



The Henrietta Barnett School

Year 8 Curriculum Overview



Authenticity - Kindness - Curiosity
Connection - Endeavour

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Welcome from the Deputy Headteacher

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our statements of intent for the Year 8 Curriculum.

In Key Stage 3, we want to enable students to pursue a wide variety of academic and extra-curricular interests to the full. We want to foster a love of learning independently of exams and to encourage inquisitive, motivated and creative thinkers. We want to nurture resilience and robustness: students who are willing to take risks in the classroom and who are not afraid of failure.

We are fortunate to have students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and we want them to enjoy their life at school and feel part of a supportive community, valuing this diversity. We want our students to become valued team players and also develop leadership skills. We want them to build and enjoy lasting friendships, to enjoy their time out of school and to lead a balanced life.

In the following pages, each subject department has set out the vision and intentions for its Year 8 curriculum.

Mrs Mandy Watts
Deputy Headteacher



Art

In Year 8 we broaden students' knowledge by introducing them to a wider range of media and processes, whilst continuing to build on their core skills. Projects encourage a personal response and put a particular emphasis on process and risk-taking. Students look at a very wide range of examples from all around the world, both historical and contemporary. Projects covered include poly-block printmaking, where students consider and design the arrangement and design of pattern. Students are required to respond to Art, Craft and Design made for different purposes such as Mandalas, Islamic Art, interior design and fashion. They explore the overlap between Science and Art by studying how artists and scientists depict the human body, as well as the cultural artefacts of The Mexican Day of the Dead festival. Students also partake in an animation project, which requires them to respond to a theme using various techniques, and produce a short film.



Classics

In Year 8, students develop their problem-solving skills by translating Latin stories of increased linguistic complexity. The Year 8 course follows characters introduced in the Year 7 course as they move to Roman Britain and ancient Alexandria. Students widen their understanding of sentence structure by being introduced to new grammatical concepts such as relative clauses, as well as extending their knowledge of verb tenses and noun cases. Students build on their knowledge of Latin vocabulary and continue to widen their English vocabulary in the process.

Students continue to build their knowledge of Latin vocabulary. Class discussions about the stories and the characters they contain encourage them to develop skills of literary analysis too. Students also extend their understanding of life in the Roman Empire by learning about the culture of Roman Britain and the Egyptian city of Alexandria.

Drama

In Year 8, we begin to explicitly broaden students' understanding of genre and style, allowing them to explore theatre tropes from different periods of history. Students study Ancient Greek Theatre, engaging with the concepts of exaggeration and chorus work, to build on their existing knowledge of vocal and physical skills and consider stylistic staging.

Using Greek Theatre techniques, students interpret myths, creating a multidimensional performance as an ensemble, where they have the opportunity to include design elements such as costume and masks. We then develop the students' approach to script work, examining naturalism and extended character development techniques.

Students then study physical theatre, looking at Stephen Berkoff's Total Theatre methodology and applying it to Kafka's Metamorphosis. We develop students' ability to set clear aims and intentions for theatre, guiding them to consider the specific effects on the audience they would like to achieve. At the end of Year 8, students look at activism in performance, and examine how theatre can be used as a tool for change.



DTE

In Year 8, students will extend the skills and knowledge developed in Year 7 by completing three new projects: the Mechanical Toy Project, the Steady Hand Game Project, and the Eco-Friendly Town Project. These projects are designed to challenge students further in the areas of resistant materials, electronics, and sustainable design, while also encouraging greater creativity, independent problem-solving, and teamwork. By working through each project, students will continue to refine their technical ability, deepen their understanding of engineering principles, and learn how design and technology can address real-world issues.

DTE (continued)

The Mechanical Toy Project focuses on resistant materials and introduces students to mechanisms. They will design and make a toy that incorporates moving parts such as cams, followers, and axles. This project develops their ability to work with wood, plastics, and other materials with accuracy, using tools and equipment safely and effectively. Students will also apply knowledge of mechanical systems to create movement, learning how different types of cams or linkages can change motion. Creative design work is encouraged, as students are asked to produce a toy that is both functional and appealing to a chosen user. By the end of the project, they will understand how mechanisms can be used to solve practical problems and bring designs to life.

