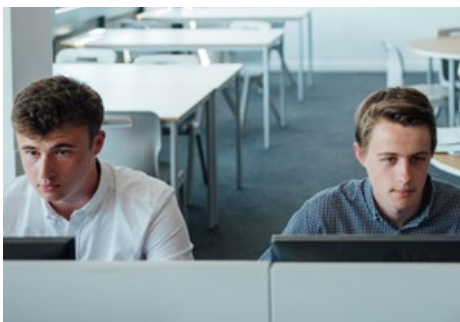




# Robert Smyth Academy



**Respect, Succeed, Aspire**  
Sixth Form Prospectus 2025/26



# Student centred & academically special



Robert Smyth Academy Sixth Form offers a broad academically special curriculum that regularly translates into exceptional performance and superb destinations. Our ethos is very simple; We put students at the centre of what we do.

Our Sixth Form is a vibrant thriving and high achieving community. We offer academic excellence and great professional development opportunities in all subjects alongside a vast array of extracurricular activities. Our courses are open to internal and external students who meet the course requirements and who have a good school reference. We are very proud to offer a broad range of subjects as part of our curriculum.

Sixth Form students benefit from excellent pastoral support.

We have a specialist team of Sixth Form Tutors, led by two Heads of Year who are experienced in successfully preparing students for Sixth Form life and supporting them with future progression. This includes managing the transition to A Level study, study skills and future planning including UCAS applications. We offer students a high-quality school experience that is characterised by care, guidance, and maximising potential.

We have an excellent programme of support to guide students as they make the transition from GCSE to A Level study. This allows students to feel supported and confident in their studies. We believe that young people succeed when they have the structure and support to grow and develop. Therefore, we are committed to high expectations and we provide an environment where students reach for the stars and achieve beyond their aspirations.

Last year, over 90% of our students were able to graduate to their universities of choice including over a quarter of our students progressing to Oxford, Cambridge and Russell Group universities. This is a reflection of both the quality of teaching and the excellent support package offered to all students as they prepare for aspirational destinations.

This is not an exam factory. We expect every student to participate fully in activities that will further enhance their personal development. To give you a few examples, we offer students fantastic opportunities such as Sports Leadership qualification, the Extended Project Qualification and Duke of Edinburgh Award alongside a range of leadership opportunities for academic mentoring to chairing student leadership committees. To quote a student who was interviewed about the school, "This school isn't just about our results, they want us to be better people."

In November 2022, Ofsted inspected the school and they praised the high quality courses on offer to Sixth Form students. They confirmed that the school provides a high-quality education and our students benefit from great support. To quote one of our students this summer, "This school has changed my life."

I hope this prospectus will provide you with an insight into our school. We look forward to meeting with prospective students at our open evening in November. I wish you all the best of luck in your application for a place in the year of 2026.

**Dan Cleary**  
Principal

# Dear student

Welcome to the Sixth Form.

Our Sixth Form is a thriving and high-achieving community. We offer academic excellence and personal development within a wide variety of subjects and a vast array of extra-curricular opportunities.

Our courses are open to both internal and external students who meet the entry requirements.

Sixth Form students benefit from excellent pastoral support. We have a specialist team of Sixth Form tutors, led by two Heads of Year, who are experienced in successfully preparing students for Sixth Form life including

managing the transition to this important stage in education, study skills and future planning.

Students receive significant support with preparing for post-18 options including high level apprenticeships and prestigious places at Oxbridge and Russell Group universities.

I hope this prospectus provides the answers to any questions you may have; however, any further enquiries to help you make the right choice are always welcome.

**Gavin Luhrs**  
Head of Sixth Form




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# Why choose us?

## Sixth Form

 Robert Smyth Academy Sixth Form has consistently achieved results well above national averages and this has a lot to do with the invigorating and challenging learning context we have created.

We currently offer 27 courses in our Sixth Form, predominantly A Levels. We firmly believe that a robust, vibrant and engaging learning community is the best context in which individuals can flourish. We are looking forward to the exciting prospects that future students will offer, knowing that each year amazing individuals contribute to the strength of the Robert Smyth Academy Sixth Form.

Learning is approached in an open-minded and accepting manner. Students are taught to question the world, seeking out fresh ideas and knowledge. Sixth Form study is a chance for students to discover more about our world and the universe beyond. Students will be guided through the experiences of Sixth Form, whether it is managing the transition from Key Stage 4, how best to balance a more challenging workload or the UCAS application process; student



independence is nurtured by our excellent support systems.

Our Sixth Form tutor groups are organised by year group, meaning tutors can focus on the more specific needs of Year 12 or Year 13 tutees. As new members of Sixth Form, many Year 12 students need support with study skills and managing greater independence. Year 13 students are adults and yet still require guidance as they plan for post-18 options. In both cases our well established tutoring programme ensures all students can flourish.

Students are also able to demonstrate their ability to manage increased responsibility by taking on the challenging leadership roles we offer. Students can achieve recognition for their work as a leader, whether it is in sports, events organisation or community endeavours. Year 12 students can apply to be Sixth Form Prefects, a role which develops students' confidence and enables them to represent and lead their peers.

Robert Smyth Academy is a learning community and as such all students are taught the value of mutual support. Students' high levels of engagement with our subject mentoring roles is indicative of the empathetic attitude we foster.

We expect all Sixth Formers to be organised. Each student will receive a swipe card to enter the building via the student entrance and will need to remember this card at all times.

## Dress code

Our expectation is that Robert Smyth Sixth Form students will take pride in their appearance and in their membership of our learning community. Students attend in **smart business wear**.

## The school day Years 12 to 13

Tutor time	8:45am
Period 1	9:15am
Period 2	10:15am
Break	11:15am
Period 3	11:40pm
Period 4	12:40pm
Lunchtime	1:40pm
Period 5	2:15pm
End of school day	3:15pm
*For some students in Years 12 or 13 on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, this is the start of Period 6, which ends at 4:15pm.	*3:15pm - 4:15pm

Full details of this are available from the Sixth Form section of our website.

## Enrolment

Each year approximately half of our Sixth Form students join us from other schools. We have an extremely welcoming and supportive Sixth Form and in the early weeks of the new term students will meet a range of new people, establishing many new friendships.

## Open Evening

In November each year we hold an open evening, during which, prospective students can discuss A Level courses with subject leaders. If you have queries about our Sixth Form this Prospectus is a great place to start, and our website and social media accounts will also offer you an insight. You are welcome to contact Mr G Luhrs, the Head of Sixth Form, with any specific queries [gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk).



### School meals

Cards and a biometric system are used to pay for meals in our specialist catering facility for Sixth Form students, which is open from 9.15am – 2.15pm and offers a wide range of main meals, hot toasted panini, filled wraps, speciality coffees and homebaked cakes and cookies.

### Student Services

We have a dedicated entrance and exit to the school for all students. Sixth Formers will use their identity cards to sign in and out here. Student Services opens at 8am-4pm and is available to purchase school equipment, and assist students with any problems or queries they may have.

### Transport

Students can arrive at school on foot, by bicycle, by car or on the school bus from certain areas. Students are welcome to drive to school; however, we ask that they are considerate of our neighbours when parking near the academy.



### How to apply

To apply, students should complete the application form on our website. A senior member of the Sixth Form staff will meet with each student about their course choices and aspirations.



# Courses we offer



COURSE	STAFF	PG NO
<b>Business</b>		
Business	Mr B Markham	14
Economics	Mr B Markham	18
<b>Computer Science</b>		
Computer Science	Miss C Jones	16
<b>Design and Technology</b>		
Fine Art	Mr D Page	12
Textile Design	Mrs S Mayer	36
Product Design	Mr N Crook	32
<b>English and Media</b>		
English Language and Literature	Mrs H Hackett	20
English Literature	Mrs H Hackett	20
Media Studies	Mrs H Hackett	26
<b>Humanities</b>		
Geography	Mrs L McLeod	22
History	Mr G Owen	24
Politics	Mr G Luhrs	31
Psychology	Mrs R Wilson	33
Sociology	Mr R Webb	34
<b>Mathematics</b>		
Mathematics	Mrs A Haynes	25
Further Mathematics	Mrs A Haynes	25
Core Mathematics	Mr D Copp	26
<b>Modern Foreign Languages</b>		
French	Miss C Mode	21
German	Mrs J Hadfield	23
Spanish	Miss G Lopez	35
<b>Performing Arts</b>		
Drama & Theatre Studies	Mrs A Fenton	17
Music	Mrs L Wass	27
Music Technology	Mr N Hughes	29
<b>Physical Education</b>		
Physical Education	Mr M Scully	30
<b>Science</b>		
Biology	Mrs R Hancox	13
Chemistry	Mr A Booth	15
Physics	Mr M Cripwell	31
<b>Other Opportunities</b>		
Extended Project	Mr G Luhrs	37
Personal Development Opportunities	Mr G Luhrs	7



“The jazz and soul bands have released three albums since 2005. The music department also hosts a recording studio where professional standard recordings can be made by individuals and bands.”

# Personal development opportunities

At Robert Smyth Academy we passionately believe that education encompasses more than each individual achieving his or her best in every subject studied. A huge range of extra-curricular, sporting and personal development opportunities are offered throughout the year which can help you to develop your potential. Staff and students work together in a multitude of fulfilling activities, making the school community what it is – a thriving, successful and truly rewarding place to be. Just a few ideas and examples are featured in this prospectus. Further information is available from the Academy staff or via our website.

## CAIRS

CAIRS stands for Charity Action In Robert Smyth and is an important part of life in the Sixth Form. The CAIRS committee is made up of volunteers from all year groups who both organise and participate in a number of fundraising events throughout the year.

All monies raised by the students over the year are collected together and then divided amongst charities of their choice before the end of the summer term. Anyone can join CAIRS or suggest a charity that they would like to receive a donation.

## Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

We offer this at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. It is an internationally-recognised

award that is highly regarded by admissions tutors and employers.

The meetings for Sixth Formers will be timed to try to minimise clashes with other commitments; once an initial interest has been registered then these will be arranged. Most follow the Gold Award programme. This requires candidates to commit to five activities, some of which you may already be doing.

These are Volunteering, Skill, Physical, Expedition and a five-day residential project. There is a small cost for registering on the award scheme and the expeditions require a financial contribution to be made, although every attempt is made to keep this to a minimum.

### Extra-Curricular Drama and Dance

There are many opportunities to get involved in drama and dance activities. You might perform in the annual RSA Dance Show and can audition for the RSA Dance Company who perform in competitions, professional theatres and primary schools. Our A Level drama students regularly showcase their performances at lunchtime and in the evening. Sixth Form students have also helped run drama and dance workshops for younger students at our feeder schools, as well as working inclusively alongside young people who have additional needs.

### Extra-Curricular Music

There are many opportunities for all students to take part in various ensembles, with weekly rehearsals for soul band, orchestra, jazz band, big band, percussion ensemble, flute choir, advanced flutes, string ensemble, advanced brass, sax ensemble, folk group, and choir. The ensembles perform a wide range of music and there are parts for both experienced and less experienced players; most of the ensembles are non-auditioned. You are also encouraged to organise your own ensembles and bands and may use the practice rooms at lunchtime and after school.

There are a number of concerts each year, featuring all the ensembles plus soloists, bands and student compositions. The event list includes Christmas, Spring, GCSE and Year 13 Leavers' concerts. Many ensembles also perform at events both inside and outside school and take part in competitions both locally and nationally which have included The National Schools' Games and the Schools' Proms at the Royal Albert Hall.

There are termly trips to see Leicester Symphony Orchestra at De Montfort Hall, as well as tours abroad for the choir and for the jazz and soul bands who have been selected twice to represent the UK at the ISME (International Society for Music Education) World Conference. The jazz and soul bands have released three albums since 2005. The music department also hosts a recording studio



where professional-standard recordings can be made by individuals and bands.

### Extra-Curricular PE and Sports Leadership Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities in PE and sport at RSA available to Sixth Form students. In addition to teams in traditional sports such as football (girls and boys), rugby, netball, cricket, tennis and badminton there is a wealth of Sports Leadership opportunities. Robert Smyth is an official Sports Leaders UK Sports Leadership Academy and was shortlisted to be National Leadership Academy of the Year (one of only 8 in the UK). As a result, all Sixth Form students have the opportunity to complete the Level 3 Certificate in Higher Sports Leadership: this qualification is highly valued by employers and gains UCAS points for students.

