



Our Ref: LD/cc/Year8CatchUp

2nd October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Barr Beacon School
www.barrbeaconschool.co.uk

In this letter you will find an overview of what we are doing in each subject area to check the prior learning of our Year 8 pupils and what we are doing to plug gaps in their knowledge so they can catch up on any learning they may have missed from Year 7.

We appreciate everything you are already doing at home to create an environment in which your child can concentrate on their school work, including homework. You may also find useful our guide to home learning: <https://barrbeaconschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Home-Learning-Guide.-BB.pdf>

You should have also received a text this week linking to our video which explains how our remote learning works, so your child can keep up with their studies if they are unable to attend school. If you did not receive this, please make sure we have your most up-to-date mobile phone number. The link is also here: <https://barrbeaconschool.co.uk/keep-up-with-your-learning-even-if-you-have-to-stay-at-home/>

Checking understanding and plugging gaps

All of our teachers are making sure Year 8 have strong foundations in each of their subjects so new knowledge will be able to be built successfully. During lockdown, even the hardest-working pupils will have struggled to understand some things and misconceptions may have crept in.

Here is an overview of each subject's approach. Please ask your children about their learning and the feedback they are receiving. You might start by asking them the questions we are constantly asking in school:

- What are you learning well in this subject?
- What do you need to do to improve your learning in this subject?

Subject	Overview of in-class test and feedback
Art	Year 8 Art pupils will be focussing on various Creative Careers in Art and design. Pupils will develop their knowledge on 'what is creativity' in an initial theory lesson. They will then start exploring the different professions in Art and Design, learning the key principles behind what an arts practitioner produces. They will be given the opportunity in their practical lessons to explore a range of art materials, techniques and processes, adapting these skills to the various professions. Students will be given a range of challenges, from pastel transfer techniques to resilient watercolour testing. Practical lessons will be assessed



Barr Beacon School
Old Hall Lane
Aldridge
Walsall
WS9 0RF
West Midlands



0121 366 6600

@barrbeaconsch

postbox@barrbeaconschool.co.uk



	via teacher observation during lessons. Pupils will get instant feedback within their lessons regarding what they have done well and what they need to continue to work on for next time. Pupils will also be assessed at the end of their rotation based on their final outcome.
Computer Science	In the Computer Science rotation, Year 8 pupils will start by exploring how computers store data using binary. They will learn how to convert to binary values. They will then move onto look at how computers store images, sound and text. They will study how computers carry out logic and understand logic circuits and look at how computers take in and output data. At the end of their rotation they will build on knowledge they learned in Year 7 and will extend their skills in programming – looking at more advanced algorithms.
Dance	Within their performing arts rotation slot, pupils will be introduced to dance through a period of 12 lessons whereby they will develop the fundamental concepts of the subject. Pupils will explore actions, dynamics, choreographic devices and motif development. Pupils will learn a contemporary dance piece before choreographing a small section of their own.
Drama	Within their performing arts rotation slot, pupils will be reintroduced to drama through a period of 12 lessons whereby they will further explore the fundamental concepts of the subject. Pupils will explore theatre in education as a theatre style, looking at breaking the fourth wall and creating drama which is interactive with an audience.
English	Year 8 pupils will focus on short stories this half term, an area they will not have covered in depth during lockdown. This unit focuses on the fundamental structure of a story, to learn key terminology and devices used by writers and consider how to incorporate this within their own work. Pupils also have regular key vocabulary, spelling and recall tests to ensure they understand the content they have learned. These skills will be assessed in the coming weeks through a one-hour assessment lesson; 30 minutes on a reading question and 30 minutes on a writing task. This is to identify skills that students understand and those that they have struggled with. Students will have a series of feedback lessons in order to reflect and recraft any areas they need to develop before moving forward.
Food	When your child starts their Food rotation they will be focusing on nutrition and healthy eating. Pupils will learn about the Eat Well Guide and how this can help us plan healthy balanced meals. They will then move onto looking into the functions, deficiencies and excesses of the different macro and micro nutrients that we need in order to survive. Pupils will have regular mini class tests at the end of their lessons as a way of informing the teacher of their knowledge and understanding of the topic being taught. Pupils will also be regularly involved in



