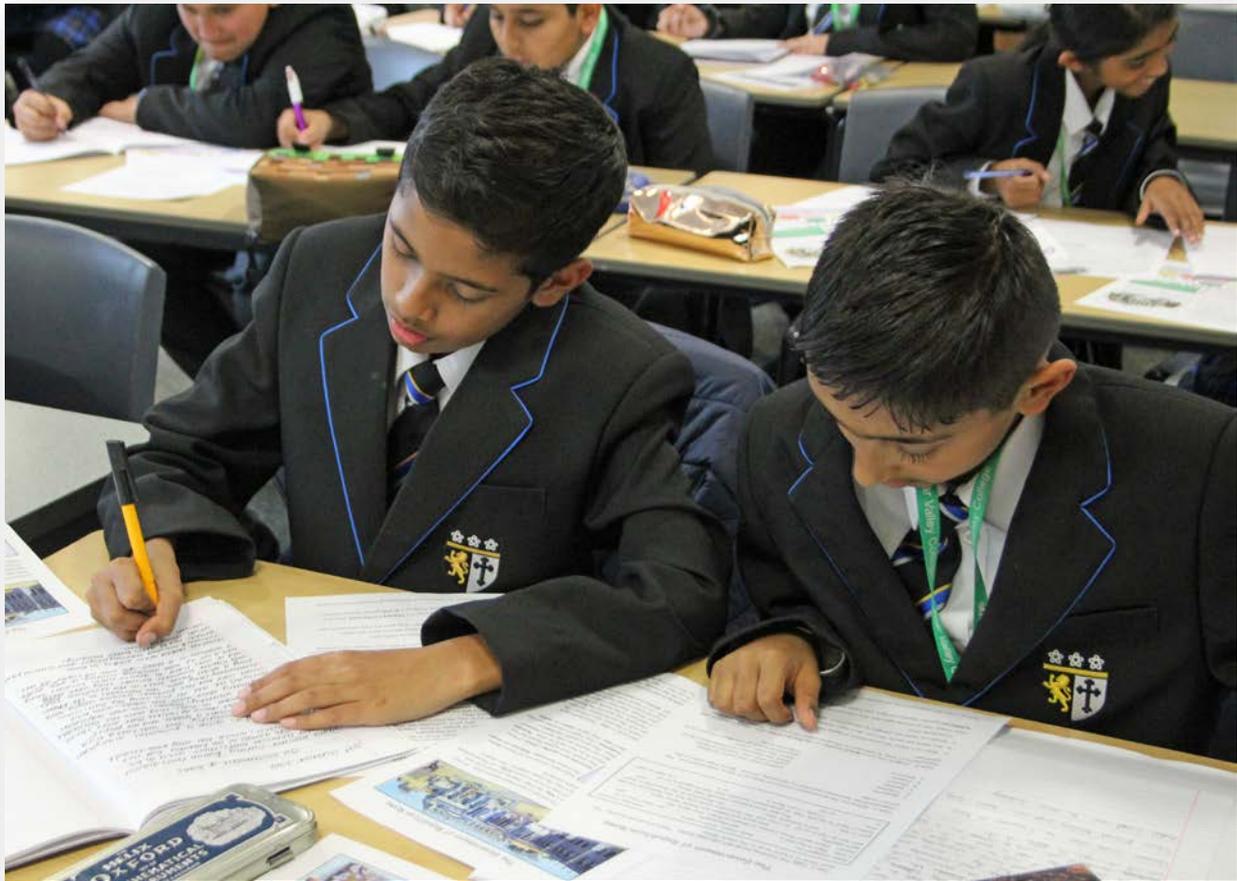




Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE



Year 7 Curriculum Handbook

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The Curriculum at Key Stage 3

Our curriculum at Key Stage 3 is designed to provide students with the skills needed to prepare them for a successful future. When students arrive at Soar Valley College they study a number of core curriculum subjects. These are organised into a two-week timetable, with the number of hours for each subject during the two weeks as shown in the table below:

| | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| English | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Science | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Art & Design | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Computing | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Design & Technology | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Drama | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Geography | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| History | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Languages | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Music | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Physical Education | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Religious Education | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Citizenship/Personal Development | | 1 | 1 |

A small number of students will be part of our Nurture Group. For these students the transition to secondary school is made more gradual by grouping some subjects together; these are taught by our specialist team who use the subject content to develop basic skills.

During Year 7 there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of reading, communicating and writing. This emphasis on literacy continues throughout the time the pupils spend at Soar Valley.

An induction programme is built into Year 7, during which students will learn about our expectations, how to behave in different social situations and how to organise themselves so they are ready to learn.

