ST BERNARD'S
HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum Guide
Graphic Communication
2026 - 27



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Curriculum Intent

At both GCSE and A-Level we follow the AQA syllabus, Art and Design: Graphic Communication. These courses enable students to experience a wide range of primarily practical based activities as well as build on their ability to build on their knowledge of other artists and designers within the graphics industry.

At St. Bernards we believe that Graphic Art is fundamental to our daily lives. Not only does Graphic Art help protect us through the information that it provides but it also enhances our lives through the creative way in which that information is presented to us and entertains us. The courses we offer allow students to express their creativity and God-given gifts through graphic media in both traditional and digital forms. Students develop their work from the initial research to the conception of the idea and making of the final outcome. They have the opportunity to create products including illustrated books, packaging, giftware and information graphics.

We also prepare students for employment in the creative sector or further study by exploring skills such as problem solving, computer-aided design, independent work, meeting deadlines and exploring briefs.

Head of Technology Faculty

Mrs S Stanborough

Head of Graphics Department

Mrs S Stanborough

Year 10

This subject can be chosen as an option for GCSE.

Firstly, in Year 10 we focus on a skills-based project which sets the foundation of expectations and key skills for Graphics. This project will be teacher led and allow students to build a repertoire of techniques that they can then use for their coursework.

Our sustained project "Gardens" gives students the opportunity to attend a trip to RHS Hyde Hall Gardens to gather primary research for their brief, and experiment with techniques to create an increasingly independently designed graphic product. Students refine their repertoire of graphics techniques, employing their strengths as they develop their final outcomes.

The "Gardens" project is worth 60% of the students overall grade.

Number of lessons per fortnight: 3

Skills developed: Research and analysis, drawing, experimenting, designing, making and evaluation. Graphics skills include: Use of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and other digital software students might want to use, hand drawn typography and illustration using Pro markers and painting techniques.

Classes: Students are taught in **mixed ability classes**

Essential equipment: 2 x A3 sketchbook for projects (which can be purchased from the school shop), pencils, pens, eraser, glue stick, ruler, sharpener, scissors, colouring pencils, a watercolour palette brushes and a selection of fine line pens.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: Students are welcome to attend Catch-up Club during lunchtime. All students attend the Hyde Hall Trip in the Spring Term.

Careers curriculum: Links are made to other contemporary and historical graphic designers, in addition to insights into the world of typography, packaging, advertising, merchandise and illustration design.

	Content studied	**Literacy focus**	**What parents can do to help**
Autumn Term	**Project 1)** • Understanding and practise using the formal elements. • How to use the One Drive, saving and printing work. • Practising experimental drawing techniques. • Exploring the design principles and shape psychology. • Developing logo ideas and a final design. • Understand typography and developing own responses. • Artist analysis on Saskia Bueno. • Development of hand drawn and digital ideas through Photoshop. • Exploring illustration work • Introduction to Adobe Illustrator. • Development of Seaside based designs.	• Basic Graphic terms for computer software and hardware. • Defining the formal elements • Subject-specific language for design theory. • Subject-specific language for Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. • Design analysis of other artists' work.	• Encourage students to complete their classwork and homework tasks to a good standard by the deadline. • Encourage students to review their subject-specific language and use it when recording their and other artists' work. • Ensure that students are using own words rather than copy and paste for any written work.

Spring Term	**Project 2) Gardens** • Mind mapping ideas. • Creating moodboards and investigating the design brief. • Analysis of brands and competitor research. • Writing own design brief. • Artist research on a technique that is relevant to the student's own design brief. • Exploration of traditional and digital media to develop ideas. • Trip to RHS Hyde Hall Gardens to gather research.	• Brand terminology. • Evaluating drawings • Analysis of other designers' work.	• Encourage students to meet deadlines. • Ensure that students attend the Hyde Hall trip to gather research for their sustained project.
Summer Term	**Sustained Project "Gardens"** **Sustained Project "Gardens"** • Presenting photography and research completed at Hyde Hall Gardens. • Observational drawing based on Hyde Hall visit. • Experimental work trialling possible media for the final outcome. • Artist research 2 on a technique that is relevant to the student's own design brief. • Creating own responses to designers' work. • Developing initial ideas for products.	• Evaluating their own work using subject-specific language. • Analysis of other designers' work. • Annotating ideas.	• Encourage students to write in their own words using the frameworks provided in the project brief and the advice given on Teams assignments. • Encourage students to complete their homework tasks to a good standard by the deadline, discussing their chosen graphic designers.

