

JAMES ALLEN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

Year 7 Curriculum Outline

(N.B. All periods are 35 minutes long, although some subjects are taught in double periods. There is no setting or streaming in Year 7.)

Art

A double period weekly; girls are taught in half-class groups.

The first three years are very important; they are arranged as a programme of integrated learning that will equip pupils for the GCSE course. All work in the department starts with observation. The department believes that drawing is the foundation of all Art, drawing to observe, invent, express, explore and investigate. Pupils are taught to research, develop and evaluate ideas; most projects result in a final piece. All pupils are introduced to a wide range of art, artists and cultures. The full syllabus for Years 7, 8 and 9 can be viewed on the department's Web page, within the school's site. Year 7 essentially involves a drawing course. Pupils are taught how to approach complex drawing problems logically. We initially stress the difference between cognitive recognition and perceptual understanding.

Civilisation

A double period weekly; girls rotate through a carousel arrangement during the year.

This is a general course taught in 6-8 week modules by five members of staff. There are five courses: Art History, Greek Mythology, Citizenship, Religious Stories and IT. The aim is to broaden the girls' general education.

Drama

A double period weekly.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 our aims are to enable pupils to: develop key skills in creativity, self-confidence, concentration and communication; interpret text and themes and give them dramatic form; explore theatre styles of different periods and cultures; identify issues and principles, make decisions and explore them throughout the process; work in groups of different sizes; take responsibility for development, building on each other's contributions; write and design; evaluate work in progress and finished pieces with sensitivity and understanding.

In Year 7 the exploration of dramatic form might involve using music to create mood and atmosphere (*The Tempest*), montage (*Victorian influences*), improvisation (*Voyage*), teacher-in-role and forum theatre (*Evacuation*), dance drama (*Oklahoma*); and the focus on performance techniques will include use of space, movement, intonation, inflexion, timing, rhythm and projection.

English

Five periods each week.

The Year 7 English course includes: the study of the history of the English language, involving the reading of 'Dragonslayer' and some Chaucer, the reading and study of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and the reading and study of at least one novel. This could be chosen from the works of Dickens, Serrailier, Steinbeck, Durrell and Lively. Poetry and creative writing form an important part of the course. Formal grammar

and accurate spelling are also emphasised. Oral activities are undertaken throughout the year and preparation for the school debating competition is started in the Autumn Term

French

Four periods weekly.

Some girls have already studied French, for others it is a new language. Those in the latter category normally make very rapid progress. The four skills – Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing – are given equal emphasis. The more French a girl knows the more she is expected to say and to write in letters and compositions. The Textbook used is *Encore Tricolore I Nouvelle edition* (+ additional materials). The course is arranged as follows:

Autumn Term - *Topics:* personal questions, your area, family and home, pets, festivals, clothes. *Grammar:* genders, agreement of adjectives, être and avoir.

Spring Term - *Topics:* seasons and weather, activities, directions in town, school timetable, typical day. *Grammar:* -er verbs, faire, aller, prepositions, reflexive verbs.

Summer Term - *Topics:* food and drink, likes and dislikes, leisure activities, household tasks, holidays. *Grammar:* partitive articles, prendre, negatives, verbs + infinitive

Geography

Two periods weekly

A sense of place and location is fundamental to Geography and the purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of the many aspects of location from global to national and down to local.

The development of cartographic and graphical skills is also central to the course and during the year girls will learn how to use an atlas, read OS maps and use pie charts, scattergraphs and bar graphs appropriately. In the process of acquiring these skills they will be introduced to specific locations based on local, national and global scales.

Autumn Term

- Introduction to London: its location, various functions and cultural diversity
- Investigation of how pupils travel to school
- Use of Atlas: global features and locations, latitude and longitude

Spring Term

- Key features of the Geography of Britain: relief, climate and urban areas
- OS maps: all the key skills based on the local area and elsewhere in Britain

Summer Term

- The Geography of Japan: physical Geography, population distribution, urban areas, natural resources, nuclear power and industry
- The Geography of France in preparation for a joint residential field trip with the French Department after half term.

History

Two periods weekly

The following topics are covered:

- ◆ Introduction to the skills of a historian
- ◆ Medieval monarchy – conquest and consolidation of Norman rule
- ◆ Conflict between church and state
- ◆ The Crusades
- ◆ The English reformation - the break with Rome

- ◆ In addition we arrange an outing either to Hampton Court or Kentwell Manor in the Summer term or we have a 'Medieval Experience' in school.

Latin

Two periods weekly – girls taught in form groups

We follow the Cambridge Latin Course. Unit 1 stages 1- 10 are covered in Year 7. The main language features include: nominative and accusative cases, singular and plural, declensions 1-3; present tense; imperfect and perfect tense (3rd person singular and plural; sentence patterns and word order. The cultural background material focuses on the Roman family and town life in Pompeii c AD70. Topics included are: daily life and food, town life, the forum, the theatre, slaves and freedmen, the amphitheatre and gladiatorial shows.

Mathematics

Five periods each week.

The Year 7 course builds on Key Stage 2 mathematics. The topics studied this year fall broadly into these headings:

Basic geometry, number patterns, introducing algebra, directed numbers, co-ordinates in four quadrants, fractions, decimals, perimeter and area – to include the circle, collecting and displaying discrete and continuous data, geometry to include parallel lines, basic equations, polygons, imperial units in everyday use and conversion graphs, basic probability, basic volume and capacity, drawing on isometric paper.

Pupils are likely to have met some of these topics before, but the emphasis is on improving pupils' basic manipulative and problem solving skills.

Music

A double period weekly; music is taught to half-class groups.

