



**Bedford
Modern
School.**

A Level Options

2026-2028



Excelling *Together*

Introduction

Bedford Modern School has a thriving Sixth Form which provides a structured and supportive environment for each student, as well as being an integral part of the whole BMS community. It is also an important stage in the transition from compulsory education to university, training or employment.

The highest standards of academic and personal development are both expected and encouraged, the latter including not only achievement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, but also the conscious need for service to the community.

Preparation for examinations at A Level is the central focus of the Sixth Form curriculum. The emphasis is on offering breadth of education as well as preparing students for their particular career direction. Consequently, most students select four subjects of study in Year 12 with the expectation that three of these subjects will be pursued to A Level in Year 13. In order to meet the demands of study at this level it is expected that members of the Sixth Form will undertake work outside of the classroom. As an approximate guide they can expect around three hours work per subject per week in Year 12 and four hours per subject per week in Year 13.

Registration is lesson by lesson, and specific times are allocated for tutorial meetings during the week. As students move through the Sixth Form, timetabled private study is provided in increasing measure to enable best use of non-teaching time at school.



**Student Leadership
Team 2026-27**

Community *Outreach*

All students are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities to assume positions of leadership and responsibility, and involve themselves in the life of the School. These include the opportunity to apply for the position of School Monitor (Prefect), Sixth Form Committees as well as involvement in many teams and societies.

Our Activities Afternoons in Year 13 allow students the chance to gain additional experience in areas such as leadership and sports coaching, as well as opportunities in the community, such as visiting a drop-in centre for our senior citizens and walking with people living with dementia.

We are committed to the concept of service in the Sixth Form. To this end we offer a variety of opportunities outside the curriculum. We encourage students in Year 12 to participate in some form of Monitoring in the Sixth Form, either within departments or assisting in Open Events.

Enrichment

At Bedford Modern School we recognise that students come into Year 12 at varying stages of development. Our Enrichment Course has been devised to support and broaden the knowledge of each individual. The programme is designed to raise awareness of issues that will affect them as young adults as well as equipping them with the knowledge to make informed choices. Students may opt to complete an [Extended Project Qualification \(EPQ\)](#) on a title of their choosing which, although unlikely to form the basis of a university offer, will develop their skills of independent learning and make them more attractive to top universities. Students can also opt to study [AQA Mathematical Studies \('Core Maths'\)](#) from January of Year 12 to develop their mathematical skills and thinking.

A Level *Qualifications*

We expect the majority of students to choose **four** subjects at the beginning of Year 12 and continue with all four until the first Parents' Consultation Evening in November, after which they may choose to drop one. The expectation is that all students will continue their other three subjects to full A Level at the end of Year 13. However some students may continue with four A Level courses, most commonly a combination involving those taking Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

Some students may begin Year 12 on three subjects after discussion with Mr White, Director of Sixth Form, or other senior members of staff, but need to be aware that the requirement is still that they should gain at least a grade C in all of their summer exams at the end of Year 12 to support success at A Level.

Poor grades following the summer exams in June of Year 12 will highlight, to both teachers and parents, which students need to work harder if they are to succeed at A Level. A good performance will also mean that students have already revised work which will be needed for the main A Level.

Individual cases will be reviewed when the Year 12 exam results are released, and recommendations for changes to students' patterns of study may then be made. It is possible that we may advise a student that they should not continue with one or more subjects that they may have wished to continue to the full A Level, or even that it is inadvisable to move into Year 13 at all. It is school policy that no student in Year 13 should be studying for just one A Level.

Transition into Year 12

We aim to build a course to suit the strengths and aspirations of each student as they enter the Sixth Form. To facilitate this process we provide tailored meetings for members of Year 11, commencing at the beginning of the academic year, where possible post-16 pathways are discussed. These choices are reviewed and further discussed after the mock exams. The parents of students who perform below their potential in these exams will be invited in to meet with the Transition Team at the next Parents' Evening for further discussions and to establish how best the student can be supported in the final run up to the exams. In July of Year 11, students are invited back for a Move Up Day to experience their final option choices, which are then reviewed after GCSE results. Each stage is designed to inform, support and enable students to make the right choices for their future.

The basic entry requirement onto most courses is a minimum of a grade 6 at GCSE in an appropriate subject, however those students who embark on A Level studies with a grade 7 or above are likely to find the transition much easier. In some cases there may be further restrictions, e.g. a minimum of a grade 6 in Maths to study Physics, and a minimum of grade 7 in Maths to study Maths. Please see the following individual subject pages for further details.

Entry into the *Sixth Form*

Students with an average GCSE grade score of 6.0 or above (derived, for example, from 10 results at grade 6) will have automatic entry to the Sixth Form but BMS retains the right to ask students to reconsider their course choices in light of their overall GCSE grades.

The average score will be derived from **all** the subjects that students have taken at GCSE. Those with fewer than nine subjects will be considered on an individual basis.

For students who fall below the 6.0 threshold, there will be a process of discussion and negotiation to see whether or not there is a viable course available for them.

Students must also have achieved at least a grade 4 in both GCSE Maths and GCSE English Language to qualify for entry into the Sixth Form.

The School reserves the right **not** to offer Sixth Form courses to any student whose behaviour and attitude has been unsatisfactory in earlier years.

Confirmation of each subject choice will depend on:

- The grade achieved at GCSE and the student's performance during the course.
- The overall average GCSE grade score of the student and their chosen combination of subjects.
- The view taken by those most closely associated with the student (subject staff, Tutor, Head of Year) as to their academic potential.
- The viability of set numbers.

Subject *Availability*

We hope to be able to offer all the subjects that are detailed in this guide. The school reserves the right not to run a course should numbers not make it viable.

All subjects are guaranteed to be available as two-year courses. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the same number of sets per subject will be maintained over the two year period; the fact that students can choose to give up a subject at the end of Year 12 means that the number of sets available needs to be reviewed at that stage. It is therefore possible that students will have different teachers in Years 12 and 13. (Additionally, the nature of the timetable means that it is not possible to accommodate requests for students to be taught by particular members of staff.)

Please note that the school will not allow you to do **both** English Literature **and** English Language and Literature. Many university courses would also advise that certain combinations or particular subjects are inadvisable at A Level, so we advise that you check out the specific course requirements via the UCAS website (www.ucas.com) if you know that you want to pursue a particular degree.

Conversely, some subject choices are recommended or essential if students wish to pursue certain courses or career paths in the future. These include studying both Chemistry and either Maths or another Science if Medicine is the intended path, and both Physics and Mathematics for Mechanical Engineering. For more advice on this, please contact the relevant Heads of Subject, Mrs Jones (Head of Careers), Mrs Costello (Sixth Form Transition Co-ordinator), Miss Coltman (Director of Sixth Form) or Mr Hewlett (Deputy Head Academic).

If you require more guidance about individual subjects, please talk to either the subject teacher or the Head of Subject. If you require more information about the options process or the viability of combinations then please contact Mr Hewlett directly.

Whilst every effort is made to accommodate student choices, timetable constraints may mean this is not always possible and a review of choices will be needed.



How to Choose Your A Levels

What to consider:

1. Subjects you enjoy – you will have on average one lesson every day, sometimes two, so it is important to enjoy it.
2. Subjects that you are good at – universities like to see top grades.
3. Subjects which complement each other e.g. Geography, Economics, Maths and Biology.
4. Remember you are unlikely to continue all four, so one can be a bit different e.g. Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Latin.
5. Retaining a breadth and balance e.g. both Arts and Sciences.
6. Variety within the workload – it can be problematic if you pick subjects which all have a high coursework component e.g. Art, Product Design and Computer Science.
7. Check if any particular A Levels are seen to be compulsory by your likely institution or course choice e.g. Maths for degree level Economics at some institutions – this is best discovered by looking on the [UCAS site](https://www.ucas.ac.uk).
8. Taking too many new subjects can be a challenge e.g. Film Studies, Business, Politics and Psychology.
9. Take advice from those who are currently studying the subjects – current Year 12 and Year 13 students, such as your Year Monitors.
10. Talk to your current teachers.
11. Have a look at the specification online (see web addresses in subject entries.)
12. If you are really unsure, select subjects from the facilitating subjects list. These come from a report entitled 'Informed Choices' produced by The Russell Group of Universities. A link to the report can be found here: www.informedchoices.ac.uk

How not to decide:

1. Cult of the celebrity – there are no guarantees that you will get the teacher who inspired you through GCSE.
2. Doing the same options as your friends – you may well be in different sets, and these decisions are just too important to be made for such a poor reason.
3. The subjects that you think will be easy – they do not exist.