	<p>food practical lessons where they will get the chance to prepare and cook a variety of dishes. These will be assessed via teacher observation and pupils will get instant feedback within the lesson regarding what they have done well and what they need to continue to work on for next time.</p>
French	<p>This half term in French pupils will be describing their town. This module will retrieve lots of the learning they were doing prior to us going into lockdown such as: using connectives to make longer sentences, giving opinions, using time phrases and conjugating present tense verbs. This module however will also expand their knowledge of French and the French-speaking world by looking particularly at French towns and what there is or isn't and also introducing the future tense – a skill they won't have covered in depth during lockdown.</p>
Geography	<p>In Geography we will study Fieldwork in the first term. Studying these topics will build upon the knowledge pupils have from studying Geography in year 7. We will ensure that pupils have strong foundations in their knowledge by giving pupils regular knowledge quizzes, retention activities and comparing current content with content they studied last year. Pupils will all be assessed at the end of each half term. Teachers will then feedback on the assessments and ensure that all misconceptions are addressed so that all pupils have good foundational knowledge before we continue to the next topic.</p>
German	<p>This half term in German pupils will be describing their town. This module will retrieve lots of the learning they were doing prior to us going into lockdown such as: using connectives to make longer sentences, giving opinions, using time phrases and conjugating present tense verbs. This module however will also expand their knowledge of German and the German-speaking world by looking particularly at German towns and what there is or isn't and introducing the past tense – a skill they won't have covered in depth during lockdown – to discuss how towns may have changed over time. They will also be encouraged to use modal verbs – such as 'you can' - to explain what activities you can do in a town. This is drawing on a skill they started in Year 7 but will have had less practice of over the last few months.</p>
History	<p>During the first half term, pupils are studying new topics relating to Revolution and War. Throughout the term we will be embedding skills such as source work and analysing interpretations to make sure that the core skills are retained from Year 7. Chances to focus on different areas of the world will allow our students to gain an understanding and appreciation of the wider world. Pupils will be assessed towards the end of the term based on the knowledge they have been taught and will have to use skills such as source analysis, interpretations and explanation to achieve the highest marks. Subsequently, the teachers will feedback on their assessments with the focus being</p>



	on addressing misconceptions that might have arisen. This is to ensure that before we move onto a new topic that the students have a good working knowledge as well as, a secure understanding of the core skills within History.
Mathematics	Over the course of the first half term, pupils are completing work to ensure they have strong foundations for our Year 8 content. This will then be assessed in the weeks prior through a 1 hour non calculator and calculator assessment. Pupils will then receive a review sheet so they can work independently with the use of MathsWatch at home on any topics they struggle with. Teachers will also go through the assessments and will pick up key topics to review within lessons in the consolidation week before half term.
Media Studies	During media rotation, Year 8 are experimenting with advertising and editing techniques. These editing techniques build on the skills they began to develop in Year 7 when creating their silent films. Students are using Premiere Pro to edit existing footage into something uniquely their own. They implement different techniques found in existing advertisements and explore their impact on their intended audience. Pupils will be assessed at the end of the rotation based on their editing skills and how well they were able to implement advertising techniques themselves.
Music	Within their performing arts rotation slot, pupils will be introduced to music through a period of 12 lessons whereby they will be introduced to the fundamental concepts of the subject. Pupils will explore performing, composing and appraising through a range of developing instrumental techniques including ukulele and electronic keyboard. Pupils will also develop a range of composing skills through exploring a variety of cultures and dramas.
PE	In PE, pupils have returned to the physical activity rotations they would have missed during lockdown. This means by Christmas pupils will have participated in a full range of 12 sports since they joined Barr Beacon. In Year 8, pupils are developing the core skills needed in those sports. Pupils will be verbally questioned about the health and fitness theory knowledge that was set during lockdown. This will inform teachers what content needs to be further developed in future lessons.
RE	In RE we will study Hinduism and Buddhism in the first term. Studying these topics will build upon the knowledge pupils have from studying four other faiths in Year 7. We will ensure that pupils have strong foundations in their knowledge by giving pupils regular knowledge quizzes, retention activities and comparing these new religious ideas to the topics we studied in Year 7. Pupils will all be assessed at the end of every half term. Teachers will then feedback on the assessments and ensure that all misconceptions are covered so that all pupils have good foundational knowledge before we continue to the next topic.



Science	Year 8 pupils will have carried out a baseline assessment, which included Year 7 knowledge and skills that they had an opportunity to look over in a skills check week at the start of term. During all lessons, quizzes and knowledge recall activities are being used consistently; as well as keyword, spelling and definition recall tasks. By half term, pupils will have a greater understanding of forces and variation which were two topics that were explored in lockdown – we are now looking at them in more depth so students can demonstrate their mastery of the topics.
Textiles	Year 8 Textiles pupils will be continuing to focus on health and safety in textiles, learning fundamental textiles skills and using a range of equipment. Pupils will develop their knowledge of techniques such as tie dye, applique and other manufacturing processes. They will then learn how to create design ideas developing into a final design alongside researching how technology is changing the fashion industry. Practical lessons will be assessed via teacher observations during the lesson, with a practical log of their work in their booklets. Pupils will get instant feedback within their lessons regarding what they have done well and what they need to continue to work on with regards to their cushion and their homework tasks. Pupils will be assessed at the end of their rotation based on their final product alongside an assessed homework design idea.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Ms L Draycott
Headteacher



Barr Beacon School
Old Hall Lane
Aldridge
Walsall
WS9 0RF
West Midlands



MATRIX
ACADEMY
TRUST

0121 366 6600

@barrbeaconsch

postbox@barrbeaconschool.co.uk