A number of events are organised throughout the year involving our feeder schools and Sixth Form students who are encouraged to assist. They are welcome to assist our KS3 and KS4 sports teams and can also become involved in our sports council or sports ambassador programme.

### Higher Education

The majority of Year 13 students decide to go on to higher education. With over fifty thousand courses to choose from at more than three hundred institutions the process can seem daunting. Some students apply to the most competitive of courses, including those at Oxford and Cambridge. Detailed guidance and support is given to students at every stage in tutor time and through organised trips to higher education conferences, fairs and open days.

### PSHE

All students follow a 'core' programme which begins in Year 12 and develops the study skills required to make a successful transition from Key Stage 4 to 5. Students will also examine the options available in the next stage of their education and, if they are choosing universities, will have support in tutor time for their UCAS applications. Towards the end of the programme in Year 13 students will be taught some of the life skills that will be crucial for independent living.

A key part of our PSHE programme is the 'project' section. During this period, students will have the opportunity to choose a project or qualification from a



“You can apply for the position of Prefect in Year 12 and act as an ambassador for the academy.”

### Prefects

You can apply for the position of Prefect in Year 12 and act as an ambassador for the Academy. Prefects are expected to help at Academy events, be involved in staff interviews and are asked to promote a positive, enthusiastic and engaged attitude about their learning at the Academy. Our prefects are also an important element of our student voice programme.

### Residentials

Many faculties organise residential experiences to enhance the learning within their subject area. Students will be informed of these opportunities by their subject teachers. There is also an opportunity for students to take part in skiing.

### Reading Buddies

Volunteers from Sixth Form spend time each week listening to Year 7 and 8 students reading. This is a valuable experience, particularly for those students who might be thinking of teaching as a career.

help with or just need a concept they don't understand explaining again. You may work with your mentee during their lessons - in or out of the classroom. Your valuable knowledge and experience of completing your GCSEs recently will be greatly appreciated.

### Music Lessons

Tuition is available from our visiting peripatetic teachers on all orchestral instruments as well as guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, classical and jazz piano, jazz saxophone improvisation and voice. Individual music theory and aural lessons are also available and you can be entered for theory grade exams too. See the music department for information on how to sign up for lessons and get involved in extra-curricular music activities.

### Work Experience

Students who wish to get more of a flavour of the world of work can apply to do work experience during term time, such as the Year 12 enrichment week. This may provide excellent experience for those students who are wishing to enter employment after their time in the Sixth Form or wish to apply for a university course that requires first-hand experience of an industry or profession.

### Outlook Expeditions

This is an exhilarating, valuable and demanding programme that allows you to learn and develop through an expedition to a challenging destination: Costa Rica 2010; Thailand and Laos 2012; Northern Peru (Amazon and the Andes) 2014, Southern Tanzania 2016, Borneo 2018 and Ecuador 2025. Each overseas expedition lasts four weeks, but is preceded by 15-20 months of careful planning. Many fascinating challenges are encountered throughout the programme, such as fundraising and group leadership.



wide range of activities. Students who need academic support will have the opportunity to choose a study skills course. Completion of the projects and qualifications should improve students' wider skills and give them plenty to write and talk about in interviews and UCAS personal statements. Some courses also carry UCAS points and extra accreditation.

### Subject Mentors

In a number of subject areas you will be invited to become a mentor to help younger students achieve their best. This may involve organising regular meetings to help your mentee with the topics they are studying in class. They may have homework they need some

### Year 12 Road Safety, Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Day

This is a day for all Year 12 students in the summer term. Representatives from the emergency services and young peoples' organisations lead a carousel of activities covering road safety, young drivers, drugs and alcohol.

# From the Head Prefect Team



Zaia



Victoria



Eve



Natasha

From the moment in Year 12 when you arrive in the Sixth Form centre you feel at home. You have everything you need to study, but the facilities provide so much more than a place to work.

The Sixth Form Centre has two distinct parts: the social area and catering facility downstairs, and the silent working area upstairs. Downstairs the friendly staff in the Sixth Form canteen provide a home from home – highlights include the famous bronkie and the delicious range of lunchtime meals. There is also a comfortable area to meet with friends and socialise. Upstairs you can work on the computers provided or at the many desks. There are also several classrooms in this area.

As part of the Sixth Form, students are taking on more independent study and it's great to focus in depth on your chosen specialisms. The atmosphere in the Sixth Form Centre and Bragg Hall provides the perfect backdrop to further study. The jump from GCSE to A Level is a challenging one but working in close

proximity with the support of the Head of Sixth Form, Heads of Year and tutors provides a smooth journey to not only succeed in your studies, but also give invaluable help for your future plans. Whether that be a university application or guaranteeing an apprenticeship, assistance is always available.

As well as working hard, sixth formers have the opportunity to take a full part in Academy life. Sixth Form students contribute as mentors to younger students, participate in the many extra-curricular activities that span all year groups and are aspirational role models to students in Years 7 to 11.

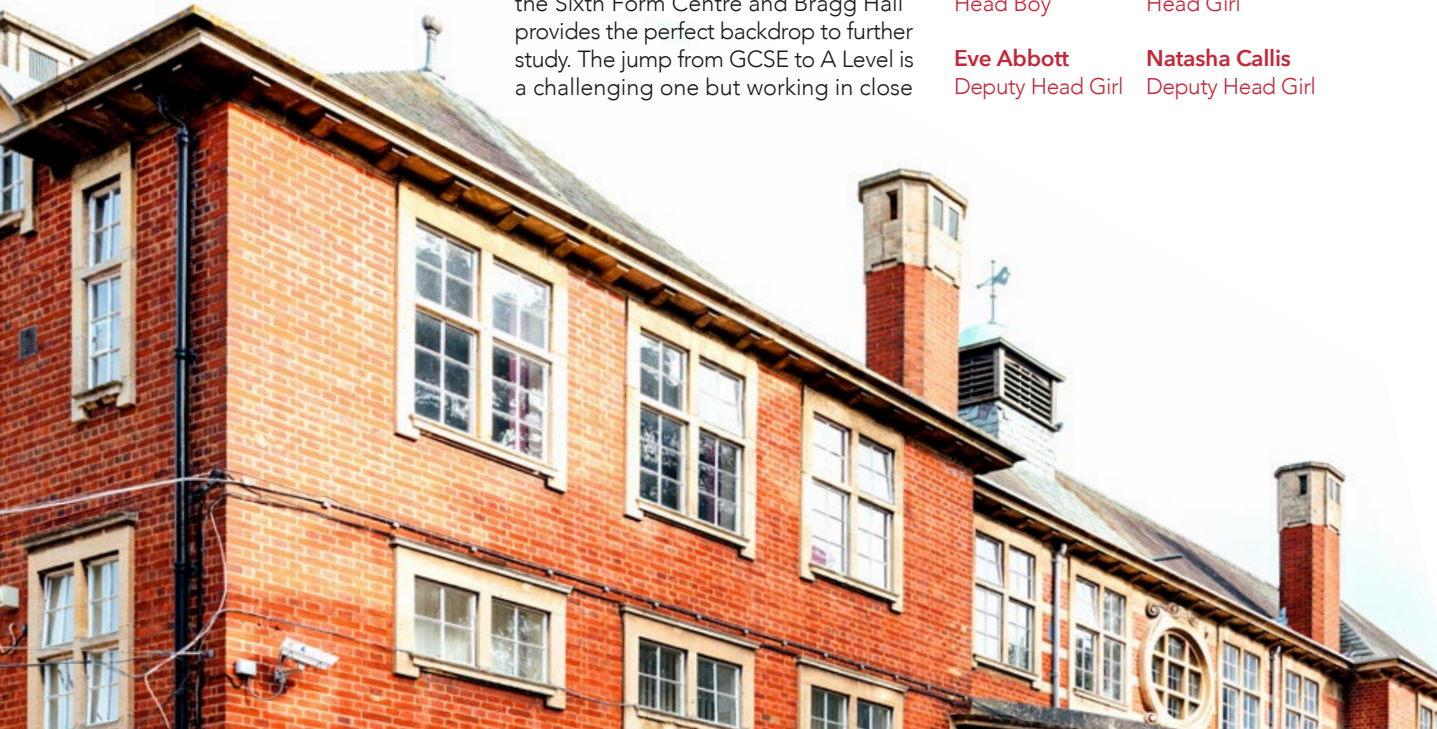
The Robert Smyth Academy Sixth Form is a great place to study and we hope you will enjoy being here as much as we do.

**Zaia Kawagoe**  
Head Boy

**Victoria Jones**  
Head Girl

**Eve Abbott**  
Deputy Head Girl

**Natasha Callis**  
Deputy Head Girl



# Subject specific A Level requirements

Some of our courses have specific requirements as detailed below. Further information about our entry requirements can be found on pages 38-39.

A LEVEL SUBJECT	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
Fine Art	Grade 5 or above in GCSE Art or a portfolio.
Biology	Grade 6 in GCSE combined science or in GCSE biology if taking separate sciences. Grade 5 in GCSE maths is also required.
Business Studies	N/A
Chemistry	Grade 6 in GCSE combined science or in GCSE chemistry if taking separate sciences. Grade 5 in GCSE maths is also required.
Computer Science	Grade 5 or above in computing or science. Grade 5 or above in GCSE maths is also required.
Core Mathematics	Grade 4 in GCSE maths.
Drama & Theatre Studies	Grade 5 in English.
Economics	N/A
English Language & Literature	Grade 5 or above in both GCSE English Language and English Literature.
English Literature	Grade 5 or above in both English Language and English Literature.
French	Grade 6 or above in GCSE French.
Further Mathematics	Grade 7 or above in GCSE maths.
Geography	N/A
German	Grade 6 or above in GCSE German.
History	N/A
Mathematics	Grade 6 in GCSE maths.
Media Studies	N/A
Music	Grade 5 in GCSE music. The ability to play a musical instrument or sing to at least Grade 5 standard.
Music Technology	It is useful, but not essential, to have GCSE music or a theory music qualification. You will be required to take a short music theory test and questionnaire before entry to the course.
Physical Education	Grade 5 in Biology or Combined Science and in PE.
Physics	Grade 6 in GCSE combined science or in GCSE physics if taking separate sciences. Grade 5 in GCSE maths is also required.
Politics	Grade 5 in GCSE English.
Product Design	If taken Grade 5 in GCSE product design.
Psychology	Grade 5 in GCSE English, maths and science.
Sociology	N/A
Spanish	Grade 6 or above in GCSE Spanish.
Textile Design	Grade 5 in art or another design subject.

# Fine Art A Level

Board: AQA

Contact Mr D Page [dpage@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:dpage@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Why study Fine Art at A Level?

You may be wondering how you can use your artistic abilities to advantage in the Sixth Form. You may not have realised that there is a wide range of employment opportunities associated with art. Below is a simple outline of what this subject can offer you and a range of courses open to students at various levels after leaving education.

## The course

The A Level Fine Art course allows you the freedom to explore new ideas at the same time as refining your technical skills. The course mixes traditional methods with some highly innovative approaches to making and responding to art. The study of art history and techniques provides many ideas that can be absorbed into your practical work. Each teacher is an expert in the field and you will have the opportunity to develop a personal style by extending your own specific interests in painting, drawing, graphics, computer art and photography. Trips, visits and life drawing all go to make this a very personal A Level choice.

Coursework is designed to provide you with an interview portfolio that meets the expectations of Higher Education. The great majority of students who follow this course are successful in obtaining a place on a foundation course before going on to further success on a wide range of degree courses.

## Course content and assessment

### Year 12

Coursework – A portfolio of work from a theme set by us incorporating painting/drawing, graphic design, lens based media, computer graphics and 3D model making, with particular focus paid to development of ideas and experimentation.

The emphasis of the coursework is on developing an understanding through practical experience of the ways in which artists and illustrators have responded to subjects in the modern world. This naturally leads to the study of painting, drawing, collage and other fine art skills, together with the use of new media in the graphics workplace, e.g. computer generation and manipulation of imagery.

