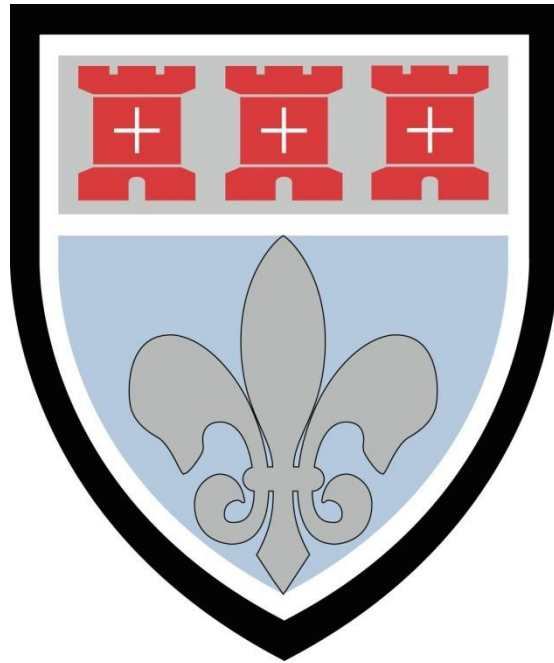


ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL



SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM CHOICE BOOKLET

COURSE INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

Shining together in faith, joy and love

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Guidance

We are delighted that you are considering St Mary's Sixth Form as the place to continue your studies. In this booklet, you will find detailed information about the subjects we offer at Sixth Form, including an overview of each course, assessment methods, potential progression opportunities, and the entry requirements for each subject.

In the coming months, we will work closely with all students to provide personalised guidance on their subject choices for Key Stage 5. It is important that students select an appropriate programme of study, balancing their aspirations and interests with the level of challenge each course presents. Our goal is to ensure that every student at St Mary's leaves having reached their full potential.

We use a wide range of national data to assess the relative difficulty of subjects. This information helps guide students in selecting a combination of courses that aligns with their strengths and goals.

At St Mary's we offer the following pathways to students:

- **4 A-Levels**
- **3 A-Levels and an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)**
- **3 A-Levels and an AS qualification in Thinking Skills**
- **3 A-Levels and an AS qualification in Core Mathematics**
- **3 A-Levels**
- **A combination of A-Levels and vocational courses**
- **A combination of GCSE resit courses and A-Levels and/or vocational courses**
- **3 vocational courses**

Students are guided towards a suitable pathway and advised to choose subjects based on their GCSE performance and overall GCSE grade average.

At St Mary's, the vast majority of students pursue three A-Levels.

Core Curriculum

The following subjects are all compulsory at St Mary's Sixth Form:

Core Religious Education

- All students in the Sixth Form continue to study Religious Education.
- Students build on their GCSE Core RE studies, deepening their understanding of spirituality, theology, and ethics.
- Students leave St Mary's with a National Level 3 qualification in RE (NOCN RE) which gives the students 8 UCAS points.
- Students spend **two hours a fortnight** studying core Religious Education.
- Philosophy and Ethics is also available as an A-Level to complement this course.

Core Physical Education

- All students follow a practical course in PE.
- Students spend **two hours a fortnight** studying core Physical Education.
- The students are expected to participate in a wide range of activities using the sports facilities which include the Sports Fields, Sports Hall, Activity Studio and Fitness Suite.
- Students develop skills such as team building, leadership and organisation alongside an appreciation for health and fitness.
- Sport is also available as an A-level to complement this course.

Personal Development

- All students follow our bespoke Personal Development Programme building upon the activities carried out in Key Stage 3 and 4.
- Students spend **two hours a fortnight** studying Personal Development.
- Our varied and exciting Personal Development Programme offers students the opportunity to develop both life and learning skills that will help them in their studies and in their preparations for life after Sixth Form.
- Our Personal Development curriculum equips students with a strong understanding of contemporary issues, essential skills for employment and further education, a clear sense of adult responsibilities, and thorough preparation for academic assessments.

All students are expected to complete every aspect of our Sixth Form Core Curriculum, which is designed to complement their Key Stage 5 subject choices.

Wider Curriculum

As well as our taught curriculum, St Mary's Sixth Form has an extensive wider curriculum, which we encourage all students to participate in.

Super-Curricular

- All students in the Sixth Form complete **one hour** of directed Super-Curricular (topics beyond the taught curriculum) work each week.
- Our Super-Curriculum encapsulates all those activities that foster academic endeavour beyond the measurable outcomes of examination results.
- Super-Curricular work can focus on enhancing the student's understanding of their existing subjects, develop an interest they already have or increase their employability skills for the future.
- Students complete this work independently but are given clear, directed guidance to carry out a variety of activities such as virtual work experience and extended reading.

Student Leadership Scheme

- As the most senior students in the school, Sixth Form students are expected to act as positive role models for all other students in the school community guiding them both academically and pastorally.
- Students complete their Student Leadership tasks weekly and are entrusted with leadership roles in various aspects of school life, with activities such as running extra-curricular activities, acting as classroom assistants, and assisting staff.
- We encourage our students to always display the Gospel values and support others in the community. This includes our charity and fundraising initiatives and mentoring and volunteering programmes, which are sub-divisions of our Student Leadership Scheme.

Enrichment Award

- Students are encouraged to actively participate in our numerous enrichment opportunities across the school and are awarded our Sixth Form Enrichment Award for their continued participation.
- Students are eligible to achieve our Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum Enrichment Awards throughout their time in the Sixth Form.
- Activities which contribute towards the Enrichment Award include attending our weekly Sixth Form Enrichment Sessions/Workshops from various universities and employers, attending our Key Stage 5 specific clubs such as the 'Law Society' and 'Aspire to Oxbridge' Group, participating in our Sixth Form Mentoring and Volunteering Scheme, being part of our Student Leadership Team and joining our Sixth Form Spirituality Team.

GCSE Resits

At St Mary's Sixth Form, we are committed to ensuring that all students achieve the qualifications required for progression into further study, training or skilled employment. In line with national policy, students who have not achieved at least a Grade 4 in GCSE Mathematics and/or GCSE English (Language or Literature) are required to resit these subjects during their time in the Sixth Form. This is a mandatory requirement set by the Department for Education, and as such it is not optional and must be followed by the school and by students.

Achieving a Level 2 qualification in both Mathematics and English is essential for access to many future opportunities, including higher education, apprenticeships and a wide range of careers. Our programme is designed to provide focused support so that students have the best possible chance of securing these key qualifications.

Targeted teaching is delivered in dedicated Sixth Form classes by subject specialists. Students typically receive three hours per week of taught GCSE English and four hours per week of taught GCSE Mathematics. Lessons are planned to address individual areas of weakness, consolidate prior learning and build the skills and knowledge needed for success.

Participation in these resit courses is built into each student's Sixth Form timetable. Depending on prior attainment and need, students will either:

- take GCSE English or GCSE Mathematics **alongside three Key Stage 5 courses** (subject to option blocks), or
- take both GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics **alongside two Key Stage 5 courses** (subject to option blocks).

GCSE English and Mathematics resit classes take priority over all other subjects on the student timetable. Consequently, it may not always be possible for students to study all their preferred Key Stage 5 course choices where there is a clash with these compulsory resit classes.

Resit examinations are normally sat twice per year, in November and June, providing regular opportunities to secure a Grade 4 or above. Teaching and timetabled lessons will continue until the required grade is achieved. This resit curriculum is a central part of our provision and reflects our commitment to enabling every student to progress successfully to their next stage of education, training or employment.

General Entry Requirements

Joining our Sixth Form is a voluntary decision. By enrolling, students agree to uphold the general expectations of our school, and the specific standards set for our Sixth Form. It is important that this decision is made with careful consideration, as a strong work ethic, good behaviour, reliable attendance, and punctuality are essential for success. Additionally, active participation in the wider aspects of Sixth Form life, such as full engagement in the Core Curriculum and support for the school ethos, is required. Students who have demonstrated poor attendance, punctuality, or work ethic in Year 11 (unless due to valid medical reasons) are less likely to thrive in Sixth Form, where academic demands are higher. These factors will be carefully reviewed throughout Year 11, and, if needed, discussed with students during the transition to Sixth Form.

