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Why come to Oxford Spires Sixth Form?

Dear Parent and student

I hope you enjoy looking through Oxford Spires Academy’s Sixth Form prospectus and find that there is something here of interest for you. We pride ourselves at Oxford Spires on being a friendly, high aspiring and successful Sixth Form. We offer preparation for a full range of career paths, from apprenticeships to university, and everyone in Year 12 does work experience. We offer a full range of A level subjects and have very strong provision for those who require that little bit extra to impress in personal statements and at interview for Oxbridge and Russell Group universities. We offer Level 3 BTEC courses as well and pathways through to apprenticeships.

Our Sixth Formers lead the school. The students themselves have created the culture of success and collaboration that makes being a part of Oxford Spires Sixth Form a great experience for all. Our student leadership team lead School Council and House events, as well as mentoring younger students and undertaking community service: building their transferable skills by helping others.

You will have Sixth Form facilities to enable you to work effectively, support for your own personal path through Years 12 and 13, and an experienced Sixth Form team to help you achieve your ambitions. Have a look at what we offer, talk to our current and past students at our open evening, and get in contact with me to organise a tour of the school. We look forward to seeing you at Oxford Spires!

Dr Jackie Watson, Vice Principal (Sixth Form, Careers and Enrichment)

What is Oxford Spires Sixth Form like for students?

A working environment for the 21st Century

Oxford Spires Academy offers its Sixth Form students a working environment to encourage learning. The Reuben Business Centre has a purpose built Common Room and study space, exclusively for the use of Sixth Form students and allowing them to work more independently, as they must. Here, students can work in groups or individually, and have IT access. There is further access to the IT network for students all around the building, and Sixth Formers work where it suits them best. With access to documents and electronic material from home, there is never any excuse for missing work!

What is available for Sixth Form students?

Apart from the Common Room and Sixth Form study space, students often find teachers and gain extra help during study periods, working in subject areas, and there is also silent Sixth Form work space in the Library. As the Sixth Form grows, these facilities are under review. Year 13 students already have another common room, in addition to the Reuben Building space.

This area of the Library is being redeveloped to provide more careers resources for students looking ahead to university, apprenticeships and job applications. Careers guidance is available for all Sixth Formers and individual interviews take place in Careers Room next to the Library.

When they are not in lessons, Sixth Form students have their own café, the Willows, where they can socialise and work informally, perhaps in groups. There are vending machines and a small kitchen in the Common Room too.

Extra-curricular and supercurricular activities are really important to Sixth Formers, and staff offer a variety of day and residential trips, and after school visits to lectures, workshops and events in Oxford. Students participate annually in debating competitions and all Year 12s undertake Work Experience during their first year in the Sixth Form. This is, of course, in addition to the usual school provision of sports, drama, art and music events in school, many of which come through the House system and its annual competitions.
How to apply

Students who are already at Oxford Spires Academy in Year 11 need to apply via the website – www.oxfordspiresacademy.org - by the end of January, after the Sixth Form Options evening, discussion with subject teachers and tutors, and discussion with parents.

Students who currently study at another school should also apply via the website – www.oxfordspiresacademy.org. For further information, a paper application form or to book an appointment or a tour with Dr Watson, please contact the Sixth Form Office, on 01865 415937. You can follow events at Oxford Spires Academy Sixth Form on Twitter - @OSASixthForm.

Meetings to discuss subject combinations will take place in February and March. As the Sixth Form timetable is based on student subject choices, though, the earlier your application, the more likely it will be that you will be able to study your choice of subjects. Don’t worry if you change your mind – there is the opportunity for changes to those choices after GCSE results.

How courses in the Sixth Form work

Students who gain five or more grades 9-5 at GCSE, and have the required grades for the specific subjects they wish to study, progress on to a Level 3 programme. Level 3 courses are now assessed after 2 years – at the end of Year 13.

In most subjects, there will be an AS exam at the end of Year 12, which is ‘stand-alone’. Students will take this qualification, to help university applications and to show how to improve in Year 13, but it will not form part of the final A level grade. Assessment for A level will take place for ALL subjects in Year 13.

Students should choose subjects they will enjoy, for which they are likely to be qualified and which will ensure their smooth progress to the career path of their choice.

Students will also be required to resit their Maths and/or English GCSE if they have not reached grade 4, as they will need these qualifications, whatever their future plans.

Why students enjoy the Sixth Form at Oxford Spires Academy

The student experience here really is unique. We are provided with the perfect balance of independence and structure: a balance that complements post-GCSE studies extremely well.

The student/teacher relationships here are phenomenal. Our teachers give 110%, taking an interest in students that goes beyond their obligations – helping us academically, in our hobbies and passions, in our future decisions and in our emotional wellbeing. Whether it’s subject teachers, tutors, sixth form staff or the members of our House, we are spoilt for choice about who to turn to for help.

Sixth Form staff make UCAS and other applications easy. We have a great team that will help you make decisions about which post-sixteen pathway would suit you best, how to apply and by what deadline, as well as help you understand many of the practical worries about leaving school, like finance or accommodation.

