

WELCOME



Our Headteacher

This term has been one of real success across our school, and I am delighted to share how proud I am of everything our pupils and staff have achieved. Both in the classroom and through the many extra-curricular opportunities on offer, our community has truly lived out our vision of Success for All.

Our core values of Excellence, Independence and Community have shone through in so many ways. Classrooms have been full of focused learning, and pupils have shown real determination and pride in their work. Year 7, in particular, have settled in exceptionally well, embracing our standards and routines and making a strong start to their high school journey.

Attendance has been excellent this term, and I want to thank families for the ongoing support. Strong attendance is essential for securing the best outcomes, and it has made a clear difference.

Beyond lessons, pupils have taken part in a wide range of activities. The High School Musical production and our Christmas Concert were outstanding events that showcased the incredible talent within our school. Our sports teams have also been extremely busy and successful, representing the school brilliantly in competitions.

Trips such as the visit to Sherwood Forest have enriched pupils' learning and provided memorable experiences. We have also come together for key moments, including our Remembrance Day commemorations, where pupils showed great respect and maturity.

I would also like to recognise Year 11, who are preparing for their PPEs in January. They have shown increased focus and maturity this term, and we wish them every success as they continue their revision and preparations.

It has been a truly positive and memorable term for our whole community. Thank you for your continued support. I wish all our families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy a restful break, and I look forward to seeing everyone in January, ready for another successful term ahead.



Miss Dewse
Smithills School Headteacher





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YEAR 7



Year 7 have had a very strong start to their time at Smithills. Over 47,000 value points have been given out to pupils in year 7 this is a demonstration of the pupil's enthusiasm for school and for our school values of excellence, community and independence. Those values have also been demonstrated in the pupils who have volunteered their time outside of the school day.

We have had a healthy number of pupils taking part in football and basketball and performing in the High School Musical production. Well done to those pupils who have grasped the opportunities on offer.



Year 7 have also had the opportunity to become sports leaders this half term. Our first group of leaders are pictured below and have been tasked with setting up and running some interform events in the new year.

I hope you all have a peaceful festive season and I look forward to seeing all the pupils back in school in 2026!

Mrs Scholefield
Year 7 Head of Year



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YEAR 8



Celebrating Achievements

This term has been full of highlights for our Year 8 pupils. We are delighted to share that many achieved 100% attendance, showing real commitment to their learning. Pupils also enjoyed a variety of school trips that broadened their experiences and strengthened friendships. A particular highlight was the community Christmas party, where Year 8 proudly represented Smithills and helped spread festive cheer.

Assemblies That Inspired Us

Our assemblies this term have encouraged reflection and growth. We celebrated Black History Month by learning about remarkable achievements and contributions, honoured Remembrance Day with respect and gratitude, and explored the values of humility and kindness. These themes have resonated strongly with our pupils and have guided their actions both in and out of school.



Recognising Success

We have continued to celebrate the successes of our pupils in creative and meaningful ways. Lucky dip rewards, form tutor nominations and Proud awards have brought excitement to those who go above and beyond.

Looking Ahead to January

As we move into the new year, we look forward to fresh learning opportunities across all subjects. Pupils will have new chances to shine in performing arts, develop important skills, and continue to grow as part of the Smithills family. We are excited to see Year 8 embrace these opportunities and build on the strong foundations they have already laid.

Miss Johnson
Year 8 Head of Year





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YEAR 9



Year 9 pupils have had a great start to this year. Achieving 46,282 value points since the year began! Lots of year 9 pupils showed our value of community by participating in High School Musical, with many pupils playing main roles, showing confidence and charisma.

Pupils have shown excellence throughout lessons, which has been evidenced on Proud Monday where Miss. Heywood and Ms Malik have been shown amazing classwork, assessments, and homework from our Year 9 pupils. Pupils have had lots of opportunities, for example, visiting Sherwood Forest where pupils explored the forest through guided walks and discovered the fascinating story behind the legend of Robin Hood.

Year 9 have also participated in educational performances about knife crime led by CUT theatre and assemblies on Black History Month and Bullying.



Pupils have participated in sporting activities such as football matches; we may have lost, but we gave it a good go and showed great community spirit! Pupils also participated in cross country, and Year 9 pupil Jake came 3rd, showing great independence.

Overall, pupils have had a great start to the year, showing our values of independence, excellence, and community.

I hope Year 9 have a great next term, we have Duke of Edinburgh, more football matches and Earth Day to look forward to...

Miss Heywood

Year 9 Head of Year





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YEAR 10



As we approach the Christmas holidays, I would like to take the opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon some of the great achievements of our Year 10 students, so far this year.

