



THE  
PORTSMOUTH  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL

# THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

2025/2026



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## Welcome to the Middle School!

The early part of a pupil's secondary education is an exciting time - we want to help pupils to assimilate the body of knowledge and practical skills necessary both to achieve academic success and to provide a secure foundation for their future as lifelong learners in which they contribute positively to the local and global community. How do we do this? Teachers are specialists in their subject areas, knowledgeable and passionate, and our curriculum is studied through the lens of what makes us unique - our core values.



So, as well as being an exciting time for our Middle School pupils, it is also an exciting time for PGS as we introduce our brand-new KS3 curriculum, designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes we know will lead our pupils to flourish, thrive and succeed in the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We encourage pupils to be enquiring and independent in their learning. We want our learners to evaluate their progress critically and learn to optimise their potential by setting themselves challenging goals and adopting effective study techniques. We give regular constructive feedback to identify the strengths of pupils' work and targets for improvement. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including those with Additional Educational Needs (AEN).

The Learning Support department screens all pupils on arrival at PGS and uses the results of baseline tests to identify individuals who would benefit from additional support. They may offer a discrete number of support sessions to pupils who have a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. If you have any concerns about your child's study skills or believe they may have an undiagnosed specific learning difficulty, please contact your child's tutor in the first instance.

We look forward to sharing your child's learning journey through secondary school with you.

## Homework

Homework is an opportunity to consolidate and build on classroom learning in a variety of ways. You can help your children by ensuring they have a routine that enables them to do homework every day of the week and providing an environment at home which is conducive to quiet study. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are set homework tasks, according to the homework timetable. Homework may be due for completion on a different night from the one on which the homework is set - this is to enable an even spread of homework across five nights. Pupils should spend 25 minutes on each piece of homework in Year 7, rising to 30 minutes per piece in Year 8. If pupils find that homework is taking significantly longer than this, they should stop and talk to their teacher. There is a supervised daily homework club based in the school library from 4.00 pm until 6.00 pm where pupils may work independently. No additional homework is set over the holidays although in the summer half-term preceding the end-of-year examinations, revision is advisable.

In order to learn well, young people need around 10 hours' sleep a night. They should relax before going to sleep - reading quietly in a softly lit room is ideal. Pupils should not spend time on their mobile phones for at least an hour before going to sleep and should charge these in another room to avoid "blue light" reducing the quality of their sleep. Eating healthily helps with concentration, so it is important to have three meals a day and healthy snacks too. Keeping hydrated by drinking fluids but limiting sugary drinks and those containing caffeine maximise the ability to study well. Pupils may drink water in class and should bring a named bottle to school.

Please raise any concerns about home or schoolwork with your child's tutor in the first instance.

## The Library

The school library is key to academic enrichment and success. It is much more than just a place for books—it is a dynamic space where creativity, collaboration, and curiosity come to life.

The library is a welcoming and versatile space where pupils can come before school, during breaks, at lunchtime, and after school to read, study, and complete their homework. Open daily from 08:00 to 18:00, it offers a quiet, comfortable environment to focus and explore. Pupils have access to a wide range of books, journals, and digital resources, all supported by a knowledgeable library team who are eager to help students discover new topics and expand their interests.

Beyond traditional books, the library boasts a variety of resources, including magazines and graphic novels, ensuring there is something for everyone. Lunchtime book clubs provide a fantastic opportunity for pupils to engage with their peers over shared reading interests, fostering collaboration and creativity.

*“My PGS experience would not have been as enriched without your book recommendations and discussions. I don't understand how I always walk away from book club with about 5 more books I need to read!” Year 10*

The library is also equipped with laptops, allowing pupils to check emails, work on assignments, and collaborate on group projects. For research and homework, a photocopier is available to scan and print materials, making it easier for students to access the resources they need.

*“You gave me more support and confidence in my own ability than I ever could have asked for. I appreciate every meeting, extra research and constructive idea you have given me. The skills you have passed on will guide me through university and thereafter.” Year 13*

There is a supervised after-school study, providing a structured yet relaxed environment for independent work. Pupils do not need to book in advance; they simply sign in and out, allowing them the flexibility to read, study, or finish homework in a peaceful atmosphere.

In all, the library is a hub of creativity, collaboration, and curiosity, providing students with the tools and resources they need to succeed academically while fostering a love of learning.

### **How can parents help?**

A parent can foster a child's love of reading by making books a fun and regular part of daily life—reading together at bedtime, visiting libraries, and letting the child choose books that interest them. Creating a cozy reading space and showing enthusiasm not only helps make reading feel special it sets a value on its importance. Crucially when a parent models a love of reading themselves, and shares those experiences, children are much more likely to develop and maintain the same passion.



# Academic Enrichment

Academic enrichment activities in the Middle School occur throughout the school year and are designed to develop pupils' **curiosity** as they explore learning beyond specific subjects. Pupils are, via independent and creative open-ended projects, given the opportunity to further develop their knowledge of particular topics that inspire them. This also provides an excellent opportunity to support pupils in acquiring skills which foster effective independent research, project-planning and evolution, and **creative** and **collaborative** presentations. Pupils are also supported in developing their own self-regulation skills and will learn to understand more about the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for success. Finally, we also look to run more directed study days and creative project work that focus on wider world skills and values such as entrepreneurship, business leadership and innovation.

Illuminate! is an academic extension lesson, which will form part of the Year 7 & 8 timetable for the first time from September 2025 to ensure that academic enrichment also forms part of timetabled lessons, in addition to other opportunities offered. It will take place once a week and pupils will explore a number of short courses in a carousel which lasts the full academic year. There will be opportunity to study a wide range of options, encapsulating many academic interests. The aim of the programme is to support the development of the PGS Core Learning Skills of analysis, communication and global literacy, and the PGS Core Life Skills of initiative, leadership and advocacy.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents may wish to support their children by discussing with them what they wish to independently pursue further beyond the curriculum. Children will also benefit from gaining a greater awareness of how their parents work in the modern workplace and the most apposite skills and mindsets that are beneficial in this regard.

**Mrs Samantha Haslam, Deputy Head (Academic & Staff Welfare)**

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# Art & Design

## **What do you learn?**

In Art at Portsmouth Grammar School, pupils gain knowledge of key artistic concepts such as colour theory, composition, perspective, and form. These all link to our foundation through the Formal Elements of Art and Design. From the outset, pupils study a range of historical and contemporary artists, movements, and cultural contexts, developing an understanding of visual language and art history. Pupils also learn how to analyse and interpret artworks critically, using appropriate vocabulary. This foundation equips them with a broad understanding of how art communicates meaning and how it reflects and shapes the world around us.

## **What will you be able to do?**

Middle School pupils develop a strong foundation in a core range of techniques, including drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics and mixed media. They learn to experiment creatively, evaluate their work critically, and express ideas visually. These experiences directly support the PGS Skills by fostering communication, creativity, collaboration, resilience, and reflection. Through both individual and group projects, pupils will gain confidence and adaptability, learning to approach challenges with an open mind. Art encourages independent thinking and problem-solving, aligning closely with the school's commitment to developing well-rounded learners prepared for future academic and personal success.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

We set our assessments within the bounds of the national Art Assessment Objectives to enable a standard of learning that provides a common understanding yet pushes academic learning. In Middle School Art at PGS, homework is set regularly to reinforce and extend our classroom learning. Typical tasks may include observational drawing, finding research about artists or movements, sketchbook development, or preparation for upcoming projects. Pupils are expected to complete their work with care and creativity, meeting deadlines and demonstrating independent effort. Our homework programme supports skill progression, personal reflection, and deeper engagement with visual ideas. It also encourages pupils to take ownership of their artistic development and to build the discipline and commitment needed for future success in this subject ready for Year 9 and beyond.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

In Art lessons, we utilise our pupils' in-built curiosity, learning to experiment and finding ways to explore together. Pupils investigate ideas and materials, interpret themes, and engage with visual storytelling. By tackling open-ended tasks, we anticipate that pupils will refine their focus, develop initiative, and embrace originality. Art cultivates thoughtful risk-taking and encourages imaginative problem-solving. Learners gain appreciation for different viewpoints and express ideas in unique, meaningful ways. Through supportive guidance and reflection, we build assurance and help our pupils to discover their personal strengths. All these experiences nurture key qualities aligned with the PGS Core values. We take pride in preparing individuals to contribute positively within and beyond the classroom environment.