The Steady Hand Game Project introduces students to more advanced electronics. Building on the circuit skills gained in Year 7, they will design and construct a game that tests a user's hand-eye coordination by completing a circuit when the wire loop touches a shaped path. Students will gain further confidence in reading circuit diagrams, soldering components, and assembling a working electronic system. They will learn how components such as buzzers, LEDs, and resistors can be combined to achieve different effects. Alongside the electronics, students will design and make a casing or base for their game, giving them the chance to integrate resistant materials skills with electronic design. This project reinforces the importance of accuracy, safety, and testing when working with circuits, while also encouraging students to produce a fun and functional product.

The Eco-Friendly Town Project takes a broader, problem-solving approach to design and technology. Students work in teams to design a sustainable town, considering issues such as renewable energy, eco-friendly buildings, waste management, and green transport. This project develops research and presentation skills as students explore real-world environmental challenges and propose solutions through drawings, models, or digital design. It emphasises collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, as students must justify their choices and show how their town promotes sustainability. By working on this project, students will understand how design and engineering play a vital role in addressing environmental concerns and shaping a better future.

By the end of Year 8, students will have built on the foundation of Year 7 by working with more complex mechanisms, circuits, and design problems. They will be confident in using a wider range of materials, tools, and processes, and they will have learned how to apply their technical skills creatively and purposefully. Importantly, they will also begin to see how design, technology, and engineering connect to larger global themes, such as sustainability and innovation, preparing them for further study in Year 9.

English

Students begin Year 8 by studying the classic American novel 'Of Mice and Men'. They are taught to track a theme across a novel and to write an analytical paragraph and essay plan tracking a theme. Students then commence their first study of a literary genre: Gothic Literature. Through the reading of extracts from a range of texts, students gain inspiration to produce their own creative writing in the gothic style.

In the Spring Term, students enjoy an in-depth study of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', learning to track how a character develops across a play and to write an effective introduction. They also take part in the annual 'Key Stage 3 Solo Speaking Competition', performing a short formal speech to the class. In the Summer Term, students read and write their own poetry on the theme of 'Nature' and enjoy a trip to nearby Big Wood to gain inspiration.

The year ends with a pleasurable study of Oscar Wilde's comedy 'The Importance of Being Earnest', using drama to explore the themes and characters. They are taught to write effective conclusions, and produce their first full essay, having now been taught all of the requisite skills. Extra-curricular opportunities include Debating Club, Shakespeare Club, and creative writing competitions across the year.



Geography

In Year 8, students start by using their knowledge of climatic variations from Year 7 to explain the location of the world's biomes. Students expand their understanding of human and physical processes by considering how they can affect each other when studying ecosystems and flooding. This interaction is applied further when looking at the conflicts involved in trying to manage hazards, such as flooding. When studying flooding, students are first introduced to the geographical concept of risk that is used in Year 9 and throughout GCSE and A-Level. Students are given their first in-depth study of the topics of development, a vast threshold concept that underpins a large amount of geographical understanding. Students link to various ideas from Year 7 to help explain variations in the level of development. This understanding is needed to explain patterns and make judgements across a wide range of geographical concepts in KS3, GCSE and into A-Level.

History

In Year 8, students build on their understanding of the Medieval period and explore how authority changed in the transition to empire in the Early Modern world. Across the year, they will continue to develop their global perspective on the past, looking at the interconnections between Britain, Europe and the Wider World. These studies which will take them from Tudor England to Mughal India, and will be grounded in a more forensic use of primary evidence, particularly honed in a case study on the Witchcraze. Students will further strengthen their ability to evaluate the interplay of causes in their analysis of the Transatlantic Slave Trade extending their understanding of authority by focusing on resistance. We conclude the year with an in depth study of the British Empire in 1838, reflecting on the diversity of experience and consolidating their conceptual and thematic progress from Year 7 and 8.