There are few Sixth Form settings in this city that provide content for your personal statement on the level that we do. The House system is integral to the way we run things here and it provides the best structure for support and achievement alike. Whether it’s House Drama, House Music and Dance, House Science, House Public Speaking or the multiple House Sport competitions throughout the year – whoever you are – there are opportunities to take part and lead others in your chosen passion. Leadership, teamwork and organisational skills are all heavily emphasised and adapted to your talents and personality, to help you grow.

There are also many cross-house collaborative efforts such as the school choir, the school play and also competitions outside of school, such as the English Speaking Union Debating, that we enjoy taking part in. Schemes, like the creative writing group, First Story, and the Duke of Edinburgh program that are fantastic to build friendships, as well as develop material for future applications.

But, more than these extra-curricular achievements, there are countless opportunities for you to succeed academically at Oxford Spires Academy. Whatever your ability, there is provision here – support for those that need it and always more to do for those who need stretching.

The Student Leadership Team
What qualifications do I need for this course?
You should have Art GCSE at Grade 6, or above. You should have a broad awareness and experience of art and design materials and processes, and have begun to build your own portfolio of work.

What will I study?
Unit 1 – Personal Investigation. This is the personal portfolio and incorporates two major elements: supporting studies and practical work. Internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

Unit 2 – Second Personal Investigation that counts towards their coursework grade. There is a more explicit focus on the written element to prepare for the Personal Study in Year 13.

Unit 3 – Personal Investigation. This is the personal portfolio and incorporates three major elements: supporting studies, practical work, and a Personal Study. Internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated. The Personal Study is a 3000-5000 word written investigation into an Artist / Art work or topic of your choice around the theme in Unit 3 and is worth 12.5% of the overall grade. To strengthen their Personal Study, all art students are entered into the National ARTiculation public speaking competition.

Unit 4 – Externally Set Assignment. Incorporates two major elements: preparatory studies and the 15-hour period of sustained focus. Externally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

How will I study?
A wide range of activities and options and in-depth assignments. You will explore a wide range of media and specialisms. You will be expected to work outside of lessons in the studio to develop your on-going portfolio and build your skills and knowledge. Visits to galleries, museums, workshops and studios will be a key element to your research.

How will I be assessed?
All work is assessed internally and then externally moderated. Units 1-3 are internally set, and the Exam units 4 is externally set.

What can I do afterwards?
Students can progress from this qualification to further education courses such as the BTEC Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (QCF), higher education courses such as BTEC Higher National Diplomas in art and design subjects, or direct to a BA Honours degree with an art and design focus, apprenticeships or other training, employment in a related sector.

Lewis Waring
Lewis studied Art, English Literature and History, and this gave him a lot of alternatives. He gained A grade in A level Art and decided to go to Gloucester University to study Fine Art. In the Sixth Form he took part in the ARTiculation competition, representing the school at the Ashmolean Museum, where he was also a youth ambassador. His photography was published in a Modern Art Oxford book, and he was a successful creative writer – with an AS level in Creative Writing alongside his main studies. Lewis was a key part of the Student Leadership Team, and developed his leadership skills through helping to establish the student council across the school.
Anna Beekmayer

Anna was interested in applying for Dentistry at university and took Biology alongside Chemistry and Maths. She also researched for an Extended Project looking at the efficacy of traditional Chinese medicines. Anna’s interests were wide and, as well as playing an active part in OSA’s Medical Society, and taking a summer Nuffield science research placement, she starred on the BBC reading her poetry.

Having gained three A*s in her A levels, and another in her EPQ, she took up a place to read Biomedical Science at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

What qualifications do I need for this course?

5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above with a minimum grade 6 in Biology (or 6-6 Combined Science), English and Maths. Due the popularity of the subject at OSA, a cap on the number of students entering the course may be required. In this case, priority will be given to students with the highest GCSE science grades.

What will I study?

You will study a range of topics across the two years of study. In your first year, these will include: Biological Molecules, Cells, Exchange Between organisms and Genetics. In the second year, you will progress with your understanding of Biology to consider topics such as: ecology, control of gene expression, energy transfers and coordination of responses to stimuli in plants and animals.

How will I study?

You will use a range of methods in class, such as individual and group work alongside regular practical work. In lessons, we will consider the theory behind the topics that we are studying and you will learn to apply this to the wider world and to other aspects of Biology. Outside of the lesson, you will develop and use independent skills to complete homework that will be set after each lesson. This may include research, writing up practicals or completing exam questions.

How will I be assessed?

At A Level, there are 3 exams at the end of the two year course. These will cover all of the topics of the course. You will also work towards a Practical Endorsement certificate throughout the year by completing a range of core practicals and practical write-ups. Both of these will be needed for future university courses in the sciences and further study of Biology.

What can I do afterwards?

Biology is a great choice of subject for people who want a career in health and clinical professions, and wish to study courses at university such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Optometry and Nursing. It is also important for Zoology, Marine Biology or Forensic Science. Biology is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study.

