DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619



The Lower School Curriculum

Academic Year 2026-27

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Introduction

This booklet provides an overview of the curriculum in the Lower School, and describes the content of all the subject courses your son will experience in Years 7 and 8. It will not of course provide answers to all the questions you may have about your son's learning - we warmly invite you to take up the opportunities through each academic year to talk with us about those - but it will give you a sense of how we work towards the five aims of the College:

- Our primary duty is to ensure that all our pupils are offered the right academic challenge and fulfil their academic potential;
- We hope to create an environment which promotes an independent work ethic and encourages all pupils to acquire a love of learning;
- We look to provide a wide range of sporting, cultural and adventurous activities for pupils to enjoy and through which they can learn to work co-operatively and to take a lead;
- We are committed to nurturing a supportive community which encourages a sense of social responsibility, and spiritual and personal development;
- We want to ensure that pupils from a variety of backgrounds can feel secure and equally valued.

As our first aim states, there are of course many opportunities for pupils to learn at school; this document describes only those that are timetabled, and other information will already have been sent, or will follow this booklet, to alert you and your son to those.

We want to do all we can to make those five aims real for every pupil in the Lower School, and we value an honest dialogue with parents very highly. We know that parents can often hesitate to come forward, but we do want to encourage you at the outset to share with us any questions or concerns that may arise in your son's experience of school, either through his Form Tutor or directly to the Head of Lower School, Mrs Caitlin Kelly, kellycd@dulwich.org.uk

Mr Simon Dungate-Jones

Acting Deputy Master Academic

October 2026

Our Curriculum

In the Lower School the curriculum is designed on the following principles:

Breadth, so that pupils are exposed to the full spectrum of areas of learning (linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, creative, literary, spiritual, moral, physical, cultural and social);

Balance, so that pupils develop appropriately in each of these areas;

Depth, so that pupils study a topic in enough detail to engage with it critically;

Relevance, so that pupils see the reasons for learning in each of these areas;

Resourcing, so that pupils are taught in groups of a suitable size in well-equipped accommodation, by well-qualified teachers.

There are 50 timetabled lessons per fortnight and these are divided as follows:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8
English	6	6
Mathematics	5	5
French or Spanish	5	4
Science	4	5
Classics	4	-
Chinese	2	-
2nd Language	-	4
History	2	3
Geography	2	3
Religion & Philosophy	2	3
Art	2	2
Design and Technology	2	2
Music	1	1
Computing	2	1
Drama	2	2
Wellbeing	1	1
Games	4	4
PE	1	1
FT period / Assemblies	3	3

A Note on Language Choices

In March of Year 8, pupils are asked to select the second language they wish to study in Year 9 in addition to the first Modern Language they have studied since Year 7 (French/Spanish). Since the

school welcomes new pupils at this point who may not have previously studied a second foreign language, we offer all options (Chinese, German, French, Spanish) as ab-initio as well as continuation options for those who have covered them in Years 7 and 8. For existing pupils this therefore means that, for their second option, they may choose to continue with the language (Chinese/Classics/Latin/German) pursued in Year 8, or have the further option of beginning (or resuming) one of the following: Chinese, German, French, Spanish.

In summary:

Year 7

- All pupils study 3 languages. Your son will study either French or Spanish plus Chinese and Classics/Latin

Year 8

- All pupils study 2 languages. Your son will study either French or Spanish and will study either Chinese or Classics/Latin or German.

The School Day and the Timetable

There are eight Forms in Years 7 and seven in Year 8, with an average of 22 pupils in each Form, and most lessons are taught in Form groups.

Every school day has 5 timetabled lessons of 55 minutes:

Prep (homework) forms an important part of the learning routines in the Lower School, and up to three preps of 20 minutes will be set each weekday night in Year 7, rising to 30 minutes each in Year 8.

Registration	0835 – 0850
Period 1	0850 – 0945
Period 2	0950 – 1045
Break	1050 – 1120
Period 3	1120 – 1215
Period 4	1220 – 1305
Lunch	1305 – 1435
Period 5 & registration	1440 – 1545 *(1430 start for games)*

Assessment

We know that one of the main ways in which pupils improve in a subject is through the dialogue between each individual pupil and the subject teacher. This dialogue takes different forms, but comes mainly through oral feedback in lessons, written comments in books, half-termly assessment grades and subject reports. While much good feedback is informal, formal assessments are important measuring points for the pupils and for you as parents. Assessment grades are awarded every half-term, when each subject teacher will award a grade for Effort and a grade for Attainment.

In the Lower School particularly, we want pupils to get into good routines for learning, to find their work interesting and rewarding, and to grow in confidence when tackling academic challenges. Effort grades assess their progress in these areas and, in outline, are awarded according to the following criteria:

1	Excellent	Always curious and resourceful, and actively embraces intellectual challenges
2	Good	Usually resourceful, interested and hard-working, with the occasional lapse
3	Inconsistent	Attitude and learning routines are sometimes below the standard expected
4	Poor	Attitude and learning routines are often below the standard expected

If pupils can get their effort right, we believe they will fulfil their academic potential, so greater attention is given to these grades in the first instance. In Year 7, the first assessment is always of Effort only.

At one point in the academic year your son will receive Enhanced Assessment Grades. These put a pupil's effort under the microscope, and rather than grading effort holistically, it is broken down into four constituent learning habits, each graded 1-4.

These learning habits are:

Engagement in class
Personal organisation
Independence
Collaboration

Further information about each of these learning habits will be communicated as part of the Enhanced Assessment Grade report card.

