

INTRODUCTION

Years 7 and 8 - School House

Pupils in the School House are based in School House, and are attached to one of four Houses – Amory, Beale, Gornhay and Mayfield.

Each pupil has a member of staff who acts as a Tutor to oversee work and progress. The pupils meet with their Tutors each week.

Our aims

We aim to give pupils in School House as wide an appreciation as possible of what Blundell's has to offer. They benefit from using the same laboratories, PE facilities, workshops, Art School, Drama and Music areas as the rest of the school.

The members of staff who teach them are the same people who teach as subject specialists at other levels right up to A-level and entrance to Oxford and Cambridge. They are used to extending the brightest and encouraging the weakest.

There are specialists at hand for those pupils studying English as a Second Language, and for those with Specific Learning Difficulties.

1. Our class sizes are as small as possible.
2. Setting is used approximately
3. We pride ourselves on the positive relations students build with their peers and with staff.
4. We recognise that those entering in Year 7 come from a variety of different types of school and educational background so that it is necessary to bring them together and give them a common experience to take forward into the Senior School.

Mark Orders and Examinations

At twice-termly intervals a Mark Order is held, in which the pupils' marks are collated for all subjects and feedback is given each pupil in each subject. The pupil receives a copy and a copy is sent to parents. In addition an effort grade is recorded for each pupil and subject; the Head Master gives prizes on the basis of these effort grades. The Tutor discusses progress with the pupils after each Mark Order, and sets targets. There are School Examinations in November and June.

Reporting to Parents

Parents receive a fuller feedback by way of end of term subject reports or tutor letters. They are welcome to contact the school at any time.

Parents' Meetings

In the Autumn Term, parents of pupils in both Year Groups have the opportunity to meet with their child's teachers and Form Tutor. All dates of Parents' Meetings and Mark Orders are published in the School Calendar.

The Academic Programme

The programme covers as wide a variety of subjects as possible. The weekly timetable is at present as follows:

English, Mathematics and French
Four or five periods each with two preps

Biology, Chemistry and Physics
Two periods each with one prep each

These are taught as separate subjects by subject specialists but use a common course-book, which emphasises essential links between the subjects

History and Geography
Two periods each with one prep each

Latin/Classical Studies
Two periods with one prep

Art and Design Technology
A double period each with one prep each

Drama
Two periods

Music
Two periods

Physical Education
Two periods

Information Technology
One period

Religious Studies
One period

PSCHE
(Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education)
One period

Art and Design

The Department is committed to a broad and balanced approach to Art and Design throughout the School. We believe that everyone should be given the opportunity to explore and expand upon his or her individual abilities. Equal emphasis is placed upon the acquisition of skills (particularly drawing from observation) and the development of an inventive and original approach to problem solving and making. Looking at and discussing the work of other artists, both historical and contemporary, are important parts of what we do.

During Years 7 and 8, continuing in Year 9, the pupils follow closely the programmes of study of the National Curriculum, including Painting and Drawing, 3-D design and Graphic Design. Pupils are encouraged to be innovative and expressive in their use of a wide range of materials including clay, paint, collage, photography, animation, sculpture, printmaking and drawing.

There are opportunities through Activities and Quiet Hours to engage in more individual investigation and annual trips to local exhibitions and areas of interest (Plymouth Animated Exeter, Aquarium, Eden Project, Broomhill Sculpture Park, Paignton Zoo) to gather resources for class projects.

Teachers

Mr R D J Matthew	Head of Dept, BA, MDES, PGCE
Mr C M Hedley-Dent	Cert Ed
Ms D M Drew	BA, PGCE
Miss E Watts	BA

Biology

Biology is taught as a separate science to Years 7 and 8 by subject specialists. We follow the Common Entrance syllabus, which is based on the National Curriculum.

In Year 7, after an introduction to Biological principles, pupils study: how to classify organisms; cells, tissues, organs and systems; human reproduction and inheritance; habitats and the environment.

In Year 8, they study: the dynamics of ecosystems; digestion and nutrition; breathing, circulation and respiration; skeletons and muscles; plant structure and function.

