

ENTERING YEAR 9 - 2009

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the school we want all our pupils to develop lively, enquiring and well-informed minds. Our aim is to excite pupils in their learning environments and, by providing a broad and balanced curriculum, to foster every pupil's educational development. Great emphasis is placed on monitoring pupils' performance and ensuring that they continue to make progress (please refer to page 5 for further details). Excellent examination results underscore the school's commitment to this objective

The Year 9 Curriculum at Monkton Senior is notable for the range of subjects included. The curriculum offers genuine breadth to allow pupils the maximum choice of GCSE subjects. Pupils are set for English and Mathematics to ensure that all pupils progress at an appropriate rate in these vital subjects. The sciences are taught separately as Physics, Chemistry and Biology, taking full advantage of subject specialist teachers and the superb new teaching facilities to develop the distinctive skills acquired through the study of each discipline. Similarly, History and Geography are taught separately. Most pupils will continue with their study of French and some will choose to continue with Latin, but there is also the opportunity to begin lessons in Spanish. Drama is introduced as a new subject. Separate courses in Art and Technology give full expression to pupils' creative skills as well as providing a firm grounding in the techniques needed in later years. Lessons in Information Technology teach the use of common packages to underpin the use of computer techniques in other areas of the curriculum. Lessons in Music, Religious Studies and Physical Education complete a rich and varied weekly programme of study.

Trips and special events add an extra dimension to classroom learning and are carefully integrated into the school year.

All pupils are allocated a personal tutor who takes particular responsibility for academic progress through regular meetings. In addition we report on effort and progress twice a term - an interim report written at half term and available on line*, and a full end of term report which is available for collection at the end of term, as well as on line. This structure allows careful monitoring of academic progress and early intervention to resolve any difficulties.

* Details on how to access reports will be sent separately at the start of the Michaelmas Term

YEAR 9 TIMELINE

Michaelmas Term

September	MiDYIS testing - see page 5
October	Setting Exams, followed by set changes where needed.
November	The Art of Learning with Lance King

Lent Term

January	Boarders Parents' Meeting
February	Publication of 'Entering Year 10 – GCSE choices'
February	Day Pupils Parents' Meeting
March	Year 9 tutors hold individual discussion with tutees

Summer Term

April	Return of GCSE Options Form via tutors
June	End of Year exams, followed by set changes.

INTERNAL EXAMS

One of the key aims of pupil assessment is to ensure that their educational needs are being met by correct set placement. There are two major sets of internal exams in Year 9. The first ones, known as setting exams, are held in the week before the Michaelmas half term, and test Maths, English, Science, French, Geography and History. These exams enable us to ensure that all our pupils have been correctly setted. There are usually a few adjustments made after half term.

The end of year exams, held in June, involve all academic subjects, and are an important way of measuring academic progress over the year. They also help determine setting in the core subjects in Year 10.

'ART OF LEARNING' STUDY-SKILLS COURSE

Monkton Senior School places great emphasis on developing the skills pupils need to be successful at learning. These skills are developed both through the classroom and also with special 'study skills days'. Two such sessions are organised; the first in November of Year 9 with Mr Lance King and his 'Art of Learning' and the second after the Trial Exams in Year 11.

Lance and his team will visit Monkton on 18 November. This will be their second visit to Monkton, they come highly recommended. Two quotes from other independent schools:

- 'With their multi-sensory teaching styles, their New Zealand stories and their wonderful sense of humour, the Art of Learning presenters reach all pupils and in the past the impact has been immediate and amazing.'
- 'Parents just love the workshop and would happily turn the 90 minute session into a day course if Lance would let them. '

The aims of this course are to:

- *understand the structure and function of brain and mind and the processes of thinking and learning*
- *apply specific thinking strategies to specific problems*
- *create a positive attitude towards learning*
- *make effective classroom and study notes*
- *understand the impact of visual and verbal thinking on personal study and learning*
- *shift information into long term memory*
- *apply what has been learned and continually improve their learning process*

A follow up workshop for staff and a separate workshop for parents will complement this programme, and thus ensure that all parties in the "pupil, parent, and teacher partnership" are aware of the strategies and the level of support which are required to make learning successful. The parental workshop will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18th November in the Bewick Lecture Theatre. We hope as many parents as possible will be able to attend this important workshop – please indicate on the form at the back of this booklet - so you might become better equipped to support your child, not just in terms of practical learning strategies, but also in relation to instilling and boosting your child's confidence.