The following pages will give you an introduction to the courses that you can choose from. For further details, ask your subject teacher or the Head of Subject, or go direct to the exam board web page where you can find the specification, past papers and student guides.



A Level Subjects *Offered*

[Art and Design \(Fine Art\)](#)

[Biology](#)

[Business](#)

[Chemistry](#)

[Classical Civilisation](#)

[Computer Science](#)

[Design Technology - Product Design](#)

[Drama and Theatre](#)

[Economics](#)

[English Language and Literature*](#)

[English Literature*](#)

[Film Studies](#)

[French](#)

[Geography](#) (International A Level)

[German](#)

[History](#)

[Latin](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Further Mathematics](#) (must be studied alongside Mathematics)

[Music](#)

[Philosophy](#)

[Physical Education](#)

[Physics](#)

[Politics](#)

[Psychology](#)

[Religious Studies](#)

[Spanish](#)

*Students may not select both of these courses.



Art and Design (Fine Art)

Exam board: [Eduqas](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs S Nazir (interim)

Course Content:

Progress will be regularly monitored and tested. Throughout the course there will continue to be a well-structured mixture of study visits and opportunities to work with visiting artists.

Year 12

The Year 12 course consists of two units of work, one of which will lead into Year 13, with work assessed at the end of the year. The emphasis of the course is breadth of study. Students are challenged to extend their knowledge of artists and to improve their own practical skills across a range of areas during the course of the year.

In the first part of the autumn term, students will experiment with materials and techniques in diverse areas such as: painting, printmaking, photography and ceramics. This will form the first part of their coursework unit. They are then encouraged to use these new skills in response to that year's chosen theme and create one or several finished art pieces. This will form the basis for the Year 13 Coursework Portfolio.

Year 13

Students produce one unit of coursework and the emphasis of the year is in-depth study. Unit one incorporates two elements - 'Practical Work' and 'Learning Journal'. Students are asked to choose an area of study with their teachers that they can develop over the year. This may be broad, such as 'Landscape' or 'the Nude', or they may be more specific with starting points such as 'Shadows' or 'Self Portrait'. This study will be a practical exploration of their own ideas and work and an investigation of similar artists' work.

The second part of the unit is entitled 'Learning Journal'. This is a written, illustrated 'essay' of around 2,000-3,000 words which allows students to record and reflect on their progress and how links have been made to related art and artists.

At A Level students also undertake an externally set assignment, which is completed in 15 hours under exam conditions.

The two units are marked in May of Year 13.

Entry requirements: At least a Grade 6 in GCSE Art or a related subject.

Biology

Exam board: Edexcel (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr D Donoghue

Course Content:

Biology is a versatile A Level, suitable for diligent students with an interest in how living organisms interact and function. The A Level course provides both a sound grounding and exposure to the main areas of Biology, allowing students to make informed decisions about which area might be of interest for post-18 study. Biology is required for most degrees in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry and Physiotherapy, as well as the traditional degrees in the Biological Sciences.

Students who are considering post-18 study in a biological field will find that some other subjects, such as Chemistry and Mathematics (particularly for the molecular biology courses), along with possibly Geography (for the environmental sciences) will strengthen their applications.

Students will follow the Edexcel Biology B specification. All topic areas are examined at A Level.

Year 12

- Cellular reproduction
- Basic biochemistry of the fundamental macromolecules in biology
- Ultrastructure of the eukaryotic and prokaryotic cell and virus particle
- Classification, natural selection and speciation
- Gaseous exchange and mass transport in animals and flowering plants
- Ecology and conservation
- Mendelian inheritance
- + a field trip for Ecology field studies

Year 13

- Advanced biochemistry: respiration and photosynthesis
- Immunology
- Epigenetics and gene technologies
- Chemical and nervous co-ordination in animals and flowering plants
- Gene expression
- Viral life cycles
- Microbiology
- Homeostasis
- Excretory systems
- Nervous systems.

Practical work is an integral component of the A Level Sciences. There is a Practical Skills Endorsement, which is assessed throughout the two years of the A Level, based upon the competence of the students in the laboratory. It does not count in any way towards the letter award (A* - U) of the A Level, but will instead

be expressed in addition to this grade.

There are three examination papers at the end of Year 13 and no NEA. The Practical Skills Endorsement is separate from the examination grade, although some university courses require a Pass in this component.

As well as linking closely to Chemistry, Biology also has aspects and skills in the curriculum that link into Mathematics, Physics, Geography, Physical Education and Psychology.

Many students progress to study Medicine or other healthcare-related degrees, as well as Life Sciences or other scientific courses; Biology A Level students have also gone on to study a wide variety of undergraduate courses or other post-18 options.

Entry requirements: It is a requirement that students wishing to study Biology in the Sixth Form have achieved at least a grade 6 in Biology at GCSE or grades 6,6 in Dual Award Science.



Business

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs E Charlton

Business is part of the PPE Faculty. We follow the AQA specification which, based upon some independent research of a selection of top Russell Group universities, was viewed as being the preferred choice for institutions such as the University of Warwick, the University of York and Durham University due to its academic rigour and subject content. The course will provide students with the key competencies and knowledge to pursue a career in management. The focus is upon both long-term strategic and medium-term tactical decision making and the impact of the external environment on business.

We complement the study of Business with a wider approach involving independent research and presentations by the students to allow them to implement skills they will need both at university and in the business world.

Course Content:

The focus in Business is to develop students with an understanding of the business world. They will study the complete range of business structures from small start-ups to global conglomerates whose operations impact upon all of our lives. Students will develop the knowledge and skills needed to analyse data, think critically about issues and make informed decisions – all skills that are needed for further study and employment.

Year 12

The focus in Year 12 is on the study of decision making within a business and will cover:

- The interrelated nature of business activities
- The competitive environment and the markets in which businesses operate
- The influences on functional decisions and plans including ethical and environmental factors
- How technology is changing the way decisions are made
- The factors that determine whether a decision will be successful
- The use of quantitative and non-quantitative data in decision making.

Year 13

Year 13 builds upon the study of decision making in the functional areas and looks at strategic decision making. This will include:

- The impact of technology on strategic decision making
- The influences of Corporate Social Responsibility, ethical and environmental issues
- The difficulties in forecasting future trends
- The importance of assessing feasibility and risk
- The impact on stakeholders of strategic decisions and their response to such decisions.

Assessment:

The full A Level qualification will be assessed at the end of Year 13 and will consist of three papers each of two hours duration. These will be made up of a range of multiple-choice, short answer and extended answer essay questions. Each paper is synoptic testing the students' knowledge of the entire two year course.

Entry requirements: No prior study of Business is required for this course. There is a considerable emphasis on numerical, statistical and data evaluation skills as tools of analysis and therefore students must have achieved at least a Grade 6 in Mathematics and English at GCSE.

Links to other subjects:

Business is a subject that focuses on the application of theory to real world business events. Therefore it combines well with other such subjects within the PPE Faculty. Students of Product Design, Geography and Maths will also find links to the courses they study. Whilst there is a quantitative skills element to the course, there is also the need to be able to complete extended writing tasks.

Prospects after A Level:

There are a huge range of courses at university where students can continue to study Business. These typically combine the option of study with the opportunity to include a year in industry, either in the UK or further afield.

Students will also find an A Level in Business as excellent preparation for the world of work or for gaining access to a degree-level apprenticeship, an option that has increased in popularity in recent years with both students and employers.



Chemistry

Exam board: [OCR](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr J Fitton

Course Content:

Chemistry has often been described as 'The Central Science' due to its significant role in a wide variety of scientific disciplines. Chemistry's application to a wide range of areas, from Biochemistry to Geochemistry, makes it a key contributor to modern life.

The study of Chemistry at A Level provides students with an understanding of important scientific concepts and equips them with a range of valuable skills. Chemists can follow a wide range of degree courses and careers. Degrees in Chemistry are highly valued in both the scientific and commercial worlds.

We follow the OCR Chemistry A specification. This course places practical work at the core of students' learning. Students keep comprehensive records of their practical work in Laboratory Notebooks and are required to follow up their laboratory work in order to develop their analytical and evaluative skills.

The course focuses upon the three core areas of Chemistry: Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry and Physical Chemistry, with practical work embedded in all areas of the course.

- Organic Chemistry includes study of: alkanes, haloalkanes, alkenes, alcohols, organic analysis, optical isomerism, carbonyl compounds, aromatic chemistry, amines, polymers, amino acids, proteins, DNA, synthesis, NMR spectroscopy and chromatography
- Inorganic Chemistry includes study of: periodicity, Group 2, Group 7, Period 3, transition elements, reactions of ions in aqueous solution
- Physical Chemistry includes study of: atomic structure, chemical quantities, bonding, energetics, kinetics, equilibria, thermodynamics, electrochemistry.