Year 10 has started brilliantly for our students, who have begun their GCSE studies and have involved themselves in a great variety of extra-curricular activities. We have a record number of pupils taking part in our Future Honours Programme; students have secured their work experience placements; students have visited Manchester University; students have performed in our 'High School Musical' production; Year 10 pupils have also performed at our Community Party and in a variety of musical competitions with our school band.

47 students have achieved 100% attendance so far this year and more than 139 students have achieved attendance well above the national average. This will make a big difference to their GCSE studies!



In addition, 138 students have received more than 100 Value Points already this year – congratulations to all!

Finally, I hope that all of Year 10 have a fantastic Christmas and I look forward to seeing them back at school on 5th January 2026!

Mr Harrison
Year 10 Head of Year



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YEAR 11



As the year ends and the festive season begins, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on a term filled with hard work, growth, and achievements. Year 11 has been a busy time so far, with exam preparations, extracurricular activities, and personal milestones. Here's a recap of what we've accomplished this term and some exciting things to look forward to in the new year!

We have crammed so much into this term. Thinking back to the start September and the Year 11 expectations evening, showing everyone the roadmap for the year, and now realising we are already way down the road.

By now your son or daughter has already secured their College interview or even in some instances College placement or apprenticeship placement for next September, and should be congratulated as they have completed this ahead of the deadline we set them at the start of the academic year.

On Friday the 12th of December year 11 participated in Mock interview day and gained a fantastic experience of how to conduct themselves during an interview situation that will stand them in good stead for life beyond Smithills School. They looked really smart and the feedback from the visitors to school was extremely complementary. Students have been supported in putting together their record of Achievement folders in preparation for the day. These contained Personal statements and CV's as well as certificates and other documents showing successes to date. A massive thank you goes to Mrs Bennett for all her hard work arranging Post 16 College assembly speakers, Mock interviews along with 1:1 connexions interview for all the year group.

Pathways to Success

Congratulations to everyone who also attended the various Pathway to Success revision sessions throughout this term. Hopefully you will benefit from this with amazing PPE results.

Mock Exam Preparation-PPE Exams: Students have been working diligently throughout the term, and we've seen fantastic commitment to their studies. The upcoming PPE exams after Christmas will provide a great opportunity to assess progress made. The results are an important indicator to staff where there may be gaps in knowledge and give an accurate picture of where the students currently sit. These PPE results will also show colleges if students are on track to achieve their target grades.

All students can now fully focus on studying and revising for their PPE's that start on Monday 12th January, concluding on Friday 30th January 2026.

PPE timetable: Scan the QR code to visit our Year 11 dedicated page on the school website to view the PPE timetable.



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YEAR 11



Please remember that all exam timetables and revision booklets are available online via the year 11 page of our school website as well as the paper copies students have been provided with. We will continue to offer support and guidance when we return in January.

- PPE Exam Timetable: The detailed timetable has already been given to the students but is also on the school website along with Revision Guide- how to revise.
- Importance of the PPEs: These mock exams are a vital part of the journey towards GCSE success, helping students identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Revision Over the Holidays: While it's important to relax and enjoy the festive season, we encourage students to dedicate some time to revision. Resources and tips have been shared in class.

Another date for the diary is Thursday 26th February 2025 as this is Year 11 Parents' Evening.

A Term to Celebrate - Highlights This Term:

Sports Achievements: Well done to all Year 11s who represented our school in sports, with standout performances in football. Good luck to our team in the next round of the cup in the new year. There has also been some amazing effort and performances in basketball and netball.

Creative Arts: A special congratulations to the year 11 students who performed in High School Musical and those involved in the Christmas concert, which showcased the incredible talent in our year students.

Head of Year Awards for this term

Congratulations to Affan and Seedra winners of a £10 voucher.

Form tutor Prize winners for this term:

These awards have been selected by form tutors for excellence throughout this term during session zero: Congratulations to all winners.

- 11A - Harvey and Ayesha
- 11B - Muqsit and Zeinab
- 11C - Logan and Ella
- 11D - Mohaned and Naima
- 11E - Luke and Aqsa
- 11F - Corey and Abigail
- 11G - Fargar - Rahman
- 11H - Callum and Abeera
- 11I - Harley and Noor

Congratulations to all of the Year 11 Smithills students demonstrating our values of Independence, Community and Excellence. Thank you to all parents, guardians, and teachers who have supported our students this term. Your encouragement and guidance make a world of difference.

To our Year 11 students: remember to take time over the holidays to rest, recharge, and spend time with loved ones. Enjoy the time off and the festivities, but don't forget to keep up with a little revision—it's all about balance!

I wish you all a Very Happy, peaceful break and a Wonderful 2026.

Regards,

Mr. Nash and Mrs Nash

Year 11 Head of Year and Year 11 Pastoral Lead



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ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY



Year 7

Art – Pupils will continue to develop knowledge and skills based on the Formal Elements of art, including colour theory and painting techniques.

