

CATSHILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

ACHIEVEMENT : CHALLENGE : OPPORTUNITY

CURRICULUM INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF YEAR 8 PUPILS



Y8

2017-2018

Curriculum Information for Parents/Carers of Year 8 Pupils

Here at Catshill Middle School, we are keen to involve our parents/carers in every aspect of their child's school life, including the curriculum that we follow.

We believe that curriculum should sit at the heart of our school and that it should reflect our values and ethos.

This booklet sets out the curriculum that is planned for the academic year 2016-2017.

Our team of specialist teachers and subject leaders have planned a vibrant *Enquiry and Discovery* curriculum to engage and challenge all learners. Our *Enquiry and Discovery* curriculum is designed to support learners in gaining knowledge and developing the skills that are required for both lifelong learning and for leading happy, safe and successful lives.

Subject by subject, we have set out the learning that is planned for each term and have incorporated sections on how parents/carers might support their child.

Our curriculum is flexible, however, and there will be times throughout the year when additional opportunities will present themselves and be incorporated into our planned programme.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the contents of this booklet and may I thank you, in advance, for the support and encouragement that I am sure you will offer your child throughout the year.

Mrs J. Lodge

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English

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Gothic Genre

Learners explore the gothic genre using a range of texts as well as film and art, and make critical comparisons. Learners analyse how authors use language and structure to build tension and fear and then use these techniques in their own stories.

Words of War

Using a range of sources including poetry, letters and photographs, pupils research life in the trenches. Learners consider the question, 'How does poetry help us to understand war?' Learners critically evaluate poetic devices and write their own poetry.

Spring:

War Horse or Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo

Learners read a complete novel by Michael Morpurgo studying the use of language and structure and also the intended impact on the reader. Learners analyse the development of a selected character or characters.

Romeo and Juliet

Learners explore the theme of conflict within Shakespeare's play. They write letters from the viewpoint of key characters using the language and structure of Shakespeare.

Summer:

Technology Matters

Learners consider whether all technology is for the greater good. They study the features of website design to persuade and inform with a clear viewpoint. Learners write their own non-fiction text.

What the Dickens?

Learners are introduced to Charles Dickens through a classic novel. They develop their spoken English skills, presenting a news story from a scene of their choice.

GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

Spelling and GPS are taught within lessons. Homework is often used to reinforce these key skills.

How you can help

- Encourage your son/daughter to read. Does he/she have a favourite author or subject?
- Ensure your son/daughter has a quiet/private place to complete their homework.
- Discuss their strengths and targets with them.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zjvbkqt>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z3kw2hv>

<http://www.educationquizzes.com/ks3/english/>

Mathematics

In Year 8 the curriculum is divided into 5 key areas. These are number, geometry, algebra, ratio proportion and rates of change (RPC) and statistics and probability.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Learners focus on three areas: - Number, Geometry and Algebra

- In Number, learners develop their work on factors, prime numbers and multiples including the unique factorisation theorem. Learners consider appropriate degrees of accuracy and look at standard form and its uses. Finally they apply the four operations to integers, decimals and fractions and mixed numbers (all both positive and negative).
- In Geometry, learners measure line segments and angles in geometric figures, including interpreting maps and scale drawings and the use of bearings. They identify, describe and construct similar shapes and investigate the effects of enlarging shapes. They then interpret plans and elevations of 3D shapes.
- In Algebra, learners use and interpret algebraic notation before developing their use of factors to simplify and manipulate algebraic expressions. They then rearrange and substitute numerical values into scientific formulae.

Spring:

Learners consider all five areas.

- In Statistics and Probability, learners compare expected frequencies to theoretical probability.
- In Number, learners work with terminating decimals and their corresponding fractions.
- In RPC, learners investigate ratios, work with percentages greater than 100%, solve problems involving percentage change and simple interest, and develop calculating with fractions.
- In Algebra, learners develop their understanding of sequences including calculating the n th term of linear sequences and solve more complex equations including finding approximate solutions graphically.
- In Geometry, learners understand and use alternate and corresponding angles on parallel lines and derive and use the sum of angles in a triangle to solve problems.

Summer:

Learners focus on three areas: - Geometry, Statistics and Probability, Number, Geometry and Algebra

- In Geometry, learners investigate circles including finding the area and circumference before moving on to calculate the volumes of prisms.
- In Statistics and Probability, learners analyse and compare the distributions of data sets through appropriate graphical representation and measures of central tendency and spread. They then go on to use and interpret scatter graphs.
- In Algebra, learners plot graphs of linear equations, study gradients and intercepts and simple quadratic functions.
- Learners also solve problems across the curriculum and make links between the topics.