Assessment:

There are three written examinations which contribute to the overall A Level grade. In addition, there is practical endorsement carried out by teachers in school. Whilst this does not contribute to the overall grade, most university courses require a pass.

Entry requirements: It is a requirement that students wishing to study Chemistry in the Sixth Form have achieved at least a grade 6 in Chemistry at GCSE or grades 6,6 in Dual Award Science. In the case of the latter, students must have achieved at least a grade 6 in the Chemistry components. Some mathematical skills are required. A Chemistry student should be comfortable using mathematical skills, but they do not necessarily need to be a Mathematics student.

With an A Level in Chemistry choices are many. Chemistry is an essential A Level for most Medical degree courses in the UK. You could also follow courses in Engineering, Pharmacology, Biochemistry, Medicinal Chemistry, Forensic Science and Chemistry, among others. However, the broad skills learned would stand you in good stead for a huge range of degree courses.

Classical Civilisation

Exam board: OCR (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Miss E Swallow

Course Content:

Classical Civilisation has been a well-established and popular course at BMS for many years, attracting a wide range of students, from those with a particular interest in the arts to scientists who wish to retain the breadth that an arts subject can provide. It can lead to a variety of degree courses, including Classical Studies, Archaeology, Ancient History and Anthropology. Across the A Level course, students learn about aspects of both ancient Greek and Roman culture.

Year 12

The World of the Hero (Homer's Iliad): In this unit we read the story of the mythical Trojan War, a poem considered to be the foundation of Greek culture and the beginning of Western literature. As the plot introduces us to famous Greek heroes, gods and myths, students explore the composition and delivery of ancient oral poetry, while building an understanding of the religious, cultural and social values of its day. They also discuss a wide range of themes: heroic values, societal expectations, death and mortality, reconciliation, the positive and negative impacts of the divine, relationships between men and women, gender stereotypes and the portrayal of war.

Imperial Image: In this unit we look at a variety of sources, both visual and literary, to assess how the Roman emperor Augustus managed to turn Rome from a republic into a one-man rule state. We employ techniques used in marketing and politics today to assess how leaders convey a positive image of themselves to the public.

Year 13

The World of the Hero (Virgil's Aeneid): In this unit we look at one of the greatest epics of all time, analysing the development of characters such as Aeneas, who founded Rome. We find out what happened to Troy and discuss the historical and cultural context of this work. The Aeneid contains elements of tragedy, comedy and philosophy as well as stories of love, loss and leadership.

Politics of the Late Republic: In this unit we study the political thought of the period 79-43BC, covering the slow corruption of traditionalist values in Rome, culminating in civil war and the transformation and subsequent fall of a democratic republic. Through examining the very different ideals in this tumultuous period of history, the course involves discussion of the practical difficulties encountered by states throughout history and still relevant in our current political climate.

Assessment:

There are three examination papers in total: The World of the Hero (40%), Imperial Image (30%) and Politics of the Late Republic (30%). The examinations require students to comment on passages of text, to analyse visual sources and to write analytical essays.

Entry requirements: Prospective students are not expected to have a GCSE qualification in Classical Civilisation, but we would normally expect students to have achieved a grade 6 in either Classical Civilisation, English Literature or History at GCSE.

Links to other subjects:

Classical Civilisation attracts a wide range of students, whose interests range from arts to sciences to humanities. The course itself is multi-disciplinary, containing elements of art, history, literature, politics, philosophy and religion.



Prospects after A Level:

Classical Civilisation A Level can lead to a variety of degree courses, including Classical Studies, Archaeology, Ancient History and Anthropology. Former students have also gone on to study a wide range of other subjects at university ranging from Medicine to Business to Art.



Computer *Science*

Exam board: [OCR](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Miss E Ginns

Course Content:

Computer Science brings together an exciting mix of practical and theoretical computing which will appeal to students with a creative approach to IT, Computer Science and problem solving. The A Level will be assessed through written exams and coursework.

Component 01: Computer Systems

Students are introduced to the internal workings of the (CPU), data exchange, software development, data types and legal and ethical issues. The resulting knowledge and understanding will underpin their work in component 03. **2h 30m (40%)**

It covers:

- The characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices
- Types of software and the different methodologies used to develop software
- Data exchange between different systems
- Data types, data structures and algorithms
- Legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues.

Component 02: Algorithms and Programming

This builds on component 01 to include computational thinking and problem-solving. **2h 30m (40%)**

It covers:

- What is meant by computational thinking (thinking abstractly, thinking ahead, thinking procedurally etc)
- Problem solving and programming – how computers and programs can be used to solve problems
- Algorithms and how they can be used to describe and solve problems.

Component 03: Programming Project

Students are expected to apply the principles of computational thinking to a practical coding programming project. They will analyse, design, develop, test, evaluate and document a program written in a suitable programming language. The project is designed to be independently chosen by the student and provides them with the flexibility to investigate projects within the diverse field of computer science. We support a wide and diverse range of languages. **Internally assessed (20%)**

Entry requirements: Ideally students will have studied Computer Science at GCSE gaining at least a grade 6. A grade 6 in GCSE Maths is also required. However, other students will be considered based on previous experience in Computer Science related areas such as programming.

Computer Science at A Level is valued by universities and employers since it requires the development of analytical thinking and problem solving skills. The course also lays an appropriate foundation for further study of Computer Science, Engineering, Physics or related subjects in higher education.

Design Technology - Product Design

Exam board: OCR (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr A Jones

Course Content:

Product Design offers students the opportunity to study, propose, develop and realise prototype solutions to a variety of designing and making situations, closely related to the real world of product design and manufacture. Students will analyse the function, operation, components and materials of different products. There will also be a need for students to consider the wider issues affecting the design decisions behind commercial products.

Students will take on the role of a designer. They will build up awareness and understanding of all the issues to be considered in the planning, design, manufacture and marketing of products. They will carry out critical evaluations of existing products, explore possible design developments and create functioning prototypes. Students will be encouraged to produce high quality products that could be seen in a given consumer market.

Component 01: Principals of Product Design

This is an exam paper set out through four sets of questions that predominantly cover technical principles of product design. **1h 30m (26.7%)**

Students will need to:

- Analyse existing products
- Demonstrate mathematical skills
- Demonstrate their technical knowledge of materials, product functionality and manufacturing processes and techniques.

Component 02: Problem Solving in Product Design

These are two sections to this component. Section A focuses on students applying their knowledge, understanding and skills of designing and manufacturing prototypes and products. Section B requires students to reflect on the design task in Section A in relation to wider factors/issues from the design principles. **1h 45m (23.3%)**

Component 03: Iterative Design Project

The Iterative Design Project requires learners to undertake a substantial design, make and evaluate project centred on the iterative processes of explore, create and evaluate. Students identify a design opportunity or problem from a context of their own choice, and create a portfolio of evidence in real time through the project to demonstrate their competence. **Approx. 45h, non-exam assessment (50%)**

Entry requirements: To have studied Design and Technology at GCSE gaining at least a grade 6. Grade 6 in Maths is also required. Students need to be organised, committed and ready to work hard.

Drama and Theatre

Exam board: Eduqas (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs E Marabese

Course Content:

A Level Drama and Theatre requires and develops a range of academic and creative skills, as well as personal awareness and confidence. Students can pursue their interests and study a range of practical drama elements including acting, directing, costume, mask or technical design. The written components develop students' knowledge and understanding of theatre across history through a study of set texts, live productions and a range of practitioners. The specification is weighted as follows: 60% practical or non-examination assessments (Components One and Two) and 40% written examination (Component Three).

Component 01: Theatre Workshop

Students will have the opportunity to take a text (from a choice prescribed the exam board) and reinterpret through the influence of a chosen practitioner or style of theatre. A practical group performance will be created and staged and a reinterpretation performed; students will be marked individually out of 30 for this piece. Alongside the performance, students will produce a Creative Log of 1500 words (maximum) which documents the creative rehearsal process they have undertaken. This is also marked out of 30. This component is designed to allow students to creatively explore published plays and understand the process of creating and developing, while making connections between theory (practitioner methodologies) and practice. **Internally assessed (20%)**

Component 02: Text in Action

2 group performance pieces based on one stimulus (provided by the exam board): one devised piece and one scripted piece (from a published play). Students will be required to watch at least one piece of live theatre to influence the two performance pieces. The performance pieces combined are marked out of 80 and will be marked across 2 sections: creation/development of ideas (10 marks per piece) and application of theatrical skills (30 marks per piece). Students will write a Process and Evaluation report of no more than 3000 words for the two performances which is marked out of 40. The report will cover the connection between the pieces and the practitioner and stimulus, an analysis and evaluation of the creation process and an analysis and evaluation of the final performance. **(40%)**

Component 03: Text in Performance

Split across 3 sections: two set texts and one script extract (studied and explored in lesson time). This paper will expect students to explore the scripts from the perspective of a director, performer and designer. **2h 30m (50%)**

- Section A (40 marks): a series of structured questions on one set text focusing on different theatre makers based on a specified extract (provided by the exam board) from the whole play.
- Section B (40 marks): an essay question on the second set text exploring the process of how theatre can be created and performed.

