



ST. EDWARD'S COLLEGE

Key Stage Five Curriculum

2010-2012

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Introduction

Moving on to the next phase of your education is an exciting time and becoming an Upper School pupil at St Edward's College will be both challenging and enjoyable. During the next two years, you will work for A Level achievement which, in turn, will affect your future career choices.

We have very high expectations of all of our Upper School pupils and it is assumed that you will have a serious approach to your studies and make every effort to fulfil your potential in all areas of College life. Hard work will be essential if you are to be successful but you will receive excellent tuition and pastoral support from staff at the College.

Complementing your A Level studies will be a range of enrichment activities which will enable you to grow in maturity and social responsibility. They will help you to develop initiative, independence, leadership and organisational skills, all of which will be extremely useful when applying to university or for employment.

As a member of the Upper School you will be valued and encouraged to thrive within a caring, supportive community. I hope that you will take full advantage of the excellent opportunities for academic, social and personal development that will be available to you.



C Webster
Head of Upper School

Entry Requirements to Upper School

A pupil who wishes to enter Year 12 will be required to take the full Year 12 curriculum, both the option and entitlement curriculum, including FOUR subjects to AS in Year 12.

A pupil must satisfy the subject requirements for each of FOUR AS subjects to be studied (listed below) AND also meet the minimum entry requirement of five GCSEs at grades A* to C.

A Level Subject	Entry Requirement
Art and Design	B grade in GCSE Art and Design
Biology	B grade in GCSE Additional Science AND A grade equivalent in Biology component of Additional Science GCSE
Business Studies	B grade in GCSE Maths AND C grade in GCSE English or vice versa
Chemistry	B grade in GCSE Additional Science AND A grade equivalent in Chemistry component of Additional Science GCSE
DT (Resistant Materials)	B grade in GCSE DT (Resistant Material)
DT (Textiles)	B grade in GCSE DT (Textiles)
English Language	B grade in GCSE English
English Literature	B grade in GCSE English
Film Studies	B grade in GCSE English
French	B grade in GCSE French: preferably an A grade
Further Mathematics	A grade in GCSE Maths: preferably an A* grade
Geography	B grade in GCSE Geography
German	B grade in GCSE German: preferably an A grade
History	B grade in GCSE History
ICT(Applied)	C grade in GCSE Maths AND C grade in GCSE English
Mathematics	A grade in GCSE Maths
Music	B grade in GCSE Music
Physical Education	B grade in GCSE PE, or an A grade in GCSE Short Course
Physics	B grade in GCSE Additional Science AND an A grade equivalent in the Physics component of Additional Science GCSE
Religious Studies	B grade in GCSE RE
Spanish	B grade in GCSE Spanish: preferably an A grade

Any pupil who meets the requirements to enter Year 12, but who has failed to achieve at least a grade C in Mathematics and/or English is required to re-sit the GCSE as necessary.

Progression from Year 12 into Year 13

To progress from Year 12 into Year 13 pupils currently must attain a minimum of three Ds or at least 95 UCAS points from their best three AS grades (not including General Studies).

Grade	UCAS Points
A	60
B	50
C	40
D	30
E	20

GCSE Grades to A Level Grades

The table shows average GCSE grades (all subjects) mapped to eventual A Level grades in each subject, using the last three years' A Level results.

Average GCSE Grade (all subjects)	A*	A*/A	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	total no. of candidates
Art and Design	A	A	B	B/C	C	C/D	D	17
Biology	A	A/B	B/C	C	D	D/E	E/U	111
Business Studies			A/B	B	C	C/D	D	30
Chemistry	A	A/B	B	C	C/D	D	D/E	98
DT (Resistant Materials)	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	D	27
DT (Textiles) (2008 and 2009)	A/B	A/B	B	B	B/C	B/C		6
English Language	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	D/E	118
English Literature	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	D/E	87
Film Studies (2009 only)					B	B		7
French	A	A/B	B	B/C	C			27
Further Mathematics	A	A/B	B	C				12
Geography	A	A/B	B	C	C/D	D/E	E	61
German	A	A/B	B/C	C	C/D	D/E		14
History	A	A/B	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	144
ICT		A/B	A/B	B	B	B/C	B/C	65
Mathematics	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D		86
Music	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	D	29
Physical Education		A/B	B	B/C	C/D	D	D/E	54
Physics	A/B	B	B	B/C	C	C/D		28
Religious Studies		A	A/B	B	B/C	C/D	D	38
Spanish	A	A/B	B	C	C/D	D	D/E	87
General Studies	A/B	B	C	C/D	D/E	E	U	88

The greyed out cells are where there were no pupils in a particular GCSE 'band' for that subject and so an A Level grade cannot be extrapolated.

Key Stage Five Curriculum

The A Level Curriculum

Pupils are required to select four subjects from the list below.

Courses offered at St Edward's College

Art and Design
Biology
Business Studies
Chemistry
Design Technology (Resistant Materials)
Design Technology (Textiles)
English Language
English Literature
Film Studies
French
Further Mathematics
Geography
German
History
ICT
Mathematics
Music
Physical Education
Physics
Religious Studies
Spanish

Courses offered at Partner Schools (assuming timetable compatibility)

Dance (Broughton Hall)
Economics (West Derby)
Health and Social Care (Broughton Hall)
Music Technology (Holly Lodge/Cardinal Heenan)
Psychology (Cardinal Heenan)

The Entitlement Curriculum (compulsory for all pupils)

General Studies
ICT (ECDL)
Modern Foreign Language for All
General Physical Education
Education for Personal Relationships
General Religious Education

The Entitlement Curriculum

There are a number of subjects which you have an entitlement to receive as part of your post-16 education and which are compulsory for all Upper School pupils.

General Studies

General Studies is studied by all pupils in Year 12 and an AS examination is sat at the end of the year. It provides breadth to the curriculum through the study of a wide range of subjects which test many skills such as critical thinking, literacy, numeracy and problem solving. The subject also encourages consideration of social and cultural issues.

ICT (European Computer Driving Licence)

ICT is offered to enable all pupils to be ready and confident to move on from St Edward's College to higher education or employment with an internationally recognised qualification in ICT. This course is completed during Year 12 and comprises three assessed modules.

MFL for All

As St Edward's is a Specialist Language College, all Year 12 pupils are expected to study a Modern Foreign Language from scratch. Each pupil will gain an ABC preliminary qualification in their chosen language. Currently, pupils may choose from:

Arabic

Chinese

German

Italian

Japanese

Portuguese

Russian

Those pupils who study a Modern Foreign Language at A Level are exempt from the ABC qualification. Instead, they will benefit from an additional lesson with the Foreign Language Assessment to improve speaking skills in their chosen MFL A Level subject.