Des Tech – Pupils will continue with their textiles project, focusing on weaving techniques in paper and fabric towards the creation of their woven chicken.

Food Tech – Pupils will be developing knowledge of seasonality and food origins and cooking vegetable soup and apple crumble.

Year 8

Art – Pupils will be developing knowledge of the Impressionist art period and skills in painting techniques and ceramics by looking at landscapes.

Des Tech – Pupils will be continuing with their woodwork project, taking their bird theme pull-along toy designs further and being introduced to woodwork skills.

Food Tech – Pupils will be developing knowledge of food production and costing & budgeting and cooking bread and a stir fry.

Year 9

Art – Pupils will be developing their knowledge of Surrealism and skills and techniques in painting, photography and Photoshop designs.

Des Tech – Pupils will be continuing with their Graphics project, looking at their theme of 'Flight', and developing skills using Photoshop and Illustrator.

Food Tech – Pupils will be developing their knowledge of Food availability and organic & fair trade and cooking samosas and Dutch apple cake.

Year 10

Art – Pupils will be continuing with their coursework projects based on the theme 'Food, Glorious Food'. They will be refining and exploring their ideas through creative experimentation via a series of workshop sessions and recording their observations and research of artists linked to the theme.

Photography – Pupils will be continuing in their exploration of photographers and Photoshop skills looking at themes such as 'Natural Forms' 'Urban Environment' and 'Portraiture'.

Graphics – Pupils will be continuing with their Graphics project looking at a range of Designers and how graphics influences design in industry. They will be creating their own logo designs and working on typography.

Hair & Beauty – Pupils will be looking at the economy and GDP and the impact it has on the hair and beauty sector. They will also be learning about legislation, working practices in the industry, and looking at how hair and beauty has evolved over time including technological advances and environmental influences. Practical sessions will continue to look at curling and styling techniques and focus on shampoo and blow-drying skills.





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ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Year 11

Art, Photography, Graphics – Pupils will start their Unit 2 exam project and be given their exam paper from Eduqas in January. They will choose a project theme from a list given by the exam board and need to produce a portfolio of work which will include mood boards, initial drawings, artist research and material experimentation; in preparation for their terminal exam.

Hair & Beauty – Pupils will be continuing with their Internal synoptic Assignment focusing on how to apply research methods and show how the hair and beauty industry has evolved over the last 50 years in their chosen sector.

Hospitality & Catering – Pupils will be completing Unit 2: Hospitality and Catering in Action. Pupils will complete an assignment where they will plan and prepare a menu in response to a brief set by the exam board.



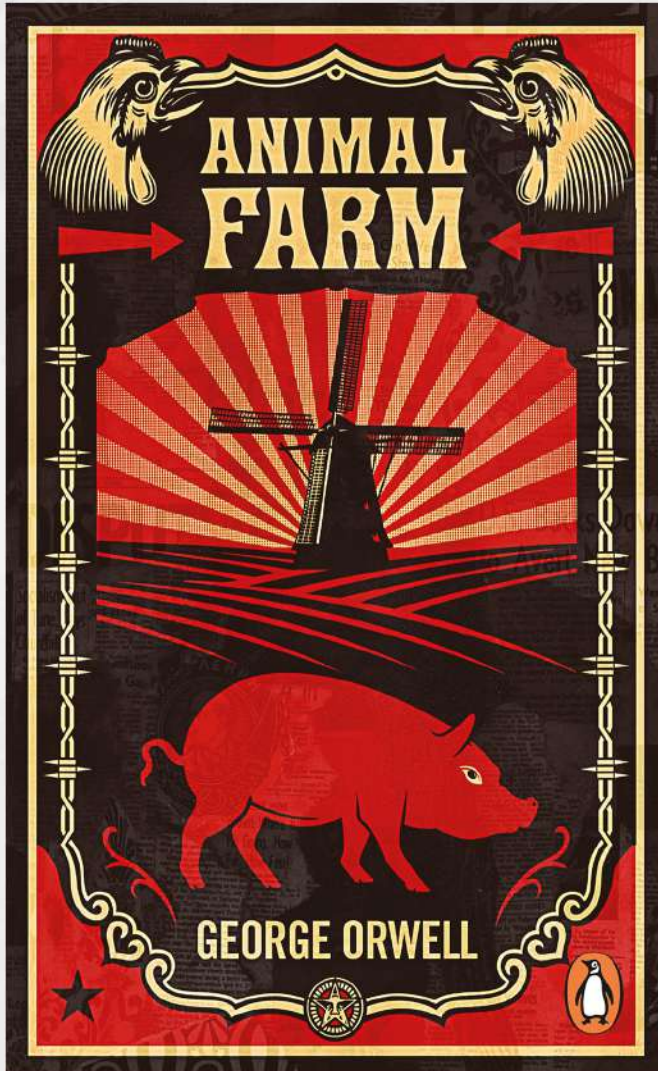


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ENGLISH



As we move into the New Year, we are excited to share what your child will be studying in English in the spring term. Our focus is on building a deeper understanding of literature and exploring key themes that remain relevant today.

