



Presdales School



Sixth Form

Course Information Booklet

2024-2026

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Art

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Art

CONTENT

Alongside the practical expertise you'll develop in your studies, you will also learn transferable skills valued in both higher education and the world of work:

Analytical | Creative problems solving | Working independently | Research methods | Understanding how context shapes meaning | How to communicate effectively. The analytical and creative problem solving elements of the course will support you in a range of subjects from History, English, Business or Film Studies through to Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. Fine Art also teaches you how to learn from your experiences and work independently - skills valued by employers and higher education institutions alike.

The AQA A Level course in Fine Art lasts two years. It consists of two components:

Component 1 – Personal investigation 60% of total A Level mark. Students conduct a personal investigation based on an idea, issue or theme supported by written material. This includes written and practical elements. A trip to Barcelona is available at Easter.

Component 2 – Externally set assignment 40% of total A Level mark. Students select a starting point from eight questions set by AQA and preparatory work will take place between February and May. Students undertake 15 hours of unaided/supervised time.

ASSESSMENT

Both components require students to participate actively in their course of study, recognising and developing their own strengths and sustaining their own lines of enquiry. Students are expected to complete independent research, record, photograph, experiment, evaluate and modify ideas to extend thinking and inform their own artwork. All work presented for assessment must show coverage of each of the four Assessment Objectives. There will be two assessments each year. Each component is externally moderated in June.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Once you have built up a good portfolio of work you will be ready to develop your art studies further. Many students go on to do a one year foundation course at Art College. Students then make a selection as to which degree course (BA) they would like to follow. After a degree course, they can take up jobs in a wide range of areas, from architecture to furniture design and from jewellery design to photography.

If you have any questions about the course, please look on the examination board website – www.aqa.org.uk – or contact a member of the Art Department.

Business

Entry requirements:

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE:

GCSE grade 5 in Business

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature and Mathematics

CONTENT

At A Level we offer the Edexcel/Pearson Business (2015) course.

Business is structured into four themes and consists of three externally examined papers.

In Year 12, students are introduced to business in Themes 1 and 2 through building knowledge of core business concepts and applying them to business contexts to develop a broad understanding of how businesses work.

In Year 13, students continue their studies with Themes 3 and 4. In these themes, we develop the breadth and depth of students' knowledge and understanding of the key concepts studied in Year 12. Application of the content is explored with an even wider range of contexts and more complex business information, requiring students to take a more strategic view of business opportunities and issues. Students are encouraged to use an enquiring, critical and thoughtful approach to the study of business, in order to understand that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives and to challenge assumptions.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will take place in May/June of Year 2 and will consist of three papers

- **Paper 1 (2 hours, worth 35%)**
will assess marketing, people and global business. Questions will be drawn from Themes 1 and 4, and from local, national and global contexts.
- **Paper 2 (2 hours, worth 35%)**
will assess business finance and operations, business decisions and strategy. Questions will be drawn from Themes 2 and 3, and from local, national and global contexts.
- **Paper 3 (2 hours, worth 30%)**
will assess content across all four themes. Questions will be drawn from local, international and global contexts. For Paper 3, there will be a pre-released context document. The context will focus on a broad context, such as an industry or market in which businesses operate.

At least 10% of the marks on all papers will require students to use mathematical skills.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This course offers students the chance to develop skills, knowledge and understanding which prepares them for entry to the workplace, perhaps on an apprenticeship in business finance or management or onto a university course. Many students have, in the past, gone into higher education degree courses in business or specific aspects of business. An increasing minority are finding apprenticeships with big accounting firms, manufacturing firms and public sector organisations.

Design & Technology : Fashion and Textiles

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Design & Technology

CONTENT

Fashion and Textiles provides wide opportunities ranging from fashion and aesthetics to industrial uses of textile products.

The practical problem solving approach encourages independent learning and personal satisfaction from working with a variety of materials. They will explore, design, create and evaluate innovative solutions in response to realistic design contexts. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the core technical, designing and making principles for fashion and textiles. They will have the opportunity to work with a wide variety of products and gain an understanding of industrial and commercial practices within the area of design and manufacture.

ASSESSMENT

- Paper 1: 2.5 hour written exam 30%
- Paper 2: 1.5 hour written exam 20%
- Non-exam assessment 50%

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Design and Technology is an excellent stepping stone to a degree course at university or Art College. Further study could lead to a wide range of exciting careers including: product design, graphic design, fashion design, theatre design, architecture, marketing, retail management, marketing and teaching.

Design & Technology : Product Design

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Design & Technology

CONTENT

Product Design (3-D Design) helps students take a broad view of design and technology, develop their capacity to design and make products and appreciate the complex relations between design, materials, manufacture and marketing.

The specification retains much of the content of the previous A-level specification and continues to provide students with the opportunity to design and make a product in both years of the course. This specification has been designed to encourage candidates to take a broad view of design and technology, to develop their capacity to design and make products and to appreciate the complex relations between design, materials, manufacture and marketing.

This creative and thought-provoking qualification gives students the practical skills, theoretical knowledge and confidence to succeed in a number of careers, especially those in the creative industries. They will investigate historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic influences on design and technology, whilst enjoying opportunities to put their learning in to practice by producing prototypes of their choice. Design & Technology compliments many other subjects at A Level, particularly the Sciences, Maths, Geography, Psychology, Business and Art.

ASSESSMENT

- **Paper 1: 2.5 hour written exam 30%**
- **Paper 2: 1.30 hour written exam 20%**
- **Non-exam assessment 50%**

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Design and Technology is an excellent stepping stone to a degree course at university or Design College. Further study could lead to a wide range of exciting careers including architecture, product design, graphic design, fashion design, theatre design, architecture, marketing, retail management, town planning, prototype making, automotive design, engineering, marketing, civil engineering, interior designer and teaching.