Each pupil will be charged £10 as a contribution to the costs of this course, which will go on the end of term bill. If this causes any difficulty please get in touch with me.

VALUE ADDED - Guidelines on ALIS and MidYIS

As a school we are always conscious of the need to give top priority to academic achievement. To this end we closely monitor pupils' academic progress, try to assess their academic potential and give them every encouragement to attain this and maybe even exceed it. To help us with this monitoring process, the School uses programmes developed by Durham University. These programmes are widely used in many independent and maintained schools and in particular they are concerned with "value added". "Value added" is a term used when a pupil makes more progress than would normally have been expected of him or her. In order to measure "value added" we need a common baseline measurement.

1. ALIS – A Level Information System

The ALIS programme, which concerns itself with post-16 education, provides comparisons between progress made by Monkton pupils and a large sample of others. Average GCSE grades are used as a baseline measurement. There is considerable statistical evidence to suggest a fairly strong correlation between GCSE results and A level results. However, within that correlation, many other factors come into play: these would include the quality of the teaching, motivation of the pupils, the resources of the school, personal and emotional problems a pupil may have, support from the home etc. We take the average GCSE grades, use the ALIS data to predict A level target grades, and use this for what we call target minimum grades. After two terms of the A level course pupils will discuss their target minimum grades with their Tutors. These target minimum grades will then be the baseline on which we monitor progress throughout the remainder of the AS course and on into the A level course. Each member of the Upper Sixth will have, during the Michaelmas Term, a formal academic interview with a member of the Senior Management Team. The target minimum grades and progress that each pupil has made will form the basis of this interview.

2. MidYIS – Mid-Years Information System

MidYIS works in a similar manner but focuses on the three years leading up to GCSE, in other words Years 9, 10 and 11. Again a baseline measure has to be established. To do this each pupil in the Year 9 sits a series of tests in the Michaelmas Term. These tests are sent to Durham University for analysis which provides us with an academic profile of each pupil. This profile is particularly useful to monitor under-achievement. If a pupil performs well in a test and subsequent progress is disappointing it can now be picked up more effectively than would have previously been possible. Again there is a fairly strong correlation between test results and final GCSE scores.

YEAR 9 CURRICULUM

English Language and Literature

Pupils have four lessons of English per week (rising to five in Year 10) and are grouped by ability into three sets in Year 9 and into four sets in Years 10 and 11. A general course is followed by all pupils, covering a wide variety: study of reading genres; different styles and purposes of writing including drama and poetry; personal research; talking and listening activities; and film studies. Personal reading and creative writing are thoroughly encouraged and we would hope that pupils will enter some of the many competitions available.

In recent years, we have looked at War Poetry from the Napoleonic Era to the present day. We have also studied issues relating to Language Change by looking at extracts from Chaucer, Dickens, Austen and more modern writers.

We study 'Romeo and Juliet' in some detail and pupils are invited to produce creative responses to the text and characters. Where possible, we endeavour to see a good quality production of the play to deepen their understanding of stagecraft and language.

We also cover a variety of media and non-fiction pieces in preparation for GCSE. This year, we have written film reviews of 'Spiderman' and analysed a variety of persuasive documents.

Each term, pupils will be expected to read widely through both their own personal readers and class readers. Each teacher structures the course in their own way, but we all cover the same core elements. The same aspects of spelling, grammar and punctuation are covered in every class at different levels in accordance with National Curriculum guidelines.

Mathematics

Pupils have four lessons per week and are grouped by ability into three sets in Year 9 and into four sets in Years 10 and 11. Pupils will be taught a common syllabus until the setting examinations in October, the results of which will enable pupils to be placed into fixed classes for the remainder of the year.

Set 1 usually consists of 20 - 22 pupils. This class will work through an accelerated programme designed to provide them with a stimulating and challenging syllabus. The class will immediately begin the IGCSE course with a view to taking the IGCSE examination in June of Year 10. In Year 11 these pupils will either continue with a stand alone Additional Mathematics qualification, or begin the A level syllabus with a Core and Applied module.

Set 2 usually consists of 18 - 22 pupils. This class will work through the National Curriculum towards Level 6 and above at Key Stage 3. The class will begin the IGCSE syllabus in Year 10, completing the Higher Tier IGCSE examinations in June of Year 11.

Set 3 usually consists of 15 - 20 pupils. This class will work through the National Curriculum towards Level 6 at Key Stage 3. The class will begin the IGCSE syllabus in Year 10. Typically two thirds of the class will complete the Higher Tier IGCSE

examinations in June of Year 11, with the remainder completing the Foundation Tier Examinations at the same time.

