



Birkdale
School

**Sixth Form
Handbook**
2025-2026

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**



Birkdale Sixth Form

A place of learning & life, centred around you, where we can all be stronger together.

Discover what makes Birkdale Sixth Form the right place for you for today, and for whatever tomorrow brings.

Be who you want to be
– with a supportive ethos providing exceptional care and individual support throughout your Birkdale Sixth Form journey

Study the subjects that are right for you
– don't compromise on your A Levels or your future, we have an extensive choice of 28 subjects for our Sixth Form students

Part of a family that cares
– you are never on your own at Birkdale with a dedicated Sixth Form team and as an important role model to all pupils



Investment in life & the future
– we offer fee assistance and scholarships to make Birkdale Sixth Form as accessible as it can be.

Build firm foundations
– our first class, dedicated UCAS and careers support means you can achieve what you need and go where you want from our Sixth Form

Experiences that enrich
– from trips around the world you'll remember forever to memorable performances in drama, music and sport, we offer unrivalled opportunities across our Sixth Form



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Welcome to Birkdale Sixth Form

As you contemplate the prospect of entering the Sixth Form in September, you will realise that this is a highly significant and exciting moment in your school career. It is the final step en route to university or to some other form of higher education or employment; at the same time you will be occupying a position of status within the school which affords the opportunity of fulfilling an influential leadership role.

This is the stage when you can concentrate on a few subjects that you have chosen to study, while being taught in smaller groups and in a more informal style than you have experienced up to now. Students take three or four subjects to A Levels giving them the chance to focus in depth on what they need and enjoy.

You will be given more responsibility for the organisation of your time and of your work, acknowledging your increased level of maturity and preparing you for still greater independence once you have left school. The co-educational environment in itself enriches the Sixth Form experience. A wide range of extra-curricular activities offers the chance to develop skills and new interests.

The Grayson Sixth Form Centre at Birkdale incorporates working and recreational facilities to help you benefit from your two years in the Sixth Form. You will find that plenty of sound advice and support is available to you when you need it, including, of course, expert guidance when decisions have to be made (as they soon will) about the future. There will be much hard work to be done as you aim towards what may well be a challenging set of A Level grades, but I am sure that you will greatly enjoy your Sixth Form career.

We look forward to welcoming you into the Birkdale Sixth Form.

Peter Harris
Head



The Sixth Form Experience

Aims

Embarking on a Sixth Form career marks a milestone both academically and personally. New challenges lie ahead and these are accompanied by a series of privileges and responsibilities.

During the next two years, staff will encourage each Sixth Former:

1. To achieve their personal best academically.
2. To establish a clear goal for life beyond school. In most cases this will be a place in Higher Education; for some it may be an opportunity to broaden their horizons with a gap year, embark on an apprenticeship or a career in employment.
3. To develop their potential as an individual; to grow in confidence, maturity and wisdom and be better equipped to face life as an independent young adult.
4. To take, where possible, a leadership role and assist staff in the smooth running of the school.
5. To maximise their involvement in extra-curricular activities and play a part in shaping the life of the Birkdale community.

Hopes and Expectations

Sixth Formers will be expected to work hard and meet deadlines, increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning. Staff will be keen to build a new partnership with students based on a commitment to academic success and the support needed to achieve it.

Underpinning this, more open discussion is encouraged where Sixth Formers can express their opinions and views. Staff are on hand to offer advice and to listen to individual needs. A greater flexibility of approach emerges out of this relationship of mutual trust and co-operation.

Sixth Formers are key members of the Birkdale community and are expected to set an example to younger members of the school. In return, they receive a number of privileges including the facilities offered by the Sixth Form Centre in the Grayson Building.

Academically, it is expected that students entering Birkdale's Sixth Form will have achieved a minimum of 5 passes (9 to 5) at GCSE, with at least 4 at grade 6 or higher; we would expect grade 6 or higher GCSE grades in those subjects being studied to A Level. A grade 6 is required to study A Level English, whilst a grade 7 is needed for Mathematics. Prospective Further Mathematicians should achieve a grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics although a grade 8 is preferred. In addition at Birkdale we look beyond the academic and would wish applicants to become fully involved in the life of the school, offering their skills and abilities in one or more of a number of areas (eg drama, sport, music, clubs and societies, etc).



The Academic Curriculum

A Level Structure

All A Level courses are linear with all assessment being made at the end of two years of study.

Choosing a Programme of Study

The Sixth Form provides an opportunity for post-16 students to continue more of the subjects they have studied up to 16 and/or to commence some new ones. The choice of contrasting A Levels – say, English for Science students or Mathematics for Humanities students – will be of particular value in broadening the range of subjects studied. Studying complementary A Levels – Computing for Science students, for example – offers opportunities for broadening a particular area of study. A key factor in decision-making should be to play to academic strengths to ensure success at A Level.

Most Sixth Form students will study three subjects to A Level (those taking Further Mathematics will study four A Levels). Each subject is taught for eight periods per week. It is important to note that as a result of the linear course structure, and in the absence of AS examinations, students will be expected to sit an internal exam in each of their subjects at the end of the Lower Sixth year in order to demonstrate they have made sufficient progress to ensure success at A Level.

Enrichment

To complement academic study, there is a comprehensive Enrichment programme which will provide students with the chance to cover a range of skills, values and practical experience to enhance their learning and equip them for life beyond school. Across four terms from January of Lower Sixth to Easter of Upper Sixth students will be able to select courses which will help them to develop the following skills and values:

- Skills for the Future (to include: Life Skills and Creative Expression: Art History, Creative Marketing, Music Appreciation, Photography or Theatrecraft)
- Leadership/Responsibility (Sports leader, House activities, Sixth Form Committee)
- Independent Learning (Study Skills; London Research, etc)
- Citizenship (Politics/Democracy, Environmental Stewardship, Charities Work)
- Preparing for Work/Higher Education (Higher Education & Post-18 Planning/Work Experience/Gap Years, PSHE, Admissions Tests, etc)

In addition to the above, all students will be able to undertake an Extended Project Qualification to complete a piece of independent research of their own choosing, if they wish. Beyond the curriculum there is also a large number of extra-curricular opportunities for students to get involved with including Sport, Music, Drama, Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, Community Action and many more.

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Pastoral Care

Choosing the Right Course

Provisional choices of subjects will be sought in the Easter Term of the Fifth Form/Year 11, and the timetable will be constructed to accommodate subject options. Consultation with potential Sixth Formers and parents will ensure that the choice of subjects is in Sixth Formers' best interests, bearing in mind career requirements and those of university entrance. Birkdale does not have a rigid blocking system – which allows timetabling of courses tailored to the individual needs of our students.

The choice of a suitable combination of A Level subjects requires consideration of a number of points, including the following:

- **Breadth and Balance**
A mixed selection of Arts and Science subjects is often satisfying educationally. However, certain university courses require certain combinations of subjects, and guidance is available.
- **Academic Requirement**
A level study is more demanding than GCSE, therefore a minimum grade of 6 at GCSE is an important pre-requisite for study in that subject. The following subjects can be studied at A level without a prior qualification at GCSE: Business, Classical Civilisation, Computing, Design Technology: Graphics, Drama & Theatre Studies, Economics, Government & Politics, History, Psychology and Religious Studies.
- **Career Aspirations**
If you have a particular career in mind, it would be useful to research subject requirements at this stage.

Availability of A Level Subjects

The contents page contains a list of available A Level subjects. Further details of each subject are given later in this handbook.

The Sixth Form Team

Mrs Parsons as Director of Sixth Form has academic and pastoral oversight of the Sixth Form. She is supported by two Heads of Sixth Form, Mr Jones and Mr Low, who each have particular responsibility for one year group. They lead a team of fourteen experienced Form Tutors.

Form Tutor Systems

In order to provide careful counselling and guidance, students are allocated to small tutor groups under the supervision of a Form Tutor. Daily contact at registration, weekly Form meetings and regular contact in the classroom allow Tutors to establish a close relationship with tutees and to provide a programme of pastoral support. Early in the Lower Sixth emphasis is placed on study skills. During the Easter and Summer Terms Form Tutors offer guidance in applying to Higher Education. This culminates in the preparation of the first draft of their tutees' UCAS reference.

The Sixth Form leadership team support Form Tutors by seeing all members of both year groups regularly. Early in the Christmas Term of the Lower Sixth there is an opportunity for parents to meet Form Tutors and discuss a range of issues related to life in the Sixth Form.

Methods of Study and Work

The emphasis in the Sixth Form is on supported learning. By the end of the Lower Sixth students should be developing their interests within the context of their chosen A Level subjects. They should be able to identify difficulties, and work on these areas with their subject teachers. The best university students are those who have learned to ask for guidance and do their own background work.

Subject teachers will offer guidance on appropriate work for study periods and homework. Students can use the excellent study facilities within the Sixth Form Centre, the Library and subject departments, and work at home in proportions which suit their individual programmes. If work starts to slip, more guidance is given.

All Lower Sixth Formers are expected to devote a minimum of twelve hours per week to their studies, over and above any work completed in school. It is expected that Upper Sixth Formers will spend about fifteen hours per week working at home in addition to their study periods in school.

Studying Arts Subjects

Some subjects available in the Sixth Form may be new to students and will pose their own challenges; others, though more familiar, will be studied in a much more sophisticated way. An important feature of study on the Arts side is the premium placed on individual research and reading. Below the Sixth Form,

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homework is often set for a specific length of time on a particular evening. At A Level, most work is much more long-term and this requires self-discipline and organisation. It is also a useful introduction to the study techniques and exercise of initiative vital in Higher Education. Class size is smaller than in GCSE groups, giving many more opportunities to contribute to discussion and debates and ample time for detailed analysis of work produced in essays and written assignments. In most Arts subjects the willingness of Sixth Formers to undertake background reading and to think for themselves will directly affect A Level performance.

Studying Science Subjects

These are essentially experimental subjects and practical work is central to their study. This work is very time-consuming and takes up much of the allocated school time. It follows that Sixth Formers will need to study extensively at home.

As far as possible, the practical work is integrated with the theoretical studies so that students develop an insight into scientific methods of investigation and enquiry. Experimental observations lead to the development of ideas, theories and models which must then be tested by further, carefully designed experiments.

Carefully chosen texts support the courses but reading beyond these is of great importance. Well-motivated students who are prepared to work consistently hard will find the courses stimulating and enjoyable. Out of them will develop a knowledge and understanding of the subjects and an appreciation of the ways in which they are usefully applied. If a student continues to study Science in Higher Education, either as a principal or subsidiary subject, the courses will provide a sound foundation but, whether or not they undertake such further study, the courses should develop an understanding of the usefulness of scientific knowledge and processes.

