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Dame Allan's Sixth Form

Open Days 2019

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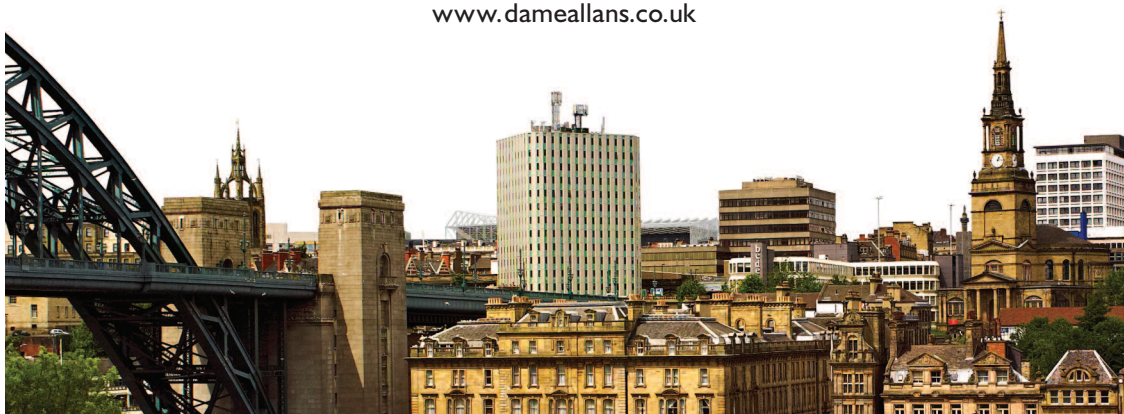

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Dame Allan's Schools

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@SixthFormDAS

Welcome

Our co-educational Sixth Form offers an exciting and academically challenging experience for students who complete their Diamond Education in our Girls' or Boys' Schools, or who join us in the Sixth Form from elsewhere. Everyone is welcomed and everyone is valued.

Our dedicated pastoral team ensures there is a smooth transition from being 'pupils' in Year 11 to 'students' in the Sixth Form, where they enjoy more autonomy and greater responsibility.

Our expectations for and of our students is high and we encourage them to set aspirational academic and personal targets. Regular mentoring is provided by tutors who offer students advice and support. Tutor groups comprise 14-16 students and tutors work closely with subject teachers, the Head of Sixth Form and the Assistant Heads of Sixth Form to oversee the pastoral and academic progress of tutees throughout the whole of their time in the Sixth Form.

Students are encouraged to act responsibly, considerately and independently in order to reach their full potential. They are expected to act as role models for younger students and to take an active part in the life of the Schools.

Our students are urged to extend their horizons, take on new challenges and develop the personal and academic skills that will equip them for life at university and beyond.

Mr P Terry,
Head of Sixth Form.

Who's who at Dame Allan's Schools

Dr Hind
Principal

Miss N Shaw
Vice Principal (Pastoral)

Mr A Hopper
Vice Principal (Academic)

Mr P Terry
Head of Sixth Form

Mrs J Downie
Assistant Head of Sixth Form

Mr M Salisbury
Assistant Head of Sixth Form

Mrs V McDonald
Bursar

Mrs R Miller
Head of Admissions

Mrs L Procter
School Nurse

Mrs H McPhillips
Senior School Receptionist

Mrs L Renwick-Hall
Senior School Receptionist

A Level Choices

Programme of Study

In Year 12 you will follow an A Level course of three subjects, plus a super-curriculum option in order to offer breadth to your studies.

THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WILL BE OFFERED

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- German
- History
- Mathematics
- Music
- Philosophy
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Politics
- Product Design
- Psychology
- Spanish

SUPER-CURRICULUM CHOICES CURRENTLY OFFERED

- EPQ
- Mandarin
- Social Enterprise
- Sports Leaders

We expect pupils entering Sixth Form to have secured 45 points from their best 8 GCSE grades (grades of 3 or below may not be included). Students new to Dame Allan's will also be invited to interview.

Your Choices

Subject requirements

In January you will be asked to choose three subjects. In order to study any subject you should be expected to gain a minimum of a grade 6 at GCSE, except for mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics and modern foreign languages where you will need to achieve grade 7.

We do offer a number of subjects at A Level that are not studied at GCSE. To study these subjects we expect students to have achieved at least a grade 5 in English and mathematics.

A grade 6 or 7 in GCSE mathematics is a requirement for certain subjects. See individual subject information for details.

Facilitating subjects

The Russell Group of universities - which includes 24 of Britain's most selective universities, e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Newcastle, Durham, York, Edinburgh, Manchester, Bristol - no longer refer to 'facilitating subjects', a list of A-level courses which was once considered essential by the most selective universities.

Instead, its new website www.informedchoices.ac.uk now suggests the A-level subjects relevant to specific degrees. The website provides an interactive tool to allow pupils to see the subjects recommended for specific degrees and students can also enter combinations of A-level subjects to see which degrees they might lead to.

We have always suggested that students study the subjects they love and have strengths in, so we are delighted that the Russell Group universities are openly welcoming all subjects in Dame Allan's diverse curriculum.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The EPQ is the equivalent of half an A Level qualification. It is highly valued by universities as it can provide formal proof of a student's readiness for undergraduate study and research. The development of these skills is supported over the two years and students are given advice on appropriate projects. Dame Allan's students normally submit a 5,000 word report that forms the basis of an assessed presentation. The award is based on the process that led to the production of the report and presentation and not just the content. Alternatively, there is the opportunity to submit a 1,000 word report along with a model, video or performance. This also requires an assessed presentation.

EPQ is available as a super-curriculum choice where it must be taken throughout Year 12 and the first term of Year 13.

Looking ahead beyond Dame Allan's

We ensure that information about all Higher Education choices is available so that students make their 18+ choices according to their interests, strengths, learning styles and abilities.

Alongside traditional degrees, Degree Apprenticeships are well worth considering as these link companies with universities and students are paid to study a degree. These are very competitive and can be applied for alongside university applications, and could offer students the best of all opportunities and possible chances to gain a HE place following their A Levels.

Which A Levels should I choose?

Science and technology	Biology Chemistry Computer science Further maths Maths Physics	• Further maths is advisable for students considering mathematics, engineering or computer science at Oxbridge or equivalent competitive universities.
The arts and humanities	English language English literature Geography History Philosophy	• Some Sixth Form students choose all of their subjects from this group. There is no problem with this, especially for those who like writing essays!
Languages	French German Spanish	• Students often study a language to broaden their profile and career opportunities.
Creative/performing/ talent-based subjects	Art Dance Music Product design Theatre studies	• All are challenging, performance based subjects and include a practical element. • Those with talent and ability follow this group. • The theoretical components of these subjects are challenging.
Social sciences and vocational subjects	Business Economics Government & politics Psychology PE	• It would normally be advisable to pick no more than two subjects from this group as they are new subjects not previously studied at GCSE. • Competitive university courses may ask for A Level mathematics in order to study economics.

What are your strengths? Look back at your Morrisby Guidance Report.

How these subject groupings relate to university courses:

The scientist

- A student who is good at science may choose subjects from: chemistry, biology, maths, physics. This will keep open the science/maths/engineering options at university.
- For the sake of maintaining a wider outlook on life, however, some science students may replace one of the sciences with another subject.
- Sixth Form students who are very good at maths may also do further maths as a fourth A Level.
- Life sciences are degrees based on chemistry and biology. If a student chooses these two A Levels, a huge range of degrees will be possible. This includes degrees leading to a definite career path (for example, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, pharmacy, dietetics) and degrees based on research (for example, biochemistry, biomedical materials science, pharmacology).
- Engineering is the practical application of maths and physics. If a student takes these two A Levels, a different, but still wide range of degrees will be possible, such as engineering (mechanical, electronic/electrical and civil), physics, materials science.
- Look closely at the entry requirements for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and engineering. Research on www.ucas.co.uk

The essayist and communicator

- Many Sixth Form students will fall into the "essay" category, where all their choices will be in the arts/humanities/social sciences/performance-based subjects. These subjects highlight a student's strength in communication skills and the ability to form a well-researched argument or analysis.
- A large range of university degrees in the arts/humanities, social sciences and business fields will be possible. A student of history, English literature, politics or philosophy, for example, might decide to continue one of these subjects to degree level or might embark on a joint or combined course, studying two or three of these subjects. Alternatively, such a student may consider something more vocational (for example, law or management).

The linguist

- Some students will emphasise their linguistic abilities by doing not one but two foreign languages. These students are highly sought after by universities for language degrees or courses with a language component and thereafter in employment.
- A joint course of a modern foreign language and another subject of the student's choice will offer good graduate employment prospects.

The creative

- A student with a talent for music may well want to study it at university. If so, it is important that they take music (along with performance grades).
- Talented artists may be thinking about an art foundation course or an art based degree course after A Levels. These students should do A Level art to provide the basis for the portfolio they will need to gain entry to an art foundation course or art based degree course.
- For drama and dance courses, entry to higher education in these fields is largely dependent on performance in audition. Preparation for such auditions can be gained from many different out-of-school activities, from drama and dance groups within school, at local theatres and from the A Levels themselves.