Anna Beekmayer

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What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 and above, including English and Maths, and Business if you have studied it.

What will I study?
Our A level course (AQA) introduces you to all you need to know about working in business, providing a solid foundation for further study. With a focus on helping you to become a good decision maker, you will learn essential managerial skills, alongside techniques to help you become an analytical problem solver. These skills are all highly sought after and valued in a wide range of careers.

Year 12 (first year)
An introduction to key business areas: marketing, operations, finance and human resource management. This includes a special focus on decision-making – particularly how decisions made in one area can affect the rest of the business.

Topic 1 – What is business?
Topic 2 – Managers, leadership and decision making
Topic 3 – Decision making to improve marketing performance
Topic 4 – Decision making to improve operational performance
Topic 5 – Decision making to improve financial performance
Topic 6 – Decision making to improve human resource performance

Year 13 (second year)
An investigation of the strategic decisions that all businesses have to make.

Topic 7 – Analysing the strategic position of a business
Topic 8 – Choosing the strategic direction
Topic 9 – Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies
Topic 10 – Managing strategic change

How will I be assessed?
Assessment is an AS exam at the end of Year 12 which will give you a recognised qualification equivalent to half an A level and a full A level exam at the end of Year 13.

AS assessment consists of two 90 minute written exams at the end of the one year course. Each exam will be worth half of the AS. Exams draw on material from the whole course, and will feature a range of question styles including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, essay questions, data response questions and case studies.

A-level assessment consists of three x 2 hour written exams taken at the end of the two year course. Each exam will be worth a third of the A-level. All three papers will draw on material from the whole course, and will feature a range of question styles including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, essay questions, data response questions and case studies.

What can I do afterwards?
If you’d like to study business, finance or management at university, A-level Business provides an excellent foundation. The skills you learn are transferable across a broad range of subjects and careers. Whatever you choose to do in the future, you’ll find that the things you learn in this course will help. For example, you’ll probably work with lots of different people, so knowledge of motivational theory will help you to work well with others and help them achieve their potential. You might have ambitious plans to start your own business. If that’s the case, you’ll find the marketing and finance topics particularly useful.
Business Studies (BTEC Level 3)

Business Studies offers a thorough insight into the world of business that all of us encounter every day.

What qualifications do I need for this course?
You need 5 GCSEs at grade 5 and above, preferably including English.

Why study a Business BTEC?

University progression
BTECs have a strong reputation with Universities and currently 95% of universities in the UK accept BTEC students, including competitive universities from the Russell Group. In 2015 over a quarter of students who were accepted into Higher education held at least one BTEC proving they are an excellent choice for those moving into Higher education.

Employability
BTECs prepare students for employment. In addition to academic skills students are also able to develop employability skills as assessments offer the experience of real-life practical tasks.

Practical assessments
BTECs are more practical qualifications. They focus on flexible learning and create independent learners. This appeals to those who find traditional teaching methods and exams difficult. The assessment for BTECs is largely based on regular coursework which makes them an ideal option for those who struggle under the pressure of exams.

What will I study?

Single Business
Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate - 1 A level

Double Business
Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma - 2 A levels

Both single and double business students will study business environments, marketing and customer service. In addition, double business students will also study international business, management, human resources and event management.

How will I study?
We do a lot of investigation into businesses to find out how they are putting the theory into practice in the current economic climate. A number of day trips may take place to bring learning to life and you will be required to carry out work and independent research of both local and national business inside and outside of school. The coursework element of this qualification will require you to work consistently hard throughout the two years as assignments will be set that count towards the final grade on a regular basis.

How will I be assessed?
Assessment is a mixture of examinations (externally assessed) and coursework (internally assessed). All assessment has a practical as well as an academic element to it.

What can I do afterwards?
Are you a real go-getter with a desire to succeed? The world of business is vibrant and fast paced, offering opportunities across a range of industries. This course prepares you for roles in a variety of sectors as well as self-employment and university. You gain experience, expertise, and the essential business and entrepreneurial skills in a sector of your choice, alongside a recognised qualification. We are able to develop your business skills, knowledge and understanding in areas such as marketing and human resources. You will build your confidence in a business environment as you’ll work closely with employers whilst undertaking real projects. The course will also improve your communication skills as you’ll be writing business reports and making professional presentations.
Chemistry (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above including English with a minimum grade 6 in Chemistry (or 6-6 Combined Science) and Maths. It would also be helpful to study A-Level Maths but this is not essential. Due to the popularity of the subject at OSA, a cap on the number of students entering the course may be required. In this case, priority will be given to students with the highest GCSE science grades.

What will I study?
- The course is divided into three sections: Organic, Inorganic and Physical Chemistry. It builds upon the foundations of GCSE Chemistry and extends it to include:
  - How Chemistry relates to industry, including chemical calculations
  - Synthesis of organic compounds and their reaction mechanisms
  - Reactivity patterns in the Periodic Table, analytical techniques and basic Biochemistry
  - How to carry out a range of essential practical techniques.