Assessment and Target Setting

At approximately half-termly intervals the academic progress of each student is assessed in terms of effort and attainment, and grades are published via BirkdalePost and the Parent Portal to both parents and students. If we are concerned that a Sixth Former is experiencing difficulty with any subject, discussions will be arranged with subject teachers, the student and parents in order to remedy the situation.

Following the publication of November grades for the Lower Sixth, target setting is introduced the setting of challenging yet achievable long and short term academic targets. The long term target is given in terms of a range of aspirational A Level grades, and short term targets are set by subject teachers to correct areas of weakness. Regular half-termly interviews with the Form Tutor or Director of Sixth Form allow

consistent monitoring of targets, and provide an opportunity to set new targets when appropriate. We expect students to take increasing responsibility for their own academic progress.

Internal examinations take place in the Summer Term of the Lower Sixth. The results of these exams will be used by subject teachers to assist them in estimating likely A Level grades for university applications. Follow up for parents takes place at a parents evening when any difficulties can be discussed.

Mock examinations take place in the Easter Term of the Upper Sixth followed by a parents evening to assist parents and students to focus on progress in the context of university offers.

Planning for Higher Education and Careers

From the age of 14 students at Birkdale receive group tuition and individual counselling to enable them to make informed option choices and post-GCSE decisions with smooth transitions at both stages.

At Sixth Form level careers guidance becomes even more personalised. The students have access at all times to the Careers/ICT facilities in the Grayson building, which include a selection of reference books and university prospectuses. They may also use the careers guidance programmes. Individual counselling and advice are available from the Head of Careers, Form Tutors, Head of Year and Mrs Parsons who co-ordinates and oversees the UCAS/HE process.

In the Lower Sixth students have to make important decisions about their future. At a time of increasing competition for entry to both Higher Education and employment, all options have to be carefully researched and applications have to be planned ready to be put into action by the beginning of the Upper Sixth year. To assist them in their final choices there is a well-defined sequence of events.

1. Work experience, which students are encouraged to undertake in either the Christmas, Easter or Summer holidays, gives insight into possible career choice.
2. All students complete a UCAS/Higher Education planning sheet at the end of the Christmas Term to help them identify university courses that reflect their academic interests and academic grades if they are unsure about which course to study. Further follow-up is available through the MyUniChoices scheme, which students may opt to take.
3. There is a biennial Careers Convention held in the Easter Term, where students have the opportunity to meet representatives from approximately 75 professions and universities.
4. An evening for parents to learn about the UCAS procedures at Birkdale will be offered early in the Summer Term.
5. During the Summer Term, Sixth Formers are encouraged to organise their own visits to open days within the parameters laid down by the school. Visits are arranged annually to Oxford, Cambridge and one additional Russell Group university.

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6. Mock UCAS forms are completed by students towards the end of the Summer Term. A UCAS day, when the teaching timetable is suspended, is held to support students in this process.
7. Towards the end of the Summer Term students and parents are invited to attend a parents evening to discuss academic performance in the context of Higher Education plans.
8. Final decisions on choice of courses and institutions are made at the beginning of the Upper Sixth year, after counselling from Form Tutors under the leadership of Mrs Parsons.
9. Instruction on interview techniques and mock interviews are given from October onwards to members of the Upper Sixth.

These events are complemented by talks from visiting speakers. Topics include choosing a university course, student life in Higher Education, admissions policies, sponsorship and scholarships, student grants and gap years.

The Wider Curriculum

Sixth Form Facilities

The Sixth Form Centre in the Grayson Building offers students the opportunity to work and relax in their own accommodation. There is ample space for private study in specially designated study areas, many of which are well-equipped with computers linked to the school network. Every Sixth Former has a locker for books and personal equipment.

There are two large and several smaller common rooms which can be used for socialising during breaks or for more formal meetings; a pool table is available together with a variety of refreshments. There is a well-equipped kitchen with microwave and toaster. The Sixth Form Committee also runs a tuck shop at break, and uses the income generated to upgrade these facilities. Elections for the Committee, which is made up of members from both the Upper and Lower Sixth, are conducted each November and June.

Getting Involved

There is a huge range of opportunities available for Sixth Formers to develop themselves as individuals. Learning to handle responsibility, organise others or cope under pressure in unfamiliar circumstances are all part of the broader Sixth Form education. Whether for personal satisfaction or to create the right impression with university admissions tutors, students should be looking to participate in a range of activities outside academic lessons.

Personal Development

In order to support this process of personal development, a training course is run over two days in the Christmas Term of the Lower Sixth at the Outdoor Activity Centre in Edale. Led by the Sixth Form team, Form Tutors and other staff, the aim of the course is to introduce Sixth Formers to the skills and processes of being both a team member and a team leader. Very demanding but also highly enjoyable, students discover their strengths and weaknesses through a series of physical activities, games, exercises and command tasks.

House System

Many Sixth Formers find the house system the ideal forum in which to show initiative and make decisions which affect those around them. While this can appear daunting at first, most students soon learn that it can be good fun to help and to organise others. House Prefects are appointed by House Masters in recognition of their personal and managerial skills in contributing to house events.

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Prefects

Sixth Formers who demonstrate leadership potential during their Lower Sixth year can look forward to promotion as Prefects at school level. The team of Prefects is led by the Head of School who is usually supported by a Deputy. These appointments are made by the Head following consultation with House Masters, Heads of Sixth Form, teaching staff and Form Tutors. The school would not run as efficiently without Prefect help and the post of Prefect has acquired considerable status as a result. In recognition of this, Prefects are invited on a further training course with Senior staff.

Community Action

As part of the Sixth Form Enrichment programme there is an opportunity to be involved in various types of voluntary work within the community. This will take place during a block of study time or after school, if preferred. From the Summer Term of the Lower Sixth, it is possible to pursue Community Action in place of Games on a Wednesday afternoon.

Skills and opportunities:

1. To work with and help people from various disadvantaged groups
2. To witness unfamiliar situations and to share in other people's experiences
3. To work alongside other volunteers as part of a team
4. To gain insight into social work, charities and voluntary organisations
5. To develop personal qualities and skills

What are the options?

- Working in day centres for children and families experiencing severe stress
- Working in drop-in centres for the homeless
- Helping young adults or children with learning difficulties
- Providing relief care for elderly people
- Befriending hospital patients and performing tasks on the wards such as serving meals
- Nature conservation
- Animal Welfare
- Homework clubs
- Charity shops

Those choosing this option will be expected to be committed, punctual, reliable, caring and willing to help wherever needed. Mrs Hidden will monitor the programme, offering help in arranging placements; liaising between school and the voluntary agencies and keeping a report of each Sixth Former's progress.

The benefits:

Motivated as many are by UCAS forms, Community Action looks good on university applications. This is especially true for those thinking about careers in medicine, law, social work, business and any other career that is 'people'-based.

Why not use some of the free time available in the Sixth Form to help other people out?

There is a real need for volunteers and it is possible to make a real impact in people's lives with relatively little effort.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a highly regarded scheme as it encourages young people to maintain a breadth of interests as well as involving them in some form of service in the community.

To qualify for the award, an expedition has to be undertaken as well as three other sections to be completed: Skills, Physical Recreation and Service. Further details can be found on the website www.dofe.org regarding the range of activities and requirements for these sections.

You may wish to note that it is not essential to have completed either the Bronze or Silver Award in order to undertake the Gold Award as long as the participant is at least 16 years of age and has received the necessary training to undertake such an expedition. Many of the students who have been at Birkdale in the Middle School have taken part in the Bronze and Silver expedition parts of the scheme through a programme of outdoor activities and camps. However, whatever the prior experience of walking expeditions may be, students will be given training in map and compass skills, route-planning and cooking. In addition, there is a day's training in the Peak District in the Easter Term for students to put these skills into practice with their expedition group. The practice Gold expedition usually takes place in July in the Lake District.

Sixth Form Games

Games in the Sixth Form is compulsory for all students. It takes place on a Wednesday afternoon and allows students the option to choose from a range of physical activities. Within the Sixth Form Games programme, students can choose from both participation and performance-based activities across three terms.

Depending on the term, students will have the opportunity to choose from the following individual and team sports: Rugby Union, Rugby 7s, Netball, Football, Hockey, Badminton, Cricket, Tennis, Table Tennis, School Gym, Climbing, Cross Country and Multi-Sports.

As well as using our own facilities (Castle Dyke playing fields, Sports Hall and Gym), we regularly use other facilities across the city to accommodate different sporting provision. Some of the facilities include the EIS, Abbeydale Sports Club, Abbeydale Tennis Club, Concord Sports Centre and Springs Leisure Centre.

An extra-curricular sports programme is also available to the Sixth Form and is viewed as an important extension of the Department's Games programme. A range of before-school, lunchtime and after-school activities is provided as well as team practices, in many of the sports included in the Games programme. The School has a proud history of competition where fixtures play a prominent role in the Sixth Form. Students represent the school against independent and state schools in regular midweek fixtures as well as a variety of competitions in Rugby Union, Rugby 7s, Netball, Football, Cricket, Tennis, Badminton, Table Tennis, Athletics, Hockey, Golf and Basketball. Saturday morning fixtures also feature for Football in the Easter term.

Inter-House competitions are held for all of the major school sports and students are expected to play a full and active part in representing their Houses. Students will also get the chance to represent their House in the annual Swimming Gala and Sports Day.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There are many more activities on offer besides those mentioned above. A comprehensive list of activities is made available at the start of each term on the school portal indicating when activities take place. University Admissions Tutors and employers are looking for people who can manage their time effectively, balancing their academic work with other commitments. The Sixth Form offers a chance to get involved in something different, either as a participant or a leader.

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How to Apply

Birkdale's Sixth Form comprises about 100 students in each of the two year groups. Places are therefore limited. The application procedure for students new to the school and for students already studying at Birkdale, whilst similar, differs in some important respects. Both procedures are outlined below.

ENTRANCE PROCEDURE FOR NEW STUDENTS

Whenever a potential applicant expresses an interest in coming to Birkdale Sixth Form, a pack of information is provided in the first instance. Attendance at the open evening is then highly recommended to find out more. A visit at another time can also be arranged on request. To apply, parents should complete the online registration form and students should complete the online Sixth Form application form. These forms can be found in the Admissions section on the School website. A copy of the student's birth certificate should be sent to the Registrar and a £50 registration fee payment is payable (details of how to pay can be found on the online form).

Additional forms are required for scholarship and bursary applications and these are available to download in the Admissions section on the School website.

