



George Heriot's School

Founded 1628

Welcome to the Senior School

Whether your son or daughter enters the Senior School from our own Junior School, from another school in the city, or from further afield, they are guaranteed a warm welcome.

In this booklet, the Senior School Departments 'set out their stalls'.

As the Head of Senior School, I can certainly vouch both for the professionalism and interest of our teachers, and the excellence of our results.

In the last year of real examinations, 2019, Heriot's S5 pupils achieved the School's best ever results at Higher (up 2% on 2018) with pupils in S4 and S6 also impressing at NAT5 and Advanced Higher respectively. Full details of the 2019 SQA results, which resulted in the School topping the Times' Scottish examination results league tables, can be found overleaf - along with our SQA results for 2020. The 2020 results were every bit as good; however, as a result of the cancellation of examinations prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic, these grades are based upon teacher estimates.

All our results, from the high flyers to others, more modest in achievement, reflect the dedicated input of staff who have encouraged the very best out of their pupils. The values of hard work and genuine pursuit of knowledge stack up to bring us results which have shown consistent excellence for many years.

Academic success, however important, is not the only ingredient of a great secondary school. Our primary mission is to produce young people who are comfortable in their own skin and ready to meet the next stage of their lives with maturity, preparedness and optimism. We recognise that developing relationships, keeping fit, and being treated with respect, are all part of the successful transition to adulthood. Accordingly, we offer a quite astonishing range of co-curricular activities, both competitive and non-competitive, from which we hope every one of our pupils can find their niche. An amazing range of sports; a variety of musical opportunities; drama, including musicals, and a host of other pastimes are all there to help shape and extend our students.

Very important too, is the need for young people to feel that they are pursuing their lives at school in an environment that offers sound advice and help whenever necessary; where staff really know their pupils and what makes them 'tick'. Our Guidance Staff, our Senior Managers and our Careers Team invest much of their time in helping students with curricular, vocational and pastoral guidance. In disciplinary terms, the emphasis is on fairness and consistency. Visitors to the School often comment on its happy but purposeful buzz, and we believe that a significant factor in this is the mutual trust and respect that exists between pupils and staff.

A particular word needs to be said about our Sixth Year 'package' - a bridge between school and what lies beyond - where the emphasis on greater independence and voluntary service means we avoid the feelings of aimlessness and disenchantment that can sometimes haunt those students pursuing their post-Higher year elsewhere.

The Senior School, like the Junior School, is about progression. It is about growing up in an environment that encourages the setting of realistic goals all the way through to Advanced Higher. We are proud of the achievements, academic and otherwise, of our pupils. However, most importantly, the Senior School cherishes a calm, caring and happy atmosphere in which staff and pupils work together.

Paul A Fairclough
Head of Senior School



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SQA Examination Results 2020

The 2020 examination results once again show remarkable attainment by Heriot's pupils.

The summary of Heriot's results from the 2020 SQA diet is shown below.

| | Presentations | A | B | C | Total (A-C) |
|----------------|---------------|-------|-------|------|-------------|
| S4 National 5 | 1335 | 81.1% | 12.9% | 5.3% | 99.3% |
| S5 Higher | 911 | 75.6% | 17.3% | 6.4% | 99.3% |
| S6 Adv. Higher | 403 | 67.7% | 23.8% | 7.7% | 99.3% |

S4

It was another very good year for S4 with an amazing 48% of our S4 pupils achieving a 'clean sweep' of A grades across all their subjects. The overall pass rate exceeded 99%, with pupils sitting on average 7.1 National 5 exams each.

S5

As ever, the S5 Higher figures are the benchmark by which the session's results will be judged, and after a record-breaking year last year, our S5 pupils again excelled themselves with our best ever A-C pass rate at 99.3%. This year 47% of our 2020 cohort attained 5, 6 or 7 As, with an average presentation rate of 4.9 Highers per pupil across the year group.