Each specific course in Sixth Form has different entry requirements, based on the level of challenge it presents and a student's performance in Key Stage 4. We assess the overall GCSE grade, as well as the breakdown of the grades. For instance, a student with a Grade 6 in a subject may wish to pursue it at A-level, but if their performance in the written exam was a Grade 5, we may advise against taking it, particularly if extended writing is a key component of the A-level. Some courses, such as those in Science, may require a higher minimum grade in both the subject itself and related subjects, such as Mathematics, due to the mathematical demands of the A-level. Similarly, for subjects that involve significant written work, a minimum grade in English may be required. Additionally, we consider the combination of subjects a student plans to study. In some cases, a student may be capable of succeeding in a challenging A-level but struggle with a combination of multiple demanding subjects. In such situations, we may strongly advise against the proposed combination.

In general, students are most likely to succeed in traditional, academic A-levels if they have achieved a range of GCSEs, including several at grades 7-9, along with some at Grade 6. Ideally, a student would have a Grade 7 or higher in their chosen A-level subject, but we may consider a Grade 6 if there is evidence of strong performance in key components of the GCSE or if there were mitigating circumstances affecting the grade. For certain A-levels, especially those with a practical component, a Grade 6 or higher will typically be required, with exceptions made for a Grade 5 in some cases. Students with grades in the 4-6 range are generally better suited for our vocational courses.

Further details on individual courses can be found in this booklet. Throughout Year 11, we will engage with students to discuss entry requirements and ensure they are well-prepared for their Sixth Form studies.

Sixth Form Entry Requirements by Subject

To ensure success in the Sixth Form, it is essential that students returning to St Mary's fully adhere to our expectations. School leaders provide guidance and support to Year 11 students, helping them select the most suitable combination of subjects based on their overall GCSE performance and their chosen courses. The information provided below, for each subject, should be considered alongside the broader entry requirements, which are equally important:

Students are expected to demonstrate, and have demonstrated in Year 11, a strong work ethic, an outstanding attitude to learning, and excellent attendance and punctuality. They must also fully comply with the Sixth Form Dress Code, having consistently adhered to the school's uniform expectations throughout Year 11.

| Subject | GCSE (Minimum) Grade Entry Requirement |
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| Art | Grade 5 in Art |
| Biology | Grade 7 in Biology or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics |
| Business Studies (A-Level) | Grade 5 in English Language and Grade 5 in Mathematics |
| Chemistry | Grade 7 in Chemistry or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics |
| Computer Science | Grade 6 in Computer Science and Grade 6 in Mathematics |
| Design Technology: Product Design | Grade 5 in DT or Art |
| Drama | Grade 5 in Drama and Grade 5 in English Literature or Language |
| English Language | Grade 6 in English Language |
| English Literature | Grade 6 in English Literature |
| Extended Project (EPQ) | Grade 5 in English Language |
| Film Studies | Grade 5 in English Language or English Literature |
| French | Grade 6 in French |
| Geography | Grade 6 in Geography |
| History | Grade 6 in History |
| Mathematics | Grade 7 in Mathematics |
| Further Mathematics | Grade 7 in Mathematics and Grade 7 in Physics |
| Core Mathematics | |
| Music | Grade 6 in Music |
| Photography | Grade 5 in Art |
| Physical Education | Grade 6 in Sport |
| Physics | Grade 7 in Physics or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics |
| Psychology | Grade 6 in English Language and Grade 6 in Mathematics |
| Philosophy & Ethics | Grade 6 in RE |
| Politics | Grade 5 in History |
| Sociology | Grade 5 in English Language or Literature |
| Spanish | Grade 6 in Spanish |
| Vocational Business Studies | Merit in Business or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature |
| Vocational Health and Social Care | Merit in Health or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature |
| Vocational Science | Grade 4 in Science or Grade 4-4 in Combined Science |
| Vocational Early Childhood Development | Merit in Health or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature |
| Vocational IT | Merit in IT or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature |

We cannot guarantee that every course will run, as the number of students selecting a subject may require us to adjust our plans.

Sixth Form Course Outlines

Art



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in Art. In exceptional circumstances, evidence of a portfolio could be considered. |
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| Outline of the Course | This is an intensive course which can involve painting, drawing, sculpture and mixed media. There is a modular structure with two units to be completed over the two years. Students are required to investigate external artistic sources within both of their modules and can choose any artists or artisans who they feel will help develop their own work. All projects should include studies, sketches and drawings which are developed through purposeful experimentation with media and materials into a final series of final pieces. Lessons are broadly skills based and feature teaching in the use of paints, drawing, mixed media sculpture and various other media. Students are expected to work in the studio during their study time researching and learning for themselves the possibilities of the media, scale, composition etc. Their outcomes are expected to be high quality, creative and above all an individual response and exploration of their chosen themes and ideas. Students will be encouraged to visit a range of art galleries and respond to learning about art from different times and cultures. |
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| Assessment | <p>Component 1 - Course Work and a Personal Study, an essay of at least 1,000 words that is based on an element of the theme chosen as the focus for the whole unit (60% of the final mark and is based on a project with a theme or focus chosen by the student at the end of Year 12)</p> <p>Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment (40% of the final grade and is based on a project which stems from a response to a title set by the examination board, 15-hour exam).</p> <p>Units are teacher-assessed throughout the course via a series of one-to-one tutorials and student critiques. At the end of the course all students are expected to exhibit both of their units in a final show. This is finally assessed by staff according to the exam board assessment criteria and these marks are moderated by a visiting external examiner.</p> |
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| Future Progression | The development of creative thinking, which is encouraged through the problem-solving involved in exploring themes and issues, puts students in a valuable position as applicants to colleges and universities, and to employers who are looking for bright young people with a range of exciting ideas. Students can go on to study degree-level Art and Design, Fine Art, Fashion, set design and the many other arts-based courses which can be a pathway towards employment in many careers directly involved in art and other careers which are reliant on developed creative skills. Architecture, Town planning, Landscape Design, Graphic Design, Illustration and Film Art are just a few of the careers followed by recent students of A-Level Art. |
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Biology



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 7 in Biology or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>AQA A-Level Biology is an ideal course for students who are curious about how living organisms work, from molecules inside cells to whole ecosystems. Students begin by studying biological molecules and cells, learning about the structure and function of key molecules like proteins and DNA, and how cells are organised, specialised and adapted. They then explore how organisms exchange substances with their environment, such as gas exchange, digestion and transport systems in plants and animals.</p> <p>The course looks in depth at genetic information, variation, and relationships between organisms, including DNA, inheritance and how species are classified and related. Students study energy transfers in and between organisms, focusing on photosynthesis, respiration and nutrient cycles, and how energy flows through ecosystems. They also learn how organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments, covering the nervous system, hormones and homeostasis.</p> <p>Later topics include genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems, considering natural selection, biodiversity and the impact of human activity, and the control of gene expression, including modern genetic technologies.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A Level Biology is a linear course, with all assessments at the end of Year 13. Practical work will be assessed in the written papers. 15% of the total A-level marks will be for practical knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>A separate 'endorsement' of practical work will be assessed by teachers when students carry out required practical experiments in lessons. This will not be graded. If students pass, it will be reported on their certificate, otherwise it will not be reported.</p> <p>Examinations</p> <p>There are 3 written papers at the end of Year 13 carried out during the summer term. Each paper is 2 hours.</p> <p>Paper 1 is worth 91 marks and is 35% of the overall grade.</p> <p>Paper 2 is worth 91 marks and is 35% of the overall grade.</p> <p>Paper 3 is worth 78 marks and is 30% of the overall grade. The paper consisting of 38 marks of structured questions, including practical techniques, 15 marks of critical analysis, and a 25-mark essay question.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Entry into Higher Education institutions to study a very wide range of courses in faculties of Science, Medicine, Business, Law, and a variety of combined courses leading to rewarding and satisfying employment.</p> <p>A small number of students prefer to enter the job market direct from Sixth Form.</p> |
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Business Studies