### **How can parents help?**

Providing access to basic art materials and a quiet space to create can help build good habits though we also encourage our pupils to keep a good time management routine and ask them to complete their assignments using a sound home schedule. Parents can support pupils by offering guidance with this. Pupils often manage their tasks for Art best over a weekend, especially during winter days, as the light is better but sometimes more can be gained from family visits to galleries to support a child's understanding. In fact, visiting galleries, exhibitions, or exploring art books together can inspire curiosity and deepen understanding. Discussing your child's ideas, praising effort over outcome and promoting resilience when facing challenges are also valuable. Above all, showing enthusiasm for this subject at home will help our pupils feel confident, motivated, and proud of their artistic journey.

**Mr Jock Peebles, Head of Art & Design**

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# Biology

## **What do you learn?**

In Year 7, pupils will learn the fundamental concepts that underpin all life on Earth. Through their study of cell structure, pupils begin to develop an understanding of the basic building blocks across the five kingdoms of life. Moving on to photosynthesis, nutrition and respiration they will learn how organisms gain and use energy to stay alive, before finally looking at the different ways in which organisms can use this energy for movement.

In Year 8, pupils will build upon these ideas and look at more complex biological systems, beyond individual organisms. The year begins with a study of the genetic code, evolution, and the diversity of species on earth. This is followed by an exploration of the ways in which organisms interact with each other and their environment, including ecosystems, the nervous system and disease.

The course is designed to encourage synoptic thinking, and this ability to make links between different areas of the course will be immensely valuable at GCSE and A level.

## **What will you be able to do?**

The primary aim of the Middle School Biology curriculum is to help pupils to develop the skills they need to be good scientists at GCSE and beyond. Key within this are observational skills, clear communication of findings, and the ability to apply understanding to increasingly complex ideas. Through practical work, pupils will learn how to produce valid data and will practice graph drawing, conclusion and evaluation.

The course is carefully sequenced so that each new topic builds upon the last and gives opportunities for review of prior material and synoptic thinking. At the end of the course pupils will be confident independent learners with a strong scientific foundation to take into the GCSE course.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

All Biology lessons are designed to stretch pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding through built-in opportunities for challenge and enrichment. Lessons are taught by subject specialists with their own interests and areas of expertise, and the course is designed to be engaging and to include many real-world applications to bring the subject matter to life. Extra reading lists are provided to encourage pupils to explore Biology beyond the classroom in ways that link to what they are learning. Pupils are all encouraged to tackle challenging questions which require linking of information and higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Outside the classroom, pupils can learn more about the biodiversity of their local area and beyond through Wildlife Club. Pupils meet weekly to share their own passions and to learn about wildlife in all its forms. Trips to the shore at low tide and evening bat walks provide excellent opportunities for pupils to directly engage with their local wildlife.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

The Biology curriculum aims to foster pupils' natural curiosity through stimulating lesson material that encourages them to ask and answer questions about life. Pupils are supported to meet high expectations, and mastery of the content requires commitment to fully engage in class and to complete thorough independent homework and revision. Through regular practical work, pupils will develop collaborative skills and there are opportunities for creative thinking and problem solving. The courage to persevere with difficult concepts or to share ideas with their peers is also strongly encouraged. By the end of the course, pupils will have an understanding of how a wide range of biological concepts are applicable to life beyond PGS and we aim to inspire a lifelong interest in the subject.

### **How can parents help?**

It is always useful for pupils to speak about what they have learned in class, linking it to prior knowledge and raising new questions to explore further. This discussion of concepts develops fluency of ideas and will help pupils to feel more confident when using their knowledge. Parents can also help by encouraging pupils to access and use the shared revision resources and to take a proactive approach to their learning. Further reading lists will be provided for extension and engagement, and we love it when parents take an interest in these documentaries and articles along with their child.

**Miss Rachel Poole, Head of Biology**

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# Chemistry

## What do you learn?

The Year 7 curriculum introduces pupils to the fundamental building blocks of Chemistry. The journey begins with the Particle Model, helping pupils understand that all matter is made up of tiny particles, laying the groundwork for future concepts that we dive into across the rest of the year such as states of matter and chemical reactions. Year 7 focuses on accessible, observable phenomena that build conceptual understanding and practical skills. The sequencing supports pupils in forming robust mental models of how substances behave and interact.

Year 8 builds on Year 7's conceptual framework by applying it in more complex and abstract contexts as well as building upon their knowledge to prepare pupils for the start of their GCSE course in Year 9. Topics covered in Year 8 include: Acids & Alkalis; The Periodic Table; Metals and Independent Investigations. It introduces socially and environmentally relevant topics, fostering scientific literacy and global awareness.

## What will you be able to do?

The KS3 Chemistry curriculum is carefully sequenced to move pupils from concrete ideas toward more abstract thinking. Each topic builds upon the last, revisiting and reinforcing prior knowledge while introducing new ideas in increasingly complex ways. This spiral structure ensures that pupils deepen their understanding and are well-prepared for the demands of GCSE science.

The Chemistry curriculum supports pupils' academic development by building strong foundations in scientific knowledge, analytical thinking, and practical skills essential for success at GCSE and beyond.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

Academic enrichment and extension in KS3 Chemistry at PGS is embedded throughout the curriculum, both in and beyond the classroom. Lessons are designed to stretch pupils and encourage higher-order thinking and the application of abstract ideas to real-world contexts. Enquiry questions and open-ended investigations are central to many topics—such as designing methods to separate mixtures—challenging pupils to consider alternative approaches.

Outside of lessons, academic curiosity is further supported through a junior science club, where pupils tackle exciting hands-on challenges and explore Chemistry in fun, innovative ways. The club aims to build confidence and teamwork, along with nurturing a lifelong interest in science by showing its relevance to the real world.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupils?**

KS3 Chemistry at PGS nurtures a wide range of skills that align closely with the school's core values. Through enquiry-based learning and practical investigations, pupils develop curiosity, asking questions about the world around them and seeking scientific explanations. They use creativity to design experiments and solve problems, while courage is shown in tackling new ideas and learning from mistakes. Mastery of the subject requires commitment, particularly in building knowledge over time and refining practical techniques. Topics like climate change and pollution encourage compassion, helping pupils consider the wider impact of science on society and the environment. Finally, regular group work and collaborative learning foster collaboration, as pupils communicate, listen, and succeed together.