### Year 13

Personal Investigation Coursework (60%) – One project for assessment. The emphasis will be on the personal development of imagery based on the combination of traditional and contemporary fine art processes, with particular attention being paid to recording skills and the presentation of an outcome. This will include an integral Personal Study of between 1000 and 3000 words.

Controlled Assignment (40%) – an externally set practical test of 15 hours duration plus prior preparation time.

Not all art students choose to study art or design subjects at university; however, in the past it has helped students to gain entry to courses in non-art subjects such as economics, software engineering, psychology, sociology, marketing and a wide range of combined degrees where it has been studied with English, languages and theatre studies.

## Where next?

### Foundation Courses

Art and design foundation courses are usually one year pre-degree courses designed to broaden experience across a range of practical and theoretical areas prior to choosing to specialise at degree level. BA and MA courses are available nationally in a wide variety of art and design related studies. A popular option for some students is to combine art or art history with another subject, eg art can be combined with languages, English, RE, history, computing, dance and drama.

## Employment possibilities

- Advertising
- Publicity
- Art Conservation & Restoration
- Art Therapist
- Computer Aided Design
- Exhibition Design
- Internet Graphics
- Interior Design
- Fashion Design & Marketing
- Jewellery Design
- Museums (Education Officer)
- Photography
- Retail Display
- Stage and Costume Design
- Technical Illustration
- Textile Design/Printing
- Visual Effects Design (for Film, Video and Television).



# Biology A Level

Board: OCR, Specification Biology A

Contact Mrs R Hancox [rhancox@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:rhancox@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Biology is the science of living organisms. It is a subject that encompasses a great diversity of topics ranging from the sub-cellular and molecular level to the interactions of populations, human and non-human. The specification is divided into topics, each covering different key concepts of biology but also encourages the understanding of how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how biological science contributes to the success of the economy and society.

## Course content and assessment

The content is split into 6 teaching modules:

### Module 1

#### Development of practical skills in biology

The development of practical skills is a fundamental and integral aspect of the study of any scientific subject. These skills not only enhance your understanding of the subject but also serve as a suitable preparation for the demands of studying biology at a higher level.

### Module 2

#### Foundations in biology

All living organisms have similarities in cellular structure, biochemistry and function. An understanding of these similarities is fundamental to the study of the subject. This module gives you the opportunity to use microscopy to study the cell structure of a variety of organisms. Biologically important molecules such as carbohydrates, proteins, water and nucleic acids are studied with respect to their structure and function. The structure and mode of action of enzymes in catalysing biochemical reactions is studied. Membranes form barriers within, and at the surface of, cells. This module also considers the way in which the structure of membranes relates to the different methods by which molecules enter and leave cells and organelles. The division and subsequent specialisation of cells is studied, together with the potential for the therapeutic use of stem cells.

### Module 3

#### Exchange and transport

In this module, you will study the structure and function of gas exchange and transport systems in a range of animals and in terrestrial plants. The significance of surface area to volume ratio in determining the need for ventilation, gas exchange and transport systems in multicellular organisms is emphasised. The examples of terrestrial green plants and a range of animal phyla are used to illustrate the principle.

### Module 4

#### Biodiversity, evolution and disease

In this module you will study the biodiversity of organisms; how they are classified and the ways in which biodiversity can be measured. It serves as an introduction to ecology, emphasising practical techniques and an appreciation of the need to maintain biodiversity. You will also gain an understanding of the variety of organisms that are pathogenic and the way in which plants and animals have evolved defences to deal with disease. The impact of the evolution of pathogens on the treatment of disease is also considered. The relationships between organisms are studied, considering variation, evolution and phylogeny.

### Module 5

#### Communication, homeostasis and energy

It is important that organisms, both plants and animals are able to respond to stimuli. This is achieved by communication within the body, which may be chemical and/or electrical. Both systems are covered in detail in this module. Communication is also fundamental to homeostasis with control of temperature, blood sugar and blood water potential being studied as examples. In this module, the biochemical pathways of photosynthesis and respiration are considered, with an emphasis on the formation and use of ATP as the source of energy for biochemical processes and synthesis of biological molecules.

### Module 6

#### Genetics, evolution and ecosystems

This module covers the role of genes in regulating and controlling cell function and development. Heredity and the mechanisms of evolution and speciation are also covered. Some of the practical techniques used to manipulate DNA such as sequencing and amplification are considered and their therapeutic medical use. The use of microorganisms in biotechnology is also covered. Both of these have associated ethical considerations and it is important that

you develop a balanced understanding of such issues. You will gain an appreciation of the role of microorganisms in recycling materials within the environment and maintaining balance within ecosystems. The need to conserve environmental resources in a sustainable fashion is considered, whilst appreciating the potential conflict arising from the needs of an increasing human population. You will also consider the impacts of human activities on the natural environment and biodiversity.

## Assessment

There are three written papers that assess content from ALL modules. Practical skills are assessed in the written papers.

Title	Duration (hrs/mins)	Modules assessed	% of total A Level grade
Biological processes	2.15	1, 2, 3 & 5	37%
Biological diversity	2.15	1, 2, 4 & 6	37%
Unifying concepts	1.30	All modules	26%

All papers are synoptic. In addition there is a practical endorsement in biology, which is a non-exam assessment. This will require you to complete and submit evidence of 12 practical tasks over the two years of study. It will result in either a pass or fail mark but does not contribute to the A Level mark. Universities offering science courses have said that they will require a pass in order to offer students a place.

## Where next?

A biology qualification is suitable training for those wishing to continue their studies in the fields of psychology, behavioural science, biological sciences, biochemistry, dentistry, food sciences, agricultural sciences, environmental science, environmental health, medicine, genetics, veterinary science, nursing etc.

# Business A Level

Board: Edexcel, 9BS0

Contact Mr B Markham [bmarkham@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:bmarkham@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Why consider Business?

A good level of interest in the business world is necessary to succeed in this course. It will allow you to gain a practical understanding and knowledge of how businesses work and it is well regarded as a qualification by employers and higher education institutions.

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in business is structured into four themes and consists of three externally examined papers.

You will be introduced to business in Themes 1 and 2 through building knowledge of core business concepts and applying them to business contexts to develop a broad understanding of how businesses work. Breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, with applications to a wider range of contexts and more complex business information, are developed in Themes 3 and 4, requiring you to take a more strategic view of business opportunities and issues.

You will be encouraged to use an enquiring, critical and thoughtful approach to the study of business, understanding that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives, and challenge assumptions.

## Theme 1:

### Marketing and people

You will develop an understanding of:

- Meeting customer needs
- The market
- Marketing mix and strategy
- Managing people
- Entrepreneurs and leaders.

## Theme 2:

### Managing business activities

You will develop an understanding of:

- Raising finance
- Financial planning
- Managing finance
- Resource management
- External influences.

## Theme 3:

### Business decisions and strategy

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 2. You will develop an understanding of:

- Business objectives and strategy
- Business growth
- Decision-making techniques
- Influences on business decisions
- Assessing competitiveness
- Managing change.

## Theme 4:

### Global business

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 1. You will develop an understanding of:

- Globalisation
- Global markets and business expansion
- Global marketing
- Global industries and companies (multinational companies).

Assessment is by means of three two-hour exams, all taken in the final summer of the course:

- Paper 1 is based on Themes 1 and 4
- Paper 2 is based on Themes 2 and 3
- Paper 3 is based on a pre-released case study and covers all four themes.

## Other activities

Work experience can be an excellent enrichment activity for someone on an A Level business studies course. We aim to organise visits and trips to enrich and enhance the whole experience.

## Where next?

The business course is ideal preparation for employment, further and higher education in a wide range of careers and courses. The course is good preparation for working in a business environment or for studying a business-related course such as marketing or management.



# Chemistry A Level

Board: OCR

Contact Mr A Booth [abooth@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:abooth@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Chemistry is a subject of global impact. As a fundamental science it has a profound effect on our planet and is involved in nearly every facet of everyday life. A chemistry qualification isn't just an end in itself, it's a beginning. The range of jobs available to someone with a chemistry qualification is greater than with most other qualifications. The reasons are simple. Chemistry underpins everything in our modern lifestyle and there are few things that we use which have not, at some stage, been made, processed or monitored by chemists.

## OCR's A Level in Chemistry A specification aims to encourage learners to:

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

The course is organised into teaching units, each of which is freestanding and tells its own story about modern applications of chemistry. This means that the important ideas in chemistry are introduced gradually and are revisited and further developed in different contexts in later units.

## In the A Level course you will study six main modules:

### Module 1: Development of practical skills in chemistry

- Practical skills assessed in a written examination
- Practical skills assessed in the practical endorsement

### Module 2: Foundations in chemistry

- Atoms, compounds, molecules and equations
- Amount of substance
- Acid-base and redox reactions
- Electrons, bonding and structure

### Module 3: Periodic table and energy

- The periodic table and periodicity
- Group 2 and the halogens
- Qualitative analysis
- Enthalpy changes
- Reaction rates and equilibrium (qualitative)

### Module 4: Core organic chemistry

- Basic concepts
- Hydrocarbons
- Alcohols and haloalkanes
- Organic synthesis
- Analytical techniques (IR and MS)

### Module 5: Physical chemistry and transition elements

- Reaction rates and equilibrium (quantitative)
- pH and buffers
- Enthalpy, entropy and free energy
- Redox and electrode potentials
- Transition elements

### Module 6: Organic chemistry and analysis

- Aromatic compounds
- Carbonyl compounds
- Carboxylic acids and esters
- Nitrogen compounds
- Polymers
- Organic synthesis
- Chromatography and spectroscopy (NMR)

## Assessment

This is in the form of three written exams.

### Component One (37%)

Periodic table, elements and physical chemistry

### Component Two (37%)

Synthesis and analytical techniques

### Component Three (26%)

Unified chemistry

In addition, there is a practical endorsement in chemistry, which is a non-exam assessment. This will require you to complete and submit evidence of 12 practical tasks over the two years of study. It will result in either a pass or fail mark but does not contribute to the A Level mark.

Universities offering science courses have said that they will require a pass in order to offer students a place. Students' practical skills will also be reported separately.



# Computer Science A Level

Board: OCR, Specification: H446

Contact Miss C Jones [cjones@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:cjones@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Experience of a high level programming language is beneficial although no specific language is required beforehand. Programming tasks will be carried out using Python version 3. Computer science helps us to understand how computers can solve problems. It could be that you have already experimented in some type of programming, either making interactive web pages or other personal projects.

Computer science has an emphasis on abstract thinking, general problem solving, algorithmic and mathematical reasoning, scientific and engineering-based thinking. These are all useful skills not just for future programmers but for anyone following a scientific, technical, engineering, or mathematical career.

## Course content and assessment

The A level specification comprises of 3 components which are Component 01: Computer systems (40%), Component 02: algorithms and programming and Component 03: programming project (20%).

Components 01 and 02 are assessed through written exams of short, medium and extended answers and Component 03 is assessed through a practical programming project for which students will prepare a portfolio of evidence. Students will be taught programming using Python version 3 programming language in lessons.

## Component 01: Computer systems

Students are introduced to the internal workings of the (CPU), data exchange, software development, data types and legal and ethical issues. The resulting knowledge and understanding will underpin their work in Component 03.

### It covers:

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

## Component 02: Algorithms and programming

This builds on Component 01 to include computational thinking and problem-solving.

### It covers:

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

## Component 03: Programming project

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





# Drama & Theatre Studies A Level

Board: Edexcel 9DR0

Contact A Fenton [afenton@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:afenton@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Subject content is divided into:

- Devising (40%) – portfolio and practical
- Text in performance (20%) – practical
- Theatre makers in practice (40%) – written exam

### Component 1: Devising – 40%

There are three main areas of focus:

- 1) Interpreting, creating, and developing a devised piece from one key extract from a performance text and applying the methods of one practitioner.
- 2) A group performance/design realisation of the devised piece.
- 3) Analysing and evaluating the creative process and devised performance.

#### How it's assessed:

- Portfolio – 60 marks
- Students must produce a portfolio documenting and reflecting on their exploratory process and the skills and techniques that they have developed in response to the text, and the influence of their chosen theatre practitioner.
- Devised performance – 20 marks
- A group performance of the final devised piece.