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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in English Language and Grade 5 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Business is structured into four themes and consists of three externally examined papers.</p> <p>Students are introduced to business in Themes 1 and 2 through building knowledge of core business concepts and applying them to business contexts to develop a broad understanding of how businesses work. Breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, with applications to a wider range of contexts and more complex business information, are developed in Themes 3 and 4, requiring students to take a more strategic view of business opportunities and issues.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to use an enquiring, critical and thoughtful approach to the study of business, to understand that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives and to challenge assumptions.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1: Marketing, people and global business Assessing Theme 1 and Theme 4. Paper 2: Business activities, decisions and strategy Assessing Theme 2 and Theme 3. Paper 3: Investigating business in a competitive environment Assessing all themes.</p> <p>There will be also end of topic tests running across both years as well as full mock papers in Year 12 and Year 13.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to real-life business contexts, with updated content to reflect the issues impacting on modern businesses in our specification and real business case studies in all our assessments.</p> <p>Students will develop transferable skills that support higher education study and the transition to employment, including numeracy, communication, an understanding of the business environment and commercial awareness.</p> <p>Students can progress from this qualification to higher education courses such as business management, business administration, accountancy and finance, human resource management, marketing, retail management, tourism management and international business. Or they could progress into a wide range of careers ranging from banking, sales, product management and general management to working in public sector organisations or charities.</p> |
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Vocational Business Studies

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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | Cambridge Technicals in Business |



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| Entry Requirements | Merit in Business or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>There are 5 units – 3 mandatory units (Unit 1 and 2 – externally examined, and 3 other units internally marked and externally moderated).</p> <p>This qualification will provide learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding to progress into higher education on a business-related programme such as Business, Business Management, Marketing, Business and Finance, Business and Economics, Accounting, Human Resource Management, and other related subject areas. It will also allow learners to choose non-business-related degree programmes.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Students are expected to build portfolios of evidence for each optional unit studied as well as prepare for two external exams (entitled to one re-sit). The optional units are internally assessed and externally moderated. The assessment of units can take place at a time that is appropriate for students and the school (i.e. a student can present a unit for assessment as required).</p> <p>Students will be awarded the following grades if successful: Pass – equivalent to grade E at A-level. Merit – equivalent to grade C at A-level. Distinction – equivalent to grade A at A-level. Distinction* – equivalent to grade A* at A-level.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Businesses are the heart of the economy. They develop innovation, create wealth within communities and lead the way in enhancing the skills of the UK workforce. The OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical in Business encapsulate this through a wide range of units. It is an ideal foundation for students entering the workplace or moving on to higher education, providing them with a theoretical background reinforced with practical skills that transfer into the modern workplace.</p> |
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Chemistry



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 7 in Chemistry or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>CR A-Level Chemistry is a demanding but rewarding course for students who are interested in how substances behave, react and are used in the real world. In Year 12, students develop their practical skills, learning how to carry out experiments safely, record results accurately and analyse data – skills that are assessed throughout the course. Foundations in Chemistry introduces key ideas such as atomic structure, bonding, moles and reactions, which underpin all later topics. Students then study the Periodic Table and Energy, exploring trends in element properties, reaction energetics and how chemistry explains patterns in the natural and industrial world. Core Organic Chemistry focuses on carbon-based molecules, including their structures, reactions and importance in everyday materials and pharmaceuticals.</p> <p>In Year 13, practical skills continue to be developed and assessed alongside more advanced content. Physical Chemistry and Transition Elements covers reaction rates, equilibrium, pH, redox and the distinctive chemistry of transition metals, linking closely to real applications such as catalysis. Organic Chemistry and Analysis extends students' understanding of organic reactions and introduces modern analytical techniques, such as spectroscopy, used to identify substances in research and industry.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A Level Chemistry is a linear course, with all assessments at the end of Year 13. There are 3 written papers at the end of Year 13 carried out during the summer term. The course is a linear course and there is no coursework element to the course.</p> <p>Paper 1 assesses the content from Modules 1, 2, 3 and 5 Paper 2 assesses the content from Modules 1, 2, 4 and 6 Paper 3 assesses the content from Modules 1 to 6</p> <p>Practical skills are assessed internally, and students are awarded either Pass/Fail, which is recorded on their A-level certificates as a practical endorsement. This unit is not used in the accreditation of their A level grades at the end of the respective courses.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>A qualification in A-level Chemistry will enable a student to enter the world of work (e.g. Laboratory Technician) or Higher Education. A student with A-level qualifications in Chemistry has a vast choice of subjects to study at university (e.g. Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medicine and Dentistry).</p> |
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Computer Science



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in Computer Science and Grade 6 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>AQA A-Level Computer Science helps students understand how computers work, how to program them, and how technology affects our lives. The course begins with the fundamentals of programming, data structures and algorithms, teaching students how to design, write and test their own programs while developing a systematic approach to problem-solving. They learn how data is represented and stored inside a computer, how different data structures are used in practice, and how very large data sets (big data) can be processed and analysed.</p> <p>Students also study computer systems, including how hardware and software work together, how a computer is organised internally, and how instructions are carried out. They explore communication and networking, looking at how computers connect, share information and stay secure, alongside how databases are used to store and manage data in real-world applications. The course introduces both traditional and functional programming styles, helping students to think flexibly about how to solve problems.</p> <p>Throughout, students consider the wider consequences of computing, including ethical, legal and social issues such as privacy, security and the impact of new technologies on society.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1 – On Screen Exam 2.5 hours – 40% of A-level</p> <p>Paper 2 – Written Exam 2.5 hours – 40% of A-level</p> <p>Non-exam Assessment – 20% of A-level</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>The Computer Science course allows students to develop high-level practical skills that are very much in demand in the modern workplace. The UK, and particularly the Northeast, has a large IT industry and there are many opportunities available. Students may go on to study a variety of university courses such as Computer Science or Information Technology. Alternatively, students may also decide to apply for apprenticeships, with many available from large local employers such as Accenture, Sage, DXC and Ubisoft.</p> |
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Drama and Theatre Studies



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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in Drama and Grade 5 in English Literature or Language. In exceptional circumstances, evidence of a portfolio could be considered. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>There are three components to the A-level qualification.</p> <p>Component One: 40% of the qualification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise an original performance piece in response to a play that is chosen by the teacher. This piece will be performed in the style of a theatre practitioner. 2. Portfolio of work to support the performance work. <p>Component Two: 20% of the qualification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A group performance of an extract chosen by the teacher to cater to the skills of the students on the course. 2. A monologue and/or duologue. <p>Component Three: 40% of the qualification</p> <p>Written Examination: 2 hours 30 minutes</p> <p>Section A: Students will see a piece of theatre prior to the exam and answer an extended response question. They are allowed notes of up to 500 words in the exam.</p> <p>Section B: Students will revisit <i>Machinal</i> by Sophie Treadwell and will answer two extended questions based on an unseen extract.</p> <p>Section C: Students will study <i>Woyzeck</i> by Georg Buchner and, in the role of director, answer a question that communicates their ideas for a contemporary performance of the play.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Component One: Internally assessed and externally moderated</p> <p>Component Two: Externally assessed by a visiting examiner</p> <p>Component Three: Externally examined</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Drama allows students to develop skills for life and, although students may not want to pursue a career within the performing arts, the skills they will develop in the drama classroom will be priceless in any career they pursue. Students will find themselves to be confident speakers, able to work with many different people in varying group sizes, be aware of how to present themselves in job interviews, presentations or auditions, be able to analyse and evaluate, and have a rich understanding of how to interact and communicate with others.</p> <p>Studying Drama and Theatre is useful for students considering higher education in any arts or humanities subject including English Language and Literature, Journalism, Dance, Music, Art and Design, and Media Studies.</p> <p>Career opportunities for students who study Drama and Theatre include arts/theatre administration, teaching, arts journalism, directing, acting, designing, stage-management, theatre-management, technician, broadcasting, media presenting, drama therapy and scriptwriting.</p> |
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Vocational Early Childhood Development

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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development |



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| Entry Requirements | Merit in Health or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>This qualification is designed for students interested in learning about the early years sector and child development. It covers the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for working in the sector or progressing to a related course in higher education.</p> <p>In this qualification, you will explore theories and models of child development and how these relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). You will develop an understanding of a range of factors that may influence children's development and consider both short- and long-term effects. Additionally, you will learn the theoretical principles behind children's language, literacy, and numeracy development and how these can be applied in an Early Years setting.</p> <p>Although work experience is no longer a mandatory requirement, students will still undertake approximately 30 hours in at least one setting with children from birth to seven years and 11 months. During this experience, you will be observed working with children and staff, helping you to develop essential skills and knowledge for working in the sector.</p> <p>Year 1 Unit 1: Children's Development (<i>externally assessed</i>) Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe (<i>externally assessed</i>)</p> <p>Year 2 Unit 3: Play and Learning (<i>internally assessed</i>) Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting (<i>internally assessed</i>)</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Students undertake four units to complete the programme of study. This includes two exam units that will be externally assessed and two coursework units that will be internally assessed. Internally assessed coursework units will be marked by the subject teacher and will be subject to internal and external verification. Students will be provided with BTEC assessment guidelines to ensure that they are fully aware of how to meet coursework criteria.</p> <p>Students will also be assessed in their work-placements in relation to their attitude, ability to work within a team and their skills and abilities when conducting activities with the children.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>This qualification is designed primarily to support progression to higher education into relevant courses such as BA (Hons) Primary Education and Childhood Studies. However, this qualification will also be relevant for those choosing to progress directly to employment or an Early Years Educator Apprenticeship.</p> |
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English Language