- Section C (40 marks): A question on a script extract from *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness exploring how the section could be performed from multiple theatrical perspectives. This script extract will be provided in advance by Eduqas in the March of your Year 13 course.

A Level Drama and Theatre students will also have the chance to perform in our Sixth Form theatre company, *Theatre in Transit*, in a professional working theatre environment who perform a different play each year in November at The Place Theatre, Bedford. They will also have the opportunity to come on our bi-annual Performance Arts trip to New York's Broadway.

Entry requirements: Enthusiasm, commitment and a readiness to work constructively in a team. A strong interest in either acting or theatre design is essential. A grade 6 in GCSE Drama is useful but not compulsory for acceptance on the course, but in its absence students must be able to demonstrate other experience of productions or theatre. In the absence of a GCSE in Drama, a grade 6 in GCSE English is required.

Links to other subjects:

The studying and performing of play texts lends itself to draw on many aspects of social, cultural and historical aspects, so there are many subjects which can be linked to Drama and Theatre. These include English Language, English Literature, Art, Music, Film Studies, Classical Civilisation, Design and Technology, History, Religious Studies and Politics.

Prospects after A Level:

Drama and Theatre A Level opens up opportunities into performance, design, and theatre production areas. Some students will go on to explore the possibilities of drama school through audition processes or Acting and Theatre Studies degrees at university. Others may take an interest in the backstage aspects of theatre such as lighting or sound design.

However, the A Level provides a vast range of transferable skills which can be applied to multiple careers and opportunities outside of the theatre industry. Many students have found their way into a variety of industries that involve public speaking, problem solving, communication and creative thinking.

This A Level can provide the foundations of personable skills and qualities that can be applied throughout the course of their future endeavours.



Economics

Exam board: Edexcel (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr P Davis

Course Content:

Economics is about scarcity and choice; we have limited resources and so choices have to be made on how these resources can best be allocated. Choices on how to best use resources have to be made in any profession: a doctor has to make decisions on how best to spend a limited budget, an engineer has to decide how to combine resources and to consider cost and revenues on every project. The analytical skills learnt in the study of Economics can develop the lines of argument and logic to make these decisions, as well as providing a framework to understand current economic issues in the UK and across the world.

Economics is traditionally divided into two related areas – **Microeconomics** and **Macroeconomics**. Microeconomics deals with the operation of markets and why they do not always work in the best way to allocate resources. It includes the study of demand and supply, aspects of market failure and possible solutions, as well as business economics. Macroeconomics deals with the operation of the economy as a whole; economic objectives such as inflation, unemployment and economic growth, as well as different types of economic policies such as interest rates, public expenditure and types of taxation. This can take a global perspective, looking at international trade, economic development, inequality and poverty.

Students will follow the Edexcel Economics (A) course. Over the two years, students will cover two microeconomic themes and two macroeconomic themes:

- Theme 1: **Introduction to Markets and Market Failure** (microeconomics)
- Theme 2: **The UK Economy: Policy and Performance** (macroeconomics)
- Theme 3: **Business Behaviour and the Labour Market** (microeconomics)
- Theme 4: **A Global Perspective** (macroeconomics).

At the end of the two years there are three examinations for Economics A Level as follows:

- Paper One (Markets and Business Behaviour): covering both microeconomic themes (35%)
- Paper Two (The National and Global Economy): covering both macroeconomic themes (35%)
- Paper Three (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics): the synoptic paper covering all themes from the two-year course (30%).

Entry requirements: Students are expected to be reasonably numerate, with a focus on the use of quantitative skills in the course and the examinations. They also need to be able to articulate a reasoned, extended answer across the two years of study. For this reason a grade 6 in both Mathematics and English at GCSE is required. The other major expectation is that students will have an interest in current economic issues and a desire to find out more about how the economy works.

Links to other subjects:

Studying Economics alongside other PPE subjects, especially Business and Politics, can help provide a broader perspective on economic topics and decision making. There are also links between Economics

and several topics in the Geography course. Mathematics and Further Mathematics also link well with Economics in terms of the quantitative aspects of the course.

It is important to note that many top Economics university courses require Mathematics and sometimes Further Mathematics to study the subject at university.

Prospects after A Level:

There are a wide range of Economics courses at university for those who want to study the subject further, including joint honours with Finance and Management. However, Economics is important regardless of the career path you follow, providing key analytical skills and logical decision making, as well as an understanding of the wider world.

Specific career paths include jobs in the financial sector (such as investment banking and finance), in economic analysis (such as for independent think tanks and in government), in the media (such as for national newspapers) and for non-government organisations (such as aid agencies).



English Language and Literature

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Dr T Foster

Course Content:

English Language and Literature is viewed by all UK universities as a facilitating subject and is therefore considered favourably by university admission tutors. It is a linear qualification with assessment of all material taking place at the end of the course, including a 20% coursework unit. This specification develops skills of literary and linguistic analysis, enabling students to become critical, independent readers. It is also designed to promote creativity and to nurture personal responses to literary and non-literary texts.

Component 01: Telling Stories 3h 0m (40%)

Section A: Remembered Places

One compulsory question comparing passages from the AQA Anthology: Paris. Closed book. (40 marks)

Section B: Imagined Worlds

One question from a choice of two on the prose set text. A short passage is used as a springboard for an essay response. Text choices include: *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Lovely Bones*. Current students are studying *The Handmaid's Tale*. Open book. (35 marks)

Section C: Poetic Voices

One question from a choice of two on a poetry set text, dealing with the forms and functions of poetic voice. Poet choices include: Donne, Browning, Duffy, Heaney. Current students are studying Donne. Open book. (25 marks)

Component 02: Exploring Conflict 2h 30m (40%)

Section A: Writing About Society

One piece of re-creative writing using an extract from a set text (30 marks) followed by a critical commentary explaining linguistic choices (25 marks). Set text options: *Into the Wild*, *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Kite Runner*. Current students are studying *The Great Gatsby*. Open book.

Section B: Dramatic Encounters

One question from a choice of two on a drama set text. Set text options: *Othello*, *All My Sons*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Herd*. Current students are studying *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Open book. (45 marks)

Component 03: Making Connections

A personal investigation that explores a specific technique or theme in both literary and non-literary discourse (2,500–3,000 words). (50 marks). **Non-exam assessment (20%)**

Entry requirements: Students wishing to take English Language and Literature at A Level should write fluently and should be able to undertake significant reading. They should achieve at least a grade 6 in both English Language and English Literature I/GCSE.

English Literature

Exam board: [Edexcel](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Dr T Foster

Course Content:

English Literature is viewed by all UK universities as a facilitating subject and is therefore considered favourably by university admission tutors. It is a linear qualification with assessment of all material taking place at the end of the course, including a 20% coursework unit. Texts studied will always include at least three pre-1900 works, including one Shakespeare play, and a post-2000 work; in Year 13 students will also be assessed on their response to an unseen text. The Edexcel syllabus gives students the breadth of study necessary to develop an informed and engaged critical appreciation of prose, poetry and drama along with key analytical and writing skills.

Component 01: Drama 2h 15m (30%)

Students study one Shakespeare play (e.g. *Othello*) and one other drama (e.g. *Doctor Faustus*) from either tragedy or comedy, plus a collection of essays and critical writing related to the selected Shakespeare play.

Section A: Shakespeare

One essay question incorporating ideas from wider critical reading. Open book.

Section B: Other drama

One essay question. Open book.

Component 02: Prose 1h 15m (20%)

Two prose texts from a chosen theme. Current students are studying *The Lonely Londoners* by Sam Selvon and *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad under the theme of 'Colonisation and its Aftermath'. At least one of the prose texts must be pre-1900. Students answer one comparative essay question on their studied theme. Open book.

Component 03: Poetry 2h 15m (30%)

Students will prepare for responding to an unseen contemporary poem, through study of poetic form, meaning, language and style.