Year 7 – Animal Farm by George Orwell

After exploring an introduction to literature this term, Year 7 students will begin studying Animal Farm. This allegorical novella examines power, leadership, and social responsibility through the lens of a seemingly simple story about animals on a farm. Studying Animal Farm helps students develop critical thinking skills, understand historical and political contexts, and reflect on human behaviour and fairness—skills that are essential both academically and personally.

Year 8 – Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson

Year 8 students, having completed The Tempest, will move on to Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. This Gothic novella explores duality, morality, and the nature of identity. Engaging with this text allows students to consider the complexities of human behaviour and the consequences of our choices, while continuing to develop their analytical and writing skills through close reading and interpretation.

Year 9 – An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley

Year 9 students, having studied Julius Caesar, will begin An Inspector Calls. This play challenges students to think about social responsibility, justice, and the impact of individual actions on a wider community. Exploring Priestley's work helps students connect literature to society, encourages moral reflection, and develops their ability to analyse characters,

Y10 – Literature: Power and Conflict: Identity and Power English Literature GCSE Exam Board (AQA)

Year 10 students will begin their GCSE journey by revisiting and extending their understanding of Power and Conflict. Having previously studied A Christmas Carol and the Power and Conflict cluster of poems focused on conflict and war, they will now explore the remaining 8 poems from the Power and Conflict cluster focusing on the identity and power poems. Building on the analytical skills developed through their study of Poetry and A Christmas Carol, students will examine how poets use language, structure, and form to express identity, challenge authority, and portray both personal and political conflict.

This unit introduces students to a selection of poems that explore how power operates—whether through society, relationships, or personal identity. Students will consider how poets use imagery, tone, and perspective to convey experiences of oppression, resilience, belonging, and self-expression. Through close analysis, they will deepen their understanding of how writers craft meaning and how literature can both reflect and resist systems of power.



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ENGLISH

Y10 – Language: Eduqas Component 1B

English Language GCSE Exam Board (Eduqas)

Alongside their analytical work, students will develop their creative writing skills by producing pieces inspired by the themes and techniques studied in the poems. These tasks will encourage them to experiment with narrative voice, metaphor, and structural choices to express their own ideas.

Studying this unit not only strengthens students' critical reading and writing abilities but also encourages them to reflect on their place in the world, the forces that shape individual and collective identity, and the power of language to challenge, persuade, and empower; essential skills as they move closer to their final examinations and to adulthood.

Y11 – Revision of GCSE Texts and Language

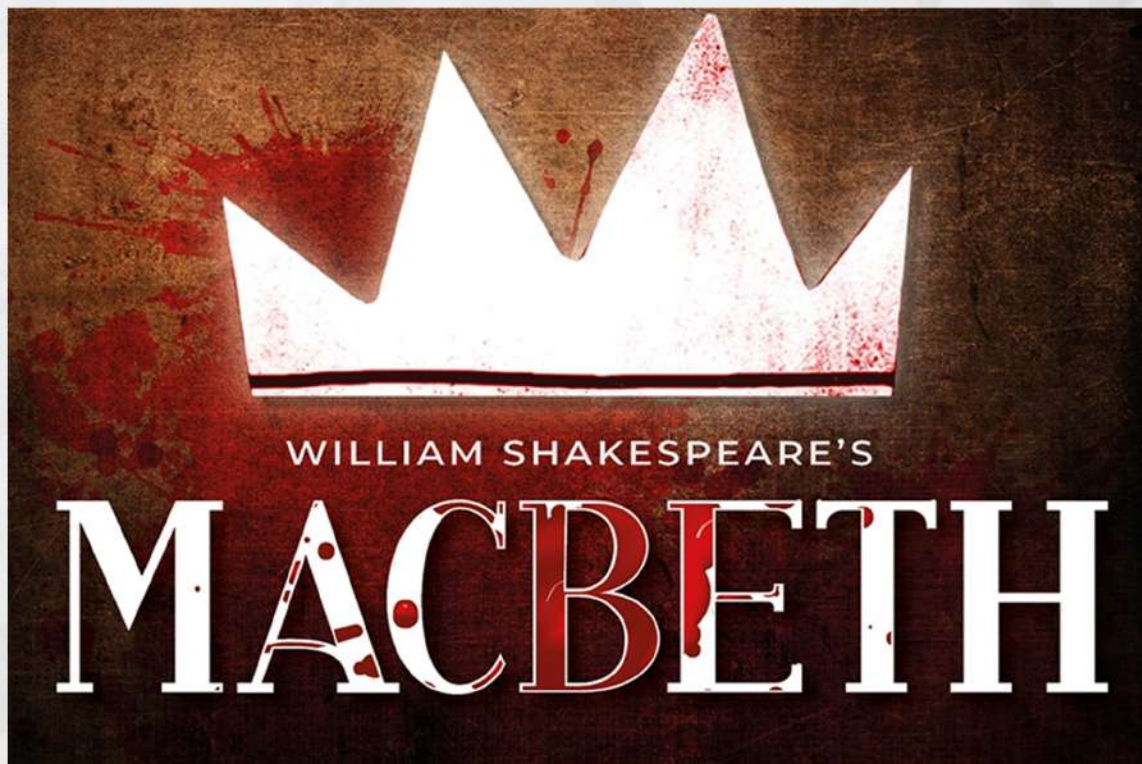
English Literature GCSE Exam Board (AQA)

