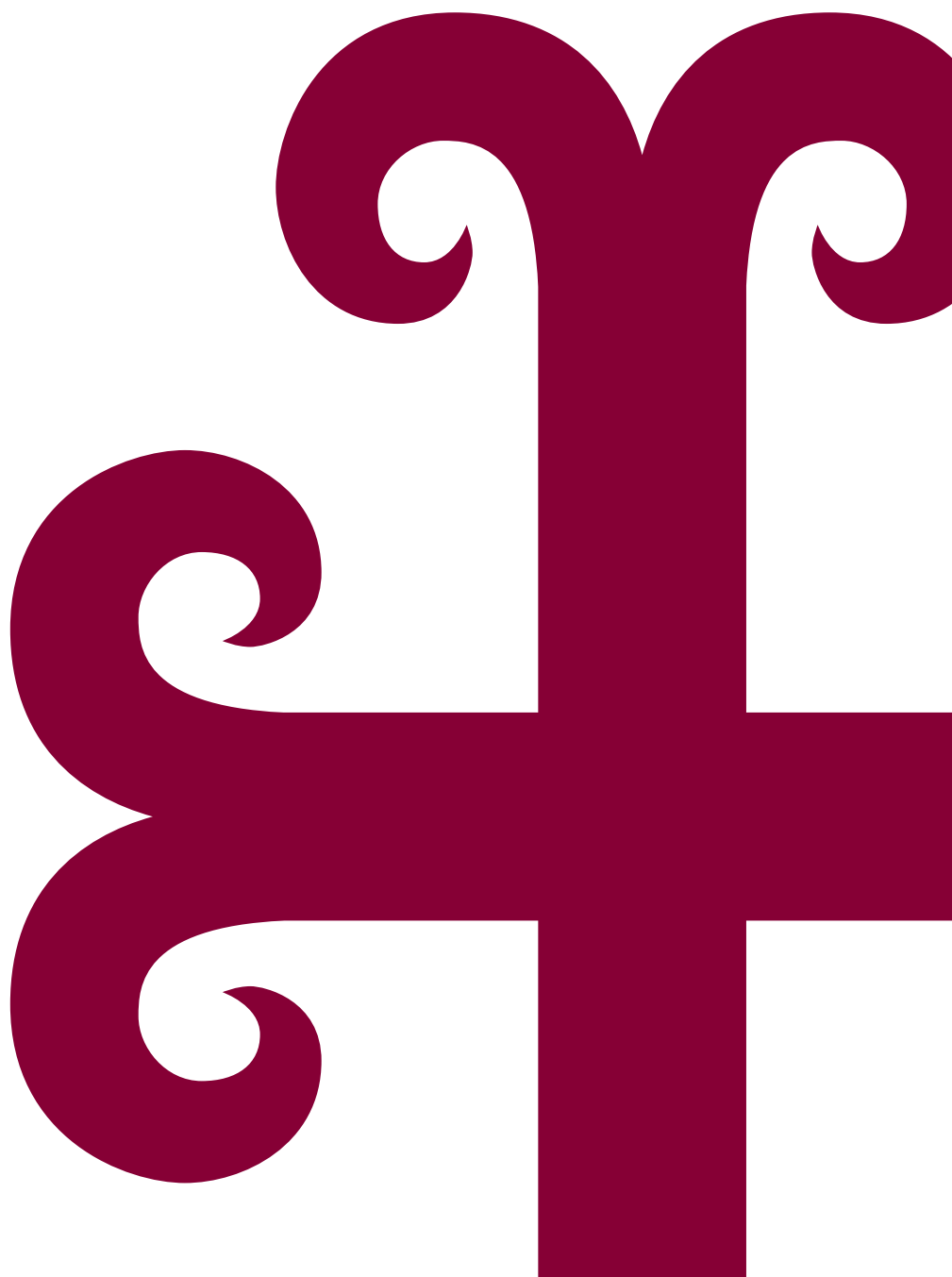


 DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

SIXTH FORM

2023-24





“ THROUGHOUT MY FIVE YEARS AT DOWNSIDE, I HAVE BEEN GIVEN MANY OPPORTUNITIES WITH BOTH THE CO-CURRICULAR AND ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL. I AM VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT SPORT, SO BEING APPOINTED CO-CAPTAIN OF THE 1ST XI HOCKEY TEAM HAS HELPED ME TO DEVELOP MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND HAS ENABLED ME TO ENCOURAGE YOUNGER PUPILS TO BE AS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SPORT AS I AM. MUSIC IS CENTRAL WITHIN THE SCHOOL, I LOVE SINGING, AND WITH THE MANY CHOIRS ON OFFER, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SING WITHIN A COMMUNITY AND CREATE STRONG FRIENDSHIPS.

ANNA-HEAD OF SCHOOL 2022-23

CONTENTS

WELCOME	4
THE CURRICULUM	6
SIXTH FORM COURSES	8
Art	8
Biology	8
Business Studies / BTEC in Enterprise & Entrepreneurship	10
Chemistry	11
Classics (Latin, Classical Greek)	11
Computer Science	12
Design Technology	13
Drama & Theatre	13
Economics	13
English Literature	14
Geography	15
History	15
History of Art	16
Mathematics	18
Further Mathematics	18
Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)	18
Music	19
Physics	20
Physical Education	20
BTEC in Sport	21
Psychology	21
Religious Studies	22
GENERAL RELIGIOUS STUDIES	23
THE EPQ	24
LEARNING SUPPORT & EAL	25
CO-CURRICULUM	26
MENTORING, LEADERSHIP & SERVICE	28
ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & SCHOLARSHIPS	30
PSHEE	31
UNIVERSITY	31
CAREERS	32
PUPIL PERSPECTIVE	33
ALUMNI NETWORK	34

Please note that some courses may not proceed if there is not enough interest.

WELCOME

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE START OF THE SIXTH FORM IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING POINTS IN YOUR EDUCATION; IT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT IT IS YOU WHO DECIDE WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO STUDY, THE FIRST TIME THAT YOU REALLY HAVE CONTROL OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

As you embark on your Sixth Form studies, you will also notice a shift in the teacher-pupil relationship, with lessons being much more of a collaborative effort between teachers and pupils, where your voice counts that much more. With these changes come greater responsibilities, of course, particularly in terms of developing your independence where study is concerned; you have to learn to manage your time and work effectively and to seek out opportunities to deepen and broaden your academic knowledge and skills. You are, of course, fully supported in developing the skills you need for success in the Sixth Form and beyond.

The Sixth Form PSHEE programme begins in the Lower Sixth with sessions on study skills that will help you develop learning habits that will be essential both in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education. You will also be assigned to one of a team of specialist and experienced Sixth Form tutors who will help you avoid the potential pitfalls that come with greater independence and who will also, in conjunction with the Head of Careers and myself, provide guidance and advice in choosing, and preparing for, the next stage of your education.

Outside the academic curriculum, there are many opportunities afforded to you at Downside to develop your interests and transferable skills. The PSHEE programme is focused on your life after leaving school, with modules on topics ranging from the aforementioned study skills to making pastry, to conflict avoidance, to managing your finances; the content of this programme is under constant review, and feedback from pupils is always welcome – it is, after all, your programme. The Sixth Form School Council is an ideal way to have your voice heard, and represents one of the many leadership opportunities available in the Sixth Form at Downside. Whether as an NCO in the CCF, a school or house prefect, a Lectio leader, a captain of a sports team or member of the School Council, the Sixth Form is an opportunity for you to help shape the School for you and for the future. The Stewardship of Gifts is an important part of our Benedictine ethos at Downside and underpins our work inside and outside the classroom; by exploiting the wealth of opportunities on offer, you will ensure that your own gifts are nurtured and that you are also helping to cultivate those of others too.

I very much look forward to welcoming you into the Sixth Form at Downside.

RICHARD RAWLINS
Head of Sixth Form



THE CURRICULUM

THE CHOICE OF SUBJECTS IN THE SIXTH FORM OFFERS OUR PUPILS THE CHANCE TO DETERMINE THE COURSE OF THEIR INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AT AN AGE WHEN THEY ARE MOST RECEPTIVE TO NEW IDEAS AND SKILLS, AND AT THEIR MOST ENERGETIC IN THEIR CREATIVE RESPONSE TO THEM.

For most people, their Sixth Form subjects will influence the direction they will take at university and what they choose to do beyond that. Sixth Form study is both challenging and intense, but it offers an exciting opportunity to study a subject in genuine depth; for all of these reasons, it is obvious that making the right choice of subjects to study is important.

Things to note:

- We recommend that pupils applying for the most competitive courses (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry and Engineering) complete an EPQ
- Aspiring medics should study Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics or Physics

- Pupils wishing to study Engineering, Mathematics and some Economics courses at university should study Further Mathematics
- Pupils wishing to study Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and who are considering a science degree, should study Mathematics
- Further advice can be sought from subject teachers, tutors and, in particular, the Head of Sixth Form
- Pupils whose first language is not English may be able to sit an A level in their first language if it is available. This will be taken as an extra subject and should not be one of their main three A levels
- Pupils who are unsure of their three strongest subjects can begin with four subjects in the Lower Sixth and decide upon their main three subjects by the end of the Lower Sixth, as long as the four subjects fit in with the option blocks. Pupils will be asked to rank their options and priority will be given to the top three ranked subjects.