Drama & Theatre

Entry requirements:

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE:

GCSE grade 5 in Drama & Theatre Studies

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature and practical experience of Drama

CONTENT

The Drama & Theatre A Level combines practical and academic study of the subject. Plays are explored for both performance and as stimuli for devised work. Throughout both types of exploration, students are required to develop and demonstrate an understanding of a wide variety of drama and theatre conventions and styles and how such work communicates with an audience. The reformed A Level comprises of 2 coursework components and one examination paper. Each component includes both practical and written work.

ASSESSMENT

- **Component 1: Devising**

Students will devise an original performance piece. They will use one key extract from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli. Students will be assessed on their performance as well as a written portfolio. This component is teacher examined and externally moderated.

- **Component 2: Text in Performance**

Students will participate in a group performance of one key extract from a performance text. Students will also present either a monologue or duologue performance from an extract from a different performance text. This component is externally assessed by a visiting examiner.

- **Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice Component 3 (*written examination*)**

This examination comprises of 3 sections. Section A is a live theatre evaluation. Section B is a 'Page to Stage' style question that will ask students to consider an extract of a set text from the perspective of a performer and a designer. Section C requires students to interpret a different set text in the style of a practitioner whilst showing an understanding of the original performance conditions.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Drama and Theatre is highly valued by both universities and employers as it develops both the academic and creative talents of students. Throughout the course, students will develop a multitude of transferable skills including time management, analysis, problem solving, collaboration, communication and an understanding of how to amend and refine work. This will aid students in making a smooth transition to their next level of study and/or employment. For those seeking careers in the media, teaching, journalism, any career involving the entertainment industry or public speaking, presenting and problem solving, Drama and Theatre would be an ideal choice.

Economics

Entry requirements:

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE:

GCSE grade 6 in Business

GCSE grade 6 in English Language and English Literature and Mathematics

CONTENT

We follow the A Level Edexcel/Pearson Economics A (2015) specification.

Theme 1: Introduction to Markets and Market Failure:

An introduction to the nature of economics and examines how the price mechanism allocates resources in markets. It also examines how pricing and the nature of competition between firms is affected by the number and size of market participants. In addition, you will be investigating the reasons for failures in markets to allocate resources efficiently.

Theme 2: The UK Economy – performance and policy:

This theme looks at how we measure economic performance and the main objectives and instruments of economic policy that governments use in the UK. An investigation into the wider economy, with detailed examination of current economic decisions and the consequences to the UK economy.

Theme 3: Business Behaviour and the Labour Market:

This theme builds on the introduction to Economics from Theme 1, investigating the theory of the firm and government intervention into markets. It furthers students' knowledge of important Economists such as Hayek and Keynes.

Theme 4: A Global Perspective:

A look at the impact globalisation has had on the world economy. Investigating trading blocs, international competition and the rise in inequality that exists. In addition, development economics is researched as well as the impact of the Financial markets on different global economies.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will occur in June of Year 2 and will consist of three separate examinations:

- **Paper 1 (2 hours, worth 35% of final mark)** will assess themes 1 & 3
- **Paper 2 (2 hours, worth 35% of final mark)** will assess themes 2 and 4
- **Paper 3 (2 hours, worth 30% of final mark)** will assess content across all four themes and students will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, make connections and transfer higher order skills across all four themes.

At least 20% of the marks on all papers will require students to use mathematical skills.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Economics is an excellent subject to study at this level. Many go on to university to further their studies. The majority of economics courses require mathematics at AS Level or higher but an increasing number are reviewing this requirement. For those planning careers in finance or management this course is a real asset.

English Language & Literature

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

Students will study a 20th century play and prose texts, including novels and fictional writing. They will develop their ability to analyse and explore the work of published writers in addition to developing their own creative skills as writers. Whilst the examination texts are studied in class, the coursework module provides the opportunity for students to choose their own texts as a basis for their writing.

ASSESSMENT

A Level Unit 1:

Voices in Speech & Writing (Examination 40% weighting)

- **Section A** – Comparison of an unseen prose non-fiction text with an extract from the studied anthology
- **Section B** – An extract based question on the 20th century drama text

A Level Unit 2:

Varieties in Language & Literature (Examination 40% weighting)

- **Section A** – Unseen Prose Non- Fiction Texts: one essay question on an unseen prose nonfiction extract
- **Section B** – Prose Fiction and Other Genres: one comparative essay on two prose fiction texts, Great Expectations and The Great Gatsby

A Level Coursework (20% weighting)

Students will select two texts to study (one fiction and one non-fiction) and will produce two assignments (two pieces of original writing and one analytical commentary)

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A Level English requires a candidate to use high level analytical skills and apply them to various written texts. A traditional A Level, it is well regarded by all universities and is an excellent preparation for any Arts based degree. Ultimately English Language & Literature is an excellent subject for those considering future careers such as journalism, law, teaching or the Civil Service.

English Literature

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

Students will study eight texts at A Level and develop the ability to analyse and evaluate what they have read whilst honing their own communication skills.