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in English Language. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level English Language is designed for students who are interested in how language really works in everyday life – in conversation, the media, online and in different social groups. In Year 12, students study <i>Language and the Individual</i> and <i>Language Varieties</i>, exploring how language reflects identity, age, gender, region and social background. They also begin to look at <i>Language Diversity and Change</i>, considering how English has developed over time and how it varies around the world.</p> <p>In Year 13, these ideas are brought together in <i>Language, the Individual and Society</i> and continued work on <i>Language Diversity and Change</i>, with students analysing a wide range of real texts, from historical documents to adverts and social media. They also complete a <i>Language Investigation</i>, where they choose their own area of interest (for example, political speeches, sports commentary or children’s language) and carry out independent research. Alongside this, they produce a piece of <i>Original Writing</i>, such as a blog, article or short story, with a reflective commentary.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1: Language, the individual and society – Textual variations and representations and children’s language development 40% of A-Level.</p> <p>Paper 2: Language diversity and change – Diversity and change and language discourses 40% of A-Level.</p> <p>Non-exam assessment: Language investigation and original writing 20% of A-Level.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Students with English Language as a qualification often progress to higher education. It is suited to disciplines where communication skills, in both speech and writing, are paramount. Students who have followed a career path soon after A-Levels have gone into areas as diverse as the Speech and Language Therapy, PR and Media, Banking and Professional Sport.</p> <p>Progression routes include teaching/working with young children; reading, writing, speaking, and listening are central to any child’s learning. Primary or secondary teaching is rewarding. Section B of Paper 1 (A-Level English Language) in particular helps to prepare those looking to work with young children. The non-exam assessed responses directly develop writing skills and serve as an excellent introduction to journalism. The ability to read carefully, assimilate information quickly and exercise judgement wisely also makes Law a natural course to take. The ability to assess and evaluate speech also aids students in their progression towards this discipline.</p> |
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English Literature



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in English Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level English Literature is an exciting and challenging course for students who enjoy reading, thinking deeply and discussing ideas. In Year 12, students are introduced to literary genres through the study of Shakespeare and one other drama text, exploring how writers use character, structure and language to present powerful stories on stage. They also study prose and poetry, comparing how different writers and time periods explore similar themes, such as love, conflict, identity or power. This develops close analytical skills and confidence in written and spoken responses.</p> <p>In Year 13, the focus deepens through the study of Aspects of Tragedy, where students consider how tragic heroes, suffering and moral dilemmas are presented in literature. They also explore Elements of Crime Writing, looking at how writers create mystery, tension and questions of justice, guilt and morality. Alongside this, students complete an independent coursework unit (Theory and Independence), where they choose their own texts and apply ideas from a critical anthology. This helps them develop independence, research skills and personal responses.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A-Level</p> <p>Paper 1: Literary Genres—Aspects of Tragedy or Comedy 2 hours 30mins, closed book, 40% of A-Level.</p> <p>Paper 2: Texts and Genres—Elements of Crime Writing or Political and Social Protest 3 hours, open book, 40% of A-Level</p> <p>Coursework: Theory and Independence 20% of A-Level</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>This course develops skills in communicating ideas and making informed judgements. It is suited to disciplines where communication in both speech and writing is paramount.</p> <p>Progression routes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to read carefully, assimilate information quickly and exercise judgement wisely makes Law a natural course to take. • The ability to listen, assess, and reach decisions about people are all fostered by the course. Literature is concerned with people and consequently makes the Civil Service a natural option. • Reading, writing, speaking and listening are central to any child's learning. Primary or secondary teaching is a natural and rewarding option. |
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Film Studies



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| Examination Board | Eduqas |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in English Language or English Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Film Studies is ideal for students who enjoy films and want to understand how and why they are made. In Year 12, students are introduced to key film language, production skills and the idea of film as a way of communicating messages and ideologies. They study American mainstream cinema alongside contemporary independent films, as well as British and global cinema, exploring how different cultures, industries and directors shape the stories we see on screen. Students also look at documentary, classic and new Hollywood, developing skills in close analysis, comparison and critical thinking, while beginning their own practical production work.</p> <p>In Year 13, students build on this foundation by focusing more closely on script writing and the creation of their own short films, putting theory into practice and developing practical, creative and technical skills. They revisit classic and new Hollywood alongside experimental film and silent cinema, examining how filmmakers challenge conventions, use visual storytelling and influence audiences. Throughout the course, students learn to write analytically about film, understand its social and political contexts, and express their ideas creatively. Film Studies offers an excellent route into media, arts, humanities and creative industries at university and beyond.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Varieties of film and filmmaking Written examination lasting two and a half hours This section forms 35% of the qualification</p> <p>Global film and Film Movements Written examination lasting two and a half hours This section forms 35% of the qualification</p> <p>Production This is a non-exam assessment – students produce a short film or screenplay and an evaluative analysis. This section forms 30% of the qualification</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Film Studies is a suitable platform for progression to a range of higher education degrees and vocational level courses. It naturally leads to the study of Film, Television and Media but also develop skills of analytical writing, creative writing and visual analysis. Students who study Film Studies also gain a solid aesthetic appreciation and flourish in areas such as art and photography. For those who do not wish to progress further within the field of Film Studies, this course also provides a coherent, engaging and culturally valuable course of study.</p> <p>The skills developed on the course will also help further study in English literature and other analytically centred subjects.</p> |
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French



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in French. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>In year one of the course there are 3 compulsory topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trends in French-speaking society (the changing nature of family, the ‘cyber-society’ and the place of voluntary work) • Artistic culture in the French-speaking world (a culture proud of its heritage, contemporary francophone music, cinema: the 7th art form) <p>In year two of the course there are 4 compulsory topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trends in French-speaking society (positive features of a diverse society, life for the marginalised and how criminals are treated) • Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world (teenagers, the right to vote and political commitment, demonstrations, strikes (who holds the power?) and politics and immigration) • A study of a French-speaking book and film • An individual research project linked to a French-speaking country or culture |
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| Assessment | <p>Unit 1 – Listening and Reading 2 hours 30 minutes, and forms 50% of the total A-level marks</p> <p>Unit 2 – Writing 2 hours, and forms 20% of the total A-level marks</p> <p>Unit 3 – Speaking 21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes of preparation time), and forms 30% of the total A-level marks</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>French is a highly valued A-level and choosing it will increase your chances of gaining a place at a leading university. Languages combine well with any subject for further study: the range of combined degrees and further education courses involving a language is limitless – from Accountancy to Theatre Studies. Many universities even offer funding for students to continue or extend their language-knowledge by travelling or working abroad during the holidays. Many universities also offer the opportunity to take an ERASMUS year whereby students can study their degree subject in another country and develop and practise their language skills at the same time.</p> |
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Geography