General Physical Education

All pupils have one PE lesson per week to provide for their physical well being. There are a range of activities on offer with an emphasis on leisure and life skills.

General Religious Education

In Year 12, Religious Studies is taught through the General Studies programme. Pupils complete the NOCN Level Three Award in General Religious Education for a non examination course in general Religious Education one lesson per week during Year 13. This case gives pupils the opportunity to explore a range of issues relevant to the Catholic Church and religion more widely through discussion and presentations by visiting speakers.

Examination Courses

AS & A2

- A Levels are in two parts – AS and A2.
- The first part of the A Level (AS) is completed in Year 12.
- The second part of the A Level (A2) is completed in Year 13.
- A2 is more difficult than AS Level. The material covered at A2 is more challenging than that at AS.
- There are usually two modules of work for AS Level and another two modules of work for A2 Level.
- Modules are examined separately. It is possible to resit modules to improve your overall grade.
- You can only take A2 courses if you have studied and completed the AS courses first.
- The marks that you gain in AS will be added to the marks from A2 to give you your final A Level grade.
- Some subjects have a coursework element which will be completed and submitted to the examiners in advance of the final examinations.
- For a pass, grades are awarded from A to E.

Applied A Level

- An Applied GCE (General Certificate of Education) is equivalent to an A Level.
- It has the same grading system and UCAS points as an A Level.
- The course has a more vocational slant and so the teaching and learning is different as there is more research and project work for pupils to do.

Timetable

The table below is indicative of the number of lessons per week taken by pupils throughout Upper School.

Subject(s)	Number of Lessons per Week	
	Year 12	Year 13
Option One	6	6
Option Two	6	6
Option Three	6	6
Option Four	6	-
General Studies	2	0 / 1
ICT (ECDL)	1	-
MFL for All	1	-
General PE	1	1
General RE	-	1
Total	29	20 / 21

- All pupils will study four AS subjects in Year 12.
- At the beginning of Year 13, pupils drop one of their AS subjects and focus on three subjects. It is possible to 'cash in' the AS grade in the dropped subject that has not been continued to A2.
- General Studies is a compulsory subject for all pupils in Year 12 and may be continued to A2 Level in Year 13.
- ICT and PE are compulsory for all pupils throughout their time in the Upper School.
- Pupils are expected to use non-contact periods for independent study.

Collaboration

Through the work with our collaboration partners, **Broughton Hall Catholic High School, Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, Holly Lodge Girls' College, Sandfield Park Special School** and **West Derby Comprehensive** we are able to offer a wider range of courses and opportunities to enable pupils to select a most appropriate pathway to their future career.

The Collaboration exists to:

- Provide as broad a curriculum as possible.
- Improve the quality of provision across all partner schools.
- Provide a cost effective service for pupils.

The courses available through the Collaborative are accessed through the common timetable days and may form one of your choices. If you are interested in any of these subjects, please speak to Mrs Webster as soon as possible for further information.

Learning Resource Centre

Pupils are expected to use their 'free' periods for private study in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC). Year 12 pupils are able to use the College LRC where they will have access to a wide range of subject specific resources, including textbooks, journals and online materials. In addition, they will be able to use a computer to support their study. Year 13 pupils will use the Year 13 LRC located in St. Clare where they will have similar facilities at their disposal. Both resource centres also contain information on careers and higher education and are for private, personal study and this must be respected at all times.

Academic Expectations

- Embarking on an A Level course requires commitment and dedication from you.
- Whatever course you choose to follow, you cannot expect any of it to be easy and, if you are going to do yourself justice at the end, then you must be prepared to work consistently and conscientiously.
- You need to take an active part in your own learning. Participating fully in lessons and reading more widely around your subjects is essential if you are to be successful at AS and A2.
- A business like approach will help you to succeed and will avoid problems of missed deadlines and an inability to cope.
- Pupils are expected to use all of their 'free' periods for private study in the College Learning Resource Centre.
- A Level courses should enable you to develop academically and pave the way for further study at university or college.
- Experience has shown that excellent attendance and punctuality are key to success at A Level and, consequently, the College has a policy of only paying the examination entry fees of those pupils whose attendance is 95% or above.
- It is expected that you will spend between 12 and 16 hours per week on homework and independent study during your time in the Upper School.

It's Your Choice

Gather the facts

- Find out about each subject from the booklet and by asking members of the teaching staff.
- Think about the nature of the course and consider the weighting of examinations to coursework.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Have you any ideas about what you want to do in the future?
- Use the Careers section of the Learning Resource Centre to research requirements for Higher Education.

Consider the issues

- Will you enjoy the course?
- Are you likely to be successful in the examinations?
- Would you like to spend part of your week studying in another school?
- Discuss your ideas with family and teachers.
- It is not easy to change subjects once you have started the course.

Choose because:

- You have a good understanding of what the subject involves and feel confident that you can work with interest and enthusiasm.
- The subject is necessary for the course you wish to study at University.
- The subject complements your other subjects.
- Your teachers believe that you have the ability to succeed in the subject.
- The style of the course together with the balance of coursework and examinations suits you.

DON'T choose because:

- The subject sounds easy.
- You like the teacher.
- Your friends have made that choice.
- You cannot think of anything else!

Make sure your decision is an informed one – it is your future so plan carefully and ensure that the decision is right for you!

Art and Design

Why should I choose Art and Design?

Do you wish to acquire a deeper understanding of Art & Design and engage in the work of Historical and Contemporary Artists? Are you prepared to work independently with a high degree of personal response? Do you want to develop your creative talent and produce original, unique and personal work? If the answer to these questions is 'yes', then AS and A2 Art & Design at St. Edward's College is for you!

What does the course involve?

The AS/A2 course involves four units, two of which are externally set assignments, one in each year. At AS Unit One consists of a coursework portfolio exemplifying work carried out during the year. At A2 Unit Three consists of a personal investigation in which you are required to develop work in response to an idea, concept or theme of your own choosing, supported by 1000-3000 words.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your practical skills and creative responses with both traditional and new media, in a challenging, rewarding and enjoyable way. Analysis, problem solving and independent research are all qualities required for any person considering higher education and Art & Design promotes all three.

How will I learn?

With the direction of committed and experienced staff you will visit both local and national galleries in order to gather visual and written information in your resource book. Your teachers will keep you focussed with advice and personal monitoring and they will give you support so that you will learn in a vibrant and caring environment.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed by your teachers and moderated externally. Each coursework unit accrues 25% of the total A2 marks and each externally set assignment, with preparatory work, 25%. In both coursework and externally set assignments, evidence of your ability to progress from conception to realisation with a high level of personal response is paramount.

What could a qualification in Art and Design lead to?