How you can help

- Support learners to attempt homework tasks.
- Encourage all learners to have a secure knowledge of tables
- Ensure revision tasks are completed.

Useful Websites:

<https://trockstars.com/login> (for practising times tables)

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/11-14-years/number>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zqhs34j> (KS3 Bitesize maths)

<http://nrich.maths.org/secondary-lower>

Science

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Energy, Matter and Reactions

Learners investigate the processes of conduction, convection and radiation then learn about energy transfer when a force moves an object. They will then learn about how the periodic table can be used to study atoms, elements, compounds and mixtures. Finally, they will learn about chemical energy and apply their learning to different types of reaction.

Spring:

Organism, Ecosystems and Electromagnets

Learners study the process of digestion and the importance of a balanced diet before moving on to the processes of breathing and respiration. This will lead on to the pupils investigating photosynthesis. They then study electricity which includes magnetism and electromagnets, voltage, resistance and current.

Summer:

Earth, Forces and Ecosystems

Learners study the structure of the Earth's atmosphere and its natural resources. They investigate carbon dioxide emissions and consider how metals are extracted from ores. They will then learn about contact forces and pressure.

How you can help

Parents and carers can help support pupil learning in science by encouraging children to ask questions about the world around them and how things work. There are a number of science-based documentaries on television that explain key concepts, such as Horrible Science and new scientific discoveries are regularly reported on in quality newspapers. Thinktank in Birmingham provides a stimulating environment to learn about Science.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zng4d2p>

<http://www.schoolscience.co.uk/home>

<http://www.scibermonkey.org/>

Art

Curriculum – what we're doing

In Key Stage 3, learners are taught to develop their creativity and ideas, and increase proficiency in their executions. They develop a critical understanding of artists, architects and designers expressing reasoned judgements that can inform their own work. Learners use a range of techniques to record their observations in sketchbooks as a basis for exploring their ideas. Learners will use a range of techniques and media to increase their competence in the handling of different materials. They will analyse and evaluate their own work, and that of others, in order to strengthen the visual impact or applications of their work. Their studies will include the history of art, craft design and architecture, including periods, styles and movements from the past up to the present day.

Autumn:

Asia

Following a short basic skills introduction to the year, learners will explore Indian culture by investigating patterns within Mehndi and architecture. They will consider the use of colour and develop skills through printing.

Learners will also consider China as a culture, examining Chinese New Year and its history of civilisation.

Spring:

World at War

Learners will follow the theme within Humanities by looking at the First World War. They will consider 'Trench Art' and the poetry of Wilfred Owen. Independent work will be encouraged within this topic and sketchbooks will also reflect that. Pupils will examine the work of John and Paul Nash and Otto Dix as well as modern artists such as Cornelia Parker. Technical skills will include portraiture, where facial expressions will be studied and drawn.

Summer:

Surrealism

Pupils will learn to draw from different points of view. They will consider scale when practising observation drawing and create a diorama from their research. Within this topic pupils will consider the work of Dali and Magritte amongst other artists of the period.

Personal Projects

As the year progresses, Year 8 pupils will be encouraged to develop more independence in readiness for GCSEs. Structured personal projects will be embarked upon within which both self-assessing and peer assessing will play a major part.

How you can help

Visit one of our galleries such as the Birmingham Art Gallery or the Ikon Gallery. Encourage the use of a sketch book in preparation for High School.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z6f3cdm>

www.tate.org.uk

Computing

In Year 8, pupils will continue with the Key Stage 3 programme of study for Computing. The emphasis will be on preparing the learners for GCSE and enabling them to acquire basic programming and computational thinking skills as they take more responsibility and become independent learners. During the year pupils will have the opportunity to make use of the BBC Microbit to develop their programming skills, and discover what this miniature computer can do.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

How can I use technology safely, responsibly, and securely?

Learners will look in more detail at the dangers that can exist online, and investigate their legal and ethical responsibilities. They will also examine how they can protect their online identity, and what impact a digital footprint can have on their future lives. During this unit learners will review the use of the Gmail account for school use.

How can I create an App to prevent Cyber-Bullying?

Learners will carry out research by using search techniques, and will then produce an App that could be used on a mobile phone to prevent cyber-bullying. Learners will have to plan, design, implement, and test the App they design. Central to this will be what they actually want the App to achieve.

Spring:

How can I use multiple applications to solve a problem?