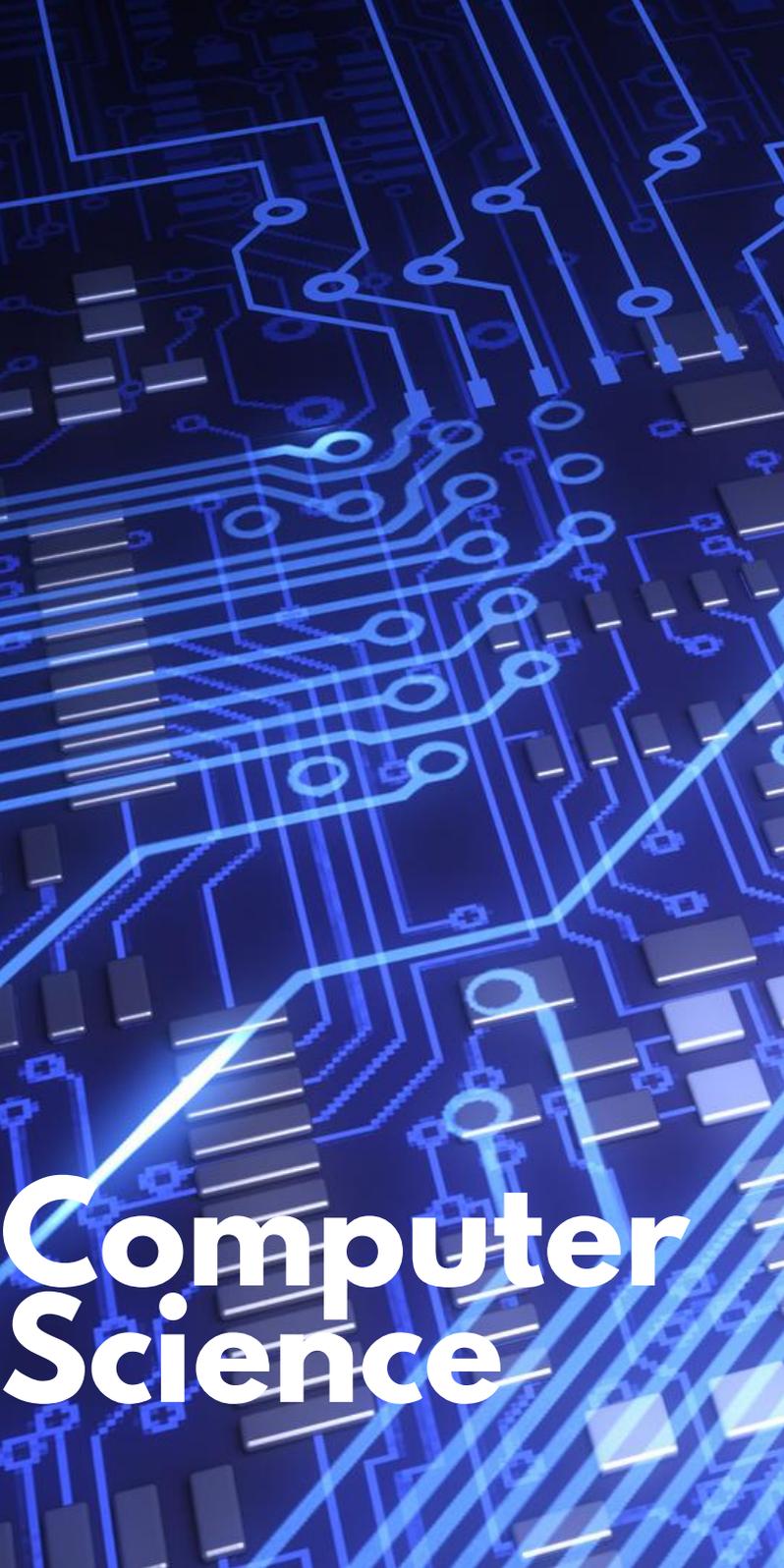
The Chemistry curriculum supports pupils' academic development by building strong foundations in scientific knowledge, analytical thinking, and practical skills essential for success at GCSE and beyond. By engaging with global issues like climate change and sustainability, pupils also develop a sense of responsibility, empathy, and awareness of their role in society.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents may wish to support their child's learning in this subject by initiating discussion about the topic being studied so they become practised at vocalising their ideas. Parents can help children to learn the spelling of subject-specific words and to revise for end of topic tests. It is important for pupils to be encouraged to revise through practising questions wherever possible. A key website is BBC Bitesize KS3. All pupils will have access to an on-line textbook, Educake and Seneca.

**Mr Matthew Shields, Head of Chemistry**

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# Computer Science

## **What do you learn?**

In the Middle School at Portsmouth Grammar School, our Computer Science curriculum is more than just learning about computers; it is about igniting a passion for technology and innovation. We cultivate essential digital skills while deeply embedding the PGS core values of collaboration, commitment, compassion, courage, creativity, and curiosity. Through engaging with fundamental concepts and practical applications, we prepare our students to confidently navigate and contribute to the ever-evolving technological landscape. Our journey through Years 7 and 8 equips students with a strong ethical foundation in online safety and responsible digital citizenship, alongside vital skills in digital literacy, programming, and computational thinking.

### *Year 7*

- Digital Literacy and School Systems
- Introduction to Programming with Micro:Bit
- Online Safety and Desktop Publishing
- Spreadsheet Modelling
- Technology Pioneers Research and Innovation Project
- Computational Thinking

### *Year 8*

- Introduction to Flowol
- Introduction to Block-Based Coding with Code.org
- App Development Project with AppInventor
- Data Handling and Advanced Spreadsheet Skills

### **What will you be able to do?**

Developing digital fluency involves confidently using essential tools and platforms alongside writing basic programs to solve problems and build interactive projects. A crucial aspect is understanding online safety and responsible digital citizenship. Furthermore, you will learn to organise, analyse, and interpret data using spreadsheets and even design simple mobile applications. By applying computational thinking and clearly communicating technical concepts, you will also be equipped to research and present findings on various technological topics.

### **Academic Enrichment and Extension**

Get ready to put your skills to the test! As part of the Computer Science curriculum, all pupils will take part in two exciting national challenges: the Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge and the Bebras Coding Challenge. This is a fantastic opportunity to compete against fellow students, not just within PGS, but from schools all over the country, showcasing your developing talents in computational thinking and coding.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

Through teamwork and dedication in coding projects, you will cultivate compassion by considering user needs and build courage by tackling complex challenges. This journey fosters creativity in designing solutions and nurtures curiosity by exploring new technologies and the work of pioneers.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents play a crucial role in reinforcing the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom. Engaging your child in discussions about how technology impacts daily life and work can provide practical insights and inspire curiosity. Sharing your own experiences with technology, encouraging responsible use and discussing the evolution of software and hardware can make learning more relatable and meaningful.

### **Mr. Hywel Stayte, Head of Computer Science**

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# Design & Technology

## **What do you learn?**

In both Year 7 and 8, pupils rotate subjects across the year. Pupils will complete 2 terms of Design & Technology and 1 term of Food & Nutrition each academic year.

## ***Design & Technology***

Pupils complete a combination of theory and practical tasks across the year, learning about material properties and manufacturing processes.

### *Year 7*

- Metal casting processes
- CAD/CAM
- Manufacturing with timbers

### *Year 8*

- Wood joining methods
- Metalworking processes
- Finishing techniques (spray painting, waxing etc)

## ***Food & Nutrition***

In both years pupils complete a combination of practical lessons and theory. Pupils are required to bring in ingredients for practical sessions and are able to adjust ingredients to their preferences.