Whilst being primarily Fine Art, a qualification in this field compliments many other subjects and is, for example, encouraged when applying for Dentistry. As a higher qualification it can lead you into Architecture, Photography, Product Design, Stage Lighting and Set Design and Fashion, Interior & Graphic Design.

Pupil comment:

'Art A Level is certainly something to pick if you enjoy exploring many ideas. It enables you to improve your artistic abilities in various ways and to become engrossed in Art history. Art A Level allows you to develop your creative mind but it is not for the work shy!'

Biology

Why should I choose Biology?

Since Science and Technology are fast becoming an integral part of our lives, the choice of Biology at Advanced Level is a forward thinking decision. Cloning, Biotechnology, DNA Finger Printing, Gene Therapy and IVF seem to be in the headlines every day. If you want to find out more about these contemporary topics or find out how cells really produce energy, or how nerve impulses cause muscles to contract, then you will enjoy A Level Biology.

What does the course involve?

This is a modular course consisting of six modules.

You will be given the opportunity to carry out fieldwork during the first year of the course. You will study the ecological techniques used to investigate both the abiotic and biotic factors in an ecosystem. You will be involved in group work to build your confidence and improve your social and interpersonal skills.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your skills in areas such as communication, both written and oral, collaboration, self organisation and observation as well as planning and designing investigations.

How will I learn?

You will be taught A Level Biology through both theory and practical lessons. This will be further supported by the use of ICT and background reading to extend and enrich your Biological knowledge and understanding. A Biology field trip during Year 12, in the Summer Term, will enrich your knowledge and understanding of Unit Four.

How will I be assessed?

AS Examination

Unit One	Biology and Disease	One hour and 15 minutes. Five-seven short answer questions; two longer questions (a short comprehension and a structured question requiring continuous prose)
Unit Two	The Variety of Living Organisms	One hour and 45 minutes. Short structured questions and two longer data handling, assessing analysis and evaluation questions
Unit Three	Investigative and Practical Skills in AS Biology	20% of the total AS marks

A2 Examination

Unit Four	Populations and Environment	One hour and 30 minutes. Short structured questions plus two longer questions involving continuous prose and <i>How Science Works</i>
Unit Five	Control in cells and in organisms	Two hours and 15 minutes. Short answer questions and two longer questions involving data handling questions and a synoptic essay
Unit Six	Investigative and Practical skills in A2 Biology	10% of the total A level marks

What could a qualification in Biology lead to?

A Level Biology is a specific requirement for certain careers – such as Medicine, Physiotherapy and Veterinary Science but is also recommended for a wide range of careers such as Dentistry, Agriculture, Forestry, Farming, Fisheries, Food Manufacture and Preservation, Genetic Engineering, Pharmacy and Nursing.

Pupil comment:

'Biology is a fascinating science with so much interesting material to learn and I, personally, find it incredible how each bit of information ties into the bigger picture. Choosing Biology will open up a range of opportunities for you, plus, you'll enjoy the course.'

Business Studies

Why should I choose Business Studies?

Business Studies is a course which provides the opportunity for you to develop a wide range of business related knowledge and skills. Your studies will cover a wide range of topics relating to business such as law, accounting, marketing, and others which enable you to taste vocational areas that you may wish to pursue after A Levels.

What does the course involve?

You will study how business operates in the world today. This covers marketing, accounting and finance, human resource management, operations management, business objectives and how government laws and policies affect business.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop both literacy and data handling skills. You will develop the skill to analyse and evaluate data, such as business accounts. You will learn how to solve business problems by using appropriate business tools and methods.

How will I learn?

A variety of teaching methods will be used. Class based work will involve using case studies of recent business problems. The course also involves researching current business practices on the internet.

How will I be assessed?

There are two written papers for both AS and A2:

AS Modules

Unit One	Planning and financing a business	One hour and 15 minutes
Unit Two	Managing a business	One hour and 30 minutes

A2 Modules

Unit Three	Strategies for success	One hour and 45 minutes
Unit Four	The Business Environment	One hour and 45 minutes

What could a qualification in Business Studies lead to?

Many pupils follow a business related degree course, such as Business Studies, Management Studies or Accountancy.

Alternatively the course provides a good background for a job in business, marketing, personnel or accounts. The course also covers some aspects of business law which is useful for a Law degree.

Pupil comment:

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to research different types of business, and to find out what made them successful."

Chemistry

Why should I choose Chemistry?

- It opens up multiple career paths
- Because you can relate it to real life situations
- It's a "hands on" subject with opportunity for practical work
- Chemistry complements many other subject combinations
- It leaves you with many options at age 18

What does the course involve?

At AS Level, candidates are given a solid grounding in foundation Chemistry. You will study the chemical reactivity of atoms and molecules and gain an understanding of their structures. The development and use of the periodic table is explained. Organic chemistry is studied in more detail.

At A2 Level, you will cover the areas on Inorganic, Physical and Organic Chemistry in much more detail, often with complex calculations.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your analytical skills and communication skills (verbal and written) and the mathematical skills you never knew you had. You will improve your logical thinking and develop an excellent memory for observations in many areas of practical Chemistry, improving your experimental technique.

How will I learn?

You will learn by reading notes, using text books, answering problems and preparing answers for class work tutorials. You will revise for end of topic tests and complete past examination papers. You will also take part in experiments and complete coursework.

How will I be assessed?

The introduction of the Practical Skills Assignment (PSA) allows candidates to be given credit for work completed during routine class practicals. Assessment becomes linked to the work of the course and moves away from formulaic testing. You will also complete two written papers worth 80% of the total AS Level marks. The Investigative and Practical skills are worth the remaining 20% of the total AS Level marks. An AS Level counts as half an A Level. At A2 there are a further two written examinations.

What could a qualification in Chemistry lead to?

Many exciting opportunities in Science-related Degrees – Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Veterinary Science, Law, Teaching and Research to name a few.

Pupil comment:

"A challenging but rewarding course."

"A stimulating two years."

"Chemistry complements my other subject choices so well."

"Studying the subject in more detail made it so much more interesting and fulfilling."

Design Technology (Resistant Materials)

Why should I choose Design Technology (Resistant Materials)?

Resistant Materials is a subject that will naturally extend your Design Technology capability from Middle School in a way that you will find challenging, rewarding and enjoyable. Creativity, ingenuity, innovation, analysis, problem solving and independency. These are all qualities required by any young person planning a successful career in life, no matter what your choice of occupation.

What does the course involve?

The AS/A2 course involves two projects and two examinations, one in each year. The practical element will consist of a design portfolio and a manufactured piece of work. Integral to the work, is your ability to engage in independent study, whilst constantly making reference to your client's requirements.

What skills will I develop?

You will further develop practical skills in manufacturing; bench work using a variety of tools and machine work – ensuring that you fully understand the use of the lathe and CNC equipment. Your existing knowledge of materials, processes and manufacturing systems, together with your ability to propose design solutions for successful outcomes, will all be expanded upon.