S5 Higher Results: 10 Year Trend A-C Passes

| | 2010- 2011 | 2011- 2012 | 2012- 2013 | 2013- 2014 | 2014- 2015 | 2015- 2016 | 2016- 2017 | 2017- 2018 | 2018- 2019 | 2019- 2020 |
|-------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| All | 96.5% | 96.3% | 97.5% | 97.4% | 96.8% | 97.4% | 98.1% | 96.7% | 98.7% | 99.3% |
| Girls | 97.1% | 95.8% | 98.2% | 98.6% | 97.3% | 98.4% | 99.5% | 98.1% | 97.9% | 99.4% |
| Boys | 95.9% | 96.8% | 96.6% | 96.2% | 96.3% | 96.3% | 96.9% | 95.2% | 99.3% | 99.3% |

S6

Our S6 results are also excellent, as the class of 2020 also achieved an A-C pass rate of 99.3%. The percentage of A grades at Advanced Higher was 67.7% - a record breaking year for this record-breaking group.

Overall the 2020 SQA results represent an outstanding performance by Heriot's pupils, and we are very proud of them. Breaking records is not what exam results are about though – the important thing is that each pupil does their best and achieves the highest grades of which they are capable. Whether pupils have achieved multiple A grades or personal bests with B or C grades, each and every one deserves to be congratulated. Heriot's expects its pupils to work hard, and the effort, commitment and enthusiasm of our exam candidates have paid off magnificently. In turn they have rewarded not just the professionalism and dedication of their teachers, but also the support and encouragement which they have received from home.

Jenell Arnott
Director of Studies

Art and Design

Art and Design offers opportunities to explore creative ideas. We encourage pupils to respond to the subject with confidence and imagination, developing specialist techniques in a range of media as well as broader transferrable skills like problem solving, divergent thinking and aesthetic judgement.

Pupils learn to analyse visually, communicate ideas effectively, show expression and imagination, evaluate and appreciate the visual world and present work with confidence. Drawing is central to our subject. We offer a progressive course in practical art and design skills from P3 to S2. The pupils work on a range of projects from painting and printmaking to textile and architectural design.

In S3 pupils can opt to study National 5 Art and Design, often progressing to study Higher in S5. In S6 we offer Higher Photography and Advanced Higher Art and Design where pupils can refine their drawing skills in additional life drawing classes. Our courses at all levels also include discursive critical analysis of Artists and Designers – traditional and contemporary.

Beyond the classroom we offer a range of clubs and workshops developing specialised skills such as ceramics, textiles and digital media. We have run many Art and Design trips locally and further afield, visiting galleries and developing cultural awareness in locations such as London, Paris, Rome and New York.

Former pupils have gone on to study our subject all over the UK with recent destinations including Glasgow School of Art and Central St Martins in London.

Biology

Our departmental aim is to enable pupils to develop the intellectual and practical skills essential to understand Biology, and to appreciate its relevance to their everyday lives.

The subject is presented in a lively and interesting manner which illustrates its importance and relevance to scientists and non-scientists alike. Pupils are encouraged to cultivate the skills and attitudes needed to understand and evaluate the contribution of biology to modern society. Our S1 and S2 pupils follow in-house courses leading onto National 5 in S3 and S4. CfE Higher Biology and CfE Higher Human Biology courses are offered to pupils in S5. Pupils who would like to take one of these highers in S6 are also welcome. The CfE Advanced Higher course is only offered to pupils who have already achieved at Higher level in either Biology or Human Biology.

Since the discovery of DNA, Biology as a subject has made more progress in our understanding of humanity than any other, and the new CfE curriculum has brought our courses up-to-date.

Business Education

The Business Education Department is fortunate to be one of the few across the country to offer such an extensive range of courses. In S2 pupils are exposed to the dynamic and exciting world of business through our stimulating S2 course. Following on from this, pupils in S3 can opt for N5 Accounting, Business and Economics, with all 3 subjects allowing progression to Higher and Advanced Higher level. S6 pupils are also offered Microsoft Office Specialist qualifications to improve their IT skills – an essential transferrable skill regardless of their post Heriot's destination.