### *Year 7*

- Hygiene in Food and Nutrition
- Eatwell guide, macro nutrients and environmental aspects of the food industry
- Practical lessons cover a range of skills, safe knife skills, use of hobs and ovens

## Year 8

- Micronutrients, specific dietary needs, allergies and intolerances
- More complex skills are developed this year, thickened sauces, fair trade foods and Genoise sponge

### **What will you be able to do?**

#### ***Design & Technology***

- They will be able to identify a range of different tools and understand how to use them safely
- Skills will be developed using a range of materials (timbers, metals and polymers)
- Pupils will develop skills using CAD/CAM methods including a detailed understanding of 2D Design and how the laser cutter uses a CAD file to cut materials
- Pupils will design products for everyday use and consider how the choice of materials impact design decisions

#### ***Food & Nutrition***

- Pupils will be able to safely use equipment, follow recipes and develop preparation techniques, being able to overcome challenges they may encounter
- They will be able to plan and prepare dishes efficiently within a time limit
- Their understanding of healthy eating and making informed food choices will develop so they can adapt recipes
- Pupils will be able to evaluate the impact of food choices on health, culture and the environment

### **Academic Enrichment and Extension**

#### ***Design & Technology***

Year 7 DT Club is a weekly club which runs during a lunch period. Pupils have the opportunity to explore their own projects, developing skills beyond those covered in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own project and are given support pursuing their goals.

Year 8 & 9 DT Club runs weekly after school, providing more time to explore their own projects and the different processes available in the DT department.

#### ***Food & Nutrition***

Young Chef Club is a weekly club which focuses on cooking flavourful food, exploring how to develop and present existing recipes. Pupils will plan, develop and prepare challenging dishes to further their culinary skills, each term pupils will prepare a starter, main and dessert.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupils?**

#### ***Design & Technology***

In design and technology lessons, pupils develop a wide range of important skills.



Collaboration is built as they work in teams to solve problems, share ideas, and complete projects together. Commitment is shown through the effort and resilience needed to design, build, and improve their work over time. Compassion is developed as pupils design products with the needs of different users in mind, thinking carefully about how to make life better for others. Courage grows as they take risks with new ideas, test prototypes, and learn from mistakes. Creativity is at the heart of their work, encouraging them to think inventively and find original solutions. Curiosity is sparked as they explore how things work, investigate new materials and technologies, and ask questions to deepen their understanding.

### ***Food & Nutrition***

In Food and Nutrition lessons, pupils develop essential skills that extend beyond the kitchen. Collaboration grows as they work together to plan, prepare, and evaluate dishes, learning to communicate and share responsibilities effectively. Commitment is strengthened through the careful following of recipes and the perseverance needed to master new techniques. Compassion is nurtured as pupils consider dietary needs and cultural preferences, promoting empathy and inclusivity. Courage emerges when they step out of their comfort zones to try unfamiliar foods and tackle challenging tasks. Creativity flourishes as they consider and edit recipes and experiment with flavours, textures, and presentation. Curiosity drives them to explore the origins of ingredients, the science behind cooking processes, and the impact of food choices on health and the environment.

### **How can parents help?**

#### ***Design & Technology***

It is helpful to encourage pupils to practise their designing and drawing skills whenever they can, especially when visiting new and exciting places. Highlighting articles or television programmes you may see which show manufacturing or exciting advancements in technology can enthuse and inspire pupils to think about modern advancements in design. Visits to exhibitions and museums can also allow students to understand the developments in technology in a broader context.

### ***Food & Nutrition***

Parents play an important role in supporting pupils with their Food and Nutrition learning. Encouraging pupils to weigh and measure their ingredients accurately at home helps them develop essential practical skills, build confidence, and work more independently during lessons. Practising these skills outside of school also reinforces the importance of precision and organisation in cooking. Parents can further support their child by involving them in meal planning, shopping for ingredients, and cooking at home, which strengthens their understanding of nutrition, budgeting, and food safety. Positive encouragement, discussing healthy eating habits, and allowing pupils to experiment with new recipes at home will help deepen their knowledge and passion for Food and Nutrition.

**Mrs Elisabeth Haigh, Head of Design & Technology**

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# Drama

## **What do you learn?**

Middle School Drama at PGS is, for many, a highlight of their week, and it provides a forum for creative and personal growth, whatever one's personal interests and background. In Years 7 and 8, pupils have the opportunity to develop and refine their practical, collaborative and evaluative skills across a range of theatre-based units designed to provoke imagination, confidence, creativity, discussion, cultural awareness and intellectual curiosity. The Middle School curriculum in Drama blends engagement and fun with an emphasis on building and reinforcing the skills, knowledge and disciplines pupils will require at GCSE and beyond.

**Year 7** begin with a current Skills Audit, before moving into Melodrama to build confidence, characterisation and use of the stage. They will then use a variety of Shakespearean extracts to explore language, tension, staging and the use of ensemble movement, before performing excerpts from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', focusing on effective rehearsal. Finally, they will explore the playscript of 'Skellig' through reading, discussion and oracy, alongside exercises which build understanding of the style and characters, culminating in summative performances of sections from the script.

**Year 8** begin with an exploration of the playscript 'Blood Brothers' through the use of reading, discussion, consideration of context and oracy, alongside exercises which build understanding of the characters, their motivations and emotions. The term culminates with performances of sections from the script, focusing on the use of effective rehearsal.

This is followed by an Introduction to Devising, a series of one-off creative workshops reinforcing and practising key Drama conventions to be used in the creation of an original piece of theatre, adding lighting and sound cues, props and costume. The year ends with the scripting and performance of a Monologue, and a series of set and costume design sessions, using a range of technical vocabulary

### **What will you be able to do?**

By the end of Year 8, pupils will have explored and demonstrated practical understanding in a range of drama skills, conventions and techniques, through applying them to different scenarios, genres and performance mediums across the two years of Middle School. Drama is a key subject for working independently and collaboratively, and every opportunity is given for pupils to develop these crucial skills via creative, engaging tasks. Evaluative feedback is an important part of the subject, and pupils will develop their dramatic and descriptive vocabulary whilst reporting on the effectiveness of others' work, as well as how it might be refined.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

Involvement in Drama outside of the classroom provides a natural strengthening and progression of abilities within it. The provision of Middle School Drama Club (held every Wednesday after school in the Autumn Term), and thereafter rehearsals for the Middle School Production in Summer provide an excellent opportunity to build confidence, make friends and develop performance skills in a safe, creative space.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

Drama is a very human subject, and by its nature, pupils are encouraged to develop their personal qualities in parallel with their dramatic ones. The syllabus aims to provoke intellectual curiosity, alongside cultural and contextual awareness, qualities implicit in becoming an effective learner. In addition, the emphasis on collaborative skills and commitment is a significant benefit, allowing pupils to find healthy and effective ways of working with each other, whilst encouraging the development of leadership qualities.

### **How can parents help?**

It is always appreciated when parents assist and support their children in attending rehearsals they are called to, as this makes the rehearsal process far more effective for everyone. Additionally, the more theatre performances your son/daughter sees, the better their appreciation of, and critical thinking about Drama in class and in performance will be.

**Mr James Robinson, Director of Drama**

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# English



## What do you learn?

In the Key Stage 3 English curriculum, pupils embark on a journey through a diverse range of texts and themes designed to foster a deep understanding of literature and language. The curriculum is carefully structured to build upon prior knowledge, skills, and understanding, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections between different modules.

**In Year 7**, pupils explore the realms of Myths and Legends, delving into timeless stories and introducing pupils to the concept of narrative structures, character development, and the use of language to convey meaning. The study of The Novel further develops these skills, as pupils engage with a range of narrative styles, genres, and themes. The Creative Writing through Shakespeare module enables pupils to explore the art of creative writing, using Shakespeare's works as a catalyst for their own work.