The Attainment grade in each subject will show the standard of work reached relative to those we expect of Dulwich pupils. This will usually be based on a test that is taken during the term, alongside the class work and prep completed since the last grade was awarded. The grades and their respective criteria can be found in the table below:

O	Outstanding	Attainment far exceeds expectations
E	Excellent	Attainment is consistently above expectations
G	Good	Attainment is consistently in line with expectations
I	Improvement required	Attainment does not meet the level expected
C	Academic concern	Attainment is consistently and significantly below the level expected

Master's Commendations

Once assessment grades have been awarded, those pupils who have excelled on academic attainment will see the Master. Those pupils who have achieved the most or second most Effort grades in their form groups will see Miss Cooke or their Head of Year respectively.

Teachers' Merits and Commendations

Merits are awarded by individual teachers for particularly excellent engagement in a given lesson. Commendations are awarded by teachers and the Head of School for either an exceptional piece of individual work or sustained effort and progress over time. Parents are notified of these achievements via emails home. The pupil in each form who has received the most commendations at the end of term is awarded a prize in the end of term Assembly.

Concerns over effort

We have a series of responses involving the Form Tutor and the Head of Year as appropriate, when pupils receive a particular number of Effort grades below Good. We will of course also contact parents to discuss these.

Learning in the Lower School should be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for your son, without any of the pressures of public examinations, but equally it should put in place the important attitudes and skills that will enable him to cope well in his years further up the College. We very much hope that this will be your son's experience over the next two years.

The following pages give more detail on each subject studied in the Lower School.

Art and Design

The Art Department aims to inspire a lifelong love, understanding and appreciation of the arts. Through a challenging and ambitious curriculum, complemented by a rich programme of co-curricular and enrichment opportunities, we encourage every pupil to discover their own creative interests and strengths. We believe that Art and design allows pupils to journey into unfamiliar territory: to explore, question, experiment and discover their own place within a world of creative and cultural possibilities. In doing so, pupils develop confidence in their ability to generate ideas, solve problems and take creative risks.

Academic enrichment is embedded throughout the Lower School curriculum, extending learning beyond individual projects and encouraging pupils to engage with Art and Design as a wider cultural discipline. Gallery visits, visiting artists, workshops, exhibitions and opportunities to encounter contemporary and historical practice broaden pupils' understanding and stimulate new ideas. Alongside this, House Art Competitions, lunchtime Art Clubs and societies provide further opportunities for pupils to experiment, pursue individual interests and showcase their talents beyond the classroom.

In Year 7, pupils are introduced to a broad and exciting range of techniques, materials, artists and ideas, establishing the foundations for their development as both artists and creative thinkers.
Working from a shared theme, pupils experience two different approaches or disciplines, taught by teachers drawing upon their specialist expertise. Projects balance practical skills with creative thinking, knowledge and understanding, and pupils work across both two- and three-dimensional formats. Drawing, painting, printmaking, collage and sculpture sit alongside digital approaches using platforms such as Adobe Photoshop.
Throughout the year, pupils encounter art, craft and design from a rich variety of historical and contemporary contexts, representing different cultures, traditions and perspectives. While projects provide a clear structure, there is also flexibility for exploration and individual responses, ensuring that a hands-on, studio-based experience remains at the heart of Year 7 Art.

In Year 8, pupils build upon the skills and confidence established in Year 7 while becoming increasingly ambitious and independent in their creative choices. Working from a common theme, they develop their observational skills and encounter a broader and often more experimental range of materials and processes.
Projects may incorporate lino printing, dry point etching, painting, ceramics, wire, plaster and sculpture, alongside increasingly sophisticated and independent use of Photoshop and other digital approaches. Pupils are encouraged to experiment, combine processes and begin making more individual decisions about how best to communicate their ideas.
Critical and contextual understanding also develops further. Pupils explore the work of a diverse range of artists and learn to make meaningful connections between an artist's ideas, materials and processes and their own developing practice. Artists might include Peter Blake, Joseph Cornell, Wangechi Mutu, Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti and Chila Kumari Singh Burman.

By the end of Year 8, pupils have experienced Art as much more than the acquisition of technical skills. They have begun to develop curiosity, visual awareness, independence, creative confidence and a willingness to experiment and take risks, providing a strong foundation for the greater personal freedom and ambition of Year 9.

Mrs M J Doherty
Director of Art

Chinese

The Lower School Chinese course is designed for complete beginners and aims to introduce the fundamentals of Mandarin Chinese. All four language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing are used throughout the course. As well as providing a flavour of what it is like to learn the language, the course also explores Chinese culture and provides an insight into historical and contemporary China.

Year 7

In Year 7, the focus of the course is on understanding spoken Chinese. The topics covered include social greetings, family, pets, and numbers. Pupils learn about the four tones used in spoken Chinese and the use of pinyin to transcribe the pronunciation of characters. Pupils will be introduced to writing Chinese characters and will learn a limited number of characters to develop their reading and writing vocabulary.

Year 8

In Year 8, pupils who have chosen to continue with Chinese have double the amount of lesson time (4 lessons per fortnight) than in Year 7. The Year 8 course extends into further topic areas such as food and drink, hobbies, school subjects and nationalities and there is greater use of Chinese character recognition and writing.

Wider Cultural Activities

In Year 7, we also arrange a popular workshop on Martial Arts which gives an insight into *wushu*, the ancient, codified discipline of self-defence often known as kung-fu. Pupils also compete in a Chinese singing competition.

In Year 8, pupils practice Chinese calligraphy and brush-writing through a specialist calligraphy workshop, widen their artistic horizons by participating in a Chinese musical workshop, and also visit the British Museum's China collection.

Mr J S R Suddaby
Head of Chinese

Design & Technology

Design & Technology is an exceptionally broad subject, spanning the scientific principles that underpin engineering and the creative thinking that drives innovation in fields as varied as product design and architecture. Our Lower School course immerses pupils in this breadth, enabling them to explore materials, processes and ideas from both the technical and artistic angles. The focus is on building practical, transferable skills and the confidence to plan, prototype and manufacture solutions that extend far beyond the classroom.