Please note the following key stages of the admissions process for students new to Birkdale applying for Sixth Form entry:

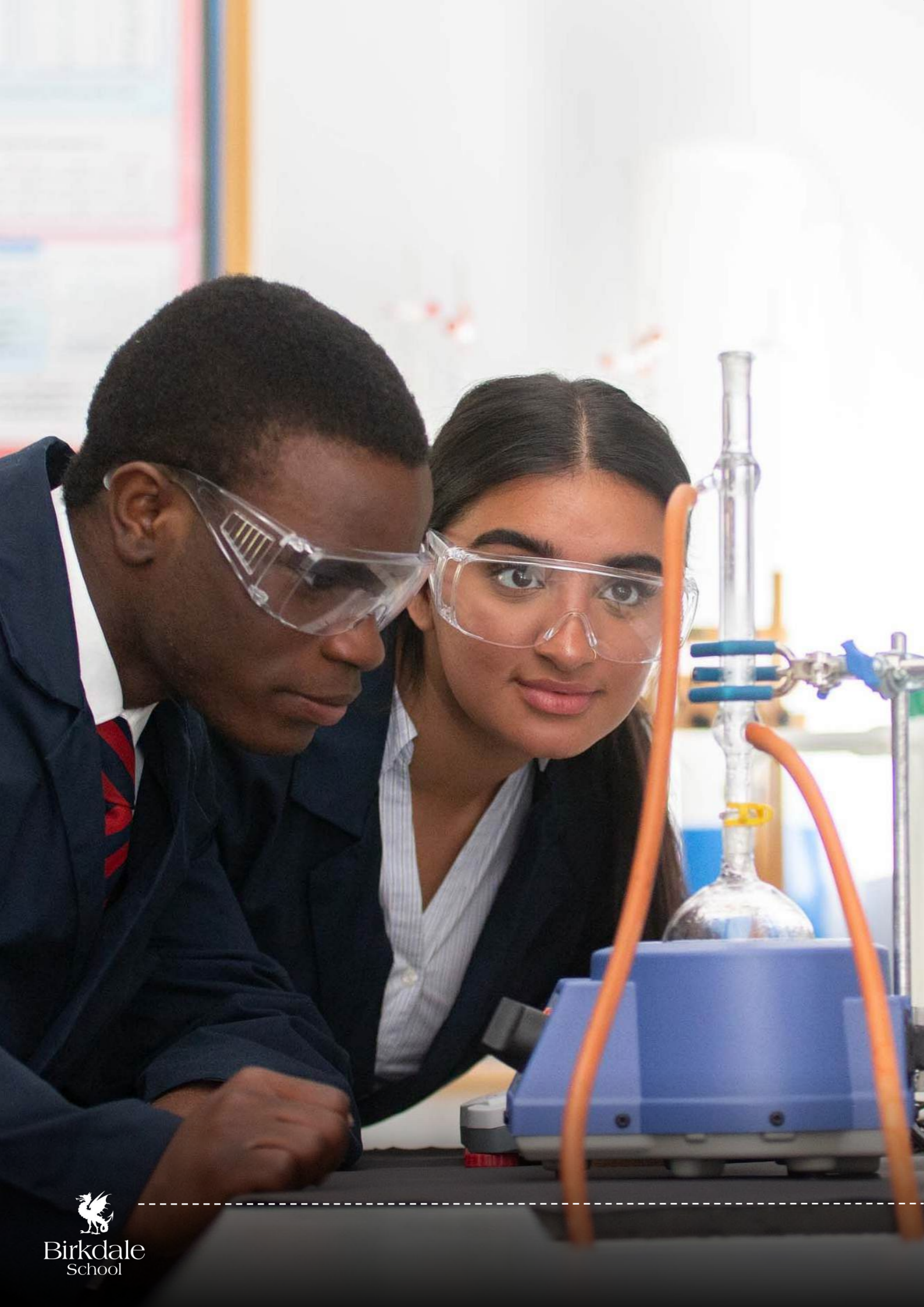
- **Open Evening – Thursday 17 October 2024**
An opportunity for families to see the facilities available to Sixth Form students and to gain a taste of what A Level study is like in subjects in which they are interested.
- **Application deadline for all Scholarship and Bursary applications – Friday 6 December 2024**
- **Academic Scholarships and Bursary Examinations – Saturday 18 January 2025**
Birkdale offers a number of scholarships for academically able students. A limited amount of means-tested bursary funding is available to enable students who would benefit from being members of Birkdale's Sixth Form but who would otherwise be prevented on financial grounds. Music and Sports scholarships are also available. Further details for all scholarships and bursaries can be found in the Admissions section on the School website.
- **Taster Day – Tuesday 4 March 2025**
The Taster Day is a great opportunity to experience what life at Birkdale is like by attending lessons and chatting with current Sixth Formers. Attendance is highly recommended.

- **Application deadline – Friday 14 March 2025**
Application by this date means that an applicant's subject preferences can be included in our option blocking process. We are able to consider applications received beyond this date, subject to being able to accommodate an applicant for their chosen subjects.
- **Interviews**
Scholarship and bursary candidates will have an interview as part of the assessment process. Other applicants will have an informal interview at a mutually convenient time. This may be as part of a visit or during Taster Day.
- **Option of further discussion of A Level subject choices**
The Director and Heads of Sixth Form are available to help students refine their choices of A Level subjects.
- **Sixth Form Induction Course – 7 to 9 July 2025**
Not to be missed! See next page for details.
- **Post GCSE Interviews – August 2025**
See next page for details.

ENTRANCE PROCEDURE FOR CURRENT S5 STUDENTS

- **Sixth Form Handbook – October 2024**
Sessions are organised in form periods to issue the handbook, explain how to make the most of open evening and to introduce some of the subjects offered at A Level that were unavailable at GCSE.
- **Open Evening – Thursday 17 October 2024**
An opportunity for families to see the facilities available to Sixth Form students and to gain a taste of what A Level study is like in subjects in which they are interested.
- **Application deadline for all scholarship and bursary applications – Friday 6 December 2024**
Please see Admissions section on School website for further information and application forms.
- **Straw Poll of likely A Level subjects – January 2025**
A first opportunity to indicate A Level subject choices.

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- **Scholarship Examination Day – Saturday 18 January 2025**

- **Sixth Form Interviews – February/March 2025**

Each S5 student has an interview with a member of Senior Staff to further refine A Level subject choices in the light of mock examination results and career ideas. Following this, details of each student's A Level choices are communicated by Birkdale Post to parents who are invited to contact the Deputy Head (Academic) should they have any queries.

- **Sixth Form Induction Course – 7 to 9 July 2025**

See below for details.

- **Post GCSE Interviews – August 2025**

See below for details.

Sixth Form Induction Course

All students who are intending to join Birkdale's Sixth Form are required to attend an induction course at the end of the Summer Term. The programme has been developed to give students an opportunity to sample life in the Sixth Form, and to spend some time investigating the courses which have been chosen for A Level.

- A Level classes give a flavour of the way subjects develop beyond GCSE. Some teachers suggest background reading matter to prepare for a crisp start in September. Others encourage serious thought about coursework.
- There are further opportunities for one-to-one guidance on A Level subject choice.
- There is time to learn about the Community Action initiative and a variety of clubs and societies.
- Also included in the programme is information about Higher Education and Sixth Form life.

The induction course provides a valuable introduction to the Birkdale Sixth Form. Participants appreciate the opportunity to get to know their new peers before the start of the Christmas Term.

Post GCSE Interviews – The Final Choice

Interviews with Senior Staff are arranged after the publication of GCSE results. These interviews allow final discussion of the subjects to be studied. Subject to timetabling and number constraints, changes to subject choice are still possible at this late stage.

Details of A Level Courses

A LEVEL COURSES

ART AND DESIGN (AQA Fine Art 7202)

Course Overview

It is anticipated that those studying Art at A level should have a higher level of motivation, and a keen interest in the work of other artists and designers. The ability to handle and manipulate materials in a confident and fluent manner is essential.

For those wishing to embark on a career as an artist, designer or architect A Level Art would be a necessary choice. However imagine the would-be medic asked to discuss a current Science and Art exhibition at their Oxford interview and feeling glad that they had taken Art as their fourth option. Imagine the prospective engineer who was told at their Cambridge interview that it was a real bonus that they were able to draw, and you will begin to see how Art is useful in all kinds of spheres – the dentist who is a skilled craftsman and can match different shades of white is obviously at an advantage.

Think of your favourite film, remember that the director and those employed in its making probably found their way into cinema via Art school.

Lower Sixth Art

Project:

A portfolio unit of course work. Various studies and explorations of ideas using different artists and materials to generate ideas.

Component 1:

After the internal exams in the summer term the students will embark on the first component of the A level and begin to explore ideas for their chosen area of investigation.

Upper Sixth Art

Component 1 continued:

Personal investigation – (Internally assessed and externally moderated; 60% of A Level)

This is based on an idea, issue, concept or theme supported by a 1000–3000 word written piece of work.

Component 2:

Externally set assignment – (Internally assessed and externally moderated; 40% of A Level)

This is a project based on one of eight starting points set by AQA. Students produce a clearly defined selection of work which will lead to a finished piece or pieces.

Links to other subjects

A common combination of A Level courses is Art, Maths and Physics or Art, Geography and Physics.

Links to HE courses and beyond

Many of our students go on to do Art related degrees such as Architecture and Landscape Architecture whilst others will go on to study Art on a foundation course either locally or attached to a degree course elsewhere within the UK.

Student views on the course

Please see the Sixth Form Art video on the school website to hear students' opinions on the course and the department.

BIOLOGY (AQA 7402)

Course Overview

The GCE specification is designed to follow on from GCSE trilogy science or from GCSE biology as a separate science. Our objective in biology is to develop a student's interest in the many different fields of biology, whilst ensuring they appreciate how biological research is carried out.

We also consider the ethical dilemmas often involved in the advancement of biological diagnoses, treatment and technology. The course provides foundations for further study in biological sciences and medicine whilst developing relevant practical skills. To this end, 12 required practical tasks are assessed across the two-year course.

A Level Biology – Assessment by three written examination papers:

Paper 1: 7402/1 – Written examination paper (2 hours – 35% of A Level)

This paper consists of 76 marks of short and long answer questions, followed by 15 marks of extended response questions. The topics examined are biological molecules, cells, exchange of substances, and genetic diversity and relationships. This paper also assesses relevant practical skills from required practical tasks 1-6.

Paper 2: 7402/2 – Written examination paper (2 hours – 35% of A Level)

This paper consists of 76 marks of short and long answer questions, followed by a short 15-mark section of comprehension questions. The topics covered are as follows; energy transfers, responding to the environment, genetics, populations, evolution, ecosystems and control of gene expression. This paper also assesses relevant practical skills from required practical tasks 7-12.

Paper 3: Written examination paper (2 hours – 30% of A Level)

The paper contains 38 marks of structured questions based on practical techniques, a short 15-mark section on critical analysis of experimental data and a final 25-mark section where one essay is chosen from a choice of two titles. All 12 required practical tasks can be assessed on this paper.