The vocational

- Many students choose maths and art if they wish to study architecture although this is not required by all universities.
- Traditional essay writing subject(s) are useful to study law at university.
- Some students may well choose subjects such as business and computing among their three A Levels. These students would tend to follow this up with applications for vocational degrees. It is worth remembering that entry to some of these courses is highly competitive, so students would do well to include a facilitating subject.

How to decide:

Your Morrisby Guidance Report and Careers Consultation Action Plan and Ambitions Pack will help you to consider your strengths and ambitions and will have started to help you to make some informed choices. There are really only three reasons why you might choose to study a subject at A Level:

- **You enjoy and are good at the subject at GCSE level.**

Think - some subjects are considerably different at A Level.

- **You presume that you need the subject to enter a particular career or course at university.**

Think - there are all kinds of misconceptions about what is needed for certain careers or degree courses.

You must check the university website or prospectus for entry requirements. Some universities will specify certain grades in certain GCSEs within their entry requirements (www.ucas.com)

- **You have not studied the subject before but feel it would be interesting and suit your strengths.**

Think - many Sixth Form students have misconceptions about new subjects. You should check with the A Level subject teachers, read the A Level specifications when published and to talk to Year 12 and 13 students.

The most important thing is that you are able to provide evidence to back up your choices with:

- evidence that you are performing well in the subject at GCSE level to take the subject at A Level.
- evidence that you are ***interested enough*** in a subject if you have not studied it at GCSE (6 at GCSE in maths and English is required for new subjects at A Level).

For example, in order to choose English literature, students would normally need evidence of at least a grade 6 at GCSE and should enjoy reading poems, plays and novels. For economics, they should have a real interest in current affairs issues, plus English and maths at grade 6 at GCSE.

A six-point plan

Here are six questions to think about as you make your decision:

- if you have a specific career in mind, does it require you to do a certain university course which requires certain A Levels?
- for those subjects that you have studied at GCSE and that you wish to continue to A Level, will you get the grade you need? Perhaps you should talk to your teachers
- have you chosen a balance of subjects that reflect your strengths and interests? Check your Morrisby Guidance Profile
- if you want to take a subject that you have not studied before, can you talk for at least a minute on what this subject is about? The following are not reasons for choosing a particular subject: 'It sounds like it might be interesting'; 'I think I will like it'; 'It will be fun'
- will the teaching and/or assessment style suit you? Consider if there is any coursework or practical elements or whether it is all examined?

- have you read the details of the A Level specification for Year 12 and Year 13 for the subjects you are interested in?

Research

- www.morrisby.com Morrisby Guidance Report, careers consultation with Mrs Whitehouse and Careers Information Pack.
- www.ucas.co.uk
- www.prospects.ac.uk
- Work experience
- Wider reading
- Job Explorer Database (JED) and Morrisby - useful for research on Higher Education and employment options and for advice on writing personal statements and CVs
- These are very useful when researching A Level subject choices, Higher Education and Employment. It is also good to research on these when writing CVs and Personal Statements to see which strengths, skills and qualifications are required for subject and employment areas. Students have their own username and password for Morrisby and JED - used in Year 11 careers lessons.

Beyond the Curriculum

Extra-curricular opportunities

Dame Allan's Sixth Form students are encouraged to make the most of opportunities to extend their learning outside the classroom. Whether it's developing a wider interest in a subject area through educational visits or societies such as the science discussion group, debating club or archivists; enhancing their leadership and teamwork skills through our senior sports teams, participation in World Challenge, the Combined Cadet Force, the Duke of Edinburgh Award or our Derwent Hill leadership weekend; contributing to the arts in our drama productions, Vizavis dance company or musical groups or contributing to the wider community through Youth Parliament, community service or peer mentoring, we have something for every student to get involved in.

Enrichment

In addition to extra-curricular activities, our weekly enrichment programme throughout Year 12 and Year 13 provides a platform for students to receive Higher Education and careers guidance and PSHEE, as well as an opportunity to learn vital 'life skills' such as stress management and wellbeing, financial management and first aid training.

- World Challenge
- Team games
- Senior Choir
- Chamber Choir
- Swing Band
- Ceilidh Band
- Senior wind band
- String ensemble
- Symphony orchestra
- Rock bands
- EES Engineering
- Science discussion group
- Relais de la Memoire
- LAMDA
- Drama groups
- Archivists
- Public Speaking competition
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Youth Parliament
- Community Service
- Debating society
- Vizavis dance company
- Listening skills and peer mentoring
- Educational trips
- Law/Politics Club
- Inspire programme with DAJS
- Psychology twilight talks
- Public lectures
- Climbing club
- Derwent Hill leadership weekend
- Royal Marines Combined Cadet Force

Subject Information

Art

What is the subject about?

The study of fine art is the development of expressive and creative responses to thematic enquiry through visual research, analysis, observation and recording. Students will develop practical skills in a wide range of media including oil and acrylic paint, printmaking and graphic media.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Visual communication skills including drawing (recording) in a range of media, problem solving, sequential development, interpretation, reviewing, modifying and refining, discussion, evaluation, critical appraisal and analysis.

What topics will I study?

Projects are broad and develop in a direction personal to students guided by department staff. Topics of exploration previously selected by students are diverse and include surveillance, equality and genetics. Component 2 is set by the exam board.

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

There is synoptic assessment in both components of the A Level providing stretching and challenging opportunities for students as follows:

Component 1: Portfolio
(60 per cent of total marks) 96 marks available

In Component 1, students develop work based on an idea, issue, concept or theme leading to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes. Practical elements should make connections with some aspect of contemporary or past practice of artist(s), designer(s) or photographers and include a personal study (written work) of no less than 1000 and no more than 3000 words in support of the practical work.

Component 2: 40 per cent of total marks
96 marks available

In Component 2, students respond to a stimulus, provided by AQA, to produce work which provides evidence of their ability to work independently within specified time constraints, developing a personal and meaningful response which addresses all the assessment objectives and leads to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Creative industries are the fastest growing sector of the UK economy contributing over £100 billion per year. Feeding into this are careers in architecture, digital media, 3D design, graphic design, illustration, fashion, music, film, theatre, video games, TV and publishing sectors. The creative industries are one of the UK's greatest success stories, with British artists, fashion brands, musicians, and films immediately recognisable across the globe growing at almost twice the rate of the wider economy and worth a staggering £10 million per hour.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

The course builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired by candidates taking art at GCSE level; it is expected that candidates have achieved a grade 6. Candidates embarking on the A Level course will have already developed understanding and skills which will contribute to their enjoyment and fulfilment of the A Level course.

Be prepared to develop your curiosity, let go of perfectionism, get out of your comfort zone and explore ideas and media.

Biology

What is the subject about?

Biology A Level will give you the skills to make connections and associations with all living things around you. The course builds up from the chemicals of life, through cells, tissues and organs into whole organisms and concepts such as evolution and gene technology. Being such a broad topic, you are bound to find a specific area of interest, plus it opens the door to a fantastic range of interesting careers.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Biology at A Level greatly extends the work covered at GCSE and introduces new topics and ideas. There is a high volume of factual content within the course, however the ability to apply your knowledge to unfamiliar contexts is also a crucial requirement. Sound numerical skills are essential, as well as strong written communication skills.

Biology is never far from the headlines and a desire to delve deeper into the biology behind headlines, enriching your subject knowledge beyond the limits of the specification, will be a great advantage.

Biology is a practical subject. During the course you will carry out practicals including:

- using microscopes to see cell division
- dissection of animal or plant systems
- aseptic technique to study microbial growth
- fieldwork.

These will provide the skills and confidence needed to investigate the way organisms behave and work. It will also ensure that if you study biology at university, you will have the skills needed to carry out successful experiments in your degree. You must demonstrate competency in practical work in order to achieve a pass in the practical endorsement awarded at the end of the course.

What topics will I study?

The unit titles are:

1. Biological molecules
2. Cells
3. Organisms exchange substances with their environment
4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
5. Energy transfers in and between organisms
6. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
7. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
8. The control of gene expression.

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

There are three exams at the end of the two years for A Level, all of which are two hours long. At least 15 per cent of the marks for A Level biology are based on what you learned in your practicals and 10 per cent of the marks assess mathematical skills.

> "The Scientist is not a person who gives the right answers; he is the one who asks the right questions"
>
> *Claude Levi-Strauss (French Anthropologist)*

What can I do with the subject in the future?

A Level biology is a requirement for most degree courses in biological and medical sciences. It is also useful for vocational courses such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and other careers in the health service. In recent years our biologists have also pursued a variety of courses including law, architecture, psychology and geography to name but a few.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

The study of biology at A Level builds on work already studied so students should have a minimum of a grade 7 at GCSE. The mathematical demands of the course require competence at mathematics equivalent to at least grade 6 at GCSE.