English Language GCSE Exam Board (Eduqas)

As students enter their final year of GCSE study, Year 11 will focus on consolidating, refining, and revising their understanding of the core texts and skills assessed in their English Literature and Language exams. This term centres on structured revision of 'Macbeth', 'A Christmas Carol', 'Blood Brothers', and the Power and Conflict poetry anthology, alongside developing confidence in unseen poetry and their Eduqas English Language exam techniques.

In addition, we are delivering English walking talking mocks, where we provide step-by-step walkthroughs of exam strategies and model effective approaches. These guided rehearsals are designed to build students' confidence and ensure they are fully equipped for success in their exams.

Students should now also be independently revising these texts at home and regularly practising exam-style questions in preparation for their GCSE examinations.





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GEOGRAPHY AND SHERWOOD FOREST TRIP



Geography Department

January Update This month; the Geography Department is engaging pupils in a wide range of thought-provoking topics.

Year 11 are concentrating on Themes 5 and 6, with a focus on social and economic development, while also continuing their walking talking mocks every other week to support thorough preparation for the upcoming examinations.

Year 7 are exploring the concept of equality, evaluating the various factors that influence the distribution of wealth across different regions of the world.

Year 8 are undertaking an in-depth study of China, considering how its rapid development may have come at a significant environmental cost.

Meanwhile, **Year 9** are examining the development of the United Kingdom, gaining insight into the nation's evolving economic and social landscape.



Sherwood Forest Trip Report – Years 7 to 9

Pupils from Years 7 to 9 recently enjoyed an enriching three-day visit to Sherwood Forest as part of the Generation Green programme run by the YHA. The trip provided a unique opportunity to combine outdoor adventure with historical and cultural learning.

Our first experience of the forest was a guided walk across Sherwood, where pupils explored the rich history and myths that have made the forest famous worldwide. On the second day, pupils took part in a lively scavenger hunt across the forest, testing their teamwork and problem-solving skills, before moving on to den-building activities that encouraged creativity and resilience. The final day focused on the history of battles in the area, with pupils examining examples of ancient weaponry discovered locally, offering a fascinating insight into the region's past conflicts.

The trip was a memorable experience that not only deepened pupils' geographical and historical understanding but also strengthened their appreciation of the natural environment.



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INA AND HOMEWORK



INA

Our INA and EAL pupils have been working incredibly hard in the last term, improving their English language proficiency through specialist INA interventions with Mrs Karowna, in-class support with Miss Hussain and should all now have access to translated resources within their subject classes. New INA students are settling in well, making friends and building confidence with their English language both inside the classroom and with their new peers.

Moving forward, we will be focusing more on phonics in our intervention sessions to support students' reading abilities as well as continuing with the Verbal Communication sessions that boost students' confidence in the wider community.

Homework - Reading

Our pupil's engagement with Sparx Reader has dramatically increased in this school year: thank you to everyone supporting our pupils to access this! Pupils who read more do better: there is a "significant connection between reading ability and success in all GCSE subjects [and] the link between good reading and good grades is actually higher in maths than in some arts subjects like English literature and history." Pupils in The Bridge have started reading Akala's *The Dark Lady*, a brilliant novel about Shakespeare's sonnets and a young boy with a mysterious talent. Pupils in all of our Session 0 forms continue to engage with a range of brilliant texts, and our reading ages across the school are stronger than previously for the third year running!

SPARX Science – All Year Groups

Many pupils across the school have completed their Sparx Science tasks so far, showing a positive attitude and growing confidence in their scientific understanding. While overall engagement has been good, there is still room for more pupils to complete their weekly work consistently so everyone can benefit fully from the platform.