We run a Study Skills programme for Lower Sixth pupils as part of PSHEE to help develop key independent learning skills. This will be particularly useful for pupils in their A level studies and for those pupils undertaking an EPQ.

“**DOWNSIDE IS GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR MY UNIVERSITY COURSE IN MEDICINE THROUGH FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM CHOICES AND SUPPORT FROM INSPIRING TEACHERS.**

SIXTH FORM SCHOLAR, ASPIRING MEDIC



SIXTH FORM COURSES

ART

Examining Board OCR
Subject Entry Code H601 Art and Design: Fine Art

Entry requirements

It is normally expected that pupils embarking on an Advanced GCE course in Art will have a high level of interest and motivation in this subject. They should have achieved at least a grade 6 at GCSE. Pupils entering the Lower Sixth Form from outside Downside should present a portfolio containing both sketchbook work and individual larger pieces. This may be done digitally if the pupil is unable to present actual work.

Course

The first phase of the course will involve the pupils exploring a range of drawing, painting, print, film and sculpture, with an emphasis on observation and building their creative skills. There will be weekly life drawing class which pupils are expected to attend. They will also research a range of related artists, developing their critical and contextual analysis. During the course, pupils will take part in visits to galleries locally and in London, and there will be the opportunity for an overseas study tour.

Assessment

Incorporates two major components:

Component 1 (60%):

A portfolio of practical work showing the pupils personal response to their chosen starting point which they will begin in the Summer Term of Lower Sixth, and a related study of 1,000 words minimum.

Component 2 (40%):

OCR externally set task which is released 1st February and consists of a choice of seven themes to be used as starting

points. Pupils select one starting point and produce preparatory studies. They have 15 hours to produce a final outcome in exam conditions. The date and time of the exam is set by the Art Department.

Submissions to all components above must include supporting studies and evidence of the pupil's personal development and outcome in response to their chosen themes.

Careers

Essential for careers in:

Visual Effects Art
Fashion Design
Architecture
Illustration
Animation
Graphic Design
Interior Design
Set Design for Theatre, TV or Film
Costume Design
Concept Art

Useful for careers in:

Film production
Art Gallery Curation
Conservation
Art Valuation
Publishing
Photography
Web Design
App Design
Fashion Editing
Landscape Design

BIOLOGY

Examining Board AQA
Subject Entry Code 7402 Biology

Entry requirements

Any pupil wishing to study Biology at A level is expected to have achieved at least a grade 7 in both Biology and Mathematics at GCSE. Biology is a very adaptable A level and works well with most other subjects. Pupils with an interest in the latest genetic procedures as well as the more traditional physiology aspects of the subject are well catered for by the course we follow.



Assessment

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Topics 1-4 2 hours (35%)

Paper 2: Topics 5-8 2 hours (35%)

Paper 3: Topics 1-8 and practical skills 2 hours (30%)

Course

A level Biology provides a fascinating introduction to many aspects of this modern science. It is designed and taught to stimulate the pupils and create a lifelong interest in the subject. Practical work is undertaken throughout the course, and pupils also participate in a residential field trip. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a 'Pass'.

Topics:

- Biological molecules
- Cells
- Organisms exchange substances with their environment

- Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
- Energy transfers in and between organisms
- Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- The control of gene expression

Careers

Biology is a very well-regarded subject by universities, and lends itself to undergraduate study in Science, Medicine, Veterinary, Engineering and Law. It is an excellent preparation for university entrance in subjects such as Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, and it is an essential requirement for the majority of Medical, Dental and Veterinary Science courses. The analytical, practical and problem-solving skills gained are also highly desirable in many fields such as Business, Accountancy and Law, amongst others.

PLEASE NOTE: Either the Business Studies A level OR the BTEC in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship will be taught, depending on numbers opting for each course. We will not be able to offer both courses in any given year.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Examining Board Edexcel
Subject Entry Code 9BS0

Entry requirements

Pupils do not require GCSE Business, but at least a level 4 in English and a level 5 in mathematics at GCSE is required. This course contains a significant level of numeracy and calculation style questions.

Assessment

Paper 1: Marketing, People and Global Business

2 hours 100 marks (35%)

Paper 2: Business Activities, Decisions and Strategy

2 hours 100 marks (35%)

Paper 3: Investigating Business in a Competitive Environment

2 hours 100 marks (35%)

Course

The course comprises the following four sub-themes:

Theme 1 Marketing and People

Meeting customer needs
The Market
Marketing Mix and Strategy
Managing People
Entrepreneurs

Theme 2 Managing Business Activities

Raising finance
Financial planning
Managing finance
Resource management
External influences

Theme 3 Business Decisions and Strategy

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

Theme 4 Global Business

Globalisation
Global markets and business expansion
Global marketing
Global industries and companies

The Edexcel A level in Business encourages learners to:

- develop an enthusiasm for studying business
- gain an holistic understanding of business in a range of contexts
- develop a critical understanding of organisations and their ability to meet society's needs and wants
- understand that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives
- generate enterprising and creative approaches to business opportunities, problems and issues
- be aware of the ethical dilemmas and responsibilities faced by organisations and individuals
- acquire a range of relevant business and generic skills, including decision
- making, problem solving, the challenging of assumptions and critical analysis
- apply numerical skills in a range of business contexts.

This A level specification introduces learners to the dynamic business environment and the importance of entrepreneurial activity in creating business opportunities and sustaining business growth. Learners will have the opportunity to develop a wide range of essential skills required for higher education and employment.

The focus of the specification is to nurture an enthusiasm for studying business using contemporary contexts, allowing learners to develop an appreciation of the strategic, complex and inter-related nature of business issues from a local to global perspective.

Careers

Business combines well with most subjects and prepares pupils for a range of careers including Banking, Insurance, Accountancy, Government Administration, Marketing, Management and Commerce.

BTEC NATIONAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED CERTIFICATE IN ENTERPRISE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Examining Board Pearson
Subject Entry Code 601/7414/6 BTEC Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

Entry requirements

The course assumes no prior knowledge of business or business-related subjects. Candidates should have achieved a minimum of a grade 4 in both Mathematics and English.

Specification

3 Mandatory Units:

- Unit 1 Enterprise and entrepreneurs
- Unit 2 Developing a marketing campaign
- Unit 3 Personal and business finance

And 1 Optional Unit from:

- Unit 7 Social enterprise
- Unit 8 Enterprise and intrapreneurship in practice

Assessment

Four units, two are externally assessed and two are internally assessed. Three units are mandatory, and a further unit is optional. Four units in total are needed to complete the course. Evidence for each unit is provided in different formats.

Unit 1: Enterprise and entrepreneurs (Internal Coursework)

- A written report on a successful local enterprise and entrepreneur
- A presentation outlining a possible local enterprise opportunity

Unit 2: Developing a marketing campaign (External – Pre-Release Case Scenario – Controlled Assessment)

- Learners to develop a rationale and develop a plan for a marketing campaign for a given product under controlled conditions.

Unit 3: Personal and business finance (External – 2 Hour Written Examination)

- The examination will assess both personal finance, and business finance and accounting.

Optional Units (pick 1)

- Unit 7: Social enterprise (Internal – Coursework)
- Unit 8: Enterprise and intrapreneurship in practice (Internal – Coursework)

Careers

Business combines well with most subjects and prepares pupils for a range of careers including Banking, Insurance, Accountancy, Government Administration, Marketing, Management and Commerce.

CHEMISTRY

Examining Board AQA
Subject Entry Code 7405 Chemistry

Entry requirements

Any pupil wishing to study Chemistry at A level is expected to have achieved at least a grade 7 in both Chemistry and Mathematics at GCSE. We advise pupils to study A level Mathematics as they will find the mathematics component of the course much easier if they are doing so.

Assessment

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Physical and Inorganic Chemistry 2 hours (35%)

Paper 2: Physical and Organic Chemistry 2 hours (35%)

Paper 3: Physical, Inorganic and Organic Chemistry 2 hours (30%)

Course

Practical skills are assessed in all three papers. Practical work is undertaken throughout the course. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a 'Pass'.

Careers

A level Chemistry is a challenging course highly respected by universities and employers. It is an excellent preparation for university entrance in subjects such as Chemistry, Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Physics, and Engineering, and it is an essential requirement for the majority of Medical, Dental and Veterinary Science courses. The analytical, practical and problem-solving skills gained are also highly desirable in many fields such as Business, Accountancy and Law, amongst others.

CLASSICS (LATIN, CLASSICAL GREEK)

Examining Board OCR
Subject Entry Code H443 Latin
H444 Classical Greek

Entry requirements

Pupils are expected to have achieved at least the equivalent of a GCSE grade 6 in the language concerned before embarking upon this course. They should also have a lively interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of the classical world as the common heritage of European civilisation.

Assessment

A level candidates are assessed on four units:

1. Unseen Translation (33%)
2. Prose Composition or Comprehension (17%)
3. Prose Authors (25%)
4. Verse Authors (25%)

Course

The course is based on the original writings of classical authors in Latin and Greek, respectively. Core authors for Latin are Caesar, Pliny, Ovid, Cicero, Tacitus, Virgil, and Seneca. Core authors for Greek are Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, Herodotus, Homer, Lysias, Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. A selected portion from the works of two of the core authors (one verse and one prose) is studied in the original Latin / Greek as 'set text'.