Some general ways parents can support include:

Year 7 Settling-In Evening

This is held in October so that parents can meet the Form Tutor and find out how their child has settled in to life at secondary school. A full Subject Parents' Evening is held later in the year. These are valuable opportunities to find out how your child is progressing and what they can do to improve further.

Reports

Reports are sent home three times a year and outline the effort a child is making in each subject together with any concerns about behaviour and/or homework completion. They will also indicate targets for children and the progress they are making towards meeting those. Discussing the report with your child is an important way of engaging with their learning. Parents can help by celebrating successes, discussing where things have not gone so well and setting targets for future improvement.

Homework

Parents can see all homework set for students via www.satchelone.com a link for which is on our school website. Students also have a Planner for recording homework, which parents are asked to check weekly and sign. Providing a calm and quiet place to work at home will help your child to focus.

Healthy lifestyles

A healthy diet can make a big difference to children's concentration in school. This includes restricting fizzy drinks and sugary foods. Another important factor is a reasonable bedtime so that your child is able to concentrate on their learning the next day. It is also advisable to make sure access to games consoles, mobile phones and computers is monitored to make sure your child is able to spend sufficient time on their schoolwork.

Further information about our curriculum can be found in this booklet, together with information on how you can support your child's learning in all subjects.

Reading, Writing and Communication across the Curriculum



What is it and what do we expect?

At Soar Valley we think it is important to develop the abilities to read, write and communicate effectively in all lessons. We want students to feel proud of their work! We encourage students to try to use neat handwriting in all lessons, as well as writing in full sentences and paragraphs where it is necessary, as well as using correct punctuation.

All students, throughout Key Stage 3, will spend some time in the library as part of their English lessons. Here a clear, well designed curriculum is delivered by the English team with the intention of ensuring that students read widely during these important formative years. Other subjects will provide opportunities for students to read.

In all subjects students are encouraged to take responsibility for checking their work for technical errors, before the teacher does, and to make corrections and improvements prior to handing in work. This helps them to learn which mistakes they make often and where extra help may be needed.

There is a strong emphasis in all classrooms on developing students' skills of speaking and listening. Our approach is encapsulated by the phrase "Say it again, say it better." When students are answering questions in class they will be encouraged to reshape their answers, where appropriate, to be in full sentences and to employ the correct subject vocabulary. Students should see this as an opportunity to improve their oral responses in the same way that they would a written answer.

All subjects have the intention of teaching students subject specific vocabulary during the delivery of their curriculum. Learning the meaning and spelling of these words is important and students are encouraged to work on this within class, in homework, and independently where they know that they have areas for improvement to address.

What can parents do to help?

Encourage children to read for pleasure. All students will have a school library book which they will swap at least once every two weeks. They should also try to read lots of different texts, including magazines, newspapers, websites, fiction and non-fiction.

Once homework has been completed, parents can support by encouraging children to read it aloud. When children read aloud, it is easier for them to spot their mistakes. They can also be encouraged to make corrections and improvements to their own work.

Ensure that children have opportunities to practice speaking with confidence. Ask them about their day at school, for example, and praise them when they speak clearly and confidently. Where they use new words that they have learned at school praise their use of subject specific vocabulary.

Useful websites:

www.literacytrust.org.uk

English

The English curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- inspire an appreciation of the importance of reading and literature;
- develop knowledge about the use of language in a wide range of texts;
- build knowledge of how to use written language themselves in a variety of structures, forms, contexts and audiences.

In Year 7, we want students to have a rich, enjoyable and challenging experience, leading them to engage with and to be highly motivated by their English lessons, as well as to understand and value the functional aspects of the subject. Having high expectations of our students, we strive for the success for all, regardless of their ability.

In their lessons, students are encouraged to build their knowledge and skills by working both independently and as part of different kinds of groups, and we endeavor to offer interesting and appropriate resources and learning activities for all students whatever their ability.

In addition to lessons in the classroom, all Key Stage 3 classes have a regular lesson in the library to help to promote good, independent reading habits and a real sense of pleasure from reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves in their reading and are given opportunities to read in class, are given time to independently read in the library and are encouraged to read for pleasure beyond their English lessons.

During Year 7, students study the following units:

- **Why do writers write about themselves? How can we use this to inspire our own writing?**
 - Reading and writing autobiography, letter writing, reading and writing autobiographical poetry
- **Why is Shakespeare such an important writer in the English Canon?**
 - Studying the life and times of Shakespeare; reading *The Tempest* or *Twelfth Night*; reading non-fiction texts; learning to analyse and perform Shakespeare's language.
- **How are human crises presented in modern teenage fiction and 21st century non-fiction?**
 - Reading, understanding and analysing *The Bone Sparrow* by Zana Frallion; reading non-fiction; writing and performing speeches

There are many opportunities for different kinds of speaking and listening and drama in lessons.