Sparx Science is designed to strengthen long-term knowledge through regular retrieval practice, helping pupils remember key content from Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Its question styles also mirror KS3 & GCSE assessments, supporting pupils in developing essential exam techniques such as applying knowledge and interpreting data.

Well done to all pupils who have engaged so far, your hard work is making a real difference. Keep it up!



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MATHS



Key Stage 3: Year 7

A Taste of Year 7's New Term in Maths

This term, your child will be building on their mathematical skills through problem solving, learning how to interpret problems, and developing the steps needed to solve them. This approach will deepen their understanding of both formal and mental strategies for addition and subtraction, before moving on to multiplication and division later in the term.

Topics we'll cover include:

- Perimeter
- Money
- Interpreting bar charts
- Tables
- Frequency trees

We will also be exploring how to form and solve equations, encouraging your child to think deeply about the meaning and the "why's" behind algebra—helping them see the bigger picture under the umbrella of algebra. Then finishing with delving into the world of fractions and decimals.

Year 8

A Glimpse into Year 8 Maths This Term

This term, Year 8 students will build on their understanding of equivalence from Year 7, developing confidence in algebraic techniques and problem solving.

Key areas of focus include:

- Expanding brackets and factorising by taking out common factors
- Expanding two binomials and applying this to solving equations
- Equations with brackets and unknowns on both sides, exploring when, how, and why algebraic methods are used
- Inequalities, learning the meaning of a solution and comparing similarities and differences with equations
- Sequences, finding rules, identifying missing terms, and applying this knowledge to graphs and real-life contexts
- Laws of indices, embedding understanding of powers, addition and subtraction, and for some, extending to powers of powers

To support learning, students will use bar models and other visual tools to make sense of the maths. Emphasis will be placed on both forming and solving equations, rather than relying only on procedural methods.

Year 9

Financial Mathematics in Year 9

In this block, students will practise and apply their number skills in a range of financial contexts. Building on the language of financial mathematics introduced in Years 7 and 8, they will now deepen their understanding through practical, real-world applications.





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MATHS

Key areas of focus include:

- Tax and wages – exploring how income and deductions are calculated
- Percentages in context – applying knowledge to everyday financial problems
- Simple and compound interest – understanding how money grows over time

This unit emphasises both practical skills and conceptual understanding, helping students see how mathematics connects directly to financial decision-making.

Content covered includes:

- Using percentages for financial calculations
- Understanding income, tax, and deductions
- Applying simple and compound interest formulas
- Interpreting and solving problems in financial contexts

Key Stage 4 – Year 10

Year 10 will be continuing their journey into the realms of GCSE Maths and deepening their understanding of Geometry, with Angles and Bearings, Circles and Vectors; and Number topics with Ratio and Fractions, Percentages and Interest and Probability.

Year 11

Year 11 will be completing their PPE's in January. They will then continue to work harder than they ever have before, to ensure that they have completed the Year 11 SOL and filled any gaps that they may have missed from Year 10, before the end of Term. From there on it will be pure exam preparation and revision to fully prepare them for their GCSEs in the summer term. Good luck for your final two terms as a Smithills student!





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MFL



Well done to all Key Stage 3 pupils who took part in our Day of the Dead competition this term, the standard was high and the creativity we saw was fantastic!

Trip News: Pupils who are travelling to Spain in September should bring in medical forms and passports as soon as possible; all names must be accurate on the travel documents. Final payment is due on or before Monday 23rd June 2026. A meeting will be held in the Summer-term for parents and pupils to attend.

Our Turkey trip is fast approaching! Please keep an eye open for updates from Mr Hussain. Pupils are starting to get very excited about their visit to Antalya, have a wonderful time!



From January, our Year 11 pupils will be continuing to prepare for their speaking exam and finishing the few remaining topics from Theme 3 (The World Around Us).

Year 10 pupils have made an excellent start to their GCSE journey and will begin work on Theme 1 (People and Lifestyle).

Year 9 Spanish pupils will have the opportunity to do some cooking with Mrs Pacer and Mr Fagan in the New Year; we will be making some authentic dishes and of course sampling them as we cook.

Years 7 and 8 are working extremely hard and are participating well in lessons, especially with our speaking games. Year 7 will be learning to talk about family and friends next term, while Year 8 will be working on describing their future plans. Keep up the excellent effort!





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PE



Year 7, next term, the Year 7 boys in PE1 will be taking part in swimming lessons, while those in PE2 will focus on badminton. For the girls, PE3 will concentrate on fitness activities, and PE4 will also be badminton. This combination ensures that pupils experience both skill-based sports and health-related fitness.

For **Year 8**, the programme mirrors Year 7. Boys in PE1 will continue with swimming, and PE2 will cover badminton. Girls in PE3 will work on fitness, while PE4 will again be badminton. This consistency helps pupils build on skills developed in the previous year.