Our main aim is to create an enjoyable classroom working environment that:

- Encourages pupils to work both independently and co-operatively;
- Challenges each individual pupil and instils an enquiring mind;
- Develops a wide range of skills for learning, life and work;
- Ultimately allows pupils to thrive and reach their full potential.

Chemistry

Chemistry is the study of matter and the changes it can undergo. Understanding the basic properties of matter and learning how to predict and explain how they change when they react to form new substances is what chemistry and chemists are all about.

Chemistry, often called the central science because of its importance in connecting with other sciences including biology, physics, medicine, engineering and material science, is not limited to beakers and laboratories. It is all around us, from areas as diverse as food and drink, archaeology, biotechnology and environmental protection. A basic knowledge of chemistry will help all pupils understand their material world.

The Department's aims are:

- to develop pupils' understanding of the nature of matter – its properties, reaction and uses – through a range of teaching strategies;
- to improve the scientific literacy of all pupils and to increase their understanding of social and environmental issues;
- to develop the problem solving and investigative skills of pupils in a scientific context.

Citizenship

Citizenship is studied by all pupils in S1 to S5. Citizenship aims to equip all students to:

- Learn how to deal with the challenges of our school and, later on, society;
- Lead lives and make decisions, both in and out of school, that are personally satisfying and socially constructive;
- Interact effectively with their natural and social environment;
- Make the transition to adult and working life.

The units in all Citizenship courses are designed to encourage individual work, paired work and group work which can easily lead into whole class discussions on a number of issues which affect our pupils. We also work with outside agencies such as Police Scotland, Cultivating Minds and Lilypads, who assist with the delivery of courses.

Examples of units studied in S1–S5: Drugs, Alcohol, First Aid, Personal Safety, Financial Education, Enterprise, Political Awareness, Mental Health, Sexual Health and Relationships, Study Skills, Organ Donation and Practical Relaxation.

Classics

The Classics Department encourages an appreciation of language, society and culture through the study of some of the most important poetry, history, politics and philosophy. Latin is introduced through interest classes in Upper Primary and taken by all S2 pupils, who may then follow the levels to Advanced Higher. Translating and interpreting the language forms the central focus while time is allowed to consider Classical society, which, taught with fun and imagination, enhances a rich and fascinating cultural experience and enlightens modern practices. These studies open up an understanding of a wide range of voices and ideas. Higher Classical Studies, an S6 option, investigates Athens and Rome through literature and archaeology with tutorial-style learning and vigorous discussion. Classical Greek is also offered as an interest course from S2 upwards leading to the opportunity to study at certificate level in S6. Pupils from P6 onwards can choose to relax in cosy Classics lunch clubs while absorbing the most exciting of ancient tales from mythology and epic. A Classics film club also analyses modern perceptions of the Classical world.

Computing Science

The Computing Science Department seeks to equip pupils with the computational thinking skills they require to solve computing problems as well as understand computers and digital society.

In P6 and P7, specialist Computing Science (including coding) is introduced and core ICT skills are delivered. This continues in S1 and S2, with an emphasis on computational thinking through more advanced study of Computing Science as a discrete subject. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, pupils study the principles of Computing Science through topics such as programming, as well as web and database development.

The department also runs successful extra-curricular clubs in creative computing, games development and photography and is an active participant in various awards and competitions.

Design & Technology

The courses offered reflect the evolutionary nature of design and technology which is an important factor of modern day life. Pupils have the opportunity to express their individuality and are encouraged from an early stage to work independently. A wide variety of teaching methods are used to nurture creativity and promote thinking “outside the box”.

Aims

- To develop pupils’ ability to solve problems by engaging in the research, design, implementation and evaluation aspects of technological activities;
- To develop pupils’ understanding of the importance of design and technology in modern society;
- To encourage pupils to apply knowledge and skills by thinking and acting confidently, imaginatively, creatively and with sensitivity;
- To promote collaborative skills.