Science

Science is taught as three separate subjects, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, each subject taught by a specialist teacher. Pupils have three lessons of each subject per week and are grouped by ability into three sets in Year 9 and into four sets in Years 10 and 11.

Once in Year 11, pupils in Sets 1 and 2 will take the three separate science GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Pupils in Sets 3 and 4 will usually take two Science GCSEs, currently Science and Additional Science. Occasionally pupils who struggle with science may be entered for the single Science GCSE. The topics studied in Year 9 in each of the sciences lay the foundation for the GCSE examinations that will be taken in Year 11.

Biology

Biology involves the study of a wide range of exciting topics ranging from human biology and plant biology to ecology and the study of disease. Biology is a subject that is closely related to everyday life and is never far from the headlines. Issues such as genetic engineering, biotechnology and global warming are some of the areas much in the news. These are explored during Years 9 to 11 along with the key topics that underlie the subject. The GCSE course is followed from early in Year 9 in order to give time to explore the subject in as practical and relevant a way as possible.

Chemistry

Chemistry introduces you to the basic ideas involved in the study of matter around you. It will help you to explain about the materials in our world; why they are as they are, and how they can be changed. Chemists observe the world around us and study the ways in which the tiny invisible particles which make up matter interact to make new, and often important, substances. Chemistry is behind a vast range of everyday products, from our clothes and trainers, through medicines that help us get better and fertilisers that help us grow more food, to novel materials that are involved in high technology and space exploration.

Physics

Physics analyses the fundamental laws governing our Universe and aims to explain concepts such as time, space and light. This knowledge is then widely applied in the design of everyday devices such as mobile phones, computers and aeroplanes, to name but a few! In Year 9 pupils study how heat is transferred, the science behind energy saving appliances, how we might generate the electricity we need and the electromagnetic spectrum.

Art

The Year 9 curriculum is based upon project work and the pupils will learn techniques, processes and media that will help them flourish at GCSE. The short projects include drawing, illustration, paint, printmaking and three-dimensional pieces, ceramics, ICT (Photoshop) mixed media and sketchbooks. Prep is given weekly and all work is closely linked to practicing artists. Written work on critical analysis and subject specific terms is encouraged, but the emphasis is on exploration and development of techniques. Visiting artists are also part of the programme. There is a Year 9 Art Club at lunchtimes in the department for pupils to try new things or catch up with set work.

Design and Technology

In Design and Technology, Year 9 pupils first develop their understanding of mechanisms through designing and making their own wooden automata (moving toy). They are then introduced to the area of 'appropriate technology' (design for the developing world) and are briefed to design and make a solar charger for use in Tanzanian villages. Both of these projects include the opportunity for pupils to explore their creative abilities and use a wide range of hand and machine tools.

ESL

Pupils who have English as a Second Language normally have twelve lessons of ESL a week, covering all aspects of English, to provide them with a secure base from which to begin their GCSE studies in Year 10. These pupils have ESL lessons while other pupils have English, French, Spanish and History. Integrated into the course is one period a week focussing on the vocabulary required for Science subjects, and another using specialist computer programmes to develop their language skills. They also take an intensive reading course in which they are individually monitored and stretched.

Year 9 pupils are formally assessed twice; at the end of the first half term, and also at the end of the third term, when they can also take the mainstream English paper if their teachers feel their level of English is strong enough. They are assessed in writing, reading, grammar and listening, and also informally assessed on their speaking skills. Pupils also have an opportunity to participate in an inter-school speaking competition called International Voice, in the Michaelmas term.

Depending on progress throughout Year 9, more able pupils will be given the opportunity of joining the mainstream English classes for Year 10. These pupils subsequently receive only four periods of ESL lessons a week, in preparation for the First Certificate in English exam in Year 11.

Extra English

Extra English lessons are designed to support the mainstream curriculum. The lessons allow more time for the development of the essential key skills of grammar, punctuation, handwriting and textual organisation. Whilst these are also taught during mainstream English lessons, the extra curriculum time enables pupils to build upon the foundation areas.

Extra English enables pupils to hone their writing skills in order to complement their work in all areas of the curriculum. Guidance and advice will also be available for coursework in all subjects.

There are 4 lessons available every week. Each one will be devoted to either reading skills, writing skills or a combination of both. Taking Extra English will also ensure that any Special Needs provision (if applicable) will be able to continue into Year 10.

French

The main aim in Year 9 is to build upon and revise skills learned in previous schools. We want to encourage our learners to communicate with other speakers of the language. We aim to promote the enjoyment of learning a language for its own sake and to provide intellectual stimulation.