Section A: Contemporary and Unseen Poetry

One essay question comparing an unseen poem written post 2000 to a poem from an anthology of contemporary poetry studied in Year 12. Open book.

Section B: Period Poetry

Such as the work of the Victorian poet, Christina Rossetti. One essay question. Open book.

Component 04: Coursework (20%)

Students have a free choice of two texts to study. Chosen texts must be different from those studied elsewhere in the A Level and must be complete texts first written in English. They may be linked by theme,

movement, author or period and may be selected from poetry, drama, prose or literary non-fiction.

Students produce one assignment – a comparative essay of 3,000 words.

Entry requirements: English Literature students wishing to take English Literature at A Level should write fluently and should be able to undertake significant reading. They should achieve at least a grade 6 in both English Language and English Literature (I)GCSE.

Links to other subjects:

Both English A Level subjects combine well with Film Studies, Modern Foreign Languages, Latin, History, Drama and Theatre Studies, Religious Studies, Psychology, Philosophy and Politics.

Prospects after A Level:

An English A Level speaks volumes about your ability to read critically and to analyse the written word. As well as going on to study English at degree level, students can use English A Level as a gateway to studying many other subjects such as Law, Linguistics, American Studies or Creative Writing. When you enter the world of employment, the skills gained during English A Level will be invaluable as employers welcome staff who can analyse, evaluate, balance opinions and articulate ideas purposefully.



Film Studies

Exam board: [Eduqas](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr J Saunders

Course Content:

Film Studies is an exciting and challenging discipline that explores the intellectual and emotional appeal of film. It enables students to develop a critical awareness and understanding of film, and its relationship with society, utilising transferable skills that are key to many intellectual and practical situations.

The course recognises film's unique status as an art form, a social and political tool, and as an industry, providing a number of possible analytical routes. It allows students to explore the institutions that produce films, production methods and the audiences that respond to them. Although film texts can be accessible initially, the high level of academic rigour and close analysis is demanding.

In Year 12, students engage in the construction, deconstruction and critical analysis of a range of film texts. In Year 13, there is the opportunity to extend knowledge of film concepts through an engagement with a range of film issues and debates, promoting independent learning skills.

Year 12

Component 01: Varieties of Film (35%) An exploration of films from Britain and four American films with differing historical contexts. Examples include 'Vertigo' and 'Shaun of the Dead'.

Year 13

Component 02: Global Film (35%) An exploration of films from World Cinema, as well as documentary films. Examples include 'Pan's Labyrinth' and 'Sunrise'.

Component 03: Production (30%) The production of a film text (4-5 minutes) or a screenplay for a short film, with an evaluative analysis.

A distinctive feature of the course is the practical element that enables students to put theory into practice by creating their own film, thus affording opportunities for engagement in creative work at a high level. This also facilitates the learning of new and practical skills, such as working on film editing software, as well as developing logistical skills when planning and producing their film projects.

Entry requirements: At least a Grade 6 in both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature, as well as an analytical and creative approach to studying, and an enthusiasm to learn new skills.

Links to other subjects:

The study of Film includes analysis, creativity and placing films into historical, social and political contexts. This makes it an ideal partner for a wide range of subjects, including English, History, Politics, Business, Art, Drama and Theatre Studies, Psychology and Philosophy.

French

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mlle G Amoros

Course Content:

As much of our trade is currently conducted with Europe, there is no doubt that knowledge of French will continue to be an important asset in the job market in the years to come. French is spoken as a first language both within Europe and in North America, Africa and the Middle East, so proficiency in French can present you with opportunities to work or study across several continents. In addition French has long been an official language of bodies such as the Olympic Games, United Nations, FIFA and the IOC, underlining its importance as a means of communication on a global scale.

The A Level specification accounts for the needs of students post-GCSE, with an emphasis placed on a balanced and consistent development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The materials are varied, authentic and explore contemporary issues facing French-speaking countries. Grammatical structure is an essential feature of A Level work but the emphasis still lies in understanding and speaking the language. Lessons are conducted to a great extent in French and by the A Level stage students should be able to communicate confidently and clearly in the language.

Each student has a weekly conversation class with our French Assistant, either individually or in a small group. All students are encouraged to spend some time in a French-speaking country during their Sixth Form studies and there is a Sixth Form trip for an immersion language experience, as well as a day trip to the BFI which focuses on study skills of film studies and essay writing. The A Level course is taught over two years in Year 12 and Year 13.

We follow the AQA A Level specification. Topics studied in Year 12 include: family and relationships, technology, charity work, culture, music and cinema with a set film from the prescribed list. In Year 13 we study: social issues of diversity, the marginalised, criminality, aspects of political life, strikes and demonstrations, immigration and a prescribed set text in French.

For Year 12 there will be three components of the end of year examination. These marks are not carried over to the A Level in Year 13.

Year 12

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (12-14 minutes, plus 15 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1: **Listening / Reading / Translation into English** (40%)
- Paper 2: **Translation into French / Writing about a film from the prescribed list** (30%)

Year 13

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (21-23 minutes, plus 5 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1: **Listening / Reading / Translation into English and French** 2h 30m (40%)
- Paper 2: **Writing about one book and one film from the prescribed list** 2h 0m (30%)

Entry requirements: Students require a minimum of a grade 6 in French at GCSE but a higher grade offers a greater chance of success in achieving a higher grade at A Level.

Links to other subjects:

Far from being an exclusively linguistic course, this syllabus offers an insight into a wide range of current issues. French combines well with all the Humanities, Mathematics, English, Film Studies, Business, Economics and the Sciences.

Prospects after A Level:

Some students go on to do degree courses in languages, often using the skills they have learnt at school to take up a new language like Arabic, Russian or Mandarin. Others pursue higher education courses in a vast range of subjects with a language option alongside their main specialism.

Even if you choose not to continue with your language after school, having a languages qualification may improve your employability, particularly with international companies. It is becoming increasingly common to find that a second language is a prerequisite for a job.



Geography

Exam board: [CIE](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr B Day

Course Content:

The Geography course that we follow will have ten components: six in Year 12, and four in Year 13. Two teachers provide support throughout the course, one teaching Physical Geography and the other focusing on Human Geography.

Year 12 Physical Geography will include rivers, rocks and landscape, and atmosphere.

Year 13 Physical Geography focuses on coastal landscapes and hazards.

Year 12 Human Geography will focus on population, migration, water resources and settlement.

Year 13 Human Geography focuses on 'Trade, Aid and Tourism' and 'Disease and Geography'.

Assessment:

Papers one and two will be a mix of short answer questions (similar to GCSE) and longer style extended writing. Papers three and four will be longer mark answers and essay questions. Each exam is 1h 30m, and each contributes 25% of the course. There is no coursework.

Entry requirements: A grade 6 in Geography at GCSE would be the minimum expectation for entry to the course. If you don't have a GCSE in Geography we would be looking for a GCSE average score of at least 6.5 with a grade 7 minimum in English Language, as well as a hard-working ethos.

Links to other subjects:

Geography links to all other subjects on the curriculum. It develops analysis, evaluation, essay writing, numerical and graphical skills.

Prospects after A Level:

Geography opens the door to a wide range of degree courses, including geography, environmental science, urban planning, sustainability, international development and geology. It is a highly regarded A Level by both top universities and employers, equipping students with valuable analytical, research and data interpretation skills. This subject facilitates understanding of some of the biggest challenges facing our rapidly changing world, such as climate change, urbanisation, migration and resource management.

Many students go on to careers in areas such as environmental consultancy, conservation, business, government, education, data analysis and geographical information systems (GIS). Even if you choose not to continue with Geography after school, the transferable skills developed through the course, including problem-solving, critical thinking and fieldwork, are highly valued by employers across a wide range of sectors.

German

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr A Robinson

Course Content:

There is much more to Germany than business, beer and Vorsprung durch Technik; Europe is unthinkable without the rich and versatile contribution of Germany. German is spoken by more than 80 million people in Europe, including many in Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Sixth Form syllabus has been designed to account for the needs of students post-GCSE with an emphasis placed on a balanced and consistent development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammatical structure is an essential feature of A Level work but the emphasis still lies in understanding and speaking the language. Lessons are conducted to a great extent in the foreign language and by the A Level stage students should be able to communicate confidently and clearly in German to a high idiomatic level. Each student has, in addition to twelve timetabled periods per ten-day teaching cycle, at least one weekly conversation class with the German language assistant, either individually or in a small group. All language students are encouraged to spend some time during the post-Year 12 summer break in a German-speaking country, on either an exchange, home stay or work experience programme.