Learners will be working on a project, which will involve them in selecting and using a number of different applications to complete a challenge. Learners will be expected to keep a diary/blog as they work through the different activities and show the computational thinking behind the decisions they have made.

Summer:

How can we be web aware? Examining the fundamentals of the web.

Learners will investigate what the web is and how a website is designed. They will look at existing websites and identify the main design features and the key components of a web page. Learners will also examine the main languages that are used in web design including HTML.

How can I use a textual based programming language to solve a variety of computational problems?

This unit of work will give learners a basic understanding of the Python programming language. Through a series of lessons learners will be introduced to the basic Python syntax and look at selection, loops, functions, lists and classes. Learners will be given the building blocks to extend their programming skills by adding to existing programs or extending their knowledge on Code academy.

How you can help

Engage in discussion about the Computing activities and challenges your child will be experiencing, take an interest in the work being carried out and ask questions. There are many programmes on television, and You Tube, which can help to develop computational thinking that is central to the computing curriculum.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects>

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.microbit.co.uk

Design and Technology

In Year 8, our learners focus on two detailed projects working with resistant materials (wood and plastic) and food, which build on their Year 7 experiences. They explore a variety of creative and practical activities and are taught the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to engage in an 'interactive' process of designing and making. As part of their work with food our learners will be taught how to cook and develop creative recipes applying the principles of nutrition and healthy eating, hopefully instilling a love of cooking for now and in later life.

As some of our teaching groups rotate during the year learners may access this curriculum at a different point in the academic year.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn/Spring:

FOOD

How can we adapt and create new recipes to meet varying needs?

To maximise creativity our learners in Year 8 are given three challenges - developing a new sweet or savoury crumble recipe, designing a carbohydrate based salad for an athlete and creating a savoury pastry product for their family. Through the course of these challenges our learners become competent in a range of cooking techniques, selecting and preparing ingredients; using utensils and equipment safely and are able to use their awareness of taste, texture and smell to adapt and create their own individual recipes. They will understand the principles of nutrition and health and can use their knowledge of seasonal availability to help them make informed choices. Inspiration gained from celebrity chefs, current TV food shows and family recipes from home lead to unique and innovative creations.

Spring/Summer:

RESISTANT MATERIALS

Is it possible to incorporate cultural influences into functional design products?

In this project our learners are encouraged to consider consumer choice when designing products. They use research skills, including the study of different cultures, as they develop a detailed design specification for their candle holder, which guides their thinking. They communicate their ideas using annotated sketches, resolving design problems and addressing design opportunities. Understanding the properties of materials and the performance of structural elements helps our learners achieve functional solutions. When making, they are able to develop practical expertise using specialist tools, techniques, processes, equipment and machinery. Through testing and evaluating, they develop and refine their ideas as they take into account the views of intended users and other interested parties.

How you can help

The development of some basic skills is key to the Year 8 DT curriculum. Practice and encouragement to develop 3D drawing skills is essential as is the opportunity to cook at home and experience different foods. Knowledge of key events and individual's, chefs, engineer's designers etc. through whatever source, helps our learners relate their own ideas to the real world.

Useful Websites

www.mr-dt.com

www.bbc.co.uk/food

www.allrecipes.co.uk

French

In Year 8, pupils have two lessons of French a week. Pupils have access to a wider range of resources including audio files for listening practice and 'Studio' course books. During the year, it is expected that pupils will begin to develop their ability to understand and produce French with a greater degree of accuracy. They will start to use varied and more complex structures with different tenses to give accounts of past events or plan future projects. Pupils will explore various cultural facts about French forms of entertainment and learn about tourist attractions in Paris. They will also find out about French celebrations, food and regions.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

What is your greatest passion: films, books, music, the Internet?

What do you know about Paris?

During the Autumn term, pupils will be able to find out and talk about various forms of entertainment including tourism. They will be given the opportunity to review the present tense and opinion phrases before moving on to understanding and applying the past tense to their work to give an account of past events.

Spring:

What is your favourite food?

What is your house like?

During the Spring term, pupils will learn how to describe their region and house in detail and talk about food. They will also be introduced to the future tense and use various prepositions when writing.

Summer:

What is the film "Les Choristes" about?

Why is the 14th of July a national holiday in France?

During the Summer term, pupils will watch, analyse and learn how to write the review of a French film in order to consolidate their knowledge of tenses and opinion phrases. Students will also find out about the French revolution and how it is celebrated in France.