Careers

Studying Latin and/or Classical Greek is valuable preparation for a wide range of university courses in humanities, natural sciences, theology, medicine, economics and law. It is also useful for many careers. Studying these languages gives pupils an opportunity to master a system of challenging yet manageable proportions, and to understand how languages function. Studying their literature provides insights into many essential characteristics of modern thought. In addition, a knowledge of Latin or Classical Greek is a proven route to more articulate use of the languages of today by all who wish to acquire the highest skills of expression and persuasion.

Essential for careers in: Classical Language teaching
Translating

Desirable for careers in: Library and Museum work
Archaeology and Historical Research
Security & Intelligence Services
Diplomatic Service
Law
Medicine, Veterinary
Medicine, Dentistry

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Examining Board AQA
Subject Entry Code 7517 Computer Science

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for the course as everything will be taught from first principles. The ability to think logically, apply mathematics to a situation and describe how things work are all advantageous when studying Computer Science.

Assessment

Paper 1: Computer Systems

Combined written and programming examination: 2 hours and 30 minutes (40%)

Paper 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Written examination: 2 hours and 30 minutes (40%)

Programming project

Analyse a real-world problem, to design and implement a computerised solution which must be tested and evaluated (20%)

Course

The A level course focusses on the key fundamentals of Computing, including: Programming; Data Structures; Algorithms; Data Representation; Computer Systems; Organisation and Architecture; Communication and Networking; Databases and Functional Programming. The course also covers topical issues such as Big Data and the Consequences of Using Computing. Finally, the course teaches pupils a systematic approach to problem-solving.

Programming is a key element of the course and features in both Paper 1 and the project. Pupils will primarily learn to programme in VB. Net (both procedural and object oriented) and will also gain experience in Haskell and SQL.

Careers

As well as programming, Computer Science teaches many transferable skills including planning, problem-solving, critical thinking and use of logic. Many careers benefit from these skills, even if they do not fully utilise all of the content that may be covered. Pupils thinking of being a programmer, hardware engineer or software engineer will learn the initial skills they need to begin their journey. This course also serves as an excellent springboard to the Degree level Computer Science.

Computing Careers are wide and varied. They include Programmers, Web Designers, Artificial Intelligence Specialists, Social Media Experts, Cybersecurity Experts, App Designers, Games Designers, Hardware Engineers, Database Managers, Network Engineers, Technicians and many more.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Examining Board AQA
Subject Entry Code 7552 Design and Technology: Product Design

Entry requirements

It is expected that those pupils wishing to study the subject should have either passed Design and Technology GCSE at grade 7 or above, or have achieved at least a grade 7 in Art and Design.

Assessment

1. Technical Principles (30%)

Candidates sit a two hour and 30 minute written examination, answering a mixture of short answer, multiple choice and extended response questions. Candidates will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of designing and making principles, technical principles and specialist knowledge.

2. Designing and Making Principles (20%)

This is a one hour and 30 minute written paper. Section A of the paper focuses on a product analysis, whilst Section B tests the candidates' knowledge and understanding of commercial manufacture.

Non Examined Assessment (NEA) (50%)

Candidates undertake a substantial design and make project task and produce a final prototype. The context of the task will be determined by the pupil.

Careers

The study of Design Technology (Product Design) is excellent preparation for a range of Design Technology undergraduate courses. Careers for people with Design and Technology include: Product Designer, Architect, Software Engineer, Landscape Designer, Structural Engineer, Material Scientist, or even the next Jonathan Ive or James Dyson.

DRAMA & THEATRE

Examining Board PEARSON EDEXCEL
Subject Entry Code 9DR0

Entry requirements

Pupils are expected to have attained a grade 6 or higher in both English Language and English Literature at GCSE (or at least a grade B in CIE IGCSE English Language First Language and English Literature).

Assessment

Component 1: Devising

Devise an original performance piece using one key extract of a text and one practitioner
Portfolio of evidence
Non-examined assessment (40%)

Component 2: Text in Performance

A group performance/ design realisation of one key extract of a text

A monologue or duologue performance/ design realisation from one key extract of a different text
Non-examined assessment (20%)

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

Live theatre evaluation
Page to Stage: Realising a performance text from a studied play
Interpreting a Performance Text: an extended response demonstrating a reimagined production concept of a second set text
Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes (40%)

Course

The aims of this course allow pupils to take a practical approach to all elements of drama and theatre making whilst putting literary drama analysis in historical and social context and encourage pupils to:

- Read widely and independently both set texts and others that they have selected for themselves as well as context and practitioner based reading
- Engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of representing them
- Develop and effectively apply their knowledge of drama analysis and evaluation in writing and through performance
- Develop the valuable transferable cognitive skills of problem solving; critical thinking; systems thinking and ICT literacy
- Develop the valuable transferable interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of communication, adaptability, self-management, and collaboration
- Explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them.

Careers

This course develops critical thinking and analytical skills alongside performance skills and therefore would be beneficial for a range of careers in which performance (from the dramatic to the political to arguing in court) is an element.

ECONOMICS

Examining Board Edexcel
Subject Entry Code 9EC0 Economics

Entry requirements

Pupil do not require GCSE Economics, and they are expected to have achieved at least grade 7 in Mathematics and English at GCSE.

Paper 1: Markets and Business Behaviour (Themes 1 and 3)

2 hours (35%)

Paper 2: The National and Global Economy (Themes 2 and 4)

2 hours (35%)

Paper 3: Micro and Macro Economics (All Themes)

2 hours (30%)



Course

Theme 1: Introduction to markets and market failure

This theme focuses on microeconomic concepts. Pupils will develop an understanding of: nature of economics, how markets work and market failure and government intervention.

Theme 2: The UK economy – performance and policies

This theme focuses on macroeconomic concepts. Pupils will develop an understanding of: measures of economic performance; aggregate demand and aggregate supply; national income and economic growth, and; macroeconomic objectives and policy.

Theme 3: Business behaviour and the labour market

This theme develops the microeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 1 and focuses on business economics. Pupils will develop an understanding of: business growth and business objectives; revenues, costs and profits; market structures; labour market, and government intervention.

Theme 4: A global perspective

This theme develops the macroeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 2 and applies these concepts in a global context. Pupils will develop an understanding of: international economics; poverty and inequality; emerging and developing economies; the financial sector and the role of the state in the macro economy.

Careers

Economics combines well with many other subjects and enables pupils to broaden their studies. Pupils acquire skills that are valuable in many other areas of life. The main transferable skills are independent thinking and critical analysis. About 10% of Economics graduates entering employment use the knowledge they have gained directly in their undergraduate studies in their work, and the majority choose careers that make use of their analytical, numerical and communication skills – all much valued by employers. Examples include careers in banking, insurance, accountancy, government administration, marketing, management and commerce.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examining Board **OCR**
Subject Entry Code **H472 English Literature**

Entry requirements

Pupils are expected to have attained a grade 6 or higher in both English Language and English Literature at GCSE (or at least a grade B in CIE IGCSE English Language First Language and English Literature).

Course

The aims of this course are to encourage learners to develop their interest in, and enjoyment of, literature and literary studies as they:

- Read widely and independently both set texts, and others that they have selected for themselves
- Engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them
- Develop and effectively apply their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation in writing
- Develop valuable transferable skills of sustained research and composition
- Explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them.

Assessment

Component 1

Shakespeare (Hamlet)

Drama and poetry pre-1900 (*Paradise Lost* and *A Doll's House*)

Written examination. Closed text. 2 hours 30 minutes (40%)

Component 2

Close reading of an unseen text in chosen topic area

(*The Gothic*)

Comparative and contextual study from chosen topic area

(*Dracula* and *The Bloody Chamber*)

Written examination. Closed text. 2 hours 30 minutes (40%)

Component 3

Literature post-1900 (for example, *Mrs Dalloway*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Of Mutability*)

(*Named Desire* and *Of Mutability*)

Non-examined assessment: critical piece OR re-creative writing piece with commentary (20%)

Texts may change year to year depending on teacher and pupils' interests.

Careers

Essential for careers in:

Journalism
The Media & Advertising
Speech & Language Therapy
English Teaching
Publishing

Useful for careers in:

Law
Marketing
PR
Psychology or Counselling
Library or Archive Management

GEOGRAPHY

Examining Board **AQA**
Subject Entry Code **7037 Geography**

Entry requirements

Prior knowledge of Geography is not a requirement for this course. Potential pupils are expected to have achieved at least a grade 6 in GCSE Geography, or a grade 6 or higher in English Language and Mathematics.

Assessment

Component 1: Physical Geography

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes (40%)

1. Water and carbon cycles
2. Hot desert environments and their margins
3. Hazards

Component 2: Human Geography

Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes (40%)

1. Global systems and global governance
2. Changing places
3. Population and the environment

Component 3: Geographical Investigation

3,000–4,000 words (20%)

Pupils complete an individual investigation, which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the pupil relating to any part of the specification content.

1. Fieldwork requirements
2. Investigation requirements
3. Geographical skills checklist

Course

Geography is a highly relevant subject and is both an Art and a Science. It, therefore, bridges many subjects and can be highly useful when applying to university. Geography improves skills in essay writing, fieldwork techniques, independent research, debate of contemporary issues, use of qualitative and quantitative data, presentation skills and of scientific enquiry.