Alongside timetabled lessons, pupils are encouraged to join Innovate Club in Years 7 and 8, which offers opportunities to work on special projects, experiment with new techniques and raise funds for charity through the sale of student-made products. In Year 7, there is also a dedicated off-timetable Engineering Day, during which pupils design and launch rockets as far and as accurately as possible, earning House points while developing teamwork and problem-solving skills.

In Year 7 pupils complete two major projects that introduce different aspects of Design & Technology. In the first, they design, model and prototype an acrylic lamp inspired by the vivid forms and colours of tropical birds. This project develops CAD/CAM skills such as laser cutting and line bending, combining precision with bold, creative vision. The second project is a more traditional exercise: pupils work with timber and hand tools to construct a crossbow-style “Ping Pong” launcher that fires ping pong balls across the room. Alongside the fun of testing their launchers, they study timber theory, learning about the differences between softwoods, hardwoods and manufactured boards, and begin to understand sustainability and product analysis.

In Year 8 pupils build on these foundations through three more demanding projects that consolidate and extend their skills. The Clock Project asks them to research design movements and apply their findings to the aesthetics of a personalised clock, cut on the laser cutter and assembled to a high standard. The Copper Bird Bath introduces metalworking techniques, with pupils shaping and planishing copper, soldering components and mounting the bowl on a steel stem while learning about ferrous and non-ferrous metals, annealing, work-hardening and manufacturing efficiency through jigs. The City Lights project combines timber, plastics and simple electronics in a USB-powered night light based on famous landmarks, using refraction and basic physics to create striking visual effects.

Across both years pupils deepen their understanding of the design process, materials, CAD/CAM and sustainability while developing creativity, accuracy and resilience. By the end of the Lower School course they will have experienced a wide spectrum of Design & Technology and gained the skills and confidence to take their ideas from concept to reality.

Mr J Humphrey
Head of DT

Drama & Dance

Drama & Dance is an imperative and imbedded tool in the pastoral and academic development of Dulwich pupils. As the school of the most famous actor of the renaissance period, the qualities developed in Drama & Dance lessons (teamwork, creativity, leadership and risk-taking) are assets in all subjects and all areas of life. Assets core to the values of the holistic Dulwich education.

In Year 7, pupils are introduced to the skills and strategies necessary to act, and specific techniques to nurture an imagination for learning. Year 7 Drama & Dance schemes are based on a variety of topics, from Greek Mythology, imagined worlds, well known stories and child migrant testimonies. These are explored through ensemble skills, characterisation, movement work and puppetry.

In Year 8, pupils cultivate devising skills related to a range of stimuli and become mini theatre companies in the creation of original work. Year 8 Drama & Dance schemes embrace school-wide initiatives to raise awareness of (for example) sustainability, mental health, PRIDE and neurodiversity.

'Creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.' Ken Robinson

"Good artists copy; great artists steal." - creativity builds on the work of others – not replication but crucially the synthesis of ideas from disparate sources to produce art that is new and meaningful. The independent learner in Drama & Dance has knowledge of what has gone before layered with the confidence to assimilate and then make a statement. This is what Drama & Dance teaches. To this end lessons are purposefully immersive and experiential; the acquiring of knowledge happens as a performance where pupils act and play, the learning is weaved in like a game. Pupils learn best when they don't know they are learning at all. There is an emphasis on play and experimentation in Drama & Dance lessons. Each individual pupil is encouraged to find their own voice and develop their own unique skillset for performing. We also nurture collaboration and independent thinking. Pupils learn the importance of effectively communicating as a group, developing trust and performance skills alongside one another. However, there are many opportunities to show leadership and initiative by shaping the class work with a directorial eye, teaching the importance of independent thought and leadership.

By the end of Year 7 pupils should be able to:

- Embrace the ensemble ethic when developing skills such as still images, transitions, group sculpture, soundscape, thought track and movement sequence
- Identify how the use of space, movement and voice communicate meaning
- Demonstrate an ability to inhabit heightened and believable characters
- Reflect upon and respond positively to their own work and that of their classmates.

By the end of Year 8 pupils should be able to:

- Invent creatively; examining their ability to apply a range of techniques to performance
- Identify specific intent for an audience and be able to assess the effectiveness
- Evaluate and analyse the issues and themes involved in work, with appropriate terminology

In Year 7 and 8 pupils work with our teacher in charge of Dance to develop choreographic skills and a movement language as a basis for creating character and narrative.

Skills and techniques explored include:

- developing a physical language; actions, dynamics, relationships, space
- conjuring characters and worlds; contrast, effort scales, qualities of movement
- creating movement sequences; rhythm, variety, control, actions, motifs
- duet work & ensemble playing; repetition, mirroring, canon, unison, formation, pause, pace
- explore a range of styles including Contemporary Dance and Hip-Hop
- explore works by various dance companies including Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, ZooNation and Gary Clarke Company

Pupils can also extend their drama skills beyond the classroom in co-curricular work. Each year, Lower School pupils create eight House Plays for the Lower School House Drama Competition, with each House staging excerpts based on a theme, such as musicals, magic, portals and heroes and villains. Here pupils are honing not just their performance skills but also integrating their own inventive original choreography, as well as singing. There is also the opportunity for pupils to hone their performance skills in the annual monologue-jam, a competition which enables boys to develop characterisation skills to complement class work, and in the summer term, pupils perform their own original scenes that have been devised and scripted through the Lower School Drama Club.

Miss Victoria Buse

Director of Drama

English

In English we aim to create an enjoyably open and productive classroom atmosphere underpinned by hard work and a determination to achieve the highest standards, where discussion can reflect the reality of pupils' own experiences. Nurturing a lasting enjoyment of English, fostering a creative imagination, and stimulating interest, expertise and excitement in responding to literature are at the core of our work. Pupils are encouraged to develop an enthusiasm for using language ambitiously and imaginatively in all that they do, and to talk in different situations with confidence, precision and self-awareness.