There is explicit teaching of new and technical vocabulary in each unit.

The teaching of grammar, technical and functional skills is embedded into all that we do and students are supported in their application of these skills through a range of strategies to promote literacy development across the curriculum.

What parents can do to help:

On the school website, there is a very helpful link to '*Understanding Progress in English: A Guide for Parents*'.

The helpful advice given on the *Reading, Writing and Communication across the Curriculum* page is also excellent and very relevant to English.

Talk to your son or daughter about their English work and English homework. Encourage them to discuss what they are learning in their lessons and explain their ideas. Encourage them to proofread their English work and homework and to revise knowledge and skills covered in the lessons.

Encourage your son or daughter to read for pleasure and, if possible, read together. If you don't know what to choose, ask Ms. Codling in the library and have a look at [AccessIt!](#) The latter can be accessed via the library portal on the college's website.

Useful websites:

- KS3 BBC Bitesize English at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z3kw2hv>
- SAM Learning on <https://www.samlearning.com>

Mathematics

The Maths curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the mathematical concepts that allow students to become numerate and resilient problem solvers;
- help them understand the links between key mathematical concepts and see how they are used in a variety of interesting and useful contexts;
- allow them to realise the power that mathematics has to help us communicate effectively in a technological world;
- allow them to appreciate the intrinsic and aesthetic qualities of mathematical shapes, proofs and patterns;
- allow them to realise the thrill and fulfilment of tackling a problem or a puzzle and to recognise that, whilst good mathematicians are usually stuck, there is fun to be had when you try to get out of the maze!

Mathematics is the means of exploring and communicating the ideas and patterns that make up our world. We aim to build on the many skills that are developed in primary school so that we can provide a meaningful and enjoyable secondary experience.

Students are thoroughly assessed when they arrive at Soar Valley. These assessments help us to place the students into sets i.e. groups based on their current ability. Setting helps all of our students to develop at an appropriate level. To ensure students are in the right set there are regular assessments to check progress and groups are adjusted accordingly during the year.

Topics covered:

Our programme focuses on the three key elements of mathematics – Number, Algebra and Geometry – which are developed alongside a study of Statistics. All of these elements are covered in Year 7 and the experience is enriched for students with opportunities to develop their problem solving ability. Our scheme of learning covers all of the requirements for the National Curriculum and is scheduled as follows.

| Term One | Term Two | Term Three |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Length, Area and Volume | Proportional Equivalence | Order of Operations |
| Properties of Number | Properties of Shapes | Sequences |
| Place Value and Arithmetic | Angles | Equations |
| Rounding and Estimation | Transformations | Probability and Ratio |
| Division and Fractions | Statistics | Constructions |
| Expressions | | Scale Drawing |
| Time, Units and measures | | |

What parents can do to help:

Homework and learning outside of the classroom is encouraged at all times. There are many ways students can enhance their class studies and we have invested in some quality resources to help. Our favourite online homework site is [Mathswatch.co.uk](https://www.mathswatch.co.uk). Every child will be given an individual login to access this site. Other sites that we subscribe to, and would highly recommend, are www.mymaths.co.uk and www.samlearning.com

These sites cover all of the above topics and provide extra lessons and questions for students to work on at their own pace. Questions are marked instantly giving immediate feedback about their progress

Science

The science curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- allow them to acquire scientific knowledge and understanding through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics;
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science through different types of scientific enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them;
- allow them to learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills both in the laboratory, and other learning environments.

Having a fundamental understanding of science has never been more important than it is today in a world dominated by constantly evolving scientific and technological ideas. Our aim is that all pupils receive the best preparation for living in this world.

When students begin the Year 7 course they will undertake training in lab safety, key skills and how to become young scientists. Following a short assessment they will conduct a transitional module. The aim of which is to make sure pupils begin Key Stage 3 with the relevant scientific skills and vocabulary. Following this pupils follow the National Curriculum programme of study. The Year 7 course is split up into 3 units each containing a topic of biology, chemistry and physics. Throughout the year our young scientists will be constantly developing and improving their scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding. The topics listed below create the foundation required to understand the uses and implications of science today, and for the future. During Year 7 pupils are taught in mixed ability form groups.