Year 12

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (12-14 minutes, plus 15 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1 **Listening / Reading / Translation into English** (40%)
- Paper 2 **Translation into German/Writing about a set book or a film from the prescribed list** (30%)

Topics in Year 12 include: relationships and family, the digital world, festivals and traditions, the cultural life of Berlin, and youth culture as well as a prescribed film in German.

Year 13

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (21-23 minutes, plus 5 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1 **Listening / Reading / Translation into English and German** 2h 30m (40%)
- Paper 2 **Writing about one book and one film from the prescribed list** 2h 0m (30%)

Topics in Year 13 include: immigration and integration, racism, Germany and the EU, and German reunification as well as a prescribed text in German.

Entry requirements: Students are required to have a minimum of grade 6 in German at GCSE but a higher grade offers a greater chance of success in achieving a higher grade at A Level.

Prospects after A Level

Some students go on to do a degree course in languages, often using the skills they have learned at school to take up a new language. Even if you choose not to continue with German after school, having a languages qualification may improve your employability, in particular with international companies. It is becoming increasingly common to find that a second language is a prerequisite for a job.

History

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Ms C Webb

Course Content:

The History A Level course, combining both early modern and modern elements, is constructed from the AQA specification. This particular combination has a number of benefits for students. It gives them the opportunity to study a period of history before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, adding breadth to their overall historical understanding. It also enables students to study modern history from an international perspective which helps them to develop a clear understanding of the key issues in the world around them.

The A Level course requires students to study three components, two of which are examined in the form of written papers and the third of which is a Historical Investigation.

Component 01: Breadth Study 2h 30m (40%)

1C - The Tudors - England, 1485-1603

Component 02: Depth Study 2h 30m (40%)

2Q - The American Dream - Reality and Illusion, 1945-1980

Component 03: Historical Investigation Internally assessed (20%)

The Historical Investigation will be focused on the relationship between Britain and South Africa, 1815-1910.

Assessment:

Each of the two examined components will require students to complete a combination of source-based and essay questions. Each examination is 2 hours 30 mins. The Historical Investigation is completed in Year 13 and takes the form of an extended essay and will be assessed internally and moderated by the exam board. There is a word limit of 4,500 words but no time limit for students for this part of the course.

Entry requirements: Anyone wishing to study History at A Level should have a genuine interest in the subject and at least a grade 6 in GCSE History. Students who have not taken History at GCSE are welcome providing their performance in English is grade 6 or above.

History is one of those A Levels that fits well with every other subject. Most obviously, the skills and content studied in History are relevant if you are interested in pursuing any of the other Humanities, English or PPE subjects at A Level. However, the skills learnt in A Level History also work well with Modern Foreign Languages and the Sciences. Many BMS students go on to read History or related subjects such as War Studies and International Relations at university. More generally, History A Level is excellent preparation for a wide range of degree courses and careers, particularly Law, Business and Media.

Latin

Exam board: OCR (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Miss E Swallow

Course Content:

At A Level, students have the opportunity to study both language and literature, gradually acquiring the language skills to read literature confidently in the original Latin. Prescribed literature texts cover a range of subjects including history, myth, religion, politics and philosophy.

The course is composed of the following four components:

Component 01: Unseen Translation (33%)

Students will have to translate two Latin passages into English.

Component 02: Comprehension (17%)

Students will answer comprehension questions in English on a passage of Latin prose.

Component 03: Latin Prose Literature (25%)

Students will study a prose text of about 200 lines. In the examination they will be asked to translate a short section of text and to answer a selection of factual and stylistic questions relating to it. Current Year 12 students are reading about an infamous murder case in Rome.

Component 04: Latin Verse Literature (25%)

Students will study a verse text of about 200 lines and will be asked to translate a short section of text and to answer a selection of factual and stylistic questions relating to it. We are currently studying selections from Virgil's Aeneid.

Entry requirements: Students should have at least a grade 6 in GCSE Latin.

Links to other subjects:

Latin traditionally attracts a diverse range of students. While its problem-solving skills may attract mathematicians and scientists, the literature side of the course appeals to those studying English and the Humanities.

Prospects after A Level:

Latin is regarded highly by both employers and universities who value the evaluative and analytical skills it develops. As well as going on to study Classics or Latin, recent students have followed a wide range of courses at university, including English, Theology, Politics, Biology, Medicine and Business. There are also several joint courses available, combining Latin with English, a Modern Foreign Language or History. Former students have gone on to pursue careers in law, accountancy, medicine and journalism.

Mathematics and Further Mathematics

Exam board: OCR (Mathematics) Edexcel (Further Mathematics) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs K Adams

Course Content:

Mathematics is a course worth studying in its own right, and as a supporting subject for the physical and social sciences. It is challenging but interesting. It builds on work students will have met at GCSE, but also introduces ideas that some of the greatest minds of the last millennium have produced. It is a sought-after qualification, both for courses in higher education and for the workplace.

Mathematics is a popular option at BMS. We study the OCR Mathematics A Level (Specification A, H240). The course is made up of two parts – Pure Mathematics (which accounts for two-thirds of the course) and Applied Mathematics (which is split equally between Statistics and Mechanics).

There are three two-hour papers which are sat at the end of Year 13.

Component 01: Pure Mathematics 2h 0m (33%)

Component 02: Pure Mathematics and Statistics 2h 0m (33%)

Component 03: Pure Mathematics and Mechanics 2h 0m (33%)

Each paper has equal weighting, and calculators may be used on all three papers.

Pure Mathematics consists of algebra, graphs, trigonometry and vectors, as well as introducing the important new area of calculus. The Applied Mathematics content is made up of Mechanics: forces, velocity and acceleration, and momentum, as well as Statistics: descriptive statistics, probability, discrete random variables, and probability distributions. It is a very good idea to have discussed your suitability for this course with your current Mathematics teacher.

Good mathematicians will want to consider taking **both Mathematics and Further Mathematics** at A Level. This course is recommended, and sometimes required, for those who want to study Mathematics at a higher level for its own sake, as well as for those who see themselves studying courses such as Physics or Engineering at degree level, or who are considering Economics at Cambridge or other top universities. In Year 1, students complete A Level Mathematics. Year 2 consists of a mix of Further Pure and Applied Modules; usually a combination of Additional Further Pure, Further Mechanics and Statistics.

We follow the Edexcel Further Mathematics (9FM0) course, and more details can be found on the Edexcel website where you can view the course specification and find a sample of past papers.

Entry requirements: To start the Mathematics course you should be expecting to achieve at least a grade 7 in Mathematics at GCSE. For Further Maths, a minimum of a grade 8 at GCSE is essential, and you will have also studied an extra qualification such as the Level 2 Further Mathematics qualification or similar. If you do not have an extra qualification, a grade 9 at GCSE is needed.

Music

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Miss D Derry

Course Content:

The Music course for Year 12 and 13 students prepares them for the AQA A Level qualification in Music. The core skills required are listening and appraising music, performing music and composing music. The A Level in Music develops the practical and creative skills learnt at GCSE level whilst at the same time fostering critical and analytical thinking about music.

Component 01: Appraising Music (40%)

Students complete a listening paper that requires both aural and extended writing skills. The listening paper is on both familiar and unfamiliar music. The areas of study are: Western Classical Tradition 1650–1910, Music for Theatre, and Art Music since 1910.

Component 02: Performance (35%)

Students are required to perform a solo and/or ensemble as an instrumentalist, or vocalist and/or music production (via technology). A minimum of ten minutes of performance in total is required. The performance takes place between March and May in the year of certification. By this time, students should perform at a minimum of practical Grade 6 standard.

Component 03: Composition (25%)

Students produce two compositions. One of the compositions requires students to complete two exercises of a four-part harmonisation and the second composition is a 'free' composition. The compositions must have a combined time of at least four and a half minutes in total. Each composition is worth 25 marks and students are required to demonstrate a wide range of musical techniques within their work.

We expect A Level students to participate in ensembles relevant to their instruments or voice. Students will be self-motivated and must be prepared to work in their own time on listening tasks and solo practice as there is always going to be more to discover about the music that we study. Students should take on responsibility for reading around the subject and listening to a wide range of music.

Entry requirements: All A Level students will have at least a grade 6 in GCSE Music, or have equivalent musical experience in lieu of this. Students are advised to be a minimum of Grade 5 standard on their main instrument when starting the A Level course. We ask A Level students to participate in ensembles relevant to their instrument/voice. We also expect A Level Music students to be members of the school choir as this greatly benefits the aural discrimination section of the listening exam.