ASSESSMENT

A Level Unit One: Drama (Examination 30% weighting)

- **Section A: Shakespeare**

One essay question from a choice of two on a Shakespeare play

- **Section B: Other Drama**

One essay question from a choice of two on a modern drama

A Level Unit Two: Prose (Examination 20% weighting)

One comparative essay question from a choice of two on crime fiction

A Level Unit Three: Poetry (Examination 30% weighting)

- **Section A: Contemporary Poetry**

One comparative essay from a choice of two on an unseen poem written post-2000 and a named poem from Poems of the Decade

- **Section B: Poetry Collections**

One essay question from a choice of two on a collection of pre-1900 poetry

A Level Unit Four: Coursework (20% weighting)

One extended comparative essay on two texts. Here students are given considerable independence

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A Level English requires a candidate to use high level analytical skills and apply them to various written texts. A traditional A Level, it is well regarded by all universities and is an excellent preparation for any Arts based degree. Ultimately English Literature is an excellent subject for those considering future careers such as journalism, law, teaching or the Civil Service.

French

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in French

CONTENT

The course will build rapidly on the knowledge and understanding gained in GCSE French, so that you will quickly gain confidence in the use of spoken and written language in the context of a range of interesting broad themes with a focus on social phenomena in the French speaking world.

Topics are taught using a variety of newspapers, magazines, films and plays, and the textbook recommended by the examination board. There are opportunities to participate in trips to the cinema, theatre performance and conferences. You are encouraged to widen your vocabulary and cultural understanding through independent reading and watching films.

The A Level requires you to research a topic independently. You will also develop oral fluency with a lesson per week with a French Assistante. Longer pieces of written work will be produced and you will study at least two literary texts which will include a book and a film.

ASSESSMENT

You will be assessed across all four skills as you were at GCSE. Assessment will also include a focus on translation skills and you will study a film and a novel in detail. The speaking examination will include an independent research project which will require you to provide statistics and evidence of different viewpoints. The assessment criteria also require you to demonstrate cultural knowledge.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Clearly, in the modern world, there are numerous occasions when advanced language skills can be used in travel or business contexts. Languages combine well with a variety of other subjects, both in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education. Foreign language competence distinguishes you in the workplace from others with similar qualifications and experience.

Geography

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Geography

CONTENT

Students follow the Edexcel course and in Year 12 they will study:

- Tectonic Processes and Hazards
- Coastal Landscapes and Change
- Globalisation
- Regenerating Places

In Year 13 they will study:

- The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity
- The Carbon Cycle and Energy Insecurity
- Superpowers
- Health, Human Rights and Intervention

Fieldwork is a compulsory part of the course and all students are required to attend a 3 day residential trip in Yorkshire and 2 further day trips to King's Cross to carry out the data collection required for the independent investigations.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment all takes place in Year 13 and is by 3 written examinations and the submission of the independent investigation.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Statistics show that Geographers are among the most employable groups of people as a result of their investigative, numerate, spatial and ICT skills. As a result, it is a subject that combines well with almost any other A Level. Future opportunities include degree studies in Geography, Environmental Science, Oceanography or Meteorology as well as apprenticeships in Leisure and Tourism. These often lead to careers in diverse industries such as Environmental Management, Education, Law, Banking and Marketing.

German

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in German

CONTENT

The A Level course builds rapidly on the knowledge of German already gained at GCSE. You will quickly broaden your vocabulary and cultural understanding through studying broad themes incorporating social issues and phenomena in German speaking areas as well as cultural and literary aspects. You will practise all four skill areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and you will be constantly strengthening your knowledge of German grammar, so that you can manipulate the language in order to say or write what you want correctly.

We use films, popular magazines and newspapers to teach the topics and the department regularly organises trips to conferences and workshops. You will have the opportunity to speak to the German Assistant on a weekly basis and to undertake a week's Work Experience in Germany. German combines particularly well with science subjects, other languages, history and mathematics.

ASSESSMENT

You will be assessed across all four skills as you were at GCSE. Assessment will also include a focus on translation skills and you will study two pieces of literature in detail. The speaking examination will include an independent research project which will require you to provide statistics and evidence of different viewpoints. The assessment criteria also require you to demonstrate cultural knowledge.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A qualification in a language is important for an increasing number of career opportunities in the European Union as well as access to careers in the world of business management, marketing, tourism, banking, telecommunications or the Civil Service. A Level languages combine very well with a huge number of college and university courses.

History

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in History

CONTENT

Unit 1 – England 1558-1603: mid-Tudor crises and Elizabethan England

Henry VIII's three children all ruled after him, in challenging circumstances. We explore how Edward, as a young boy, and Mary, as England's first ruling queen, attempted to assert their authority and see through ambitious programmes of religious change, while fending off foreign threats and dealing with social and economic problems in England. Is it fair to characterise their reigns as a period of crisis?

Elizabeth I has enjoyed a much better reputation, as 'Gloriana' and 'Good Queen Bess' to her sister's 'Bloody Mary'. We study how far she was able to stabilise religious tensions, and to assert her authority despite her gender, the lack of an heir, pressure to marry, plots against her life involving her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, and the threat of Spanish invasion. Was she as successful as her well-known portraits imply, or was her position constantly insecure?

Unit 2 Russia, 1894-1941

Continuing the theme of power struggles, and how rulers lose their legitimacy and their hold on power, we explore the period of the Russian Revolution and its tumultuous aftermath, culminating in the Stalinist dictatorship. Was Tsar Nicholas II's bloody end brought about more by his personal failings, loathing and distrust of his wife, or a failure of leadership in the First World War?

Russia experienced not one but two revolutions in 1917. Was it Lenin's appealing promises or his ruthless planning which led to the seizure of power by the minority Bolshevik faction? Were his promises ever put into practice? Stalin outdid several more famous rivals to take power after Lenin's untimely death, but under his leadership, the Russian people learned to speak in whispers – why were they so afraid? This provides a fascinating comparison to life in Nazi Germany.