How will I learn?

Your learning will take the same format as that in Middle school. You will be taught both theoretically and practically to achieve successful outcomes. This way you will ensure that you are fully aware of the important details before you actually undertake any level of practical on the machinery or equipment within the department.

How will I be assessed?

To complete the course and to give you the opportunity to achieve an A grade you will sit a written examination that tests your knowledge of materials, processes and manufacturing systems. This will be work that you have done in practice during the two year course and is worth 50% of the final mark. The coursework in Resistant Materials counts for 50% of your final A Level grade and its completion to a high standard ensures success overall. The project consists of a concise design portfolio and the making of a quality product.

What could a qualification in Resistant Materials lead to?

Resistant Materials is a qualification that could help lead you into any one of the following careers: Architecture, Surveying (Building and Quantity), Engineering (Civil and Mechanical), Construction, Estates Management and various design related careers.

Pupil comment:

“An individual should choose Design Technology for several different factors. Foremost the subject is practical and helps individuals learn new skills which they would not learn in other subjects. In turn this subject requires a serious amount of effort and dedication. However, if you possess these qualities then theory work and the job manufacture will be of a consistently high quality and you will be rewarded with a good A Level grade.”

Design Technology (Textiles Technology)

Why should I choose Design Technology (Textiles Technology)?

Textiles Technology is a subject that will naturally extend your Design Technology capability from Middle school in a way that you will find challenging, rewarding and enjoyable. Creativity, ingenuity, innovation, analysis, problem solving and independency. These are all qualities required by any young person planning a successful career in life, no matter what your choice of occupation.

What does the course involve?

The AS/A2 course involves two projects and two examinations, one in each year. The practical element will consist of a design portfolio and a manufactured piece of work. Integral to the work, is your ability to engage in independent study whilst constantly making reference to your client's requirements.

What skills will I develop?

You will improve on skills already partly developed at Key Stage Four, expanding your knowledge and understanding of textile materials, components, processes and techniques along with the evaluation of textile products and commercial practices which will also be tested. This will all be work that you have done in theory or practice during the two year course.

How will I learn?

Your learning will take the same format as that in Middle school. You will be taught both theoretically and practically to achieve successful outcomes. This way you will ensure that you are fully aware of the important details before you actually undertake any level of practical on the machinery or equipment within the department.

How will I be assessed?

To complete the course and to give you the opportunity to achieve an A grade you will sit a written examination that tests your knowledge of materials, processes and manufacturing systems as well as design and market influences. This will be work that you have done in practice during the two year course and is worth 50% of the final mark. The coursework in Textiles Technology counts for 50% of your final A Level grade and its completion to a high standard ensures success overall. The project consists of a concise design portfolio and the making of a quality product.

What could a qualification in Textiles Technology lead to?

Textiles Technology is a qualification that could help lead you into any one of the following careers: Printed Textiles (designing for fabrics, wall papers), Fashion, Constructed Textiles (designing carpets, knitwear) Retail (buying, merchandise display, styling), Film and Television (wardrobe design and continuity) and Interiors.

Pupil comment:

"This is a subject that requires a substantial amount of coursework. If you enjoy independent study and seeing something come together during the course of the year, then this is the course for you! However, you must be prepared to put in the time and effort to the portfolio and practical work if you wish to succeed."

English Language

Why should I choose English Language?

English Language A Level is one of the fastest growing and most popular A Levels. The syllabus began in the late 1980s and is now a well established A Level, respected by universities and employers alike.

What does the course involve?

The course is very different to GCSE English Language. It involves the systematic study of the English language: the way it is used, its history, its structure and the way children acquire it.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop the ability to analyse language systematically using linguistic theory. You will also increase your ability to use language to address a particular audience for a specific purpose. You will learn research methods which will allow you to investigate language and you will be given the capacity to critically assess the quality of your own writing.

How will I learn?

You will learn in a variety of styles. Often this will involve whole class teaching. Sometimes small groups will be given a task to perform. At other times you will be asked to work independently on coursework tasks.

How will I be assessed?

The examining body is AQA and this course is based upon their syllabus B. There are four modules in the assessment pattern for this course. Two of these are coursework.

What could a qualification in English Language lead to?

Pupils who take English Language go on to do all sorts of interesting things: Journalism, Science, Mathematics. Some even go on to write professionally or to work in broadcasting. Many people who later go on to take a modern foreign language at university take English at A Level. Some even go on to teach!

Pupil comment:

"This was a really interesting course. I enjoyed the coursework best because it gave me a chance to use what I had learned in a practical way. The investigation was really interesting and I became passionate about the whole thing."

English Literature

Why should I choose English Literature?

English Literature has always been a well established A Level, respected by universities and employers alike. It continues to be a very popular choice for Sixth Form pupils.

What does the course involve?

The course marks a real progression and is very different to GCSE English Literature. It involves the study of both the old and modern texts written in the English language. It involves close and analytical reading of texts and the contexts in which they were written.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop the ability to analyse texts using critical theory. You will learn to make your own critical judgements about texts and to evaluate judgements made by others.

How will I learn?

You will learn in a variety of styles. Often this will involve whole class teaching. Sometimes small groups will be given a task to perform. At other times you will be asked to work independently on coursework tasks. Wider reading around the subject is also essential.

How will I be assessed?

The examining body is AQA. There are four modules in the assessment pattern for this course. Two of those are coursework.

The exact choice of text changes from year to year. The texts are selected by the staff teaching each specific class.

What could a qualification in English Literature lead to?

Pupils who take English Literature go on to do all sorts of interesting things such as Journalism, Science, Mathematics or Law. Some go on to write professionally, work in broadcasting or even teach!

Pupil comment:

"I really liked the texts we read, even studying them for the examination. At first the Shakespeare was difficult though, when I saw it performed, it all made sense. The modern novel was really interesting and it made me think about the way we live our lives today and to question some things I had taken for granted before."

Film Studies

Why should I choose Film Studies?

Since its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century, film has become a global art form and an all-pervasive vehicle of popular culture. Most of us have 'grown up' with film and can readily identify (and identify with) its defining images, stars and genres. But is there more to film than Hollywood? This course will help you find out. If you enjoy cinema, then you are already, to some extent, 'film literate'. The A Level course aims to deepen your understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of film and develop your critical, analytical and research skills. Film Studies is both demanding and richly rewarding – it is by no means an easy option, but its challenges can be highly enjoyable!

What does the course involve?