How will I study?
The course is intensive and requires a strong element of independent study. You will need to learn a significant body of work and apply this both qualitatively and quantitatively. Therefore, it is vital that you have a good grasp of mathematics. You need to be an independent student with the ability to problem solve.

How will I be assessed?
The course is assessed by 3 exams at the end of the two year course. In addition, students will have to carry out ongoing practical work, over the two years, which will be assessed as part of the practical endorsement.

What can I do afterwards?
A level Chemistry is a challenging, academic course highly valued by employers and university admissions tutors alike due to the level of commitment required to attain the higher grades. Besides the possibility of working specifically in the field of chemistry, a Chemistry A-level qualification is compulsory for most Medical, Dental and Veterinary courses as well as other Science degrees. The Chemistry course will provide you with the following skills: scientific, numerical and technical skills; an enquiring mind; logical approach to solving problems; patience and persistence; the ability to analyse data; leadership and teamworking skills; the ability to make decisions; good spoken and written communication skills; determination, creativity, flexibility and decisiveness. Chemistry is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study for a wide variety of course.

Sara Al Dahwi
Sara gained A* grades in Chemistry, Biology and Maths, as well as an Extended Project examining antibiotic resistance. She was sure that she wished to study Medicine from the start of Year 12, and undertook medical work experience, as well as running the school’s Medical Society and supplementing her A level knowledge through short courses, lectures and a summer science placement. She is now studying Medicine at Keble College, Oxford, and has helped students following her to prepare for applications and admissions tests.
Classical Civilisation (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
You will need 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including grade 6 in English Literature or History.

What will I study?
Classical Civilisation is the study of the culture and ideas of Ancient Greece and Rome. The course at OSA is mainly literary, though it will cover ideas and examples of classical art and philosophy. In the first year you will study Epic (looking at translations of Virgil’s Aeneid and one of Homer’s Odyssey or Iliad) and Greek Theatre (with a focus on the context of theatre in Athens, and on both tragedy and comedy). The second year will move attention to classical thought, and will look at areas such as religion, love, politics and war. These, of course, are the literature and the ideas that have shaped culture in most of Europe, and learning about them is a really good way to support studies in English Literature, History, Philosophy and Ethics, Politics, and Modern Languages.

How will I study?
You will have discussions in class, based on prior reading. You should enjoy reading – and analysing – literary texts such as plays and poetry to do this course. You will be expected to research issues and make presentations. You will learn how to write essays that present an argument clearly, and to answer shorter questions – and in order to do this, you’ll practise exam-style work.

How will I be assessed?
There will be two exams for the AS at the end of Year 12, and if you successfully complete the first year and progress to Year 13, there will be three exam papers at the end of the A level course.

For AS:
- Paper 1 (The World of the Hero) = 1hr 30min
- Paper 2 (Culture and the Arts) = 1hr 30min

For A level:
- Paper 1 (The World of the Hero) = 2hr 20min
- Paper 2 (Culture and the Arts) = 1hr 45min
- Paper 3 (Beliefs and Ideas) = 1hr 45min

What can I do afterwards?
Almost anything! The skills this course develops are highly transferable, and 70% of degree-level jobs do not mind which subjects you have studied at A level or at university.

If you wished to go to university to study Classics, you can do this – and would learn Latin or Greek language once you were there. It would also help you if you planned to go to study English, History, Philosophy, Politics and so on – or subjects such as Law.

Future jobs that require the skills classical subjects build include work in museums, being an archivist, a lawyer, work in publishing or journalism, teaching, work in public relations – but many jobs in business or enterprise would also value intellectual flexibility and analytical thinking skills too.

If you do not plan to go to university, the focus on reasoned argument, on examination of source material and on verbal confidence and articulacy are highly marketable skills in terms of apprenticeships and traineeships.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
You need 5 GCSEs at grade 5. In addition you will be required to have a minimum of grade 6 in Computing and grade 6 in English, Maths and Physics (or Physics papers in Double Science). Prior experience with programming and a coursework programming project are highly desirable, and if you didn’t have the option to take Computing at GCSE, you will need to discuss this with the Head of Subject.

What will I study?
The qualification will provide learners with a range of transferable skills which will facilitate personal growth and foster cross curriculum links in areas such as maths, science and design and technology. Computer Science is a very creative subject and skills such as problem solving and analytical thinking will all be refined and explored as you progress through the learning and assessment programme.

Computer Science uses mathematics (and knowledge from Science and Technology) to express its computational laws and processes. As such, Computer Science qualifications must contain a minimum of 10% mathematical skills. You will learn to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills of computational processes and problem solving in both theoretical and practical ways.

In the AS course you will study two components: 01 Computing Principles: this unit covers the internal workings of the Central Processing Unit (CPU), Networking, the exchange of data (this includes web-page design and java script) and will also look at software development, data types (including Boolean Algebra, number representation, and encryption methods); and legal and ethical issues and both procedural and object orientated programming methods. 02 Algorithms and Problem Solving: This unit draws upon knowledge from unit 1 and develops computational thinking and algorithms in order to describe solutions to problems.