In **Year 9**, the structure remains the same. Boys in PE1 will take swimming, and PE2 will focus on badminton. Girls in PE3 will continue with fitness, while PE4 will be badminton. This provides continuity and allows students to refine their abilities in both individual and team activities.



For **Year 10**, there is a slight change. Boys in PE1 will move into the Fitness Suite to develop strength and conditioning, while PE2 will continue with badminton. Girls in PE3 will focus on fitness, and PE4 will remain badminton. This shift introduces older pupils to more advanced training opportunities.

Finally, in **Year 11**, boys in PE1 will continue using the Fitness Suite, and PE2 will remain badminton. Girls in PE3 will move to the Pavilion for their activities, while PE4 will continue with badminton. This structure provides a balance of fitness, skill development, and facilities use as pupils prepare for their final year.





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RE



This term, **Year 7** have built on their understanding of why Religious Education is important and how beliefs shape behaviour. They began by exploring key teachings and stories from Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Sikhism, looking at how these connect to values like the Golden Rule. Building on this, pupils studied major religious festivals — including Passover and Purim in Judaism, Christmas and Easter in Christianity, — discovering how these events reflect faith and bring communities together.

This term, **Year 8** have explored how beliefs and life events shape identity. They learned about rites of passage in different faiths, Hindu teachings on duty, and Christian sacraments like baptism and confirmation. Pupils also examined Islamic marriage and Buddhist traditions, before tackling big questions about suffering and evil — including Christian and Muslim responses, free will, and why suffering exists.

This term, **Year 9** have built on their understanding of how beliefs — both religious and non-religious — shape values and life choices. They reflected on their own motivations and explored Humanist ideas about living a good life without religion. Pupils examined how faith inspires action, looking at examples like Marcus Rashford and community leaders, and studied Buddhist teachings such as the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, considering their influence on real people. Building on this, Year 9 will tackle big ethical and environmental questions: how people make moral decisions, Christian sources of guidance, scientific and religious views on the origins of the universe, and threats to the natural world.

This term, **Year 10** began their GCSE Religious Studies course by building on their prior learning about Christianity. They revisited key beliefs such as the Trinity, creation accounts, the Incarnation, and the significance of Jesus' final days, as well as teachings on salvation, life after death, and responses to evil and suffering. Moving into the Islam section of the GCSE, pupils explored why Sunni and Shi'a Muslims differ, studied the Six Beliefs of Islam and the Five Roots of Shi'a Islam.

Year 11 are continuing the Edexcel GCSE course; they have completed 2 assessments so far this term. They have completed past paper questions in lessons. They are moving on to the peace and conflict unit and preparing for their PPE examinations which will assess 90% of the course, completing both papers to support their preparation for their exam in the summer.





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SCIENCE



This month, the Science Department are guiding pupils through a diverse and engaging range of scientific concepts as they continue to build strong foundations and prepare for future study.

Year 7 are progressing through their Chemistry unit on Separation Techniques, developing practical skills and an understanding of how mixtures can be separated using scientific methods. They will then move on to Biology, where they will explore tissues and organs and discover how specialised structures work together within living organisms.

Year 8 are focusing on Chemical Reactions in Chemistry, learning how substances interact and transform. Following this, they will embark on their Physics topic of Space, investigating the structure of the universe and our place within it, before moving on to Biology to study Variation and Inheritance, examining how characteristics are passed from one generation to the next.

Year 9 are beginning to engage with GCSE-level content, starting with Atoms and the Periodic Table, followed by Energy Stores and Organisation. This early exposure helps pupils develop confidence as they transition towards more advanced scientific ideas.

In **Year 10** Biology, pupils are continuing their work on Immunity, gaining insight into how the body defends itself against disease, before progressing to Bioenergetics, exploring respiration and photosynthesis.

Year 10 Chemistry classes are focusing on Chemical Changes, applying their understanding of reactions to real-world contexts.

Year 10 Physics are studying the Particle Model, deepening their understanding of matter and the behaviour of particles.

Finally, **Year 11** pupils are continuing their GCSE content while interleaving revision and exam-style practice in preparation for their upcoming PPE assessments, ensuring they are well-prepared and confident for the challenges ahead.





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COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY



Smithills School invited 80 friends and family members of the local community to enjoy some Christmas festivities in the school hall.

The annual community Christmas party began with a welcome drink on arrival, served by Smithills School staff and pupils while enjoying festive music.

The afternoon progressed with performances from our Elite dance group and live snippets of last week's Christmas music concert.

Mrs Cannon (Business Manager), who coordinated the event, said, "I love overseeing this event every year... this event is truly unique and makes me feel so proud to be a member of the Smithills family."