Helpful books/websites:

RHS Hyde Hall Gardens Website: https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall

Source for contemporary graphic designers: https://www.illustrationx.com/uk

Opportunities for wider reading/research:

Design Better Podcast: https://open.spotify.com/show/59RliaMdeDAkEgp9nj1Mkj

Character Design: https://www.creativebloq.com/character-design/tips-5132643

Year 11

This subject can be chosen as an option for GCSE.

In the Autumn term of Year 11 we conclude our 60% coursework grade through the completion of the "Gardens" project. At this point students will be aware of a range techniques and designer links that they can use to help design and make a final graphic outcome(s), which could include a piece of packaging, a children's book, a poster, or giftware. They will become increasingly more independent as they develop and construct this work.

After Christmas in Year 11, the Externally Set Assignment is released and students will choose a starting point from the exam paper provided by AQA. They will have approximately 10 school weeks to use their knowledge and skills to record their research, ideas, techniques and plan what they want to make in the final 10 hour exam. All preparatory work must be handed in on the first day of the exam.

Number of lessons per fortnight: 3

Skills developed: Research and analysis, drawing, experimenting, designing, making, evaluation and presentation. Graphics skills include: Use of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and other digital software students might want to use, hand drawn typography and illustration using Pro markers and painting techniques. Independence and timekeeping when working on the exam project.

Classes: Students are taught in mixed ability classes.

Essential equipment: 1 square sketchbook for the exam project (which can be purchased from the school shop), pencils, pens, eraser, glue stick, ruler, sharpener, scissors, colouring pencils, a watercolour palette, brushes and a selection of fine liner pens.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: Students are welcome to attend Catch-up Club during lunchtime.

Careers curriculum: Links are made to other contemporary and historical graphic designers, in addition to insights into the world of typography, packaging, advertising, merchandise and illustration design.

	Content studied	**Literacy focus**	**What parents can do to help**
Autumn Term	**Gardens project - continued** • Final Photoshoot to record visual elements for final piece. • Initial and developed designs related to their researched designer 1. • Experimentation with techniques of choice. • Finish a final 1st outcome. • Initial and developed designs related to their researched designer 2. • Initial set of ideas for final piece. • Initial and developed outcomes related to their researched designer 2. • Refining and making of the final outcomes. • Complete a final evaluation of outcomes.	• Label and evaluate drawings designs. • Record the process of making their outcomes. • Final evaluation of completed outcomes using specialist terminology.	• Discuss what type of final product(s) they want to make and how their designers' work will affect it. • Encourage them to reflect and refine their ideas. • Encourage them to meet the coursework deadline of 2nd January.

Spring Term	• Commence Externally Set Assignment. • Complete mind maps and mood boards. • Collect primary and secondary sources. • Observational drawing of primary/secondary sources. • Research and analyse 2 designers relevant to the question. • Develop a wide range of ideas	• Reading through and interpreting exam paper questions. • Ensuring that annotation includes analysis of other designers' work. • Ensuring that work is regularly evaluated.	• Encourage students to plan their preparatory time carefully. • Encourage students to print and present their work regularly. • Encourage students to source their own source material to draw from.
Summer Term	• Preparation for final 10 hour exam. • Complete a final outcome(s) under exam conditions.	• Write a plan for the 10 hour external exam. • Fill out all declaration sheets in preparation for the external moderators visit.	• Encourage students to be fully prepared for their 10 hour exam. • Encourage students to meet the final deadline.