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in Geography. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Geography is ideal for students who are curious about how the world works, both physically and socially. The course is split between Physical Geography and Human Geography, with opportunities to focus on areas that match students' interests.</p> <p>In Physical Geography, students study the water and carbon cycles, exploring how these vital systems operate and why they matter for climate and the environment. They then choose one landscape option, such as hot deserts, coastal environments or glacial systems, and one hazards or ecosystems topic, for example natural hazards or ecosystems under stress, examining how these environments function and how they are affected by human activity.</p> <p>In Human Geography, students look at global systems and global governance, including trade, migration and international organisations, as well as changing places, which focuses on how places are experienced and represented. They also choose one optional topic such as contemporary urban environments, population and the environment or resource security, linking geography to real-world challenges.</p> <p>Students also complete an individual geographical investigation, based on their own question and fieldwork data. This builds independence, research skills and analytical writing, providing excellent preparation for university and a wide range of careers.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Unit 1: Physical geography – Written exam of 2 hours 30 minutes, worth 120 marks or 40% of A-level.</p> <p>Unit 2: Human geography – Written exam of 2 hours 30 minutes, worth 120 marks or 40% of A-level.</p> <p>Unit 3: Geographical investigation – coursework of 3,000 and 4,000 words, worth 60 marks and 20% of A-level, marked in school by teachers and then moderated by AQA.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Geography equips students with a range of skills that are highly prized and sought after by a variety of employers. These skills are essential to everyday life in the workplace. Geography can be used as a foundation to progress into either science or arts-based courses at university with many students opting to do either a BSc or a BA degree course in the subject. The range of career destinations is only limited by ambition. Geographers are highly regarded by employers owing to their broad knowledge of a variety of local, national, and global issues combined with their analytical, presentation and communication skills.</p> <p>Careers in health, education, finance, the media, business, the armed forces, the environment, industry, travel, commerce, and the public sector have all been pursued by geographers.</p> |
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Vocational Health & Social Care



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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Health and Social Care |

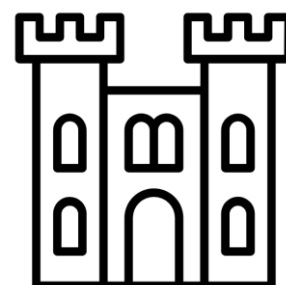
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| Entry Requirements | Merit in Health or Grade 4 in English Language or Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>This Level 3 BTEC qualification in Health and Social Care has been designed with input from employers, higher education representatives, and professional bodies. It provides the knowledge and skills required for working in the health and social care sector or progressing to related courses in higher education.</p> <p>Students will study four units covering a range of topics, from the theoretical principles of human development to the practical aspects of health and social care practice. All students will be offered opportunities to undertake work experience in a care setting. While this is not a mandatory requirement, it is highly recommended as a way to develop the skills and expertise needed for employment or further study.</p> <p>Year 1 Unit 1: Human Lifespan and Development (<i>externally assessed</i>) Unit 2: Human Biology and Health (<i>externally assessed</i>)</p> <p>Year 2 Unit 3: Principles of Health and Social Care Practice (<i>internally assessed</i>) + 1 more optional unit</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Students undertake 4 units to complete the programme of study. This includes two exam units that will be externally assessed and two coursework units that will be internally assessed.</p> <p>Internally assessed course work units will be marked by the subject teacher and subject to internal and external verification. Students will be provided with BTEC assessment guidelines to ensure that they are fully aware of how to meet coursework criteria. Externally assessed units will be assessed through formal external examinations in the Summer of Year 12.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>There are more than 350 distinct career pathways in the health and social care sector. When taken alongside other relevant qualifications, it can lead to a Higher Education degree pathway in an array of health and social care programmes such as nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, social work and occupational therapy.</p> |
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History



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

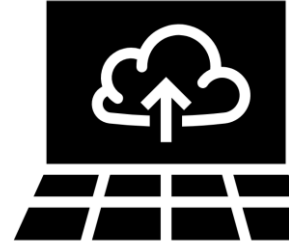
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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in History. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level History offers students the chance to explore how political power, society and ordinary people's lives have changed over time. The Breadth Study, <i>The Quest for Political Stability: Germany, 1871–1991</i>, follows Germany from unification under Bismarck, through the First World War, the Weimar Republic, Nazi dictatorship, division during the Cold War and eventual reunification. Students examine how governments gain, use and lose power, and how major events and ideologies shaped Europe.</p> <p>The Depth Study, <i>Wars and Welfare: Britain in Transition, 1906–1957</i>, focuses more closely on British society and politics. Students study reforms such as the early welfare state, the impact of two world wars, and social change in areas like health, work and democracy. This allows them to explore how war and government policy affected the everyday lives of people in Britain.</p> <p>Alongside these units, students complete a Historical Investigation on Russia, 1762–1881, developing independent research, extended writing and critical analysis skills. Across the course, students learn to evaluate evidence, interpret different historical viewpoints and construct well-argued written responses. A-Level History is excellent preparation for university study in History and related subjects such as Politics, Law and the Social Sciences.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Breadth Study: <i>The Quest for Political Stability: Germany, 1871-1991</i> (40% of A-Level, assessed by examination of 2 hours 30 minutes)</p> <p>Depth Study: <i>Wars and Welfare: Britain in Transition, 1906-1957</i> (40% of A-Level, assessed by examination of 2 hours 30 minutes)</p> <p>Historical Investigation: <i>Russia 1762-1881: Tsarist reform</i> (20% of A-Level, assessed by NEA)</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>History is one of the most popular A-Level subjects in the country, attracting students studying a wide range of other subjects. Many of these students enjoy the subject so much they eventually choose a history-related degree course. Others go on to careers in Law, Politics, Sociology, Psychology, Journalism, Anthropology, Architecture, Marketing, Accountancy and PR.</p> <p>The skills you use in A-Level History are valuable for prospective employers or students. Evaluation, analysis and forming judgements are sophisticated and high-order skills which impress employers and higher education establishments across the board. History A-Level is well-respected and an excellent choice for any student.</p> |
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Vocational IT



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| Examination Board | Pearson/Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | Level 3 AAQ BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate) |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 4 in English Language or Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>The Level 3 AAQ in IT is a practical, career-focused course for students interested in how digital systems work and how they are used in business and everyday life. Over two years, students complete four key units that build strong technical and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>In Information Technology Systems, students learn how hardware, software, networks and data all work together. They explore how organisations use IT to operate effectively, make decisions and stay secure, as well as considering the impact of technology on society.</p> <p>Cyber Security and Incident Management introduces students to common threats such as hacking, malware and data breaches. They learn how to protect systems, respond to security incidents and follow procedures that are used in real workplaces.</p> <p>In Website Development, students design and create their own websites, developing skills in planning, layout, usability and basic coding. This helps them understand how online services are built and maintained.</p> <p>Relational Database Development focuses on how large amounts of information are stored, organised and searched efficiently. Students design and build database solutions that could be used in real organisations.</p> |
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| Assessment | Units 1 and 2 are externally examined. The other units are assignment-based and assessed internally. Each unit is then assessed as a Pass, Merit or Distinction. Final award is calculated on a points system. |
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| Future Progression | <p>The BTEC Level 3 IT course allows students to develop practical skills that are very much in demand in the modern workplace. The UK, and particularly the Northeast, has a large IT industry and there are many opportunities available.</p> <p>Students may go on to study a variety of university courses in Information Technology or Computing. Alternatively, students may also decide to apply for apprenticeships, with many available from large local employers such as Accenture, Sage, DXC and Ubisoft.</p> |
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Mathematics

$$\int_1^{\infty} \frac{\ln x}{x^2} dx = 1$$

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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 7 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Mathematics is a challenging and rewarding course for students who enjoy problem-solving, logical thinking and working with numbers and abstract ideas. All the content in A-Level Mathematics is compulsory and broadly the same across examination boards, giving students a strong and consistent foundation.</p> <p>Around two-thirds of the course is Pure Mathematics. This is the core of the subject and includes topics such as algebra, coordinate geometry, trigonometry, sequences and series, proof, calculus (differentiation and integration) and vectors. These ideas underpin all higher-level mathematics and are essential for many university courses in science, engineering, economics and beyond.</p> <p>The remaining one-third of the course is Applied Mathematics, split equally between Statistics and Mechanics. In Statistics, students learn how to analyse data, interpret graphs and use probability to make informed predictions – skills that link closely to subjects such as biology, geography, psychology and the social sciences. In Mechanics, students apply mathematics to the physical world, studying forces, motion and modelling – particularly useful for physics and engineering.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1 (33$\frac{1}{3}$%) – Pure maths; 2 hours</p> <p>Paper 2 (33$\frac{1}{3}$%) – Pure maths and statistics; 2 hours</p> <p>Paper 3 (33$\frac{1}{3}$%) – Pure maths and mechanics; 2 hours</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>A level Mathematics is currently the most popular of all A levels taken in England. Young people recognise that it is a highly desirable qualification that can help them achieve their aspirations for further study and their future career. Studying A level Mathematics helps develop a logical approach to problem solving, as well as developing mathematical knowledge and skills, it is valuable preparation for a wide range of degree courses. Mathematics provides a firm foundation for all scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical careers and a flying start for many others, such as those in finance, medicine and agriculture.</p> <p>Throughout the course you will be challenged to gain a comprehensive understanding, allowing you to solve complex problems and to independently develop and put forward your own mathematical arguments. Competent mathematicians are in demand in many industries, their skills are considered critical in modern business, industry and technology and they are often leaned on by other specialists for insight, such as economists and engineers. By choosing to study mathematics, you will develop a mind-set that will be a great asset to you in life.</p> |
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Further Mathematics