The two modules you will study for the AS Level in Year 12 cover:

- film narrative (the ways in which a film tells a story) and film genre (different types of film)
- how a film is put together (lighting, sound, mise-en scène, cinematography, editing)
- how we respond to film as fans and consumers
- the Hollywood industry, past and present
- British Cinema and the ways in which it reflects British society

The two modules for the A2 course in Year 13 involve:

- in-depth studies of 'auteur' directors and actors
- aspects of World Cinema
- a range of topics including Early Cinema, documentary, regulation and censorship, performance, and sociological and gendered approaches to film interpretation

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your analytical and critical skills. From the outset, you will be trained to 'read' a film in depth, exploring the film maker's art and technical expertise. You will learn to examine the film maker's intentions and to assess his/her effectiveness in conveying ideas to the audience. You will also have the opportunity to research aspects of film you consider particularly interesting and present your findings via coursework assignments. There is also the opportunity to make short films of your own and submit them as coursework. Many pupils find this the most rewarding aspect of the course.

How will I learn?

The earlier stages of the course focus on your experiences of film to date. This, for many pupils, probably means the most popular mainstream movies and genres from Hollywood. You will be encouraged to reflect on what you already know and then to assess critically and confidently an ever-widening range of films. In class you will be presented with a combination of extracts as well as whole films for discussion, but viewing outside of the classroom is essential. Throughout the course the emphasis is on the pupil's personal response. It is important to remember that you will be taught how to think rather than what to think.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is via a combination of written exams (55% of total mark) and coursework (45% of total mark).

Module One	Coursework	A 1500 word analysis of a film extract and a piece of practical work
Module Two	British and American Film	One hour and 30 minute examination
Module Three	Coursework	A small-scale research project and a creative project
Module Four	Varieties of film: Issues and Debates	One hour and 45 minute examination

What could a qualification in Film Studies lead to?

Film Studies sits comfortably beside other humanities subjects: English Literature, Art and History. As such, it provides excellent grounding in critical thinking and so would serve as a stepping-stone to a wide range of university courses. More specifically, it lays the foundations for pupils interested in film and the media in general.

Pupil comment:

"Film Studies is a really fascinating subject. I've had my eyes opened to so much more than just Hollywood and I'm really pleased with the progress I've made. I've enjoyed having the chance to get involved in the practical side of film-making."

French

Why should I choose French?

Studying French at A Level can improve your career prospects and marketability in this increasingly global economy. More and more companies are looking to recruit people with advanced language skills and becoming fluent in French will allow you potentially to communicate with another 77 million people! France is our nearest neighbour and is the largest country in Western Europe and many British companies do business with France.

What does the course involve?

You will develop and extend the language skills you have acquired at GCSE Level. Equal emphasis will be placed on the four skills and a thorough understanding of grammar will be ensured. Topics at AS include media, popular culture, healthy living, relationships and health. The A2 course covers topics such as environment, immigration and contemporary social issues. You will also study two cultural topics.

What skills will I develop?

As well as continuing the practice of language skills you have been taught at GCSE, particular emphasis will be placed on speaking French and the ability to communicate with accuracy and confidence on a variety of issues. You will also learn the skills of translation and interpretation.

How will I learn?

Lessons will be delivered in the target language and smaller groups will ensure that each pupil has an opportunity to participate fully in lessons and use their French as much as possible. Pupils will also spend one hour per week with a native French speaker in groups of three to four which will ensure that you become a confident communicator.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed in all four skills.

AS Modules

Unit One	Listening/Reading/Writing	35% (of total A level mark)
Unit Two	Oral examination	15%

A2 Modules

Unit Three	Listening/Reading/Writing	35%
Unit Four	Oral examination	15%

What could a qualification in French lead to?

The majority of our A Level pupils have gone on to study French at university, either as part of a language degree or combined with Business, Commerce, Finance, Law or Education. As an EU citizen you have the right to work, live and study in any EU country. This increases competition at home and abroad. By studying French you are more attractive to employers.

Pupil comment:

"I'm amazed how much more I can say compared with GCSE. I can talk about so many more contemporary issues of the day! I love the lessons with the French Assistant because you get a chance to speak a lot. I also participated in a French exchange which was great!"

Geography

Why should I choose Geography?

Geography aims to provide you with an understanding of the dynamics that shape the physical, economic and social aspects of the world in which you live. It is one of the few subjects at this level that bridges the gap between arts and science subjects. Many A Level science candidates often choose geography as their third A Level. The world is seemingly chaotic at global, national and local scales and the geographer attempts to look for a sense of order in both physical and human geography. If you are curious about the world in which you live, you will enjoy geography.

What does the course involve?

The course is mainly designed around the study of physical and human geography covering topics as diverse as plate tectonics, meteorology, population and food supply issues. Two papers will have modules based on fieldwork and the topics will vary each year. At AS Level the emphasis will be on fieldwork method and Year 12 will be completing fieldwork on fluvial geomorphology. Year 13 will require issue evaluation through practical experience of fieldwork.

What skills will I develop?

Geography is unusual in that it develops both literacy and numeracy skills to a high level. Candidates will develop interpretative and analytical skills related to data in cartographic, graphical and statistical format. There will be an emphasis on the use and interpretation of more advanced statistical techniques such as correlation, Chi squared and descriptive statistics. In addition, pupils will develop the ability to write full essay length, synoptic answers to questions on physical and human geography topics.

How will I learn?

Class based work will provide the basis for learning. At AS level this will be through stimulus data questions and at A2 level there will be more emphasis on essay writing. Given the nature of the subject, a great amount of teaching and learning will involve the use of the interactive whiteboard. The subject will involve a great deal of data interpretation involving graphical, cartographic (map) and statistical information. The main emphasis will be on description and explanation using some problem solving exercises.

How will I be assessed?

At AS Level there are two modules in physical & human geography and geography skills. The two modules account for 50% of the final A Level. At A2 Level there are two modules, covering physical and human geography. One examination is two hours and the other is one hour 30 minutes. There is no coursework to submit, but fieldwork is linked to Modules 2 and 4.

What could a qualification in Geography lead to?

Geography at degree level has one of the lowest unemployment rates compared with all other subjects (Source – ‘What Graduates Do 2006’). Most geography graduates enter business, marketing and sales, but a large proportion continue to enter careers such as planning, accountancy, finance and many public service careers.

Pupil comment:

“I have enjoyed developing my knowledge in Geography as the topics covered so far have been really interesting. The fieldwork trips are an enjoyable and practical way of learning.”
“As I have become older, I can see the value of Geography in understanding some of the major news stories in the world, like the winter weather of 2010 and the Haiti earthquake”

German

Why should I choose German?

Everyone speaks English. Wrong. Only 5.6 % of the world's population speaks English as their primary language leaving over four fifths of the population who do not. Remaining monolingual restricts your communication and thinking abilities and denies you the ability to appreciate and understand the world in which you live. Since German speaking countries form the biggest language zone in Europe, have the biggest market place *and* the biggest immigrant community in Europe, an ability to communicate in the language opens up many new opportunities.