Drama

The courses within the Drama Department will allow the pupils to explore language, movement and theatre as a means of expression.

Pupils will undertake practical activities to develop communication, team-work and problem solving skills and the ability to work positively with others and discuss their own and others’ work. Within their learning experiences pupils will be exploring the quality and nature of relationships and will be encouraged to explore their own and others’ assumptions, attitudes and values.

As learners develop practical skills in performing they will reflect on how their use of self-expression, language and movement can develop their drama ideas. They will develop problem solving and critical thinking skills as they explore drama genre, structure and conventions. They will also investigate production skills to design, create and enhance their performance and the performances of others.

Experiences in Drama encourage originality, spontaneity and feelings of self-worth and offers the opportunity to enter imaginatively into other worlds, to consider issues and to explore emotions.

English

English is at the heart of children’s learning. Through language they receive much of their knowledge and acquire many of their skills. Language enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others’ experiences, feelings and ideas. Due to the fact that language is central to children’s intellectual, emotional and social development, it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils’ learning to be coherent and progressive.

Aims

- To enable pupils to develop skills of communicating and understanding;
- To enable pupils to deploy language for specific purposes and the needs of particular audiences;
- To establish a love of reading in its broadest sense that will develop pupils’ knowledge of, and response to, the world around them;
- To ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met, thus ensuring that all pupils, at all stages, realise their full potential in English.

Geography

Geography is the study of the Earth’s landscapes, people, places and environments; it is all about the wonderful world in which we live and the people we share it with.

At Heriot’s we have an excellent team of qualified, enthusiastic geographers who deliver courses in Geography to students from S1 to S6. We use a wide variety of teaching styles to cater for individual learning needs and to help develop positive attitudes towards our planet and its resources.

Class work is complemented by the use of ICT, GPS and GIS, multimedia, role play and debate. Pupils are encouraged to question and to progress their thinking skills and will have an opportunity to develop their creative and artistic flair. Active learning in the form of field trips is central to the course: our trips involve a number of Human and Physical Geography studies, both one day and residential, in the UK and abroad.

History and Modern Studies

History is taught to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels. Modern Studies is also taught to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

The HMS department aims to make sure that students enjoy a rich and varied experience of learning about the past and about the world as it is today. To this end, HMS teachers deploy a variety of teaching methods so that classes will be interesting, illuminating, thought-provoking and fun. We hope that exposure to History and/or Modern Studies will contribute to the development of students as independent and critical thinkers who can fulfil their academic potential, whose knowledge and skills are expanded and who understand the importance of working with others as well as individually. We hope that History and /or Modern Studies will help foster among students the tolerance, humanity and healthy scepticism that are the heart of what it means to be a good citizen in a liberal democratic society. And, perhaps just as important, we hope that students develop a love of History and Modern Studies as subjects.

Mathematics

The various courses of study in Mathematics offered by the Department all have the following aims:

- to contribute to the pupils' personal development and overall education;
- to enable pupils to develop to the limit of their capability the mathematical skills and understanding required for both their present and future needs;
- to develop an appreciation and enjoyment of Mathematics.

These aims are realised through courses which involve the pupils learning in a variety of ways, e.g.:

- by working together, as well as working independently;
- by involvement in problem solving and investigative activities;
- by carrying out practical work;
- by using graphic calculators and computers.

Every opportunity is taken to show the relevance of Mathematics and to present the subject in as interesting a way as possible. Pupils are encouraged to enter both Scottish and UK 'Mathematical Challenges' and the annual 'World Maths Day' Competition.

Modern Languages

Following an introductory European Cultural Awareness course in P5, pupils begin learning French, German or Spanish from P6 and can continue studying this language through to National 5 or elect to switch to Mandarin in S1. Pupils have an opportunity to start learning a second Modern Language (Mandarin, Italian or Spanish) in S3, also leading to presentation for National 5, and are strongly encouraged to continue their language studies further up the School, with French, German, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish taught to both Higher and Advanced Higher. Regular exchange programmes are held with our partner schools in Continental Europe and China.