Guests were served a 3-course meal by staff and pupils and left with some Smithills goodies upon their departure. Hadley (Performing Arts Pupil at Smithills), who presented the afternoon, said, "It's nice to see all the Smithills community coming together to celebrate Christmas."

Many thanks to all Smithills staff and pupils for the time they have given to help celebrate Christmas with the Smithills community.



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HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



The Performing Arts Department at Smithills School was buzzing with excitement as pupils from Years 7 to 11 took to the stage in their production of High School Musical JR. which ran from Monday 24th to Wednesday 26th November,

This much-loved Disney musical has been reimagined by the school's dedicated cast and crew, showcasing the incredible range of skills nurtured through the performing arts. From acting and singing to set design and technical production, students have embraced every aspect of the show with passion and professionalism.

The production is not only a highlight of the school calendar but also a valuable opportunity for pupils to develop confidence, creativity, and collaboration. "Being part of this show has helped me grow so much," says Year 11 pupil Kyle S, who plays Troy. "I've learned how to work as part of a team and push myself out of my comfort zone, while developing my performance skills."

Year 11 pupil, Imani G, who took on the role of Gabriella, agreed: "It's been amazing to be part of something so big. I've made new friends across different year groups and discovered how much I love performing." Year 11 pupil, Safiya S, who played Taylor, states that 'this has built my confidence over time and even though it's a challenge, I enjoy being part of the end product'.



But the magic didn't stop at the spotlight. Behind the scenes, a dedicated team of students worked tirelessly to bring the production to life. Lacey S, a Year 9 pupil, who helped with props and set design, said, "It's been gratifying to see everything come together. I've learned how much work goes into a show and how important every role is."

The technical side of the production was led by students, with Nathan W, a Year 11 pupil, designing the stage lighting. "Creating the lighting effects has been a great challenge," he says. "It's taught me how to be creative in a different way and how lighting can completely change the mood of a scene."

Adding to the excitement, local primary schools attended special morning performances on Tuesday, 25th and Wednesday, 26th November. These morning performances provided younger pupils with the opportunity to experience live theatre and be inspired by the achievements of older students.

Head of Faculty for Performing Arts and Physical Education, Mr Milthorpe, praised the pupils' dedication, "This production is a testament to the talent and hard work of our pupils. It's wonderful to see them grow in confidence and creativity, and to share that with the wider community."





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KEY DATES JANUARY-APRIL 2026

Year 11 PPEs **January 12th-30th**
 Year 10&11 SEND Parents & Carers Coffee Morning
 Year 8 Parents evening **15th January**
 Bolton Dance Festival **20th January**
 Year 9 MFL Cookery Event **3rd February**
 Year 9 Gateways with Manchester University **10th February**
 Year 9 MFL Cookery Event **24th February**
 Year 11 Parents Evening **26th February**
 Cumulative Assessment Week (Year 7-10) **2nd-6th March**
 Year 9&10 Vaccinations **10th March**
 Year 9 Options Evening **12th March**
 Year 10 Geography Fieldwork **12th March**
 Year 8 Gateways with Manchester University **12th March**
 Year 10 Geography Fieldwork **13th March**
 Year 9 Parents Evening **17th March**
 INSET Day **20th March**
 Turkey Trip **23rd-25th March**
 Year 11 RE Conference **26th March**

Year 11 PPE Timetable – January 2026 Overview

Week A

Mon 12 Jan

AM: Science Paper 1

PM: Maths Paper 1

Tue 13 Jan

AM: English Language Paper 1

PM: Science Paper 2

Wed 14 Jan

AM: History Paper 1 / Geography Paper 1

PM: Maths Paper 2

Thu 15 Jan

AM: MFL Paper 1 (Reading) / Enterprise

Fri 16 Jan

AM: English Literature Paper 1

Week B

Mon 19 Jan

AM: English Language Paper 2

PM: Maths Paper 3

Tue 20 Jan

AM: MFL Paper 3 (Writing)

PM: Science Paper 3

Wed 21 Jan

AM: History Paper 2 / Geography Paper 2

PM: RE / Computer Science

Thu 22 Jan

AM: English Literature Paper 2

PM: Science Paper 4

Fri 23 Jan

AM: Option Subjects

(RE, Health & SC, Enterprise, H&B, Computer Science)

PM: Science Paper 5

Week A (Final Week)

Mon 26 Jan

AM: Science Paper 6

PM: Geography Paper 3

Tue 27 Jan

AM: MFL Paper 2 (Listening – Spanish/French)

PM: MFL Paper 2 (Listening – Urdu)

Wed 28 Jan

AM: Cambridge Nationals / Digital IT /

Health & Beauty / Hospitality & Catering

Thu 29 – Fri 30 Jan

All Day: Hospitality & Catering

Practical Assessment