### Component 2: Text in performance – 20%

There are two main areas of focus:

- 1) A monologue or a duologue performance/design realisation from one key extract from one performance text.
- 2) A group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a different performance text.

#### How it's assessed:

- Performance in front of an external visiting examiner for both performances - 60 marks.

### Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice – 40%

- Written Exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

## Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation – 20 marks

- Students answer one extended response question from a choice of two requiring them to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen in light of a given statement.
- Students are allowed to bring in theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

## Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text – 36 marks

- Students answer two extended response questions based on an unseen extract from the performance text they have studied.
- Students will demonstrate how they, as theatre makers, intend to realise the extract in performance.
- Students answer from the perspective of a performer and a designer.
- Performance texts for this section are not allowed in the examination as the extracts will be provided.

## Section C: Interpreting a Performance Text – 24 marks

- Students will answer one extended response question from a choice of two based on an unseen named section from their chosen performance text.
- Students will demonstrate how their re-imagined production concept will communicate ideas to a contemporary audience.
- Students will also need to outline how the work of their chosen theatre practitioner has influenced their overall production concept and demonstrate an awareness of the performance text in its original performance conditions.
- Students must take in clean copies of their performance texts for this section, but no other printed materials.



# Economics A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9EB0

Contact Mr B Markham [bmarkham@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:bmarkham@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

A good level of interest in the world we live in will allow you to enjoy and succeed in this course. The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in economics is structured into four themes and consists of three externally examined papers.

You will be introduced to economics through building knowledge of core microeconomic, macroeconomic and business concepts, and applying them to business contexts and evidence relating to the macroeconomic environment. Breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding with applications to more complex concepts and models are developed in the second year of study.

You will need to apply your knowledge and understanding to both familiar and unfamiliar contexts in the assessment and demonstrate an awareness of current economic events and policies.

## Theme 1:

### Markets, consumers and firms

You will develop an understanding of:

- Scarcity, choice and potential conflicts
- Enterprise, business and the economy
- Sources and methods of finance
- Introducing the market
- Market failure and government intervention
- Revenues, costs, profits and cash.

## Theme 2:

### The wider economic environment

You will develop an understanding of:

- Business growth and competitive advantage
- Marketing and elasticities of demand
- Increasing business efficiency
- Life in a global economy
- The economic cycle
- Introduction to macroeconomic policy.

## Theme 3:

### The global economy

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 2. You will develop an understanding of:

- Globalisation
- Business expansion
- Global marketing
- Multinational corporations
- Global labour markets
- Inequality and redistribution.

## Theme 4:

### Making markets work

This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 1. You will develop an understanding of:

- Competition and market power
- Market failure in business
- Market failure across the economy
- Macroeconomic policies and impact on firms and individuals
- Risk and the financial sector.

## Assessment

Assessment is by means of three two-hour papers, all taken in the final summer of the course.

- Paper 1 is based on Themes 1 and 4.
- Paper 2 is based on Themes 2 and 3.
- Paper 3 is based on a pre-released case study which covers all four themes.

## Other activities

We try to organise trips and visits to enhance the study of this subject with real-world examples.

## Where next?

Studying economics in a business context is very logical; all business decisions are driven and constrained by the economic environment in which they are taken.

Economics is the study of all aspects and consequences of the economic problem. People, firms and countries face the problem of unlimited wants and needs but limited resources. Economics looks at the way resources are allocated and the way decisions are made in this context.

Business is the broad term which covers all activity that helps to provide the goods and services we want and need.

An understanding of economics in a business context will give you an excellent grounding in the way the real world works – as well as being an excellent preparation for further study and employment.



# English Language & Literature A Level

## Why study English?

### All life is here

Fall in love, face death on a battlefield, be taken as a hostage, escape from a hostile land, and find spiritual enlightenment. All this and more is waiting for you to discover. Reading and discussing texts can open new worlds to you, transport you across time and space and enrich your life and understanding of people.

The study of an English course at A Level involves reading, analysis, discussion and writing. The courses we offer aim to further your understanding of literature and language, your reading, analytical and creative communication skills, and critical thinking – all skills which are required to study at university level, whatever the subject you decide to take.

The English faculty believes that it is very important that you gain the widest possible experience of English and the arts. We regularly organise theatre trips and visits to lectures and conferences. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are organised through the faculty and every other year we hold an Arts Week.

So following either or both of the two courses that we offer, will enable you to develop personally, academically and culturally.

## What next?

An A Level in either English literature or English language and literature is an excellent foundation for further study in a range of subjects, as well as being a good basis for entry to a wide range of careers.

Students who have an English degree progress to careers in journalism, publishing, teaching, public relations, accountancy, the law, the civil service, management, marketing and a host of other possibilities.



# English Language & Literature A Level

**Board:** AQA, Specification 7707

# English Literature A Level

**Board:** AQA, Specification 7712

Contact Mrs H Hackett [hhackett@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:hhackett@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

This course combines the study of literary texts (poems, novels, drama) with the study of non-fiction and spoken language. Language choices create meanings in any text and so we can use the same methods to analyse any type of text.

This specification differs from A Level Literature by extending its coverage beyond literature to explore differences and similarities between literary texts and other types of texts. It also offers opportunities for you to develop your writing skills by creating texts yourself and critically reflecting on your own work.

There is a coursework component (NEA) worth 20% of the A Level.

## Paper 1: 'Telling Stories'

This unit involves the study of three texts ('Paris' anthology, one prose set text, poetry anthology). You will explore how and why stories are told and how language choices help to shape the representations of different worlds and perspectives.

## Paper 2: 'Exploring Conflict'

You will study two texts: one prose and one drama. The unit looks at how language choices help to construct ideas of conflict between people, and between people and their societies.

The exam requires students to respond creatively to the prose text such as by recreating a scene from a different character's perspective.

## NEA (coursework): 'Making Connections'

The coursework requires you to compare how language is used in two different types of text: a literary text and some non-fiction material. You will be able to choose your own investigation with guidance from the teacher. Assessment is by means of a 2500-3000 word essay.

## The course

This course includes the study of Shakespeare together with works of poetry, prose and drama. You will also be expected to read a wide range of texts on given topics. There is a coursework component worth 20% of the A Level.

The course encourages you to explore the relationships that exist between texts and the contexts in which they are written and received. We also encourage students to develop their own informed personal responses and to challenge the interpretations of other readers.

## Paper 1: Love through the Ages (examination)

This unit involves the study of three texts (one prose, one poetry and one Shakespeare) from a range of periods, on the theme of love.

You will also be required to respond to two previously unseen poems in the examination.

## Paper 2: Texts in Shared Context (examination)

The aim of this unit is to study a range of texts from one particular time period. You will study three texts (one prose, one poetry and one drama). You will also learn about the context of the period by watching films and conducting research. The examination will also include a previously unseen extract.

## Assessment (non-exam): Independent Critical Study

This module is assessed by means of a coursework essay (2500 words) and bibliography. You will be required to write a comparative critical study of two texts, one of which must have been written pre-1900.

This part of the course allows you to work independently and to develop your own interests.



# French A Level

Board: AQA, Specification 7262

Contact Miss C Mode [cmode@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:cmode@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

We live in a multi-lingual, global society. Whether it is for pleasure, travel or opening job prospects, the knowledge of a language is a valuable skill in its own right and an asset when combined with another specialism. French, German and Spanish are currently the most sought after foreign languages by UK employers.

## The course

### This course aims to:

- Build on the knowledge you gained at GCSE, furthering your languages skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing. You will become fluent, independent and confident when interacting.
- Explore key issues in the context of French-speaking countries, which will inspire cultural curiosity. You will be able to develop your own views and express them in French.
- Analyse French literary and cinematographic work.
- Enable you to consolidate a range of general and language specific study and communication skills through research, group work, oral presentations, essay writing, use of ICT etc.

The emphasis in Year 12 is on developing your language proficiency through the study of a variety of themes rooted in French-speaking countries. You will start by consolidating the foundations laid at GCSE during a carefully devised bridging programme. We then build on those skills gradually.

Given the nature of foreign language study, we work very hard to provide you with a variety of opportunities for foreign travel: study visits, work experience, trips to university, conferences for Sixth Formers and, when appropriate, theatre and cinema visits.

## Course content and assessment

### In year 12, the course will focus on the following themes:

#### Aspects of French-speaking society:

##### current trends:

- The changing nature of family
- The 'cyber-society'
- The place of voluntary work artistic culture in the French-speaking world:
- A culture proud of its heritage
- Contemporary francophone music
- Cinema: the 7th art form

### In Year 13 you will carry on developing your languages skills and study the following themes:

#### Aspects of French-speaking society:

##### current issues:

- Positive features of a diverse society
- Life for the marginalised
- How criminals are treated. Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world:
- Teenagers, the right to vote and political commitment
- Demonstrations, strikes – who holds the power?
- Politics and immigration

Over the course of the two years, you will study a book and a film. You will also have the opportunity to pick your own area of interest and research it independently.

## Examination

The A Level examination content will cover the themes, book and film studied in Years 12 and 13. The exam will include:

- Paper 1: Listening and reading tasks, translation into English and translation into French
- Paper 2: Essays on the book and film studied
- Speaking: A discussion about your independent research project and one of the sub-themes studied in class.

## What do you need to study French at A Level

You need at least a grade 6 at GCSE French. You should also have a genuine interest in language and foreign culture, with a desire to communicate in French as much as possible.

Time spent in a French-speaking country is also invaluable and you are encouraged to spend some time abroad during Years 12 and 13.

## Why studying French will be an advantage

There are many well-worn yet valid arguments why language study is important. Remember that many in your generation will not have taken a foreign language to GCSE, even fewer at A Level and you will have an advantage on the job market, having studied languages.

'Working with languages' is no longer just about translating, teaching or being a travel representative! Employers from all sectors and university admissions tutors from all subject areas respect and value language qualifications, for both the skills and the personal qualities they represent. A post-16 language qualification could give you the edge!

## What can you do with languages at higher education?

This may seem a long way off, but it is worth thinking about, even at this early stage. Language courses at university are varied and interesting. A language is a subject which you can study with almost anything to make an exciting and marketable combination, e.g. finance, law, media, IT, engineering, business studies, English etc.

# Geography A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9GEO

Contact Mrs McLeod | [ImcLeod@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:ImcLeod@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

The themes of the course are about the interactions between societies, economies, cultures and environments. There is a balance between physical geography (coasts, rivers, natural hazards), human geography (population, development, urban, rural issues) and environmental geography (ecosystems, climate change, global warming).

Residential field courses and day trips will be organised to develop fieldwork skills. Fieldwork skills will be assessed as a piece of coursework in Year 13.

## Course content and assessment

### Year 12

#### Dynamic Landscapes

- Tectonic Processes and Hazards
- Coastal Landscapes and Change

#### Dynamic Processes

- Globalisation
- Regenerating Places

### Year 13

#### Physical Systems and Sustainability

- The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity
- The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security
- Climate Change Futures

#### Human Systems and Geopolitics

- Superpowers
- Global Development and Connections

## Assessment:

Three exams assessing subject content and synoptic links across units 1 to 4. In addition, students will complete an individual investigation based on an issue related to any of the four units.

## Where next?

Almost any subject goes with geography. It is supported by and complements most of the A Levels on offer at Robert Smyth Academy. It is considered as a bridge between the Arts and Sciences.

Very few careers specifically require a qualification in geography, but you will find that the course keeps the door open on a wide range of possible careers.

The majority of our students have gone on to higher education where they have taken a wide range of degree courses.



# German A Level

Board: AQA

Contact Ms J Hadfield [jhadfield@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:jhadfield@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

We live in a multi-lingual, global society. Whether it is for pleasure, travel or opening job prospects, the knowledge of a language is a valuable skill in its own right, and an asset when combined with another specialism. German, French and Spanish are currently the languages most sought after by UK employers.

## The course

This course aims to:

- Build on the knowledge you gained at GCSE, furthering your languages skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing. You will become fluent, independent and confident when interacting.
- Explore key issues in the context of German-speaking countries which will inspire cultural curiosity. You will be able to develop your own views and express them in German.
- Analyse German literary and cinematographic work.
- Enable you to consolidate a range of general and language specific study and communication skills through research, group work, oral presentations, essay writing, use of ICT etc.