Mathematics

Building on the knowledge and skills developed in Year 7, we provide a challenging curriculum encompassing number, algebra, data handling and shape and space. Main topics taught this year include circles, developing number work including standard form and indices; solving more advanced equations and inequalities, straight lines and curve graphs, angle properties and Pythagoras' theorem. Students continue to build on their problem solving skills with continued practice and entry into the Junior Mathematics Challenge.

MFL

In Year 8, students build on the progress made in Year 7 in French and German. They widen their knowledge with more tenses and vocabulary, thereby becoming far more confident in speaking and writing the language. They will also learn a lot more in terms of varied topics to enable them to speak more authentically. Students also begin Spanish this year and will be familiar with the order of topics from their previous language learning. This gives students a real sense of achievement and enjoyment. They enjoy the challenge and variety of three languages. Students also continue to learn the language through authentic cultural sources such as songs, literature, short films and festivals.

By the end of the year, students will be confident using the present and past tenses in French and German. In Spanish, we cover a wide range of present tense verbs and introduce the near future.



Music

In Year 8, we build on the skills and knowledge acquired in Year 7 through a broadening of the range of students' listening experience and a deepening of their understanding of musical concepts such as harmony, melodic variation, and formal structure. They explore the concept of major/minor and other musical modes, orchestral development and forms, using as models the slow movement of Mahler's First Symphony and Paganini's Caprice No.24. They further develop their aural and notation skills through more complex exercises and tasks including melodic dictation and close listening work. They explore the world of Eastern European Jewish folk music through a look at the Klezmer tradition and we also introduce the students to a second industry-standard software package (Logic Pro) and encourage its use as an additional compositional tool.

Physical Education

In Year 8, students build on the fundamental skills they learnt in Year 7. They begin to enhance their decision making and develop the knowledge and skills to outwit opponents and perform effectively whilst under pressure in competitive situations. They work on developing their communication skills in team situations to improve the overall performance of the team and should be able to transfer their knowledge between sports to help reinforce learning. They practise striking and fielding and net/wall games. They work independently to improve their personal best and their physical fitness. They will understand the benefits of physical activity on their physical, emotional and social wellbeing. They develop the skills to work as a team and develop tenacity, resilience and perseverance which is essential in sport and valuable in all situations.