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 8 in Mathematics and Grade 7 in Physics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>The content is separated into three areas: compulsory Pure Core (50%), Additional Mechanics (25%) and Additional Pure Maths (25%). Pure Core will extend and deepen knowledge of proof, algebra, functions, calculus, vectors and differential equations studied in A Level Mathematics. It will also broaden knowledge into other areas of pure mathematics that underpin the further study of mathematics and other numerate subjects with complex numbers, matrices, polar coordinates and hyperbolic functions.</p> <p>Additional Mechanics extends knowledge of particles, kinematics and forces from A Level Mathematics and uses extended pure mathematical knowledge to explore more complex physical systems. Additional Pure broadens and deepens knowledge of pure mathematics, studying both discrete and continuous topics which form the foundation of undergraduate study in mathematics and mathematical disciplines. AS content is taught during Year 12 and then built on in Year 13.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1 (25%) – Pure Core 1; 90 minutes Paper 2 (25%) – Pure Core 2; 90 minutes Paper 3 (25%) – Additional Mechanics; 90 minutes Paper 4 (25%) – Additional Pure Maths; 90 minutes</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Further Mathematics is a challenging qualification, which both extends and deepens knowledge and understanding beyond the standard A level Mathematics. Students who do it often say it is their favourite subject. It provides a challenge and a chance to explore new and/or more sophisticated mathematical concepts.</p> <p>Further Mathematics qualifications are highly regarded and are warmly welcomed by universities. Students are really demonstrating a strong commitment to their studies, as well as learning mathematics that is very useful for any mathematically rich degree. Some prestigious university courses require you to have a Further Mathematics qualification, and others may adjust their grade requirements more favourably to students with Further Mathematics.</p> |
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Core Mathematics



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | AS-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 4 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>Core Maths is a Level 3 course, equivalent to an AS qualification, designed to develop practical mathematical skills for use in everyday life and to support the quantitative requirements of other subjects. It is intended for students who have achieved at least a grade 4 in GCSE Mathematics and is typically studied alongside three A levels or BTEC qualifications.</p> <p>The course focuses on applying mathematics in real-world contexts, including finance, statistics, estimation, and problem-solving. Students learn to use problem-solving cycles in modelling, statistical analysis, and financial mathematics, employing appropriate technology to process and interpret quantitative information.</p> <p>Starting from authentic problems or questions with mathematical foundations, students engage in structured reasoning, applying a range of skills and processes to reach logical and well-justified conclusions. They are expected to think flexibly, evaluate outcomes, and use their mathematical and statistical knowledge to make informed decisions.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Paper 1 (50%) – Introduction to Quantitative Reasoning; 2 hours</p> <p>Paper 2 (50%) – Critical Maths; 2 hours</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Core Maths is highly regarded by universities and employers because it demonstrates strong quantitative reasoning and problem-solving skills. While it is not a full A level, it complements subjects such as sciences, geography, psychology, business, and economics, where mathematical understanding is essential.</p> <p>Many higher education institutions value Core Maths as evidence of continued mathematical study, particularly for courses that involve data analysis or financial reasoning. It is especially useful for degrees in social sciences, business, health sciences, and STEM fields that do not require full A level Mathematics. Some high-profile Universities give reduced offers to students who have achieved a particular grade in Core Maths.</p> <p>Core Maths equips students with practical skills in finance, statistics, and data interpretation, which are highly relevant in careers such as business, accountancy, healthcare, and public services. Employers appreciate the ability to apply maths in real-world contexts, making this qualification an asset for apprenticeships and vocational pathways.</p> |
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Music



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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in Music. In exceptional circumstances, evidence of a portfolio could be considered. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Music is an excellent choice for students who love making music, creating their own ideas and understanding how music works in depth.</p> <p>In performance, students work on their chosen instrument or voice, building confidence, control and expression. They learn how to prepare for high-quality performances, whether as soloists or as part of an ensemble, and reflect on how to communicate character and emotion to an audience.</p> <p>In composition, students create their own music, exploring melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and structure. They experiment with different styles and genres, develop ideas from initial sketches into complete pieces, and learn how to use notation or music technology to realise their intentions clearly.</p> <p>In listening and appraising, students study a wide range of music – for example classical, popular, film and world traditions. They learn to listen critically, recognise musical features, compare different pieces and place music in its historical and cultural context. This develops strong analytical skills and a rich musical vocabulary.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Performance Assessment Overview: A recital of eight minutes. This can be a longer piece, or a programme made up of several shorter items.</p> <p>Composition Assessment overview: Two compositions, one of which is the student's free choice and the second is to a brief set by the board.</p> <p>Appraising Assessment Overview: Section A: Areas of study and dictation (50 marks) Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score provided). One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.</p> <p>Section B: Extended response Two essay questions – essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks)</p> |
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| Future Progression | Music is a highly regarded academic subject and whether you take it with a view to a career in music or as an additional A-level subject, it is held in high esteem by universities and other institutions of higher education. This qualification supports progression into higher education, training or employment, such as a degree in music or vocational courses such as a BTEC HND or HNC in Music. |
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Photography



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in Art. In exceptional circumstances, evidence of a portfolio could be considered. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>This is an intensive course which involves practical photography work including experimental work, as well as theory and technical camera work.</p> <p>Students are required to investigate external artistic sources within both of their modules and can choose any photographers or artists who they feel will help develop their own work. All projects include many photoshoots from the classroom and out on location. Photographs are developed further with work on Photoshop and darkroom experimental work. Lessons are broadly skills based and feature teaching in the use of the camera, experimental photography, dark room processes, photo installations and planning and editing photographs. Students are expected to work in the studio during their study time researching and learning for themselves the possibilities of the media, scale, composition etc. Their outcomes are expected to be high quality, creative and an individual response and exploration of their chosen themes and ideas.</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to visit a range of art galleries and respond to learning about art from different times and cultures. The photography course relies heavily on students taking weekly photoshoots out on location as part of their homework tasks.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Component 1 - Course Work and a Personal Study, an essay of at least 1,000 words that is based on an element of the theme chosen as the focus for the whole unit (60% of the final mark and is based on a project with a theme or focus chosen by the student).</p> <p>Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment (40% of the final grade and is based on a project which stems from a response to a title set by the examination board, 15-hour exam). Units are teacher-assessed throughout the course via a series of one-to-one tutorials and student critiques. At the end of the course all students are expected to exhibit both of their units in a final show. This is finally assessed by staff according to the exam board assessment criteria and these marks are moderated by a visiting external examiner.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>The development of creative thinking, which is encouraged through the problem-solving involved in exploring themes and issues, puts students in a valuable position as applicants to colleges and universities, and to employers who are looking for bright young people with a range of exciting ideas. Students can go on to study degree-level Photography, film making and the many other arts-based courses which can be a pathway towards employment in many careers directly involved in art and other careers which are reliant on developed creative skills. Some of our most recent students have gone on to pursue degrees and careers in Graphic Design and Photography in the UK and beyond.</p> |
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Physical Education