Links to other subjects

Biology at A Level compliments other science courses and can be combined with mathematics and chemistry for those wishing to pursue careers in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science. It can also complement psychology and geography or be undertaken simply for the love of the subject.

Links to HE courses and beyond

A good grade in A Level Biology is well thought of by university admissions tutors and is useful for those students who wish to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary sciences. Biology A Level provides students with many transferable skills including data processing and high levels of literacy and numeracy.

BUSINESS (Edexcel 9BS0)

Course Overview

The Business course focuses on the objectives and different functions of business, e.g. marketing, accounting and finance, operations and human resources, along with the challenges facing business from the wider competitive environment. Those who study Business will inevitably meet some areas of Economics because all businesses are affected by what happens in the national and global economy.

You will be introduced to the challenges and issues of starting a business, including financial planning. The key internal functions of businesses are then explored along with how the management of these functions can assist in improving the effectiveness and performance of a business. Finally, you will examine business strategy and how businesses might best respond to change in today's fast moving commercial environment, both domestically and internationally.

The A Level course comprises three papers:

Paper 1: Marketing, people and global businesses (Written exam: 2hrs, 35% of A Level)

Meeting customer needs, the market, marketing mix and strategy, managing people, entrepreneurs and leaders, globalisation, global markets and business expansion, global marketing, global industries and companies (multinational corporations). Questions will cover local, national and global contexts.

Paper 2: Business activities, decisions and strategy (Written exam: 2hrs, 35% of A Level)

Raising finance, financial planning, managing finance, resource management, external influences, business objectives and strategy, business growth, decision-making techniques, influences on business decisions, assessing competitiveness, managing change. Questions will cover local, national and global contexts.

Paper 3: Investigating business in a competitive environment (Written exam: 2hrs, 30% of A Level)

Based on a pre-released context, usually a specific industry or individual market. Questions will cover the content already covered in Papers 1 and 2.

Links to other subjects

Business is closely related to Economics and has particular links to Mathematics, Psychology, Geography and Design & Technology.

Links to HE courses and beyond

An A Level in Business would be considered valuable preparation for degree level study in the fields of Business Management, Accountancy and Finance, Marketing, Corporate Law, Economics and Quantity Surveying, whilst providing a solid foundation for any student looking to run their own, or somebody else's, business.

CHEMISTRY (AQA 7405)

Course Overview

The GCE specification in Chemistry has been tailored to follow on from GCSE Trilogy Science or GCSE Chemistry as a separate science. It will develop a student's knowledge and understanding whilst providing a pathway to further study in Higher Education. Our objective is to develop a student's interest for the subject, including an interest in further study and careers in Chemistry, to appreciate how society makes decisions about scientific issues and to develop a deeper appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of How Science Works. There is some practical assessment in the form of twelve required practicals which take place as part of the normal teaching. Practical work is not limited to these as we are devoted to ensuring the practical skills required to be a successful chemist.

A Level Chemistry – Assessment by three written papers:

Paper 1: 7405/1 (Written Paper 2 hours 35% A Level)

This paper consists of a mixture of short and long answer questions (105 marks) and is a 2 hour paper. It accounts for 35% of the A Level Chemistry qualification. Topics examined include Inorganic Chemistry with relevant Physical Chemistry and Practical Skills.

Paper 2: 7405/2 (Written Paper 2 hours 35% A Level)

This paper consists of a mixture of short and long answer questions (105 marks) and is a 2 hour paper. It accounts for 35% of the A Level Chemistry qualification. Topics examined include Organic Chemistry with relevant Physical Chemistry and Practical Skills.

Paper 3: 7405/3 (Written Paper 2 hours 30% A Level)

This paper consists of questions on practical techniques and data analysis (40 marks) with further questions based on topics from across the specification (20 marks). There is a further multiple choice section (30 marks). This paper accounts for 30% of the A Level Chemistry qualification.

Links to other subjects

Chemistry at GCE level complements courses in Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Geography. It can also be studied simply for the love of the subject.

Links to HE courses and beyond

A good grade in Advanced Level Chemistry is well regarded by University admissions tutors and is essential for anyone wishing to study medicine at University. It is recognised that the subject still demands the ability to engage in analytical thinking as well as demanding high levels of literacy and numeracy.

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION (OCR H408)

The course is open to everyone. You do not need to have studied any Classics before and all texts and materials are in English. Perhaps you loved **Greek myths** when you were younger, or are interested in **ancient history** (why is it we are doomed to repeat our mistakes?). It is a very **varied** course, perfect if you have wide ranging interests or can't bear to choose between subjects. In what other subject do you get to look at literature, history, theatre, art, philosophy, politics and *more?*

Classical Civilisation is the **study of the ancient Mediterranean**, with a focus on ancient **Greece and Rome**. You study **three modules** over two years to develop a balanced understanding of **the past** and how it **still affects our world today**.

The World of the Hero

In this unit we read some of the western world's earliest and most influential literature and explore what it is to be a hero in the face of very different challenges.

The *Odyssey* is about Odysseus' struggles to get home to his wife and son, sometimes helped by the gods and sometimes hopelessly at their mercy. He encounters gods and heroes, men and monsters – and when he does get home, more trouble lies ahead. The *Aeneid* tells the story of Aeneas, mythical ancestor of the Romans, as he flees from the burning ruins of Troy to found a new city in Italy. Along the way he has a doomed love affair with Dido, queen of Carthage, visits the underworld and has to fight for his very survival.

World of the Hero is taught over two years, with a year on each text.

Greek Theatre

Trace the history of Western theatre all the way back to its roots in ancient Athens and discover how and why these performances became such a vital part of civic life. Why did **Aristotle** believe that the role of drama was to excite **pity and fear** from its audience, thus cleansing themselves from negative emotions – and how was this achieved? This unit looks at material evidence as well as several ancient Greek plays in translation – namely, the terrifying downfall of Oedipus, the fear of the unknown (What are those women really getting up to in the woods? And who is this handsome stranger?) in the Bacchae and the absurdist humour of the Frogs, which arguably features Western literature's first poetry battle.

Politics of the Late Republic

By the first century BC **Rome was in crisis and civil war was a near constant threat**. But how did men like Sulla and Julius Caesar take power? Why was slave labour a decisive factor in bringing down the most powerful nation in the world? Which political murder involved a particularly gruesome example of attempted fraud? **In order for the emperors to rise, the republic first had to fall**. In this unit, find out about the final years of Republican Rome and the political structures that could no longer manage its bulk or contain the ambition of its people.

By studying Classical Civilisation you will gain a wide range of skills, such as:

- **Critical analysis** of texts and sources
- Confidence **developing your own ideas and challenging sources**
- Using **evidence** to support your work effectively
- A **broad understanding of myth and ancient history**, ideal for interpreting Shakespeare or confronting the past
- The ability to amuse and entertain with a range of **interesting, weird, and often disgusting facts, tales and anecdotes** from the ancient world

COMPUTER SCIENCE (OCR H446)

Computer Science is not the same as ICT! At the heart of Computer Science is the development of computational thinking, helping learners to develop the skills to solve problems, design systems and understand the power and limits of human and machine intelligence. The subject is practical – learners will apply classroom learning to real-world systems and write and test significant amounts of code. The subject is creative – learners will blend ideas and methods to create inventive solutions to problems. The subject is academic – learners must apply high level powers of analysis, evaluation and decision-making to produce elegant and accurate results. Throughout this course there will be an emphasis on problem solving using computers, computer programming and algorithms, and the mathematical skills such as Boolean algebra used to express computational laws and processes.

A Level lessons are delivered using practical, hands-on methods where possible. Programming is not taught in isolation – it is applied to produce solutions that illuminate and clarify other aspects of theory relevant to the course. Students will be exposed to several programming paradigms and languages – they will also be encouraged to explore additional options through self-study. No prior experience of Computing is required, although we would expect students to have achieved at least a grade B in Mathematics at GCSE level. However, a passion for computing is much more important and we would be delighted to consider any student who is fascinated by computer technology and is willing to work hard and try their very best.

A Level Computer Science

Paper 1: Computer Systems (Written paper 2 ½ hours – 40% of A Level)

This component contains the majority of the content of the qualification and is assessed in a written paper recalling knowledge and understanding. *Topics of Study include:* Components of a computer and their uses; Software and software development; How data is exchanged between different systems; How data is represented and stored within different structures; Different algorithms that can be applied to these structures; The individual (moral), social (ethical) and cultural opportunities and risks of digital technology; Legislation surrounding the use of computers and ethical issues that can or may in the future arise from the use of computers.

Paper 2: Algorithms and Programming (Written paper 2 ½ hours – 40% of A Level)

This component relates principally to problem solving skills needed by learners to apply the knowledge and understanding gained in the first component. *Topics of Study include:* Understand what is meant by computational thinking; How computers can be used to solve problems and programs can be written to solve them; The use of algorithms to describe problems and standard algorithms.

Component 3: Programming Project (Non-exam teacher assessment – 20% of A Level)

The project is a substantial piece of work which assesses a variety of different skills including the development and demonstration of computational thought processes. Learners will need to choose, in liaison with their teacher, a well-defined user driven problem. The choice of project must enable learners to: meet all assessment requirements as contained in the specification; use an appropriate programming language which is non-trivial and has a substantial coded element; solve a problem sensibly within the constraints of resources available; facilitate the successful completion of a whole task from its definition to its acceptance and evaluation by that user. The project will be submitted in the form of a report that will contain the solution to the chosen task. *Please note:* Mathematical skills are embedded throughout the content of the three components. They will be assessed in the written papers and through the non-examined assessment where appropriate.

Links to HE courses and beyond

Computer Science, Software Engineering, Programming, IT, Computer Game Design, Creative Media, Data Analysis, Artificial Intelligence, Communications Infrastructure, Robotics, Cybersecurity.

Computing is increasingly a part of the fabric of everyday life and highly relevant to further education and employment. Moreover, it teaches an analytical approach to problem-solving that has applications in many unrelated areas of interest. Students leave the course equipped with skills and ideas that will help them navigate our rapidly changing world. Some will go on to use programming in later life while others will use the many branches of Computational Thinking studied, allowing them to tackle new problems with confidence.

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DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Product Design – Edexcel 9DT0**
- **Design Engineering – OCR H404**

“Design is not just about how something looks – it is about how something works. It is vital that we work towards developing products that work better and last longer. Young people should be encouraged to be creative and make things”. James Dyson

- **Design and Technology – Product Design (with a resistant materials pathway on coursework)**
- **Design and Technology – Product Design (with a graphics pathway on coursework)**
- **Design and Technology – Design Engineering**

Coursework is now 50% of the qualification, and 50% examination, reflecting an increased focus on examined content but still enabling students to design, make and evaluate creative products.