Music is taught through projects which last for half a term. Lessons involve a mixture of practical work, listening and appraisal and music technology. Girls are introduced to music from all around the world. The programme is as follows:

Autumn Term - A survey of rhythm including note values and a Samba performance project. In the second half of the term the theme is 'pitch' including note-reading in several clefs and the pentatonic scale. The work includes short compositions, which are performed. Songs from different nations, including Africa and the British Isles are learned, followed by participation in a Big Sing.

Spring Term - Introduction to Javanese Gamelan followed by a Gamelan group performance and a composition project putting original Gamelan-inspired music to a short film.

Summer Term - Form Song Competition preparation and performance. Video review of competition, Gustav Holst project and 'Music for Film and TV' (as time permits).

(Many girls also have individual instrument lessons. Bel Canto choir and a number of orchestral/instrumental groups are open to Year 7 pupils.)

Physical Education

Four periods each week.

All girls follow the same curriculum in Years 7 and 8 to promote continuity and to allow them to achieve in a range of activities. The main winter curricular activities are: hockey, netball, swimming, gymnastics and dance and the main summer curricular activities are:

tennis, athletics and rounders. Extra-curricular activities take place before and after school and during the lunchtimes. These include all the above curricular activities and the following extra activities: football, fencing, cross country, karate, trampolining and dance. We run an extensive fixture programme competing against local schools and enter local, county and national competitions in a number of sports.

In Year 7 all the girls take part in some outdoor adventurous activity in the Autumn Term, usually a visit to an Outdoor Education Centre.

Religious Studies

Two periods each week.

We spend the year introducing Year 7 pupils to the nature and value of studying religions. Students learn about the role religions play in the world, considering for the first time what it means to “be religious” undertaking an inquiry into different aspects of religious life, from the perspectives of different world religions. Later students move on to assess different ways in which people communicate with God and communicate their ideas about God. This approach encourages girls to learn about a wide range of the world’s religious traditions and phenomena, as their investigations involve a wide range of stimuli taken from the world’s major religious traditions. It also encourages them to develop their thinking skills to express their ideas in lots of different ways.

Science

Six periods each week.

Year 7 girls at JAGS are taught Science as separate subjects, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, by specialists. They have three Science teachers for 2 periods per week (1 hour 10 mins) for each subject, and all lessons are laboratory based.

Since 2004, we follow the QCA scheme of work in year 7 and this will be introduced for the whole Key Stage over the next 3 years.

We have adopted the Thinking Through Science Scheme, developed at King’s College, London. This scheme delivers the Key stage 3 National Curriculum through activities, reading and study. Collaborative group work is an integral part. The Scheme is aimed at average to high ability pupils and it encourages them to think and articulate their thinking in a challenging but supportive environment. It aims to develop the thinking skills and reflective abilities, which are so important in shaping an understanding of Science.

The topics covered are:

Introduction – safety, scientific method, variables, analysis of data.

Biology

Topic 1 – Ecology – sampling methods, habitat types, organisms’ adaptations to seasonal and daily changes, food chains and food webs, pyramids of number.

Topic 2 - Classification and variation – characteristics of living things, biological classification, inheritance, types of variation within and between species, representing variation.

Topic 3 - Cells and Reproduction – cell types, specialised cells, cell sizes, use of microscope to view cells, tissues, organs and systems, fertilisation, development, pregnancy and birth in humans, puberty and growth, menstrual cycle, comparison with reproduction in other animals.

Chemistry

Topic 1 – Safety – Introduction to safety and practical investigations.

Topic 2 – Particles – Properties and uses of solids, liquids and gases, particle theory – evidence and use, diffusion, pressure, expansion.

Topic 3 – Acids Alkalis – Acids, alkalis and indicators, pH scale, neutralisation, acids and metals, acids and carbonates, tests for hydrogen and carbon dioxide.

Topic 4 – Solutions – Dissolving, mixtures and pure substances, solubility, separation techniques, chromatography, rock salt separation.

Physics

Topic 1 - Forces – Balanced and unbalanced forces, speed, floating and sinking, density, Hooke's law, friction and air resistance, terminal velocity.

Topic 2 - Electricity – Circuit diagrams, series and parallel circuits, measuring current, resistance, fuses and safety, energy in circuits.

Topic 3 - Energy resources - fuels and fossil fuels, measuring energy, renewable energy resources, energy sources in animals and plants.

Topic 4 – Solar System – The solar system, earth, sun and moon, eclipses, seasons, phases of the moon.

Technology

Three periods each week; taught in half class groups.

By undertaking a series of interesting and stimulating projects and through acquisition of both traditional and technological design and making skills, girls are encouraged, nurtured and taught how to become autonomous, creative, innovative and independent problem solvers.

At the start of Year 7 all girls are introduced to the ICT network: how and where to log on, save and print work. Exercises in WORD, Publisher and Excel determine what they know and to ensure they are able to use ICT as a tool throughout the curriculum from an early stage. They will use ICT extensively in DT: Microsoft Publisher to relate a topic about themselves to their peers (linking to PSHE), Economatics Logicator to explore control technology and CAD (Computer Aided Design) linking to CAM (Computer Aided Manufacture) and manipulating digital images with Corel Draw. We continue to teach and use traditional design and making skills through projects: a wooden table top mirror incorporating turned parts, a clock from acrylic and structural engineering basics which are taught through group problem solving exercises. The use of written and drawn specifications and ongoing review and evaluation of work is a key component to this course.

All Year 7 girls have two timetabled **Activity Slots** each week, immediately following the lunch break on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A wide range of activities is available from which the girls choose (e.g. music, sports, IT, languages, board games) and small group speech and drama lessons also take place during this time.

PSHCE

PSHCE topics are covered both in sessions with specialist speakers and in the regular twice-weekly tutorial time with form tutors.

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