The Chantry School

DT Department
Information for candidates

Curriculum overview

The Design & Technology curriculum at The Chantry School seeks to inspire and develop creative and innovative individuals across the full range of subject areas including food & nutrition. It encourages pupils to design and make products that have high elements of individuality and that stretch and challenge their practical capabilities. Working with a range of materials and commodities, pupils develop skills using hand processes and equipment, with a relentless focus on producing the highest quality outcomes possible. We actively encourage the use of digital image manipulation and fabrication methods within the curriculum to reflect the technological advances currently influencing the designing and manufacturing industry and it is our expressed intention to truly develop a curriculum for the 21st century.

Pupils are encouraged to take risks when designing and making products to push the boundaries of what is possible. The development of independent learners is a key focus for our curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to think through solutions to practical and design-based problems through independent research or guided discovery.

Pupils are taught that finding solutions to problems can take many forms and are actively exposed to experimentation especially within food & nutrition, sketching, modelling and computer based virtual modelling as well as systems modelling. They are encouraged to discuss and evaluate their work with others and to take account of others' views.

Pupils are taught to think about the social and environmental impacts of design and make activities encouraging an ethical and sustainable approach to the products that they make. The inclusion of scientific, mathematical and literacy knowledge is used to enhance pupil's deeper understanding of the technological concepts being experienced.

Pupils understand that all design and technology activities have a higher element of risk attached to them and are expected to work to the highest standards of health, safety and hygiene through a policy of self and peer regulation.

There is a clear five-year plan for the Design & Technology curriculum that offers flexible pathways through the KS3 & 4 continuum ensuring pupils are prepared to move onto appropriate KS5 courses. Courses offered at Key stage 4: Food and Nutrition, 3D Design and Graphics.

All topics are linked in a logical sequence to prior learning to ensure embedding and securing of prior learning, whilst introducing new learning. There is a relentless focus on producing quality products.

Food & nutrition is part of an established and highly successful Design & Technology department made up of four specialist staff. The department has a philosophy of 'Design First' where we focus upon developing pupils' creativity through the use of teaching and learning strategies that promote fertile creative learning environments. Food has a unique perspective on creativity that allows pupils to experiment and explore the use of commodities in a creative and innovative way. The department's annual 'Design Awards' evening has been a major contributor to raising standards in Design at KS3 and this has had a major impact upon levels of attainment at KS4. We have a strong history of excellent GCSE results across the suite of subjects offered. Our results are always something to be celebrated Indeed, we have a reputation for the high quality of teaching and learning which is constantly developing and is led by a highly experienced Head of Department.

Key Stage 3:
Pupils have two, one-hour lessons of Design & Technology per week. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups. The curriculum is structured into two half year rotations (phases). In the first phase pupils cycle around Product Design, Graphics, Textiles & Food. This rotation focuses upon design skills where pupils draw sketch model & experiment to design products to theme set by teachers. The second phase, the pupils cycle around the four subjects again and focus upon the 'make' skills. In this phase pupils make the products that they designed in phase 1.

Key Stage 4:
Pupils have 5 lessons of Design & Technology per fortnight. The department offers GCSE courses in 3D Design, Graphics (both Edexcel) and Food & Nutrition (AQA). These are highly successful courses that have risen in popularity with pupils over the last five years. We currently have eleven groups across key stage four with well over 200 pupils following a GCSE course.

GCSE Results 2024:
In the 2024 GCSE results for Food, 17.2% of pupils achieved grades 9 to 7, 65.5% attained grades 9 to 5, and 77.6% received grades 9 to 4.

Similarly in 3D, 35.7% achieved grades 9 to 7, 57.1% earned grades 9 to 5, and 78.6% secured grades 9 to 4.

In the Year 10 Graphics exam, 43.5% obtained grades 9 to 7, 82.6% reached grades 9 to 5, and 91.3% attained grades 9 to 4.

Resources and rooming:
The department is housed in purpose-built accommodation that comprises of a suit of specialist rooms. There is a specialist food & nutrition kitchen that is to undergo a major development during the summer to expand and modernise the facility. The department has a team of highly successful and experienced teachers who are dedicated to providing the highest quality learning experiences for our pupils.