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

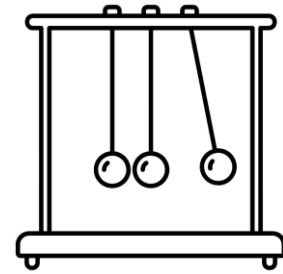
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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in GCSE PE. Regular participation in one competitive sport at club level is essential. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>The course begins with Applied Anatomy and Physiology and Exercise Physiology, where students learn how the body responds to exercise and training, including the cardiovascular, respiratory and muscular systems, and how athletes can improve fitness, performance and recovery. Biomechanics builds on this by looking at movement, forces and motion in sport, helping students understand techniques and performance from a scientific perspective.</p> <p>Students also study Skill Acquisition and Sport Psychology, exploring how skills are learnt and developed, how performers stay focused and motivated, and how factors such as confidence, anxiety and leadership affect performance. Finally, Sport in Society and Contemporary Issues looks at the wider world of sport, including participation, ethics, technology, the media and current debates such as equality and performance-enhancing drugs. Throughout the course, students link theory to their own practical performance in at least one sport, developing strong analytical, evaluative and communication skills. OCR A-Level Sport is excellent preparation for further study and careers in sport science, coaching, teaching, physiotherapy, fitness, and the wider sports industry.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Physiological factors affecting performance 2 hour written paper, 90 marks – 30% of total A Level</p> <p>Psychological factors affecting performance 1 hour written paper, 60 marks – 20% of total A Level</p> <p>Socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport 1 hour written paper, 60 marks – 20% of total A Level</p> <p>Performance in physical education Non-exam assessment, 60 marks – 30% of total A Level One assessment of practical sports performance in a sport from the ‘Approved Activity List’. Evaluation and Analysis of Performance for Improvement (EAPI) task.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Further careers in sport could include:</p> <p>Medicine: Doctor, Physiotherapist, Sports Therapy, Sports Rehabilitation. Health & Exercise: Fitness Professional, Health Promotion Officer, Gym Instructor, Nutritionist and Personal Trainer. Management: Disability Sports Development Officer, Events Manager, Football Manager, Sports Development Manager and Talent Project Coordinator. Media and Marketing: Broadcasting, Journalism, Marketing, Photographer. Science: Sports Scientist, Strength and Conditioning Coach. Teaching and Coaching: Teacher, Children’s Sports Coach, Outdoor Adventures Leader, Ski Instructor, Performance Analyst and Competition Manager.</p> |
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Physics



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

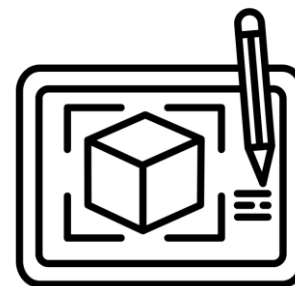
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| Entry Requirements | Grade 7 in Physics or Grade 7-7 in Combined Science, and Grade 6 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>The course begins with the development of practical skills, where students learn how to plan, carry out and evaluate experiments safely and accurately – essential preparation for both the exams and any science-based degree. Foundations of physics introduces key ideas such as units, measurements, scalars and vectors, which underpin all later topics.</p> <p>Students then study forces and motion, exploring how and why objects move, linking closely to real-world contexts such as vehicles and sport. Electrons, waves and photons looks at electricity, wave behaviour and quantum phenomena, helping students understand technologies such as lasers, fibre optics and electronic devices. The Newtonian world and astrophysics module extends these ideas to gravitation, thermal physics and the behaviour of planets and stars, giving an insight into how scientists model the universe.</p> <p>Finally, in particles and medical physics, students explore nuclear and particle physics alongside applications in medicine, such as imaging and diagnostics.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A Level Physics consists of linear assessments, with all exams taking place at the end of Year 13.</p> <p>A separate ‘endorsement’ of practical work will be assessed by teachers when students carry out required practical experiments in lessons. This will not be graded but is a ‘pass/fail’ based on teacher grading.</p> <p>To achieve an A Level qualification, you must sit 3 written papers at the end of Year 13 carried out during the summer term.</p> <p>Paper 1 is 2hrs 15 minutes and is worth 37% of the total grade (100 marks). It assesses content from modules 1, 2, 3 and 5.</p> <p>Paper 2 is 2hrs 15 minutes and is worth 37% of the total grade (100 marks). It assesses content from modules 1, 2, 4 and 6.</p> <p>Paper 3 is 1hr 30 minutes and is worth 26% of the total grade (70 marks). Topic. It assesses content from all modules (1 to 6).</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Physics is a “facilitating subject”, meaning that it is highly regarded whatever degree or career path you choose. It is considered essential for science and engineering courses, so it keeps a lot of doors open for you. Physics opens these doors because of the skills and ways of thinking it teaches you. You will pick up mathematical and analytical techniques that are valued in a huge range of careers. You will become a critical and creative thinker, and a problem solver!</p> |
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Product Design



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| Examination Board | OCR |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in DT. In exceptional circumstances, evidence of a portfolio could be considered. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>In Year 12, pupils will spend 80% of their timetabled lessons focusing on the theoretical aspects of the course. They will learn in a variety of styles of theory lessons, including practical / making tasks, production lines, student teacher, team presentations and design tasks. Students will receive timely assessments of units and develop metacognitive skills to take ownership over their progress.</p> <p>The remaining 20% of their timetabled Year 12 lessons will focus on developing student's use and confidence in CAD/CAM techniques. Students will hone their skills in 2D Design and use this to independently programme and use the laser cutter. Students will also gain experience in using Sketch Up and Fusion 360, progressing towards the ability to select the appropriate software to develop their own CAD drawings and use the 3D Printer. Additionally, students will develop further confidence in using hand tools and machinery such as routers, pillar drills and sanders alongside layering of techniques to create silicone moulds and cast materials such as epoxy resin and Jesmonite. As an outcome, students will manufacture an angle poise lamp to showcase their ability to use CAD/CAM and hand making skills to create and communicate their ideas.</p> <p>In Year 13, students will continue to develop their theory knowledge and application in preparation for their A Level examinations. In addition to this, they will begin their NEA which will form 50% of their overall grade. In this project they will be given the opportunity to explore a specialism, focus and context of their own choosing. This freedom of choice will allow students to select a particular interest or passion which they have within design, examples of previous focuses have been for architecture, mental health, sports, caring for animals, urban design and furniture design.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A-level Exam Paper 1: Technical Principles – 30% of A-level. A-level Exam Paper 2: Designing and Making Principles 20% of A-level. A-level non-examined assessment: 50% of A-level.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Students who wish to pursue a career in design will be able to structure their own personal portfolio, which will be essential for interview for any design course. A lot of students choose to do a one-year foundation course in art after A-level to experience all art and design areas, and some degree courses specify this as a requirement for entry on to courses so students will need to check entry requirements early. Other students will apply directly for degree courses (e.g. Architecture, Graphic design, 3D Design, Product Design, Urban Design and Design for Industry).</p> |
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Psychology



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in English Language and Grade 6 in Mathematics. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>You will study a range of introductory topics in Psychology in Year 12. They include social influence, which looks at why people conform and obey; memory, which explores how people remember and why they forget; attachment, which investigates how bonds form and why they are important; and psychopathology, which explains how we define, explain and treat various mental health disorders. Psychology in context will also be considered by looking at the different approaches that psychologists use to explain human behaviour, and the methods used in psychological research. Finally, Year 12 will also entail focusing on biopsychology to address how our physical state influences our thoughts and behaviours.</p> <p>In Year 13, issues and debates are studied, including assessing the influence of nature and nurture on behaviour and the importance of acknowledging the role of free will and individual differences when explaining actions. You will also focus on schizophrenia by looking at how we describe, explain and treat this chronic illness. To build on your knowledge of how we develop, you will study cognition and development to understand further how we grow as humans over our lifetimes. The final topic you will study is forensic psychology, to give you an understanding of why criminals offend and how we can address this complex issue to reduce its effect on society.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A-level is assessed through three two-hour papers. These are:</p> <p>Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology.</p> <p>Paper 2: Psychology in Context, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of approaches, biopsychology and research methods.</p> <p>Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of issues and debates, schizophrenia, cognition and development, and forensic psychology.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Psychology develops a range of valuable skills, including critical analysis of theories and research, independent thinking, and the planning of investigations. In developing these skills, Psychology will prepare you for a range of careers or university courses including Psychology and other social sciences. Due to the transferable skills that are taught through this course, it will also be useful for further studies that lead to careers in occupational health, marketing, business development, nursing, teaching, law and, of course, various areas within Psychology.</p> |
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Philosophy & Ethics