The emphasis in Year 12 is on developing your language proficiency through the study of a variety of themes rooted in German-speaking countries. You will start by consolidating the foundations laid at GCSE during a carefully devised bridging programme. We then build on those skills gradually.

Given the nature of foreign language study, we work very hard to provide you with a variety of opportunities for foreign travel: study visits, work experience, trips to university, conferences for Sixth Formers and, when appropriate, theatre and cinema visits.

## Course content and assessment

In year 12, the course will focus on the following themes:

Aspects of German-speaking society:

- The changing state of the family.
- The digital world.
- Youth culture: fashion and trends, music, television.

## Artistic culture in the German-speaking world:

- Festivals and traditions.
- Art and architecture.
- Cultural life in Berlin, past and present.

In Year 13, you will carry on developing your languages skills and study the following themes:

## Multiculturalism in German-speaking society:

- Immigration
- Integration
- Racism

## Aspects of political life in the German-speaking world:

- Germany and the European Union
- Politics and youth
- German reunification and its consequences

Over the course of the 2 years, you will study a book and a film. You will also have the opportunity to pick your own area of interest and research it independently.

## Examination

The A Level examination content will cover the themes, book and film studied in years 12 and 13. The exam will include:

Paper 1: Listening and reading tasks and translation into English and translation into German  
Paper 2: Essays on the book and film studied  
Speaking: A discussion about your independent research project, and one of the sub-themes studied in class.

## What do you need to study German at A Level

You need at least a grade 5 at GCSE German. You should also have a genuine interest in language and foreign culture, with a desire to communicate in German as much as possible.

Time spent in a German-speaking country is also invaluable and you are encouraged to spend some time abroad during Years 12 and 13.

## Why studying German will be an advantage

There are many well-worn yet valid arguments why language study is important. Remember that many in your generation will not have taken a foreign language to GCSE, even fewer at A Level and you will have an advantage on the job market having studied languages.

‘Working with languages’ is no longer just about translating, teaching or being a travel representative! Employers from all sectors and university admissions tutors from all subject areas respect and value language qualifications, for both the skills and the personal qualities they represent. A post-16 language qualification could give you the edge!

## What can you do with languages at Higher Education

This may seem a long way off, but it is worth thinking about, even at this early stage. Language courses at university are varied and interesting. A language is a subject which you can study with almost anything to make an exciting and marketable combination, e.g. finance, law, media, IT, engineering, business studies, English etc.

# History A Level

Board: AQA, Specification 7262

Contact Mr G Owen [GOwen@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:GOwen@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

An inquisitive approach to the past and a willingness to work hard will ensure success in this course. History encourages debate about the past based on historical evidence. The period studied at A Level builds upon some topics and themes covered at GCSE as well as developing new areas of focus.

The periods studied have been chosen for their historical importance and because of the many and varied resources available. The combination of units at A Level blend a variety of political, social, economic, religious and military issues and involve the assessment of individual rights and freedoms and the way in which different groups and sections of society tried to achieve these in Britain and across the world. The skills required for success at A Level are the same as those needed for GCSE, though at a significantly more advanced level.

## Course content and assessment

- A unit on Tudor England will be studied, focusing on Henry VII and Henry VIII in Year 12 and Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I in Year 13. Students will assess the impact of monarchy and government on people and the significance of individual leadership, religion and political change.
- A unit on America in the 20th Century will address key changes in society and foreign policies, including race relations, the Vietnam War and the importance of key presidents, from Truman to Carter, 1945-1980.
- In Year 13 you will undertake an historical enquiry on a key theme to complete a no-more-than-4,500-word coursework essay, involving independent research and analysis of Russia 1855-1964 to assess long and short-term causes and consequences of change.





# Mathematics A Level Further Mathematics A Level

**Board:** Board OCR, Specifications Mathematics B (MEI) H640 and Further Mathematics B (MEI) H645

Contact Mrs A Haynes [ahaynes@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:ahaynes@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Mathematics at advanced level is a demanding and stimulating course. Good study skills and consistent hard work are essential in order to be successful. It is a demanding course but the successful student will earn an impressive qualification that is highly regarded by universities and industry.

The maths faculty offers courses that work within the 'MEI Structured Mathematics' scheme. There are elements of pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics for A Level maths and, numerical methods, further statistics and further mechanics for Further Mathematics. Each element will be taught as topics by subject specialists.

You will be provided with full details of the content for each topic and a schedule that maps out how each element is taught and how the topics fit together. The pure topics build upon the algebra, geometry and trigonometry learned at GCSE level, whilst introducing and exploring new topics such as calculus and numerical methods.

All Statistics topics build upon the data handling and probability learned at GCSE level, whilst introducing and exploring new topics such as binomial distribution, hypothesis testing and discrete random variables. All Mechanics topics introduce and explore new areas such as forces, Newton's laws, modelling and projectiles.

## Course content and assessment

For A Level, qualification is achieved by completing a 2 year course with three written exams of 2 hours. Your overall grade is determined by the aggregate score from all three papers you take. For Further Mathematics, qualification is achieved by completing further written papers in addition to the A Level.

We expect all students who take A Level maths to participate in the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge which is held each year in November.

## Frequently asked questions

### Which subjects go well with Mathematics A Level?

Most subjects do; it is a useful service subject particularly for the sciences and humanities, owing to its broad content.

### What about post A Level?

Some higher education institutions expect maths A Level for acceptance onto certain degree courses; apart from mathematics these may include:

- Accountancy
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Biology
- Biophysics
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Engineering
- Geology
- Physics
- Statistics
- Technology

NB: Many mathematics degree courses now prefer, or insist on, further mathematics being studied.

## What about professions?

Mathematics is a useful vocational qualification too. Some careers specifically require A Level mathematics, including:

- Accountant
- Actuary
- Architect
- Armed Forces Engineering Officer
- Astronomer
- Engineer
- Finance
- Physicist
- STEM Teaching

Specific information regarding Further Mathematics

## Features of the courses

- Teaching and support from experienced teachers.
- Self-study: ideal and vital preparation for all university courses.
- Support from a distance learning website. Resources include study plans, extra notes and examples, fully worked solutions and a variety of tests to help you and your tutor assess your progress.

## Scheme of work

You will study further pure work that includes matrices and complex numbers; further statistics work that looks at regression and more complex hypothesis testing; further mechanics work that explores moments of forces and energy amongst others.

## Is further mathematics difficult?

Yes. A recommendation of at least a GCSE grade 8 or higher is preferable. However, we will accept students achieving a grade 7.

# Core Mathematics Level 3

Board: AQA, Specification 1350

Contact Mr D Copp [dcopp@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:dcopp@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Core maths is a Level 3 qualification aimed at students not wanting to take A Level maths but still wanting to continue with some form of maths. It covers mathematical content in a practical context relating to many other A Level subjects, for example Business Studies, Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Geography and the Sciences. The course will help students maintain and build on their mathematical knowledge to make them better able to cope with the mathematical demands of other subjects they are studying, higher education and the workplace.

The course carries up to 20 UCAS points and it is looked upon favourably by universities when going through the application process. It is studied over a period of two years. To take this course, students require a grade 4 or above in their mathematics GCSE. The course would involve five hours of lessons over a two week period.

## The subject content will include:

- Analysis of data
- Maths for personal finance
- Estimation
- Critical analysis of given data and models (including spreadsheets and tabular data)
- The normal distribution
- Probabilities and estimation
- Correlation and regression
- Critical path analysis

## Assessment

The core maths course is assessed by examination only. There are two examination papers, each 1 hour and 30 minutes in length.



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# Media Studies A Level

Board: Eduqas

Contact Mrs H Hackett [hhackett@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:hhackett@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## What is Media Studies?

This subject investigates many areas of the mass media – film, music, newspapers, advertising and image production, the internet and videogames.

Given that teenagers are widely knowledgeable about the mass media, you will already have great funds of information about this subject upon which to draw.

As an academic area of study, media studies is nowadays very widely taught at degree level and some of its concepts are shared with English or literary studies. Elsewhere the subject forms significant overlaps with design, economics, history, psychology and sociology.

## The course and assessment

Over the two year A Level course there is a combination of examined theory and analysis (70%) and creative coursework (30%)

The A Level course has three components, two of which are examined and one is a non-examined assessment.

### Component 1: Meanings and representations in the media

In this examined unit you will study a range of media forms in order to develop your ability to write about: how meanings are created; theories of representation; and the impact of industry context on the production and reception of media texts.

### Component 2: Media forms and products in depth

In this examined unit you will study the television industry, the magazine industry and explore the impact of the internet on the production, distribution and consumption of media texts.

### Component 3: Cross-media production

For the non-examined assessment component you will produce a cross-media pair of media products. For example, you might be asked to produce a magazine and a website promoting it.



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# Music A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9MU0

Contact Miss L Wass [lwass@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:lwass@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Why choose Music?

Music is a subject that combines practical work with academic study of different styles of music. If you have an interest in music and sing or play an instrument, what better way to improve your skills and deepen your understanding than to study music at A Level? Universities look favourably at students with musical skills and A Level music is a highly regarded A Level. The A Level music course will give you the opportunity to develop your performance and composition skills and improve your theoretical knowledge whilst gaining a qualification. It is possible to take both Music and Music Technology at A Level and each year several students opt to do so.

## The course

The course involves performing, composing, listening and analysing. You will improve your skills in performing, compose in different styles have access to Sibelius, Reason and Cubase software for composition work. In addition to this, you will analyse and listen to a wide variety of music to develop a more informed appreciation of how and why it was written and performed. You will gain an in-depth understanding of the history of classical and popular music.

## The course caters for musicians with different musical backgrounds and interests:

- For the performance unit you can choose to play either solo or ensemble pieces in any style.
- For the composition unit the exam board issues different briefs you can choose from which will be very broad and will allow for both classical and popular style pieces for instruments and/or voices. You also have a free composition choice.
- For the listening and analysis unit you also have to study a wide range of music covering both classical and popular.

## Course content and assessment

The course consists of three units:

### Unit 1: Performing

(Coursework; 30%; externally assessed; 60 marks)

- A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital. The audience must consist of your teacher and at least one other person.
- Performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, or improvising.
- The expected difficulty level at the end of Year 13 is Grade 7 although it is perfectly acceptable to perform pieces of Grade 6 standard and below. It is therefore expected that students are at least Grade 5 standard when they start the course in Year 12.

- The total performance time across all pieces must be a minimum of 8 minutes (and a maximum of 12 minutes).
- Final performances for submission must be recorded after the 1st March in Year 13 and all materials for assessment submitted to arrive by the 15th May.

### Unit 2: Composing

(Coursework; 30%; externally assessed; 60 marks)

- Total of two compositions lasting at least 6 minutes in total
  - Composition 1 must be from either a list of briefs related to the areas of study set by Edexcel, or a free composition, carrying 40 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 4 minutes in duration. Briefs relating to areas of study (specific briefs will be released on 1st September in the year of certification i.e. Year 13):
    - Vocal Music
    - Instrumental Music
    - Music for Film
    - Popular Music and Jazz
    - Fusion
    - New Directions
  - Composition 2 must be from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique, carrying 20 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 1 minute in duration. List of briefs assessing technique (specific briefs will be released on 1st April in the year of certification i.e. Year 13):
    - Bach chorale
    - Two-part counterpoint
    - Arrangement
    - Remix
- 



# Music A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9MU0

Contact Miss L Wass [lwass@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:lwass@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Unit 3: Appraising

(Exam; 40%; externally assessed; 100 marks)

There are 6 areas of study and 3 set works to be covered within each of these:

AREA OF STUDY	SET WORKS
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80: Movements 1, 2, 8</li><li>• Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge: Nos. 1, 3 and 5</li></ul>
Instrumental Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clara Wieck-Schumann: Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1</li><li>• Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique: Movement I</li></ul>
Music for Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Danny Elfman, Batman Returns (selection of scenes)</li><li>• Bernard Herrmann, Psycho (selection of scenes)</li></ul>
Popular Music and Jazz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courtney Pine, Back in the Day: Inner state (of mind), Lady Day and (John Coltrane), Love and affection</li><li>• Kate Bush, Hounds of Love: Cloudbusting, And dream of sheep, Under ice</li><li>• Beatles, Revolver: Eleanor Rigby, Here, there and everywhere, I want to tell you, Tomorrow never knows</li></ul>
Fusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Debussy, Estampes: Nos. 1 and 2 (Pagodes and La soirée dans Grenade)</li><li>• Anoushka Shankar: Breathing Under Water: Burn, Breathing Under Water, Easy</li></ul>
New Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kaija Saariaho: Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics</li><li>• Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, Ritual of Abduction</li></ul>

## The assessment for this unit consists of:

- One written paper of 2 hours.
- One audio CD with the extracts to accompany questions on the paper will be provided per student.
- This paper comprises two sections: A and B:

### Section A: Areas of study and dictation (50 marks)

- Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score provided).
- One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.