Business

What is the subject about?

We study businesses in a variety of contexts, from small to large, UK focused to global and within manufacturing and the service sector. Business, as a subject, is the analysis of the manner in which businesses are organised and run internally and how they are affected by external factors. The course aims to develop analytical and problem solving skills by relating business theory to real world situations. Areas of enquiry are more easily illustrated by examples of the kind of questions that might be prompted by the course:

- Is it ethical to download music without paying for it?
- Who is doing better - Amazon or Apple?
- Why is the Uber business model so controversial?
- What is the most cost effective way of motivating your workforce?
- How does Google attract such high calibre employees?
- What is the best way to make a profit?
- How will Aldi alter their strategic position following improvements to the UK economy?
- Should stakeholders be given a greater say in a business' decisions?
- Can the changes at Tesco stop its decline?
- How can a business possibly plan for Brexit?

In addition students can take part in the National Student Investor Challenge dealing in shares with a starting portfolio of £100,000

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You already have many of the key analytical and reasoning skills that will be helpful on this course. We will help you to understand and apply new business theories to real world contexts. By the end of the course the best business students will be able to process large amounts of information, to sift out the important from the marginal data and to critically evaluate the commercial impact on the business.

What topics will I study?

The Edexcel specification involves the study of marketing, accountancy and finance, operations management, human resource management and the objectives and strategies of organisations.

The course is broken down into four 'themes', allowing for a broad coverage of a range of units:

- Theme One
  Marketing and people
- Theme Two
  Managing business activities
- Theme Three
  Business decisions and strategy
- Theme Four
  Global business

What is the examination board?
Edexcel

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Assessment takes the form of three two-hour examinations at the end of a two year course.

Business 1 - Three compulsory sections

Section A - 15 multiple choice questions

Section B - Short answer questions

Section C and D - Two essay questions

Business 2 - Three compulsory data response questions

Business 3 - One compulsory case study followed by approximately six questions

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Students aspiring to a future career in the business field should find this course invaluable. It combines well with most other subjects since commercial awareness is an advantage in virtually all occupations. It is hoped that the department could help inspire some future entrepreneurs and wealth creators but on a more modest level we aim simply to encourage an appreciation of business principles.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

No prior knowledge of business studies is assumed nor is necessary to enrol for this course; however minimum grade 6 at GCSE mathematics and English are desirable. There is a minimum 10 per cent numeracy content in the examinations.

Chemistry

What is the subject about?

Chemistry in today's society is concerned with improving our standards of living and general well-being. It is responsible for the development and manufacture of medicines, vaccines, plastics, textiles and many of the other modern materials that we take for granted. The battle against pollution is being fought by chemists. A student who has studied A Level chemistry should have a greater understanding of the impact of science on our society and may play an active role in how it develops.

What topics will I study?

Physical Chemistry - atomic structure, amount of substance, bonding, energetics, kinetics, equilibria, redox reactions, thermodynamics, electrode potentials, electrochemical cells, acids, bases and buffers.

Inorganic Chemistry - periodicity, Group II, Group VII, transition metals and reactions of inorganic compounds in solution.

Organic Chemistry - alkanes, halogenoalkanes, alkenes, alcohols, organic analysis, carbonyl compounds, aromatic chemistry, amines, polymerisation, amino acids, proteins and DNA, organic synthesis, structure determination and chromatography.

What is the examination board?
AQA Specification 7405

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

The course is linear with all written papers completed at the end of Year 13.

Paper 1: Two hours, 35 per cent of A Level marks

Relevant physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, relevant practical skills

Paper 2: Two hours, 35 per cent of A Level marks

Relevant physical chemistry, organic chemistry, relevant practical skills

Paper 3: Two hours, 30 per cent of A Level marks

Synoptic - all content and practical skills

Practical work is carried out throughout the course and assessed both in the written examination papers and via a separate certificated endorsement of practical skills. This is teacher assessed and will be based on direct observation of your practical work in class.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Chemistry can be studied to provide the foundation for a career in the chemical industry,

chemical engineering or pharmaceutical industry. It is also required for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, forensic science and pharmacy. It is a useful subject to have studied for other forms of engineering, biological or environmental sciences. Equally it is not unusual to study subjects such as law or accountancy having obtained A Levels in subjects such as chemistry.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

The study of chemistry at A Level builds on work already studied so students should have a minimum of a grade 7 at GCSE. A grade 7 in GCSE mathematics is essential as there is a considerable mathematical element to the course.

Chemistry is a demanding subject at A Level and students need to be prepared to work hard. Less than 35 per cent of marks at A Level are awarded for simply remembering what has been taught in class. To succeed students must be able to not only learn facts but also be able to interpret and analyse qualitative and quantitative data and apply their knowledge to unfamiliar problems.

Computer Science

What is the subject about?

Computers are everywhere. We use mobile phones, TVs and cars that include large amounts of software; almost everyone has a computer in their home and virtually everyone under 30 plays computer games. These systems all rely on advanced computer science.

Computer science is a practical subject where learners can apply the academic principles learned in the classroom to real world systems. It is an intensely creative subject that combines invention and excitement. Students will develop an ability to analyse, critically evaluate and make decisions. An A Level in computer science values computational thinking, helping students to develop the skills to solve problems, design systems and understand the power and limits of human and machine intelligence.

Students will develop an ability to analyse, critically evaluate and make decisions. The project approach is a vital component of 'post-school' life and is of particular relevance to further education, higher education and the workplace. Each student is able to tailor their project to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

- An interest in computer science
- The ability to analyse and solve problems
- The capacity for thinking creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- The capacity to see relationships between different aspects of a subject
- Mathematical skills

What topics will I study?

- The characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices
- Software and software development
- Exchanging data - compression, encryption, databases, networks, web technologies
- Data types, data structures and algorithms
- Legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues
- Elements of computational thinking
- Problem solving and programming
- Algorithms to solve problems and standard algorithms

Students will also choose a computing problem to work through, covering the following areas:

- Analysis of the problem
- Design of the solution
- Developing the solution
- Evaluation

What is the examination board?

The course follows the OCR specification, course code H446

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

The course consists of three components:

The computer systems component contains the majority of the specification content and is assessed in a written paper, recalling knowledge and understanding. It includes the following topic areas: characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices; software and software development; programming; exchanging data; data types, data structures and algorithms; legal, moral, ethical and cultural issues.

The algorithms and programming component relates specifically to problem solving skills needed to apply the knowledge and understanding from the first component. The component covers a range of elements regarding computational thinking, such as: elements of computational thinking, programming and problem solving; pattern recognition, abstraction and decomposition; algorithm design and efficiency and standard algorithms. The component also provides students with a short scenario in which problem solving skills are required.

The programming project is a practical portfolio based assessment, with a task produced using a suitable programming language. Students will need to analyse a given problem, design a solution, implement the solution and provide a thorough evaluation.

Mathematical skills are embedded throughout the three components:

Computer systems written examination - 40 per cent of A Level

Algorithms and programming written examination - 40 per cent of A Level

Programming project - 20 per cent of A Level

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Choosing computer science is the best preparation for students who want to go on to study computer science at a higher level and will also provide a good grounding for other subject areas that require computational thinking and analytical skills.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

GCSE computer science is not a requirement. Due to considerable mathematical content within computer science a minimum of a grade 6 at GCSE mathematics is required.

“You are unique, and if that is not fulfilled, then something has been lost.”

Martha Graham

Dance

What is the subject about?

This specification reflects both historical and current dance practices, making it more relevant, and is intended to inspire a lifelong passion and appreciation for dance. As well as learning technique, choreography and performance, students will look at Rambert Dance Company in detail and one other area of study.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

An interest in the subject is a must as are enjoying learning about dance history and looking to improve the way in which you move. You should also be able to work well with others, either in a choreographer's role or that of a dancer.

What topics will I study?

There are three core strands.

1. Performance (solo and quartet)
2. Choreography
3. Critical engagement

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

This qualification is linear, this means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

The three core strands are divided into two components:

Component 1: Performance and choreography (50 per cent of A Level)

These elements will be assessed in a practical examination:

- A solo performance linked to a specific practitioner within an area of study
- A performance within a quartet
- Group choreography - the creation of a group dance

Component 2: Critical engagement (50 per cent of A Level)

- Knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation of Rooster by Christopher Bruce and its location within the corresponding area of study
- Knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation of Sutra by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and its location within the corresponding area of study.

This component will be assessed as a written examination:

- the written paper (two hours and 30 minutes) will consist of short answer questions and three essay questions on the specific areas of study.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

A Level dance is a dynamic qualification which encourages students to develop their creative and intellectual capacity, alongside transferable skills such as team working, communication and problem solving. All of these are sought after skills by higher education and employers and will help students to stand out in the workplace whatever their choice of career. Past students have gone on to study a wide range of subjects at university, including law, design, marketing to name just a few.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

GCSE dance is not essential but is helpful to have.

Design and Technology: Product Design

What is the subject about?