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| Examination Board | Edexcel |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in RE. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>There is a study of three components that make up the A-Level, each helping students to think deeply, argue clearly and write in a well-structured, thoughtful way.</p> <p>The study of Philosophy of Religion includes philosophical issues and questions; the nature and influence of religious experience; problems of evil and suffering; religious language; the works of key scholars; and how religious beliefs have developed over time. Students learn to analyse complex arguments, evaluate different viewpoints and construct their own reasoned responses.</p> <p>The study of Religion and Ethics covers significant concepts in moral debates; three major ethical theories; applying these theories to real-life issues; ethical language; deontology, virtue ethics and key scholars; and medical ethics, including beginning- and end-of-life questions. Students regularly discuss case studies, consider different sides of an argument and develop clear, evidence-based conclusions.</p> <p>The study of Christianity focuses on religious beliefs, values and teachings; sources of wisdom and authority; practices that shape religious identity; social and historical developments; key scholars; and the relationship between religion and society. This component develops skills in interpreting texts, understanding context and exploring how beliefs influence both individuals and communities today.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Three externally assessed written exams comprising three sections. All questions are to be answered.</p> <p>Section A: two extended response questions.</p> <p>Section B: one two-part essay question on an excerpt, sourced from the extract list.</p> <p>Section C: one extended essay question.</p> <p>All three exams are 2 hours long and each is worth 33.3%.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Philosophy and Ethics are very popular subjects that complement the other areas students choose to study. Many students find that taking this subject supports their learning in other subjects and it can lead on to a variety of different careers.</p> <p>It is recommended that you opt for Philosophy and Ethics if you are interested in studying the following courses at university: Sociology, Psychology, Law, Nursing, English, Medicine, Philosophy, History or Theology. There are many more courses to which this A-level can lead.</p> |
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Politics



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in History |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>A-Level Politics is ideal for students who are interested in how power works, who makes decisions, and how ideas shape our society.</p> <p>Students first study the Government and Politics of the UK, looking at the constitution, Parliament, the Prime Minister and cabinet, the judiciary and devolution. They explore how democracy and participation work in practice through elections, referendums, political parties, pressure groups and the role of the EU. This helps them understand how decisions are made and challenged in the UK today.</p> <p>They then examine the Government and Politics of the USA, including the Constitution, Congress, the Presidency and the Supreme Court. Students look at US elections, political parties, pressure groups and civil rights issues such as gun control, abortion or gender equality. Comparative politics is a key feature, as students regularly compare the UK and US systems, highlighting similarities and differences between the two democracies.</p> <p>Finally, students study Political Ideas, focusing on four major ideologies: liberalism, conservatism, socialism and nationalism. They explore key thinkers, core beliefs and how these ideas influence parties, policies and political debate. Throughout the course, students develop skills in analysis, argument, evaluation and written communication.</p> |
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| Assessment | Three papers (each 2 hours long) and all equally weighted. There are area combination of shorter 9-mark essay style questions and longer 25-mark essay questions and extract questions. |
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| Future Progression | <p>Studying A Level Politics will develop critical skills such as analysis, evaluation and the construction of clear and coherent arguments. It will require you to immerse yourself in the politics of both the UK and the USA, up to current times, and develop a critical eye when reading about contemporary political events.</p> <p>These skills will provide the groundwork for a plethora of options post Sixth Form and are transferrable to any job role. These could include university study in courses such as Politics or International Relations. Beyond this, many Politics graduates might progress to careers in politics, government, the charity sector or with Think Tanks.</p> |
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Vocational Applied Science



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| Examination Board | Edexcel/Pearson |
| Type of Qualification | Level 3 AAQ BTEC National in Applied Science (Extended Certificate) |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 4 in Science or Grade 4-4 in Combined Science. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>Applied Science is a practical, career-focused course for students who enjoy Biology, Chemistry and Physics and want to see how science works in real-world contexts.</p> <p>In Year 12, students begin with exam-based units that build directly on GCSE Science, then extend their understanding to A-Level standard. They revisit key ideas in Biology, Chemistry and Physics and learn to apply them to new situations, developing stronger scientific knowledge, mathematical skills and exam technique. Alongside this, they start their NEA/coursework units, which involve researching a scientific topic, planning and carrying out investigations, recording results and analysing data. Students also develop their ability to present findings clearly, both in writing and verbally.</p> <p>In Year 13, students continue with their NEA/coursework units in greater depth, strengthening their practical skills, independence and ability to manage longer projects. There is also the opportunity for some students to re-sit exam units if needed, helping them to improve their overall outcomes.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>The course consists of 4 mandatory units and 1 optional unit.</p> <p>Mandatory Units Principles and Applications of Biology (50 marks, 1 hour assessment), Principles and Applications of Chemistry (50 marks, 1 hour assessment), Principles and Applications of Physics (50 marks, 1 hour assessment) and Practical Scientific Procedures and Techniques (coursework based).</p> <p>Optional Unit Science Investigation Skills (coursework based)</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Applied Science give learners the opportunity to acquire technical and employability skills, knowledge and understanding which are transferable and will enable learners the opportunity to enter employment in the science sector or to progress to vocational qualifications such as the Edexcel BTEC Higher Nationals in Applied Biology, Applied Chemistry or Health/Science -related qualifications. This course also gives learners the opportunity to develop a range of skills and techniques, personal skills and attributes essential for successful performance in working life.</p> <p>Scientists work in a range of industries from food and drink to pharmaceuticals. These courses provide a route to employment in the science industry or within organisations that use science including the health service, government establishments and educational institutions or access to university degrees.</p> |
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Sociology



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 5 in English Language or Literature. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>Students will study Education, Health, and the Media in Year 12, followed by Crime and Deviance and Theory and Methods in Year 13.</p> <p>In Year 12, you will begin with a range of introductory topics in Sociology. Key elements of the course will be covered, including major sociological theories and research design. Core themes such as socialisation, culture and identity, social differentiation, power, and stratification will also be explored. You will focus on Education, examining how policies, external factors, and internal processes influence educational performance and opportunities. In the Sociology of Health, you will consider the social construction of health, models of health, inequalities in provision and access, mental illness, the role of medicine, and the globalised health industry.</p> <p>In Year 13, you will build on your understanding of core themes, perspectives, and methods through the study of Crime and Deviance and The Media. Topics include social order and control, the social distribution of crime by ethnicity, gender, and social class, green crime, human rights and state crimes, crime control, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies. You will also evaluate the impact of new media in contemporary society, explore the relationship between ownership and control of the media, globalisation and popular culture, selection and presentation of news, and the interaction between media content and audiences.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>A-level is assessed through three two-hour papers. These are:</p> <p>Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of Education through short answers and extended writing, Methods in Context through extended writing, and Theory and Methods through extended writing.</p> <p>Paper 2: Topics in Sociology, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of the Sociology of Health and the Sociology of the Media.</p> <p>Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods, worth 33.3%. This assesses your knowledge of Crime and Deviance through short answers and extended writing, and Theory and Methods through extended writing.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Sociology develops a range of valuable skills, including critical analysis of theories and research, independent thinking, and the planning of investigations. In developing these skills, Sociology will prepare you for many careers or university courses including Sociology and other social sciences. Due to the transferable skills and topics that are taught, it will also be useful for further studies that lead to careers in the police and probation services; social work and teaching; social and market research; charitable, counselling and voluntary organisations; public relations; journalism and communications; media and marketing.</p> |
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Spanish



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| Examination Board | AQA |
| Type of Qualification | A-Level |

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| Entry Requirements | Grade 6 in Spanish. |
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| Outline of the Course | <p>In year one of the course there are 3 compulsory topics: Aspects of Hispanic society (modern and traditional values, cyberspace and equal rights). Artistic culture in the Hispanic world (modern day idols, Spanish regional identity, cultural heritage or cultural landscape).</p> <p>In year two of the course there are 4 compulsory topics: Multiculturalism in Hispanic society (immigration, racism and integration). Aspects of political life in the Hispanic world (today's youth, tomorrow's citizens, monarchies, republics and dictatorships and popular movements). A study of a Spanish-speaking book and film. An individual research project linked to a Spanish-speaking country or culture.</p> |
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| Assessment | <p>Unit 1: Listening and Reading 2 hours 30 minutes, and forms 50% of the total A-level marks.</p> <p>Unit 2: Writing 2 hours, and forms 20% of the total A-level marks.</p> <p>Unit 3: Speaking 21– 23 minutes (including 5 minutes of preparation time), and forms 30% of the total A level marks.</p> |
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| Future Progression | <p>Spanish is a highly valued A-level and choosing it will increase your chances of gaining a place at a leading university. Languages combine well with any subject for further study. The range of combined degrees and further education courses involving a language is limitless – from Accountancy with Spanish to Theatre Studies. Many universities even offer funding for students to continue or extend their linguistic knowledge by travelling or working abroad during the holidays. Many universities also offer the opportunity to take an ERASMUS year whereby students can study their degree subject in another country and thereby develop and practise their language skills at the same time.</p> |
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