### Section B: Extended response

- Two essay questions – essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks)
- Essay one asks students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract.
- Essay two gives a choice of three questions that ask students to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.

## Where next?

### How useful is A Level Music?

Edexcel Advanced Level Music is an academic as well as a practical course. You will be able to gain entry to university to follow a wide range of subjects. An A Level in music indicates to a prospective university or employer that you have a broad range of skills, including creative, analytical and practical.

The A Level in music can lead to further study in music or performing arts in higher education or at HND level. Former Robert Smyth students have gone on to study music at The Royal College of Music, The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Birmingham Conservatoire, Leeds College of Music, Oxford University, Leeds University, The Institute for Contemporary Performance and The Academy of Contemporary Music in London. For those wishing to study for a music degree at university or conservatoire an A Level in music is normally required; Grade 8 practical on its own is very rarely sufficient.

A Level would also be useful for anyone considering music as a potential part-time career. Possible career pathways: professional performer or composer, instrumental or classroom teaching, arts and leisure management, music within the media, music publishing, music therapy.



# Music Technology A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9MT0

Contact Mr N Hughes [nhughes@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:nhughes@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## Why choose Music Technology?

If you are a musician interested in sound production, or a wannabe music producer looking to create polished and professional sounding mixes, then music technology A Level is for you. It is a highly creative course where only true musicians with a good ear and an ability to manage their own time succeed.

- You MUST have some keyboard skills (not 'qwerty').
- You will need an interest in all styles of music.
- A keen ear is also required for success on this course.

## The course

- Hands-on experience of using up-to-date equipment.
- Learning about sound recording/capture.
- MIDI theory, manipulation and possibilities.
- Synthesis theory and applications.
- Gaining a full and broad understanding of all popular music styles.
- Pushing the boundaries of composition and sound design.

## Course Content and Assessment

### Component 1 (20%) NEA

#### Recording

Using contemporary recording and production techniques, produce one recording, chosen from a list of 10 songs provided by Pearson which will consist of a minimum of five compulsory instruments and two additional instruments. The song and instrument list will be released by the exam board on 1st June in year 12.

### Component 2 (20%) NEA – Technology-based composition

Having learnt about audio manipulation and sampling techniques, here you put them to the test.

You get a choice of three composition briefs to choose from which will be released on 1st September of year 13. Each brief has a specific challenge and you have to fulfil all of the criteria whilst creating an original and engaging musical composition.

### Component 3 (25%) Exam Listening and Analysing

This externally assessed exam will test your knowledge of recording and production techniques and principles as well as demonstrating your knowledge of the development of recording and production technology.

This exam will be sat at a computer where you will be given a CD which will contain recordings of commercially available works. You will need to answer the questions in the examination booklet which will relate to these recordings. You will be wearing headphones to listen to the music.

There are 2 sections to the exam. Section A consists of smaller fact based questions on 4 unknown commercial recordings. Section B will consist of two essays on the final two recordings on the CD.

This exam lasts 90 minutes.

### Component 4 (35%) Exam Producing and Analysing

This exam is sat at a Digital Audio Workstation where you will also have to assemble tracks in audio and MIDI, edit tracks together and complete practical and written tasks. At the end you have to produce a final polished mix to be assessed as well as write an extended essay on a production idea, technique, mixing scenario or hardware/FX unit.

This exam lasts 2 hours and fifteen minutes with 10 minutes of setting up time.

## Where next?

There are the obvious links to the sound industry. This can be a stepping stone to a career in: sound engineering (studio and live), studio production, composing, music performing, sound design for theatre and film/TV, engineering, computer programming and more! Music technology is all about working to very important deadlines on your own. Students feel very proud and pleased when they meet these deadlines, knowing the work they have produced is to the best of their ability. This skill alone will benefit you at any stage of your life. Ex-RSA students have gone onto work in the music industry, set up their own recording studios and business, designed mixing desks for large manufacturers, had songs played on Radio 1 and toured the Far East and Europe.





# Physical Education A Level

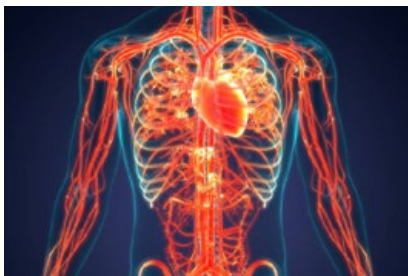
**Board:** OCR, Specification H555

Contact Mr M Scully [mscully@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:mscully@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

This course takes a multi-disciplinary approach, encouraging the development of different methods of enquiry drawn from a wide range of disciplines, with the focal point being the performer and the performance. The specification is based on the interactions between the theory and practice of physical education.

The content is divided into four components. Each component is further sub-divided into topic areas and the detailed content associated with those topics.



## Component 1:

**Physiological factors affecting performance (30% of A Level)**

- 1.1 Applied anatomy and physiology
- 1.2 Exercise physiology
- 1.3 Biomechanics.

## Component 2:

**Psychological factors affecting performance (20% of A Level)**

- 2.1 Skill acquisition
- 2.2 Sports psychology

## Component 3:

**Socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport (20% of A Level)**

- 3.1 Sport and Society
- 3.2 Contemporary issues in physical activity and sport

## Non Exam Assessment (NEA)

**(30% of A Level)**

Practical performances (15% of A Level - This NEA will consist of one activity taken from the approved list. Learners can be assessed in the role of performer or coach.)

**Evaluating and Analysing Performance for Improvement (EAPI) (15% of A Level)**

This NEA will consist of observing a live or recorded performance by a peer and then providing an oral response analysing and critically evaluating the performance.)

Acrobatics Gymnastics, Amateur Boxing, Association Football, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Blind Cricket, BMX (Racing only), Boccia, Camogie, Canoeing, Cricket, Cross Country Running, Cycling (Track or road cycling only), Dance, Diving (Platform diving), Equestrian, Figure Skating, Futsal, Gaelic football, Goal Ball, Golf, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey (Field), Hurling, Ice Hockey, Inline Roller Hockey, Kayaking, Lacrosse, Netball, Polybat, Powerchair football, Rock Climbing, Rowing, Rugby League, Rugby Union (sevens or fifteen-a-side), Sailing, Sculling, Skiing (on snow), Snowboarding, Squash, Swimming, Table Cricket, Table Tennis, Tennis, Triathlon, Trampoline, Volleyball, Water Polo, Wheelchair basketball, Wheelchair rugby, Windsurfing.

# Physics A Level

Board: OCR, Specification Physics B - Advancing Physics

Contact Mr M Cripwell [mcripwell@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:mcripwell@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

Physics is the most fundamental of all sciences. It is an ideal option for those who are curious about the Universe and how it works. Physics is central to the current technological revolution, repeatedly making the seemingly impossible possible. You will experience a mixture of theoretical and practical physics, with an emphasis on how ideas can be applied creatively and used to explain real life situations. It provides you with a grounding in classical physics as well as an introduction to the newer, more-radical theories of recent times.

The advancing physics course provides a distinctive structure within which you learn both about fundamental physical concepts and about physics in everyday and technological settings. A primary aim of the course is to show how physics is practised and used today. Equally important, however, is to show the usefulness of the subject, and to illustrate the kind of impact that discoveries in physics have had on the way people live.

## Course content and assessment

### 1. Development of practical skills

### 2. Foundations of Physics

### 3. Forces and motion

- Motion and forces
- Work, energy and power
- Materials
- Newton's laws and momentum

### 4. Electrons, waves and photons

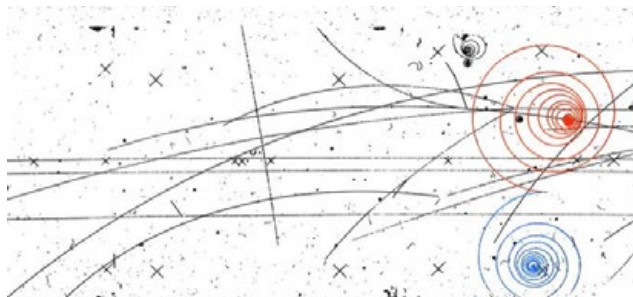
- Electrical circuits
- Waves
- Quantum physics

### 5. Newtonian world and astrophysics

- Thermal physics
- Circular motion and Oscillations
- Gravitational fields
- Astrophysics and Cosmology

### 6. Particles and medical physics

- Capacitors
- Electric fields and Electro magnetism
- Nuclear and particle physics
- Medical imaging



# Politics A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9PL0

Contact Mr G Luhrs [gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)



## The course

Politics is a subject to be studied if you have an interest in politics and the way we are governed. If you want to understand how parliament and the government work, or how politicians are elected, or what agendas political parties have on some of the hot political issues of the day, then this is the subject for you.

Politics has a profound influence on everyone's life as the government and politicians decide how much tax we pay, whether certain crimes are punished, whether the laws on immigration and abortion should be reformed, or even if we should go to war with another country.

Politics will deal with these current affairs and will turn you from being a passive member of society to an active political animal.

Politics is the subject for you if you like debate and discussion and you want to develop your own views, rather than accept the views of others.

During the two years we will study many different topics as separate areas, but you will discover that all areas of political life are interconnected, such as: political ideologies and current political ideas; electoral systems and voting behaviour; pressure groups and democracy; constitutions, citizen rights and the judges who guarantee them.

## Course content and assessment (exam only)

### Year 12: UK Politics/UK Government

Topics studied in Year 12 comprise:

- Political participation i.e. Democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems and voting behaviour and the media
- Core political ideas i.e. conservatism, liberalism and socialism
- UK government i.e. the constitution, Parliament, the Prime Minister and executive and relationships between institutions
- Non-core political ideas i.e. feminism.

→



## Year 13: Comparative Politics

Topics studied in Year 13 comprise:

- The US Constitution and federalism,
- US Congress
- The Presidency
- US Supreme Court
- Democracy and participation in the US
- Civil rights

## Revision and exam skills

In higher education almost all British establishments offer a variety of courses in politics, both as a single honours subject and in combination with other subjects (law, history, geography, economics and international relations). You will also be able to progress to vocational qualifications (at university) such as BTEC higher national certificates/diplomas in subjects such as public services, business or media (journalism).

Furthermore, a knowledge of government and politics is considered an advantage in occupations which involve the knowledge of the political process, e.g. management, public administration, civil service, secret service, broadcasting e.g. researching for current affairs programmes, policy research, publishing, journalism, the armed forces (officer level), public relations, managing campaigns of pressure groups/charities or even teaching!

## Where next?

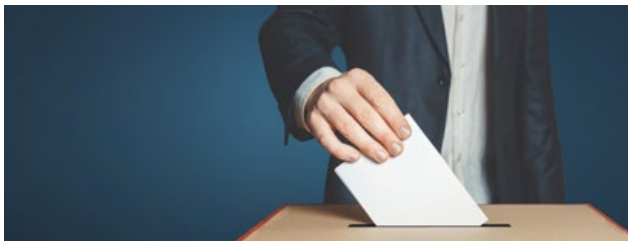
Former Robert Smyth students who studied politics have gone to university to study the following degrees:

### International Relations at University of London

"Politics has given me a better understanding of what's going on in the country regarding things like the credit crunch. It's also nice to be able to read a broadsheet and actually know what it is they're talking about! Overall A Level Politics increases your awareness of how decisions are made in countries and as a result enables you to form more informed and balanced opinions about politicians and the political system as a whole. It's an A Level that's more than just writing essays and getting grades, it's about developing skills and knowledge you'll use for the rest of your life!"