How you can help

Learning a foreign language provides many skills and advantages in life from reinforcing literacy to enhancing job prospects. Learning one language sets the path to learning other languages and widens a pupil's opportunities. Parents can support pupils by helping them gain confidence and by encouraging them to practise at home or on holiday. Learners always appreciate a member of the family to test them on vocabulary or go through speaking test preparations.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.languagesonline.org.uk/>

<http://www.french-games.net/frenchgames>

<http://atantot.com>

Geography

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Introducing India: What are the opportunities and challenges for the future?

Learners study the physical and human features of India. They explore location, environment, population, urbanisation, tourism, trade, economic growth, aid and international development in this diverse, rapidly-changing and globally-significant Asian country.

Future Floods: How can Geography make a difference?

Learners investigate why flooding occurs, whether flooding can be predicted and the sustainability of flood defences. They compare the impact of flooding in the UK with that of Bangladesh.

Spring:

Rise of China: Where does China go from here?

Learners investigate the factors which affect and effect the rapid changes in contemporary China. They explore how China is linked to the rest of the world, how the country is developing and consider the sustainability of the development

How does glaciation change the world?

This unit focuses on Iceland. Learners will develop their understanding of physical geography, especially glacial features and processes in areas once or currently covered by ice. Human interaction with icy and glacial environments is also studied, including how people have adapted to such places, the hazards they pose, and the importance of glaciated places for the future.

Summer:

What are Russia's regions and roles?

Learners explore how Russia is a globally significant place and home to a diverse range of landscapes and environments. They explore Russia's varied physical regions and how wealth, power and influence have been gained through the sale of fossil fuels.

How you can help

Encouraging your children to read newspapers and watch news reports is a good way of developing their understanding of the world and global issues. There are a number of television programmes that will also develop their learning and enjoyment of Geography, in addition to YouTube clips.

Useful Websites:

<http://ngkids.co.uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zrw76sg>

<http://www.ducksters.com/geography/asia.php>

History

Curriculum – what we're doing?

Autumn/Spring:

Cromwell: Hero or Villain?

Learners explore how the country changed under Cromwell's rule and the impact of Cromwell's policies on Ireland. They evaluate different perceptions of Cromwell and learn why the Commonwealth ended.

Why was the Monarch Merry?

Learners explore how, when and why Charles II became king and compare his rule to that of Cromwell. They study the key events of The Plague and The Great Fire of London and explore how the lives of women changed between Tudor and Stuart England.

Spring:

How did slavery affect the British Empire?

Learners investigate how and why the British built their empire. They focus on the Slave Trade and the impact of Thomas Clarkson and William Pitt on this.

Spring/Summer:

How did World War 1 challenge Britain, Europe and the World?

Learners explore the reasons why The Great War took place. They explore the life of soldiers, from joining up to frontline, and consider how life changed for ordinary citizens.

How did World War 2 challenge Britain, Europe and the World?

Having gained an overview of why WWII began, learners focus on Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the bombing of Dresden. They learn about the death camps, the role of Winston Churchill and the impact of nuclear weapons in ending the war.

How you can help

There are many excellent documentaries on television and YouTube which will develop increased awareness and understanding of the past. Reading relevant books, especially biographies of key historical figures is always helpful and will improve literacy as well as historical skills. Visits to places of Historical interest will also help. Encouraging your child to read a newspaper or watch the news will make them aware of some of the issues which we study in the past.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zk26n39>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/horrible-histories>

Life Skills

Curriculum – what we're doing

At Catshill Middle School, we have designed our curriculum taking into account the best practice advice from the PSHE Association and The Citizenship Foundation. In addition to our planned curriculum, which is summarised below, we have the flexibility to address other issues and events as they arise during the course of the year.

Autumn:

8.1 Where do you cross the line?

Learners consider online behaviour and its consequences with a focus on cyberbullying, sexting, peer pressure and self-esteem; they are also made aware of the dangers of online grooming.

8.2 Where do I see myself?

Learners explore how career opportunities are changing in the UK and identify the skills needed for a modern jobs market.

Spring:

8.3 How substance-aware are you?

Learners explore the role of alcohol and drugs in society; the risks and consequences of use/misuse and how to manage peer influence.

8.4 What are our digital rights?

Learners explore and debate a range of issues surrounding internet access and use. They learn the importance of internet safety.

Summer:

8.5 Do we expect respect?

Learners explore how to make and maintain healthy relationships while learning about consent and challenging controlling behaviour, violence and abuse.