Careers

Nationally, Geography is a growth subject at A level and is highly sought after by leading universities. Geography provides pupils with a broad range of options at degree level and in the workplace, with graduates progressing to careers in Accountancy, Banking, Finance, ICT, Law, Management, Marketing, PR, Research and many other fields.

HISTORY

Examining Board **AQA**
Subject Entry Code **7042 History**

Entry requirements

Prior knowledge of History is not a requirement for this course. Potential pupils are expected to have achieved at least a grade 6

in GCSE History (or at least a B grade in CIE IGCSE History), or a grade 6 or higher in a related subject such as English Literature or Religious Studies.

Assessment

Component 1: Breadth study (40%)

1K The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975

The first part of the corresponding full A level option. This involves the study of significant historical developments over a period of around 50 years and associated historical interpretations.

Written exam – 1 hour 30 minutes

Component 2: Depth study (40%)

2D Religious conflict and the Church in England, c1529–c1570

The first part of the corresponding full A level option. This involves the study in depth of a major historical change or development and associated primary evidence

Written exam – 1 hour 30 minutes

Component 3: Historical investigation (20%)

A personal study based on a topic of the pupil's choice. This should take the form of a question in the context of approximately 100 years. It must not duplicate the content of options chosen for Components 1 and 2.

The study is 3,000–3,500 words which is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

Course

Firstly, History pupils should be interested in the causes and consequences of events that have occurred in the past. For that reason, an enquiring mind and a willingness to think for oneself are desirable qualities in a Sixth Form historian. Secondly, pupils should enjoy reading and research.

The successful study of History at this level has many benefits. Most obviously, it develops an understanding of the background to our own times. It fosters the skill of synthesis and an analytical approach to information. Above all, it encourages pupils to evaluate what they read and to take an objective view of the past.

Careers

A qualification in History leads to degree courses not only in History, but also in Politics, Law, International Politics, Sociology, Business Studies, Management, Media Studies, for example. The skills fostered by the study of History are valuable in a wide range of careers and good History graduates enjoy excellent employment prospects. Apart from the more obvious careers such as teaching, archive and museum work, History graduates find employment in law, the media, publishing, public relations, management and commerce. Their understanding of what 'makes people tick', the ability to research and synthesise information, to formulate logical arguments and present objective reports makes historians attractive to employers.

HISTORY OF ART

Examining Board Edexcel
Subject Entry Code 9HT0

Entry requirements

Prior knowledge of History of Art is not a requirement for this course. Potential candidates are expected to have achieved at least a grade 6 in History or English Literature.

Assessment

Assessment: 2 x 3 hour written exams

- Paper 1. Visual Analysis and Themes (50%)
- Paper 2. Historic Periods (50%)

The subject content is divided into three components:

1. Visual Analysis
2. Thematic Study of World Art and Architecture
3. Historic Period Study of Art and Architecture

1. Visual Analysis

This section of the exam will assess skills of visual analysis and is designed to equip students to analyse and interpret the formal visual features and stylistic elements of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Students must develop knowledge and understanding of key terminology, formal characteristics, subjects and genres, and materials and techniques.

2. Thematic Study of World Art and Architecture

Thematic study is intended to be an inherently broad-based exploration of the developments in art and connections between movements and periods (before and after 1850, and from across the globe). Students will study work across at least three types of art. Students will select two themes from the three options:

1. Nature in Art and Architecture
2. Identities in Art and Architecture
3. War in Art and Architecture

3. Historic Period Study of Art and Architecture

The study of a specific period is intended to allow students the opportunity to research and explore in detail the key movements, concepts, artists, contextual factors and related developments in a specific place/s and across a clearly bonded time frame.

Two Periods will be selected from the following five options:

1. Invention and illusion: The Renaissance in Italy (1420–1520)
2. Power and persuasion: The Baroque in Catholic Europe (1597–1685)
3. Rebellion and revival: The Avant-Garde in Britain and France (1848–1899)
4. Brave new world: Modernism in Europe (1900–1939)
5. Pop life: Contemporary art and architecture in Britain and the USA (1960–2015)

Course

History of Art offers students the opportunity to explore art and architecture of the world from 500 BC to the present day. The study of art and architecture in historical and contemporary forms will give students a broad knowledge of world civilisations including the artistic production of different cultures, groups, and individuals from across the globe. Students will gain a life-long enjoyment of the art and architecture that surrounds them, knowledge and understanding of the formal characteristics and terminology of History of Art and a general knowledge and understanding of historical, social, and cultural contexts of painting, sculpture and architecture. Themes such as conflict, identity and the environment demonstrate how studying art of

the past and present has a relevance to, and a place within, our daily lives. The periods of study have been selected to introduce students to some of the most exciting and significant eras in the history of art and architecture. The study of History of Art requires students to develop visual and analytical skills that can be applied to many walks of life, as well as tools to understand how images and cultural objects shape our social and political identities. It encourages lifelong learning and provides access to higher education and university degree courses in Art History and related subjects, in particular offering contextual knowledge for the practical arts and cultural and media studies. It also offers access to art historical-related careers as well as others.

Careers

Essential for careers in:

Art History
(teacher, writer)
Curator
(museum, art gallery)
Art Dealer
Arts or culture researcher
Arts or culture educator

Useful for careers in:

Historian
Artist
Designer
Architect
Visual media (publishing, film,
photography etc.)
Advertising
Conservation
Cultural Heritage



MATHEMATICS

Examining Board OCR (MEI)
Subject Entry Code H640 (for first assessment in 2018)

Entry requirements

Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at A level must have studied GCSE or IGCSE at the Higher Tier and must have obtained a grade 7 (or at least an A grade in CIE IGCSE Mathematics).

Assessment

Paper 1

Pure Mathematics and Mechanics. 2 hour exam (36.4%)

Paper 2

Pure Mathematics and Statistics. 2 hour exam (36.4%)

Paper 3

Pure Mathematics and Comprehension. 2 hour exam (27.3%)

Further Mathematicians will complete the A level Mathematics course before the end of Lower Sixth and focus on Further Mathematics in the Upper Sixth.

Careers

Essential for careers in:	Useful for careers in:
Economics	Medicine & Dentistry
Engineering	Veterinary Medicine
Computer Science	Psychology
Actuarial Science	Civil Service

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Examining Board OCR (MEI)
Subject Entry Code H635/H645 Further Mathematics B

Entry Requirements

Pupils wishing to study Further Mathematics at A level are expected to have studied GCSE at the Higher Tier and achieved at least a grade 8, and ideally a grade 9 (or an A* grade in CIE IGCSE Mathematics). Further Mathematics cannot be studied without A level Mathematics.

A level Further Mathematics is designed for pupils with an enthusiasm for Mathematics, many of whom will go on to degrees in Mathematics, Engineering, the Sciences and Economics, or any subject where Mathematics is developed further than in A level Mathematics. A level Further Mathematics is both deeper and broader than A level Mathematics, and builds from GCSE and A level Mathematics. A level Further Mathematics prepares pupils for further study and employment in highly mathematical disciplines which require knowledge and understanding of sophisticated mathematical ideas and techniques.

Assessment

Mandatory paper: Core Pure (Y420) taken by all pupils. 2 hours 40 minutes exam (50%)

Options: Either one major and one minor, OR three minors
 Major Options: Statistics or Mechanics. 2 hours 15 minutes exam (33%)
 Minor Options: Mechanics, Statistics, Numerical methods. 1 hour 15 minutes (16%)

Course

Pupils will complete the A level Mathematics course in the first year of study (end of Lower Sixth), then continue to study the A level Further Mathematics course in Upper Sixth. Both A levels (Mathematics and Further Mathematics) will be sat at the end of Upper Sixth. A level Further Mathematics is a linear qualification in which all papers must be taken in the same examination series. Candidates must take the mandatory Core Pure, and then either a major paper in Statistics or Mechanics, with one further optional minor paper in one of the other applied discipline, or the mandatory Core Pure paper and then three further optional minor papers.

Careers

Useful for careers in:

Engineering
 Actuarial Science
 Computer Science
 Physics
 Chemistry
 Economics
 Accountancy
 Investment Banking

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH)

Examining Board AQA
Subject Entry Code 7652 French
 7662 German
 7692 Spanish

Entry requirements

Pupils are expected to have achieved at least the equivalent of a GCSE grade 7 in the language concerned before embarking upon this course. They should have an interest in developing their knowledge and understanding of the culture and way of life of the target-language country.

Assessment

Candidates are assessed on three units. All examinations are sat at the end of the two-year course.

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing 2 hours 30 minutes (50%)

This paper assesses aspects of the target-language society, including current trends and issues, the artistic culture of the target-language society, aspects of the political life of the target-language society and grammar. The examination includes listening and reading comprehension exercises and translations to and from English. No dictionaries are permitted in the examination.

Paper 2: Writing 2 hours (20%)

For this paper, candidates must study either two literary texts or one literary text and one film from the prescribed list. Candidates must write one essay in the target language on each of the works studied. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work, as well as a critical and analytical response to features such as form and technique of presentation. Candidates are expected to write approximately 300 words in each of the two essays. No dictionaries are permitted in the examination and pupils will not have access to the text or film during the assessment.

Paper 3: Speaking 21-23 minutes (30%)

Candidates are assessed on an individual research project and on one of the four sub-themes of the main content themes. The examination will be conducted by one of the Downside teachers. Pupils will also need a full-size dictionary. The department recommends the Collins suite of dictionaries.