Many practical investigations are carried out so that pupils have the chance to use biological principles as well as learning them. They also develop essential laboratory based investigatory skills for future studies in science.

The department is well-equipped, having four spacious laboratories. The department is fully wireless networked, and we have multi-media projectors and Smart Boards, as well as interactive microscopes and a set of laptops so that IT can be frequently used to aid teaching and learning.

The rural setting of the School lends itself to ecological investigations and a variety of specimens can be obtained. The Biology Department plays an important role in the pupil's Health and Sex Education.

Teachers

Mrs D E C Brigden	BEd
Mr A J Deighton-Gibson	BSc, PGCE

Chemistry

In Years 7 and 8, Chemistry is taught to all pupils according to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the syllabus for Common Entrance.

In Year 7 the approach is directed towards problem solving and practical investigation, but opportunities are taken to introduce chemical principles in an increasingly formal way as the year progresses.

In Year 8 the trend towards formality continues, but as many ideas as possible are introduced through laboratory-based practical work. The department is pro-active in entering pupils for chemistry competitions i.e. Salter's Festival.

We have noticed that many published teaching schemes seem to have been designed to be used in a classroom. To us, this seems a great pity - all lessons are taught in a laboratory. The department is very well resourced and exploits the opportunity for practical investigation.

The laboratories are spacious and well-equipped with data projectors. There is also a lecture theatre within the department, which is excellent for experiment demonstrations.

The teachers are all graduates and they teach to the highest levels in the school.

Teachers

Mrs G M L Batting	Head of Dept, BEng, PGCE
Mr A J Guy	BSc, PGCE
Mr D J Smart	BSc, PGCE
Mr A J Mead	BSc, PGCE
Miss K Wilson	BSc, PGCE

Design Technology

Design Technology is both an Art and a Science. It is an exciting and varied subject which demands skills in creative thinking and research to produce artefacts which solve real problems.

Pupils in year 7 and 8 spend two periods a week working with a range of resistant materials in the realisation of a number of projects that use wood, metal, plastics and electronics.

There is also a module in Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided manufacture (CAD CAM), which allows pupils to experience modern manufacturing technology.

In the early stages these are teacher-directed with a small amount of design added to an existing solution.

Once confidence in making and designing is established then work of a more complex nature can develop in year 8, where creative thinking, originality and novelty of idea can develop further for those technologists who have a flair for the subject.

Teachers

Mr B Wheatley	Head of Dept, MA, PGCE
Mr J G Pilbeam	BEd, PGCE
Ms D M Drew	BA, PGCE

Drama

The Drama course in Years 7 and 8 is broad. In Year 7 pupils explore various aspects of the subject including movement, sound, rhythm, mime and mask work. The syllabus aims to build confidence and develop the use of body and voice – the basic tools of the actor.

Year 7 pupils will be given the opportunity to take part in a drama presentation at the end of the year.

In Year 8 pupils explore different genres of drama: these include story-telling, Greek Theatre, Shakespearean Drama, Melodrama, and Commedia dell 'Arte. They begin to experiment with different styles of acting.

Year 8 have the opportunity to take part in a performance in the summer term.

Teachers

Miss F A Baddeley	Head of Dept, BA, MA, PGCE
Miss C A Fordham	BA, PGCE
Mrs H J Corden	

English

Everyone is “doing” English all the time: whether it be chatting on the ‘phone or talking to a bank manager, composing e-mail to a friend or a letter of complaint to a manufacturer, writing a shopping list or a love-poem, we are always trying to put together “the best words in the best order”. English lessons, therefore, aim to increase fluency and accuracy of speaking and writing, largely following the outlines of the National Literacy Strategy.

Everyone should encounter a novel, a play and some poetry every term, but these may range from Chaucer to Duffy, from Shakespeare to the analysis of advertisements.

There are also many opportunities for creative writing in a variety of forms, many pieces of which are displayed within the department, published in the school magazine or entered for national competitions.

Teachers

Mr T D Dyke	Head of Dept, MA, PGCE
Mr J S Shrimpton	BA
Mr A J R Berrow	MA, PGCE
Miss P J Black	Cert Ed
Mr S J Dawson	BA, PGCE
Mrs A M Rhodes	BA, PGCE

Geography

All pupils study Geography for two periods per week in Years 7 and 8.