Pupils study a novel in both Year 7 and 8 in the Lower School. Empathy, inference and close reading skills are also prioritised in Year 7 as fundamentals to aiding learning in English, and pupils are taught a Shakespeare play, with particular focus on key scenes, as a way of providing them with a sense of literary heritage. In Year 8, the department's own poetry and non-fiction anthologies, featuring a diverse range of writers and concerns, underpin the study of these genres.

Over the two years we seek to inspire enthusiasm for reading and instil the core skills for success in the Middle and Upper Schools: the ability to spell and punctuate accurately and write fluently and stylishly; to think both analytically and creatively; and to appreciate a range of challenging texts. By the end of Year 8, pupils should be able to: write about personal experience in their own voice, show ability in structuring and planning essays, write letters, analyse characters and themes in the books they have studied, and support opinion with textual reference.

Pupils have the opportunity to work in the Lower School Library each fortnight, where they can undertake independent reading, project work, research and other group activities; we also encourage pupils to engage in reading for pleasure in their own time. There is a thriving Lower School Book Club that all pupils are welcome to attend, an extension group called Lower School Further English and Wordsmiths, our Lower School writing group. There are regular occasions when pupils can showcase their talents in clubs, House and Form Competitions, which include poetry recitation, poetry writing, and debating.

Mr A E Hawes
Acting Head of English

German

Year 8 Course book: *Stimmt 1*

The emphasis throughout our Year 8 German course is on enthusiastic teaching and learning of the language within its cultural context, carefully tailored to pupils of all abilities.

It is envisaged that those pupils who have opted for German in Year 8 will be eventually able to continue their study through to GCSE. Indeed, we aim to lay the foundations for future learning and, as such, grammar and vocabulary form a significant part of the course. This said, the course is appropriate for pupils of all abilities.

The Stimmt books are a modern and accessible springboard for beginning German and each teacher also supplements the textbook with their own materials.

Pupils will also receive access to Active Hub, an online platform where they can access the electronic Stimmt textbooks, independent activities, and tasks set by their class teacher. Each pupil will also receive a physical copy of the Stimmt textbooks.

The digital language laboratory is used for pronunciation practice, grammar drills and listening comprehension and serves as an excellent resource for language development.

We run a popular Christmas market trip to Aachen at the end of the Michaelmas Term.

Course content:

The key areas of grammar covered are the present tense (including irregular verbs), use of cases, adjectives (including possessives), adjective endings, and modal verbs, as well as complex word order such as subordination.

The following core topic areas are taught:

- Self, family and home
- School
- Freetime Activities
- Town and local area

Mrs E Larke
Head of German

French

Year 7

Course book: *Vif 1*

French is taught from beginner level in Year 7, assuming little previous knowledge of the language. The aim of Year 7 is to introduce pupils to French as a global language and to give them the skills and confidence to communicate in and enjoy using French. Further to this, the curriculum content gives pupils the skills to talk about themselves and their daily life, cultural similarity and difference, and begin discussing broader issues relating to global citizenship, whilst interacting with the cultures and day to day life of the Francophone world. There are many free learning opportunities both in the classroom and in discrete projects, a pen-pal exchange and competitions, as well as a popular sporting and cultural trip to Vic-sur-Cère in the Easter holidays.

The course book is engaging, culturally rich, and is supplemented with online resources. Pupils have access to a textbook, as well as a grammar workbook.

The grammar covered includes: the present tense, possessive adjectives, negatives, prepositions, and an introduction to the near future tense.

Year 8

Course book: *Vif 2*

Year 8 builds on and extends the work covered in Year 7. Further topics and grammatical constructions are covered that allow pupils to widen the scope of their language with different tenses and a deeper vocabulary. Pupils learn more about Francophone culture whilst boosting their practical skills through situations that include: talking about role models and friendship, future plans, and the Francophonie.

The course book and pupil workbook which accompanies it furthers pupils' understanding of French and gives linguistic confidence that prepares them well for Year 9. This rigour is assisted by a strong commitment to free-learning through the use of contemporary media, film and competitions coupled with the opportunity to take part in our trip to Vic-sur-Cère.

Mr J Poynton
Head of French

Geography

Lower School Geography at Dulwich aims to enthuse and excite our pupils about the world around them and provide them with a strong foundational knowledge in the subject to prepare them for study in Year 9 and at GCSE. We start to consider many of the world's major issues which Geography seeks to address, whilst maintaining a positive and optimistic atmosphere in our lessons.

Year 7

In Year 7 the following topics are covered:

- Our Changing Planet (an overview of the history of planet Earth)
- Map Skills
- The Water Cycle and Rivers
- Sustainability and Problem Plastics

Year 7 provides the foundations of geographical knowledge and skills that build on and develop from that gained in primary school. The curriculum focuses on themes of sustainability and real-world practical issues such as plastic pollution and sustainability whilst also providing a solid foundation in physical geography through an exploration of the earth's evolution, the water cycle and rivers.

Year 8

In Year 8 the following topics are covered:

- Development
- Geographies of Food
- Weather and Climate Change
- Population Pressures
- Migration

The Year 8 curriculum provides a more detailed exploration of contemporary issues. The course begins by exploring issues of development, inequality and human rights across the world, followed by a small topic on the global production and consumption of food. It then explores the physical geography of weather and provides an in-depth exploration of climate change, its causes and consequences. In the Summer Term pupils will learn about the global dynamics of population change, and how it impacts countries. We finish with a small topic on migration, using the Windrush migration as a case study.

Mrs H Manger

Head of Geography

History

The syllabus is structured around the themes, problems, and methodologies associated with the study of medieval and early modern History. Pupils will analyse the intersecting histories of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland from the early Middle Ages to the Seven Years' War. The political histories of the British Isles will be an important theme throughout, but as pupils advance through the course, they will encounter European and global topics, and investigate the challenges of social, cultural, and intellectual history. Above all, the course will be colourful, interesting, and fun.