### Politics at Manchester Metropolitan University

"Politics was definitely my favourite subject at Sixth Form! It enabled me to get involved with many new opportunities such as MUNGA, 'Question Time' with our local MP and joining the 2024 general election campaign with a local candidate. Not only have I gained a lot of knowledge about British and American society but I have also gained many skills and built on others such as timed-essay writing which enabled me to be successful in my exams."



# Design Technology: Product Design A Level

Board: Eduqas

Contact Mr N Crook [ncrook@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:ncrook@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

A Level in Design and Technology aims to encourage students to be open to taking design risks, showing innovation and enterprise whilst considering their role as responsible designers and citizens. We want them to develop intellectual curiosity about the design and manufacture of products and their impact on daily life and the wider world.

Through studying this course it is our desire that they gain an insight into the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries and develop the capacity to think innovatively to meet the needs, wants and values of users and clients. Further to this they will need to develop knowledge and experience of real world contexts for design and technological activity as they pursue their own personal design briefs.

This will include having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of materials, components and processes associated with the creation of products that can be tested and evaluated in use and aim to have a positive environmental impact.

There is an increasing need to apply mathematics and scientific principles to the coursework and in preparation for exam questions so a good pass in these subjects at GCSE would be an advantage to students.

## Course content and assessment

### Component 1: Design and Technology in the 21st Century

Written examination: 3 hours, 50% of qualification

This written exam will be the culmination of 2 years study looking at topics such as designing and innovation, materials and components, industrial and commercial practice and human responsibility when designing. The subjects are aimed at preparing the students to be assertive contributors to a world that needs products that are designed with future generations in mind.

### Component 2: Design and make project

Non-exam assessment: approximately 80 hours,  
50% of qualification

This is a project of the students own choice that will be investigated, designed, developed, manufactured and rigorously tested. A formal portfolio will be presented to an external examiner during the spring term in their final year.



# Psychology A Level

Board: AQA, Specification 7182



Contact Mrs R Wilson [rwilson@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:rwilson@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## What is Psychology?

Psychology is the study of the mind, behaviour and experience. It considers what it is that makes us the person we are: our personality, intelligence and behaviour. During the course we consider the thought-provoking and, often controversial, theories of psychologists such as Skinner, Freud, Bowlby and Rogers. The course will cover a variety of topics, including some of the following:

- Why do we obey and conform?
- How do we define or classify abnormal behaviour?
- Why might eyewitness testimonies be inaccurate?
- Is behaviour genetically determined or learned?
- Are some people more likely than others to become depressed or addicted?
- How do we develop morality and self-awareness?
- Why do some people develop eating disorders?
- How do we develop gender behaviour?
- How does a child develop their thinking?

Because psychology underpins just about everything we do throughout our lives, it is both a fascinating and a demanding subject. However, the A Level course will take a more academic route towards an understanding of the various theoretical perspectives and the different methods of studying behaviour.

We examine many psychological concepts, theories and related research, in an attempt to find the best explanation for a particular kind of behaviour. Crucial to this process is the development of analysis and evaluation, providing support and criticism (either methodological or ethical), therefore presenting a balanced viewpoint.

## Course Content and Assessment

Teacher explanations are combined with a variety of other activities including

discussions, presentations, videos, paired problem solving and group work. Psychology is an ideal subject for the development of thinking skills, analysis and evaluation of theoretical research and construction of balanced arguments, substantiated by appropriate evidence. These skills can be transferred to other subjects and used throughout life.

### Year 12

- Social Influence: conformity, obedience and minority influence
- Cognitive psychology: memory, forgetting and eye witness testimony
- Developmental psychology: attachments in development.
- Research methods including basic maths
- Clinical Psychology and Mental Health: explanations and treatments of various disorders including depression, phobias and OCD
- Approaches: perspectives used by psychologists to explain human behaviour

### Year 13

- Biological psychology builds on the Approaches topic of year 12 and considers the brain and nervous system and the theory of localisation and lateralisation.
- Eating behaviour will consider biological and psychological explanations of anorexia nervosa and of obesity.
- Gender will look at explanations for gender development or cognition and development will look at the development of a child's cognitions.
- Issues: A synoptic section that revisits many of the issues common to all topics in psychology such as the extent to which behaviour is determined by nature and nurture.
- Addiction looks at risk factors in developing addictive behaviour and focuses on smoking and gambling addictions.

- Research methods and statistical analysis builds on the work covered in year 12 and introduces students to a variety of statistical tests designed to measure statistical significance.

All three examinations will be taken at the end of Year 13. All papers will be two hours in duration.

## Where next?

### Careers in Psychology

Psychology leads into a number of professions:

- Teaching
- Educational psychology
- Clinical psychology
- Occupational psychology
- Forensic or legal psychology
- Sports psychology
- Media and advertising
- Nursery or childcare
- Counselling

It is especially relevant to any professions that involve working with people (e.g. medicine, teaching, social work, personnel management, police etc.) or to anyone with a general interest in people and their behaviour.

A Level psychology is also accepted as an entry qualification to most professions (eg accountancy, law etc) as well as to Higher Education courses, which could eventually lead to pure (academic) or applied research.



# Sociology A Level

Board: AQA

Contact Mr R Webb [rwebb@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:rwebb@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

Sociology is the academic study of society, social relationships, and the institutions that shape human behaviour. It asks big questions about how society works, why inequalities exist, and how individuals and groups interact within different social contexts. From understanding the causes of crime to exploring the impact of education and family life, Sociology helps students develop a deeper awareness of the world around them.

If you've ever wondered why some people have more opportunities than others, how media influences our views, or what role religion plays in modern life, Sociology offers the tools to explore these issues critically and thoughtfully.

## Why study Sociology?

Sociology encourages students to think independently, question assumptions, and engage with contemporary social debates. It's ideal for students who enjoy discussion, analysis, and exploring different viewpoints. You'll learn to interpret data, evaluate theories, and understand the complexities of human behaviour in a rapidly changing world.

## Course content

The AQA A Level Sociology course is structured around key themes and topics that reflect real-world issues and current debates. Over two years, students will study:

### Year 12 Topics:

- Education: Investigate the role of education in society, differences in achievement by class, gender and ethnicity, and the impact of government policies.
- Families and Households: Explore changing family patterns, gender roles, childhood, and demographic trends such as birth and death rates.
- Research Methods: Learn how sociologists conduct research, including qualitative and quantitative methods, and how these are applied in real-life studies.

### Year 13 Topics:

- Beliefs in Society: Examine the role of religion, secularisation, and the relationship between belief systems and social change.
- Crime and Deviance: Analyse why people commit crimes, how society responds, and the influence of power, inequality, and social control.
- Theory and Methods: Develop a deeper understanding of sociological theories such as Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, and Postmodernism, and how they apply to different areas of society.

## Assessment

Assessment is entirely through written examinations at the end of Year 13. There are three exam papers, each worth 33.3% of the final grade:

- Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods – 2 hours
- Paper 2: Topics in Sociology (Families and Beliefs) – 2 hours
- Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods – 2 hours

Each paper includes a mix of short answer questions, extended writing, and essay-style responses. There is no coursework component.

## Skills developed

Studying Sociology helps students build a wide range of transferable skills, including:

- Critical thinking and analysis
- Independent research
- Essay writing and argument construction
- Data interpretation
- Understanding of diversity and social justice

These skills are highly valued by universities and employers alike.

## Future careers and progression

Sociology is a versatile subject that complements many other A Level choices, including Psychology, Politics, History, and English. It provides a strong foundation for university courses in:

- Sociology
- Criminology
- Social Policy
- Law
- Politics
- Psychology
- Education
- Media and Communication

## Career paths for Sociology graduates are diverse and include:

- Social Work and Youth Work
- Teaching and Education
- Law and Criminal Justice
- Journalism and Media
- Human Resources
- Public Relations
- Government and Civil Service
- Charity and NGO work
- Market Research and Data Analysis

Sociology is particularly suited to students who want to make a difference in society, understand the world more deeply, and pursue careers that involve working with people and communities.

# Spanish A Level

Board: AQA

Contact Miss G Lopez [glopez@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:glopez@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

We live in a multi-lingual, global society. Whether it is for pleasure, travel or opening job prospects, the knowledge of a language is a valuable skill in its own right, and an asset when combined with another specialism. French, German and Spanish are currently the languages most sought after by UK employers.

## The course

This course aims to:

- Build on the knowledge you gained at GCSE, furthering your languages skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing. You will become more fluent, independent and confident when interacting.
- Explore key issues in the context of a Spanish-speaking country which will inspire cultural curiosity. You will be able to develop your own views and express them in Spanish.
- Analyse Spanish literary and cinematographic work.
- Enable you to consolidate a range of general and language specific study and communication skills through research, group work, oral presentations, essay writing, use of ICT etc.

The emphasis in Year 12 is on developing your language proficiency through the study of a variety of themes rooted in Spanish-speaking countries. You will start by consolidating the foundations laid at GCSE during a carefully devised bridging programme. We then build on those skills gradually.

Given the nature of foreign language study, we work very hard to provide you with a variety of opportunities for foreign travel: study visits, work experience, trips to university, conferences for Sixth Formers and, when appropriate, theatre and cinema visits.

## Course content and assessment

In Year 12, the course will focus on the following themes:

Aspects of Hispanic society:	Artistic culture in the Hispanic world:
Modern and traditional values	Modern day idols
Cyberspace	Spanish regional identity
Equal rights	Cultural heritage or cultural landscape

In Year 13, you will carry on developing your languages skills and study the following themes

Multiculturalism in Hispanic society:	Aspects of political life in the Hispanic world:
Immigration	Today's youth, tomorrow's citizens
Racism	Monarchies, republics and dictatorships
Integration	Popular movements

Over the course of year 12 and 13, you will study a book and a film. You will also have the opportunity to pick your own area of interest and research it independently.

## Examination

The A Level examination content will cover the themes, book and film studied in Years 12 and 13. The exam will include:

Paper 1	Listening and reading tasks, translation into English and translation into Spanish.
Paper 2	Essays on the book and film studied.
Speaking	A discussion about your independent research project, and one of the sub-themes studied in class.

## What do you need to study Spanish at A Level?

You need at least a grade 5 at GCSE Spanish. You should also have a genuine interest in language and foreign culture, with a desire to communicate in Spanish as much as possible.

Time spent in a Spanish-speaking country is also invaluable and you are encouraged to spend some time abroad during Years 12 and 13.

## Why studying Spanish will be an advantage

There are many well-worn yet valid arguments why language study is important. Remember that many in your generation will not have taken a foreign language to GCSE, even fewer at A Level and you will have an advantage on the job market having studied languages.

'Working with languages' is no longer just about translating, teaching or being a travel representative! Employers from all sectors and university admissions tutors from all subject areas respect and value language qualifications, for both the skills and the personal qualities they represent. A post-16 language qualification could give you the edge!

## What can you do with languages at higher education

This may seem a long way off, but it is worth thinking about, even at this early stage. Language courses at university are varied and interesting. A language is a subject which you can study with almost anything to make an exciting and marketable combination, e.g. finance, law, media, IT, engineering, business studies, English etc.



# Textile Design A Level

**Board:** AQA, Specification 7204  
(GCE Art & Design Textile Option)

Contact Mrs S Mayer [smayer@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:smayer@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

The course has been designed to:

- Concentrate and develop the topics and skills you want to:
  - Project themes can be tailored to personal interests very easily.
  - Students create textile design under the art and design specification, which includes fashion design, textile art, costume design or interior design.
- Give you a variety of new skills in techniques such as: fabric manipulation, heating and burning, felt making, printing, etc. Also, to enhance existing skills such as embroidery and garment construction, amongst many others.
- Reward hard-working students, as entries are made into external competitions each year.
- Give students the opportunity to work with visiting artists and to prepare for the next

stage of their education, such as Foundation in Art Course or fashion degree.

- Give students regular feedback and assessment in the form of tutorials.

## Course content and assessment

Two components of work will be produced over the two-year course.

### Year 12

Skill development: A “portfolio” of work, made up of several small projects. This will include a summer project, skill development workshops and a project to put all the skills into practice. Component 1 will begin before the end of year 12.