Course

The core content of the course consists of three areas: Social issues and trends, Political and artistic culture and Grammar. In addition, pupils study a combination of cultural topics from the prescribed list of literary texts and films.

Pupils wishing to sit an A level in their first language (e.g. French, German or Spanish), or bilingual pupils, will not attend lessons in their first language, as the lessons and examination courses are aimed at pupils learning the language as a foreign language. However, pupils will be permitted to take an A level in a language in which they are already fluent. This will involve a programme of independent study, supported by regular meetings with a member of the Modern Foreign Languages Department, principally to prepare for Papers 2 and 3. Pupils will be expected to familiarise themselves with the range of topics taught for Paper 1 using the online resources that accompany the A level course. Entry for the A level examinations will be conditional upon completion of work set; pupils will also be expected to sit the relevant internal examinations, including the mock A level.

Careers

Essential for careers in:

Language Teaching
 Interpreting

Desirable for careers in:

Tourism
 Security/Intelligence Services
 Translating
 Journalism
 Immigration
 Diplomatic Service

MUSIC

Examining Board Eduqas
Subject Entry Code A660PA (Performing) or A660PB (Composing)

Entry requirements

A good pass at GCSE is not a prerequisite of the course, but candidates must already be established, proficient and committed performers if they are to be successful.

To have a realistic chance of success, a minimum standard of Associated Board grade 6 in an instrument or singing is required, together with a pass at grade 5 Theory, prior to starting the course.

Assessment

Component 1: Performing (35%)

A performance consisting of a minimum of three pieces. At least one of these pieces must be as a soloist. The other pieces may be either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both.

OR

Component 1: Performing (25%)

A performance consisting of a minimum of two pieces either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both.

Component 2: Composing (25%) – Coursework

Two compositions, one of which must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition and be in response to a brief set by WJEC. The second composition is a free composition.

OR

Component 2: Composing (35%) – Recital

Three compositions, one of which must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition and be in response to a brief set by WJEC. The second composition must reflect the musical characteristics of one different area of study while the third composition is a free composition.

Component 3: Appraising (40%) – Listening Exam

2 hours and 15 minutes approx.

Area of study A: The Western Classical Tradition (The Development of the Symphony 1750-1900) which includes two set works: Symphony No. 104 in D major; 'London': Haydn OR Symphony No. 4 in A major; 'Italian': Mendelssohn

A choice of one area of study from:

Area of study B: Rock and Pop
 Area of study C: Musical Theatre
 Area of study D: Jazz

A choice of one area of study from:

Area of study E: Into the 20th Century including two set works: Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, Movement II: Poulenc AND Three Nocturnes, Number 1, Nuages: Debussy

OR

Area of study F: Into the 21st Century including two set works: Asyla, Movement 3, Ecstasio: Thomas Adès AND String Quartet No. 2 (Opus California) Movements 1 (Boardwalk) and 4 (Natural Bridges): Sally Beamish

Careers

The study of A level Music is an ideal preparation for the study of Music at university and conservatoires, possibly with a view to a career in the performing, technical or administrative fields of the music industry. In addition, the analytical skills and discipline required to study Music mean that pupils develop a wide range of transferable skills which are highly sought after in a range of other professions such as Finance and Law, for example.

PHYSICS

Examining Board **AQA**
Subject Entry Code **7408 Physics**

Entry requirements

Physics is a mathematical science. While it is not absolutely essential to study A level Mathematics, the two subjects complement each other well. Any pupil wishing to study Physics at A level would ideally have achieved at least a grade 7 in both Physics (separate science or combined science) and Mathematics at GCSE.

Assessment

Candidates are assessed with three written papers.

Paper 1: Core Physics 2 hours (34%)

Paper 2: Core Physics 2 hours (34%)

Paper 3: Practical skills and Option topic 2 hours (32%)

Course

The course blends traditional topics, such as Newtonian mechanics, waves, circuits and field theory, which give an excellent overview of classical Physics, with more modern topics, such as nuclear and particle physics and quantum mechanics, which are supported by a trip to Cern. Practical work is undertaken throughout the course. If a candidate completes this satisfactorily, their A level certificate will be endorsed with a pass. The option topic examined in paper 3 will be one from: Astrophysics, Electronics, Engineering Physics, Medical Physics, Turning Points in Physics.

Careers

A level Physics is a challenging course highly respected by universities and employers. The fundamental knowledge and understanding gained, plus the skills of analysis and problem-solving, are highly desirable in many fields. This subject is an excellent preparation for university entry in subjects such as Science, Engineering, Computer Science, Accountancy, Law and Medicine.

PLEASE NOTE: Either the Physical Education A level OR the BTEC in Sport will be taught, depending on numbers opting for each course. We will not be able to offer both courses in any given year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examining Board **AQA**
Subject Entry Code **7582 Physical Education**

Entry requirements

Candidates do not need to have studied GCSE PE in order to study A level. They will be expected to be of above average physical ability in one team sport and/or individual activity, and they should have achieved at least either a grade 6 in GCSE Biology and Chemistry (separate sciences) or 6 in Combined Science. For pupils who have studied GCSE PE, they will be expected to have achieved at least a grade 6 in addition to the above sporting and science requirements.



Course

Candidates will be given the opportunity to build on their experience and improve their personal skills/techniques across a variety of roles in a sport of their choice to improve performance.

Content:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Sport and society
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanical movement
- Sport psychology
- Sport and society and the role of technology in physical activity and sport

Assessment

Paper 1: Factors affecting participation in physical activity and sport. 2 hours (35%): multiple choice, short answer and extended writing

- Section A: Applied anatomy and physiology
- Section B: Skill acquisition
- Section C: Sport and society

Paper 2: Factors affecting optimal performance in physical activity and sport. 2 hours (35%): multiple choice, short answer and extended writing

- Section A: Exercise physiology and biomechanics
- Section B: Sport psychology
- Section C: Sport and society and technology in sport

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport. Internal assessment (30%)

Pupils are assessed as a performer or coach in the full sided version of one activity, plus they need to provide a written and verbal analysis of their performance.

Careers

The study of A level Physical Education can lead to university courses in Sports Science, Recreation Management, Sports Technology, Sports Engineering, Teaching or Physiotherapy.

BTEC (RQF) NATIONAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED CERTIFICATE IN SPORT

Examining Board **Pearson**
Subject Entry Code **601/7218/6 BTEC Sport**

Entry requirements

Candidates should be an active sportsperson and have achieved grade 4 in either Combined Science or two separate sciences such as Biology and Chemistry. In addition, a grade 4 in English and GCSE PE/BTEC First Sport may be desired.

Course

Three mandatory units:

- Unit 1 Anatomy and Physiology
- Unit 2 Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well-being
- Unit 3 Professional Development in the Sports Industry

And one optional unit:

- Unit 4 Sports Leadership
- Unit 5 Application of Fitness Testing
- Unit 6 Sports Psychology
- Unit 7 Practical Sports Performance

Assessment

Four units: two are externally assessed and two are internally assessed. Three units are mandatory, and a further unit is optional. Four units in total are needed to complete the course. Evidence for each unit is provided in different formats.

- Unit 1: Anatomy and physiology (external exam) 1.5 hours 80 marks
- Unit 2: Fitness Training and Programming (external coursework (Set Task))
- Unit 3: Professional Development in the Sports Industry (internal coursework)

Optional Units (pick 1)

- Unit 4: Sports Leadership (internal coursework)
- Unit 5: Application of Fitness Testing (internal coursework)
- Unit 6: Sports Psychology (internal coursework)
- Unit 7: Practical Sports Performance (internal coursework)

Careers

The study of a BTEC Sport qualification could lead to the study of university courses in Sports Science, Recreation Management, Sports Technology, Sports Engineering, Teaching or Physiotherapy. It alternatively could be used as a pathway into the same strands within the Sports Industry.

PSYCHOLOGY

Examining Board **AQA**
Subject Entry Code **7182 Psychology**

Entry requirements

Pupils wishing to study Psychology at A level must have achieved at least a grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics, Biology (or BB in Dual Award Science) and English.

Assessment

Each paper is assessed by a two-hour written examination. Each paper has equal weighting. There is no coursework or controlled assessment component for the course.

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

Social Influence: Research into conformity and obedience. Why do people follow others and when do they decide that enough is enough and resist others influence?

Memory: Short- and long-term memory. Why do we forget?
Attachment: The development of human attachments and the effects of deprivation.

Psychopathology: What is abnormality, what causes it and how can we treat it? The disorders discussed are phobias, depression and OCD.

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

Approaches in Psychology: There are five main approaches that offer answers to the crucial 'WHY?' question. Behaviourism, Cognitive, Biological, Psychodynamic and Humanist.

Biopsychology: The nervous system, in particular how the brain works.

Research Methods: The methods used by psychologists to design research, collect and analyse data.

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

Issues and Debates: The key debates include the discussion of Ethics, Nature vs Nurture, Reductionism and Determinism.

Options in Psychology: Relationships, Aggression and Schizophrenia

Course

These units will be taught through a combination of class/group/ individual projects and presentations, debates, discussions, practical activities and essay writing skills activities. You will need to be prepared to study and analyse a wide variety psychological theory and research from a broad area of the curriculum. You will need to develop sophisticated skills of critical thinking and to be able to analyse the value of the research using the skills of a scientist. Psychologists use a number of objective methods to carry out their research and analyse their data and this is reflected in the course.