Year 7

The course charts British history from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Wars of the Roses and explores the key themes of royal and religious power. Topics covered include: the Norman Conquest; female Kingship with Matilda & Eleanor; Henry II and Becket; the Crusades; John and Magna Carta; the role of the Church; the Black Death; the Peasants' Revolt and the Hundred Years' War. A project on castles contributes to the end-of-year examination. The main textbook is Robert Peal's *Medieval Britain, 410-1509*.

Year 8

The course picks up the narrative thread with the rise of the Tudors, and the aim in the first term is to understand how the Tudor monarchs coped with the enormous religious change and social flux of the sixteenth century. Topics covered include Henry VIII's 'Great Matter'; the mid-Tudor crisis and the reign of Elizabeth I. There will also be a comparative study of the Kingdom of Benin. In considering seventeenth-century absolutism, and in undertaking a research project on the Civil War, pupils reflect on the roles of personality, belief, and political authority in shaping societies and in tearing them apart. Topics covered include James I & the Gunpowder Plot; the government of Oliver Cromwell; the Restoration monarchy; the Great Fire of London and the Glorious Revolution. The main textbook is Robert Peal's *Early Modern Britain, 1509-1760*.

Miss H Gibbons

Head of History

Computing

The Lower School Computing course introduces pupils to the key ideas and skills that underpin modern computer science. At the start of Year 7, pupils are given a brief introduction to the College's digital systems, including OneDrive, Teams and Outlook, so that they can confidently access resources, organise their work and communicate effectively.

The course develops pupils' computational thinking and problem-solving skills through a range of practical activities. Pupils learn core programming concepts such as sequence, selection and iteration, and apply these through programming tasks, robotics and other physical computing projects. These activities help pupils understand how software can interact with the physical world through sensors, inputs and outputs, while developing their confidence in constructing and testing algorithms. Pupils also take part in two national competitions: the UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge and the Coding Challenge, giving them opportunities to apply their logical thinking and programming skills to unfamiliar problems.

Web development gives pupils experience of creating their own websites using HTML and CSS, helping them understand how web pages are structured and styled. Pupils also work on creative programming projects, including arcade-style game design, where they apply programming constructs to control game logic, interaction and behaviour.

Pupils are also introduced to machine learning using Microsoft's educational CreateAI tools. This gives them an accessible introduction to how computers can be trained to recognise patterns and make classifications, while encouraging discussion about how artificial intelligence works and how it is increasingly used in everyday technology.

In Year 8, pupils complete an introductory Python programming course. This develops their understanding of text-based programming and provides an important bridge between the Lower School Computing curriculum and the more advanced programming studied in the Middle School.

For pupils who develop a particular interest in programming, the Lower School Code Club provides further opportunities to explore coding and develop their own projects.

More information about the courses we offer can be found on the College website or by emailing the Head of Computing, Miss Son sonm@dulwich.org.uk.

Miss M Son
Head of Computer Science

Classics

The study of the ancient Romans and Greeks has long been at the heart of the English education system, and so it is no surprise that Classics/Latin is an important part of every Dulwich pupil's offering here at the College. Our curriculum offers pupils a great insight into Greco-Roman culture and history, as well as providing a rigorous training in the linguistic skills needed to read Latin (and Classical Greek once pupils reach Year 9). We stress the learning and understanding of linguistic patterns and teach pupils a distinctive and important way of thinking. The rich cultural history of the Roman world is both a fascinating subject in its own right, as well as an important foundation upon which much modern culture is built.

Year 7

All pupils study Latin in Year 7, and we use this time to introduce them to the underlying grammar and syntax of the language. Pupils develop analytical skills which will aid them in their modern languages as well as in Latin; by the end of the year our pupils will have studied three of Latin's six tenses, three of the six noun cases, have acquired a broad vocabulary, and explored the fascinating world of Rome in the first century BCE. Our cultural studies explore topics including the nature of the gods and their associated myths, the lived experience of ancient Romans, the thrills of chariot racing, and various other important topics such as the role of slavery in the ancient world. To support our pupils' learning we have developed a bespoke departmental coursebook, which we use in conjunction with the *Suburani* textbook.

Year 8

Pupils may opt to continue with Classics/Latin into Year 8, and those who do are rewarded with a rich and engaging curriculum. We continue with our linguistic focus, leading pupils to encounter the true complexity and beauty of a fully inflected language – for anyone who enjoys puzzles, this should certainly appeal! Our cultural studies broaden their horizons at this point, and we look more fully at Roman history, including studying various important figures from Roman and British history, such as Boudicca and the Emperor Nero. Other topics include the great fire of Rome, life in the military, and even pirates! We also leave the Italian mainland to study the impact of the Romans in France, specifically in Arelate, modern-day Arles.

Trips, expeditions and societies

The department runs an annual Lower School trip to Naples, allowing pupils to visit the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and to climb the slopes of Vesuvius itself. This expedition sits alongside various trips to more local classical sites and visiting speakers. Pupils in the Middle and Upper Schools also have the opportunity to attend expeditions to the Mediterranean; previously the department has visited Southern Greece, Sicily, Crete, Turkey and Croatia.

The department also runs several societies in the Upper and Lower schools; most notably for new pupils, Miss Cooke runs the ever-popular Classics and Mythology Club, which allows pupils to explore various stories from not only Greek and Roman culture, but also to learn about important stories from other areas of the world. Recent highlights have included pupil-led talks on Japanese mythology and the Norse god Loki!