Philosophy

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs O Thatcher

Course Content:

Philosophy means 'love of wisdom', and to enjoy this course you will need a questioning and open mind and an interest in ideas. No previous philosophical experience is necessary. The course is designed to introduce students to important philosophical themes, to help them give a clear account of arguments and develop a rigorous approach, both critical and constructive, to the study of philosophy and the nature of argument. This will be helpful to anyone who wishes to study many other subjects to a higher level, including English, all the Humanities (Geography, History, Classical Civilisation and Religious Studies) and any other discipline which requires clarity of thought. It also provides a valuable complement to the Science and Mathematics A Levels.

There has been a significant increase of students choosing to study Philosophy nationally and in several other local schools. Many go on to study it at university, and it teaches the rigour and thinking skills which are so important in the workplace. In recent years, our students have gained places to study Philosophy at University College London, Kings College London, the Universities of Warwick, Nottingham, Oxford and Cambridge.

The key features of the Philosophy course are:

- Practice and development of the ability to construct and sustain clear and coherent arguments
- Provision of a set of transferable critical thinking skills
- Thematic and text-based study
- A contribution to attainment in the key skills of communication and IT
- Compatibility with other areas of study, particularly the Humanities, but it is also found to be useful by those studying predominantly mathematical or scientific subjects.

The course is made up of two modules in Year 12 and two more in Year 13, including a study of Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge), Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind and Metaphysics of God.

The exams require responses to five questions on each topic, including both short answer and essay questions. There are two exams, each of three hours, allowing students plenty of thinking and planning time as well as writing time.

Students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, including through the use of philosophical analysis (conceptual analysis and argument analysis). They must also be able to analyse and evaluate the philosophical arguments within the subject content to form reasoned judgements.

In doing this, they will:

- Understand the ways in which philosophers have analysed the core concepts of philosophy, and be able to identify how subtle differences in analyses can have wider impacts on philosophical arguments

- Understand the main philosophical arguments within topics, through the works of philosophers, and articulate those arguments in appropriate forms correctly, clearly and precisely
- Understand the philosophical claims which are made within each topic and be able to articulate those claims correctly, clearly and precisely. Students must also articulate how those claims might relate to other topic areas
- Understand the ways in which philosophical arguments are developed, issues are raised, and arguments are reformulated in response to those issues
- Understand the similarities and differences between the forms of reasoning used in different philosophical content areas, including the similarities and differences between different kinds of knowledge
- Generate responses using appropriate philosophical formats, to a range of philosophical questions. These responses must include: articulating definitions, articulating arguments and counter-arguments, and selecting, applying and evaluating appropriate material to generate their own arguments.

Further details and information regarding special events, such as revision webinars and PPE debates, can be obtained from Mrs Thatcher.

Entry requirements: All prospective A Level Philosophy students should have achieved at least a grade 6 in GCSE English and at least a grade 6 in any GCSE Humanities subject.

Links to other subjects:

As there is a philosophical dimension to almost every subject, students will find links to any other A Level subjects they take. Philosophy students often study other PPE subjects, but not always; these subjects are Politics, Economics, Business and Psychology. Other students take Humanities subjects, Languages and Art. Mathematics students and scientists will also find some of the methods of Philosophy common to those subjects also. There are also links with Classics and Latin, with these being popular subject combinations.

Prospects after A Level:

Since Philosophy will help you become a more precise, independent and logical thinker, you will benefit from your course whether you go on to university or not. Those going on to study and practise Law often have a background in Philosophy, but the transferable skills are wide-ranging, making Philosophy a well respected qualification for a vast range of other professions. Philosophy is also an interesting and useful tool to take into a career working with Artificial intelligence (AI).



Physical Education

Exam board: OCR (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Miss H Gilbert

Course Content:

The course aims are:

- To enable students to gain an understanding of the physiological and mechanical basis of performance in sport and physical education
- To foster an understanding of the psychological and sociological factors underpinning sport and physical education.

A Level PE includes the compulsory study of: Applied Anatomy and Physiology, Exercise Physiology, Biomechanical Movement, Skill Acquisition, Sports Psychology, Sport and Society and the Role of Technology in Physical Activity and Sport. Alongside this are the practical skills of PE which are examined via a student's individual performance.

Component 01: Physiological Factors Affecting Performance 2h 0m (30%)

Students focus on systems of the human body involved in movement and physical activity. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the changes within these body systems during exercise, during exercise of differing intensities, and during recovery. Application of this theoretical knowledge will enable students to understand how changes in physiological states can influence performance in various sports.

Component Two: Psychological Factors Affecting Performance 1h 0m (20%)

Students focus on the psychological factors affecting physical activities and sports, including: models and theories that affect learning and performance in physical activities, how different methods of training and feedback work and why their effectiveness differs from person to person, group dynamics, and the effects of leadership and stress on performers.

Component 03: Socio-Cultural and Contemporary Issues 1h 0m (20%)

Students focus on the sociological and contemporary factors that influence and affect physical activity and sport for both the audience and the performer and how sport affects society. This includes the emergence and evolution of modern sport, the impact of the modern Olympic Games, and the influence ever-evolving modern technology has on the world of sport.

Component Four: Performance Within Physical Education Internally assessed (30%)

Students perform in one practical activity as either a performer or coach. Students verbally analyse and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a performance and create a viable action plan for the development of the performer, which must include detailed application of theoretical elements from all aspects of the course.

Entry requirements: In order to access the A Level PE course, students need to achieve a grade 6 in either GCSE Physical Education or GCSE Biology.

Physics

Exam board: OCR (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr J Pritchard

Course Content:

Physics looks to explain the universe around us, from the very smallest quantum phenomena to astronomical interactions. The A Level course expands upon the classical areas of Physics whilst introducing these exciting new areas of study.

Physics is vital in modern society and lies at the heart of the multitude of science and engineering disciplines. The study of Physics encourages an enquiring, logical and analytical mind; important traits for many less obviously related careers such as computing, business and finance. A key component of the study of Physics is experimentation and practical work, which underpins our course. One or two periods each week will be dedicated to an experiment and its analysis, enabling students to explore the current topic and develop appropriate practical skills. Students will keep a lab book for all experiments, which will form the basis of a practical competency endorsement at the end of the A Level.

Year 12

Forces and motion:

- Motion
- Forces in action
- Work, energy and power
- Materials
- Laws of motion and momentum

Electrons, waves and photons:

- Charge and current
- Energy, power and resistance
- Electrical circuits
- Waves
- Quantum physics

Year 13

Newtonian world and astrophysics:

- Thermal physics
- Ideal gases
- Circular motion
- Oscillations
- Gravitational fields
- Stars
- Cosmology

Particles and medical physics:

- Capacitance
- Electric fields
- Magnetic fields
- Particle physics
- Radioactivity
- Nuclear physics
- Medical imaging

There are three A Level papers, which all include synoptic assessment and multiple-choice questions. A practical competency endorsement is recorded separately.

Entry requirements: Students wishing to study Physics in the Sixth Form should have achieved at least a grade 6 in GCSE Physics or grades 6,6 in Dual Award Science. In the case of the latter, students must have achieved at least a grade 6 in the Physics components. All prospective students should also have a grade 6 or better in GCSE Mathematics.

Links to other subjects:

Physics is primarily a problem-solving subject. The skills you learn are obviously mathematical, but you will also learn how to communicate your ideas in a logical form and see to the core of many problems in order to find sensible solutions. These skills can be easily transferrable to areas of management, finance, law and many others. Physics has links to many subjects apart from the other Sciences, such as: Music, DT, Computer Science, Mathematics and even English Literature where your analytical skills can be used to evaluate texts.

Prospects after A Level:

After English and Mathematics, Physics is the most important qualification for a great many careers. Employers rate Physics qualifications very highly, particularly if you study it to A Level or higher. Physics is also regarded as a valuable subject in the fields of finance, law, medicine, management, and a host of other occupations.



Politics

Exam board: Edexcel (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr S Baker

Course Content:

A Level Politics has a very wide appeal, not only to those with an interest in politics and current affairs, but also those who seek to broaden their debating, presentation and analytical skills. Our results at A Level are excellent and our teachers are examiners for the subject. The Politics Department regularly achieves one of the highest percentages of A/A* grades in the school with many students achieving full marks for various papers.

There are a large number of day, evening and residential trips offered, which allow students to access Politics outside of the classroom. For Year 12 students, there has been a trip to Edinburgh to study Devolution and the Scottish Parliament. For Year 13 A Level students, there is a trip to Washington DC to study American Politics and visit important institutions such as Congress and the Supreme Court. We also participate in Model UN Conference, European Youth Parliament plus a Mock Trial competition at Bedford Magistrates Court for those interested in a career in Law.