As far as possible in the time available we follow the National Curriculum.

The main emphases are on the following:

- ◇ The acquisition of basic skills such as mapwork, the interpretation of satellite images and simple methods of presenting information such as graphs and sketch maps
- ◇ Knowledge of major physical and human features in the World and the economic differences between regions
- ◇ Understanding of some of the key issues which affect us all such as sustainable development
- ◇ Understanding of environmental issues, National Parks, biogeography, rivers and weather.

Teachers

Mr G A Bucknell	Head of Dept, BSc, PGCE
Mrs S L Holman	BA, PGCE
Mr C M Hamilton	BA, PGCE
Mrs B A Nuttall-Owen	BSc, PGCE

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History

We teach Years 7 and 8 in the belief that to deny British children a full knowledge of their country's history is to deny them a share of their common birthright. A useable historical knowledge is a necessary tool for an intelligent life.

Pupils are encouraged to write accurately and to think clearly. They learn to be aware of bias and to test all ideas in the light of proper evidence.

In Year 7, students study Medieval Realms, followed in Year 8 by the making of the United Kingdom 1500-1800.

The most important lesson we hope to impart is that History can be a great deal of fun as well as a valuable academic subject. We also hope to impart the important distinction between opinion and fact.

Teachers

Mr B M Marsden	Head of Dept, BA, PGCE
Mr M J Hawkins	BA, MA, PGCE
Mr D J Richards	BA, PGCE
Mr R J Holman	BA, GTP

Information and Communication Technology

The process of developing independent research and presentation skills begins in year 7. In the first three years at Blundell's pupils have time-tabled lessons in ICT. They explore a wide range of software and their applications with a series of structured tasks throughout each year. By the end of Key Stage 3, we aim to have given the pupils a wide skill base that they can then use in their GCSE and A Level studies.

Outside of lesson time the Library and its associated facilities are open from 7am to 9pm during the week, with slightly reduced hours over the weekend. The facilities are heavily used and the current network is in a continual state of expansion. The school website also gives pupils access to the email system so they can stay in touch from home as well as school.

The whole education area of Information and Communication Technology is one that is mushrooming, to say the least. At Blundell's we try to keep up to date with our hardware and software so that pupils who leave here are computer literate and able to use these tools as an effective companion to their study or research.

Teacher

Mr M P Dyer	Head of Dept, MSc, PGCE
Mr T E Candler	BSc, GTP

Latin

Salve! A lively approach proves that Latin is not a dead language. All students in Years 7 and 8 study Latin or some Latin with Classical Studies, using the Cambridge Latin Course, which has been chosen for its broad approach, as it brings to life the world as well as the language of the Romans.

Scenes set in Pompeii, Britain and Egypt portray the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, visits to the amphitheatre and the baths, and even a crocodile hunt.

We encourage pupils to learn more about their world by comparing the first century with the twenty-first (how would you treat a serious spear-wound?)

Progress in the language component ensures that Latinists reach CE level by the end of Year 8.

The Cambridge Latin Course enables the study of the Classical World to run concurrently with studying Latin. Where necessary more emphasis is placed on this area, which we hope leads to further study in future years. From this they gain some idea of the fundamental place of the Classical World in the way we think, speak and act today.

Activities include visits and demonstrations. We go to the Roman fortress of Caerleon and to Roman Bath. We try on Roman clothes and enjoy our Classics Days (how did a Roman lady do her hair and what did her family eat?).

Teachers

Mrs R E Milne	Head of Dept, MA, PGCE
Mrs R J Crease	BEd
Dr J Whalley	PhD
Mr J A Mayes	BA

Mathematics

The transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is a most important one in Mathematics. It is a time when children's understanding moves from the concrete to the abstract and they are beginning to appreciate the value of generalisation. In this way the seeds of algebra are being sown, both as a method for solving problems and for manipulating expressions.

Enjoyment of the subject is created by experimentation and by application of the principles to the solving of problems in a variety of situations.