The content of the A Level in Computer Science is divided into three components: 01 Computer systems component: contains the majority of the content of the specification and is assessed in a written paper recalling knowledge and understanding. 02: Algorithms and programming component relates principally to problem solving skills needed to apply the knowledge and understanding encountered in Component 01 and to apply these to Component 03. 03 Programming project which is a practical portfolio based assessment with a task and is produced in an appropriate programming language and submitted as a report demonstrating your ability to analyse, design, develop, test, evaluate and document a program written in a suitable programming language and must also follow the agile development approach to the project development.

How will I be assessed?
Computing AS level is assessed the end of the course by two equally weighted written examination papers of 75 minute duration. Computing A level is assessed the end of the course by two written examination papers of 2½ hours duration, each worth 40%. The final 20% will be earned from the programming project.

What can I do afterwards?
This qualification is suitable for pursuing any career in which an understanding of technology is needed. The qualification is also suitable for any further study as part of a course of general education. A range of transferable skills which will facilitate personal growth and foster cross curriculum links in areas such as maths, science and design and technology. Computer Science is a very academic but creative subject and skills such as problem solving and analytical thinking make the course a desirable course for those intending to pursue either a practical vocation in the Technology or IT industry, as well as University Study in Computer Science, Physics, Mathematics, Technology or Engineering.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
Pupils will be required to have a minimum of grade 6 in Design and Technology and grade 6 in English, Maths and Science.

What will I study?
The WJEC GCE in Design and Technology offers a unique opportunity in the curriculum for learners to identify and solve real problems by designing and making products or systems. Design and technology is an inspiring, rigorous and practical subject. This specification encourages learners to use creativity and imagination when applying iterative design processes to develop and modify designs, and to design and make prototypes that solve real world problems, considering their own and others’ needs, wants, aspirations and values.

How will I study?
Learners should take every opportunity to integrate and apply their understanding and knowledge from other subject areas studied during key stage 4, with a particular focus on Science and Mathematics, and those subjects they are studying alongside Design and Technology at A level.

How will I be assessed?
There will be no AS exam in this subject.

Component 1: Design and Technology in the 21st Century.
Written exam (3 hours) – worth 50%

Component 2: Design and Make Project. Non-exam assessment of 80 hours – work 50%

What can I do afterwards?
You might use your Product Design to go to university or take an apprenticeship. You could enter any of the disciplines of Engineering (mechanical, electrical, aeronautical, fluid, structural), as well as going into Product Design itself. It is also useful for Architecture applications.
independently. You will perform regularly but also you will need to make detailed notes, complete essays, reflect and analyse your work and the work of others. Develop a deep knowledge of practitioners and their influence on the development of theatre over the centuries. You should read plays, visit the theatre and generally be involved in the faculty, sharing your passion and skill.

How will I be assessed?
You will be constantly assessed through practical performance and written tasks set in lessons by your teacher. Formal assessment is;

Component 1: Ensemble Performance (Devised) - 30 minutes and a 3500 word supporting portfolio (Coursework) in Year 12
Component 2: Ensemble Performance – 30 minutes (Scripted) and a Monologue Performance – 5 minutes (Scripted) (external visiting examiner) in Year 13
Component 3: One 2.5 hour written exam in Year 13

What can I do afterwards?
A level Drama will then give you access to an Arts degree at university, an Arts placement or an acting career through Drama School. However, Drama focuses heavily on communication skills, team work, organisation, time management, being creative and thinking outside the box – many of the graduate attributes that universities and employers are seeking.

What qualifications do I need for this course?
Drama and Theatre at A Level is all about passion and commitment for the practical performance elements but also about being able to express ideas and opinions relating to technical theatre conventions and the creative process. You will need a minimum of Drama GCSE grade 5 and 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including English. Students who do not have GCSE Drama must have participated in other drama and dance activities both in school and outside, you must also discuss this with the Head of Subject.

What will I study?
Component 1: Devising – will form 40% of the final grade. You will devise an original performance piece using one key extract from a performance text and your performance will have a clear theatre practitioner focus. You will then create a portfolio of supporting evidence exploring and contextualising the creative process you and the ensemble followed. The unit is coursework and is completed over the course of year 12 – it is vital students see as much live theatre as possible to help shape their work and ideas.

Component 2: Text is Performance – will form 20% of the final grade. All students will see live theatre throughout the course and will need to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen. This is an extended response to a choice of 2 questions - students are allowed 500 words of notes.

Section A – Live Theatre Evaluation. All students will see live theatre throughout the course and will need to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen. This is an extended response to a choice of 2 questions - students are allowed 500 words of notes.

Section B – Realising a Performance Text. Students answer two questions based on an unseen extract of a text studied. Students have to demonstrate understanding from the point of view of a Performer and a Designer.