On entering Year 9 pupils will choose French from one block. There will be two sets within each block. If appropriate a pupil may choose French in both blocks.

All of Year 9 goes to France at the beginning of the school year for 4 days. This is a cross-curricular activity. They stay in a chateau in Northern France and follow an outdoor pursuits programme, go on a visit to the First World War Battlefields and complete a workbook and write a diary in French. They also visit a French market, eat French food and are encouraged to speak some French every day.

We use Expo 3 as a basis for our teaching, along with film, song and games. We aim to ensure that Year 9 have all the basic skills to begin the GCSE course in Year 10.

History

In Year 9 we study four topics, two in the Michaelmas Term, and one in each of the Lent and Summer Terms. They are, in Michaelmas: the Industrial Revolution (a new topic to most, so that everyone has a fair chance at the setting exam) and then the Victorian achievement (the C19th in Britain, including the effects of the Industrial Revolution, trade, empire, slavery and its abolition). History should be about thinking for yourself, expressing yourself clearly, getting the best out of all kinds of sources, and above all being able to persuade: to win arguments. By now we will have shown pupils the skills we are looking for in History, and the examinations are based more on skills than learning at this stage.

In January we move to topics in the mid C20th (including the USA between the Wars and the Second World War. Topics may vary slightly between teachers). Then for the summer we do a study on the First World War. This is an important subject in itself, but also forms a background for the C20th World history we study at GCSE. It gives a real taster of what GCSE will be like. The summer exam is based on the

First World War work alone, and success in this is a good indicator of future prospects.

Latin

Latin involves learning the grammar, vocabulary and structures of the language. Most of Year 9 is taken up with this, so that by the end of the year candidates have a sound enough grasp of the language to cope with unseen translation of Latin into English and to study the set books. These are chosen for interest and for their intrinsic merit, (hence the name, "Classics"). They include writers such as Virgil, Ovid, Pliny and Cicero. They raise issues and questions such as how to behave in certain circumstances, so that the discussion goes well beyond merely linguistic matters, important though these are.

Latin is a suitable subject for those interested in language and in literature. It involves remembering quite a large amount of information, but also going beyond this to work out the meaning of passages of Latin. Ultimately, the subject involves an engagement with an ancient culture, which is interesting in its own right, but also as the ancestor of modern European culture.

Geography

The year 9 curriculum is designed to set some different challenges from the work recently covered in the Common Entrance syllabus. There are 4 topics covered in detail:-

In the Michaelmas Term we analyse in detail some *awesome landscapes*. The processes that have carved features such as Cheddar Gorge, the Great African Rift valley, Ayers Rock and the Franz Josef glacier are analysed and pupils encouraged to select their own favourite landscapes. We also study common problems experienced by *cities* throughout the World. Issues such as crime, traffic, pollution, affordable housing and the shanty town problem are covered with case studies throughout.

In the Lent Term we study demography; population distribution, natural increase and migration are all studied in detail and the pressure that increasing world population may have on all our resources. The concept of an 'optimum population' is explored with each pupil preparing a PowerPoint presentation on a population issue of their choice.

In the Summer Term detailed studies of a range of *fragile landscapes* are undertaken. These can be at any scale and include the problems of global warming, declining fishing stocks, Antarctica, flooded landscapes and the conflicts associated with quarrying. The links with the previous topic are obvious. These studies are a preparation for the Decision Making Exercise which pupils sit for their GCSE at the end of Year 10.

Music

For curricular Music, Year 9 is divided into three groups, each with one period per week. Classes are then further subdivided to achieve our aim that everyone will have had a chance to learn a musical instrument. From each group, a small number may opt to learn the violin or a brass instrument – these should ideally be pupils who have not learnt an instrument. The majority from each group follows a course incorporating musical styles, listening tests, and other basic musical knowledge which will provide a useful grounding for those wishing to continue with Music at GCSE and beyond.

Individual music tuition is provided at extra cost (details are in the Joining Instructions), and those pupils who reach a suitable standard can play in the Orchestra, Concert Band or Big Band. The Choir is open to all.

Personal, Social and Health Education

In Year 9 there is one lesson of PSHE per week. Personal, Social and Health Education is an important part of any pupils' education at Monkton. We provide a safe environment in which to openly discuss relevant and topical issues for all our teenagers. Open discussion is the key to a successful PSHE lesson as acceptance of each others' opinions is highly encouraged in a more informal setting, with small class sizes.