In Year 7, Mathematics is taught initially in pupils' normal forms, though the opportunity is taken to re-organise pupils into groups of similar ability during the year. In Year 8, the groups are set according to ability.

Teachers	
Mr P H Gordon	Head of Dept, BA, BEd, (Hons) NHED
Mrs N J Klinkenberg	BSc, PGCE
Mrs J Olive	BSc, PGCE
Mr P F Rivett	MA, PGCE
Mr R J Turner	MA, GTP
Mr H Roffe-Silvester	MEng, GTP
Mr D P Marshman	BSc, PGCE
Mr C L L Gabbitass	BEd

Modern Languages

French is taught to all pupils who enter the school in Year 7; our coursebooks are *Encore Tricolore 1* and *Encore Tricolore 2*. Our aim is to foster a love for the language and an enthusiasm for learning it. We are committed to providing a full and thorough introduction and recognise the importance of a firm grammatical foundation if significant progress is to be made later. Pupils are placed in sets according to previous experience of French and subsequent progress.

The wider issues involved in language-learning are also considered and time is spent concentrating on the French people, their country and culture, and their position within Europe. Insights into life in France and other French-speaking countries are also provided through the use of authentic material.

We hold 'taster sessions' towards the end of Year 8 to introduce pupils to German and Spanish in order to give them a basis for choice at the beginning of Year 9.

Teachers	
Mrs S J Rumble	Head of Dept, BA, PGCE
Mr J C Hatton	Head of Spanish, BA, PGCE
Mlle C C G Rebuffet	MA Grenoble, PGCE
Ms I G Scott	Head of German, MA, PGCE
Mrs K J Wright	Head of French, MA, PGCE
Mrs L R Stanton	BA, PGCE
Miss A de Bazouges	French Assistant, LLCE

Music

These formative years are vital for the individual pupil, probably giving access to a lifetime's involvement and enjoyment, and as the foundation of future music-making for the School.

A wide range of music is studied and placed in context. Practical activities are an important part of the syllabus for both composing and performing elements. Class concerts are important. Emphasis is also placed on notation and understanding of the musical language, all are introduced to the use of keyboards and computers.

Composing music includes three activities: improvising, refining ideas to a finished written or recorded state, and adapting and arranging.

Listening attentively and critically is an important part of musical education. Many musical styles and traditions are studied.

Teachers

Mr A H Barlow	Director of Music, MA Oxon, MPhil, FRSA, PGCE
Mr L J Wynell-Mayow	BA, PGCE

Physical Education

The Physical Education courses complement the sporting philosophy of the school and satisfy the recommendations of the National Curriculum.

The overall aim is to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. This is achieved through the teaching of a range of activities such as athletics, ball skills, dance, fitness training, gymnastics, swimming, team games and racket sports.

As well as developing recreational interests, the programme promotes understanding of how physical fitness and health can be achieved. Pupils are encouraged to plan and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

Teachers

Mrs A T Candler	Head of Depart, Bsc, PGCE
Mr E K Saunders	BA PGCE
Mr L Menheneott	BEd MBA
Mrs L J Chick	BA, PGCE
Mr C L L Gabbitass	BEd

Physics

Physics is treated as a separate subject and is taught by specialists in the subject. A syllabus has been designed that covers the essential elements of Common Entrance and the National Curriculum but which also tries to emphasise that 'Physics is Fun'.

There is a mixture of theory and experiments in each year but it is recognised that the role of practical work plays a key part in developing the scientists of tomorrow. At the end of year 8, pupils will be well placed to move on to further study leading to GCSE and beyond.

The Department is particularly well resourced; we have three spacious laboratories, a sixth form study room and a preparation room. The newest laboratory is equipped with facilities, which allow ICT skills to be developed. Multimedia projectors enable us to display physics images, video clips and animations to the whole class. The department is fully wireless networked, and ICT is regularly used as a learning resource. Pupils will be introduced to data capture using sensors and will be able to process results using the latest technology. Small research projects give opportunities to collect information from databases, locally and on the Internet, and to make full use of the School's library facilities.