**In Year 8**, pupils progress to more complex texts and themes. The Speeches module develops pupils' critical thinking and analytical skills, as they examine the art of persuasive language and its impact on audiences. The study of Shakespeare builds upon the foundation established in Year 7, with a deeper exploration of his works and their cultural significance. The English Literary Heritage module introduces pupils to a range of literary periods and styles, broadening their understanding of the literary canon. The Dystopias module challenges pupils to think critically about the world around them, exploring the themes and motifs of dystopian literature.

### **What will you be able to do?**

Throughout the Key Stage 3 English curriculum, pupils develop a range of subject-specific skills, including critical thinking, analytical skills, creative writing, and close reading. These skills are fostered through a variety of teaching approaches, including discussion, debate, and written analysis. Pupils also develop essential PGS skills, such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, which are embedded in the curriculum through group work, presentations, and project-based learning.

As pupils progress through the curriculum, they become increasingly adept at using their knowledge and skills to interpret and analyse complex texts. They learn to identify and analyse literary devices, evaluate the impact of language on audiences, and develop well-supported arguments. The curriculum is designed to cultivate pupils' critical thinking and creativity, enabling them to approach texts and themes from multiple perspectives.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

Academic enrichment and extension are integral to the English curriculum, both within and outside the classroom. Pupils engage with complex topics and enquiry questions through modules such as Dystopias and Intertextuality, which encourage critical thinking and nuanced analysis. Open-ended learning tasks, such as creative writing projects and presentations, allow pupils to explore their interests and showcase their skills.

Beyond the classroom, pupils have opportunities to participate in literary competitions: we strongly encourage pupils to participate in the Foyle Young Poets Award and PGS have performed well in recent years. Numerous short story competitions take place throughout the year, run both internally - the Conan Doyle prize, for example - and externally. The English department runs a very successful literary society which enjoys frequent visits by academics and Old Portmuthians eager to share their literary expertise. The school's annual participation in World Book Day and the prestigious Leonardo prize provide platforms for pupils to engage with authors, poets, and literary critics, further enriching their understanding of literature and language.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

The English curriculum is designed to support the academic and personal development of pupils, aligning with the PGS core values of curiosity, creativity and compassion. Through the study of literature and language, pupils develop empathy, tolerance, and an appreciation for diverse perspectives. The curriculum encourages pupils to think critically about the world around them, exploring themes and issues that promote personal growth and understanding.



Pupils learn to work collaboratively, sharing ideas and supporting one another in group discussions and projects. The curriculum also fosters a sense of responsibility, as pupils develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling them to approach challenges with commitment and resilience.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents can play a vital role in supporting their child's learning in English by engaging in conversations about the texts and themes being studied. Encouraging pupils to share their thoughts and ideas about the curriculum can help to foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Parents can also support their child's reading habits by providing access to a wide range of texts and encouraging them to explore different genres and authors.

Additionally, parents can help their child develop essential skills, such as time management and organisation, by establishing a regular routine for homework and study. By showing interest in their child's learning and providing a supportive environment, parents can help their child thrive in the English curriculum.

If you have any questions or require more information, please do not hesitate to contact:

**Mr James Valente, Head of English**

[j.valente@pgs.org.uk](mailto:j.valente@pgs.org.uk)



# Geography

## **What do you learn?**

Pupils will discover the breadth and relevance of Geography through a variety of contemporary topics, including health and disease, crime and inequality, climate change, and digital mapping. The main aims of the Middle School curriculum are to engage pupils, and to embed foundation skills and concepts such that pupils can access more complex theory throughout their Key Stage 3 experience. For example, building pupils to recognise the role of interconnections and interdependence in our rapidly changing world.

## **What will you be able to do?**

The Middle School Geography curriculum is highly focused on developing skills, such as mapwork, digital literacy, numeracy, decision making, debating, and assimilating/ prioritising information. The assessments for each topic reflect the diversity of skills being developed, for example, group work when creating a weather forecast and debating skills when considering the main issues relating to climate change. We are passionate about developing skills for the future; such as responsible AI use and critical thinking, particularly when researching information on the internet.

## **Academic enrichment and extension**

Pupils have the opportunity at the end of Years 7 and 8 to enter the Young Geographer of the Year competition, which is run by the RGS (Royal Geographical Society).

Furthermore, the focus beyond exams in the summer is geographical enquiry, such as “Lula or Bolsonaro, who’s got the right idea about the Amazon Rainforest?” and “Should China now be considered a developed country?”. Homework tasks are very often accompanied by opportunities to extend thinking, either by linking to other content and skills already covered or by going beyond the content covered in the lessons. We are also passionate about fieldwork and seeing the world for ourselves; Year 7 go to the Wildheart Sanctuary and the Dinosaur Isle Museum on the Isle of Wight to further explore the topics of conservation and extinction, whilst Year 8 go to the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in order to practise collecting and analysing coastal data with the backdrop of one of the UK’s most famous landscapes.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

Pupils learn through doing in Geography which nurtures their curiosity. The variety of homework and assessment tasks promotes creativity, with high expectations of pupil outcomes driving commitment. Pupils are encouraged to be courageous by making informed choices and independent decisions about their work and speaking and discussing ideas as a class. Compassion is an essential value of Geography, for example, in the International Development Crime and Inequality topics. Perhaps the value that we champion the most in Geography, however, is collaboration, developing their ability to work productively together and thereby preparing pupils for future careers.

### **How can parents help?**

The main way in which parents can support their children as they learn Geography is to show an interest in what they have been learning. The news covers geographical issues in depth, such as climate change, the cost-of-living crisis, geopolitics and housing shortages to name but a few, all of which can be discussed from different points of view. Please encourage your children to use an atlas or globe for locations, to navigate using a map when walking or travelling and to explore their world at every opportunity to create a respect for those they share it with. Geocaching is an excellent activity for families to get out and about whilst pupils develop and improve their map skills.

### **Miss Louisa Burton, Head of Geography**

[l.burton@pgs.org.uk](mailto:l.burton@pgs.org.uk)



# History

## **What do you learn?**

Year 7: The development of the UK. This includes: Trade and Empire, the development of slavery and the Industrial Revolution. Year 8: Conflict, Rights and Democracy. This includes: The Suffrage movement, WWI- the roles of soldiers and the homefront and trench warfare. At Key Stage 3 the written structure of pupils' answers will use the PEE paragraph structure; Point, Evidence and Explain: this format will be used to enable pupils to answer all questions including source and interpretation-based questions. This skill is used throughout GCSE and A Level to formulate well developed and reasoned answers, so is a key building block for future study.

## **What will you be able to do?**

Pupils will use the historical events and knowledge gained from the topics to develop core skills of understanding the past, using sources to make claims about the past, understanding historical perspectives and why these may differ. Historical reasoning includes being able to explain the cause of events and make judgements on their significance, making links between themes. Historical analysis includes being able to see patterns and trends that develop over time, showing the impact of one event on another and historical writing, being able to apply evidence in a coherent and structured manner.

## **Academic enrichment and extension**

There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to engage both inside and outside the classroom. Including competitions clubs and historical site tours.

Pupils will have opportunities to read beyond the classroom with a tailored 'bookshelf' dedicated to each unit.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

At KS3 we have a strong focus on the Fundamental British Values which shape our curriculum. This allows us to embed the PGS core values into every topic we study. History naturally lends itself to the curious, having a desire to learn about the past and how it has shaped our society. There are several opportunities in individual and group tasks to be creative, including the use of IT and be collaborative by working as part of a team to complete investigations while being courageous to deliver your findings. We look at a range of poignant events, providing the opportunity to empathise and understand the compassion needed to place oneself in the position of people in the past.