Topics covered:

| Biology | Chemistry | Physics |
|--|---|---|
| Ecology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying organisms in their environments • Organism classification Organisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life processes • Cell structures • Cell transport Genes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation • Growing up | Earth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the earth • Rock cycle • Fossils Matter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States of matter • Atomic structure • Separation methods Reactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and chemical reactions • Acids and alkalis | Forces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of force • Investigating force • Speed Energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy transfers • Efficiency • Generating energy Electricity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current, potential difference, resistance • Types of circuit • Electricity in the home |

What parents can do to help:

Parents can help support learning by discussing students' homework, to further support learning activities in college. Homework is set using the Activate 1 Workbook, as well as weekly quizzes on Educake. Parents can help students to check areas they are unsure of and test their knowledge using these resources and should support their child with making flash cards and graphic organisers to aid revision. Talk about science in the news and encourage students to come to college with questions about science news. Encourage your child to read as well as listen to science news.

Useful websites:

KS3 BBC Bitesize Science at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zng4d2p>

For self-assessment students should use Educake on www.educake.co.uk

Art & Design

The art curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- develop creative thinking skills and a love of learning by experiencing a range of different materials, techniques and processes;
- build upon their knowledge and skills;
- ensure students acquire a broad knowledge and understanding of the Art world and the creative industries which will help to prepare them for their next steps.

Students will complete two practical units of work during Year 7. They will cover a wide range of Art & Design skills, and learn about different styles of Art, through topics such as:

Insects and Bugs:

- Students will learn about and practice the formal elements of Art.
- They will learn to understand and use all of the visual qualities found in art work, such as line, tone, colour, pattern and texture.
- Students will practise drawing images using a range of techniques and processes.
- They will create work using chalks and charcoal, inks, pastels and low relief.
- Students will learn about abstract art.
- They will study the work of various artists and use that as inspiration to create original pieces.

Our Town:

- Students will learn about architecture through history.
- They will learn about the wide variety of architectural design in Leicester.
- They will draw architectural elements using a range of Art media.
- They will explore a range of design ideas for their own building.
- Students will create 3D sculptural work.

Student will also study Art History alongside their practical units.

What parents can do to help:

Each student will be given a sketchbook that they will sometimes use for homework. Parents can support students – and really boost their child’s confidence – by admiring the work and talking about how it was created. Another way to help is by encouraging students to draw simply for their own pleasure and interest.

Occasionally watching television programs about Art is also a great way to widen students’ knowledge and develop their cultural awareness.

Useful websites:

The Museum of Modern art www.moma.org

The Tate Gallery www.tate.org.uk

The National Gallery www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Students often need to research different artists or art movements, and a simple search on Google will give immediate access to a significant number of works of art by a particular artist.

Design & Technology

The Design and Technology curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- inspire students to actively engage with confidence and success in an increasingly technological world;
- encourage risk taking, resourcefulness, innovation and support them to become capable individuals;
- allow them to make vital contributions to the creativity, culture and well-being of our community.

Topics covered in Year 7:

Food and Nutrition: The main learning focus in Year 7 is for students to gain knowledge and understanding about healthy eating and food safety. Students are introduced to different foods, which allows them to understand where food comes from, as well as understanding different cooking methods. As this project progresses, students will focus on presentation techniques and specialist terminology regarding food preparation and nutrition. At home, there is an emphasis on sensory analysis and evaluating their own practical skills, which will improve their knowledge and understanding for future projects.

Timbers (Phone Holder): The project acts as an introduction for Y7 students to a range of skills, concepts and processes. Students are guided through the concept of conducting simple focus group surveys after initially identifying a target market or individual and then customising their phone holder's visual design to that individual's tastes and wants. The practical aspect of the project acts as an introduction to accurate marking out and the use of a range of wood-working tools and procedures, as well as workshop safety. Additional emphasis is also placed on learning about CAD/CAM, timber types and origins as well as developing the students drawing and rendering skills.

Polymers (Maze Game): This project covers polymers, sustainability, packaging and new technologies. This includes specific software and manufacturing methods. Students are introduced to batch making processes enabled by exposure to 2D Design and the laser cutter to produce a final product ready for marketing. Computer Aided Design and Manufacture is a core principle of this project.

Textiles (Sock Toy): This project allows students to explore the textiles core and specialist knowledge through the manufacture of a sock toy. They will be introduced to the raw sources and main construction methods of textiles. Students will learn to use hand and machine based equipment safely in order to support their work over the next two years. Through analysis of other products and looking at toy safety regulations, they will design a sock toy suitable for a small child. The toy will be evaluated against their own design specification to check for suitability at the end of the project.

What parents can do to help:

We would appreciate each student coming to each Design & Technology lesson fully equipped with quality colouring pencils, pencil, pen, rubber and a black fine liner. A regular checking of Show My Homework, which will often have support material uploaded to aid learning, would be appreciated. We encourage all students to take pride in their work, so support and encouragement at home would be advantageous. Additionally, should there be any difficulties providing ingredients during Food Technology lessons, you will find staff supportive in solving any issues with advance notice.