What does the course involve?

In the first year of the course, pupils will work towards an AS qualification, practising language skills in the context of topics such as media, popular culture, healthy living and family. The A2 qualification in the second year will include the study of the environment, the multi-cultural society and the contemporary social issues. Whilst pupils will continue to develop their listening, reading and writing and speaking skills, there is added emphasis on the study of culture and society and detailed consideration of grammatical rules.

What skills will I develop?

As well as continuing the practice of language skills you have been taught at Key Stage 4, you will develop important communication skills which are vital for the work place. By exploring the similarities and differences between a foreign language and your own, you learn how language can be manipulated and applied in many ways. Understanding and appreciating aspects of cultural difference will challenge and extend your perceptions of yourself and other people.

How will I learn?

Lessons will be delivered in the target language and smaller classes in the sixth form will give you the opportunity to use your German as much as possible. Pupils will also spend one lesson a week with a foreign language assistant developing oral skills. Independent learning is vital if you are to succeed at A Level and the department provides materials and ICT support to help you achieve your potential.

How will I be assessed?

AS

Unit 1 Listening/Reading/Writing	35% (of total A level mark)
Unit 2 Speaking Test	15%

A2

Unit 3 Listening/Reading/Writing	35%
Unit 4 Speaking Test	15%

What could a qualification in German lead to?

Any A Level language course helps you to develop transferable skills which will be invaluable when you get your first job. If you have the knowledge and skills, and a firm command of a European language, you have much to offer. Those interested in a career in IT or science should know that German is the second most used language on the internet as well as in scientific research. The majority of our A level pupils have gone on to study German at University, either as part of a language degree, or combined with Business, Commerce, Finance, Law or Education.

Pupil comment:

"I feel that I have progressed so much from GCSE in terms of the vocabulary I am able to use. The lesson with the Foreign Language Assistant has given me a lot of confidence when speaking – it's nice to have more individual attention in less formal surroundings."

History

Why should I choose History?

Ask yourself:

- How else can you make sense of the present unless you have a good understanding of the past?
- How else can you understand why the place where you live looks the way it does?
- How are you going to participate in Society's systems if you don't know how they work?

Answer: by taking History A Level!

What does the course involve?

In short, this course will involve you! You will study AS History over two modules and A2 History will involve another two modules. All modules will look at Tudor and American policy. You will need to be able to read all about these events, produce summarised notes, present your work to your class, role play certain events and individuals, talk about your thoughts and write it all down in clear, logical, well balanced arguments.

What skills will I develop?

As I have already hinted at, you will learn how to communicate clearly and express yourself verbally and on paper. You will learn how to research and gather information from a variety of sources. You will learn there are very few right or wrong answers but there are different sides. You will learn how to listen. Finally, you will gain a greater understanding of the past and learn that History repeats itself time and time again.

How will I learn?

You will learn through a variety of methods; reading, researching, presentations, group and paired work, discussions, hearing university speakers and meeting historians.

How will I be assessed?

Unit One	Britain 1483–1529 (one hour and 25 minute examination)
Unit Two	Vietnam and the USA 1961–1975 (one hour and 30 minute examination)
Unit Three	The Triumph of Elizabeth: Britain 1541–1603 (one hour and 30 minute examination)
Unit Four	Historical enquiry of 3,500 words based on the investigation of a historical issue over a hundred year period.

What could a qualification in History lead to?

On this question, the world really is your oyster! Employers and universities like to see that you have followed a balanced course. History is certainly an important part of keeping that balance. History is recognised as an important academic subject as you can express yourself, research and offer balanced logical arguments. Even if you fancy a scientific career, do not be put off History as even scientists have to communicate effectively and their projects are not isolated but carried out in context, relating to the whole of society. It is an excellent foundation for budding bankers, accountants, TV Researchers, lawyers, police officers, army soldiers, archaeologists, librarians, archivists, teachers – even monarch as Prince Charles has a History degree!

Pupil comment:

"The step up from GCSE to A Level is pretty big and I must warn you there is a lot of work involved. However, it is all do-able and all enjoyable! Success at A Level comes when you stop trying to think like an A Level pupil, but allow yourself to think like an historian."

Information Communication Technology

Why should I choose Information Communication Technology?

Regardless of your further education or career aspirations you cannot escape the fact that Information Technology will play an integral role in your life. Whether it is through communication, research or simply leisure, the impact that Information Technology has is immense and is set only to increase further.

What does the course involve?

The ICT course involves a number of different, interesting and informative elements. Pupils will look into the impact of ICT on society and how society actually uses ICT. In addition, they will also use ICT to analyse data and create professional business documents, presentations and websites. It is an in-depth course that requires candidates to be committed to the syllabus and the attention to detail it requires.

What skills will I develop?

Pupils will expand skills they already possess in areas of Publishing, Databases and Spreadsheets and will gain knowledge and expertise in new areas of creating industry-standard documents, websites and ICT systems and applications used in various organisations.

How will I learn?

Coursework lessons will be based around a PC and pupils will be taught to the OCR syllabus. Traditional teacher-led lessons will be enhanced by the use of the College's ICT VLE, a unique learning tool that gives pupils guidance, support and advice via interactive tutorials that are mapped to the examination criteria.

How will I be assessed?

At AS Level pupils will submit two pieces of internally assessed and externally moderated portfolio coursework and sit a one and a half hour, traditional examination.

At A2 Level, Pupils submit two pieces of internally assessed and externally moderated portfolio coursework in addition to producing one piece of coursework, the constraints of which are set by the examination board.

The examination unit counts as one-third of the overall mark at AS Level and one-sixth of the overall A Level.

What could a qualification in ICT lead to?

Pupils who study this subject will be eligible to apply for most ICT-related courses but, in addition, it is a qualification that is recognised by most course providers in the areas of business and finance. The vast majority of employers now require that prospective employees possess a competent level of IT skill.

Pupil comment:

"I have found the course very interesting. The coursework pieces are enjoyable to complete. I found it really helpful to know that there would only be one exam at the end of year."

Mathematics

Why should I choose Mathematics?

Mathematics at A Level is a course worth studying for its own sake and it is both challenging and interesting. It builds on work covered at Higher Level GCSE, but also involves new ideas. It serves as a very useful support for many other subjects as well as being a much sought-after qualification in its own right.

What does the course involve?

Pupils follow the Edexcel GCE Mathematics AS/A Level specifications.

Pupils will study six modules over the course of the two years – four Pure Mathematics modules (Core 1 – Core 4) and two Applied modules (Statistics 1 and Mechanics 1).

How will I learn?

In Year 12 pupils have six lessons per week plus two homeworks. During this time pupils complete AS Level Mathematics (modules: C1, C2, S1).