### **How can parents help?**

The best way you can support your child's learning is through discussion, asking questions, probing alternative views which will require them to use evidence to support their judgements. Additionally, ensuring your child is always prepared for their next lesson including completion of all homework.

All lesson materials and revision materials are posted on Google classroom; this will allow you to see what they are doing in class and at home. Additional reading material can be found in the library, where a curated list for each of our topics is held. BBC Bitesize is always a recommended resource for History as most of the topics we cover are featured in small bitesize chunks for initial understanding or revision.

**Mrs Nicola Neil, Head of History**

[n.neil@pgs.org.uk](mailto:n.neil@pgs.org.uk)



# Latin

## What do you learn?

Year 7: Cambridge Latin Course Book 1.

- Daily Life and the History of Pompeii.

Year 8: De Romanis

- Greek and Roman Mythology.
- Founding myths/history of Rome's origins.

## What will you be able to do?

- Translate Latin passages.
- Understand and compare Classical culture, history, politics, religion, philosophy, and sport.
- Build language and grammar skills, along with a logical approach and attention to detail.

## Academic enrichment and extension

- Read about the Trojan War in the Summer Term.
- Study Odysseus in Year 8, combining texts from the original Odyssey.

## How do you develop as a PGS pupil?

- Curiosity: Learn about a world that is both fundamental to and different from our own.
- Commitment: Acquire fluency in a language.
- Collaboration and Creativity: Engage in group work and creative projects within the Latin curriculum.
- Compassion: Understand the perspectives and challenges of people who lived long ago.
- Courage: Tackle an intellectually rigorous subject.

### **How can parents help?**

It is great if parents encourage pupils to be curious about the past and about the roots and origins of words. Some help testing pupils on vocabulary prior to a test often can make a difference.

Parents can encourage pupils to be curious about the past and the origins of words. Testing pupils on vocabulary before a test can make a significant difference.

Encourage pupils to engage with texts that have Classical themes, such as Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, the Percy Jackson series, and novels by Robert Harris, Caroline Lawrence, Ben Kane, and Simon Scarrow. Movies with Classical themes can also inspire pupils to explore the Classical World.

**Mr Michael Murray, Head of Classics**

[m.murray@pgs.org.uk](mailto:m.murray@pgs.org.uk)



# Mathematics

## **What do you learn?**

We aim to provide a balanced and comprehensive Mathematics programme with full coverage of the skills and content required during Key Stage 3. The content taught in both Years 7 and 8 is divided into eight broad topic areas: Using and Applying Mathematics to Solve Problems, Numbers and the Number System, Calculations, Shape, Space and Measure, Algebra, Ratio & Proportion, Statistics and Probability. Concepts introduced under each of the areas are extended and expanded throughout Years 7 and 8 in preparation for the Year 9 curriculum, broken down into Base Skills (prior knowledge), Core Skills (expected learning) and Extend Skills (beyond expectations).

## **What will you be able to do?**

The aim is to build confidence and motivate individuals to develop their own mathematical thinking and reasoning capabilities alongside a thorough and rigorous approach to problem-solving. Learning and practising fundamental mathematical concepts, strategies and processes should lead to the ability to reason, model, prove and evaluate in the world of Mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the development of their own skills through regular formative assessment and feedback. This is supported by a customised online Dr Frost course that provides the opportunity for review and looking ahead throughout the whole year. These allow us to provide a clear and coherent set of accessible materials which encourage pupils to engage in the curriculum and develop the mathematical skills required at this level.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

To facilitate providing appropriate stretch and challenge for all pupils, we stream the pupils in Year 7 and then set them in Year 8. This creates ample opportunities for teachers to extend pupils through problem solving task such as Nrich investigations or JMC style questions. Outside of the classroom, there is a weekly Maths Puzzle Club where pupils come together to discuss harder problems and explore novel solutions to games and puzzles in a stimulating environment. We also run an annual Maths puzzle day where pupils are encouraged to solve a series of challenging puzzles throughout the day to be entered into a prize draw.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

Through appropriate challenge within the classroom, pupils develop the courage to keep pushing themselves, understanding that any wrong answers are just learning stops on the way to better knowledge. Our feedback programme supports pupils to develop commitment to their learning through clear signposting and direct dialogue with teachers on next steps. The supporting online resources and stimulating enrichment material help pupils to develop curiosity about where their learning could take them.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents may wish to support their child's learning in this subject by initiating discussion about homework that has been set or the feedback sheet from the open book Progress Check that is completed after each topic (roughly every 3-4 weeks) so they become practised at communicating and vocalising their ideas.

### **Mr Tom Fairman, Head of Maths**

[t.fairman@pgs.org.uk](mailto:t.fairman@pgs.org.uk)

### **Mr Joe Addyman, Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator**

[j.addyman@pgs.org.uk](mailto:j.addyman@pgs.org.uk)



# Modern Foreign Languages: French & Spanish

## **What do you learn?**

Pupils are introduced to the core vocabulary and grammar they need to be able to talk about their daily lives in the language, from free time to holidays. This can include food, the school system and sport. It also covers topics such as shopping, health and fitness and new technologies. Pupils learn how to give personal descriptions and describe their daily routine, home and local area. The ability to develop accurate communication is developed so that a pupil can converse and write about the topics at a basic level by the end of Year 8. The emphasis is on making the language relevant and fun, and to this end there is plenty of role-play, drama activities and songs.

## **What will you be able to do?**

Pupils learn to manipulate the language for different purposes and contexts, both in speech and writing. They will be more confident due to increased emphasis on spoken language. Pupils will be encouraged to find out more about French and Hispanic culture and develop receptive language skills. We aim to nurture highly communicative pupils who are prepared for moving on into wider society, enabling them to work more effectively with others and across national borders. Pupils become self-motivated and independent in their endeavours, keen to develop their knowledge and understanding without adult input.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

Throughout this phase we encourage the development of an inquisitive approach with extension activities for pupils who require stretch. This may include the use of story based and higher-level reading texts, which we introduce them to on World Book Day. We also use foreign language cinema to assist with aural immersion and give that essential insight into the culture. In Year 7 our pupils embrace Languages Day with tasters in other language. In Year 8 in the Summer Term our Language Assistants help develop their confidence in the spoken form, preparing them for our study trips in the following years. The Linguistics Olympiad is offered to provide challenge, requiring high levels of cognition to solve the puzzles.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