8.6 Am I ready to move on?

Learners reflect on their life at middle school, consider their futures and have the opportunity to develop a range of skills to support them as they move to high school and beyond.

How you can help

You can help support the Life Skills programme by encouraging your child to be aware of current affairs and that tolerance and respect are necessary for a safe environment.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zqtnvcw>

Music

The Music curriculum is designed to allow pupils the opportunity to explore a range of music from different countries, time periods and styles in a creative and practical way. Learners develop key skills in performing music, composing their own music as well as listening and responding critically to evaluate the music they hear. All pupils are warmly invited to join one of our choirs, form a band or start/continue instrumental lessons. We have a growing musical tradition within our school which we hope our Year 8 pupils will enjoy and contribute to.

(Please request a separate letter for instrumental lessons from the Office for details of charges).

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Year 8 pupils will consolidate their understanding of the elements of music and develop their knowledge of texture and harmony by playing chords. They will learn about various genres of music looking at style, structure and elements of song, for example: bass, riff, chorus, chords and melody through topics relating to other curriculum subjects.

Spring:

Year 8 pupils will take the elements learnt in the autumn term and compose their own song. They will learn how to write lyrics and music as well as explore musical ideas in small groups and as a class.

Pupils will be encouraged to draw on a range of musical structures, styles and instrumentation.

Summer:

Pupils will explore their voice, learn singing techniques and will be encouraged to play instruments of their choice and develop themselves as autonomous musicians. Pupils will be encouraged to form smaller groups/bands and discuss repertoire ready for their leaver's performance.

Pupils will organise a performance featuring their own songs and groups.

How you can help

- Encourage pupils to listen to music and discuss their future as musicians.
- Talk about your favourite music and why.
- Encourage pupils to think about who inspires them as a performer.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.allmusic.com/genre/reggae-ma0000002820>

PE

In Year 8 during Physical Education, pupils will become more competent, confident and expert in their techniques, and apply them across different sports and physical activities. They should understand what makes a performance effective and how to apply these principles to their own and others' work. They will begin to develop skills of officiating and leading activities.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Can I use and refine learnt skills in competitive games?

Learners will use and apply skills of games through football, hockey, netball, rugby, cricket, rounders and basketball. They will apply principles suitable for attacking and defending. They will use a range of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in direct competition. Games units will run through the whole school year.

Spring:

How can physical education develop my understanding of how my body works?

Learners will develop their body capabilities through dance activity. In Dance, they will choreograph dances in a range of dance styles and forms. Through health and fitness units they will begin to understand and apply the long-term health benefits of physical activity

Summer:

Can I analyse my performances compared to previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve my personal best?

Learners will explore through athletics how they can achieve fastest times, heights and distances. Pupils will learn skills associated with a range of track and field events. They will compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best.

How you can help

Pupils often need help to remember named P.E. kit on the correct days. This information can be found in their planners on their timetable page. Encourage pupils to participate in extra- curricular clubs both inside and outside school. These activities along with healthy eating will encourage pupils to adopt lifelong healthy lifestyles.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/things-to-do/sports-fitness.aspx#>

<http://www.wychavonleisure.co.uk/our-centres/bromsgrove/>

<http://www.rylandcentre.co.uk/>

<http://www.bromsgrovehockey.org.uk/>

Philosophy and Ethics

At Catshill Middle School, the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2015-2020 forms the basis of our curriculum. We aim to engage Learners in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address through three main strands: *Believing*, *Expressing* and *Living*.

Curriculum – what we're doing

Autumn:

Does living biblically mean obeying the whole bible?

Learners explore the variety of writings in the bible: narrative, poetry, prayer, commands and letters. They consider the moral commands and question how these can be of use in today's world. Different responses to the Bible are investigated and learners consider whether you have to be a Christian to 'live biblically'.

Spring:

Is death the end? Does it matter?

Learners consider the belief of life after bodily death and explore the music, hymns and songs that are used at Christian and secular funeral services. They study 'samsara', the Buddhist cycle of birth and rebirth, and contrast this with Humanist beliefs.

Summer:

How can people express the spiritual through the arts?

Learners explore a range of definitions of 'spiritual' and 'spirituality'. They investigate and explain how and why music and art are important ways of expressing the spiritual across five world religions.

How you can help

Religious Education provides rich opportunities for children to learn about the things that matter in the lives of local people and the wider world. Parents can support learning by encouraging their children to have an awareness of current events and to have a thoughtful and questioning approach to life. Understanding people's views can be a first step to recognising and appreciating diversity.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>