Mr M Thompson
Head of Classics

Mathematics

Year 7

With pupils coming from a varied of backgrounds, Year 7 starts with revision and reinforcement of basic principles in arithmetic. There is an emphasis on numeracy with pupils being taught not to reach for the calculator immediately but to try and work answers out using non-calculator methods. Pupils then move on to Algebra with an emphasis on a good grounding in the basic rules. Then moving onto Geometry, Number, Probability, Statistics and Constructions. The books used are Essential Mathematics Books 7 and 8 by D Rayner, which are provided by the College. At the end of Year 7, pupils take a 75-minute non-calculator examination. Based on their performance in the end of year examination, common tests throughout the year and recommendations from teachers, pupils are then placed into sets in year 8. Pupils are encouraged to take part in the Junior Mathematical Challenge, a national competition. Those who achieve a very high score are invited to take part in the Junior Mathematical Olympiad.

Year 8

The scheme of work reinforces material covered in Year 7 and builds upon it. Topics are covered to a much greater depth than in Year 7, including Arithmetic, Algebra, Graphs, Geometry, Probability and Statistics and Constructions. Again, there is an emphasis on numeracy and a lot of the material covered lends itself to non-calculator work. Pupils sit a 75-minute paper at the end of Year 8. Based on their performance in tests throughout the year and recommendations from teachers, pupils are placed into sets in year 9, alongside the new intake of pupils. Essential Mathematics Book 9 by D Rayner is used in year 8 which is also provided by the College. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in the Junior Mathematical Challenge, with high achieving pupils going on to the Junior Mathematical Olympiad.

Calculators

All pupils are asked to buy a scientific calculator with at least the following functions:

- add, subtract, multiply, divide
- π
- brackets
- square, square root
- nth power and root
- reciprocal
- sin, cos, tan and their inverses
- degrees
- standard index notation
- sign change
- memory

We would recommend the FX-991CW calculator, as it is suitable for use up to A level studies. The commissariat stocks the standard scientific calculators which we use. The emphasis within each group is for pupils to be able to use a calculator with confidence. As a pupil goes through the College, they are introduced to more functions which he will eventually use in his IGCSE papers, in which calculators are allowed throughout.

Ms S Smalley

Head of Lower School Mathematics

Music

Aims

- To develop pupils as confident, creative and active musicians through regular opportunities to perform, compose and listen to music from a wide range of cultures, traditions, genres and styles.
- To understand how music is constructed and communicated, including reading and writing stave notation
- To develop practical musicianship skills through singing, instrumental performance, ensemble work, improvisation and composition.

Year 7

One timetabled lesson is provided each fortnight in Year 7. The curriculum is fundamentally practical, with pupils learning through performing, composing, improvising and listening. Musical theory and notation are introduced alongside practical music-making, enabling pupils to develop and communicate their own musical ideas. In the first term, pupils explore the Elements of Music, focusing on pulse, rhythm and ensemble performance. Through percussion activities and group performances, they develop rhythmic vocabulary, accuracy, coordination, listening and ensemble skills. In the Lent Term, pupils explore melody and pitch, developing their understanding of scales and notation through practical keyboard work. They apply these skills through individual and group composition. In the Summer Term, pupils explore chords and harmony through keyboard and ensemble activities. Throughout Year 7, pupils are encouraged to learn by doing, with theory and listening supporting practical music-making. Prep is set fortnightly and directly linked to lesson content. Work is assessed both with self-evaluation and formal performance composition rubrics.

Year 8

Year 8 Music classes are split between two teachers to enable intensive composing and performing activities to take place. The lessons involve a balanced mixture of Listening, Performing, and Composing. The pupils also explore the basics of music notation and learn to read and write music. The units of study followed in Michaelmas and Lent Terms both explore composition. In one unit, pupils use the software LogicProX to create a Blues song, using different musical features found in Blues music. They also explore the wider context of Blues music and its roots in African American music. The other unit looks at Form and Structure in Music, culminating in a composition of a piece of music written in Theme and Variation form based on the melody 'Frere Jacques.' Pupils listen to a range of pieces throughout both studies to improve their ability to identify musical features and listen critically to music. In the Summer Term, the pupils put together all they have learned about rhythm, chords, harmony, and structure to play as a class Rock Band. Each form is given a different song to learn and are encouraged to bring in their own instruments. They will explore verse/chorus structure as well as creating contrast using texture and dynamics. A final performance is given at the end of the year. Work is assessed both with self-evaluation and formal performance and composition rubrics.

Miss S Heath

Head of Academic Music

Physical Education and Games

In the first Physical Education lesson of the academic year, Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 pupils are fitness tested. We build a bank of data on each pupil enabling us to monitor progress in terms of physical capability throughout their career at Dulwich College. This knowledge fuels assessments and thus conversation with pupils and parents on areas of development.

Our Physical Education Curriculum has been designed to follow the 'Long Term Athlete Development Model'. Following on from the 'Fundamentals' pupils cover in Junior School, the Year 7 pupils complete a module on hand eye coordination games, working on different components of agility, core skills and game understanding. In Year 8, boys complete a gymnastics module of basic vaulting and parkour, to help develop fundamental movements and core strength. Alongside these modules, pupils also have a module on swimming and athletic development. During Year 9 pupils will experience units of work related to the 'Learning to Train' stage with core lifts and strength, with swimming becoming water safety and an introduction to water polo.

In Years 10 and 11, we use pupils' fitness testing data to direct pupils into training groups that will specifically target their identified weaknesses. This could be aerobic, anaerobic or strength training.

This curriculum has been designed with four aims in mind.

1. To expose all pupils to activities that will develop functional movement and movement literacy.
2. To expose pupils to areas of knowledge that will develop their ability to participate in lifelong physical activity with a sound understanding of what they are doing.
3. To allow pupils to experience different activities they may not be exposed to in our Major Sports and Options Games based curriculum.
4. To provide us with data on every pupil in terms of fitness levels, which can in turn be fed directly back to parents and targeted for development.

Games

Games forms an essential part of the College week. All lessons are taught with the objective of improving pupils' performance and understanding of sport in an enjoyable atmosphere, so that they continue participation further up the College and ultimately after they have left Dulwich.

