New Rush Hall School - Year 8: Spring 2.1

English

In English this half term pupils will investigate the world of detective fiction and discover how writers create mystery, suspense and memorable characters. Through the study of Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes, pupils will explore clues, red herrings, villains and the methods used to solve crimes. They will analyse how Victorian society influenced detective stories and examine how evidence and inference help readers reach conclusions. Pupils will produce a range of writing, including crime reports, newspaper articles and suspenseful narratives, while developing their analytical skills through character and setting studies. The unit encourages logical thinking, problem solving and effective communication.

Maths

In Maths this half term, pupils will develop their understanding of decimals, rounding, and ratio. They will practise ordering decimals, rounding to decimal places and significant figures, and using place value in calculations. Pupils will solve problems involving all four operations with decimals, including multiplying and dividing by 0.1 and 0.01. They will also explore ratios involving decimals and apply these in real-life contexts. Throughout the unit, pupils will make connections to estimation, inverse operations, and proportional reasoning, strengthening their fluency, accuracy, and problem-solving skills. This learning will culminate in a review and assessment at the end of the unit.

Science

In Science this half term pupils will study variation, adaptation, and evolution alongside magnetism. They will explore species, populations, and the influence of biotic and abiotic factors on communities. Pupils will investigate DNA structure, genetic variation, and mutations, comparing artificial selection, inbreeding, and natural selection to explain evolution and speciation. They will also examine causes of extinction and adaptations of extremophiles. The focus then moves to magnetism, where pupils will learn about permanent magnets, poles, and magnetic fields. They will study induced magnetism, current-carrying wires, and how electromagnets are constructed and strengthened. Practical investigations will explore electromagnetism, before pupils consider Earth's magnetic field and its importance.

PSHE

In PSHE this half term pupils will explore personal safety and develop the knowledge and confidence to assess and manage risk in a range of situations. They will learn about the effects of caffeine, vaping, tobacco and alcohol, while investigating how peer influence and social norms can affect decision-making. Pupils will also explore strategies for staying safe around roads, water and fireworks, and identify trusted adults and support services that can help when concerns arise. This unit supports pupils to make informed choices and keep themselves and others safe.

Art

In Art this half term pupils will be studying 'Mexican Day of The Dead'. Pupils will learn about the Mexican festival and explore personal beliefs pupils hold around life after death. They will research Sugar Skulls, with this knowledge they will develop their own design intended to make out of clay. They will develop their hand building skills when working with clay and will construct their own hand-built vessel that will later be embellished with patterns inspired Mexican Day of The Dead artwork. Pupils will conclude this half term by firing and painting their pots.

PE

In PE this half term pupils will further develop areas of their fitness and master key table tennis skills. They will engage in various fitness activities aimed at enhancing cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility, laying a strong foundation for overall physical fitness and well-being. Simultaneously, pupils will immerse themselves in the intricacies of table tennis, continuing to refine their techniques in bat control, footwork, and shot accuracy, while also deepening their understanding of game strategies and tactics. By combining fitness training with table tennis drills and gameplay, pupils will not only improve their physical fitness but also develop hand-eye co-ordination, focus, and sportsmanship essential for success both on and off the table.

Geography

In Geography this half term pupils will be studying the topic 'One World, Many People: How Are Populations Changing?' They will define what population means and explore how it is measured. Pupils will explore population distribution and identify where the world's biggest populations are found. Pupils will analyse population patterns and understand how the population of a country changes as it develops. They will interpret population data to predict change and investigate how countries attempt population control. Finally, pupils will explore what is meant by migration.

Food Technology

In Food Technology this half term, pupils will explore how food production and consumption affect the environment. They will investigate renewable and non-renewable resources, consider the impact of food and packaging waste, and learn how recycling and composting can reduce environmental harm. Pupils will examine sustainable food choices and explore ways to reduce waste through meal planning and careful ingredient selection. Practical lessons will focus on using seasonal ingredients and adapting recipes to make cooking more sustainable. By the end of the unit, pupils will understand how everyday food choices can contribute to a healthier planet.

History

In History this half term pupils will explore how the Industrial Revolution transformed Britain. They will investigate life before industrialisation and examine how population growth, inventions and mechanisation changed industry and society. Pupils will study the growth of factories and industrial towns while considering the experiences of workers, including women and children. Through historical sources and enquiry, they will investigate working conditions in factories and coal mines and assess the significance of industrial developments. The unit encourages pupils to understand how economic and technological change can have a lasting impact on people's lives.

Computer Science

In Computer Science this half term pupils will be studying 'Market Research and Game Design Fundamentals'. Pupils will begin by learning the purpose of market research and using it to inform their own game ideas. They will analyse feedback from peers to refine plans, develop storyboards, and map out the design and level progression for a multi-level game. Using Scratch, pupils will begin coding movement, scoring, and interactive gameplay using sequences, conditionals, loops, and variables. Throughout, pupils will test and debug their programs, developing their understanding of user experience, while applying key computational thinking skills in a creative context.

Enrichment

As part of the Enrichment Programme, pupils will be given the opportunity to experience:

Climbing: As part of the enrichment programme this half term, pupils experience the physical and mental challenge of climbing through both bouldering and top-rope activities. Under expert guidance, they learn to problem-solve, communicate clearly, and manage risk in a supportive environment. Climbing encourages trust, self-regulation, and personal resilience as pupils navigate vertical challenges and learn to overcome them step by step. It builds on the confidence and coordination developed through Year 7 activities, giving pupils a new way to grow physically and mentally. It's an activity that reflects our values of courage.

Swimming: In this half term pupils will be taught based on their swimming ability. More experienced swimmers will work on developing their Front Crawl, Head surface dives, backstroke, pre diving skills and butterfly. Lessons will take place in 25 x 12.5-meter pool. Less experienced swimmers