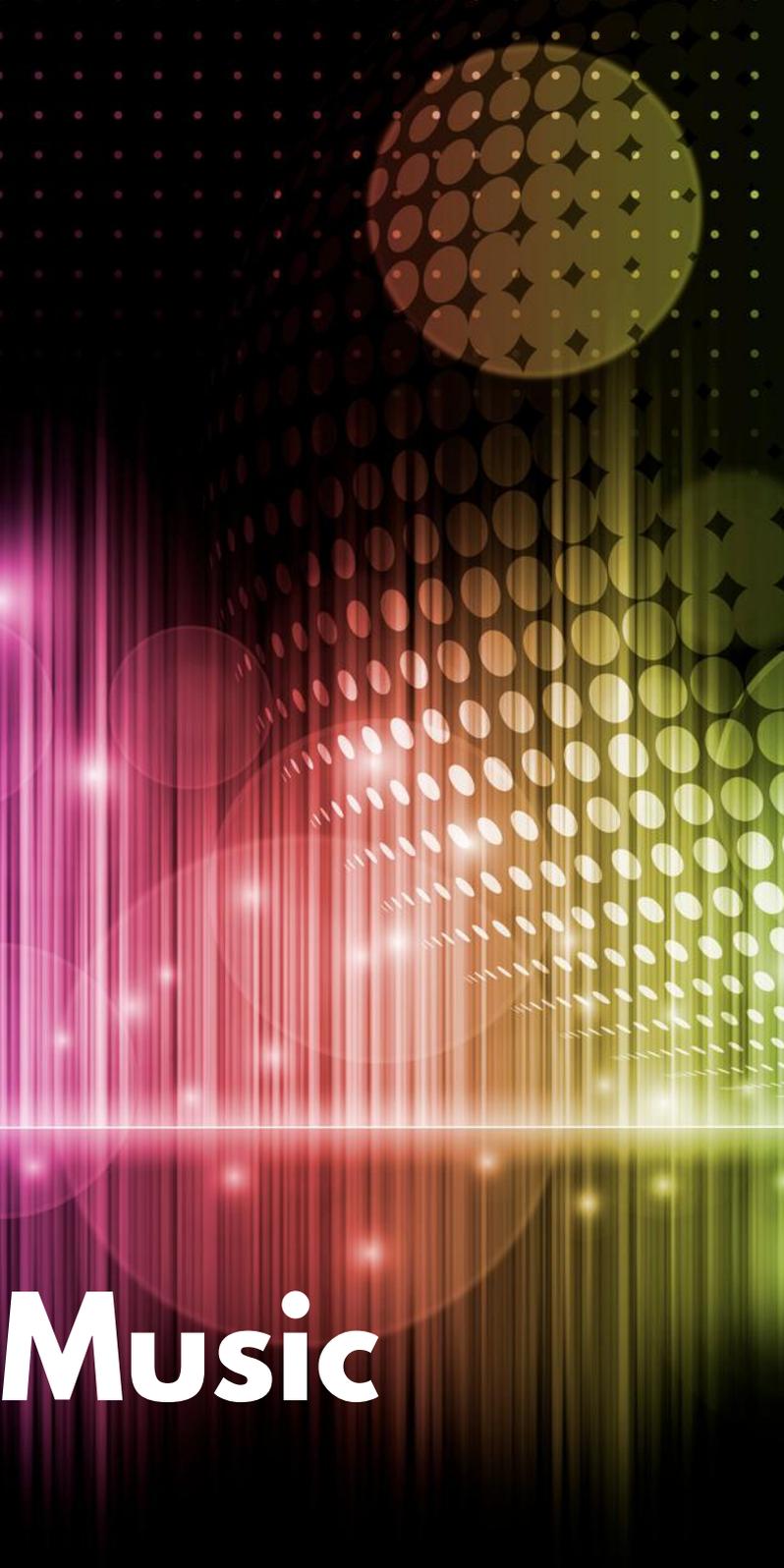
Pupils develop secure handling of the language elements, allowing them to gain creative ability with the building blocks. They gain the courage to develop a communicative approach and manipulate a different code. Through exposure to the living culture, their curiosity for the wider world is ignited. They learn to respect people who are different, from other backgrounds, perhaps less fortunate than themselves, nurturing their compassion. Greater independent acquisition of language is gained through collaboration with peers, inside and outside the classroom. We build a culture of commitment to learning through increased enjoyment and engagement.

### **How can parents help?**

As parents, you will no doubt have helped your sons and daughters to learn their spellings at primary school. Continuing to practise spelling in the same way is extremely useful in Modern Languages, in the early stages, as is informal testing of vocabulary learning, to support recall. It is also helpful if you engage your children in conversation about what they have learnt about life in France and the Hispanic world. Some parents will be keen to take their child on holiday to further expose them to the culture in preparation for school trips in later years.

### **Mr Oliver Stone, Head of Modern Languages**

[o.stone@pgs.org.uk](mailto:o.stone@pgs.org.uk)



# Music

## **What do you learn?**

We aim to introduce a base of key musical skills through the lens of a diverse range of musical styles and genres across the KS3 curriculum. The content in Years 7 & 8 focuses on developing three major skill areas; listening skills, performing skills, and composition skills. Each skill is utilised whilst studying a musical element, for example Rhythm. In term 1 Year 7 pupils engage with rhythm through a range of styles, such as Djembe Drumming, Samba, and STOMP body percussion. They perform and improvise rhythms, learn how to hear and identify different rhythmic shapes and patterns, and begin to notate their own rhythms. Each term follows the same model and builds on the skills developed in the previous term via a different musical element and culminates in the summer term of Year 8 with an own choice project which combines all three major skill areas.

## **What will you be able to do?**

The aim is to build an appreciation of music and the ability to engage with different musical styles as a listener, performer, and creator. By the end of year 8 we aim for pupils to be able to

- Create and notate music demonstrating coherent melodic and rhythmic features and basic harmony.
- Perform with confidence and accuracy
- Recognise musical features and devices when listening to music
- Be able to use appropriate terminology when speaking or writing about music

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

The curriculum is designed to have no ceiling on attainment. The tasks are devised to allow for all pupils to constantly be developing the brief, for example a pop song performance task will include a range of resources to suit different ability levels across the instruments which allow pupils to achieve a complete performance of the song, but with appropriate complexity.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

The PGS core values are woven into the music curriculum and developed from the outset:

- Curiosity: Learn about a diverse range of musical styles and the cultures which shape them
- Commitment: Building musical skills and preparing performances
- Collaboration and Creativity: Engage with others via group performances and creating musical sound via composition, improvisation and performance
- Compassion: Understanding the perspectives of contrasting musical cultures and appreciating the performances of peers
- Courage: Able to perform in front of others and to share responses to new musical styles

### **How can parents help?**

Parents are always welcome to bring their children to school concerts, details of which can be found in the Music Department Calendar. All material used in lessons is posted Google Classroom, accessible from home by parents and pupils. We would also encourage parents to take their children to external concerts in Portsmouth and further afield and to discuss music with them regularly.

### **Miss Sarah Heath, Head of Academic Music**

[s.heath@pgs.org.uk](mailto:s.heath@pgs.org.uk)

### **Mr Alex Goodwin, Director of Music**

[a.goodwin@pgs.org.uk](mailto:a.goodwin@pgs.org.uk)



# Pastoral Curriculum

## **What do you learn?**

### **Year 7**

#### *Health & Wellbeing*

- Growing up and puberty
- Emotional literacy
- Legal restrictions around smoking, vaping and alcohol

#### *Being in the World*

- Character, identity and principles
- Discrimination and prejudice
- Careers

#### *Relationships*

- Friendships
- Peer pressure
- Healthy relationships online

### **Year 8**

#### *Health & Wellbeing*

- Physical and mental health
- Emotional regulation, including stress and anxiety
- Grief and bereavement

#### *Being in the World*

- Prejudice, discrimination and equality
- Activism and standing up for others
- Fraud

#### *Relationships*

- Online safety and social media
- Nude image sharing and extortion
- Pornography

### **What will you be able to do?**

All pupils in Years 7 and 8 will receive a fortnightly timetabled lesson on the Pastoral Curriculum, delivered by a specialist teacher. They will develop subject knowledge in the above areas, particularly related to UK law. However, the focus of the course is to sharpen pupils' decision making and communication skills.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

Age appropriate, but challenging, reading material and videos are used throughout the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to think critically and debate, as well as build on knowledge and skills developed in other areas of the Middle School Curriculum.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

The objective of the course is to provide pupils with the skills necessary to become curious, courageous and compassionate human beings. The Pastoral Curriculum is central to the development of the PGS 'Core' and 'Life', with pupils expected to show leadership, initiative and advocacy for others throughout.