Games is delivered in the Lower School through two timetabled sessions per week and reinforced through the co-curricular activities. The Physical Education department leads the coaching during these sessions; colleagues from other departments support the coaching. Pupils can play rugby, football, hockey, athletics, tennis and cricket in Year 7 and 8. The early sessions act as a foundation period, ensuring all pupils have knowledge of the required skills in each sport before being put into a competitive environment.

There are representative school teams at A-F level in rugby, A-G level in football and A–D level in cricket. We do all we can to play schools at all these levels. Pupils will use their time during Games lessons for the bulk of their squad coaching. Lunchtime and after-school sessions complete the weekly coaching programme for representative squads. The College also enters teams in both local and national competitions, in a wide range of sports including hockey, tennis, swimming, water polo and athletics.

The College Day House system runs sporting competitions throughout the year. This provides an opportunity for all pupils in the House to compete together. This competition also provides an extra opportunity for those who wish to push into squads to gain recognition. House competitions currently run in rugby, hockey, football, cricket, cross country, swimming, athletics, basketball, and water polo.

Mr D Stewart

Deputy Director of Sport, Lower and Junior School

Religion and Philosophy

Religion and Philosophy at Dulwich College is academic and non-confessional. We do not seek to instruct pupils what to think but instead strive to teach them how to think.

Year 7

The course in Year 7 offers a study of religious and philosophical ideas about God in the major world religions. Rather than focusing on a particular religion, we instead focus a number of key questions, exploring how various religions respond to them.

Aims:

- To bring religious belief and practice into the experience of pupils and to bring religious practice into a contemporary setting;
- To help pupils to enter into an empathetic study of these religions and by doing so help some to understand their own cultures and backgrounds;
- To enable pupils to question and criticise intelligently universal issues such as love, peace, truth and the quest for ultimate meaning, through the study of religion;
- To consider how religions interrelate, and the various ways in which they all attempt to answer the same key questions.

The course will cover the following basic areas:

- Religious and philosophical ideas about the nature of God
- Key figures of the major religions
- The key ethical teachings of the major religions
- Each religion's understanding of judgement/the afterlife

Pupils have one prep every week and sit an examination of 60 minutes in the summer term.

Year 8

The course offers an exploration of religions interaction with and impact on society, historically and contemporarily, and an exploration of whether humans are special (as compared to other animals and artificial intelligence).

Aims:

- To be introduced to ideas of social justice
- To explore rights and responsibilities and an individual and societal level including Human Rights
- To explore notions of religion and rights and religion and the law including freedom of religion and religious expression
- To consider religious and non-religious views regarding prejudice and discrimination, and wealth, and poverty
- To consider religious and non-religious views about the sanctity of human life
- To explore whether humans are the only beings with intelligence or sentience, and what that means for, for example, the rights of animals.
- To understand different philosophical arguments about whether a soul or mind exists.

The course will include looking at several case studies, including:

- Northern Ireland, the Troubles
- Iran and women's rights
- The Cadbury family
- Simeon of Stylites
- Buddhist monks
- Christian Aid

Pupils have one prep every week and sit an examination of 60 minutes in the summer term.

Mrs C Malacrida
Head of Religion and Philosophy

Lower School Science

Introduction

In Years 7 and 8, the focus is on learning through practical investigation and developing a genuine enthusiasm for science. Pupils develop key scientific skills, including making accurate observations, collecting and analysing data, and evaluating experimental methods. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, express their ideas, and develop a secure understanding of key scientific concepts and facts. This reflects the overarching aim of the course: to equip pupils with the scientific knowledge and skills they need while fostering an appreciation of the scientific method.

Year 7

Year 7 begins with a study of cells, the fundamental building blocks of life. Pupils develop their microscopy skills and work collaboratively to create models of cells. The second unit explores the states of matter, introducing pupils to the concepts of elements and compounds. This topic provides opportunities for practical work using Bunsen burners, one of the highlights of Year 7. Pupils then move on to their first Physics unit, Forces, alongside a mini project on The Solar System. Activities in this unit involve constructing a scale model of the Solar System in the playground and investigating balanced and unbalanced forces.

The second Biology unit focuses on reproduction in plants and animals. The penultimate topic, 'Chemical Reactions', explores thermal decomposition reactions, as well as the combustion of different fuels. Pupils also develop their understanding of chemical formulae and begin to learn how to write chemical equations.

The year concludes with the 'Light and Sound' unit. Pupils investigate reflection and refraction using mirrors, blocks, and prisms, while developing their ability to draw accurate ray diagrams.

Year 8

The Year 8 course begins with photosynthesis, respiration, and ecosystems. Pupils deepen their understanding of cellular respiration, including both aerobic and anaerobic respiration.

The first Chemistry unit, 'Metals and Their Reactions', offers numerous opportunities for practical investigation, with experiments involving combustion, thermal decomposition, and neutralisation. These activities help pupils further develop and refine their observational and investigative skills. The Michaelmas term concludes with 'Electricity and Magnetism', which continues into the Lent term. Pupils explore the properties of electricity and investigate how electrical currents can be used to create electromagnets.

Following this, the 'Food and Nutrition' unit focuses on digestion, testing foods for a range of nutrients, and the principles of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. The second Physics unit, 'Energy', examines different forms of energy and methods of energy transfer, including conduction, convection, and radiation. Pupils apply their learning by designing a well-insulated house and considering how effective insulation can reduce energy consumption and fuel costs.

The final topic of Year 8, 'Separation Techniques', gives pupils the opportunity to plan and carry out their own experiments. This allows them to consolidate and apply the practical and investigative skills they have developed throughout the course.