Aims

- To develop in all pupils at all stages the ability to communicate successfully in the language(s) studied;
- To equip pupils with an understanding of grammatical structures appropriate to their age & stage;
- To instil in pupils an appreciation of other cultures e.g. through film studies and project work;
- To encourage pupils to develop a positive and mature approach to their studies, helping them to prepare for National Examinations and – where appropriate – Higher Education.

Music

The Department currently offers certificate courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher level. Bespoke Pathway Programmes in advanced theory, general musicianship and harmony are also available. In addition to a stimulating S1 and S2 curriculum, the Department also provides specialist teaching in the Junior School from Nursery to P7, with the emphasis on a rewarding hands-on programme of practical experience for pupils of all ages and abilities.

An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is offered: the principal ensembles comprising a full symphony orchestra, two string orchestras, three concert bands, seven choirs, brass ensemble, flute ensemble, saxophone ensemble and a swing band, as well as several smaller choirs and ensembles. Approximately 700 pupils are involved in extra-curricular music from P3-S6. Regular concerts are given in and around the city, including the Usher Hall, Queen's Hall, St. Cuthbert's Church and St. Giles Cathedral. A team of 22 visiting instructors offers one-to-one instrumental tuition on all orchestral instruments, as well as piano, singing, guitar and clarsach.

Philosophy and Religion

As part of a broad general education, Philosophy and Religion in S1 and S2 delivers the Religious and Moral Education component of Curriculum for Excellence as well as introducing pupils to aspects of Philosophy. Through engaging with the teachings and practices of major world religions and secular viewpoints, pupils are actively encouraged to critically evaluate a broad range of perspectives and also to make their own contributions to questions of a philosophical nature.

Philosophy and Religion lessons are characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and inclusivity. Religious and secular ideas are explored from an academic standpoint with all pupils gaining the skills necessary for living in a multi-cultural society where there are a wide range of beliefs. Relevant examples and situations from the present day provide the framework for assisting pupils in the development of their capacity for moral judgement. Learners are encouraged to make connections at both a local and international level, appreciating that in a technological age we are part of a global community.

Physical Education and Games

The PE Department encourages the development of body and mind through physical activity as well as exploring the attitudes and values associated with team activities and games, both as part of the curriculum and through the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer at Heriot's, which are supported by the department's highly committed staff.

Sport at George Heriot's is not purely about competition on the sports field, but also about maximum participation and educating pupils on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Generous playing fields and AstroTurf at Goldenacre provide an ideal environment for rugby, hockey, cricket, tennis and athletics, while indoor facilities include a state-of-the-art sports centre, including fitness suite, dance studio and games hall. There is also a strength and conditioning room and the original gymnasium.

PE is taught throughout the Junior and Senior School as an integral part of the timetable from P1 to S5; it is optional in S6. From Nursery onwards classes are taught in a variety of co-educational group activities which include swimming (from P2), racket sports, fitness/health and well-being, dance and gymnastics, as well as all the major games. Curricular games periods begin in P5 and are compulsory through to S5, though most pupils continue with a Games option through their school career. At all stages, pupils are fully encouraged to participate in some physical or recreational activities.

PE is also available as a certificate subject at National 4 and Higher, in an examination syllabus which covers both theoretical and practical aspects. This is a great opportunity for pupils to gain academic achievement from a subject they are passionate about.

Physics

Most Physics is taught on the top floor of the Lauriston Building but we like to think that the climb is worthwhile. We teach our subject in a down-to-earth, investigative manner which demonstrates the vital role which Physics has played in shaping modern society. We place considerable emphasis upon experimental work and we use an extensive range of apparatus, hardware and software to demonstrate the vital underlying principles.

In S1 & S2, we cover a wide spectrum of topics, aimed at laying sound foundations for the certificate work ahead. Our S3 and S4 students follow the SQA Physics course, National 5. This course covers relevant topics such as Dynamics, Electricity and Waves. In S5 & S6, we guide our older students through Higher and Advanced Higher Physics with considerable success.