Maths and science content is included within all courses.

Product Design (Resistant Materials Pathway) Design & Make coursework activity – 50%
Written Examination – 50%

Product Design (Graphics Pathway) Design & Make coursework activity – 50%
Written Examination – 50%

Design Engineering Design & Make coursework activity – 50%
Written Examination – 50%

All three Design and Technology courses listed above consist of a common core of study concerned with product design and analysis, plus a substantial amount of time spent studying their chosen specialist area in which they produce a coursework project in the final year. The format of these projects is outlined below, as are various examples of projects for each of the three areas. The courses are student-centered with the student very much in-charge of his/her learning.

Students will have to be self-motivated and able to work well collaboratively, as well as independently. It is helpful, but not essential, to have followed a Design subject at GCSE, with the exception of Design Engineering where previous experience is usually expected.

The school is regularly commended nationally for the high levels it achieves with both the practical and design folder elements of these courses.

Students will learn how to apply knowledge and understanding of a wide range of materials; including modern and smart materials, and processes used in product design and manufacture.

They will learn how to develop an understanding of contemporary industrial and commercial practices applied to designing and manufacturing products, and to appreciate the risks involved.

Students will be taught a good working knowledge of health and safety procedures and relevant legislation.

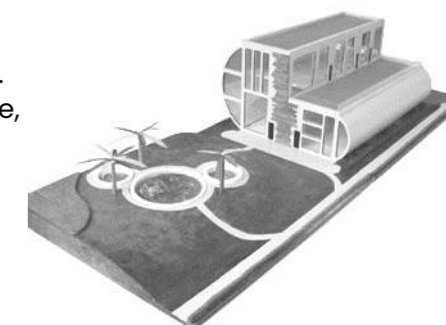
Students will be taught the importance of key historic movements and the impact key figures have on modern design thinking and how designers from the past provide inspiration for present and future designing.

It is increasingly important that students develop an awareness of wider issues in design and technology, that design and technological activities can have a profound impact on the environment and on society and that these, together with sustainability, are key features of design and manufacturing practice.

Mathematical and scientific principles are an important part of designing and developing products and students will be expected to apply these principles when considering the designs of others.

Design and Technology ~ Product Design: with a graphics pathway ~

Project work can be made full size or modelled to an appropriate scale. For instance, an adventure playground or a loft conversion as seen here, could be designed for a particular client and then modelled in specific materials and to an appropriate scale; typically the type of models an architect may produce. The course teaches the use of ‘Adobe InDesign 5.5’, ‘Photoshop’ and Solid Works software, and students use these software packages extensively in the creation of their design folder.



Design and Technology ~ Product Design: with a Resistant Materials pathway ~



Students gain much satisfaction and a real sense of achievement from this area. They identify a need and then make a fully working prototype utilising a range of appropriate materials within the same project. An example of this type of project is the ‘PortaBar’ pictured left, which uses aluminium, steel, nylon, ABS and foam. Victoria, who came to us with very little D+T experience, designed and made a portable lightweight ‘ballet bar’. Students gain first-hand experience of a variety of materials and skills from welding to casting, screw cutting to CAM work. There are many more examples of projects to view on the website.

The course teaches the use of ‘Adobe InDesign 5.5’, ‘Photoshop’ and ‘Solid Works’ software to produce the design folder, which must accompany their practical work.

Design and Technology ~ Design Engineering ~ is focused towards engineered and electronic products and systems; the analysis of these in respect of function, operation, components and materials, in order to understand their application and uses in engineered products/systems that have commercial viability.

The subject content of this component is focused towards electronics, engineered products and systems and their analysis in respect of:

- materials and components, and their selection and uses in products/systems
- Wider issues affecting design decisions.
- programmable micro controllers
- mechanisms
- pneumatics



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DRAMA AND THEATRE (Edexcel 9DR0)

It is essential that materials, components and systems are studied from the perspective of analysing modern engineered products. Learners should gain practical experience of using materials, components and systems and, where possible, the content which follows should be learned through applied practical activities, set within realistic design scenarios.

The aim of the component is to give learners a framework for analysing existing products/systems that enables them to make considered selections of appropriate materials, components, systems and manufacturing processes when designing. Students will design and make a prototype as part of the coursework module, using a range of mechanisms, electronics or computer control to investigate an area within engineering they find interesting.

Learners are also required to demonstrate their mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills in the exam that are applied to design and technology practice. The level of mathematical and scientific knowledge within this qualification should be equivalent to higher tier GCSE (9–1) learning. For learners in Design Engineering, there is an additional 10% mathematical requirement than the other endorsed titles. This extra 10% covers the specific mathematical skills associated with scientific formulae.

Links to other subjects

All three Design and Technology areas have strong links with Physics, Maths, Art and General Studies, utilising the skills learnt in these four subject areas in everyday design projects. However, D&T is in fact suitable for any student with a keen interest, regardless of other subjects being studied, and students often come from a wide variety of subject backgrounds and expertise.

Links to HE courses and careers

It is one of the very few subject areas that bridges the gap between Science and Arts subjects and, as such, this allows students greater flexibility of choice when entering higher education or the job market. Students having taken D&T at A Level have in the past moved on to careers such as architect, civil engineer, mechanical engineer, software engineer, aeronautical engineer, marine engineer, control systems engineer, product designer, airline pilot, armed forces officers, teaching, the police force, and many more fulfilling professions.

This is an A Level which comprises practical work, set plays, the study of theatre practitioners and work on live theatre productions. It requires a willingness to work as part of a team, good communication skills and an ability to think creatively. It is a challenging and demanding discipline both intellectually and artistically. Drama and Theatre is an academic subject.

Content and Assessment Overview

Component 1: Devising (40 %) (Internally assessed)

Students devise an original performance piece using one key extract from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli. They must produce a written portfolio of between 2500–3000 words and the devised performance/ design realisation.

Creating a devised performance, includes:

- exploring an extract from a text in light of a practitioner
- using this exploration to create ideas for a devised piece
- working collaboratively to develop these ideas
- analysing and evaluating the development process and your contribution to it
- analysing and evaluating your performance
- recording this process in a portfolio

Component 2: Text in Performance (20%) (Externally assessed by visiting examiner)

Students present a group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a performance text and a monologue or duologue performance from a key extract from a different performance text.

Taking part in two extract performances from two different texts, one a monologue or duologue and the other a group piece, includes:

- developing performance and/or design skills
- understanding the context of the extracts within the text
- articulating your intention for the character you are performing or the design you have created
- communicating your intention through performance

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (40%) (Externally assessed)

Students will sit a 2 hour 30 minute exam. This will ask students to evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen, explain how they would realise an extract from a performance text they have studied and produce an extended answer on another performance text they have studied.

Practical exploration of a set text, including:

- understanding of style, genre, structure, form
- interpretation of characters
- consideration of staging, including lighting, set and sound
- consideration of costume and make up
- understanding of social, historical and cultural context
- how meaning is communicated to an audience.

ECONOMICS (AQA 7136)

Re-imagining of a set text for a contemporary audience in light of a practitioner, including:

- exploring the work of a practitioner and considering how that would affect their re-imagined production
- interpretation of characters and understanding of style, genre, structure, form
- consideration of staging, including lighting, set and sound and costume
- understanding of social, historical and cultural context
- how meaning is communicated to an audience.

Analysing and evaluating a piece of live theatre, including:

- watching a piece of live theatre
- producing notes to document their response to it.

Assessment Method

- Coursework; one per year
- Internal and external assessment of performance
- Written examination in June of Upper Sixth

Links to other subjects:

English Language/Literature, Art, Music, Classics, Design and Technology, History, Religious Education.

Links to HE courses:

Drama, Theatre and Performance, Law, Journalism, Commerce, Social Sciences, Communication/Personnel, Cultural Studies.

Course Overview

Economics is a real-world subject that affects everyone! It is about our economic system and how it operates. Inevitably, it is also about problems such as unemployment, rising house prices, taxes and recent events.

You will investigate micro and macroeconomics. Microeconomics addresses issues such as: 'Why are house prices so high in some areas?', 'Can pollution be controlled effectively?' and 'Should governments interfere with markets?'. The macroeconomic issues covered include: 'Why does the government have a target for inflation and how does it affect us?', 'What happens to the economy if people decide to spend more?' and 'How are we affected by the global economy?'

The A Level course comprises three papers:

Paper 1: Markets and market failure (Written exam: 2hrs, 33.3% of A Level)

Economic methodology and the economic problem; individual economic decision making; price determination in a competitive market; production, costs and revenue; perfect competition, imperfectly competitive markets and monopoly; the labour market; the distribution of income and wealth – poverty and inequality; the market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets.

Paper 2: The national and international economy (Written exam: 2hrs, 33.3% of A Level)

The measurement of macroeconomic performance; how the economy works – the circular flow of income, AD/AS analysis and related concepts; economic performance; financial markets and monetary policy; fiscal policy and supply-side policies; the international economy.

Paper 3: Economic principles and issues (Written exam: 2hrs, 33.3% of A Level)

A multiple choice question and case-study paper, based on the content already covered in Papers 1 and 2.

Links to other subjects

Economics is closely related to Business and has particular links to Mathematics, Government & Politics, Psychology, Geography and Modern Foreign Languages.

Links to HE courses and beyond

An A Level in Economics would be considered valuable preparation for degree level study in the fields of Economics, Econometrics, PPE, Business Management, Accountancy and Finance, Marketing and Quantity Surveying. In addition, it provides a solid foundation for careers in banking, investment management and corporate law.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (AQA 7702)

- Have you ever wondered why we speak the way we do?
- Do you wonder why some people say 'daps' while others say 'pumps' and whether it's a 'ginnel' or a 'gennel' and why some play 'forty forty' while others play 'tiggy one two three' and yet more play 'one two three dun ya' but it's actually *the same game*?
- Have you ever wondered how we learn to speak at all?
- Or why we speak in different ways depending on our circumstances?
- Do you think males and females use language differently?
- What evidence do you have for this and is it reliable?
- Do you think language itself treats males and females differently?
- Why do words change their meanings and how?
- Or why do we have the words we do at all?
- How can we tell we are listening to commentary of a football match rather than a weather forecast?
- Do you look at leaflets, advertisements and websites and wonder why they are written and presented as they are?
- Do you enjoy writing creatively in a range of different genres?

If you find any of those questions interesting and think you would enjoy finding out the answers and trying out different forms of writing, then this is the course for you. The content of this excellent A Level course should truly transform the way you think about human interaction. Your understanding of how language is used, and your own ability to communicate effectively in speaking and writing, will be extended and developed.