The AQA specification has been designed to encourage candidates to take a broad view of design and technology, to develop their capacity to design and make products and to appreciate the complex relations between design, materials, manufacture and marketing.

Product design involves a broad approach to the designing and making of innovative / new products. This subject is aimed at those interested in the way business and industry identify potential products and successfully designs and manufacture them. It is not for those who intend to design and manufacture an item that already exists. However, you can investigate existing design contexts and seek to improve an existing product or develop an entirely new product or prototype.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

- Creativity
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly through sketching or 3D CAD software
- Appreciation of the need to develop a detailed understanding of materials and complex manufacturing methods delivered through weekly theory lessons.
- Keen interest in the analysis of new or innovative products, technologies and materials.

What topics will I study?

A Level Design and Technology: Product Design requires students to engage in both practical and theoretical study. This specification requires students to cover design and technology skills and knowledge as set out below.

These have been separated into:

- Technical principles
- Designing and making principles

Students should develop the ability to draw on and apply a range of skills and knowledge from other subject areas to inform their decisions in design and the application or development of technology. There are clear links between aspects of the specification content and other subject areas such as Computer Science ('The use of computer systems' & 'Digital design and manufacture'); Business Studies ('Enterprise and marketing in the development of products) and History ('Design Theory'). This is not an exhaustive list, and there are other opportunities within the specification for students to integrate and apply their wider learning and understanding from other subject areas studied during Key Stage 4.

Students must also demonstrate maths and science skills such as ratios, volumes, trigonometry and statistics. The ability to apply these skills to solve practical design problems will be assessed in both coursework submissions and the final examinations.

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Non-exam assessment: practical application of technical principles, designing and making principles. 50 per cent.

Paper 1: Technical principles. Written exam, two hours and 30 minutes. 30 per cent of A Level.

Paper 2: Designing and making principles. Written exam, one hour and 30 minutes. 20 per cent of A Level.

The non-exam assessment (NEA) seeks to assess the candidate's ability to independently apply skills associated with the practical application of technical principles, designing and making principles. Candidates will submit a written or digital design portfolio and photographic evidence of final prototype.

Assessment criteria for NEA:

A01: Identify, investigate and outline design possibilities to address needs and wants.

A02: Design and make prototypes that are fit for purpose.

A03: Analyse and evaluate design decisions and outcomes, including for prototypes made by themselves and others. Awareness of wider issues in design and technology is also addressed.

A04: Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of:

- Technical principles
- Designing and making principles.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

- Architecture
- Automotive design
- Fashion design
- Jewellery design
- Interior design
- Building Services Engineering
- Construction Engineering
- Video game design
- Manufacturing Production
- Marine Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Motorsport
- Product Design
- Structural Engineering

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Due to the increased level of demand and the necessity for candidates to plan and complete a detailed and independent investigation developed over the two year period, candidates should have obtained a minimum grade 6 in GCSE design and technology to opt for this course.

The ability to communicate through drawing and detailed self-assessment of candidates' own design work features strongly, therefore we consider these skills an important asset.

Drama and Theatre Studies

What is the subject about?

The course is designed for students who enjoy reading, writing about and watching plays and taking part in drama as a performer, director or designer.

During the course you will:

- create, perform and respond to drama and theatre
- develop the creativity and independence to become effective theatre makers
- explore the relationship between theory and practice in a range of theatrical styles and periods and historical, social and cultural contexts
- learn how relevant research, independent thought and analysis of live theatre production can inform decision making in your practical work and put this understanding into practice
- experience the ways in which theatre makers collaborate to create theatre.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

- Creativity and confidence to try new things
- Enthusiasm and a keenness to explore new ideas
- Good analytical and reflective skills
- Strong communication skills - both orally and on paper
- Empathy for other people and situations
- Interdependence - an ability to work well with others while retaining your individuality
- Good research skills and the ability to select and then share relevant ideas

What topics will I study?

You will study a range of plays from the perspective of an actor, director and designer.

You will communicate your ideas about two set texts in a written exam; the set texts have been selected to represent significant drama through the ages and include: Antigone, Much Ado About Nothing, The Servant of Two Masters, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Yerma, The Glass Menagerie, Metamorphosis and Our Country's Good.

You will develop your acting and directing skills as well as your drama knowledge and understanding, staging extracts from three different plays as well as creating your own original devised piece.

You will see a wide range of live theatre in a number of styles to help inform your own ideas. You will also research the work of key practitioners whose techniques you will draw upon when creating your own work.

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?
What's assessed?

1. Drama and theatre

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of two set plays, one chosen from List A, one chosen from List B
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

How it's assessed

- Written exam: Three hours/ open book/ 80 marks/ 40 per cent of A Level

Questions

- Section A: one question (from a choice) on one of the set plays from List A (25 marks)
- Section B: one two part question on a given extract from one of the set plays from List B (25 marks)
- Section C: one question on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production (30 marks)

2. Creating original drama (practical)

- Process of creating devised drama
- Performance of devised drama (students may contribute as performer, designer or director)

Devised piece must be influenced by the work and methodologies of one prescribed practitioner

How it's assessed

- Working notebook (40 marks)/ devised performance (20 marks)/ 60 marks in total/ 30 per cent of A Level. This component is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

3. Making theatre

- Practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts (Extract 1, 2 and 3) each taken from a different play

Methodology of a prescribed practitioner must be applied to Extract 3.

Extract 3 is to be performed as a final assessed piece (students may contribute as performer, designer or director)

- Reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts
- Performance of Extract 3 (40 marks)/ Reflective report (20 marks)/ 60 marks in total/ 30 per cent of A Level. This component is marked by AQA.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

This course will provide an excellent foundation for university courses in drama and theatre studies, technical theatre or stage management or for applicants to drama schools. It is also a superb complement to courses in English and other humanities as well as performing arts courses such as dance and music.

The written elements of the course will develop analytical and evaluative skills, while the practical requirements will improve and develop personal communication skills, confidence and teamwork. These skills complement a range of A Level subjects where analysis, communication and teamwork are important.

Previous A Level drama students have gone on to careers in film, stage and musical theatre as well as a wide range of other careers from business, law, journalism, events management, psychology and politics.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

A grade 6 in drama GCSE is useful.

An English or dance GCSE grade 6 is also useful.

More important are the skills outlined above.

"You may know what's going on in the world but if you don't know economics, you won't know why."

Mr McFall

Economics

What is the subject about?

The A Level economics course is open to all prospective Sixth Form students. No prior knowledge of course material is expected or presumed. The specification is designed to develop an understanding of contemporary economic problems. Issues for analysis are wide ranging and would include;

- Brexit; an act of economic liberation or an act of folly?
- Why does Rafa Benitez earn more in a week than the Prime Minister does in a year?
- Will President Trump's protectionist policies 'make America great again'?
- Are we heading for a recession? Is it time to end the policy of economic austerity?
- Will the Euro survive as a single currency? Will the EU survive in its current form?
- Rich people need tax cuts to incentivise them to work harder whilst poor people need benefit cuts to get them to work at all. Do you agree?
- The best way to share out scarce resources is by putting a price on them and allocating them only to those who can afford to pay. What do you think?
- To escape poverty, poor countries need more foreign aid. Do you agree?

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

As can be seen from the above questions, the greatest attribute any aspiring economist can have is an inquisitive mind. Curiosities are much more easily unravelled when thinking is done within a rigorous theoretical framework. Economists have their own way of thinking and it is the aim of this course to pass on this methodology to others. Of course your early years in maths, English, science and other lessons will have equipped you with the analytical, quantitative and critical thinking skills that will allow you to make sense of the course material.

What topics will I study?

- The central economic problem
- Demand, supply and the price mechanism
- Behavioural economics (where economics meets psychology)
- The economic behaviour of firms under different market conditions
- The economics of labour markets
- Income, wealth, poverty and inequality
- When, why and how markets fail
- Macro-economic performance; how economies function at national level
- Financial markets
- Globalisation, trade and economic development

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Economics is delivered as a linear programme with three exams at the end of the two year course;

- Markets and market failure (Two hour exam with data response and essay questions)
- National and international economy (Two hour exam with data response and essay questions)
- Economic principles and issues (Two hour exam with multiple choice and case study question)

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Career minded students may be drawn to economics for different reasons. It combines well with maths for those with an interest in banking, insurance, finance, stockbroking or accountancy. Modern linguists are increasingly being expected to have a background in economics in order to work in the business field abroad. The civic minded among you aiming for a career in government or the public services might consider it as a complement to politics or psychology. In general it will appeal to those with a desire to understand how the world works.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Throughout this course students will become familiar with new terminology, charts, graphs and simple equations to help improve their independent thinking. 20 per cent of overall marks will be based on numeracy skills therefore a minimum of a grade 6 in mathematics GCSE is essential for those considering this course.

English Language

What is the subject about?

English language at A Level is based on linguistics, the study of language as a human phenomenon, and how it works. Many students are often surprised that A Level English language bears little resemblance to GCSE.