Section C – Interpreting a Performance Text. Students will study Wozzeck and create an interpretation in the style of Punchdrunk. Students will demonstrate their reimagined concept and how it would be communicated to a contemporary audience. Answer questions on an unseen extract of text.

How will I study?
Everything you do is rooted in the practical experience of performance, designing or directing. You will need to spend time rehearsing as a group and individually, both in lessons and independently. You will perform regularly but also you will need to make detailed notes, complete essays, reflect and analyse your work and the work of others. Develop a deep knowledge of practitioners and their influence on the development of theatre over the centuries. You should read plays, visit the theatre and generally be involved in the faculty, sharing your passion and skill.

How will I be assessed?
You will be constantly assessed through practical performance and written tasks set in lessons by your teacher. Formal assessment is;

Component 1: Ensemble Performance (Devised) - 30 minutes and a 3500 word supporting portfolio (Coursework) in Year 12
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What qualifications do I need for this course?
You will need 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including grade 5 in either English Language or English Literature.

What will I study?
A level English Language is not like GCSE. Although you still analyse non-literary texts (websites, leaflets, newspaper articles etc.), you learn to do this in a much more technical way – learning a lot about grammar. You also look at spoken texts – transcriptions of conversations – and how they work.
As well as analysis of texts, you learn theory areas about language use, including:

- Language and gender
- Language and social class
- Children’s language acquisition
- Language change

Finally, you learn to write in particular forms and for specific audiences, producing your own stories, articles and web-pages to appeal to different readers.

How will I study?
You will need to be interested in language. In class, you will take part in discussion work and exercises to develop your understanding. You will debate and give presentations.
On paper, you will learn how to write analyses of texts, essays about theory and more creative work. You will need to keep notes, and to build on class notes at home.
You will be expected to read a wide variety of texts independently, including broadsheet newspapers (or their web equivalents), and to build your own wider notes on linguistic issues – rather like a scrapbook.

How will I be assessed?
There are 2 exams, both 2.5 hours long, at the end of Year 13 – assessing your ability to analyse unseen text, and to write essays on theory. These are worth 80% of your A level. The remaining 20% is a coursework folder consisting of a language investigation and a piece of creative writing, with an accompanying commentary.

What can I do afterwards?
English leads to many careers and university courses: over 70% of graduate jobs don’t mind what subject your degree is in. In particular, English Language is helpful if you want to study Linguistics, Speech Therapy, Journalism, Business courses, Teaching or Law. NB. If you wish to study English at university, you need to study English Literature (with or without English Language).
If you’re not planning on going to university, an English A level helps you communicate, and in particular to write, more effectively – and that is useful in almost all areas of employment.

Timi Amusan
Timi arrived at OSA during his Year 10 from Nigeria. He gained good GCSE grades, bearing in mind how short a time he had to get used to courses, the language and a new country, but his choice of A levels was affected by this. He took English Language alongside Sociology and Drama, and he showed that he was a talented and hardworking student. He was also a fantastic poet – writing verse that was part of England: Poems from a School, and becoming Oxford City Poet for 2019. His poetry was set to music and he performed it in Oxford and London with the Orchestra of St John. Timi is now at Portsmouth University studying the subject he has always wanted to take – Construction Engineering Management!
English Literature  
(A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
At least 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including at least a Level 6 in English Language or Literature at GCSE.

What will I study?

Unit 1: Drama
- One Shakespeare play and one other drama, such as A Streetcar Named Desire or The Duchess of Malfi.
- Critical essays related to the selected Shakespeare play.

Unit 2: Prose
- Two prose texts from a chosen theme. At least one of the prose texts must be pre-1900, linked by a common theme such as women or the supernatural – for example Dracula and The Little Stranger or Wuthering Heights and Mrs Dalloway.

Unit 3: Poetry
- Unseen poetry analysis
- A selection of poetry from a post-2000 collection and
- A range of poetry from either a literary period or a named poet from within a literary period (for example, Chaucer).

Unit 4: Coursework:
- You have a free choice of two texts to study and write one extended comparative essay referring to both.

How will I study?
Read and discuss your core texts; read around the subject and enhance your understanding by looking at similar texts; work individually and collectively to share ideas and present them to your peers; use ICT and a range of media to explore and present your responses; learn the skills of precise analytical evaluation; explore the rich contexts in which writers work.

How will I be assessed?
Three exams worth 80% of your A level, and one coursework essay for the remaining 20%.

What can I do afterwards?
Progression to university courses such as English, Journalism, Law, Media, Librarianship and any career path which requires communication skills, analytical ability, and sensitivity to language. Over 70% of graduate jobs don’t need applicants to have studied a specific subject. English Literature is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study.
Geography (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
GCSE grade 5 or above in English and a grade 5 or higher in Geography GCSE. Students who did not study Geography at GCSE will need grade 6 or higher in English for entry.