Careers

Psychology is now the third most popular A level choice in the country. A very challenging and stimulating subject, Psychology A level is a highly respected qualification and is accepted for a wide variety of further education courses. The transferable skills developed in the study of Psychology mean that graduates can enter a wide range of professions, including accountancy, banking, finance, IT, law, management, marketing, PR and research, for example.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examining Board Edexcel
Subject Entry Code 9RS0 Religious Studies

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements, although pupils are normally expected to have obtained grade 6 or above at GCSE level or in a closely related subject such as English Literature or History, for example.

Assessment

Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion. 2 hours (33.3%)

Philosophical issues and questions; the nature and influence of religious experience; problems of evil and suffering; philosophical language; works of scholars; influences of developments in religious belief.

Paper 2: Religion and Ethics. 2 hours (33.3%)

Significant concepts in issues or debates in religion and ethics; a study of three ethical theories; application of ethical theories to issues of importance; ethical language; deontology, virtue ethics and the works of scholars; medical ethics: beginning and end of life issues.

Paper 3: New Testament. 2 hours (33.3%)

Social, historical and religious context of the New Testament; texts and interpretation of the Person of Jesus; interpreting the text and issues of relationship, purpose and authorship; ways of interpreting the scripture; texts and interpretation: the Kingdom of God, conflict, the death and resurrection of Jesus; scientific and historical-critical challenges, ethical living and the works of scholars.

Course

Pupils are introduced to both philosophical and theological approaches: this is a demanding, but rewarding course. Every year, pupils gain places to read Theology at the best universities, including Oxbridge. This A level complements other humanities options, but also requires an analytical mind more usually associated with the Sciences.

Careers

A qualification in Religious Studies can lead to degree courses not only in Theology, Religion and Philosophy, but is also a valuable foundation for History, Politics, Law, International Politics, Sociology, Business Studies and Management, for example. The transferable skills developed are valuable in a wide range of careers and Theology, Religion and Philosophy graduates enjoy excellent employment prospects in Law, Media, Publishing, Public Relations, Management and Commerce.

OTHER SIXTH FORM PROGRAMMES GENERAL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

DOWNSIDE IS A ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE BENEDICTINE TRADITION, AND ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CLIFTON DIOCESE ARE REQUIRED TO OFFER GENERAL RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE SIXTH FORM AS PART OF THE EDUCATION IN THE CATHOLIC FAITH. THE PROGRAMME AT DOWNSIDE IS RUN ON A CAROUSEL SYSTEM TAUGHT BY THE THEOLOGY FACULTY WITH HELP FROM THE CHAPLAINCY AND SOME OUTSIDE SPEAKERS.

In the Lower Sixth a survey of the relationship between faith and culture with classes on faith and music, faith and art, faith and literature, the social teaching of the Church an introduction to understanding the Bible and an examination of the 'scapegoat mechanism'. In the Upper Sixth this is paralleled by responses to modern questions- examining whether we can make sense of suffering, whether there is indeed a link between violence and religion, the relationship between science and religion, responses to atheism, and questions of meaning and purpose to human life.

There is also a survey of philosophers and theologians in their thoughts on God and morality including Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and Wittgenstein, a carousel on aspects of sexual ethics including issues of gender, abortion, euthanasia, the Theology of the Body and the impact of the sexual revolution of the 1960's. There is an attempt to look at difficult issues for the Church in history, particularly the Inquisition, the Crusades, Pius XII and the Holocaust, the just war and corruption in the Church. Pupils also examine the virtues, prudence, moderation, love, courage and faith, and courage is the focus for the Upper Sixth Retreat at Ammerdown with the Dominican Fr Toby Rees OP. In Advent in the Upper Sixth there is an examination of the Last Things, death judgement heaven, hell and purgatory in Catholic understanding. Finally looking outwards to other faiths there are talks on Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and the Catholic approach to other world religions.

THE EPQ

THE LEVEL 3 EXTENDED PROJECT, MORE FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS THE EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION OR EPQ, IS AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR SIXTH FORMERS NOT ONLY TO BECOME SOMETHING OF AN EXPERT ON A PARTICULAR TOPIC, BUT ALSO TO DEVELOP A RANGE OF LEARNING AND STUDY SKILLS THAT WILL BE INVALUABLE, BOTH DURING THEIR SIXTH FORM AND BEYOND.

The qualification is highly regarded by all universities, as it shows evidence of a pupil's independent study skills, as well as of their academic interests; indeed, some universities have a policy of lowering offers by a grade if an applicant has an A or A* in the EPQ. The EPQ is not simply another piece of coursework; it is, rather, an opportunity to extend one's knowledge and skills in ways that are new and challenging to pupils.

The EPQ at Downside is entirely optional and is generally completed during the Lower Sixth year. In the Michaelmas Term, pupils identify their topic area and, under the guidance of a supervisor from the teaching staff, finalise the scope of their research and title. There are weekly group lessons to ensure that pupils understand the requirements of the qualification and to help them develop the skills necessary to complete it successfully; there are sessions, for example, on referencing, plagiarism, research skills, presentation skills and time management. Supervisors are chosen by the pupils themselves, and the supervisor/pupil relationship is one of the great strengths of the EPQ programme at Downside.

The EPQ dissertation is completed by the Lent Half Term, and the culmination of the project is in the form of a presentation in front of an audience. The quality of these presentations, which include a Q&A session, never fails to impress, with our pupils demonstrating poise and confidence, as well as a mastery of their chosen topic that would be the envy of many an undergraduate.

The choice of topic for the EPQ is entirely down to the pupil, and there are, in effect, no constraints on this. Many pupils choose to do an EPQ that relates either to one of their A level subjects or to their likely degree course; others, on the other hand, use the EPQ as an opportunity to broaden their horizons by researching something completely new to them.

Examples of recent EPQ titles at Downside include:

'How can fairy tales be read and interpreted differently in different social, cultural, literary and critical perspectives, and how do they reflect the concerns of these contexts?'

'To what extent was Belgian colonialism responsible for the Rwandan genocide?'

'Will an increasingly globalised society end up speaking English as its primary language?'

'How do socio-cultural practices affect the human rights of Nigerian women and limit their ability to reach their full potential?'

'Is hydro-foiling the way forward in competitive sailing?'

'Do CRISPR gene-editing's merits outweigh its complications?'

“ PUPILS SHOW VERY HIGH LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE IN ESSAYS ON DIVERSE SUBJECTS COMPLETED AS PART OF THE EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION.

ISI REPORT

LEARNING SUPPORT & EAL

DOWNSIDE IS A MAINSTREAM CATHOLIC SCHOOL WHERE THERE IS THE EXPECTATION THAT EVERY PUPIL IS ABLE TO ACCESS FULLY THE CURRICULUM, WITH REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT BEING MADE AND REGARDLESS OF NEED. THERE ARE SOME PUPILS WHO EITHER HAVE A MILD LEARNING DIFFICULTY OR FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS NOT THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE, AND WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE SUPPORT TO MAXIMISE THEIR PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL ACROSS EVERY SUBJECT.

LEARNING SUPPORT

When pupils are seen to experience difficulty in their learning due to conditions such as dyslexia, for example, we aim to be supportive in a holistic way across the curriculum. This means that pupils in particular need of Learning Support are integrated into ordinary classes where the teacher will be made aware of specific learning needs as they apply to individual pupils. Provision may be offered on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. These lessons will be timetabled and are taught by our Learning Support Department. Assessment is usually carried out within the Learning Support Department.

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES)

When pupils have English as an additional language, we aim to be supportive in a holistic way across the curriculum. Additional language support lessons are available to pupils whose first language is not English and who need extra assistance in order to follow their chosen curriculum. The lessons will be aimed at improving pupils' ability to use English competently in their academic subjects and to communicate fully in an English speaking environment.

Pupils joining the Sixth Form from abroad, who have not studied GCSEs, will most likely require an IELTS qualification in order to enter UK universities. Lessons will be provided from the start of the Lower Sixth.



CO-CURRICULUM

FROM THE FIRST YEAR PUPILS CAN ENJOY A WIDE RANGE OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FROM SERVICE AND SPORTS TO OUTDOOR ADVENTURE, DEBATE AND MUSIC. IN THE SIXTH FORM THERE ARE FURTHER, ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS TO COMPLEMENT THEIR ACADEMIC STUDIES.

DEBATING

The Downside Abingdon Society is the oldest debating society of any school in the country. It provides a forum for pupils to discuss topical and pertinent issues at an intellectual level, and is an ideal preparation for any aspiring university candidate. The pupils have the opportunity to meet throughout the term and challenge one another in lively rounds of debate. We invite guests to judge debates and share advice to our pupils, as well as attend debating competitions around the country and at other schools.

COMPLINE

This informal group meets weekly to sing Latin Compline (the monastic night office) in the candle-lit Old Chapel, finishing the day with a moment of quiet, and the chant which has accompanied monastic worship for centuries.

FINE DINING

This Society allows pupils to enjoy fine dining experiences in terms of researching and creating dishes, and appreciating food from around the world in a formal setting.

GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Many pupils find achieving a Duke of Edinburgh Award life-changing. A fun adventure and major challenge, there are three progressive award levels available at Downside with Gold beginning in the Sixth Form. This Award pushes personal boundaries, builds new skills and can enhance CVs and university applications.