This course is underpinned by language methods: the tools required to develop a critical understanding of the key constituents of language, for example grammar. Students will develop wide-ranging skills through engagement in critical reading, data analysis, the writing of discursive essays and the practising of directed writing. The ability to develop and sustain arguments provides students with essential, transferrable skills.

The study of linguistics is underpinned by deepening candidates' understanding and application of the methods of language.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You will have excellent analytical skills and you will be able to write confidently and coherently.

What topics will I study?

Paper 1: Language, the individual and society

Paper 2: Language diversity and change

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Paper 1: Language, the individual and society

Written exam: Two hours and 30 minutes, and 40 per cent of A Level

- In Section A, students are required to study one contemporary and an older text, potentially dating back to 1600. Both texts are linked by topic or theme.
- In Section B, candidates produce a discursive essay on the topic of children's language development, with a choice of two questions where the data provided will focus on spoken, written or multimodal language (30 marks)

Paper 2: Language diversity and change

Written exam: Two hours and 30 minutes, and 40 per cent of A Level

- Section A - Diversity and change: candidates produce EITHER an evaluative essay on language diversity OR an evaluative essay on language change (30 marks)
- Section B - Language discourses, focusing on diversity and change: candidates are required to analyse how the texts use language to present ideas, attitudes and opinions (40 marks)
- Section C - students will produce a directed writing task linked to the same topic and the ideas in the texts, writing in the style of a broadsheet. As a result, students will learn more about journalese (30 marks)

Coursework:

20 per cent of A2 marks are gained from Non-Exam Assessment in the form of a language investigation, a piece of original writing and commentary on a topic decided upon by the candidate.

The word count for the portfolio of work is 3,500 and is assessed by teachers but externally moderated by AQA.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

The study of this subject can lead students towards reading English at degree level. Alternatively, the significant socio-linguistic content also opens up opportunities in the field of social science, including psychology. Over a number of years, this course has also attracted students interested in studying law, particularly with reference to exploring the power of language.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Students wanting to study English language at A Level are required to have a grade 6 in GCSE English.

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Dr Seuss

English Literature

What is the subject about?

It's about analysing texts (poetry, drama, novels) with a particular focus on how the author develops language, form and structure to create meaning. We also consider the impact of social and historical context, and discuss the relevance of literary theories such as feminism, Marxism and narrative theory.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

If you genuinely enjoyed studying literary texts in considerable detail at GCSE, and would like to develop your analytical skills even further, this may be the course for you. As a lover of texts, you should be willing to think about what the author intended, teasing out subtle meanings, English literature will be very rewarding.
The essential requirements for this course are:

- to love reading across a range of literature
- to have a personal response to poetry, narrative and drama
- to learn how to interpret texts in a range of different ways.

What topics will I study?

- You study a range of different text forms - narrative, poetry and drama - linked by genre, the type of writing they are and kind of subject they deal with. For example, genres studied at A Level include comedy, tragedy, political writing and crime writing.
- You study Shakespeare in considerable depth, analysing structure and language.
- You study historical texts not simply as the products of individual writers, but as mirrors of the times these writers lived in.
- You explore the variety of interpretation that literary texts offer. You consider the freedom of the reader to respond to literary texts in their own way, or to respond according to a school of criticism (feminism, Marxism etc.)
- You relate texts to each other, through comparison and contrast.
- You develop analytical skills that allow you to reach a high standard of literary criticism.

What is the examination board?
AQA spec B

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

There are nine texts to study altogether over the two years, three tragedy or comedy, three crime writing or political writing, a critical theory anthology and two texts for coursework (one prose text and one poetry text). So far, at Dame Allan's we have chosen the tragedy and crime options:

Paper 1: Tragedy

Written examination: Two hours and 30 minutes, closed book, 40 per cent of A Level

Texts are chosen from a recommended list, including:

Othello - Shakespeare

Death of a Salesman - Arthur Miller

Keats poetry selection - 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', 'Isabella', 'Lamia', 'The Eve of St Agnes'

Exam structure

Section A - Passage-based question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks)

Section B - Essay question on set Shakespeare text (25 marks)

Section C - Essay question linking remaining two texts (25 marks)

Paper 2: Crime writing

Written examination - Three hours, open book, 40 per cent of A Level

Texts are chosen from a recommended list, including:

Atonement - Ian McEwan

Brighton Rock - Graham Greene

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner - Coleridge

Exam structure:

Section A - Compulsory commentary on an unseen passage (25 marks)

Section B - Essay question on single set text (25 marks)

Section C - Essay question linking remaining two texts (25 marks)

Coursework 20 per cent of A Level

Two pieces of work, one of the texts must be poetry and one must be prose.

- Each text must be linked to a different section of the AQA Critical Anthology

What can I do with the subject in the future?

The sky is the limit!

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Grade 6 in GCSE English literature.

French

What is the subject about?

A Level French is a challenging yet rewarding course, which accommodates the linguistic level of students newly qualified in GCSE French. Through the study of A Level French, we hope you will develop a lasting appreciation of the language and the ability to communicate readily in French for a variety of purposes. We aim to increase your knowledge of French-speaking cultures and help you acquire valuable skills for foreign travel, further education and employment.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

If you coped well with GCSE French and have a strong capacity to organise your work, carefully learn all new vocabulary by heart and want to develop your grammatical knowledge to create accurate sentences, then French is for you. A commitment to listening to, reading and speaking as much French as possible is also very helpful as we expect you to embrace independent study to truly enhance your linguistic progression. Above all you need to have enthusiasm for the language and the countries where the language is spoken. You should be willing to develop your skills and confidence in the spoken language and perhaps consider participating in a study visit or exchange.

What topics will I study?

The course covers current trends in French speaking society as well as cultural and political aspects of countries where French is spoken. There is also a study of a literary text and a film, which are examined in written form.

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

You will be examined during the exam season at the end of Year 13. There are three papers: Paper 1 is listening, reading and translation, Paper 2 is extended writing and Paper 3 is a speaking exam.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

An A Level language enables you to move towards genuine fluency. It opens many doors, as there are a variety of language-related jobs and statistically, employers like to take on able linguists even for employment that is not directly related to languages.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

To choose this relevant and exciting language course, a 7 at GCSE French is strongly recommended in order to cope with the demands of this work.

"Without geography you're nowhere."

Michael Palin - Geography Tsar

Geography

What is the subject about?

The A Level geography course has been designed to give learners the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to become engaged global citizens. Through the study of dynamic and contemporary content, learners can understand and interact with issues which affect people and places at a range of scales from local to global.

Through the study of physical systems learners will develop an understanding and appreciation of Landscape Systems, and Earth's Life Support Systems encompassing the water and carbon cycles vital to our planet.

Learners will explore Human interactions through the study of Global Connections and Governance, and Changing Spaces; Making Places, giving them an insight into the nature of places and the fluidity of their meanings and representations.

Geographical debates allow learners to explore, in depth, two of the most challenging, dynamic and fascinating issues of the 21st century - disease and tectonic hazards.

The Investigative geography component allows learners to undertake an independent investigation linked to any aspect of the specification to satisfy their intellectual curiosity. This component is designed to encourage learners to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic whilst developing a number of geographical and study skills relevant to higher education and the world of work.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Students should have a positive attitude towards developing as critical and reflective learners, able to articulate opinions, suggest relevant new ideas, and provide evidenced argument in a range of situations. They should be willing to participate in class discussion, to cooperate as part of a group, and to engage with a wide range of written and practical tasks. Students should also be prepared to study independently, regularly reading ahead and revising work covered in lessons. The ability to plan, think and work independently is essential for the coursework which requires high levels of organisation and motivation. Most importantly, students should have an enquiring mind and an enthusiastic interest in studying the world and our interactions with it.

What topics will I study?

Physical geography: Glaciated landscapes, Earth's life support systems, hazardous Earth

Human geography: Changing spaces; making places, global systems (Trade or Migration) and global governance (Human rights or Power and borders), Disease dilemmas

Geographical and fieldwork skills: This is an essential part of the course and students will undertake five days of fieldwork in Year 12 including a three day residential trip to the Lake District. The department holds a Secondary Geography Quality Mark with Centre of Excellence for Fieldwork awarded by the Geographical Association. Pupils will acquire the understanding and skills needed to enable them to produce their coursework independently.

Coursework
Independent fieldwork investigation

What is the examination board?
OCR

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Paper 1 - Physical systems: short and long answer questions (1-16 marks) One hour and 30 minutes (22 per cent)

Paper 2 - Human interactions: short and long answer questions (1-16 marks) One hour and 30 minutes (22 per cent)

Paper 3 - Geographical debates: short and long answers questions (1-12 marks) + extended response questions (33 marks) Two hours and 30 minutes (36 per cent)

Coursework - Independent fieldwork investigation (3,000 - 4,000 words) (20 per cent)

The course is linear (no modules)

What can I do with the subject in the future?