What will I study?
Edexcel Geography A level. 4 Human Geography topics: Globalisation / Diverse Places / Superpowers / Health and Human Rights. 4 Physical Geography topics: Plate Tectonics / Coasts / Water Cycle and Water Supply Issues / Carbon Cycle and Energy Issues. You will be examined on these topics and there will be a synoptic problem solving exam that incorporates all the topics, much like we did in GCSE. You will also go on 2 residential field trips and do a controlled assessment from those experiences which comprises 20% of your final grade.

How will I study?
You will be:
- Reading news articles, books, diagrams, and maps.
- Writing essays and exam answers.
- Researching, collecting and handling information/data.
- Competing with your classmates on Kahoot quizzes and writing competitions
- Using revision guides to consolidate your learning

How will I be assessed?
Coursework is 20% of your A level [a 4,000 word investigation]. Exams count for 80%, and they are taken in the summer of year 13.

What can I do afterwards?
Anything! Geography is known as a “facilitating” subject which means it gives you the knowledge and skills needed for just about any university course or any line of employment. Top universities will want you to have A Levels in these facilitating subjects. There is a serious shortage of geographers in the UK right now; we are in high demand! We need more remote sensing (satellite imagery) specialists, computer mapping specialists and (yes!) Geography teachers. Geography is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study.
Government and Politics  
(A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?  
5 GCSEs at grades 9-5, including a grade 6 in English or History.

What will I study?  
1. Government and politics of the UK. This consists of:  
  • Democracy in the UK: how does it work, and is it effective?  
  • The constitution: how is the UK governed?  
  • Parliament: how effective is it?  
  • The Prime Minister and Cabinet: who has the power?  
  • The judges: do they protect our human rights?  
  • Devolution: how come Wales, Scotland and Ireland have their own parliaments?  
2. Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics. You will look at how the US is governed and how this compares to the UK.  
3. Political ideas. More specifically, you will look at Liberalism, Socialism, Conservatism and Anarchism.

How will I study?  
• Note taking from books, articles, lectures and videos.  
• Class discussions and debates  
• Creating and delivering presentations  
• Writing essays and exam practice  
• Applying your theoretical knowledge to current events  
• Trips (for example, to Parliament)

How will I be assessed?  
3 separate 2-hour exams at the end of Year 13.

What can I do afterwards?  
Politics is highly sought after by universities and employers. It provides perfect preparation for courses such as History, Politics, Economics and Law.

Shukria Rezaei  
Shukria was a refugee from Afghanistan who arrived at Oxford Spires Academy in Year 10 with no English. Her hard work on her language skills was clear as she began to work with Kate Clanchy, our writer-in-residence, and to win national poetry competitions. Leaving school with 5 A levels (in Politics, English Literature, Philosophy and Ethics, Creative Writing and Persian) Shukria spent a year as a paid intern at school – supporting other refugees to develop their poetry. Then she gained a full scholarship to study Politics at Goldsmith’s, London, where she gained a first-class degree; she is now taking her Masters, examining human rights issues, along the way addressing the UN and writing articles for the national press.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
GCSE grade 5 or above in English and a grade 5 or higher in a Humanities subject.

What will I study?
Edexcel History A level.
Unit 1 - USA 1917-1990 In search of the American Dream.
Unit 2 - South Africa The making of the Rainbow Nation.
Unit 3 The British Experience of Warfare 1790-1918.
Unit 4 Choice of your own Individual Study Coursework

How will I study?
You will be:
- Reading articles and books.
- Discussing & debating.
- Writing essays and exam answers.
- Researching and handling information.
- Dealing with arguments and different debates/interpretations.
- Presenting information in different ways, for different audiences.
- Forming and developing convincing arguments.
Interpreting and evaluating differing interpretations of events.

How will I be assessed?
Coursework forms 25% of your A level (a 4,000-word essay).
Exams count for 75% in the summer of year 13.

What can I do afterwards?
History is a traditional, rigorous and academic subject. It is well respected as a qualification and is highly sought after by universities and employers. It provides a perfect preparation for courses and employment in fields such as History, Politics, Economics, Journalism and Law. History is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study.

Francis McKenna
Determined when he arrived in Sixth Form that he would not go to university, Francis was a hugely talented student and decided in the end that he would continue his learning after A levels. An articulate Head Student, with a real interest in improving his school, his decision to study History and Politics at the University of Sheffield was a natural one. His top-grade A levels in Politics, Media Studies and Sociology prepared him well for undergraduate study. He may well be leading the country soon…

History
(A level)
Felix was a natural mathematician, who is now studying Maths at the University of Bath. Taking Maths and Further Maths alongside French and Music Technology, and gaining A* grades in all four, he clearly had wider talents that his broad Sixth Form course allowed him to develop. Writing a research project on the ambiguity of language and definitions of shapes, he showed the interest in philosophical issues that many mathematicians share.

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including at least a grade 7 in Mathematics.