Teachers

Mrs C E West	Head of Dept, BEng (Hons) PGCE
Mr C Robert-Jones	BSc, PGDE
Mr D E Morrison	BSc, MICE, GTP
Miss K Wilson	BSc, PGCE
Mr R M Horn	BSc, MSc, PGCE
Mr P D Williams	BEd

PSHCE

The PSHCE lesson is a part of a process which involves the whole ethos of the School. Pupils will respond to the character of a School and will learn the good or bad habits that are current in it. The love of learning, self respect, good sportsmanship, respect for other people, self-discipline, honesty, responsibility and all the other good things we want to pass on to Blundellians are not learnt in a lesson a week, but in the whole life of the School.

In PSHCE we try to get the pupils to reflect on and discuss many aspects of their social interactions and personal development. We give information and make use of a variety of media, but the primary focus is on exploring and discussing the processes of growing up and the challenges of the wider world, in ways that are directly relevant to the pupils. The range of topics is wide and divergent: alcohol, adolescence, bullying, e-safety, conversations, drugs, families, friendship, handicap, how to revise, relating to the opposite sex, smoking, racism, peer pressure and so on. We encourage participation in discussion, in large groups and in small. Expressing yourself and listening to others are important skills which we try to foster.

The teachers work as a team. They meet regularly to plan the programme and discuss how it is working. They are all committed to providing an open and positive experience for the individuals in the groups.

Teachers

Mrs R J Crease	Head of Dept, BEd
Mrs D E C Brigden	BEd
Miss D J Hosking	BEd
Mrs A J Frankpitt	BSc, PGCE
Mr R J Holman	BA, GTP
Mr J A Mayes	BA

Religious Studies

The syllabus that is followed during Years 7 and 8 is designed to give pupils an introduction to some parts of the Bible and to some important Biblical themes as well as an understanding of Judaism.

The Year 7 focus is on Judaism and The Old Testament while the Year 8 syllabus is centred around the New Testament.

The course encourages discussion of contemporary issues as well as matters of personal concern.

The aim is to encourage in pupils an appreciation of the authority that religious experience has in the lives of human beings and to relate that experience to their own lives.

Teachers	
Mrs R J Crease	BEd
The Rev'd T C Hunt	BD, MTh, GTP
Mrs E V Weaver	BSc, PGCE

Looking Ahead

As pupils move up to Year 9, the year group size increases as we have a significant intake from other schools at this stage. We use end of Year 8 examinations, along with our knowledge of pupils from other schools, to build the different groups for Year 9.

Year 9 pupils are given an academic course which is even wider than the one they have been used to in School House, as they have an opportunity to study a second Modern Language alongside French. It is very important to us that new pupils should be given the same opportunities as those who are already known to us and the same chances to excel. Year 9 partly reinforces earlier experience but also acts as a basis for GCSE – indeed some subjects begin working on their GCSE courses in Year 9.

At the end of Year 9 pupils make their choices of subject for GCSE. It is school policy that pupils should make ten entries for GCSE (including both English Language and English Literature), although occasionally pupils who have a particular specialism will be allowed to make an extra entry if timetabling allows.

In Year 10 we expect pupils to do Mathematics, English and at least one Modern Language, (French, German or Spanish) as a matter of course. We expect pupils to do two Sciences and to choose a 'humanity', either History or Geography, although both may be chosen and frequently are. The taking of at least one 'expressive' subject such as Art, DT, Drama or Music is encouraged. Latin is available for those with appropriate experience and many students opt for Religious Studies either short or long course

The process of making choices of subject is taken very seriously with many consultations between pupils, teachers and parent, and the full support of the Careers department.

In the Sixth Form it is normal to take four subjects to AS level and three of these to full A2 level, but the system is flexible to some extent and different combinations can be considered.

At A level, we have secured in the region of 70% A and B grades during the past five years, and each year pupils have been successful in attaining places at Oxford or Cambridge. Full details of our public exams results are on the School Website.

We are committed to supporting all pupils in developing academic endeavour, enthusiasm, courage and ambition. We aim to build up skills which will give a sure foundation in the world beyond Blundell's.