In addition to our courses, we encourage our pupils to enter national competitions such as the range of competitions offered by the British Physics Olympiad.

Support for Learning

Support for Learning is a whole school department committed to raising the standard of attainment of all pupils and to enabling every pupil to achieve his or her full potential. The eight experienced and well-qualified teachers work with pupils of all ages, from Nursery to Sixth Year.

The Department has rooms in the Castle Building and the Grassmarket campus. Pupils are supported in a variety of ways: direct tuition; cooperative teaching; study skills advice; providing drop-in support sessions. Alternatively, advice may be given to class or subject teachers and to parents as to the best way to provide support for specific pupils. The Support for Learning staff also take an active role in all areas of school life.

Senior Library

Aims

- to support the School curriculum
- to enable pupils to learn independently
- to encourage reading for pleasure

The library provides access to a range of resources in both print and digital formats. Desktop PCs, laptops and printing facilities are also available for pupils use.

The library subscribes to daily newspapers and a variety of journals. There is a well-stocked fiction section, with course texts, young adult fiction, as well as contemporary and classic literature. The non-fiction section includes copies of class textbooks and materials to support independent research.

The library is open before and after school, including break and lunch times. S1 pupils attend sessions on Library Skills as part of their Citizenship course. S2 pupils are introduced to the Careers resources as part of their Citizenship course. S5 pupils have information skills sessions focusing on research and referencing skills. S6 pupils have timetabled periods of study in the Library and also have the opportunity to use the University of Edinburgh Libraries.

A variety of book events are held annually including shadowing the Excelsior graphic novel award and author visits. Every year teams are selected from S1 and S2 to take part in the inter-school Kids' Lit Quiz, an annual worldwide competition which tests participants' knowledge of children's literature. Pupils can also volunteer to work in the library, helping with general library duties and the purchasing of book stock.

Sixth Year

At Heriot's, we believe that Sixth Year should build a bridge between school and, in most cases, Further/Higher Education. We are keen to encourage our pupils to develop a greater degree of personal responsibility and independence in a structured and supportive environment. The Sixth Year timetable is flexible allowing a wide variety of combinations of subjects to be studied at different levels. In addition to the academic curriculum, a number of interest courses of both an academic and practical nature are offered. Voluntary Service is a particular feature of the Sixth Year curriculum and every pupil in S6 contributes to the School, and to the wider community, choosing from a substantial range of opportunities. The Sixth Year Programme at the end of the summer term is designed to give our pupils a memorable finale to their time at school; it focuses on transition and, of course, is a celebration of the time spent together.

Careers Guidance

At Heriot's we aim to provide a careers service which combines the expertise and knowledge of the Careers Department and the various careers agencies and professionals with which we work. A student-centred approach allows us to meet individual needs and our objective is to have a steady and realistic progression to enable students to make informed decisions about subject choice, Further and Higher Education and employment. Careers education operates within the framework of the School's Guidance system and is included in the Citizenship programme across the Senior School. In addition to this all S4 pupils are enrolled in the Morrisby careers guidance scheme and we also have a work experience programme, an annual Careers Convention and all Sixth Year pupils take part in a number of workshops including self-presentation and interview skills. Through this we aim to equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to plan and manage their careers beyond school.

Pastoral Care

The pastoral care of our children and young people is central to the ethos of the School. Each year group has two guidance teachers – the Head of Year and Year teacher - who are responsible for the well-being of the children in their care. They work closely with colleagues and families to help ensure the young person flourishes. Their work is overseen by the Head of Pastoral Care who is a Depute Head Teacher. He is also the named person and child protection co-ordinator.

Pupils have formal interviews with their Guidance Teacher twice a session to check on pastoral issues and monitor their progress but regular informal contact also takes place throughout the session. The Guidance Teachers supervise a team of Class Teachers who meet their class every morning for registration and have an overview of the pupil. Class Teachers and Guidance Teachers liaise closely. The Team welcomes liaison with families about any pastoral or academic concerns.