We aim to answer many of the questions above by engaging with language use in an analytical, almost scientific way, so you will need to grasp new concepts and the terminology with which to discuss them. This can be tricky and does require lots of hard work.

If you choose to study English Language here's what to expect:

Lots of **CLOSE READING AND ANALYSIS** - Though there is no work on set books, you will spend a lot of time analysing texts in detail. "Texts" might include: adverts; transcripts of real speech; magazine articles; websites - even cartoon strips! You have met these skills at GCSE, but A-Level English Language is significantly **more demanding**, with a lot of detailed study into how language works - including a strong focus on grammar and phonetics. You will also study a good deal of research that has been done on different aspects of language development both in individuals and wider social groups.

These topics can be fascinating so lots of **DISCUSSION** happens in lessons. You will be expected to have something to contribute to every lesson, on a whole range of language issues.

Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society Exam: 2 hours 30 minutes; 40% of A-Level

For this exam you will study textual variations and representations as well as children's language development (0-11 years). You will study a range of texts about various subjects, from various writers and speakers, for various audiences and for various purposes. Texts can be written, spoken and electronic.

Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change Exam: 2 hours 30 minutes; 40% of A-Level

For this part of the course you will explore language in its wider social and geographical contexts, in particular the varieties of English within the British Isles. As well as study of dialects and responses to them, you will also explore how social status, occupation and gender affect language use. You will study a very wide variety of texts as well as conversation analysis and you will be developing an objective, analytical approach throughout the course. You will also study how language changes and develops over time.

Unit 3: Non-exam assessment (NEA) on 'Language in Action'

This consists of two coursework tasks. One is an investigation into a particular area of language of your own choosing and the other is a piece of original writing and commentary. This is worth 20% of the final mark.

So, is it the right course for you?

As this is a subject that builds essential skills in communication and understanding, it will combine with any other A Level courses you may wish to study. It is also accepted by universities as a relevant qualification for a wide variety of courses.

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ENGLISH LITERATURE (AQA 7717)

If you love a good debate, being attentive to minutiae yet always with an eye on the global human perspective, you will definitely enjoy studying Literature. Books studied at this level open up a wealth of human experience, giving insights into cultures past and present. If you have enjoyed reading, discussing and writing about your set texts for GCSE English Literature and English Language and are excited by the prospect of spending time with more great texts in a smaller class full of friendly, lively discussion, then you will certainly enjoy this course.

You will become, with practice, an assured, sophisticated writer and a confident, informed reader. Examiners will expect you to be able to write confidently, accurately and with enthusiasm. Your style will be honed through different sorts of tasks set through the year, from class presentations to extended essays. There will be, for the A Level course, the opportunity for you to study texts of your own choice too.

This subject naturally links with Classics, History, Politics, Psychology and RE, and your experience of these subjects will be valuable as you look at each text in detail. A highly regarded subject, English Literature is a solid foundation for many courses at degree level, especially Law. If you seek a cultural and creative oasis as you study three more theoretical subjects, however, English Literature is an excellent choice, respected by University admissions tutors and employers alike.

The Course Itself

This course centres on different ways of reading and the connections that exist between texts within a specific literary genre. You will develop a sound understanding of how texts can be connected and how they can be interpreted in multiple ways.

There are three elements to this course: 'Literary Genres' and 'Texts and Genres' (which are each assessed by an exam) and a 'Non-exam assessment (NEA) – Theory and Independence'.

Paper 1: Aspects of Tragedy. Here there is an exam on three texts. You will be likely to study *Othello*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or a collection of poetry by Keats, and *Death of a Salesman*.

Paper 2: 'Elements of Crime Writing'. You will study three texts for this exam. In previous years we have studied *When Will There be Good News?* by Kate Atkinson, Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or a collection of poetry, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie and *Hamlet*. One must have been written post-2000 and one pre-1900.

Unit 3 – the NEA. Here you will apply an anthology of different critical views (like Marxism and feminism) to two texts of your own choice or from a number of texts studied in class. One needs to be a poetry text and the other prose. There will be an element of independent study but we will cover several texts in class and help you decide which areas of study suit you best. You will produce two essays of no more than 1500 words each.

The subjects of tragedy and crime will be, no doubt, entertaining, enlightening and moving. There are some great texts here to explore. Come along prepared to talk about your thoughts and ideas; though in many ways this is not a subject that can simply be 'learned' in a traditional sense, your skills of analysis and perception will be sharpened with practice and commitment in class. The best lessons in English Literature are fun, lively, thought-provoking and challenging and it is up to you to help make this happen!

THE EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION (EPQ): LEVEL 3 (AQA 7993)

Lower Sixth Formers are offered the opportunity to enter for the Extended Project Qualification at the end of the Easter Term. This is a student-driven qualification, giving the freedom and responsibility to the individual to select topics and projects. Students follow a clearly structured process, during which they plan, research their topic and create a product which can be in one of three formats:

- a written research report of 5,000 words
- a production supported by a written report of 1000 words minimum (eg charity event, fashion show, sports event etc)
- an artifact supported by a written report of 1000 words minimum (eg a piece of art, a computer game, a realised design)

During the process the students will learn to mature into critical, reflective and independent learners; develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills and increase their planning, research, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills. At the end of the process in the Easter Term of their Upper Sixth year, the students deliver a presentation. In this way students acquire knowledge and transferable skills that are invaluable for further study in Higher Education and the workplace.

Students are assessed on the process that they undertake to achieve the product as well as the finished outcome. This is the equivalent of half an A Level, meaning that the assessment level is that of A2 with a maximum of 28 UCAS points available for the A* grade.

Those who choose to embark on the EPQ should have genuine enthusiasm for their chosen project and an awareness of the time commitment necessary to make a success of the qualification. Given that the Extended Project is an additional qualification to A Levels, it is not going to be appropriate for all students and must not detract from A Level study.

GEOGRAPHY (EDEXCEL 9GE01)

In the A Level specification, there are four areas of study: Dynamic Landscapes, Dynamic Places, Physical Systems and Sustainability, Human Systems and Geopolitics.

Paper 1 – Dynamic Landscapes, Physical Systems and Sustainability (2 hours 15 minutes, 30% of A Level)

Tectonic Processes and Hazards: Why some locations are at risk of tectonic hazards, the causes of tectonic hazards, why some tectonic hazards turn into disasters and the success of management of tectonic hazards.

Landscape Systems: Coastal Landscapes and Change. An in-depth understanding of physical geography processes, the ways in which physical processes cause changes to the physical environment/landscape and to human activities, and the human responses to these changes.

Water Cycle and Water Insecurity: The factors controlling the cycling of water. The natural and human factors that lead to a surplus and deficit of water and the role of climate change. The issue of water insecurity, its consequences and strategies for managing this issue.

Carbon Cycle and Energy Insecurity: The physical processes that control the cycling of carbon. The natural and human factors that lead to changes in stores of carbon. The consequences of our reliance on fossil fuels. How the carbon and water cycles are linked to the global climate system.

Paper 2 – Dynamic Places, Human Systems and Geopolitics (2 hours 15 minutes, 30% of A Level)

Globalisation: The causes of globalisation and why it has accelerated, the impacts of globalisation on different groups and different places, its consequence for global development and how different players respond to its challenges.

Regenerating Places: Students begin by studying the place in which they live or study in order to look at economic change and social inequalities. They will then put this local place in context in order to understand how regional, national, international and global influences have led to changes there. The topic explores why regeneration is needed, how regeneration is managed and how successful is regeneration.

Superpowers: What are superpowers and how have they changed over time? What are the impacts of superpowers on the global economy, political systems and the environment? How is the influence and power of superpowers changing?

Migration, Identity and Sovereignty: The impacts of globalisation on international migration. The development of nation states and how they have evolved including the impact of globalisation. What impact has global organisations such as the World Bank and IMF had on global systems such as Trade and Migration. The threats to national security in a more globalised world.

Paper 3 – Synoptic Investigation of a geographical issue (2 hours 15 minutes, 20% of A Level) *Coursework – Independent Investigation 20% of A Level*

This will be an internally assessed and externally moderated written report of 4,000 words.

Fieldwork: For the A Level there are 5 days of compulsory fieldwork. Part of your fieldwork will go towards producing the **Independent Investigation**. The fieldwork will take place in the summer term of the Lower Sixth in Dorset. It is expected that students meet the cost of the fieldwork.

Links

This course uses a range of skills useful to other subjects.

- Graphical presentation and interpretation
- Data manipulation
- Statistical techniques
- Annotating diagrams
- Aerial photograph interpretation
- Data-response analysis and evaluation
- Decision-making
- Research techniques
- Group work and presentations
- ICT and GIS

There are also clear links with Economics/Business Studies, Politics and Maths.

Students will find this course stimulating, challenging, interesting and relevant, with many areas of study for both the physical and human components being drawn from recent events or issues. Students learn that Geography is indeed relevant to their everyday lives.

/continued

HISTORY (AQA 7042)

Component 1: The USA The making of a superpower 1865 to 1975 [Exam – 40%]

This unit is a study of aspects of social, cultural, economic, military and political American History from the end of the Civil War to the end of the Cold War. It includes the struggle for equal rights for women and African Americans, the so-called Gilded Age when America began to emerge as a superpower during the Industrial Revolution, the politics of Presidents as well as the lives of ordinary people, the famous Great Depression and the impact of two World Wars and a Cold War. It is a fascinating study of the most powerful country in the world.

Component 2: Religious Conflict and the Church in England 1529 to 1570 [Exam – 40%]

This unit is a study of the great changes to the Church and wider society which took place in Tudor England. This will include the study of the state of the Church on the eve of the Reformation, the Break with Rome which was effectively the Brexit of Henry VIII, the reigns of Edward and Mary and the Elizabethan dawn which collectively could be called the Mid-Tudor Crisis. It is arguably the most significant and interesting period in English History which in many ways resulted in the creation of the modern state as we know it today. In order to understand the great changes sweeping through England, we also study the wider international situation, which adds further value.

Component 3: Non Examined Assessment [Coursework – 20%]

This unit is an essay of 4500 words on Russian History from 1855 to 1953. It covers the reigns of Tzars Alexander II, Alexander III and Nicholas II as well as the rule of the Communists under Lenin and Stalin after the 1917 Revolutions. It is an essay that compares the Tzars with the Communists in all aspects of Russian life and could not be more relevant for the world of today. Both the content of the course and the technique required to do the essay are taught to the students.

Method of Assessment

As well as the coursework there is a 2 ½ hours exam for each component taken at the end of the two year course.

Links to other subjects

This subject can be studied in conjunction with any A Level course and particularly with Politics which has both British and American topics.

Links to HE courses and beyond

This subject teaches a range of transferable skills and is highly regarded by universities and employers alike.