Helpful books/websites:

https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall

https://www.illustrationx.com/uk

Opportunities for wider reading/research:

Graphic Design For Everyone: Understand The Building Blocks So You can Do It Yourself: By Cath Caldwell

Year 12

Year 12 commences with a skills-based project, following the theme of "Alice in Wonderland". Students build on their skills to explore a range of traditional and digital techniques. We focus on creating designs for a set of playing cards, a book cover illustration or set of stamps.

Students then devise their own brief for their Personal Investigation which is worth 60% of their overall grade, receiving guidance from their teacher as they begin to explore their own themes and build on their graphic strengths. They also write a dissertation style essay that links closely to their chosen investigation, to create a piece of extended writing between 1000-3000 words.

Number of lessons per fortnight: 5

Skills developed: Research and analysis, drawing, experimenting, designing, making, evaluation and presentation. Graphics skills include: Use of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and other digital software students might want to use, hand drawn typography, block printing and illustration using Pro markers and painting techniques.

Essential equipment: An A3 folder to carry work in. Sketchbooks as required for Projects and Personal Investigation. Pencils, pens, eraser, glue stick, ruler, sharpener, scissors, watercolour palette and brushes, colouring pencils and a selection of fine liner pens.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: We invite in visiting speakers relevant to creating portfolios. Students can mentor a younger student of Graphics during a lunchtime session to gather evidence for their CV. We encourage students to visit galleries and exhibitions relevant to their own Personal Investigation and Personal Study.

Careers curriculum: In their skills-based project students look at a selection interior design, fashion illustrators and fashion designers. In their Personal Investigation and Personal Study students choose a pathway to develop their own portfolio for further education, apprenticeship or a work-based environment and study a range of contemporary and historical designers who are relevant to their brief.

	Content studied	**Literacy focus**	**What parents can do to help**
Autumn Term	**Wonderland Project** • Retrieval work on the formal elements. • Mind mapping and mood board for the theme. • Exploration of the "Wonderland" theme through experimental drawing, printing and photography techniques. • Refining artist research skills researching a digital designer, an illustrator and a typographer. • Refining artist analysis skills. • Developing Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator skills. • Initial ideas for a Wonderland based outcome.	• Reading novels, articles and watching films to extract ideas for practical work. • Critical evaluation of own work. • Critical analysis of others work. • Annotating ideas.	• Encourage students to undertake extra- curricular reading. • Encourage students to explore careers and undergraduate qualifications in Creative Design areas using appropriate platforms such as Unifrog.
Spring Term	• Design development focusing on the formal elements. • Making of the final Wonderland outcome. • Developing mock-ups of how the product would look in situ	• Writing a brief for Personal Investigation. • Critical analysis of chosen designer's work showing depth of understanding.	• Discuss the area of Graphics and themes that students think they will explore for their Personal Investigation. • Discuss intended destinations post –sixth form

	Personal Investigation • Writing a proposal for the Personal Investigation. • Mind mapping and Mood boarding themes. • Developing a booklet of 6-10 potential designers. • Recording secondary source information relating to their personal theme. • Observational drawing from primary sources. • Designer research 1	• Collecting a range of written resources for Personal Investigation including books, articles and websites. • Critical evaluation of own work. • Critical analysis of others work.	with students to explore possibilities for a relevant Personal Investigation project. • Discuss where students could visit to obtain quality primary source information.
Summer Term	• Developing a personal response to the work of Designer 1. • Introduction to the Personal Study (1000-3000 word essay. • Designer research 2. • Experimentation with graphic media in the style of designer 2. • Designer research 3 and response. • Background research and analysis of designers' products for Personal Study. • Refining and developing research for the Personal Investigation. • Completion of analysis work for Personal Study. • Finalising their design briefs.	• Writing a successful introduction to Personal Study which clearly sets outs aims and objectives. • Selecting relevant background information about designers for the Personal Study. • Harvard Referenced bibliography for Personal Study. • Critical analysis of designers' work, referring to the formal elements.	• Encourage students to go back and improve their work in line with teacher guidance. • Encourage them to use a range of quality sources including books, exhibitions and articles for their Personal Study. • Encourage students to add to their Personal Investigation and explore this over the summer holidays.

