pupils' academic success, makes them more engaged in school and has an overall effect on their well-being'*.

How we deliver PSHE at Balcarras?

Pupils in Year 7 are timetabled for 2 hour PSHE lessons each half term. This enables us to bring in visitors to speak with our students, and to make PSHE more of an 'event' in school. In addition to our 2 hour PSHE events, tutors deliver PSHE sessions every fortnight during PM tutor time.

This year, students will study the following topics during their PM tutor sessions:

Autumn Term – Relationship Education

- Forming positive relationships
- Understanding identity
- Healthy relationships
- Introducing consent
- Different families
- Puberty and relationships

Spring Term – Health Education

- Attitudes to mental health
- Promoting emotional wellbeing and resilience
- Caffeine consumption and energy drinks
- The worry tree
- The sleep factor
- Dental health
- Personal hygiene

Summer Term – Living in the wider world

- Decision making
- British values
- Discrimination & The Equality Act 2010
- Careers (organised by Mrs Bull)
- Barclays life skills (organised by Mrs Bull)
- Coercive friendships (preventing involvement in crime)

Students will study the following topics during their 2 hour 'event' sessions:

- Year 7 Induction
- Bullying (inc. a bullying speaker session)
- Online safety (inc. a police speaker)
- First aid
- Thinking about others (charity event)
- Healthy eating and exercise

Head of PSHE and Citizenship: Miss H Davies

History

Learning in the classroom

We begin our study of history by looking at the Anglo Saxons and Vikings. This unit introduces our students to history and it allows them to study Britain before the Norman Conquest. In the second term we continue our study of Britain from 1066 through to the end of the middle ages. This involves considering the great themes of the period such as migration, empire war and conflict, the role of religion, the power of the monarchy and the development of parliament. We finish Year 7 with an international depth study to explore how China was changed by its absorption into the Mongolian Empire.

In all three units a mixture of important events and changes in everyday life are studied. Key historical skills for the future are focused on throughout such as chronology, causation, significance, source analysis and interpretations. The department prides itself in encouraging creativity, independence and resilience of our learners.

Resources used

Several recently published, colourful class texts are used as well as books from the library. Students are also encouraged to bring their own research materials and books into lessons as well. A plethora of learning resources adds variety and stimulus to the learning process. Additionally a comparative site visit is made to Chepstow and Berkeley Castles. We use the VLE, online articles, digital archives, podcasts and documentaries. Students have routine access to our ICT suite to hone their skills from across the curriculum.

How parents are able to help

Homework is set regularly in order to compliment and extend learning completed in the classroom. To boost their literacy and knowledge capital students should be encouraged to use reference materials such as newspapers, historical magazines, podcasts other reference books, and of course visits to historical sites on holidays. There are plenty of historical documentaries on and great films to watch. The department routinely updates suggestions on displays or on the VLE. Having frequent conversations with family members who have experiences or memories of any historical event are critical in captivating that personal interest and love of history in our students.

Head of Department: Mr M Stoker

Mathematics

Children's chances of success are maximised if they develop deep and lasting understanding of mathematical procedures and concepts. During the first two months, we use TEACHING FOR MASTERY to strengthen the numeracy skills of all Year 7. They are introduced to new concepts such as indices and arithmetic sequences, whilst working on a deeper understanding of the numeracy skills from KS2.

Students are initially taught as a mixed ability tutor group. After October half term, they are placed into a set based on the ranked order of their Key Stage 2 score.

Resources

Lessons are planned in line with the National Curriculum and the Scheme of Work is based on the Kangaroo Maths Scheme, which is used in many of our feeder schools too.

Students will be asked to copy notes in lessons and keep these notes up to standard as these will be an excellent resource for revision later on.

Each student will receive a B.A.M. homework booklet (Building A Mathematician). These follow the "Do it", "Secure it" and "Deepen it" structure that some students might already know from Primary school.

The school will provide each student with a MathsWatch login. This platform might be used in lessons and for homework, but also provides excellent resources for revision. There are videos, worksheets and interactive questions.

How parents are able to help

It is vital that every pupil learns and maintains their times tables and parents can be very helpful in ensuring that this building block is laid in place. All of Year 7 will be given a TimesTables RockStars account to use at home.

The VLE provides a huge amount of information: The SoW, guidelines on how to revise, assessment dates, homework tasks, feedback, etc. Being aware of what is happening each term, is a great support for your child.

It is also valuable for pupils to be able to talk over their work at home and share the challenge of new topics and the search for appropriate solutions. "What did you see in Maths today?" "How did you get on with the homework?"

Head of Department : Mr S Critchley

Music

Work in the classroom

In Year 7 we explore music through performing, listening and composing. Students develop musical skills through a broad exploration of the subject. Wide varieties of topics are covered including: Musical Elements and Notation, Vocalise, Indonesian Gamelan, James Bond, Jazzin' About and Melody and Chords.

The department has two main classrooms where, depending on the topic, the focus changes from using keyboards and ICT to group work. Students are encouraged to develop musical skills in all areas whatever their ability level.

Due to the practical nature of the subject, students are constantly receiving verbal feedback. Opportunities are also created for peer, self and teacher evaluation. Work is formally assessed at the end of each topic, often through performing work that has been composed.

Resources used

Students record key words and facts as well as completing written evaluations of their work. Visual and aural stimuli such as videos, posters, recordings and live performances are used to develop appreciation and understanding of the work covered. Specific music software, Mixcraft and Sibelius, are used as composition and performance tools, along with tuned and untuned percussion, electronic keyboards and voices. Students who learn instruments are encouraged to use them in class when this is appropriate.

How parents are able to help

Listening to music and encouraging discussion will help students develop awareness of the basic elements. On occasions, students are directed to extra resources on the school's R:drive or VLE to extend their in class learning. Students are encouraged to participate in any of the extra-curricular activities.

Please ensure your child has a pair of headphones with a mini jack to use in every music lesson.

Head of Department : Mrs H Chong