Useful websites:

www.bbc.com/bitesize, www.technologystudent.co.uk, www.Food4life.gov.uk

BBC television programmes (available on iPlayer): Dragon's Den, Inside the Factory.

Drama

The Drama curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- encourage tolerance and understanding across a range of situations and experiences;
- offer experiences that develop students' ability to question and that challenge their perceptions of the world around them;
- develop a range of transferrable skills valued by employers.

We aim to inspire a love of learning, while building the skills and knowledge to succeed in future endeavours.

During Year 7:

Students will explore the many facets of drama and the multitude of roles involved in creating performance work. Students begin to work in a variety of groups and to develop their critical thinking skills, as well as building links with knowledge from other subject areas. Throughout the year they will be introduced to the necessary building blocks of production in order to evaluate and create their own original work. There is a strong focus on independence and self-reflection throughout and students are encouraged to remember and use skills they have been learning..

Examples of topics include:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Introduction to drama | Many students may not have experienced drama as a formal subject and so in this unit they will be introduced to the key skills required within drama and begin to explore the different terminology and techniques that form the basis of all performance and presentation. |
| Undercover Spy | Students will look at the theory behind naturalistic performances and the processes of 'becoming' a character. In this unit students learn about Stanislavski as a theatre practitioner and are beginning to develop their subject specific vocabulary further. |
| Harry Potter | Students will apply skills from previous units and look at the skills required to create work for an audience. We focus on empathy and writing in role, with students developing presentation skills and techniques for performances. |
| Horrible Histories | Using a range of skills that students have been learning since the beginning of the year, we explore historical facts in a fun and practical way. Students look at storytelling and creating work for an audience, performing regularly. |
| Performing for an audience. | Within this unit, students explore how theatre is made, looking at the different roles and skills that contribute to theatre. Students are encouraged to be creative and independent and we encourage them to develop work using the skills they have learnt throughout the year. |

What parents can do to help:

Encourage your child to talk about their classwork when at home. Discuss different films and performances and the different elements which go into creating a piece of drama whether it be musicals, adverts, soaps or films. Check Show My Homework to see what work is being prepared for the next lesson and where written work is required, encourage the best effort and presentation from your child.

Useful websites:

www.youtube.com the National Theatre channel

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk>

Geography

The Geography curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- help them appreciate and make sense of the awe-inspiring world in which they live;
- create enquiring minds that are interested in geographical issues that affect us now and in the future;
- give them challenging opportunities to experience the connections between people, place and the environment on a variety of scales.

The geography curriculum introduces students to the world of geography introducing and embedding key skills required throughout their time in school. Students will investigate a number of topics across the year.

Topics covered:

An Introduction to Geography Examines the core components of the subject matter including the physical, human and environmental features that make up our living space. Introduces how we learn about geography through an understanding and application of the geographical enquiry process.

Using Geographical Skills to Investigate Leicester The geographical enquiry process is used to investigate the physical, human and environmental geographical features of Leicester. A range of skills are introduced including climate graphs, interpreting census data and analysing geographical patterns. Alongside this, map skills are taught covering key features such as map symbols, grid references and how to use and interpret a map.

An Unequal World Examines how and why certain countries are richer than others, ways in which we can measure development, how this has changed over time and what has influenced this change.

The Restless Earth Examines the wonderful world of earthquakes and volcanoes looking at the causes, effects and responses to such hazards and why these truly devastating disasters are so interesting.

Why is the Tropical Rainforest biome so unique? Introduces global climatic zones and applies core knowledge to the question of why the rainforests are so hot and wet. In addition, students investigate the layers of the rainforests and how animals have adapted to its extreme environment. They will also look at why the rainforest is so valuable in resources and why it is under threat.

What parents can do to help:

Identifying different land use patterns in the local area using GoogleEarth. <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Reading contemporary news articles relating to the themes under investigation – The BBC Science and Environment website is excellent for this purpose http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science_and_environment/

Discussing ways in which students own lives and decisions are connected to the issues under investigation

Useful websites:

2011 census information <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/council-and-democracy/city-statistics/census2011/>

Land use in cities http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks3/geography/spaces/settlement_urban/revision/4/

Tropical rainforests

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/ztgw2hv/articles/zppthcw>

History

The History curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- inspire a curiosity about the past, a desire to learn more and to find enjoyment in doing so;
- allow students to gain knowledge of the past so as to help understand the present;
- allow students to gain the skills necessary to study History and apply them as a historian would;
- allow students to master the subject.