### **How can parents help?**

The Pastoral Curriculum has been carefully designed to match the needs of the pupils at PGS, helping them to address issues which may affect them. Parents can aid this process by engaging their children in open, honest and non-judgmental conversations about the topics covered.

### **Mr Daniel Frampton, Head of Pastoral Curriculum**

[d.frampton@pgs.org.uk](mailto:d.frampton@pgs.org.uk)



# Philosophy & Religious Studies

## What do you learn?

### Year 7

- *Can we prove that God exists?:* Pupils begin the year by examining what we mean when we use the word 'God'.
- *What has Judaism ever done for us?:* We look at some of the key values that come from Judaism and ask how this might be relevant to how humans live today.
- *Is a question without an answer the best question you can ask?:* We examine what important questions there are, such as whether there is a life after death, to see if these questions have value and credibility.

### Year 8

- *What makes me 'Me'?:* What do we mean by personal identity?
- *Are all religions really just the same?:* Pupils will look at the faith claims of different religions and explore whether there are overlaps of key concepts.
- *Can a deep truth be conveyed by a story that is not true?:* We will look at different parables and allegories portrayed by different religious traditions and philosophies and examine whether they can contain anything true.

### **What will you be able to do?**

There will be a variety of activities that pupils will be engaging with. Every lesson there will be some form of debate and open enquiry. As we are an academic discipline, pupils will be required to write fluently either on their devices or exercise books. Creating logical arguments is a key activity for us and pupils will be required to examine these, and those of other pupils, in a critical and constructive way. Pupils might also, in a homework, be asked to research a key idea or concept or the ideas of a scholar. Furthermore, they will be encouraged to identify and form counter arguments. Pupils will hopefully grow into mature philosophers!

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

It is our strong belief that all pupils, of whatever ability, can stretch their thinking and be prepared to explore new and existing ideas. In every lesson there will be extension activities which give pupils the opportunity to stretch and challenge their existing knowledge. Critiquing ideas and solving complex problems are higher order skills which will help them to engage more, and see the relevancy of, religious and philosophical content in today's world. Much of what we do to extend thinking is through developing a skills-based curriculum which is integrated with academic content. Pupils will also have the opportunity to work in small groups and be encouraged to present their findings; we set high standards in terms of presentation and content.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

- Curiosity: Learn about a world that is diverse in nature, whether it be creed or race. Why are people religious or atheist?
- Commitment: Pupils commit to discovering how religious and philosophical ideas can be relevant in 2025 and beyond.
- Collaboration and Creativity: Engagement in group work and creative projects will foster enthusiasm for the subject.
- Compassion: Understand the perspectives and challenges of people who carry with them important beliefs and attitudes.
- Courage: To challenge their own pre-conceived ideas, whether that be from their own culture of faith.

### **How can parents help?**

We know that pupils like talking about 'life questions' at home with their families. Parents can help by encouraging them to think through their ideas and ask further questions.

**Dr Ruth Richmond, Head of PRS**

[r.richmond@pgs.org.uk](mailto:r.richmond@pgs.org.uk)



# Physical Education

## **What do you learn?**

Pupils will participate in a wide range of sporting activities including swimming, gymnastics, health & athletic development, badminton, basketball, athletics, climbing and striking and fielding.

## **What will you be able to do?**

Pupils will have the opportunity to work with their peers in teams and groups, developing and improving sport specific skills but also wider life skills that are transferable to the rest of their school lives. Pupils will work together towards common goals, building trust and cooperation. They will practise clear and respectful communication, whether sharing tactics, offering encouragement, or solving problems. Opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as leading warm ups or captaining a team, will help pupils grow in confidence and decision making.

## **Academic enrichment and extension**

In every lesson, pupils are challenged to perform at their very best while experiencing a wide variety of activities across the Middle School. This approach enriches their development and introduces them to sports and activities they may not have tried before. At PGS, we offer an extensive range of co-curricular sporting opportunities, and we strongly encourage all pupils to take part. Participation not only supports performance and skill development but also plays a key role in promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

- Curiosity: Pupils nurture their curiosity by exploring a wide range of sports and discovering new ways to challenge themselves.
- Creativity: Pupils will develop innovative techniques, tactics, and approaches to improve their performance and adapt to different situations.
- Commitment: Regular participation in sport builds commitment by teaching pupils the importance of perseverance, practice, and striving for personal improvement.
- Collaboration: Team games and group activities help pupils strengthen their collaboration skills by working together towards shared goals and supporting one another.
- Courage: Pupils will develop courage by stepping out of their comfort zones, trying new activities, and facing challenges with confidence.
- Compassion: Pupils will develop compassion by showing empathy, respect, and encouragement towards teammates and opponents alike.

### **How can parents help?**

Pupils are more likely to participate and engage in a healthy and active lifestyle if their parents are involved too. The PE Department is more than happy to advise you on the best ways to support your child's physical activity. We would love to hear from you.

**Mr Andrew Seddon, Head of PE**

[a.seddon@pgs.org.uk](mailto:a.seddon@pgs.org.uk)



# Physics

## **What do you learn?**

The PGS Year 7 Physics curriculum is designed to build a strong foundation in physical science. Energy is introduced early as it underpins many scientific processes pupils will encounter across Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Forces are fundamental to understanding motion and interaction, setting the stage for more complex mechanics in later years. Waves are introduced to bridge the gap between physics concepts and everyday phenomena, like hearing and seeing, which makes science relatable and engaging.

In Year 8, the PGS Physics curriculum expands on the foundational ideas from Year 7 and begins to integrate more real-world applications. Pupils are encouraged to think critically about the role of science in society, particularly in terms of energy use and environmental responsibility. The introduction of electricity and magnetism adds a new dimension, allowing pupils to explore technologies they use daily. It also sets up key concepts they will revisit in more depth at GCSE level.

## **What will you be able to do?**

Throughout Years 7 and 8, pupils build foundational physics skills by engaging in scientific investigations, developing practical competencies with equipment like circuits and force meters, and applying mathematical concepts to interpret data and solve problems. They enhance their scientific literacy by using precise terminology, constructing explanations with models and diagrams, and applying their knowledge to new contexts.

By the end of Year 8, pupils are equipped not only with key physics concepts but also with the ability to think critically and work scientifically, preparing them for further study at GCSE level and beyond.

### **Academic enrichment and extension**

The Year 7 and 8 Physics curriculum at PGS fosters critical thinking and real-world application by encouraging pupils to explore topics like sustainability and energy use, linking physics concepts to everyday life and other subjects. Extension activities and research tasks provide additional challenges, fostering curiosity and self-directed study. Additionally, PGS Physics offers two weekly lunchtime clubs: Astronomy Club, where pupils engage in activities such as observing solar activity and estimating the age of the universe; and Electronics Club, where they build devices like random number generators and sensors. Both clubs are supported by Sixth Form pupils who also lead some sessions.

### **How do you develop as a PGS pupil?**

Curiosity drives our physics curriculum, prompting pupils to delve deeper into concepts through engaging contexts and problem-solving activities. Collaborative discussions and hands-on experiments encourage teamwork, allowing pupils to test hypotheses and analyse physical phenomena. This approach not only enhances their understanding but also fosters a commitment to exploring the universe, inspiring many to later pursue Physics at A Level.

### **How can parents help?**

Parents may wish to support their child's learning in this subject by initiating discussion about the topic being studied so they become practised at vocalising their ideas. Parents can help children to learn the spelling of subject-specific words and to revise for end of topic tests. A key website is BBC Bitesize KS3. All pupils will have access to an on-line textbook, Educake and Seneca.

### **Mr Steven McLean, Head of Physics**

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