Students Views of the Course

Students who study this subject will tell you that it is a very stimulating and rewarding course that teaches you things everybody needs to know. Students learn that History is indeed relevant to their everyday lives.

LATIN (OCR H443)

Latin A Level involves study of both **Latin Language and Literature**. You do need to have taken GCSE Latin for this course, but the good news is that you will have already covered much of the language at GCSE level – at A Level we refine your linguistic knowledge and give you the confidence to tackle a range of original texts.

For literature you will read a relatively small number of lines of original ancient texts (certainly not entire books!) and you will develop the skills and confidence to unpick the intricacies of each author's style and how they shape their work.

Perhaps you're fascinated by the way that we can **decrypt original texts composed by people thousands of years ago** (and the striking similarities and differences we can see between modern and ancient societies), or the effect Latin has had on Romance languages. Perhaps you enjoy the **analytical puzzle** or just the **stories** themselves. Whatever your reason for choosing Latin, **classes are small** and tailored to your needs and interests – even if you don't feel 100% confident in your Latin ability now, you will get lots of individual support and feedback.

Language

You consolidate and extend the grammar learned at GCSE level and develop an extensive vocabulary over two years, reading a range of original texts such as selections from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (featuring strange transformations into animals and trees), Livy's *History of Rome*, Caesar invading Gaul and Roman emperors being generally terrible.

You have two final language exams:

1. Two (fairly) short passages to translate into English: one verse, one prose.
2. Either prose comp (writing in Latin) **OR** a comprehension task.

Literature

Each year you will study a prose text and a verse text. These change from year to year, but in the past we have studied authors such as **Cicero** (eg extracts from the speech that would eventually lead to his murder), **Tacitus** (eg the violence of the year of four emperors), **Horace** (eg why no one is ever happy) and **Virgil** (eg the rise and fall of original warrior woman Camilla)

As the course involves both linguistic skills and appreciation of literature, it is a useful contrast to more technical or scientific subjects, as well as good preparation for anatomical terminology. It can also enrich the study of other humanities subjects such as English, History, Religious Studies and Modern Foreign Languages. As a more unusual subject it will make your university application stand out.

By studying Latin you develop the following skills:

- **Close critical analysis** of texts and sources
- Problem solving and pattern identification
- Confidence **developing your own ideas and expressing them**
- An intimate understanding of many scientific words and concepts as well as a better appreciation of linguistics
- An **understanding of Roman culture and history**

MATHEMATICS & FURTHER MATHEMATICS (EDEXCEL 9MA0 & 9FM0)

What's it like?

Sixth Form Mathematics builds upon your GCSE work; you will learn lots of new methods and add to a "mathematical tool kit" for solving problems. You will need to follow step by step arguments, you must be prepared to think hard and also realise that, unlike at GCSE, there will be questions you won't be able to answer straight away. However, it is that challenge and the ultimate sense of achievement when you solve a problem which makes Mathematics such a rewarding and exciting subject at Advanced Level.

The Course

We will follow the Edexcel specification. The course will be assessed via three terminal two hour papers, two of which will cover the Pure Maths and one will examine Statistics and Mechanics.

Further Mathematics

Those who have a real passion for Maths can opt to study Further Mathematics as well as the standard Mathematics A Level. If you choose to study Further Maths you will have 50% more timetabled Maths lessons than those doing Mathematics A Level, so it is worth bearing in mind that you will be completing 2 A Levels in the time it would normally take to do 1½. This course will be taught in parallel with the regular A Level Maths course, taking into account any necessary prerequisite knowledge.

Requirements

You should have studied the Higher GCSE course and preferably achieved a minimum grade 7 (for Further Mathematics a grade 8 would be preferred). In particular, you need to be good at Algebra as solving equations and manipulating formulae and expressions are key skills for A Level Maths. However, every case is different and you should discuss your suitability for the course(s) with your current Maths teacher.

Links

Mathematics is a very useful subject to have; it will prove invaluable in other A Level subjects such as Economics, Physics and Chemistry. Mathematics is a requirement for entry to certain university courses, such as Engineering.

Definitions

- **Pure** is the core subject, developing your skills in algebra, trigonometry, equation solving and calculus (which is all about gradients, areas under curves and how one quantity changes with another).
- **Applied** is the term given to any module other than Pure.
- **Statistics** is concerned with data collection, display and prediction as well as probability. Statistics is useful in Biology, Geography and Economics
- **Mechanics** is about forces and movement and how the world around us works. Mechanics is useful in Physics and Engineering.

MODERN LANGUAGES (AQA)

French (7652); German (7662) and Spanish (7692)

Why study other languages when everyone speaks English?

Actually only about 6.5% of the world's population speak English as a first language. Researchers calculate that another 18.5% speak it as a second or foreign language which leaves 75% of the world population who don't understand a word. No one would deny that English is now a global language, and that there has been a huge increase in English learning throughout the world – but that just means that the world is becoming more multilingual – and monolingual English speakers are being left behind. Over 60% of British trade is with non-English speaking countries.

Aren't languages a difficult option?

The specifications build on the same skills as GCSE and so the transition to A Level is a continuation of that. Moreover, in addition to the normal classes, you will have a weekly conversation lesson in a small group with one of our native-speaker language assistants to build up confidence and fluency as well as being able to benefit from a wealth of current and stimulating teaching materials.

So, why study modern languages?

The obvious reason for studying modern languages at A Level is to develop the knowledge and skills acquired at GCSE level and therefore to be able to use French, German or Spanish in a wide range of contexts and with increased fluency and enjoyment. But there is more to it than that...

You can gain a useful insight into another culture...

You will learn more about the history and culture of the target-language countries. Finding out about other cultures will make you start to think about your own country and background.

It gives you transferable skills ...

You will develop skills, such as communication and analysis which are of practical use in and is highly valued for almost any higher education course or career.

It could offer opportunities to travel, study and even work abroad ...

An A level in a modern language will give you real possibilities to get abroad and meet people, visit places and see the sights. Over your two years of study, you will be given opportunities to participate in study visits, homestays and/ or work experience in Europe.

You may wish to combine a subject at university with a language ...

At many universities, modern languages can be studied with virtually any other subject in a combined degree, from law and politics, music to maths.

It will enhance your employment prospects ...

Whilst languages in themselves may not lead into any specific profession, employers across all sectors are looking for 'global skills' such as evidence of global awareness, work experience abroad or a period of

MUSIC (EDEXCEL 9MU0)

study abroad which the study of a language can offer. This is particularly useful in combination with another subject or discipline.

Subject content & assessment

Unit number & length of exam	Content	Contribution to assessment
A LEVEL EXAMINATION		
PAPER 1 (2 hours 30 minutes) 100 marks	Listening, Reading and Writing on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social issues and trends • Political and artistic culture • Grammar 	50%
PAPER 2 (2 hours) 80 marks	Writing: Two essays on either one text or one film or two texts from the list in the specification	20%
PAPER 3 (21 - 23 minutes including 5 minutes preparation time) 60 marks	Speaking: A discussion of one sub-theme from Social issues and trends or Political and artistic culture Presentation and discussion of an individual research project	30%

Course books and resources

All the languages taught in the Department use a variety of materials, such as newspapers and magazines, film and video, and ICT as well as an exam-board specific course book. You will have a weekly timetabled lesson with one of our native speaker language assistants, either in a small group or individually in order to develop oral confidence and fluency.

Trips and Competitions

We actively encourage Sixth Form linguists to participate in home-stay visits, study trips or undertake work experience to France, Germany or Spain. As a general rule, and where numbers are sufficient to make a trip viable, there will be opportunities offered for all three languages at some point in the two years of the course. Time spent abroad, living and breathing the language and culture of the country, is a highly desirable and extremely valuable part of Sixth Form language study. In addition, there are a number of regional and national competitions that Sixth Form linguists participate in such as the Linguistics Olympiad, the Mother Tongue Other Tongue poetry competition as well as those organised by Business Language Champions. The most recent one of these was a virtual French debating competition in June 2023 called 'War of the Words'. The Birkdale team participated in two debates against another school in the East Midlands and won both debates!

Music A-Level builds firmly on the three areas of discipline studied at GCSE:

Performing

On the A Level course candidates perform a short recital of pieces (minimum of 8 minutes) which can be in any style and for any instrument or voice. Pieces performed can be either notated or improvised, and candidates can play as part of an ensemble if they prefer. The standard required is approximately Grade 6, although performance grades will be scaled up for more difficult pieces

30% of A Level

Composition

Candidates must complete two original compositions on the course. One of these compositions can be either chosen from a list of briefs related to the areas of study, or a free composition. The other will be a composition which assesses compositional technique in a given style (to a brief set by Edexcel) and can be either a four part chorale, two-part counterpoint, arrangement or remix. There will be the opportunity to compose in a variety of different styles, depending on the preferences of the candidate. The total minimum composition time must be at least 6 minutes.

30% of A Level

Listening, History and Analysis

Students on the A Level course explore set works across a range of Areas of Study:

- Vocal Music
- Instrumental Music
- Music for Film
- Popular Music and Jazz
- Fusions
- New Directions

A Level students study three set works in the Popular Music and Jazz Area of Study and two set works in each of the other Areas of Study. Listening skills are also tested in an exam in a variety of ways including recognition of styles and structures, and analysing short melodies and chord progressions by ear. Candidates are encouraged to listen to a wide range of unfamiliar music in order to help them in the final exam.

40% of A Level

Is A Level Music for me?

If you enjoyed GCSE Music, most definitely! Some knowledge of notation will be helpful, but if you play confidently by ear, or you can improvise well, then you will enjoy the course. You will also be stretched, and you will learn to do some things you never thought possible. The successful A Level Musician is enthusiastic, has initiative and imagination, and enjoys a challenge. However, the most important quality is that he or she loves music.

A Level Music can be studied with almost any other combination of subjects. The qualification is highly regarded by university admissions tutors as it demonstrates the student possesses a wide variety of skills, both academic and practical.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY (EDEXCEL 9MT0)

Music Technology A-Level is an exciting course, introducing candidates to the world of Sound Recording, Audio Technology and Production.

Areas of Study

There are three main areas of study which students will learn about over the course of the two year course.

Area of Study 1: Recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes

- the use of recording and mixing techniques to capture, edit and produce a recording;
- The use of sound creation and manipulation techniques to create, edit and structure a technology based composition;
- the capture, arrangement of sounds and mixing and mastering techniques as used on commercially available recordings;
- the use of sound creation and processing techniques to correct and mix a recording.

Area of Study 2: Principles of sound and audio technology

- the knowledge and understanding of the principles of sound and of audio technology in relation to commercially available recordings;
- the knowledge and understanding of the principles of sound and of audio technology in relation to theoretical and practical contexts.