In geography students acquire skills that are needed across the school curriculum, at home and at work. Geography students learn about map use, data analysis, problem solving, ICT and geographical information systems. They find out how to work alone and in a team. They work directly in the real world - on 'fieldwork'. They gain an awareness of social and environmental responsibility.

The close link between geography and the world around us makes for a long and varied list of related careers, for example working with development or aid agencies, environmental work, and jobs in tourism and recreation. Statistics show that compared with other subjects, geographers are amongst the most employable. Many of those leaving university with a geography degree enter three fields of employment: administration and management, marketing or financial work. This is because geographers possess skills which are attractive to employers.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

A grade 6 at GCSE is expected, but there are no other specific requirements for studying geography at A Level. As the course involves some numerical skills including simple statistics a good GCSE result in maths would be an advantage.

> "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to a man in his own language, that goes to his heart."
>
> *Nelson Mandela*

German

What is the subject about?

You will develop your ability to understand, speak and write in German on a wide range of topical issues including music, fashion and image, German festivals and traditions, the city of Berlin, German reunification and the digitalisation of society. You will also study a German film and novel.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You enjoy learning German, are a confident speaker and have a good understanding of grammar concepts. You take an interest in, and have an opinion on, wider contemporary social and political issues affecting young people. You are hard-working and keen to become as proficient as you can in the language and to learn more about German-speaking countries.

What topics will I study?

Fashion and Image; The Digitalisation of Society; Changing Family Relationships; Music and Television; Multiculturalism; Berlin Cultural Life; German Festivals and Traditions; German Reunification; Art and Architecture; Young People and Politics; Germany and The EU.

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined? How long is each exam? Are there modules?

You will take three exams at the end of Year 13:

Paper 1: Listening, Reading & Writing (Two hours and 30 minutes / 100 marks)

Paper 2: Essay on film and novel (Two hours / 80 marks)

Paper 3: Speaking on your chosen research topic + one topic from above (21-23 mins. / 60 marks)

What can I do with the subject in the future?

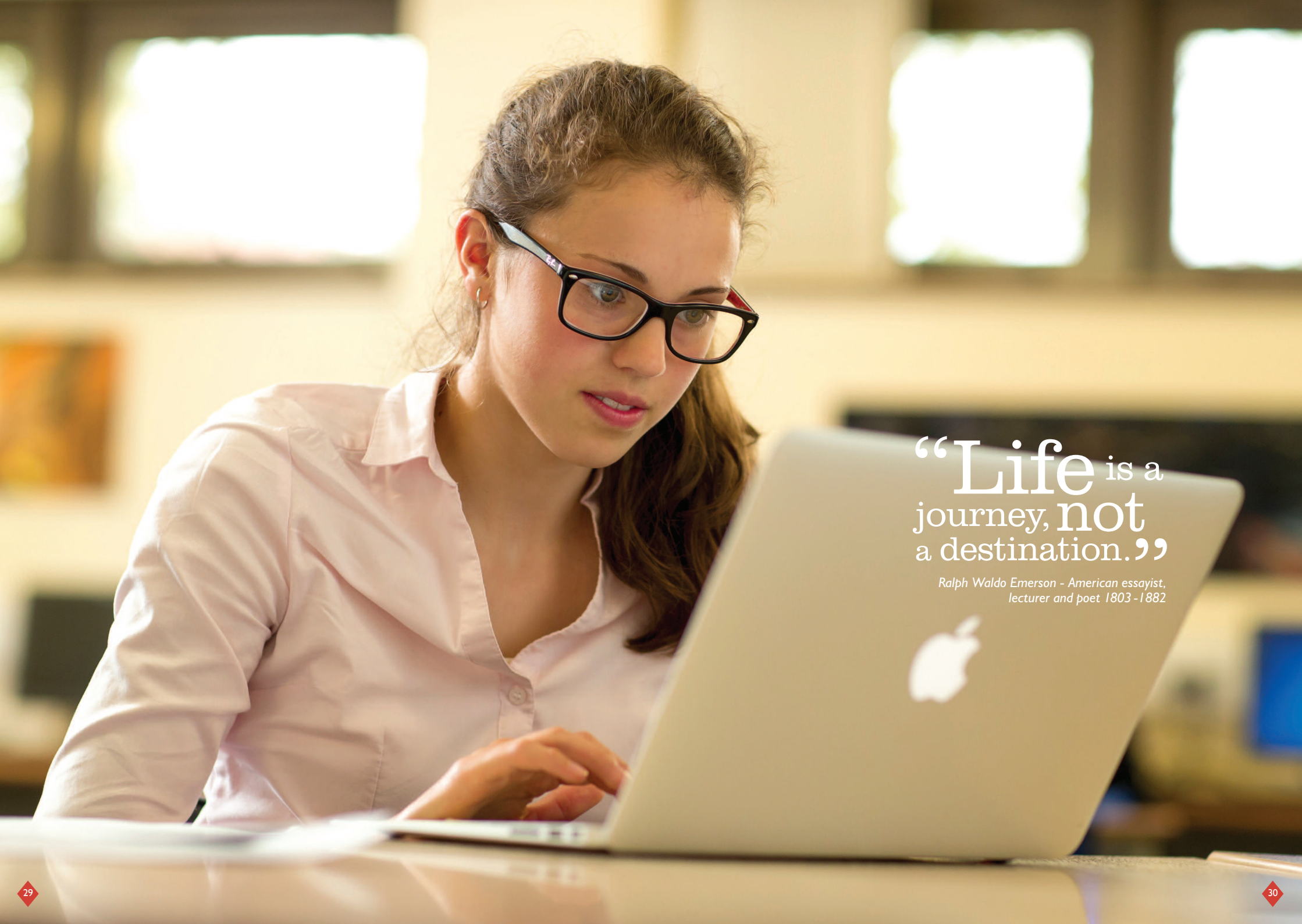
The ability to understand, speak and write German is much in demand by employers in the areas of science and research and development, technology and renewable energies, car engineering and manufacture, finance and business, primary and secondary teaching and leisure and tourism.

Universities regard A Level German very highly and recognise it as a qualification demonstrating high academic rigour.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

You should have a minimum of a 7 pass at IGCSE/GCSE.

You should enjoy learning languages and reading and listening to a wide range of resources in German. You should have a good understanding of grammar and like speaking the language.


“Life is a journey, not a destination.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson - American essayist, lecturer and poet 1803 -1882

"Life must be lived forward, but it can only be understood backward."

Søren Kierkegaard

History

What is the subject about?

Quite apart from the fact that history is a fascinating and absorbing subject, "the truth is that without a sense of history human life as we know it would be unthinkable," (AL Rowse). The study of history enriches our understanding of the world and gives a context to our lives.

The study of history at A Level encourages our students to develop their critical thinking and their ability to make meaningful connections between the different aspects of history, such as between its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Students of history are given the opportunity to explore the significance of events and the role of individuals who participated in them. At Dame Allan's we specialise in the Modern Period.

History is an immensely valuable subject giving those who undertake its study:

- a thorough knowledge of a variety of interesting topics
- the opportunity to develop sophisticated communication skills
- a capacity to think logically
- an appreciation of the different ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians
- the ability to research historical material and the skills to synthesise that research into personal study
- the skills to analyse evidence and use it to construct a sound argument.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Students wanting to study history at A Level will be avid readers, excellent communicators and will be comfortable and confident in putting forward opinions and arguments during debates. Students need to have a good command of written English, be able to write well-structured and logical essays and be able to analyse, evaluate and pass judgement on historical sources.

And importantly they will have a passion for the subject!

What topics will I study?

Unit 1: Breadth Study
The Making of a Superpower: USA 1865-1975

Unit 2: Depth Study
The Making of Modern Britain 1951-2007

Unit 3: Historical Investigation
You will need to undertake extensive research using a broad range of primary and secondary sources to write a 4,500 word essay. You will need to demonstrate independence in your learning and in your thinking

What is the examination board?
AQA

How long is each exam?
There are two exams that are 2 hours and 30 minutes each.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

A qualification in history is highly regarded by both universities and employers. The skills that it signifies are valued in countless occupations, law and journalism being excellent examples.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

It is advisable to have at least a 6 grade in history at IGCSE / GCSE level.

"Maths trains you to work in the abstract, to think creatively and come up with concrete solutions"

Wen (Architect)

Mathematics/ Further Mathematics

What is the subject about?

The subject breaks down into pure mathematics and mathematical applications (mechanics and statistics). In the pure section, which covers two thirds of the course, students are introduced to methods of proof, algebraic functions, co-ordinate geometry, sequences, series, trigonometry, exponentials, logarithms, differentiation, integration and numerical methods. The mechanics section introduces units, quantities, kinematics, forces, Newton's Laws and moments. The statistics section involves sampling, data presentation, data analysis and interpretation, probability, statistical distributions and hypothesis testing. There is also the new big data set to get grips to.