In Year 13 pupils have six periods per week plus two homeworks. In this year pupils complete A Level Mathematics (modules: C3, C4, M1).

How will I be assessed?

AS Modules

Core Mathematics 1 (C1)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75
Core Mathematics 2 (C2)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75
Statistics 1 (S1)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

A2 Modules

Core Mathematics 3 (C3)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75
Core Mathematics 4 (C4)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75
Mechanics 1 (M1)	One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

What could a qualification in Mathematics lead to?

Mathematical ability is very highly regarded by both universities and employers. An A Level in Mathematics is essential for many degree courses (including Physics, Engineering, Computer Science, Economics, Finance and of course Mathematics itself) and is highly desirable in a wide range of other subjects such as Chemistry, Natural Sciences, Architecture, Accountancy, Medicine, etc, in which there is a certain amount of mathematical content (even a Geography degree will involve the use of statistics). The problem solving skills you will acquire during the course, coupled with the ability to approach problems systematically and analytically mean that there are very few degree subjects for which Mathematics A Level would not be useful. There is currently a national shortage of Mathematicians, so employment prospects could not be better!

A few possible career opportunities are: Accountant, Archaeologist, Architect, Barrister, Business Analyst, Computer Games Developer, Defence Analyst, Doctor, Engineer, Forensic Scientist, Meteorologist, Research and Development, Statistician and Teacher.

For more information visit www.mathscareers.org.uk.

Pupil comment:

“Maths wasn’t as hard as I thought it would be. At first we did work that was similar to the Higher tier GCSE syllabus, which then progressed to more complex work that was difficult at first but became easier with practice and help was always available at Maths Club.”

“I originally chose to do Maths as I had hoped to do Medicine, but after studying Mechanics, I’ve discovered that I would like to study Engineering at university.”

Further Mathematics

Why should I choose Further Mathematics?

This option can only be taken alongside Mathematics A level. Pupils who study Further Mathematics will have the option to study 4 subjects to A2 Level, if they wish to do so. Pupils who are thinking of taking a degree in Mathematics, Computer Science or a related subject are strongly advised to take Further Mathematics at A Level as are candidates considering entry to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to study a scientific/engineering discipline.

What does the course involve?

Pupils follow the Edexcel GCE Further Mathematics AS/A Level specifications.

Pupils will study six modules over the course of the two years – three Further Pure modules (FP1 – FP3) and three Applied modules (Decision Mathematics 1, Statistics 2 and Mechanics 2).

How will I learn?

In Year 12 pupils have six lessons per week plus two homeworks. During this time pupils complete AS Level Further Mathematics (modules: FP1, D1, S2).

In Year 13 pupils have six periods per week plus two homeworks. In this year pupils complete A Level Further Mathematics (modules: FP2, FP3, M2).

How will I be assessed?

AS Modules

Further Pure Mathematics 1 (FP1)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

Decision Mathematics 1 (D1)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

Statistics 2 (S2)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

A2 Modules

Further Pure 2 (FP2)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

Further Pure 3 (FP3)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

Mechanics 2 (M2)

One hour 30 minutes written paper – marked out of 75

What could a qualification in Further Mathematics lead to?

The combination of Mathematics and Further Mathematics is excellent preparation for many future courses and careers. Such a logical discipline, studied in such depth, supports Physics, all forms of engineering, analytical work in business and industry, and courses in law, philosophy, economics and management.

If you are considering a degree in Mathematics or are considering applying to Oxford or Cambridge to study a scientific/engineering discipline then a qualification in Further Mathematics will be a real advantage. Certain 'high demand' courses at a number of other universities (in subjects such as engineering) will also prefer pupils who have studied Further Mathematics.

Further Mathematics is a very highly regarded and much sought after qualification.

Pupil comment:

"Further Mathematics helps to develop your Mathematical skills whilst learning new, complex and challenging concepts. It gives you the chance to study some University material a year early and is a very satisfying course."

"If you really enjoy Maths and would like to study a science subject at University, Further Maths can be an enjoyable way to put you a cut above the rest."

Music

Why should I choose Music?

Because you like the subject and have a good grounding already. It is advisable to have a Grade 5 standard in performing before starting and to be able to read music.

What does the course involve?

The components are called Performing, Composing and Developing Musical Understanding. This means that you will be required to perform a variety of pieces under exam conditions. The composing involves you writing music in prescribed styles. In Developing Musical Understanding, which is a formal exam, you comment on a wide variety of music both classical and pop.

What skills will I develop?

The ability to perform a variety of pieces which are recorded on CD. The development of techniques resulting in the composition of a piece in a particular genre and also analytical and aural skills pertinent to many musical styles.

How will I learn?

By practising and rehearsing different types of music and composing a piece of coursework. Also by studying a group of set pieces and listening to a wide range of musical styles.

How will I be assessed?

By both internal and external assessment as follows:

AS Modules

Performing	Worth 30% of total mark
Composing	Worth 30% of total mark
Developing Musical Understanding	Worth 40% of total mark

A2 Modules

Extended Performance	Worth 30% of total mark
Composition and Technical Study	Worth 30% of total mark
Further Musical Understanding	Worth 40% of total mark

What could a qualification in Music lead to?

A wide variety of jobs in the music profession such as orchestral/pop performer, composer, class or peripatetic teacher, lecturer or journalist.

Pupil comment:

"The music course is pure gold. You get a special ambience that injects each lesson with variety, interest, motivation and entertainment."

Physical Education

Why should I choose Physical Education?

You should choose to study PE at A Level if you have ...

- A real interest in sport and its role in society past, present and worldwide
- A familiarity with anatomy and physiology
- An interest in being involved in coaching and playing sports and improving your own performance to the highest level and maintaining your own personal fitness
- GCSE PE

What does the course involve?

AS/A2 in Sport and Physical Education provides a course of study that expands on many of the ideas and concepts already encountered within GCSE PE. It also provides a natural progression for candidates by extending their knowledge of skills, techniques and effective performance.

What skills will I develop?

Through your study of Sport and Physical Education you will develop a range of different skills. You will extend your knowledge and understanding of a selection of PE activities; you will develop understanding and problem solving skills (interpretation and evaluation). You will also develop planning and practical skills for effective performance and gain an ability to relate practice to theory and theory to practice. PE will also be valuable to you as a means of personal development.

How will I learn?

You will learn through a mix of practical activities and classroom based theory lessons combined with independent research and wider reading.

How will I be assessed?