KNOWLES SOCIETY

All pupils wishing to apply for Oxford, Cambridge and/or Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Engineering may be invited to attend the Knowles Society. This is an academic society which focuses on preparing pupils for the rigours of the application process. In addition, each subject runs an Academic Society which is an ideal way for pupils to gain a deeper and more enriched understanding of a particular subject.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The pupil-led Sixth Form School Council group is active in driving innovation and change to benefit every member of the community.

SIXTH FORM LECTURE SERIES

Downside welcomes speakers to present to the Sixth Form on a wide range of interesting and pertinent topics from slavery and mental health issues to renewable energy and extremism.

SIXTH FORM PRODUCTION

Each Lent Term the Sixth Form performs a musical. Previous productions include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Grease*, *Les Miserables* and *Salad Days*. There are opportunities for back stage roles, including light and sound, as well as acting ones.

SODALITY OF OUR LADY, DOWNSIDE

The Sodality of Our Lady was founded in the School in 1640, and the lists of members and rules have continued from 1680 to the present day. The group meets weekly to recite the Holy Rosary in the Old Chapel, and also holds a termly Mass and dinner.

TRIPS AND RETREATS

Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to experience academic and co-curricular trips and retreats. In the Sixth Form, there are also additional events including a pilgrimage to Lourdes, academic trips to Rome, Paris or Geneva, and retreats to the local retreat centre at Ammerdown, for example.



MENTORING, LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS THROUGH A CULTURE OF SERVICE, INTEGRITY AND HUMILITY FORMS PART OF THE SIXTH FORM EXPERIENCE FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, ALLOWING THEM TO BUILD RESILIENCE, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, TEAM WORK AND A VISION FOR THEIR FUTURE.

There are a multitude of leadership opportunities and roles of responsibility to enable each individual to explore their organisational and soft skills, ability to work as a member of a team and build confidence for their future, beyond school.

Senior pupil leadership positions such as Heads of School, Heads of House and prefects are opportunities for personal development as the young people work with the staff to act as role models and care for younger pupils and ensure the smooth running of the houses and school. They are selected through a process which mirrors that of the workplace, including a rigorous application and interview process.

Academic and co-curricular departments appoint pupil leaders to assist in the organisation of events and enable the pupils to develop their area of interest beyond the curriculum. Lectoria leaders have the responsibility of a group of younger pupils whom they meet weekly and chaplaincy prefects help the School community to celebrate the liturgy.

Leadership is actively encouraged through the election of House and School councils where pupils represent their year groups in effecting school change through pupil voice. Their ideas, energy and enthusiasm bring new exciting initiatives to enhance School life.

We firmly believe that the development of pupil leaders will inspire service throughout the world, bring out the best in each individual and open doors for them to a bright and exciting future.

SOCIETY LEADER

There are opportunities to lead some of our many societies and groups in activities ranging from conservation to e-safety, affecting real-world change at Downside.

LANGUAGE LEADER

Language Leaders provide outreach to local primary schools, support our Third and Fourth Form pupils with prep, and run small activities in Fourth Form Spanish lessons.

Available nationally, the Language Leader Award helps pupils learn to lead, using language teaching as the medium. Throughout the year-long programme they develop their leadership skills, growing in confidence and enhancing their future careers.

CCF LEADER

In the Fifth Form cadets follow a method of instruction (MOI) which enables them, once they become a Sixth Form NCO, to instruct younger cadets in the Third and Fourth Forms. Most of the senior cadets also tend to have senior roles elsewhere in the School.

HEAD OF CHARITIES

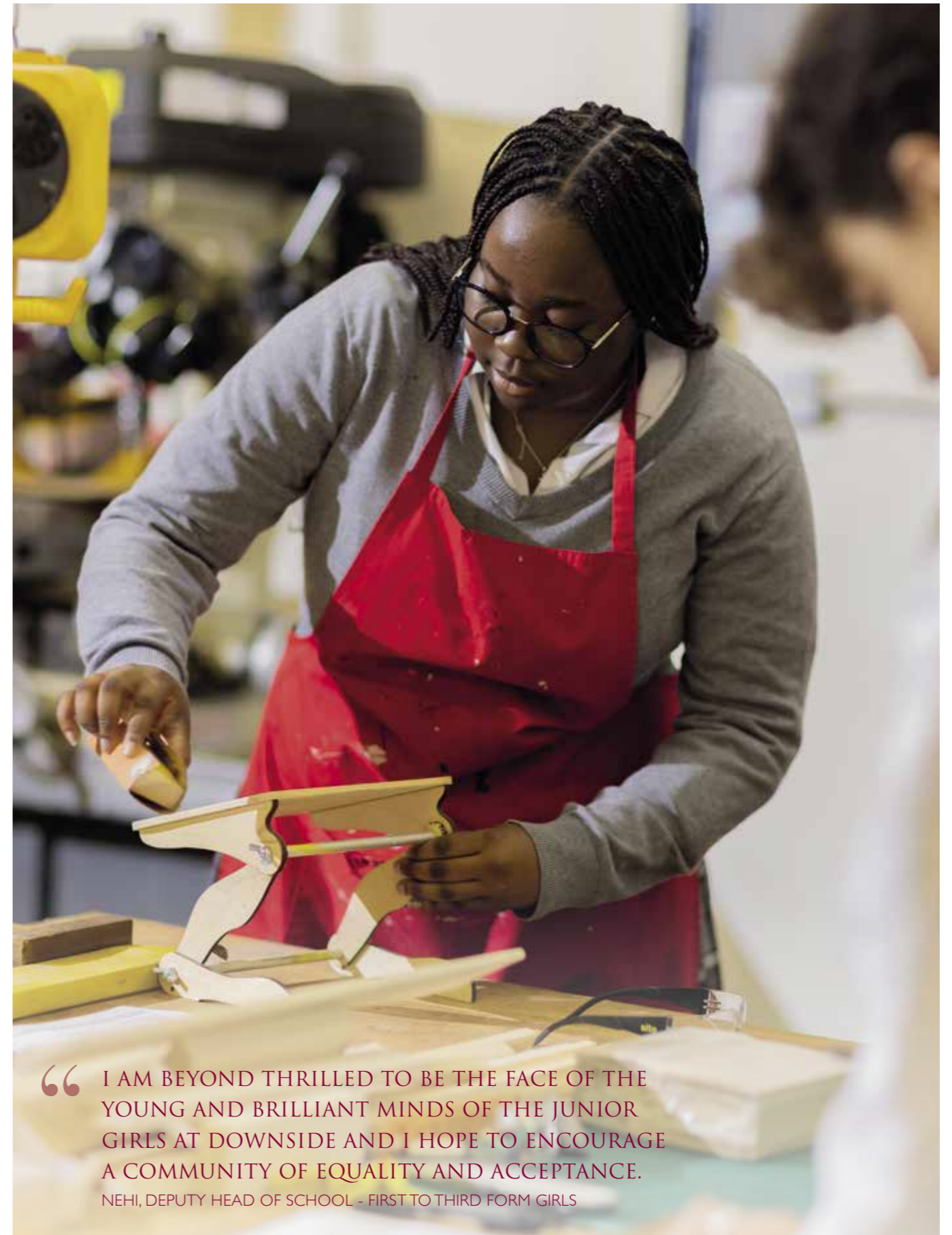
Each House has a Head of Charities representative who work with other pupils and staff to decide which charities to support each year.

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SPORT

Pupils in the Sixth Form are encouraged to support the development culture within sport. Sport Scholars in the Athlete Development Programme will receive additional mentoring and coaching opportunities to assist their development in sport alongside their academic studies. In return, there are several ways in which Sixth Form pupils can look to support the development of sport across the School as effective role models. This may include additional coaching support for younger pupils in Games sessions or at fixtures, supporting sports staff in the delivery of co-curricular sports clubs or helping to run the daily evening activity programme for our First and Second Form pupils.

SERVERS

Sixth Formers who have made their First Communion can become altar servers to assist with tasks during Mass and special services – for example at the Christmas Carol Service – in the magnificent Downside Abbey Church.



“ I AM BEYOND THRILLED TO BE THE FACE OF THE YOUNG AND BRILLIANT MINDS OF THE JUNIOR GIRLS AT DOWNSIDE AND I HOPE TO ENCOURAGE A COMMUNITY OF EQUALITY AND ACCEPTANCE.

NEHI, DEPUTY HEAD OF SCHOOL - FIRST TO THIRD FORM GIRLS

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & SCHOLARSHIPS

DOWNSIDE OFFERS CONSIDERABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUPILS TO EXTEND AND ENRICH THEIR ACADEMIC STUDIES OVER AND ABOVE THEIR TIMETABLED LESSONS.

As well as the academic clubs and societies on offer, pupils also benefit greatly from extra academic discussions and clinics to prepare them for university and beyond.

The School offers a number of scholarships at 16+. For families who may struggle to meet the full fee payment there is the option to apply for a means-tested bursary and you can apply for this regardless of whether your child is eligible for a scholarship. We believe a scholarship should be a recognition of your child's achievements to date and potential, and a bursary should be there as financial support.

The bestowal of any scholarship award carries with it privilege and responsibility. Every award holder is expected to set an example for other pupils in their approach to academic study and participation in the fuller life of the School. The tenure of any award is intended to be for the duration of a holder's education at Downside, provided that the holder's academic progress and general conduct remain satisfactory. Awards are reviewed annually.