PSHCE

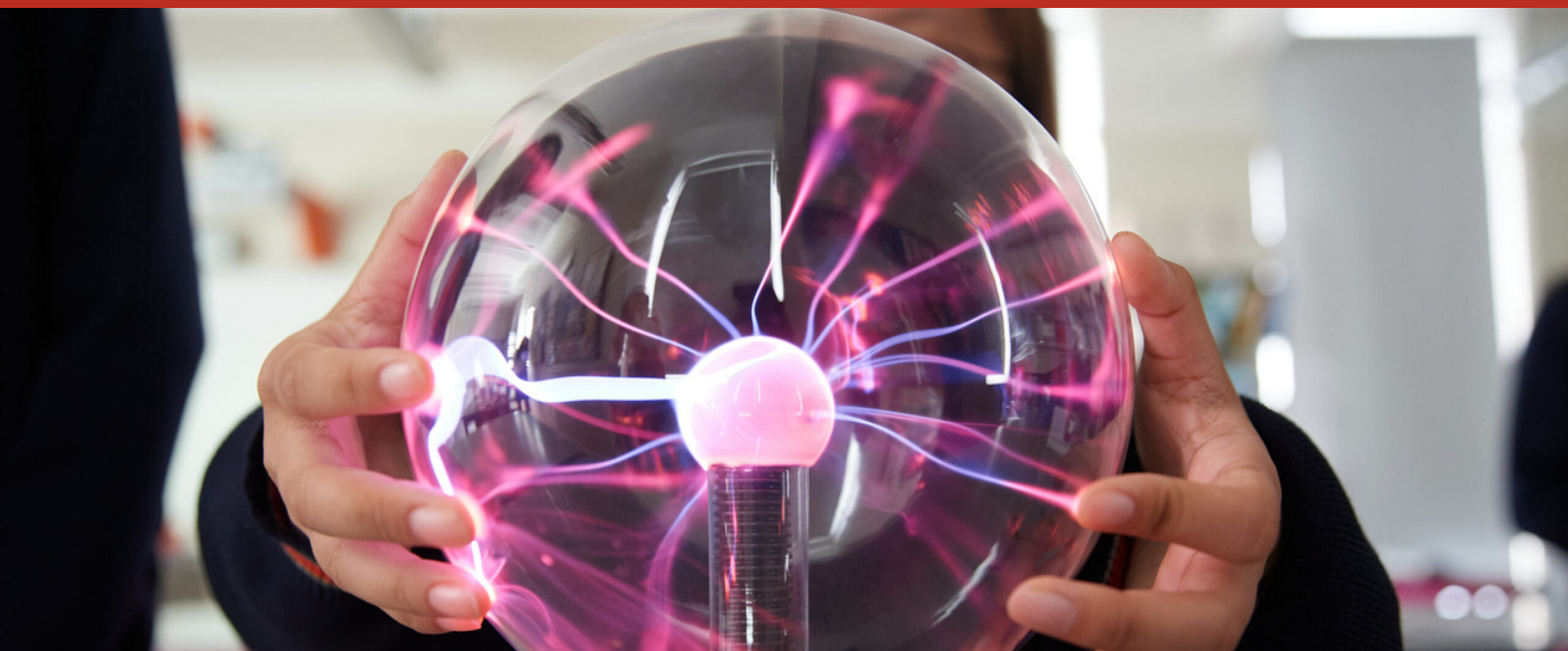
The teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) at HBS is timetabled for Years 7-11. The programme is broad and aims to prepare our students for all aspects of adult life, focusing on four themes: relationship with self, relationship with others, global citizenship and community and planning for the future.

In Year 8, the modules build on previous topics, with a more detailed focus on mental health, to increase their understanding of healthy coping strategies, as well as potential issues (anxiety, depression and self-harm) and sources of support. Lessons are aimed to help them develop a positive 'sense of self' in the context of self-esteem and body confidence and they also begin to learn about sexuality and gender in terms of identity. Lessons on relationships focus on managing conflict within friendships. A module on drugs, alcohol and tobacco is fact-based, and lays the groundwork for the lessons in later years focusing more on related societal issues. Students also have a practical module on basic first aid skills and start building skills for the future in areas of time management and critical thinking; the benefits of a 'growth mindset' are explicitly explored.

The Schemes of Work and resources are regularly updated to ensure their relevance. Further details of the topics covered are also found on our website and are circulated at the start of each academic year.

Religious Studies

Students in Year 8 explore the three world faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, preparing them for the GCSE, should they opt for it. They will learn about key teachings, festivals and practices within each faith. They should also be able to discuss the impact of belief in today's world. They will be expected to work on texts from the religions studied, to look at different interpretations, and to form considered views. In the summer term, they will explore more philosophical matters, which encourage broader thinking and debate. Termly assessments will take place at the end of each topic, assessing a range of skills.



Science

In Year 8, students expand their knowledge of different areas of Science and start to make links across different topics. They are encouraged to engage in higher order thinking, where they develop their ability to ask questions and formulate hypotheses. Science investigations and projects help to develop research and communications skills. In Biology, students broaden their understanding of the characteristics of and relationships between living organisms. In Chemistry, students build on their knowledge of the periodic table, identify patterns within and apply these to describe chemical processes. In Physics, students begin to describe physical phenomena in more detail, and use basic mathematical skills to apply theory to real life examples. Students strengthen their existing skills of scientific investigation, with greater focus on independence. They are encouraged to identify sources of error and evaluate the success of their experiments.



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