Unit One	Opportunities for and the effects of leading a healthy and active lifestyle – two hour examination (worth 60% of total AS level mark and 30% of A level mark)
Unit Two	Analysis and evaluation of physical activity as performer and/or in an adopted role – internal assessment with external moderation (worth 40% of total AS level mark and 20% of total A level mark)
Unit Three	Optimising performance and evaluating contemporary issues within sport – two hour examination (worth 30% of total A level mark)
Unit Four	Philosophical Problems – internal assessment with external moderation (worth 20% of total A level mark)

What could a qualification in Physical Education lead to?

Sport and Physical Education could lead to careers in a range of spheres such as sports science, exercise science, physiotherapy, recreation management and leisure management.

Pupil comment:

"I have really enjoyed Physical Education because I am able to expand my understanding in an area in which I'm really interested. I've also learned a lot in a practical environment. The subject is challenging and not an easy option but I would certainly recommend it."

Physics

Why should I choose Physics?

Physics is an intriguing and stimulating subject. It is a must for anyone who has a desire to understand why things behave as they do, or how laws governing the Universe can be applied to objects as diverse as stars and atoms.

What does the course involve?

Studying major topics of Particles, Forces, Motion, Gases, Electricity, Elasticity, Waves, Fields, Nuclear Energy and Radioactivity. You must be committed to sustained hard work.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your skills in areas such as problem solving and logical thinking and will gain practical hands on experience.

How will I learn?

Theory and practical work form the main part. You will learn from frequent discussions and regular homework. There will also be opportunities to use IT based learning.

How will I be assessed?

AS level

Unit One	Particles, quantum phenomena and electricity (one hour and 15 minute examination)
Unit Two	Mechanics, materials and waves (one hour and 15 minute examination)
Unit Three	Externally-moderated practical assessment

A2 Level

Unit Four	Fields and further mechanics (one hour and 15 minute examination)
Unit Five	Section A - Nuclear and Thermal physics Section B - Option; probably Astrophysics (one hour and 45 minute examination)
Unit Six	Externally-moderated practical assessment

What could a qualification in Physics lead to?

You can go on to study further at university for a degree in Engineering/Physics which should assist with entry into careers in Electronics, Communications, Meteorology, Astronomy and Earth Science industries. Many Physics graduates also work in the City for financial institutions.

Pupil comment:

"I have found Physics interesting and challenging and have thoroughly enjoyed the course. What you learn is genuinely relevant to the world and you have a great sense of achievement when you fully understand the topics."

Religious Studies – Philosophy and Ethics

Why should I choose Philosophy and Ethics?

Are you interested in questions like: “Why are we here?” “What is the point of life?” “What makes something good?” and “Does God exist?” Then this is the subject for you. Philosophy and Ethics is not only fascinating but it also develops critical thinking skills which are high on the list of requirements for prospective employers.

What does the course involve?

The course begins by introducing the foundations of both philosophical and ethical thought through examining the thoughts of key thinkers such as Aristotle and Plato. You then go on to look at issues that arise in everyday life from stem cell research to how God can allow evil to exist in the world. The course concludes by evaluating how free our moral decisions are, what constitutes a human person and life after death.

What skills will I develop?

The great virtue of Philosophy and Ethics is that it teaches not what to think, but how to think. It is the study of meaning, of the principles underlying conduct, thought and knowledge. The skills it encourages are the ability to analyse, to question orthodoxies and to express things clearly. Essay writing and presenting your ideas to others is at the core of the subject.

How will I learn?

Learning is through reading, discussion and essay writing guided by the teacher. Lessons seek to be more of a tutorial nature with the emphasis on the pupil engaging with the material.

How will I be assessed?

There are four modules, two in Ethics and two in Philosophy which are completed over the two year course. Each is worth 25% of the A Level grade and each exam is one hour and 30 minutes long and involves answering essay questions. Within lessons pupils will be assessed through the submission of essays and presentations throughout the year.

What could a qualification in Philosophy and Ethics lead to?

This is the fastest growing A Level in the country at the moment and is very attractive to prospective employers in the range of careers, which are mainly people orientated. Philosophy is, in commercial jargon, the ultimate “transferable work skill”. The subject is looked favourably on if you are pursuing any Art’s based subject, but also in Medicine and Law.

To follow this course at A level you need a minimum of a grade B at GCSE Religious Studies.

Pupil comment:

“If you are interested in the “Why?” then this subject is for you. Give it a go, become a philosopher, become the next Plato!”

“You may leave with more questions than answers, but studying Philosophy and Ethics was the best choice I made”.

Spanish

Why should I choose Spanish?

Studying languages at A Level can improve the choices you make for the rest of your life. It is a multicultural world and companies are increasingly aware of the advantages of recruiting people with competence in a foreign language. According to recent estimates almost 430 million people speak Spanish and this number is increasing rapidly. With so many Spanish speaking countries, there are constant opportunities for your Spanish skills to pay dividends. Speaking the language can open up a whole new world!

What does the course involve?

You will develop and reinforce the language skills already acquired at GCSE. Equal emphasis is placed on all four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Topics at AS Level include Leisure, Education and Healthy Living within the context of the Spanish speaking world. The A2 course focuses on issues relevant to today's society. In addition, the 'Cultural Studies' element of the course introduces you to the world of Hispanic film and literature, and includes the study of some Spanish regions. By the end of the course, you will be able to converse at a high level and possess a greater awareness of the Spanish speaking world.

What skills will I develop?

Language skills are highly valued by employers who operate in an increasingly global market. Therefore, particular emphasis is placed on speaking Spanish and the ability to communicate with confidence in a variety of unpredictable situations. Basic language skills can help you get more from life, whatever career you choose, as linguistic competence and intercultural understanding are becoming a necessity in today's society.

How will I learn?

Spanish lessons will take place in a stimulating and exciting environment where you will be challenged to improve your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills to a most impressive Level. Small tutor groups with a native speaker take place on a weekly basis and ensure that you become a confident communicator while extra support is available within the department. Independent learning is vital if you are to succeed at A Level and the department provides extra materials and ICT support to help you fulfil your potential.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed in all four skills at A Level. At AS Level, formal examinations test your competence in reading, writing and listening whilst a visiting examiner assesses your oral ability. The A2 course follows a similar format.

What could a qualification in Spanish lead to?

Speaking Spanish can open a door to a whole new world. As a citizen of the European Union, you have the right to live, work and study in any EU country. This increases competition for jobs both at home and abroad. By studying Spanish, you are likely to impress future employers. Whether on holiday or meeting people at work, Spanish will broaden your horizons and create new opportunities. Many universities provide opportunities to maintain your language skills alongside a wide range of degrees – including Law, Accountancy, Business and even Medicine!

Pupil comment:

"I can't believe how much I have improved this year, I never thought I would be able to talk confidently about political issues in another language! The small conversation classes with the Spanish assistant provide a welcome change from formal lessons! My recent exchange with a Spanish family was a most enjoyable and valuable experience – I didn't want to leave!"