Mrs J Ratnasabapathy

Head of Lower School Science

Spanish

Year 7

Course book: *Claro 1*

The Spanish Department's aim in Year 7 is to introduce pupils to the Spanish language and fascinating Hispanic culture in a varied, positive and enjoyable manner. It is also our aim to lay the foundations for solid future learning. Therefore, basic grammar and vocabulary form a major part of the first year.

By the end of Year 7, pupils will be able to understand, talk and write about subjects such as their family, house and home, local area, and likes and dislikes. The grammar covered includes the present tense, the immediate future, adjectives, the expression of basic opinions, the negative, and some prepositions.

Given that the vast majority of pupils who have chosen Spanish as their language option in Year 7 have studied little or no Spanish before coming to Dulwich College, the course is run *ab initio*, assuming little or no prior knowledge of the language.

We use *Claro 1*, which is a modern, exciting, and engaging textbook. Every member of the department supplements this with their own material, something both pupils and staff find invaluable. Pupils will also have the opportunity to make use of online resources for their language learning such as Languagesonline, quizlet.com, and Kerboodle.

In Year 7 students have the opportunity of taking part in the Spelling Bee competition, where pupils compete against each other in producing words spelled correctly in different languages. They are also offered the opportunity to attend a trip to Granada, in the south of Spain, and further their understanding of Spanish culture and cuisine.

Year 8

Course book: *Claro 1 and 2*

This year builds on and extends the work covered in Year 7. Pupils are stretched through the introduction of further topics and grammar areas. Pupils continue to use the online resources available in Year 7, as well as some more advanced ones such as thisislanguage.com.

With the introduction of the past tense, and the use of the immediate future, pupils are expected to be able to write a more detailed and varied account of their daily routines, family and school life and holidays. Vocabulary and grammar again form a substantial part of the course. They are immersed in cultural lessons to learn about Spanish regional differences and Hispanic cultural celebrations.

In Year 8, students will also have the opportunity to study a Spanish speaking film.

Ms R Garcia

Head of Spanish

Wellbeing

At Dulwich we take a holistic approach to pupils' wellbeing, development and happiness, this is something that underpins all that we do. We believe it is vital to prepare pupils for the future, ensuring they leave us as well-rounded, balanced individuals, fully prepared for their journey into adulthood. To this end we have created a Wellbeing Programme that comprises six key strands:

Physical Wellbeing, Emotional Wellbeing, Spiritual Wellbeing, Living in Community, Healthy Living and Preparation for the future.

Wellbeing lessons and form tutor periods allow time each week for pupils to cover an extensive range of age-appropriate topics, from safeguarding, stress and spirituality, to relationships, resilience and risks surrounding drugs, alcohol, gambling and more.

In the Lower School, Wellbeing lessons are designed to support pupils through early adolescence and in their transitions both from primary school and into the Middle School. These lessons include a mixture of discussion, role play, written work and reflection to assess personal growth and wellbeing.

Year 7

Michaelmas Term: Yourself and Others

This introductory unit helps students settle successfully into secondary school, build positive relationships, and develop the skills needed to thrive in Year 7. Pupils will reflect on their strengths, set personal goals, and explore the values that contribute to wellbeing and success. Throughout the term, students will learn about friendship, empathy, inclusion, and respect, while developing strategies to manage conflict and respond to bullying safely and positively. They will also explore the influence of peers, celebrate diversity, and learn how to contribute to a supportive school community. In addition, pupils will gain practical knowledge about road safety and making responsible decisions as they become more independent.

Lent Term: Healthy Living

This unit focuses on achieving a well-balanced, healthy, and happy lifestyle. Students will explore various aspects of physical, mental and emotional well-being, including nutrition, exercise, sleep, and self-care. They will learn about the importance of a balanced diet, the benefits of regular physical activity, the impact of sleep on overall health, and effective stress management techniques. Through this unit, students will develop a deeper understanding of their own wellbeing and the skills to make informed choices about their lifestyle.

Summer Term: Cyber Navigators

This unit focuses on responsible device usage and online safety. Students will be introduced to artificial intelligence and the possible risks associated with its use. They will learn how to safely manage their personal information online and how to protect their privacy. They will also explore strategies for keeping accounts and devices secure and understand what to do if their security is breached. Additionally, students will learn how to identify scams, report cyber security incidents, and understand the consequences of such actions. Through this unit, students will develop a strong understanding of digital citizenship and the skills to navigate the online world safely and responsibly.

Year 8

Michaelmas Term: Belonging and Community

This unit delves into belonging, diversity, and community. Students will explore how individuals are both similar and different, the factors that contribute to a sense of belonging, and the significance of diversity within communities. They will also examine cognitive biases, stereotypes, and strategies for fostering inclusivity and managing conflict, including strategies for constructive disagreement. Additionally, students will analyse the role of communities in supporting their members, identify ways to contribute to their communities, and recognise the value of diverse perspectives. Through this unit, students will develop a deeper understanding of these concepts and learn to appreciate individual differences, challenge stereotypes, and actively contribute to creating inclusive and supportive communities.

Lent Term: Healthy Relationships

This unit focuses on understanding healthy and changing relationships, roles in the family, puberty and emotional changes, and different types of relationships. Students will challenge gender stereotypes, learn about the importance of consent in all types of relationships and develop strategies for navigating challenging situations. This unit will equip students with valuable skills for building positive relationships, promoting respect and understanding, and making informed choices in their lives. Lesson content is age-appropriate and developed in accordance with the Department for Education's RSE statutory guidance.

Summer Term: Peer Influence and Resilience

This unit focuses on developing healthy friendships, making responsible choices, and understanding the impact of internal and external influences on individual behaviour. Students will explore peer influence, body image, self-expression, substance use, and the risks associated with sharing inappropriate content. They will learn strategies for resisting peer pressure, building positive relationships, making informed decisions about their health, and seeking support when needed. Through this unit, students will develop a strong understanding of healthy relationships, responsible decision-making, and the importance of making positive choices.

Ms F Way

Head of Lower School Wellbeing



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