The history curriculum begins with a look at how we study history so that students develop an understanding of chronology, how we measure time, fact versus opinion, sources of information and bias. Once students have this grounding in skills, they are introduced to the main ethos behind the curriculum which is *What Causes Change?* And *What Was it Like to Live at This Time?* We then introduce the five main causes of change on which we focus:

- Power
- Religion
- Conflict
- Technology
- Economy

Students will then begin a study of history with the Norman invasion in 1066. This will include what life was like in the Middle Ages, the cause, events and consequences of the Norman invasion and how life changed during this period. During the summer term students will have the opportunity to visit Kenilworth Castle.

We finish the year by looking at the end of the reigns of Henry Tudor, Henry VIII, Edward & Mary.

What parents can do to help:

Taking their children to visit local historical sites such as the Jewry Wall or Guildhall.

Assisting with the themed homework, which will require students to find out about family history. Parents could also help complete other extended pieces of work which will provide many opportunities to get involved.

Visiting the library and getting age appropriate books regarding the topics that will be covered.

Watching the news and reading newspapers with their children to encourage an awareness of and interest in current affairs.

Useful websites:

Useful general websites for all topics covered:

www.schoolhistory.co.uk

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/

www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/

www.historyonthenet.com/

www.samlearning.com

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zk26n39>

ICT and Computing

The ICT and computing curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- develop transferable skills for a changing digital world;
- implement computational thinking to solve problems;
- enable students to apply knowledge learnt when using information and communication technologies in everyday life.

In Year 7 we aim to give students an overview of the skills they will need throughout the key stage and a sound basis for further study of ICT and computer science.

Topics covered:

| Term One Topics | Term Two Topics | Term Three Topics |
|--|--|---|
| E-Safety, Cyberbullying & Keeping Data Safe | Block base programming with Microbits | Spreadsheets |
| Computational Thinking & Data Representation | Text base Programming Small Basic | Text base Programming Python & Systems Architecture |

What parents can do to help:

- Make your child aware of how to stay safe when on the internet. Visit the websites with them. Discuss with them the dangers of sharing personal information on the internet and talking to people that they do not know.
- Explain that computers need specific instructions creating a set of steps to be followed in solving a particular problem or carrying out a task.
- Think about what things we do need instructions such as following a recipe. Creating a set of instructions to make a sandwich or a cup of tea. Discuss why it is important to things in logical order.
- Parents can help support learning by discussing students' homework, which will be shared on Show My Homework, to further support learning activities in school.
- Quick topic quizzes and games for each of the units of work are available on the teachict.com website. Parents can help students to check areas they are unsure of and test their knowledge.
- Talk about ICT and computing in the news and encourage students to come to college with questions about new technologies. Encourage your child to read and find out about new technologies in sports/leisure/education/entertainment/industry etc.

Useful websites:

https://www.teach-ict.com/gcse_new/gcse_ict_quizzes.htm

<https://www.samlearning.com/>

<https://www.childnet.com/>

<http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/>

<http://www.transum.org/software/logo/>

Languages

The Modern Foreign Languages curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- inspire a love of language learning;
- instil linguistic knowledge and transferable skills in our students, which will equip them with the necessary adaptability to engage with the opportunities available to them in and beyond their academic and social environment;
- encourage respect and understanding towards other languages, cultures and customs in a diverse and changing world.

We are passionate about language learning at Soar Valley and we want all of our students to enjoy communicating in other languages. We start Year 7 with a topic exploring the skills of language learning in which they learn about the origins of words and sounds and build upon the languages we already know, alongside the introductory topic to the language being studied at secondary level. Phonics feature heavily at the start of the course so that learners have a good command of the spoken word. This is one of the four key skills to be addressed in the languages classroom: alongside the skill of spontaneous speaking, developed for example through language games, we invest a lot of time in developing the skill of writing in a new language; and we develop the more refined skills of listening and reading comprehension.

Three-quarters of our students study French throughout KS3, with the remaining quarter studying German. Year 7 students are taught in their mixed ability tutor groups and are set from Year 8 onwards.

A variety of resources are used including a large selection of textbooks, CDs, DVDs and photocopiable and digital resources in addition to our own teaching resources. We also have an annual subscription to Linguascope, which students can access from home with a password from their teacher. We use authentic texts and poems, songs, and games to really bring languages to life.

What parents can do to help:

Parents can support us by encouraging a positive attitude towards language learning and an appreciation of different cultures and how they develop our students to become global citizens.

Support would be greatly appreciated in ensuring that all homework is completed to a good standard and discussing the learning that has taken place. Helping students with vocabulary learning homeworks - by testing them at home in a fun way – we can build the foundations to ensure a child's success in his/her foreign language learning.

Students will also benefit from help with assessment preparation.

Topics covered in Year 7:

Autumn Term - Me and My Family: Students learn how to talk and write about themselves and their family.