Unit 3 – The Origins and Growth of the British Empire 1558-1783

How and why did the British Empire grow to become world-wide and world-dominating, laying the foundations for the 20th century and the world we live in today? We study the impact of the empire on Britain, from its political and naval power and its victory or defeat in war, to culture, science and the arts. Equally, we study what the impact was on the peoples of North America, India, and Africa. How much resistance did the British face, and what role did the slave trade and slavery play in the growth of British power? This course sets the British Empire in context, and includes the history of non-British, non-European peoples whose voices and experiences have often been marginalised.

Unit 4 – Historical Enquiry (coursework)

Your historical enquiry is an opportunity to choose a particular topic of interest to you, and explore it in detail. This involves independent research leading to an essay of up to 4,000 words.

ASSESSMENT

A-level is assessed by means of three examinations at the end of Year 13 and an historical enquiry.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

History is invaluable in broadening students' knowledge and understanding of the contemporary world and developing their analytical skills. Studying history teaches us to write, to argue, to persuade, to debate, to process information, to weigh up evidence, and to reach conclusions and present these. These skills are highly prized by universities, and by employers in a very wide range of fields, including business, management, journalism and the media, law, politics and the Civil Service, economics, finance and accounting, education, the arts, tourism and heritage.

Italian

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Italian

CONTENT

The Italian A Level course aims to extend and deepen your knowledge of the Italian language and give you an insight into the Italian way of life and culture. By the end of your course you will be able to understand, discuss and write about many day-to-day issues and events with increased confidence, fluency and accuracy.

The course develops the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Italian through the study of topics relating to contemporary Italian society. These topics include Italian music, media, culture and traditions, the evolution of the Italian family, immigration, Italy's north/south divide and Italian Fascism. In Year 12, we will study Roberto Benigni's Oscar-winning film, *La vita è bella* and in Year 13 we will read and research Niccolò Ammaniti's celebrated 2001 novel, *Io non ho paura*.

In addition, students will carry out an independent research project on an area relating to Italian-speaking culture or society, which is of particular interest to them. They will present and discuss this research as part of their speaking examination. In Year 12, students will have five lessons per week in the classroom as well as one weekly lesson with our native Italian speaker, to enable them to increase their fluency, flair and pronunciation. Year 13 students will have six lessons per week in the classroom, as well as one weekly lesson with our native Italian speaker.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is by examination at the end of Year 13. There are two written papers and an oral examination. Paper 1 tests candidates' comprehension of spoken and written Italian and includes a translation into English. Paper 2 comprises a translation into Italian and two essays, focusing on the novel and the film which have been studied. The speaking examination is made up of a discussion about a stimulus, the student's presentation of their research project and then a wider discussion based on this research.

It is important that students undertake their own personal study to extend and deepen their knowledge and use of Italian beyond the classroom. There may also be an opportunity to carry out work experience in Italy.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Italian A Level provides good preparation for research and further study within higher education and employment, in the UK and abroad. Italian is a magnificent and beautiful language drawing on a rich cultural heritage and would complement any other subject. Employers are often impressed with job applicants who can offer a foreign language. Italian, in particular, is an important language in fields such as business, finance, fashion, art, tourism, food, wine, technology, sport and health industries.

Mathematics

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics

CONTENT

Two thirds of the course is focused on Pure Mathematics and its applications. This will extend the work on Number, Algebra, Ratio and Proportion and Geometry as well as covering Calculus. The remaining third of the course will be split equally between Statistics and Mechanics. There is no optional content.

The Statistics content will deal with handling data and probability and will complement Psychology, Biology, Geography and Economics.

The Mechanics content will apply Mathematics to problems in the real world and relate well to Physics and Engineering.

ASSESSMENT

There are three written examinations, to be taken in June of Year 13. These will be of equal weighting, with calculator permissible throughout. Two of the examinations will be in Pure Mathematics processes and applications and the third examination will be equally weighted in the areas of Statistics and Mechanics.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

There is an excellent range of career prospects for students with a mathematics qualification at A level. University courses in all the Sciences, Economics and Geography consider an Advanced qualification in mathematics as a significant advantage. The major sectors employing mathematicians are finance, computing, electronics and engineering, although there is a vast range of potential jobs.

With a background in mathematics you will be highly employable as it shows a logical mind.

Further Mathematics

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 8 in Mathematics

This must be taken as a 4th A level

CONTENT

In the first year, all students will complete and sit the AS level in Further Mathematics, with content split into 50% Pure Mathematics including complex numbers, vectors and matrices and 50% Applied Mathematics in the fields of Statistics and Decision Mathematics. Students can then pursue their studies of Further Mathematics throughout Year 13 to take the full A level in Further Mathematics at the end of the second year. The course assumes full knowledge and understanding all the content of A level Mathematics.

ASSESSMENT

For AS level Further Mathematics, there are two examination papers of 1 hour 40mins taken in June of Year 12, one in Pure Mathematics and the other in Statistics/Decision Maths.

For a full A level in Further Maths there are four one-and-a-half hour written examinations in June of Year 13, all with a calculator. Two of these will be compulsory Pure Mathematics content and the other two are Further Statistics and Decision Mathematics. It is only the Year 13 examinations that count towards the final grade in A level Further Mathematics.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Having two mathematics A level results sets you on the path to success in many university courses and towards an exciting career. You will have an advanced knowledge of all branches of mathematics, both pure and applied and will be highly regarded. Further Mathematics is considered highly desirable for many prestigious degree courses in the fields of Mathematics, Economics, Statistics, Physics and Engineering.