In further mathematics the key themes are developed in much more detail in both the pure and applied sections and weightier topics introduced like proof by induction, complex numbers, polar co-ordinates and second order differential equations.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You will have an interest in the subject, a fine grounding in algebra and a first class work ethic. On top of this a willingness to ask questions, research independently and grapple for answers would be beneficial. You will have much practice via homework assignments and classwork but to get the most out of the course you must be responsible to some extent for your own learning and keep going over the material in a structured way and on a regular basis. To help facilitate this, students will be expected to produce a folder of independent work based on the course content.

What is the examination board?
Edexcel

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

In mathematics there will be three two-hour papers and a calculator will be allowed.

In further mathematics there will be four one hour and 30 minute papers and a calculator will be allowed.

Note there is no coursework in this option.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Mathematics is very adaptable and you can go into a wide variety of careers. The ability to present and analyse data, think logically and be highly numerate will put you high in the pecking order for careers like teacher, air traffic controller, weather forecaster, investment banker, computer programmer, medical statistician, actuary, accountant, economist, engineer, architect, psychologist etc.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

To go on to A Level mathematics you need GCSE grade 7 and to do further mathematics an 8 is required. A very good basis in algebra and a willingness to work hard would give you a flying start.

Music

What is the subject about?

Music is a multifaceted subject, allowing students to develop the interdependent skills of performance, composition, analysis and listening. This diverse skillset required allows those who love music to flourish and develop their all-round musicianship, inspiring a passion for music for life. Studying the history and context of music encourages our young musicians to analyse the musical features present within a variety of genres and styles and to investigate their social and historical backgrounds. Music A Level also encompasses aural and appraising skills: the ability to identify theoretical elements when listening to new pieces. These skills can benefit all types of music making, both in and out of the classroom, whilst widening a student's appreciation of a range of contrasting music. Music embodies creativity, often culminating in composition, creating new music by synthesising theory, investigation and imagination. Students will also develop their performance skills, performing as both a soloist and as part of ensemble. We encourage our exam year musicians to become actively involved with extra-curricular life, employing their performance talents in the many concerts, recitals, choirs and other ensembles on offer.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

First and foremost, a passion for music making and a musically inquisitive mind are essential characteristics for the study of music during Sixth Form. Music A Level requires students to have previous musical experience of performance and a familiarity with musical notation. Having a good ear will also prove beneficial when practising listening to and appraising a variety of musical styles and genres. Students will also be asked to write informatively and analytically on the set works studied, requiring the development of excellent writing skills. A creative approach and previous experience of music theory will be very helpful when composing music for coursework.

What topics will I study?

Students will study 18 set works taken from a wide variety of musical styles and periods, including film music, vocal music, instrumental music and popular and jazz music. They will explore the context and background of chosen set works, as well as the musical features exhibited within them. Students will look to develop their performing skills as well as expanding their knowledge of musical theory and how to apply it within their own compositions.

What is the examination board?
Edexcel

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Music A Level is assessed via coursework and a final examination. The coursework consists of both performance and composition work; each module is worth 30 per cent. You will have to design and perform your own eight minute recital, combining or choosing any of the following performance options: performing/singing solos, as part of an ensemble, improvising, and/or realising music using music technology. You will also have to complete two compositions, one to a brief set by the exam board and one either free composition or also to a brief. The examination is two hours long and will be worth 40 per cent of the qualification. It will include a listening and appraisal section, asking students to identify musical features from three of the studied set works, as well as being asked to transcribe a short passage of music. Students will also be required to write two essays, analysing one of the set works, the other asking students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard in an unfamiliar extract.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Music A Level is often a requirement for those hoping to study music or performing arts at higher education. It can also highlight on your UCAS form your vital analytical skills, as well as characteristics of perseverance, problem solving, self-assessment and creativity: all transferable skills that will be useful in any discipline.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Approximately grade 5 standard (or equivalent level' on your instrument is required. Familiarly with music notation is essential. Music GCSE is required, preferably at grade 6. Grade 5 Theory would also be useful.

Physical Education

What is the subject about?

Physical education A Level is about gaining a wider understanding of how our body reacts to and changes when we participate in sporting activity - both physiological changes and psychological changes. The role of sport within our society and the history and future of sport are also studied. Physical education A Level will offer an opportunity for those students with a genuine motivation in this field of study to experience an interesting course, which will develop their understanding and knowledge in all areas of sport and physical education. Students will be able to draw on their sporting experiences and apply the theories in practice, which will be important for detailed answers in written papers.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You must have an enthusiasm for sport and a passion for playing sport, be motivated and eager to learn new and exciting information and be driven to always perform to your best ability both inside and outside the classroom. Being an organised student who is able to cope with the demands of independent homework as well as pressures of class work is vital. Finally you must be willing and confident enough to contribute fully to verbal class discussions.

What topics will I study?

Students will cover seven main topic areas - Applied Anatomy and Physiology; Skill acquisition; Sport and society; Exercise physiology; Biomechanical movement; Sports psychology; The role of technology in physical activity and sport. Students will also submit one piece of written coursework.

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Two written papers at the end of the two year course. A mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.
Two hours for each paper. (each 35 per cent)

One piece of non-exam assessment. Students are assessed as a performer or a coach in the full sided version of one activity. Plus verbal/written analysis of performance. (30 per cent)

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Higher education establishments recognise physical education A Level. It offers obvious career opportunities and routes to other linked courses - for example; sports coaching, sport with business, medicine, sport medicine, sports injuries, PE teaching and sports psychology, personal training, health and fitness.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

High level of performance in at least one sport is required. Minimum of a grade 6 in GCSE biology.

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity."

J.F. Kennedy

Philosophy

What is the subject about?

Philosophy is an exciting and challenging A Level course which appeals to a wide range of students and is highly regarded by top ranking universities and employers. It offers you a philosophical training that you will find extremely useful and gives you the opportunity to explore fundamental questions, to critically examine the answers others have given and to develop and justify your own conclusions.

Philosophy gives you the opportunity to consider complex and challenging questions which explore the very nature of what it means to be human and how we should approach those subjects where there may not be an initial apparent answer.

Philosophy gives you the tools to analyse and examine concepts you use in everyday life and your other subjects. It will help you for example to become a sharper thinker, more articulate, and more confident in your ability to reason. In particular it will help you to:

- Be more persuasive - argue clearly for your university place, your job, your court case, your business proposal etc.
- Analyse and spot the flaws in the reasoning of others and construct a better argument.
- Cut through waffle and make points succinctly and with precision.
- Develop imaginative and novel solutions to problems - think outside of the box.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Philosophy is a natural choice for those of you who are inquisitive and wish to explore questions which are fundamental to humanity. It will also appeal to those of you who enjoy constructive arguments, and analysing the argument of others. If you have enjoyed subjects such as history or RS at GCSE then the chances are you will enjoy the challenges of philosophy. However there is no specific requirement for you to have studied either subject at GCSE.

What topics will I study?

Year 12 course content includes:

- **Ethics -** How do we make moral decisions? What makes something 'good'? What is the nature of moral language?
- **Philosophy of Religion -** Can the existence of God be proven? Is it possible to use human language to talk about God?

Year 13 course content includes:

- **Epistemology -** What is perception? What can we know and how? - Can I trust my senses? - How do we develop concepts in our minds?
- **Philosophy of Mind -** Are mind and body separate? Is your mind the same as your brain? What is it to be a 'person'?

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

Two three-hour exams at the end of Year 13.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Philosophy is a highly regarded A Level. Universities and employers place great value on the critical thinking and presentational skills developed in this course. Apart from choosing to specialise in philosophy, former students have found this A Level extremely helpful in careers as varied as law, medicine, business, veterinary science, advertising, politics and education. It works well with many diverse A Levels including psychology, English, economics and the sciences.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Philosophy is only taught at A Level and therefore no previous knowledge of the subject is required. GCSE grade 6 in essay-based subjects are required for acceptance on to this course.

"The unexamined life is not worth living"

Socrates

Physics

What is the subject about?

The core purpose of physics is to discover the laws of nature that explain the universe and our place within it. Physics spans the widest field of knowledge of all the sciences; from the size of a galaxy right down to smaller than the quarks that make up the protons and neutrons.

Physics explains (or tries to - there are still many things we do not know) the interaction between energy and matter and since everything in the universe is made of energy and matter (including you!) it could be argued that physics is the science that tries to explain everything. Fundamentally it is the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake, but it leads to discoveries which in time leads to technologies that impact on the quality of our lives in just about every arena.

Take a moment to think what your life would be like without electricity; without the advanced medical care you will hopefully never have to need; without clean water; without your smart phone! All of that began, at one time, with the discoveries of a scientist trying to understand the world around them. That's what physics is about.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

First and foremost, you will be inquisitive; you will naturally ask questions in order to satisfy a desire for more detail. You will be able to draw upon your prior knowledge and, even if you aren't confident that you are correct, you will always be willing to have a go at applying it to novel situations. You will be able to use mathematics competently (though you don't need to be brilliant despite what you might have been led to believe!) and you will not give up when solving problems. Whatever your perceived ability in physics, we find that any pupil with these skills will do very well at A Level.