Spring Term - Where I Live: Students learn how to talk and write about where they live and to describe their house and bedroom in detail.

Summer Term - School: Students learn how to talk about their school life. This terminates with a competition across all language groups about a favourite day at school.

There are various extra-curricular opportunities for Year 7 students across both languages, including a possible planned daytrip to Boulogne in Northern France.

Useful websites:

www.linguascope.com

www.zut.org.uk

www.languagesonline.org.uk

Music

The music curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- inspire a love of learning through inspirational and challenging musical activities;
- build on students’ knowledge and skills of performing, composing and evaluating music from different cultures, genres and medias to succeed through KS3 and KS4;
- create vocational opportunities, which focus on transferable skills that enable students to succeed across the creative industries and beyond.

Topics covered in Year 7:

| Year | HT 1 | HT 2 | HT3 | HT4 | HT5 | HT6 |
|----------|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| 7 | <u>Elements of Music</u> Exploring the Elements of Music using DR. TAPS SMITH | <u>Keyboard Skills</u> Exploring Effective Keyboard Performance Technique | <u>I’ve Got Rhythm</u> Exploring Rhythm and Pulse through Stomp percussion, classroom percussion and drums. | <u>Form and Structure</u> Exploring Musical Structures within different periods of Music | <u>Sonority City</u> Exploring the Instruments of the Orchestra. | <u>Folk Music</u> Exploring instruments of folk music, accompaniment patterns and songs. |

Year 7 topics are designed to build students’ knowledge and understanding of the Elements of Music, developing musical performance skills through a variety of instruments, listening to music from around the world and identifying how the Elements of Music are used in each culture. Students will have the chance to explore great composers from all ages, and to use their own compositional skills to develop a greater understanding of how the Elements of Music are used to build up music. Singing is integrated into all topics. Students will develop their musicianship skills in 3 key areas-Performance, Composition and Evaluation.

Listening and Appraising:

Throughout each of the units, pupils listen to their own and others’ work and undertake self and peer assessment in accordance with the Learning Pathways. Teachers use these Learning Pathways to assess pupils’ work throughout the units, to drive high expectations for all and to ensure all students achieve their full potential.

What parents can do to help:

At home parents/carers can support pupils learning in the classroom by asking questions about their learning and encouraging them to listen to a variety of music from around the world. They can also share their own personal musical tastes! In school, parents/carers can encourage pupils to reach their full potential in lessons, take up an instrument and take part in the various extra-curricular clubs and concerts.

Useful websites:

<https://edu.bandlab.com/>

www.musicalfutures.org.uk

www.musictechteacher.com

www.mymusictheory.com

Physical Education

The Physical Education curriculum aims to allow all students access to a range of sports/physical activities that will:

- Develop their confidence, competence, motivation, knowledge and understanding to value and take part in physical activity for life.

Year 7 PE consists of 10 different activities. Following the completion of the Young Leaders Award students will be set according to their practical ability and divided into single sex classes for most of the academic year. The length of time that students spend on each activity will vary depending on what set they are in. Activities are also adjusted accordingly to the meet the needs of the class.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Topic 1: Football | Topic 6: Gymnastics |
| Topic 2: Rugby Union | Topic 7: Dance |
| Topic 3: Netball | Topic 8: Athletics |
| Topic 4: Short Tennis/Badminton | Topic 9: Cricket/Softball |
| Topic 5: Health and Fitness | Topic 10: Rounders |

The aim of Year 7 PE is to develop and nurture the students' confidence, competence in physical activities and to develop their understanding of health related fitness. We work hard on fostering positive attitudes towards each other and healthy and active lifestyles, self-confidence, fair play and social skills.

The 3 key areas of development are:

1. Competence
2. Rules, Tactics and Strategies
3. Health and Fitness

What parents can do to help:

Following an early assessment at the start of the autumn term, students will be assessed continuously throughout each activity block. At the end of each activity block (which usually last for 5 weeks) students will be asked to self assess and identify areas of strength and weakness. Students will also be asked to identify methods of improvement and record these. Students will be graded by their teacher at the end of each activity block into a Bronze, Silver or Gold category to reflect their competence, knowledge of rules, tactics and strategies, knowledge of health and fitness and effort levels.

It would be useful if parents periodically enquired on their child's progress in PE and encouraged them to attend extra-curricular activities.

Useful websites:

www.bbc.co.uk/sport

www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/sport/fair/fairplay

Religious Education

The RE curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- enable students to consider the impact of religious beliefs on the world, on communities and on individuals;
- inspire curiosity, empathy, respect and debate around a range of religious and non-religious worldviews;
- build understanding of religious beliefs and practices, to help students both now and in the future.

All students at Soar Valley College study RE from Year 7 to Year 11.