Media Studies

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

Media Studies has never held greater global relevance, making its study both exciting and widely applicable to contemporary culture. The media, as a whole, affects every person in one way or another. Through our study of media, we develop a student's understanding of how people become informed – or misinformed – by media products, and how the ideologies that govern our lives are created and sustained.

We want our A Level students to understand the influence of the media and how media industries make conscious choices about media language in order to create representations and target specific audiences. We aim to arm our learners with the ability to make informed judgements about these representations and to challenge them by exploring their own view of the truth and how the media chooses to represent it.

Component One: Media Messages

Section A: News and Online Media

Section B: Media Language and Representation
(Magazines/Advertising and Marketing/Music Videos)

Component Two: Evolving Media

Section A: Media Industries and Audiences
(Radio/Video Games/Film Industry)

Section B: Long Form Television Drama

Component Three: Making Media

Students will create a cross-media product in response to an OCR set brief. They will have 30 hours to produce their product.

ASSESSMENT

All assessment is completed at the end of the course and is by examination and coursework.

Component One: Media Messages (examination 35%)

Component Two: Evolving Media (examination 35%)

Component Three: Making Media (coursework 30%)

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Within our varied curriculum, there are frequent cross-curricular references, including English Language, History, Politics, Psychology and Sociology. This broadens the spectrum of opportunities available to our students, as they progress into further education. The study of media is one of the largest growing areas for study at A Level enabling students to develop a wide range of critical, analytical and creative skills, which are useful in many future careers.

Music

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Music

CONTENT

Music A Level is designed to allow learners to pursue their own musical interests. Learners develop skills in the three distinct but related disciplines of performing, composing and appraising, whilst having flexibility to specialise in either performing or composing. Learners may choose to apportion 10% of their assessment to either performing or composing as an in-depth study. The WJEC Eduqas Music A Level offers contrast and breadth as well as depth of study. Learners will engage with both classical and popular music. Areas of study will be The Western Classical Tradition through The Development of the Symphony (1750-1900), Musical Theatre and 20th Century Music.

ASSESSMENT

Component 1: Performing (*Learners will choose either Option A or B*).

- **Option A: Performing (35%)**

A performance consisting of a minimum of three pieces with a total duration of 10-12 minutes. At least one of these pieces must be as a soloist. The other pieces may be either a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study. At least one other piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one other, different area of study.

- **Option B: 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 with a total duration of 6-8 minutes. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study.

Component 2: Composition (*Learners will choose either Option A or B*).

- **Option A: Composing (25%)**

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 the board. Learners will have a choice of four set briefs, released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. The second composition is a free composition. The compositions must be a total duration of 4-6 minutes.

- **Option B: Composing (35%)**

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 the board. Learners will have a choice of four set briefs, released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. The second composition must reflect the musical characteristics of one different area of study (i.e. not the Western Classical Tradition) while the third composition is a free composition. The compositions must be a total length of 8-10 minutes.

Component 3: Appraising

Written examination: 2 hours 15 minutes (40%). This examination will focus of the three areas of study including some set works.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

There are many courses available at universities and conservatoires, from which music graduates enter a diverse range of professions, both in and out of the world of music and the creative arts. Although A Level Music involves a lot of creative work, the theoretical study of music history and theory is sufficiently rigorous that it is accepted as a serious academic subject for entry to most university courses.

Philosophy & Ethics

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in RE

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

Philosophy deals with such questions concerning the nature of truth and knowledge as discussed by ancient philosophers; psychology of religion, particularly the scientific observation of religious experience; the relationship between the mind and body; the nature of evil; arguments for the existence or non-existence of God; and the purpose, use and limitations of language.

In **Ethics**, we explore the nature of goodness and how knowledge of goodness can be defined, tested and discussed; ethical language; and conscience. The focus is on applying and evaluating ethical theories such as utilitarianism and natural law. These theories are then further developed in applied ethics, including sexual ethics and business ethics.

Developments in Religious Thought: These components are used to analyse and evaluate the significance, impact and contextualisation of ideas within the Philosophy and Ethics units. These include; the interconnections of ideas and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world; sources of religious wisdom and authority; and significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought, including the ideas discussed in psychology, science and sociology.

Most lessons are discussion-based, and students will need to be flexible thinkers with an open mind. There are no universally agreed right or wrong answers, but students will need to learn the scholarship that might support a variety of possible answers, and develop their own coherent ideas about the various topics studied, in relation to the established scholarly views. Ongoing assessment is based on essay writing, which is a skill which will be taught, but students need to be able to think critically and write clearly about quite complex questions.

ASSESSMENT

We follow the OCR 'Religious Studies' syllabus (H173, H573). There is no coursework. A' level grades are awarded based on three, two-hour, final examinations, taken in Y13.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This popular and thought-provoking course complements most subjects at A' level. It will help students develop skills of analysis, reasoning, communication and in-depth conceptual thinking. For these reasons, Religious Studies is one of only three additional subjects, other than the core GCSE subjects, that The Russell Group of universities recommends as an invaluable foundation for many university courses. The skills developed by a study of Philosophy and Ethics will be useful in any career requiring in-depth thinking, alongside clear and coherent communication, such as law, politics, education, social sciences, the media, or any area (eg medicine or business) where ethical decisions might need to be made.

Photography

Entry requirements:

A portfolio of work needs to be submitted before entry onto the course

CONTENT

Alongside the practical expertise you'll develop in your studies, you will also learn transferable skills valued in both higher education and the world of work. The analytical and creative problem solving elements of the course will support you in a range of subjects. Photography also teaches you how to learn from your experiences and work independently – skills valued by employers and higher education institutions alike.