Helpful books/websites:

Alice in Wonderland: By Lewis Carroll

Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There: By Lewis Caroll

Curiouser and curiouser exhibition at the V & A Museum - **https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/alice-curiouser-and-curiouser**

Source for contemporary graphic designers: https://www.illustrationx.com/uk

Graphic Design School: A Foundation Course for Graphic Designer Working in Print, Moving Image and Digital Media : By David Dabner.

Opportunities for wider reading/research:

The Graphics Design Bible: The definitive guide to contemporary and historical graphic design: By Theo Inglis

The History of Graphic Design.40th Edition: By Jens Müller and Julius Wiedemann

The Victoria and Albert Museum- The family of art, design and performance museums · V&A

Year 13

In the Autumn Term, Students strengthen their ability to independently research and analyse, draw, experiment, design, make and evaluate as they develop their ideas for their own Personal Investigation. They focus on refining their design ideas in order to make a quality final outcome(s), exploring their use of graphic techniques in depth. They will also produce a final presentation board, showcasing their best ideas. In addition, they complete their written Personal Study and use this to inform ideas for their practical work.

In the Spring Term, students focus on the Externally Set Assignment and students will choose a starting point from the exam paper provided by AQA. They will have approximately 8 school weeks to use their knowledge and skills to record their research, ideas, techniques and plan what they want to make in the final 15 hour exam. All preparatory work must be handed in on the first day of the exam.

Number of lessons per fortnight: 5

Skills developed: Research, analyse, draw, experiment, design, make, evaluate and presentation of their learning journey.

Essential equipment: Sketchbook required for the Externally Set Assignment. Pencils, pens, eraser, glue stick, ruler, sharpener, scissors, watercolour palette and brushes, colouring pencils and a selection of fine liner pens.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: Students can extend their workshop time by working during their free lessons in W02.

Careers curriculum: Students can prepare a portfolio for job or university interviews and receive advice from their teacher. They follow areas of study and work that align with their own preferences within the Fashion and Textile Industry.

	Content studied	**Literacy focus**	**What parents can do to help**
Autumn Term	• Develop initial ideas for final outcome. • Produce a range of more developed range of samples, maquettes and toiles in preparation for final piece. • Work on comparisons and findings section of Personal Study. • Produce a range of developed designs for final outcome(s). • Presentation of ideas and samples on design sheets. • Write conclusions of Personal Study and present with a bibliography. • Complete a final outcome(s) for the conclusion of the Personal Investigation.	• Labelling of initial ideas. • Critical evaluation of developed ideas. • Completing Personal Study essay with a fully referenced Harvard Bibliography.	• Encourage students to refer to the Assessment Objectives and consider how they might improve their practice. • Discuss student's options post-sixth form. • Encourage students to prepare a portfolio of work suitable for university or job interviews.
Spring Term	• Write a summative evaluation for the Personal Investigation. • Make any improvements to coursework to enhance grade. • Create a display board of strongest work. **Commence Externally Set Assignment** • Complete mind maps and mood boards.	• Critically evaluating end product against aims. • Critical evaluation of own drawing, samples and design work.	• Encourage students to complete their make improvements to their coursework. • Encourage students to decide on their personal aims and outcomes for their final exam quickly so that these can be fully explored in good time. • Encourage students to collect quality primary research for

	• Collect primary and secondary sources. • Observational drawing of primary/secondary sources. • Research and analyse 3 designers relevant to the question. • Develop a wide range of ideas and samples. • Refine designs in preparation for the 15 hour exam.		their Externally Set Assignment.
Summer Term	• Preparation for final 15 hour exam. • Complete a final outcome(s) under exam conditions.	• Write a plan for the 15 hour external exam. • Fill out all declaration sheets in preparation for the external moderators visit.	• Encourage students to be fully prepared for their 15 hour exam. • Encourage students to meet the final deadline.

Helpful books/websites:

Graphic Design School: A Foundation Course for Graphic Designer Working in Print, Moving Image and Digital Media: By David Dabner.

Source for contemporary graphic designers: https://www.illustrationx.com/uk

Opportunities for wider reading/research:

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