Year 7 topics

| | <u>Topic Title:</u> | <u>In more detail:</u> |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Introduction to R.E. – Why is it important to study religions? | Exploring the impact RE has on society. |
| 2 | Hinduism - What's it like to be a Hindu? | A look at some key beliefs and practices within Hinduism. |
| 3 | Festivals – What is special about a religious festival? | An exploration of different religious festivals and why they are celebrated. |
| 4 | Judaism – What's it like to be Jewish? | A look at some key beliefs and practices within Judaism. |
| 5 | Jesus – What difference did he make? | An evaluative study of the birth, life and death of Jesus. |
| 6 | Religion & Food – Can religious people eat what they want? | Exploring different food laws within religion and their impact. |

What parents can do to help:

- Encourage wider reading and understanding around a topic using library books from the college or a local library.
- Look out for evidence of religion in the local community including buildings, festivals being celebrated, charitable activities etc.
- Talk and discuss with your son or daughter events in the media with religious and ethical angles to them.
- Encourage the following learnings habits in your child:
 - Coming to lessons fully equipped and ready to take part and completing all homework.
 - Being interested in what other people think and believe, and curious about why. You do not have to be from a religious background yourself to do this!
 - Expressing your views and opinions as clearly as you can.
 - Having an open mind when you come across ideas that you don't agree with, and listening well to different opinions.
 - Thinking about how religion makes a difference to people's lives.

Useful Websites:

BBC Religion and Ethics website has a wide range of information and useful articles

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/>

BBC Bitesize: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/>

Learning Development

The Learning Development curriculum at Soar Valley allows all students to access to a range of experiences that will:

- provide students with a “can do” approach that fosters an enjoyment for learning;
- enable students to acquire knowledge appropriate to their developmental stage.

We strive to remove learning barriers, build resilience and ensure students are prepared to access the curriculum, by developing learning tools and strategies with them

Soar Valley College is an inclusive school and we welcome all students regardless of any additional needs that they have. Additional needs may be linked to learning, behaviour or communication difficulties or perhaps a medical need. The Learning Development Faculty will ensure that all subject teachers are aware of any additional support that your child may need and will advise teachers about the best way to provide that support.

Students are supported in a variety of ways.

- They may be taught some subjects in smaller groups.
- Small group interventions focus on specific skills ie) literacy, spelling or social skills
- Intensive short term interventions can be delivered individually ie) 1:1
- There may be an additional teacher or teaching assistant in some classes to provide specific focused support.
- Buddy reading clubs run each morning during registration.
- There is a supervised homework club available at lunchtimes where support can be given to complete homework tasks.
- Vulnerable students can attend supervised activities at break and lunchtime every day.

What parents can do to help:

- Check the student planner and encourage your child to complete homework tasks on time.
- Encourage reading for pleasure and talk about the book or magazine that your child is reading.
- Help your child to be organised so they always have the necessary equipment for school.
- Promote a supportive and positive attitude towards any interventions that the Learning Development Faculty make available to your child.

When necessary we will seek advice from other agencies to help us to provide the best support for your child. We work closely with:

Special Needs Teaching Service

- Education Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy Services
- Behaviour Support Team

Extended Curriculum

We are extremely proud of the wide variety of activities available for our students on a daily basis which we feel bring a range of benefits and opportunities to help them to further develop their learning.

These activities occur before school, at lunch time or after school. In 2013/14 there were 115 different activities and 85% of our students attended at least 1 activity throughout the year on a regular basis. They are incredibly popular with the students and are all free to attend. We also have Learning Passports that allow us to reward students for time they spend in extra-curricular activities and which are extremely popular.

For Key Stage 3 students we offer:

- The Learning Resources Centre is open every morning from 8am for students to use the ICT facilities, read or to exchange their reading books.
- Homework Club
- A calm, supervised environment in the Learning Resource Centre allows students to do their homework using College resources and computers. This is held every day 3 - 4pm.
- Most subjects also offer an activity either at lunchtime or after school for students to extend their learning and receive extra guidance from the teaching staff. These may include:
- Creative Activities
- Music, street dance, drama and guitar are amongst those activities offered for students who feel stronger and more confident in creative activities.
- Opportunities to pursue particular interests for example chess, Computing, Art.

A wide variety of sports are offered for all students. They may be single or mixed sex, competitive or non-competitive situations.

We also offer a Paired Reading Scheme where older students work alongside Year 7 students to improve reading skills.

In addition to the daily activities outlined above students are also offered many other opportunities and activities that are offered at different times throughout the year.

All of our activities are publicised to the students by various means including on the Plasma Screens located throughout the College and also on the College website.

All details are correct at the time of printing but are subject to change.