- **Component 1 - Personal investigation. 60% of total A Level mark**

Students conduct a personal investigation based on an idea, issue or theme supported by written material. This will include written and practical elements. A Barcelona Trip at Easter 2019 is available.

- **Component 2 - Externally set assignment. 40% of total A Level mark**

Students select a starting point from eight questions set by AQA and preparatory work will take place between February and May. Students undertake 15 hours of unaided/ supervised time.

ASSESSMENT

Students are required to participate actively in their course of study, recognising and developing their own strengths and sustaining their own lines of enquiry. Students are expected to complete independent research, record, photograph, experiment, evaluate and modify ideas to extend thinking and inform their own artwork. All work presented for assessment must show coverage of each of the four Assessment Objectives. Each component is externally moderated in June.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Once you have built up a good portfolio of work you will be ready to develop your art studies further. Many students go on to do a one year foundation course at Art College. Further photography study at degree level could lead to a wide range of exciting careers from advertising to fashion photography and from commercial photography to photo journalism. If you have any questions about the course please look at the examination board website – www.aqa.org.uk - or contact a member of the Art Department.

Physical Education

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in PE

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE: GCSE grade 6 in Combined Science or Biology.

To be able to perform at a high level competitively in at least one sport

CONTENT

The syllabus specification seeks to develop a critical appreciation and understanding of physical activity within the context of sport and physical recreation. This is achieved by acquiring knowledge and understanding through the following subject areas:

- Applied Anatomy & Physiology
- Skill Acquisition & Sport Psychology
- Sport, Society and the Role of Technology
- Exercise Physiology & Biomechanical Movement

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is by two written examinations, a written analysis of performance and a practical examination.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This is an excellent subject to study if you want to progress to university for a degree in Physical Education, Teaching, Sports Science, Sport and Leisure Management and Sports Therapy to give just a few examples. An 'A' Level in Physical Education will be very useful for those wishing to follow a career as a health and fitness instructor, sports coach, physical training instructor in the armed forces, Sport Development Officer, and many others.

Politics

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

You will study how politics works and how to analyse and understand the news. Over the two years, you will study how the main political institutions and processes work in Britain and the USA. In addition, you will also study key political ideas and thinkers of the ideas of Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism and an optional extra such as Nationalism.

- **Component 1 - UK Politics**

We ask the questions: what is politics and why is it important? We investigate how elections work and why people vote the way they do. You examine how ordinary people participate in politics and ask just how democratic is the UK? We also examine the role of political parties and the core political ideas that they represent – conservatism, socialism and liberalism.

- **Component 2 - UK Government**

You learn about the British constitution and how it has changed. We examine the importance of Parliament, the Prime Minister and examine how well our system of government works. We also consider political ideologies such as nationalism and see how they influence the political debate and work of government via pressure groups.

- **Component 3 - Comparative Politics**

In this component we examine the roles of US Congress, the Supreme Court and the President in making democracy work in the USA. We also look at how the constitution shapes society, political practice and debate. We investigate how strong US democracy is and how people participate via elections, political parties & pressure groups and you also learn about the civil rights movement in the USA and the issue of race today. Throughout this component, there is a focus on comparison between the USA and the UK.

Year 12 visit the Houses of Parliament. A biennial trip to the USA gives students the opportunity to visit Washington DC. 2020-2021 was also enlivened by virtual speakers such as Julie Merson MP and Jonathan Friedland. 2016 saw a mock referendum on the EU and 2019 and 2019 saw mock general elections.

ASSESSMENT

You will be examined at the end of two years, in June of Year 13, in all 3 components. There is no coursework.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Government and Politics enhances those skills which are appropriate for careers involving writing, arguing, persuading and debating such as journalism, management, the Civil Service and the law. A range of skills involving processing and presenting information are taught.

Psychology

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in Mathematics

GCSE grade 6 English Language and English Literature

GCSE grade 5 in Biology or 55 in Combined Science

CONTENT

The Edexcel Psychology specification offers students the opportunity to gain a thorough introduction to the fascinating study of the human mind and behaviour. Students will study both classical and contemporary research, gaining an appreciation of the scientific research methods used by psychologists and how our understanding of psychology is applied today. Throughout the A level course, students will also develop the skills to analyse, assess and apply their knowledge to novel situations and research studies.

Year 12:

The topics in Year 1 focus on the areas of psychology that have laid the foundations of modern psychological understanding. Students look at four main psychological approaches: social, cognitive, biological and learning theories. The emphasis in Year 1 is on developing a strong understanding of topics, research methods and acquiring skills in evaluation, analysis and application of knowledge.

Year 13:

Year 2 builds on the knowledge acquired in Year 1, incorporating a higher level of understanding of psychological skills, research methods and synoptic analysis. Students will also apply their psychological understanding to the real world, with a focus on Clinical psychology and one other optional topic area.

ASSESSMENT

The A level is assessed through 3 external written papers at the end of Year 13:

- Paper 1: Foundations in psychology
- Paper 2: Applications of psychology (Clinical psychology and one optional topic from Criminological psychology, Child psychology and Health psychology)
- Paper 3: Psychological skills

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A level Psychology lays the foundations for further studies in psychology at degree level and beyond. The skills students gain through studying A level Psychology are also useful to a range of careers such as teaching, law, police, medicine, health, marketing and business.