In Year 9, pupils undertake a detailed programme based around the issues of *self-awareness* and *self-esteem*. An understanding of these two key topics is central in enabling pupils to make wise decisions when confronting difficult situations or choices.

Within these two topics we look more specifically at:

- who am I?
- where have I come from?
- what influences who I am?
- who influences what I am?
- what is important to me?
- goal setting
- bullying
- obstacles to achieving my goals
- how to handle disappointment
- how to maintain a positive self-image
- sex education
- drugs education
- assertiveness
- self-confidence
- choice and responsibility
- personal safety

Religious Studies

During Year 9 pupils will begin their short GCSE course in Religious Studies, which is part of our core curriculum. This is the OCR Philosophy and Ethics course, involving two of the major world religions: Christianity and Islam. During the Michaelmas term pupils will study the basic teachings of Christianity, understanding its origins and its application to today's society. Lent term will involve an introduction to Islam, with some fascinating lessons on holy war, the roles of men and women in Islam and the place of the Qur'an in modern society. During the Summer Term, we begin the actual GCSE course, looking from a Christian point of view at The Nature of God. This involves philosophical ideas such as 'proofs for the existence of God', the nature of miracles and the authority of the Bible.

All Religious Studies teaching at Monkton is based on group work, which encourages sharing ideas and asking difficult questions. An inquisitive mind is highly valued!

Spanish

The Year 9 course gives an excellent introduction to the language and allows pupils to master the basics. It also provides the foundational skills for the GCSE course. Pupils will learn the basics of the language through topics such as myself, my family, my town, my house, my free time, food and clothes. Pupils will also learn about cultural aspects of Spanish speaking countries through projects, songs, DVDs and food! The emphasis is on the practical side of the language, so they will be expected to participate actively in lessons: role-plays, sing-songs, power point presentations etc. Pupils will also have access to websites and software to make further progress in the language.

Learning Support

Pupils with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and language disorders are withdrawn from specified time-tabled periods once or twice a week. Wherever possible, lessons are one to one or paired.

Programmes are based on the individual needs of each pupil. In Year 9 the emphasis is often on building literacy skills, reading accuracy and comprehension and spelling. All programmes are structured and cumulative and take account of the need to learn in a multisensory way to assist memory. Touch-typing programmes are available and pupils are encouraged to become proficient.

Pupils receiving support in the department have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) completed annually by all relevant teachers. These set out targets and strategies for each pupil. Literacy skills are assessed on entry in September and again in June each year.

Where appropriate 25% extra time is allowed in examinations. Other concessions, such as the use of a laptop, reader or scribe may also be appropriate. These are normally only allowed following application to the examination boards, made during the first year of a GCSE or A level course.

Games and PE

Pupils entering Monkton Senior School in Year 9 will be pleasantly surprised at how many opportunities there are to participate in sport and PE. The school is fortunate to be able to offer the following facilities for the pupils to use during both timetabled lessons and extra-curricular activities:

- Sports Hall [including a weights room]
- Astro turf
- 4 Rugby pitches /2 Cricket squares
- 21 Tennis courts [9 grass courts]
- 2 Squash courts
- Indoor swimming pool
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Boathouse

Year 9 pupils will have one double lesson of PE. This is taught in mixed groups and covers areas of the curriculum not taught as part of the games programme. Activities include badminton, basketball, football and athletics.

Year 9 pupils also have 3 games afternoons per week. These are single sex lessons and concentrate on the major 'game' of the term. School teams are selected from participation in games sessions.

Term	Major Boys Game	Major Girls Game
Michaelmas	Rugby	Hockey
Lent	Hockey or Rowing	Netball or Rowing
Summer	Cricket or Rowing	Tennis or Rowing

Boys and Girls who opt for Rowing are required to participate for 2 terms.

Many Monkton pupils have represented the district, county, region or achieved national honours and the School provides every opportunity for these pupils.

Further sporting opportunities are open in the form of extra-curricular activities such as shooting, table tennis and squash.

THE LANGUAGE BLOCKS

There are two language blocks each having two lessons per week.

Pupils are required to choose one subject per block.

BLOCK A

French
Spanish
Latin
Extra English
ESL

BLOCK B

French
Spanish
Extra English
ESL

When making choices please remember the following:

- Spanish can only be chosen in one block.
- Pupils who might want to study Latin at GCSE level must choose it in Block A.
- ESL pupils must choose ESL in both blocks.
- Pupils who receive Learning Support should normally choose Extra English in at least one block, and possibly both.