Component 01: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas 2h 0m

Topics covered include: Democracy and Participation, Political Parties, UK Elections and voting behaviour and the role of the media, plus ideologies such as Socialism, Liberalism and Conservatism.

Component 02: UK Government and Optional Political Ideas 2h 0m

Topics covered include: the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Parliament, Devolution/EU and Judiciary and Civil Liberties, plus an optional ideology such as Nationalism.

Component 03: US Politics and Comparative Politics 2h 0m

Topics covered include: Presidential Elections, the US Constitution, US Pressure Groups, Racial and Ethnic Politics, US Congress, the US Supreme Court and Federalism. In the Comparative Politics section, students will compare UK/US Politics and consider questions such as: 'Who is more powerful - the President or the Prime Minister?'

Year 12

- Trip to meet MPs
- UK Politics: Democracy, Parties, Elections and Voting Behaviour
- Westminster trip to Parliament, Downing Street and Supreme Court
- UK Government: Parliament, Prime Ministers, Constitution and EU/Devolution
- Ideologies: Liberalism, Socialism, Conservatism and Nationalism

Year 13

- Trip to meet US politicians

- US Politics: Presidents, Congress, Supreme Court, Parties
- USA trip - New York, Philadelphia and Washington
- Comparative Politics: Comparing UK vs US policies - e.g. Prime Ministers vs Presidents

Entry requirements: Students should have an interest in current affairs and be willing to debate and discuss in lessons. A grade 6 in GCSE English or a GCSE Humanity subject is required.

Links to other subjects:

Politics works well with any sort of subject as it is very accessible and flexible. Many of our students combine it with other PPE or Humanities subjects. However we have many students who combine Politics with subjects such as Languages, Sciences and Mathematics.

Prospects after A Level:

Students who study A Level Politics have access to a wide range of possible careers and higher education opportunities. Government and Politics combines well with a range of Science and Humanities subjects which can lead to university courses in areas such as Business, Economics, Law, Media and Philosophy, as well as Politics itself. We have many alumni who studied A Level Politics who are working in Government, Law, Public Relations and Business.



Psychology

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mrs D Smith

Course Content:

Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour. Why do we think, feel, and behave the way we do? How should psychologists conduct research that is scientific, ethical and has practical applications?

Students follow the AQA course which gives them the opportunity to learn core scientific knowledge and develop theoretical and practical skills that are valued by higher education and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. The study of Psychology contributes to students' broader understanding of scientific, ethical and social issues. Thus, it promotes understanding of self and others, challenging preconceptions.

Studying Psychology encourages students to:

- Understand the main causes of human behaviour
- Develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other
- Develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- Develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- Develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- Understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the Sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society.

Year 12

Social influence, memory, attachment, approaches, biopsychology, psychopathology, clinical psychology and mental health, and research methods. 10% of marks are awarded for mathematical skills.

Year 13

Issues and debates, relationships, schizophrenia and forensic psychology. 25% of marks are awarded for mathematical content and research methods.

Assessment:

At A Level there are three exams, each accounting for one third of the A Level. They each last two hours and are worth 96 marks each. The exams consist of short answer and extended writing questions.

Entry requirements: Grade 6 in GCSE English Language or Literature, and a grade 6 in GCSE Biology and one other Science.

Religious Studies

Exam board: Eduqas (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Mr J Hooper

Course Content:

Religious Studies is an increasingly popular subject to study at A Level. This is due in part to the consistently strong GCSE results in the subject at BMS, but mostly because of the content of the course. The course aims to promote an enquiring, critical and empathetic approach to the study of belief systems. It is therefore equally as suited to those taking science-focused subjects as it is to those with an interest in Humanities or Arts.

There is a great deal of contiguity across the curriculum, particularly in terms of the skills required in other essay based subjects such as English or History. As a department we focus on the skills of academic argument and reasoning, which link to and assist in the development of clarity of thought.

We follow the Eduqas course which is comprised of three components – The Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and the Study of Islam. It is entirely examined with no coursework.

Year 12

- In the Philosophy of Religion students look at the existence of God, challenges to religious belief and religious experience
- In Ethics students look at ethical thought, deontological ethics and teleological ethics, including the application of theories to contemporary issues
- In Islam students look at key religious figures and texts, the concept of Allah and religious practices that shape identity.

Year 13

- In the Philosophy of Religion students build upon their knowledge of challenges to religious belief and religious experience as well as introducing the theme of religious language
- In Ethics students build upon religious thought and deontological ethics as well as introducing determinism and free will
- In Islam students build upon their knowledge of religious figures and texts alongside religious practices that shape identity, as well as introducing Islamic attitudes to politics, the State and the West.

Assessment:

There is a two-hour exam for each of the three components, so students will sit a total of six hours of examinations for Religious Studies. Each exam has equal weighting and each question should be answered in the form of a two-part essay.

Entry requirements: A Level Religious Studies is a highly engaging subject, and you can expect classes to involve a considerable amount of discussion and debate. To get the most out of the subject, you must be

willing to participate in these discussions, both sharing your own ideas and listening and respecting the views of others. You will develop skills of critical evaluation and analysis, which you will practice within these discussions and in essay writing. Whilst a GCSE in the subject is desirable, it isn't essential. You would need to achieve at least a grade 6 in GCSE Religious Studies if you have taken it or a grade 6 in another similar essay-based evaluative GCSE subject, like History or English. Religious Studies is very accessible at A Level, provided you have a desire to understand the basics of major world religions, and to focus on developing strong writing skills. Alongside these skills, you need to have a keen interest in the subject, including a desire to broaden your knowledge and understanding of religion, philosophy and ethics, and to develop your skills in critical thinking and analysis.

Links to other subjects:

The course aims to promote an enquiring, critical and empathetic approach to the study of belief systems. It is therefore equally as suited to those taking science-focused subjects as it is to those with an interest in Humanities or Arts. There is a great deal of contiguity across the curriculum, particularly in terms of the skills required in other essay-based subjects such as English or History.

Prospects after A Level:

A Level Religious Studies can provide you with excellent transferable skills, from essay writing, to developing confidence in debating, to developing the ability to appreciate other viewpoints. These skills can be incredibly helpful in a range of university degrees involving critical thinking and discussion such as Humanities, English, Psychology and PPE. Religious Studies or a related subject at degree level can lead to a range of challenging and rewarding jobs, using either direct knowledge gained from the subject or from the skills gained. Possible jobs from a Religious Studies degree include: lecturing, teaching, advice worker, archivist, working within 'third sector' organisations, counselling, community development worker, police officer and youth worker.



Spanish

Exam board: [AQA](#) (click for further information)

Head of Subject: Ms S Sobrado

Course Content:

As the Mexican author Carlos Fuentes said in 1998: "Hablar más de una lengua no daña a nadie. El monolingüismo es una enfermedad curable." ("Speaking more than one language never hurt anyone... but speaking just one language can be cured.")

There is no doubt that the knowledge of a foreign language is an asset in the job market in Europe and in the world, where Spanish is spoken as the first language of trade in most Latin American countries. Fluency in Spanish is a much sought-after skill and completing an A Level Spanish course will equip you with skills in all key areas including speaking, listening, reading and writing.

We follow the AQA A Level specification. Topics studied in Year 12 include: family and relationships, technology, sex equality, culture, regional identity, music and cinema with a set film from the prescribed list. In Year 13 we study: social issues of diversity, immigration, aspects of political life in the Hispanic world, the dictatorship of Franco and the transition to the Spanish monarchy, strikes and a prescribed set text in Spanish.

Students are taught by two teachers over 12 periods per fortnight, and also have a weekly conversation class with a Spanish native speaker. Every year students have the opportunity to participate in a language and work experience trip to Spain.

Year 12

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (12-14 minutes, plus 15 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1: **Listening / Reading / Translation into English** (40%)
- Paper 2: **Translation into Spanish / Writing about a set book or film from the prescribed list** (30%)

Year 13

- Non-exam assessment: **Speaking Test** (30%) (21-23 minutes, plus 5 minutes preparation time)
- Paper 1: **Listening / Reading / Translation into English** 2h 30m (40%)
- Paper 2: **Writing about two set books or a film and a book from the prescribed list** 2h 0m (30%)

Entry requirements: Students require a minimum of grade 6 in Spanish at GCSE but a higher grade offers a greater chance of success in achieving a higher grade at A Level.

Some students go on to do a degree course in languages, often using the skills they have learned at school to take up a new language. Even if you choose not to continue with Spanish after school, having a languages qualification may improve your employability, in particular with international companies. It is becoming increasingly common to find that a second language is a prerequisite for a job. As well as this, it will allow you to travel to many Spanish-speaking countries.