Russian

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Russian

CONTENT

At A level, you will enhance your level of Russian with more complex phrases and vocabulary and learn to discuss topical social issues and phenomena in Russian speaking areas as well as cultural and literary themes. The course content will allow you to get to know Russian in depth focusing on:

- The development of Russian society: The life of Russian youth, education, the world of work, media
- The political and artistic culture of the Russian speaking world: Popular culture, festivals celebrations and customs
- Moscow – changes in the life of a big city: Population changes, social problems, the environment
- The last years of the USSR – Gorbachev (1985 – 1991): Perestroika, Glasnost, 1991

You will study from the 'Navigator' course materials and a bank of in-house materials which allow you the opportunity to develop your listening, oral, reading and writing skills. We also use film, magazines and articles to teach the topics and the department endeavours to organise trips to conferences and workshops when available.

The structure of the Russian language and its grammar is studied in considerable depth but often through light-hearted activities. In both Year 12 and 13 you will have the opportunity to practise your oral skills with a native speaker.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of Year 13 you will be assessed across all four skills as you were at GCSE. Translation skills are also assessed and you will write about one literary text and one film, which you will have studied during the course. The speaking exam includes reporting on an independent research project, requiring you to provide statistics and evidence of different viewpoints. The assessment criteria value cultural knowledge.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This is an excellent subject to study if you want to progress to university for a degree in languages. It will also help you if you are interested in a career in business, law, tourism, banking, the Civil Service, education, interpreting or translating. It will provide you with an excellent base for learning other Slavic and non-Slavic languages, and will give you an unusual qualification which is widely regarded as a mark of intellectual prowess.

Science – Biology

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Biology or 66 in Combined
Science
Grade 6 in Mathematics

CONTENT

There is hardly a day goes by without Biology being in the news, whether it is the rapid development of Covid vaccinations, the effect of climate change on biodiversity or the use of genome sequencing to develop new drugs and treatment for human diseases. If you are curious, resilient and can relate what you study in the classroom to real life, Biology at A level is a suitable subject for you to study.

Practical work is at the heart of studying Biology A Level. This will include dissections and the use of equipment such as colorimeters, plus you will develop further the skills you learned at GCSE, such as analysis and evaluation. Although practicals do not contribute towards the final grade, examination questions will be based on the wide variety of practical activities that are integrated into day to day teaching. This means that you will have more opportunities to learn and use practical skills to link theory with practice, which will deepen your knowledge and understanding.

In Year 12 you will study 4 topics:

1. Biological Molecules
2. Cells
3. Organisms exchange substances with their Environment
4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms

In Year 13 you will study a further 4 topics:

5. Energy transfers in and between organisms
6. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environment
7. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
8. The Control of gene expression

ASSESSMENT

At the end of Year 13, there are 3 written examinations, each are 2 hours long. Paper 1 examines content from topics 1–4 and is worth 35%, paper 2 examines content from topics 5–8 and is worth 35% and paper 3 examines content from all 8 topics and is worth 30% of the A Level. All 3 papers include questions on relevant practical skills.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A Level Biology lays the foundations for further study and careers in biological sciences, medicine and conservation. The course ensures progression from GCSE and ensures that the skills and knowledge that universities require are developed.

Science – Chemistry

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Chemistry or 66 in Combined
Science
Grade 6 in Mathematics

CONTENT

The core aim of the Chemistry A Level course is to develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other.

Students are encouraged to develop their interest in and enthusiasm for Chemistry and understand how it contributes to the success of the economy and society. The content of the course is arranged into broad topics as follows:

- Module 1 – Development of practical skills in chemistry
- Module 2 – Foundations in chemistry
- Module 3 – The periodic table, enthalpy changes, reaction rates and equilibrium
- Module 4 – Core organic chemistry
- Module 5 – Physical chemistry and transition elements
- Module 6 – Further organic chemistry and analysis

ASSESSMENT

The A Level exams are sat at the end of the second year and assess the entire course content over three exam papers. They are broadly divided into organic and inorganic/ physical chemistry, with the final paper being entirely synoptic. The practical skills are assessed through written examination, but in addition students will be awarded a Practical Endorsement upon completion of a portfolio of the practical work undertaken throughout the course.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

This course aims to develop awareness of the world outside the laboratory and the skills learned open up a wide range of careers, both scientific and non-scientific. These key skills include imaginative and critical thinking, problem solving, communication and ICT. That is why you will find chemists working in accountancy, law, manufacturing, advertising, engineering, space research, food and drink, pharmaceuticals, retail, construction and cosmetics. With a chemistry qualification, the world is your oyster!

Science – Physics

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Physics or 66 in Combined
Science
Grade 6 in Mathematics

CONTENT

Year 12

Measurements and their errors / Particles and radiation / Waves / Mechanics and energy / Electricity.

Year13

Further mechanics and thermal physics / Fields / Nuclear physics. Plus a further option from the following: Astrophysics, Medical physics, Engineering physics, Turning points in physics or Electronics.

ASSESSMENT

There is no coursework on the AQA course. However, your practical technique will be assessed during practicals. If you successfully demonstrate the practical skills expected by an A level Science student you will receive a separate commendation. There are also 12 required practicals which you can be assessed on in the final examinations.

There are three exams at the end of the two years for A-level, all of which are two hours long. At least 15% of the marks for A-level Physics are based on what you learned in your practicals. The exam papers are a mixture of multiple choice, short and long answer questions.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Studying A-level Physics offers an infinite number of amazing career opportunities including:

- Geophysicist/field seismologist
- Healthcare scientist, medical physics
- Research scientist
- Secondary school teacher
- Meteorologist
- Product/process development scientist
- Systems developer

You can also move into engineering, astrophysics, chemical physics, nanotechnology, renewable energy and more, the opportunities are endless. Employers are extremely keen to employ students who have studied Physics because of the skills they've developed through their education. As a consequence Physicists achieve some of the highest starting salaries once they leave university.