For more information about applying for a scholarship for Sixth Form, please contact our Admissions Team: admissions@downside.co.uk



PSHEE

THE SIXTH FORM PSHEE PROGRAMME FOCUSES ON PREPARATION FOR LIFE AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL. IT COMBINES CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE WITH ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL SKILLS, AS WELL AS A WIDE-RANGING LECTURE PROGRAMME. WE ALWAYS WELCOME FEEDBACK FROM PUPILS REGARDING THE CONTENT OF THE PSHEE PROGRAMME AND TRY, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, TO INCLUDE CONTENT THAT THEY FEEL WOULD BE BENEFICIAL.

Below are some of the modules in the current PSHEE programme:

- Pre-university study skills
- University and free speech
- Interview skills and technique
- CPR & basic first aid
- CV writing and letters of application
- Budgeting and pupil finance
- Making pastry
- 'Do I need to see a doctor?'
- Quick and easy meals
- Household chores
- Equality and diversity
- Road safety awareness
- Your digital profile

UNIVERSITY

THE HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL LEAVERS ARE MANIFOLD; WHILST THIS BREADTH OF CHOICE IS CLEARLY BENEFICIAL, IT DOES MEAN THAT THE PATH TO MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES CAN BE HARD TO NAVIGATE. AT DOWNSIDE, WE ENSURE, THEREFORE, THAT OUR SIXTH FORMERS ARE FULLY SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS. SIXTH FORM TUTORS WORK CLOSELY WITH THEIR PUPILS AND WITH THE HEADS OF CAREERS AND SIXTH FORM TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND ADVICE TO HELP PUPILS MAKE INFORMED CHOICES AND DECISIONS.

Applications to universities within the UK are made through UCAS, and this is done online. The process begins with initial research on Unifrog, an online research platform to which all Downside pupils are subscribed, and attendance at a UCAS convention in the spring of the Lower Sixth. Pupils register on UCAS at the end of the Summer Term and are expected to draft their personal statements over the holidays.

Pupils applying to Oxford or Cambridge or to study Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry have an early application deadline of 15th October. The competition for entry on to these courses is strong, and there is a programme of support in place to maximise our pupils' chance of success. This includes, but is not limited to, extension lessons, one-to-one or small group lessons with subject specialists, participation in the School's senior academic society, The Knowles Society, subject-specific workshops, practice interviews and practice admission tests. We

expect applicants for these courses to be proactive in seeking out and exploiting opportunities to broaden their academic horizons and to deepen their knowledge.

Art Foundation courses adopt a different application process, involving the presentation of a portfolio of work, and any interested pupils should begin discussions with the Head of Art in the Lower Sixth year. Applications to conservatoires are also slightly different, and advice should be sought from the Head of Sixth Form or the Director of Music.

Every year, a number of pupils apply to study abroad, and the application process for foreign institutions varies considerably, as do the deadlines. Those pupils who are thinking of applying internationally should seek advice from the Head of Sixth Form as early as possible in the Lower Sixth Year, or, indeed, in the Fifth Form, particularly if an application to the US is a possibility.

CAREERS

DOWNSIDE CONSCIOUSLY WORKS TO PREVENT ALL FORMS OF STEREOTYPING IN THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT GIRLS AND BOYS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS AND DIVERSITY GROUPS CONSIDER THE WIDEST POSSIBLE RANGE OF CAREERS.

The Careers Education and Guidance Programme ensures a range of events and activities that encourages pupils to fulfil their potential, and enables them to 'know themselves' and how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work; learn about different careers and opportunities; obtain individual guidance; have some work experience; and gain information about training, education and occupations beyond school.

The School works in partnership with Futuresmart Careers Ltd. In addition to the support and guidance offered in School, pupils will also have the opportunity to benefit from membership to

Futuresmart Careers Ltd, which is a careers service for young people from 15 years of age.

We host an annual Careers Fair, which provides pupils with the opportunity to meet a range of speakers covering different careers such as law, finance, entrepreneurship, travel-writing, film production, journalism and archaeology.



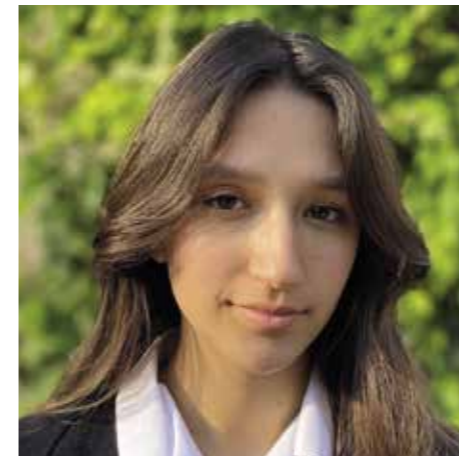
PUPIL PERSPECTIVE



Life in the Sixth Form has served as an amazing opportunity for me to really excel in what I like most. The range of possibilities are so diverse and can cater specifically to each pupil. We are given the chance to find out what suits us and explore these options further. For example, I am a keen debater and being part of the Sixth Form has allowed me to pursue this and develop my skills.

As well as this, the competitive sports Downside offers have taught me the meaning of teamwork and discipline. Downside always strives to be competitive whilst maintaining that key element of sportsmanship. Furthermore, the aid I am offered by my teachers has really helped me excel in my learning. I am currently studying A Level in RS, Physics and Maths; and although these are challenging subjects, with my teachers' extra help I grow in confidence. Being a part of the school as an Upper Sixth pupil has given me the opportunity to take on responsibility and taught me the values of being a good leader.

MAYA, SIXTH FORM ACADEMIC SCHOLAR



I loved Downside from the first moment I set eyes on the beautiful quad! During the 5 last years I've been at Downside, I have enjoyed a multitude of singing opportunities such as the annual chamber choir concerts in London and Oxford, singing Evensong at Wells Cathedral and our fabulous St Cecilia Day concerts and Music for a Summer's Evening concerts. Music at Downside is keenly encouraged, and I have to say that it's been my favourite aspect of my time here. There are an incredible number of musical ensembles here such as the Chamber Choir, Close Harmony Group, String Ensemble and Concert Band and that's only just a few!

I've also loved taking part in the theatre at Downside, where I've been in the senior musicals and been given the opportunity to co-direct the Junior School plays. These opportunities have really helped me to develop, as they've taught me key life skills and helped me grow as an individual. Downside also offers a range of activities that allows you to try something new and push yourself outside of your comfort zone, as well as a range of instrumental lessons including LAMDA lessons and Dance lessons.

ARI, SIXTH FORM MUSIC AND ACADEMIC SCHOLAR AND HEAD OF HOUSE



I have been at Downside since Second Form. Now that I am in the Upper Sixth, I can say that I have really enjoyed the life Downside has been able to offer me. I have been involved in many sports, societies, and activities that I never thought I would have gotten myself involved in. I will always appreciate the friends and peers I have met.

The vast diversity of cultures this school has, has enabled me to better understand people and their respective cultures. Downside has made me grow as an individual and I feel like it has prepared me well for what is to come.

IVAN, SIXTH FORM AND DEPUTY HEAD OF HOUSE



ALUMNI NETWORK

DOWNSIDE IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST A PLACE OF EDUCATION. WHEN PUPILS LEAVE DOWNSIDE, THEIR JOURNEY WITH THE SCHOOL DOES NOT END AS THEY ARE THEN WELCOMED INTO THE OLD GREGORIAN (OG) COMMUNITY.

The OG community is a vast global network of loyal, like-minded individuals who can be characterised by the values instilled during their time as a pupil: welcome, concern for the individual, building community, listening and humility.

The School keeps the community united with the School and each other by organising reunions all over the world, and via newsletters, publications, the School website and social media.

Getting on the career ladder or taking the next step in professional development can be a daunting prospect and the School tries hard to facilitate professional networking for all members. This provides a unique and much broader network of support and experience than would otherwise be possible alone. A Careers Fair is held every year for Sixth Form pupils where OGs, amongst other professionals, return to Downside to share their experiences and expertise across a range of industries. During their first year at university, the School aims to link pupils with other OGs at the university, providing a friendly face and a sense of continuity. As career pathways become clearer, pupils can be put in touch with OGs willing to mentor them, provide work experience or just have an informal chat. Within the OG LinkedIn group, bi-weekly videos and blogs are shared as part of Downside's 'Careers on Demand' offering further access to top tips and how to navigate the professional world.

Once in the world of work, the School arranges professional networking events for OGs. This provides an opportunity to share ideas and build relationships with people living within the same code of conduct. They are also a great occasion to chat over their old school days and reminisce about their wonderful memories of Downside.

“ DOWNSIDE IS AN INCREDIBLY SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT, AND ONE WHERE IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE A STUDENT. TO BE ABLE TO LEARN, GROW AND MAKE FRIENDSHIPS IN SUCH A WARMING COMMUNITY GIVES EACH PUPIL A SENSE OF PRIDE, ONE WHICH WILL BE CARRIED THROUGHOUT LIFE.

GEORGIA, OLD GREGORIAN (C20)
SCHOLAR & HEAD GIRL 2019-20



STRATTON-ON-THE-FOSSE,
RADSTOCK, BATH BA3 4RJ

admissions@downside.co.uk

www.downside.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1761 235103