What topics will I study?

Year 1: Mechanics, Materials, Electricity, Waves, Particle Physics and Quantum Physics.

Year 2: Further Mechanics (oscillations/circular motion), Fields and their effects, Thermal Physics, Gases, Radioactivity, Nuclear Physics and an option topic.

What is the examination board?
AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

This is a linear course; you will be examined at the end of Year 13. You will sit three two-hour papers. One will assess Year 12 material; one will assess Year 13 material, though you will be expected to apply Year 12 material to questions on this paper, and the third paper will assess practical skills, data analysis and the option topic.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Obvious careers would be in physics, maths, all branches of engineering, computer science, architecture, design or other physical science fields such as chemistry. This is also a subject that will make you stand out in competitive vocational fields (because of the high-level analytical, problem solving and mathematical skills you will be able to demonstrate) such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary science. Don't forget about fields such as the biological sciences, geography, law and economics, business courses as there are many exciting and modern careers opening up in fields like biophysics, space technology, renewables and quantum computing. In short, physics at A Level will open many and varied doors that you might not have thought about yet!

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Minimum of a grade 7 in maths and physics at GCSE.

We recommend that you take maths at A Level but this isn't a definitive requirement and you can still be very successful without it.

Please speak to a member of the department if you are considering going down this route - this is just to check you are not closing the door on future career options you might be interested in.

Politics

What is the subject about?

Politics is about debate, controversy and ideas so if you like to argue and are interested in current affairs you will enjoy the subject. Many of the topics we study will directly affect you, such as the debate about university tuition fees and you may already have strong opinions on them. Other issues may arouse passionate opposition or support such as the use of the death penalty in the USA. Whatever your views - and you will need to consider all sides of the issue - politics can be summed up in the words of Boris Johnson's favourite Greek philosopher, Pericles: "Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."

Studying politics is probably more exciting than it's ever been with the result of the EU Referendum shaking up the whole political system for a generation. Debates will rage about Britain's place in the EU and the consequences for Scotland and the English regions. Politics is therefore about what is happening now so it is a living and changing subject.

Politics has been termed, 'Who gets what, when and how'. This shows how the subject is also about how decisions are made that affect people's lives and how institutions work and how politicians' judgements are so important.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

You will need to take an interest in current affairs through reading the media and forming an opinion on the main political issues such as the renewal of nuclear weapons. The ability to listen to and evaluate different arguments is important as you will need to say why one argument is stronger than another and why one group or individual should come out on top. Being able to write clearly and persuasively is also essential in order to explain issues to your opponents; point out the weaknesses of their arguments and fairly evaluate the performance of politicians and the effectiveness of political institutions such as the UK Parliament or the US Supreme Court.

What topics will I study?

UK Politics

Political Participation: Democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media.

Core political ideas: conservatism, liberalism, socialism.

UK Government

UK Government: the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches.

Non-core political idea: feminism

Comparative Politics

USA: the US constitution and federalism, US Congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court and civil rights, democracy and participation, comparative theories.

What is the examination board?
Edexcel

How will I be examined? How long is each exam? Are there modules?

There are three exams of two hours made up of short answers and essays.

Example questions:

'Party leaders are the crucial factor in whether or not a political party is successful.' How far do you agree?

Evaluate the extent to which racial equality has been advanced in the USA in the 21st century.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Many politics pupils go on to study the subject at university either by itself or in combination with other subjects. Common courses include

Politics, Philosophy and Economics; Politics and History and International Relations.

Politics leads to a wide range of graduate opportunities that benefit from the skills gained at degree level from the civil service, local government, journalism, law, NHS management, teaching and, of course, politics itself.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Requirements: Grade 6 in an essay-based subject.

Psychology

What is the subject about?

Psychology is described as "the scientific study of the mind and behaviour". The course is an exciting and engaging introduction for students who have an interest in how and why people behave the way they do.

You will look at evidence from scientific research into these questions and take a critical and evaluative approach to this, learning how to discuss topics and bring in alternative views.

The study of psychology will help you to develop both oral and written communication skills. It will also give you experience of bringing together information from a wide variety of sources, and encourage you to take an objective and scientific approach to the evaluation of research and the practical application of psychology in the real world today.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

Do you have...

- strong mathematical skills?
- strong literary skills?
- a scientific as well as a humanistic preference?
- an interest in people and how they live their lives?
- the ability to think critically?
- the skills to work as part of a group as well as independently?

If so, then psychology may be the right subject for you.

What topics will I study?

Research methods (component 1)

This unit comprises planning, conducting, analysing and reporting psychological research across a range of experimental and non-experimental methodologies and techniques.

Mathematical skills and research methods are imperative to establishing theories and experimental design and as such are embedded throughout the course. You will have the opportunity to plan, conduct and write up your own psychological studies.

Psychological themes through core studies (component 2)

This unit introduces some of the central areas of investigation in psychology such as social, cognitive, developmental, biological psychology and individual differences organised into key themes including response to people in authority, regions of the brain and memory (through matters concerning eyewitness events), external influences on children's behaviour, regions of the brain and understanding disorders respectively. Each key theme is represented by two classic and two contemporary core studies.

We also investigate the behaviourist and psychodynamic perspectives and key debates surrounding psychological issues.

We discuss in detail practical applications of all studies learnt. Making psychology current and relevant to the world we live in today.

Applied Psychology (component 3)

We study the compulsory section on issues in mental health (this will include looking at psychological and biological attempts to explain mental disorders and their treatments, including OCD, phobias and depression plus two applied options currently criminal psychology and sports and exercise psychology.

What is the examination board?

OCR specification code H567

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

You will be externally assessed via three linear exam papers at the end of Year 13.

Your ability to apply and critically analyse the knowledge you have learnt throughout the course will be put to the test as you answer a variety of questions encompassing multiple choice, short answers, essays and mathematical problems. The length of the papers and marks available for each component are stated below.

Research methods (component 1)
90 marks written paper. Two hours
30 per cent of total A Level

Psychological themes through core studies (component 2)
105 marks written paper. Two hours
35 per cent of total A Level

Applied Psychology (component 3)
105 marks written paper. Two hours
35 per cent of total A Level

What can I do with the subject in the future?

Psychology is a fascinating subject that has many practical applications. Along with physics, chemistry and biology, psychology is a science subject. Many university courses, including medicine, require science A Levels. When choosing your A Level subjects, you should consider how psychology could complement other sciences, and vice versa. Medical students hugely benefit from psychological insights in order to deepen their understanding of clients and patients. In terms of careers, you may choose to pursue an option which directly utilises a particular aspect of psychology, for instance clinical, occupational, forensic, developmental or sport. Many psychology graduates also go on to teach the subject. Related careers make use of psychology in a broader sense, for example law, human resources, media, journalism, as well as business roles in promotions, advertising and sales.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

Entry requirements to this course are grade 6 in GCSE science, mathematics and English language.

Within A Level psychology, 10 per cent of the marks available within component 1 will be for the assessment of mathematics (in the context of psychology). A clear interest in figures as well as facts should be evidenced.

Most importantly you must be willing to work hard and contribute positively to every lesson.

Psychology is about human behaviour which is essential for a successful workforce, therefore the subject is desirable to many employers aiming to utilise a productive and effective workforce and maintain good mental health.

Spanish

What is the subject about?

A Level Spanish is a challenging yet rewarding course, which accommodates the linguistic level of students newly qualified in GCSE Spanish. Through the study of A Level Spanish, we hope you will develop a lasting appreciation of the language and the ability to communicate readily in Spanish for a variety of purposes. We aim to increase your knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries and help you acquire valuable skills for foreign travel, further education and employment.

What skills do I have that will make the course suitable for me?

If you coped well with GCSE Spanish and have a strong capacity to organise your work, carefully learn all new vocabulary by heart and want to develop your grammatical knowledge to create accurate sentences, then Spanish is for you. A commitment to listening to, reading and speaking as much Spanish as possible is also very helpful as we expect you to embrace independent study to truly enhance your linguistic progression. Above all you need to have enthusiasm for the language and the countries where the language is spoken. You should be willing to develop your skills and confidence in the spoken language and perhaps consider participating in a study visit, work experience or an exchange.

What topics will I study?

The course covers current trends in Spanish speaking society as well as cultural and political aspects of countries where Spanish is spoken. There is also a study of a literary text and a film, which are examined in written form.

What is the examination board?

AQA

How will I be examined?
How long is each exam?
Are there modules?

You will be examined during the exam season at the end of Year 13. There are three papers: Paper 1 is listening, reading and translation; Paper 2 is extended writing and Paper 3 is a speaking exam.

What can I do with the subject in the future?

An A Level language enables you to move towards genuine fluency. It opens many doors, as there are a variety of language-related jobs and statistically, employers like to take on able linguists even for employment that is not directly related to languages.

GCSE entry requirements - including skills and attributes

To choose this relevant and exciting language course, a grade 7 at GCSE Spanish is strongly recommended in order to cope with the demands of this work.