### Year 13

Component 1: The “Personal Investigation” gives students the opportunity to investigate and respond in-depth to a topic of their personal choice.

Component 2: An exam project set by the

exam board, with a final piece is produced under exam conditions.

Your work will be assessed with four objectives, which assess your ability to:

- Develop ideas through sustained investigations.
- Experiment with materials, media and techniques.
- Record observations and insights into thoughts and ideas.
- Demonstrate critical and analytical understanding, review and refine work and support practical work with the correct use of language.
- Present a personal project, which is informed and meaningful.

This enjoyable but demanding course gives students a broad variety of opportunities and prepares you for the next stage in creative education.

# Extended Project

Board: OCR, specification H857

Contact Mr G Luhrs [gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk](mailto:gluhrs@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk)

## The course

The Extended Project is an a Level 3 qualification which can be taken as an extra course in addition to the other subjects you are doing in Year 13. You have the freedom to choose the theme for your project; you might want to do something linked to your current subjects or what you hope to study at university, or simply something you are interested in.

Universities are keen on students who have the Extended Project qualification because it develops the sort of skills needed in higher education. It is worth the same UCAS points as an AS level course, but not all universities accept the points towards a conditional offer they may make you.

## The Extended Project is designed to help you:

- Develop and improve your own learning and performance as a critical, reflective and independent learner
- Develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Extend your skills in time management, planning, research, critical thinking, evaluation and presentation
- Develop and apply skills creatively, demonstrating initiative and enterprise.

## Assessment

You have a choice over the format of your project; many students choose to write a 5000 word dissertation, however you could create an artefact, a design or a performance, all of which will need to include 1500 words about your work. On completion of the main piece of work, you will make a presentation to an audience that includes your supervisor. You will also have to keep a clear and detailed record of your planning and progress throughout the project. This, along with the project and the presentation, make up the completed work for assessment.

Assessment is more focused on the process than the information that is included in the final submission. You will be assessed in four different areas:

- **Managing:** understand and undertake an active role in how the project is organised
- **Using resources:** be able to plan and carry out independent research
- **Developing and realising:** plan, organise, research and develop a project to progress it to a conclusion and evaluate the outcome
- **Reviewing:** use relevant techniques, work with others (including your supervisor) and use problem-solving and management techniques.

## Entry requirements

You require good time management skills, a commitment to work hard and meet deadlines and, above all, the ability to work independently. You will be expected to spend about 120 hours (five hours per week) completing your project by the deadline in March of Year 13. During the year you will be expected to attend a number of lessons and seminars as well as a series of meetings with a teacher who will supervise your project.

Towards the end of Year 12 students will have the opportunity to apply to take the course. Acceptance will depend on whether you have demonstrated, during your Year 12 studies, that you are likely to make a success of the project.



# Guidance notes for Sixth Form entry

All A Level courses are linear, so external assessment of your knowledge and understanding of the whole course takes place at the end of two years. However, there will be internal assessments through Years 12 and 13 to ensure you are achieving at the appropriate level.

- 1 The Sixth Form courses we intend to offer from September 2026 are detailed in this booklet. You will study 3 or 4 courses depending on your overall performance at GCSE – see entry requirements on page 11.
- 2 Most students will continue with 3 subjects into Year 13.
- 3 Any course in each year may not run if the group size is too small. A course that is significantly over-subscribed will have its group size limited; this may mean that some of you do not gain entry to one of your first choices. In either of these cases you will be contacted as soon as possible for further advice.

Please note that in trying to meet all needs we may not always offer the standard nine hours per fortnight of contact time.

## 4 Choice Procedure Summary

### October - December

- Information distributed introducing A Level courses

### January

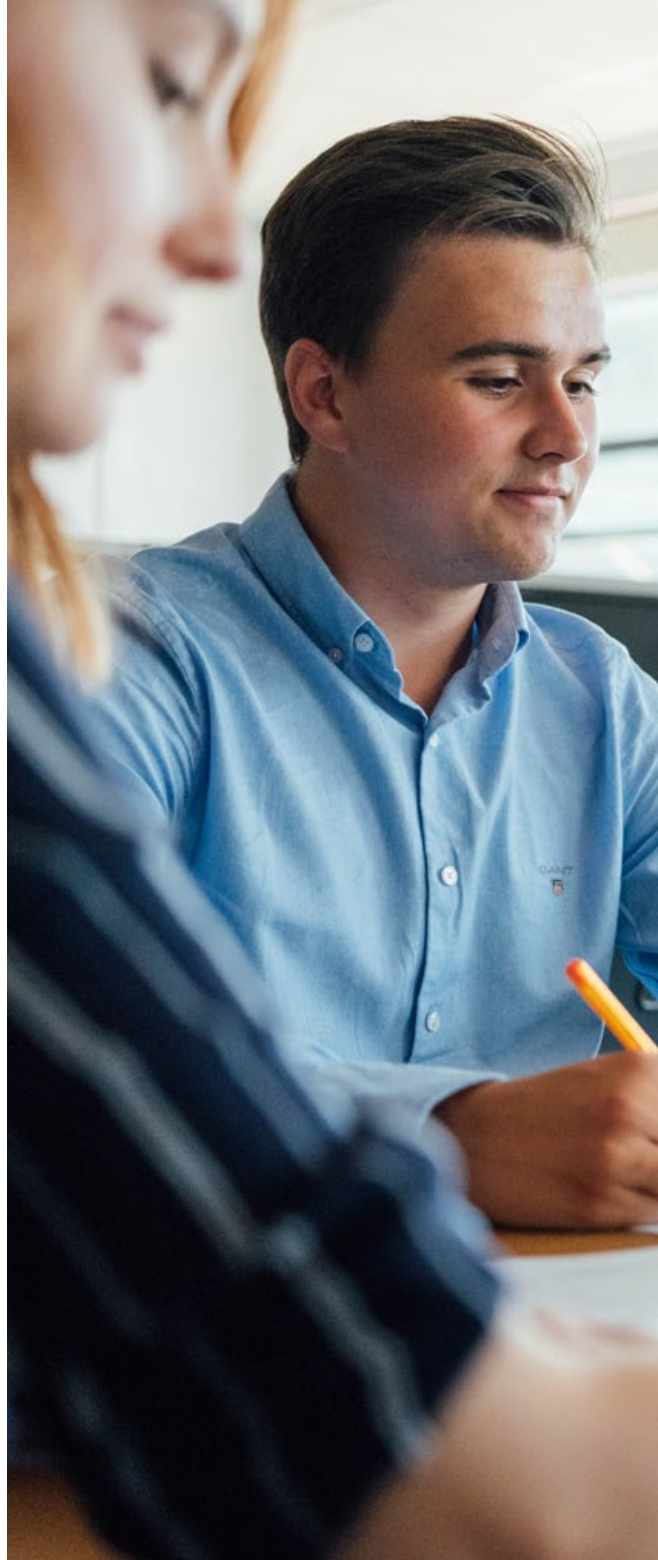
- Students complete initial choices form

### February - April

- Individual meetings with senior staff
- Final choices made
- Sixth Form acceptance letters issued

### August

- GCSE results published
- Registration day





## Sixth Form entry requirements

In order to gain entry into Robert Smyth Academy Sixth Form you will need a minimum of 40 points, including a grade 4 in English and maths, from your best eight GCSEs. Students who want to study four A Levels should have 56 points or above from their best 8 GCSEs (average grade 7).

Your current achievement grades will give you a good indication of where you are and what you will need to improve on to reach your post-16 goal.



# Q&A



## **Q Will all the courses in this booklet take place?**

Courses may not run if the group size is too small. A course that is significantly over-subscribed will have its group size limited; this may mean that some of you do not gain entry to one of your first choices. In either of these cases, you will be contacted as soon as possible for further advice.

## **Q Is it possible to select two courses from the same option block?**

If you apply before 31st January we will use your choices – along with those of other students – to construct option blocks, which means the vast majority of students will be able to take their chosen combination of courses. Late applications can be made but, as the blocks will be fixed after that point, there will be some restrictions on choices.

## **Q When will I have to make my final choices?**

All places are provisional until registration day following the publication of GCSE results in August.

## **Q Will the Head of Sixth Form meet applicants?**

We aim to meet all applicants to discuss their choices after they have submitted their application. The majority of these meetings happen face-to-face or online via a Teams meeting. These take place between February and April.

## **Q Is it possible to take four A Level subjects?**

Students are able to opt for four A Level courses, subject to demonstrating the academic capacity to manage the additional demands involved. The suitability of opting for an additional A Level course will be discussed in your meeting.

## **Q How many lessons per subject will I have?**

Our standard time allocation is nine hours per fortnight (we operate a two-week timetable). In trying to meet all needs, we may not always offer nine periods per week in every subject.

## **Q How often will my parents be informed of my progress?**

Twice a year staff will produce an assessment of students' work to date, and this will generate a student profile. This contains information about how students

are progressing in terms of their attitude to learning and a Current Assessment Grade (CA Grade). These sheets can help to track how students are progressing. Student profiles will be available to parents via the MyChildAtSchool platform to allow discussion of progress and to explore how to address any concerns that may have been raised. Tutors will also discuss these grades with students and help set targets for the coming term.

## **Q Are Sixth Form students allowed to leave during the day?**

Students must remain on-site for the whole of the morning session, from 8.45 am until 1.40 pm. We believe that structured study periods are beneficial to students. If assessment feedback raises any concerns, students will be required to stay on-site for the whole day. At lunchtime, students are free to leave the site if they do not have an afternoon lesson. Students without an afternoon lesson are welcome to remain on site to study, although some use the flexible afternoon session to arrange work experience, volunteering or study at home.

## **Q Can I drive my car to school?**

Students are welcome to drive to school and many choose to do so. As there is no on-site parking for students,





we ask that they are considerate of our neighbours when parking near the Academy.

**Q Is it possible to use my own laptop on the internal network?**

Wi-Fi is available across our site and this provides access to the internet and students' Microsoft accounts. Students' own smartphones, tablets and laptops can be used, although we cannot accept liability for these.

**Q What ICT facilities are available to me when I'm not in lessons? How will I access the ICT facilities?**

There are computers made available for student use throughout the day. The main suite for Sixth Form students is located upstairs in the Sixth Form Centre. Additional computers are downstairs in the Sixth Form Centre. Login details for the system will be provided by tutors at the start of Year 12.

All students are given an Office 365 account, which includes the opportunity to install Microsoft Office software on a home computer. Students are also given an Academy email address. Site-wide WiFi provides internet access on students' own devices including smartphones and laptops.

**Q Who do I go to if I have a problem?**

Students have several points of contact in the Academy. Our Sixth Form Administrator and Student Services staff. Student Services can be approached regarding attendance, the bursary and other administrative queries. Form tutors are in daily contact with students and are often the first point of contact in the event of queries. We also have Heads of Year and a Head of Sixth Form, and a Sixth Form Administrator all of whom are available when necessary for students.

**Q Are there any career advice/ university information days?**

Our daily tutoring and weekly assembly programme offers guidance on post-18 planning including university courses, apprenticeships and work. We arrange workshops and visiting speakers for each of these pathways. University visits are also arranged as part of the university preparation process.

**Q What happens if I am unhappy with my subject choices after a short period of time?**

In the first few weeks of term it is usually possible to switch courses, subject to meeting the entry requirements and provided the course has capacity.

**Q What are the Russell Group of Universities?**

The Russell Group is an organisation of Oxford, Cambridge, the University of Birmingham, the University of Bristol, Cardiff University, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, Imperial College London, King's College London, the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool, the London School of Economics & Political Science, the University of Manchester, Newcastle University, The University of Nottingham, Queen's University Belfast, the University of Sheffield, the University of Southampton, University College London and the University of Warwick.

The aims and objectives of the Russell Group are to promote the interests of Universities in which teaching and learning are undertaken within a culture of research excellence and to identify and disseminate new thinking and ideas about the organisation and management of such institutions.

[www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk)

# How to find us

“ My son has worked so hard with your backing and support. He has had the benefit of dedicated and expert teaching. You have understood him not only academically, but also holistically.”

**Parental feedback**





“ We offer academic excellence and personal development within a wide variety of subjects and a vast array of extra-curricular opportunities.”

Mr G Luhrs  
Head of Sixth Form



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