Sociology

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 5 in Sociology

If the subject has not been studied at GCSE:

GCSE grade 5 in English Language and English Literature

CONTENT

YEAR 12

- **Education:** The role and functions of the education system, differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity; teacher/pupil relationships; pupil identities and subcultures; the hidden curriculum; the significance of educational policies and the impact of globalisation on educational policy.
- **Research Methods:** Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design, sources of data, relationship between Positivism, Interpretivism and sociological methods, theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, method(s) and conduct of research.
- **Education with Methods in context:** Application of sociological research methods to the study of education.
- **Topics in Sociology: Families and households** Changes to the family and household structure; changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, divorce and childbearing; changes within the family e.g. gender roles, domestic labour, power relationships; childhood, and changes in status of children in the family and society; demographic trends in the UK since 1900 including ageing population and migration.

YEAR 13

- **Topics in Sociology: The Media** Relationships between ownership and control of the media, new media and its significance in contemporary society, the media, globalisation and popular culture, media representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability, the relationship between the media, their content and presentation, and audiences.
- **Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods:** Different theories of crime, deviance, social order and social control; the social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender, age, locality and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime; Globalisation and crime; the media and crime; Green crime, human rights, and state crimes; Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment; victims and the role of criminal justice system and other agencies.

Students cover the following theory: Consensus, Conflict, Structural and Social Action theories, the concepts of Modernity and Postmodernity and the following debates - Is Sociology a Science? Can Sociology be value free? What is the relationship between Sociology and social policy?

ASSESSMENT

All topics will be examined at the end of Year 13

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Sociologists are popular with employers because they think critically and independently and have a deep understanding of the complex and interlinked nature of society. Sociology is a people based subject and is relevant to a wide range of careers including teaching, medicine, health and social care, media, politics, police and law.

Spanish

Entry requirements:

GCSE grade 6 in Spanish

CONTENT

Through a variety of topic areas such as family and marriage, tourism, music and media, festivals and the world of work, you will develop your language skills and consolidate your knowledge of grammar and translation.

In addition, you will study a Spanish film in Year 12 and undertake a study of literature in Year 13. You will also continue to study a variety of social, political and cultural issues from a range of Hispanic countries.

We use films, popular magazines and newspapers alongside the course book to teach the topics, and the department has organised trips to conferences, the cinema and theatre productions to complement the course. You may also have the opportunity to take part in a Spanish trip to Andalucia or Cantabria to develop speaking skills and cultural knowledge.

ASSESSMENT

You will be assessed across all four skills as you were at GCSE. Assessment will also include a focus on translation skills and you will study two pieces of literature in detail (a film in Year 12, and a short novel or play in Year 13). The speaking examination will include an independent research project which will require you to provide statistics and evidence of different viewpoints. The assessment criteria also require you to demonstrate cultural knowledge.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Spanish is the third most widely spoken language (after Mandarin Chinese and English) and has become increasingly important as companies develop and broaden their links with Spain and South America. The world of Business Management, Marketing, Tourism, Banking, the Civil Service, Journalism and Telecommunications all provide opportunities for languages graduates.

In addition to reading a purely languages degree at University, you could combine your Spanish with such subjects as Business Studies, Accountancy, Science, Engineering, Law, Mathematics, Politics, History of Art and Information Technology. Competence in Spanish could also be a useful tool in the service industries.

English Language (GCSE 9–1)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

This course is compulsory for students who have not yet achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English Language.

CONTENT

The course covers two units that are assessed for GCSE English Language. Students need to show functional skills in understanding and producing non-fiction texts, together with speaking and listening and writing creatively.

ASSESSMENT

The course will be completed when students gain a Grade 4 in either the November re-take or in the summer.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Achieving a Grade 4 in English Language is a requirement for many further courses, higher education and career opportunities.

Mathematics (GCSE 9–1)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

This course is compulsory for students who have not yet achieved a grade 4 in GCSE Mathematics.

CONTENT

The course covers Number, Algebra, Ratio and Proportion, Geometry, Probability and Statistics. The teaching will identify and target students' individual weaknesses and thereby support them to re-take GCSE 9-1 Maths in either November or June, as appropriate to each individual.

ASSESSMENT

One Non-calculator examination worth 33 1/3 % Two Calculator examinations worth 33 1/3 % each

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Achieving a grade 4 in Mathematics is a requirement for many further courses, higher education and career opportunities. Grade 4 is considered a Pass grade at GCSE Maths.

Useful Contacts

Subject	Subject Leader	Email address
Business/Economics	Mr M Walker	mwalker@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Computer Science	Mr P Bedwell	pbedwell@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Design & Technology	Mrs N Garcia	ngarcia@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Drama & Theatre Studies	Ms L Mack	lmack@presdales.herts.sch.uk
English	Mr P Samways	psamways@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Fine Art/Photography	Mrs L Harmer	lharmer@presdales.herts.sch.uk
French	Mme C Ainge	cainge@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Geography	Mrs L Hyslop	lhyslop@presdales.herts.sch.uk
German	Mrs M Yates	myates@presdales.herts.sch.uk
History	Ms V Workman	vworkman@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Italian	Mrs L Evenden	levenden@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Mathematics	Mr M Payne	mpayne@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Media Studies	Mr D Soltysik	dsoltysik@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Music	Ms E Cooper	ecooper@presdales.herts.sch.uk
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Head of Year 12	Mrs Schillaci-Rowland	dschillacirowland@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Head of Year 13	Ms Peters	lpeters@presdales.herts.sch.uk
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