Area of Study 3: The development of recording and production technology

- the knowledge and understanding of the history and development of recording and production technology from current digital technologies back to the mono, analogue recording technologies in the 1950s.

There are 4 main assessed components

Component 1: Recording (coursework: 20% of A Level)

Students will use production tools and techniques to capture, edit, process and mix an audio recording.

Component 2: Technology-based composition (coursework: 20% of A Level)

Students will produce a technology-based composition through creating, editing, manipulating and structuring sounds.

Component 3: Listening and analysing (exam: 25% of A Level)

Students will sit a written exam in which their knowledge and understanding of recording and production techniques and principles will be tested.

Component 4: Producing and analysing (exam: 35% of A Level)

Students will apply their knowledge and understanding of editing, mixing and production techniques in a practical exam.

Is A Level Music Technology for me?

If you enjoy Popular Music and want to learn more about the way in which it has developed technologically, most definitely! Some knowledge of notation will be helpful, but if you play confidently by ear, or you can improvise well, then you will enjoy the course. You will be stretched, and you will learn to do things with sound you never thought possible! The successful A Level Music Technologist is enthusiastic, has initiative and imagination, and enjoys a challenge. However, the most important quality is that he or she loves music and wants to learn more about the way in which it is recorded and produced.

A Level Music Technology can be studied with almost any other combination of subjects, and can be used as a route into a range of Music Technology-based university courses.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (AQA 7582)

A Level Physical Education combines applied theory with practical performance and analysis. This subject should equip students with both a depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills relating to scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of Physical Education.

We would suggest that students wishing to follow this course should be at a grade 6 or equivalent level in Biology in order to give themselves a strong chance of achieving highly in the final written examinations. Students who are performing to a high standard practically in one sport have the chance to earn high marks in the non-assessment area of the course.

Subject content:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Sport and society
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanical movement
- Sport psychology
- Sport and society and the role of technology in physical activity and sport

Paper 1: Factors affecting participation in physical activity and sport

What is assessed?

- Section A: Applied anatomy and physiology
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)
- Section B: Skill acquisition
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)
- Section C: Sport and society
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)

How it is assessed:

- Written exam: 2 hours, 105 marks, **35% of A-level**

Paper 2: Factors affecting optimal performance in physical activity and sport

What is assessed?

- Section A: Exercise physiology and biomechanics
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)
- Section B: Sport psychology
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)
- Section C: Sport and society and technology in sport
multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks)

How it is assessed:

- Written exam: 2 hours, 105 marks, **35% of A-level**

PHYSICS (AQA 7408)

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport

What is assessed?

Students are assessed as a **performer** or **coach** in the full-sided version of **one** activity (45 marks)
Students will also produce a **written/verbal analysis and evaluation** of their own performance or the performance of another (45 marks)

How it is assessed:

Internal assessment, external moderation
90 marks, **30% of A-level**

An Advanced Level qualification in PE is an essential pre-requisite for specialist study in Physical Education and Sports Studies in Higher Education, and is a suitable qualification for other areas of study such as Medicine and Psychology.

The specification provides an excellent foundation for students intending to pursue careers in Teaching, Coaching, Sports Science, Sports Development, Leisure and Recreation, Health and Fitness and Professional Sport.

Course Overview

Physics is the study of how matter and energy interact. It is a fascinating subject that is interwoven with every aspect of our lives.

In the A Level course, you will learn about Physics on the grandest scale – what is the nature of the Universe and how has it evolved? You will also delve into the very smallest of scales – what are the particles that are the building blocks of the nucleus?

Physics is a practical subject, and our approach is to couple theoretical lessons with as much practical work as possible. There will also be many opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities such as the Physics Olympiad and the chance to visit CERN in Geneva.

A-Level Physics Examinations

You will sit an internal exam (usually 2 papers) at the end of year 1. A-Level assessment is by three written papers at the end of the course – details below. Students will also carry out 12 required practical activities.

Paper 1 (Written Exam, 2hrs (85 marks) 34% of A Level)

Paper 1 covers the following topics: Measurements and their errors, Particles and Radiation, Waves, Mechanics and Materials, Electricity, Periodic Motion.

The paper consists of 60 marks of short and long answer questions, and 25 marks of multiple choice questions.

Paper 2: (Written Exam, 2hrs (85 marks) 34% of A Level)

Paper 2 covers the following topics: Thermal Physics, Fields and their Consequences, Nuclear Physics.

The paper consists of 60 marks of short and long answer questions, and 25 marks of multiple choice questions.

Paper 3: (Written Exam, 2hrs (80 marks) 32% of A Level)

Paper 3 covers the following topics: Practical Skills and Data Analysis, plus one chosen from Astrophysics, Medical Physics, Engineering Physics, Turning Points in Physics, Electronics.

The paper consists of 45 marks of short and long answer questions on practical experiments and data analysis, followed by 35 marks of short and long answer questions on the optional topic.

Links to other subjects

A-Level Physics has very close links to Mathematics. Although it is not necessary to study A-Level Maths in order to study Physics, it is recommended. Any students not taking A-Level Maths will receive additional support in the form of a weekly clinic. Many students also choose to combine Physics with one or both of Chemistry / Biology.

Links to HE courses and beyond

Physics is highly regarded by Universities and employers because of the transferable skills it develops in students. The Russell Group of Universities accepts Physics as part of their entry requirements for nearly all degree subjects.

Please be aware that A-Level Maths is also required for entry to most Physics degree courses, and that A-Level Physics is required for most Engineering courses. Physicists go on to pursue a huge range of careers – see <https://www.iop.org/careers-physics> for more information.

POLITICS (AQA 7152)

Paper 1: Government and Politics of the UK (examination – 33 ⅓%)

- When studying the government of the UK students will learn about the nature and sources of the British Constitution, the structure and role of Parliament, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the judiciary and devolution.
- When studying the politics of the UK students will learn about democracy and participation, elections and referendums, political parties, pressure groups and the European Union.

Paper 2: Government and Politics of the USA and comparative politics (examination – 33 ⅓%)

- When studying this unit students will learn about the constitutional framework of the US government, the legislative branch of government: Congress, the executive branch of government: President, the judicial branch of government, the electoral process and direct democracy, political parties, pressure groups and civil rights.
- When studying comparative politics students will analyse key similarities and differences between the UK and USA.

Paper 3: Political Ideas (examination – 33 ⅓%)

- When studying this unit students will learn about liberalism, conservatism, socialism, nationalism, feminism, multiculturalism, anarchism and ecologism.

Method of Assessment

This subject is assessed by three examinations of which there is one for each module. Each exam lasts 2 hours and has equal weighting. There is no coursework.

Links to other subjects

Government and Politics goes well with all other courses and is therefore a popular option. Particular combinations include History, Economics, Business Studies, Maths, English and Geography.

Links to HE courses and beyond

It is a highly regarded qualification by both universities and employers. It can be studied as a degree in its own right or it can help develop skills transferable to many other highly regarded degree courses such as Law, Business or Accountancy. It is therefore ideal preparation for careers in those areas as well as Banking, Journalism and the Civil Service, whilst also coming in handy if you want to be Prime Minister!

Student views on the course

Students who study this subject will tell you that it is a very stimulating and rewarding course that teaches you things that everybody ought to know.

PSYCHOLOGY (AQA 7182)

Course Overview

The A-Level course aims to provide students with a thorough understanding of Psychology. This specification provides a broad and balanced content, with superb progression to higher education.

Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology (33.3% weighting)

The content of this paper includes topics on social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology. Students will be assessed in a 2-hour written exam.

Paper 2: Psychology in context (33.3% weighting)

The content of this paper includes topics on approaches in Psychology, biopsychology and research methods. Students will be assessed in a 2-hour written exam.

Paper/Component 3: Issues and options in Psychology (33.3% weighting)

The content of this paper includes topics on issues and debates in Psychology. Students will then study 3 options from; relationships, gender, cognition and development, schizophrenia, eating behaviour, stress, aggression, forensic and addiction. Students will be assessed in a 2-hour written exam.

Links to other subjects

There is significant crossover with other main science subjects, religious studies and P.E

Links to HE courses and beyond

Medicine, law, psychiatry, counselling, business studies, sports science, forensic psychology, health science.

Student views on the course

"This is an extremely interesting A-Level subject. I didn't know what to expect, as I had never studied Psychology before. It has opened up my understanding of how and why humans behave as they do and has taught me to appreciate the complexities of human mind."

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (AQA 7062B)

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and awe... the starry heaven above and the moral law within." Immanuel Kant

Religious Studies AS/A Level is your chance to study PHILOSOPHY and THEOLOGY

In Philosophy of Religion:

You will study arguments for and against God's existence and the problem of evil and suffering. You will analyse religious experiences and religious language. You will question the nature of miracles and consider the possibility of life after death.

In Ethics and Religion:

You will learn about key ethical theories like Natural Law and Utilitarianism. Then you will learn how to apply them to questions about life and death, like euthanasia, abortion and cloning. You will analyse whether humans are truly free and you will question the significance of the conscience.

In a Study of the Christian Religion:

You will learn about central theological ideas: the nature of God, the afterlife and perspectives on the Bible. You will study Christian moral principles and look at important contemporary debates – on sexuality, on the impact of science, secularisation and pluralism.

In the Dialogue between Philosophy and Christianity:

You will make sense of the way philosophical discussions have shaped and changed Christian belief – in God, the afterlife and miracles...

In the Dialogue between Ethics and Christianity:

You will understand the relationship between ethical studies and Christian beliefs – about life and death, sexuality, free will and the conscience...

Learn to argue with the philosophical greats: **PLATO ARISTOTLE DESCARTES HUME KANT RUSSELL WITTGENSTEIN** ...and theologians who have shaped Christian thought: **AUGUSTINE AQUINAS CALVIN BARTH RAHNER HICK**

Assessment: Examination only, no coursework

Is Religious Studies Useful?

Studying Philosophy and Theology provides an outstanding education in thinking and communicating. You will learn to evaluate and argue with precision, skills your future university is looking for. In the past, students looking to go on to study **Economics, Medicine, Law, Business Studies** and **Psychology** have chosen to take RS A Level for the skills it provides. Of course, many of our students are inspired to go on to study degree courses in **Philosophy** or **Theology**.

Religious Studies complements many A Level subjects, from **Physics** and **Maths** to **English, History** and **Art**. In RS we consider fundamental questions of human nature and existence. This helps to deepen our students' understanding of their other subjects. Students do not need to have studied RS at GCSE, nor do they need any kind of "religious" commitment.

What some past students have said:

"RS is an inspiring subject. It opens the mind and forces you to go beyond our apparent realm of reality."

"With RS as my third subject alongside Biology and Chemistry, I successfully applied for medicine. It sharpened my thinking and gave me the ethical skills I will need."





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