What will I study?
In A-level Maths you will study Pure Mathematics, Statistics and Mechanics. Pure Mathematics builds on your existing algebraic, coordinate geometry and trigonometry skills and introduces you to calculus, logarithms and exponentials. Statistics develops your understanding of data analysis and probability, extending your skills to utilise the binomial and normal probability distributions, test hypotheses and apply your understanding to real world data.

How will I study?
At A level there is greater emphasis on students being exposed to the origins of standard formulae, approaches or results through the use of algebraic manipulation and proof. Students are expected to develop their understanding of topics so that not only can they fluently use techniques, but also apply them to problems, both mathematical and contextual, as well as interpret the outcome of calculations within specified contexts. Students should expect to be set approximately an hour’s worth of independent study work after each lesson to develop their ability to utilise and apply the techniques. There is also regular formative assessment and feedback to enable you to develop your understanding, gauge and improve your progress.

How will I be assessed?
Maths A level is assessed entirely at the end of the course by three papers equally weighted examination papers of two hours duration. The first two papers assess your understanding of and ability to apply Pure Mathematics, the third is split into two sections, one assessing Statistics and the other Mechanics.

What about Further Maths?
If you love Maths or are planning on taking a university course with a high degree of mathematical content, you may also wish to consider A Level Further Mathematics. This will enable you to deepen your understanding of Pure Mathematics through looking at a wider variety of topics including matrices, complex numbers and proof, as well as alternative strategies for solving equations. You will also undertake additional study of other aspects of Mathematics which may include Further Pure, Mechanics or Decision Mathematics.

Students taking Further Maths will have double the number of maths lessons compared to those taking the single A-level, their course is structured to focus upon and complete A-Level Maths in Year 12 to provide a solid basis to progress to more advanced concepts in Further Maths in Year 13.

Further Maths is assessed through four equally weighted exam papers lasting one and a half hours each.

What can I do afterwards?
Maths and Further Maths A levels are highly valued by competitive universities and are listed as Facilitating Subjects by the Russell Group. A level Maths is an entry requirement for most courses in Engineering, Physics, Computer Science, Economics and of course, mathematics, as well as for some higher level apprenticeships. However, as a rigorous academic subject it aids you in your development of transferable skills that are desirable regardless of your future pathway. Maths and Further Maths (A level).

Felix Henson
Felix was a natural mathematician, who is now studying Maths at the University of Bath. Taking Maths and Further Maths alongside French and Music Technology, and gaining A* grades in all four, he clearly had wider talents that his broad Sixth Form course allowed him to develop. Writing a research project on the ambiguity of language and definitions of shapes, he showed the interest in philosophical issues that many mathematicians share.
Core Maths
(Level 3 certificate)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
Grade 5 or above in GCSE Mathematics and English.

What qualifications do I need to get on this course?
Grade 5 or above in GCSE Mathematics and English.

What will I Study?
The course is intended to further develop your understanding of mathematical modelling and the use of statistics in subjects areas such as Geography, Biology and Psychology. It will enhance your existing understanding of mathematical modelling and the use of statistics, in particular the application of the Normal Distribution and the use of correlation and regressions lines (you may have heard these called lines of best fit) to establish relationships in bivariate data. There is also a study of personal finance, including the calculation of interest on debt, mortgages and savings.

How will I be assessed?
Mathematical Studies is assessed through two one hour papers, to be taken at the end of year 12, assessing different aspects of the course. Both papers may ask questions that require you to apply the knowledge, understanding and techniques that you have learnt to a scenario of which you have had detailed information in advance.

Progression: What can I do after this course?
Successful completion of the course demonstrates the ability to work with more advanced mathematical concepts in a practical context and aids the development of transferable skills, whatever your future pathway. It will also support the maths you may encounter if you undertake further study in the social sciences.

Things to note
The Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies is not suitable if you intend to pursue further study or careers in mathematics, the natural sciences, engineering, computer science or economics. Students considering these pathways should instead consider A-Level Mathematics.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including a grade 6 in at least one essay writing subject.

What will I study?
Media combines Cultural Theories, Political Theories, Philosophy, Society and Identity. You will analyse how the power of the media is shaping and changing society, identity and ‘truth’. We look at how developing technologies are rapidly impacting the very structure of society and culture. You study 18 ‘Close Study Products’ from nine different Media formats, TV, Radio, Film, Newspapers, Magazines, Adverts, Music, Video, Computer Games and Online Media. We study these products and analyse their role in society through Media, Cultural, Ideological and Psychological theories. You will develop the ability to write essays combining all of these theories with your own analysis in order to pass the written Papers which form 70% of the exam.

30% is a practical coursework element where you create your own Magazine, Film Trailer, Website or other media form stipulated by the exam board, with technical support from your teacher, using the professional facilities available to you.

How will I study?
Class discussions, group work, essay writing and practical work. Students doing A level Media will have access to the latest technologies including Apple Macs, Adobe Creative Suite (which includes Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Flash & Dreamweaver), Quark, Final Cut Pro, Green Screen and Telecaster, digital still cameras and HD video cameras and professional audio equipment.

How will I be assessed?
There are 2 exams (2 hours each) at the end of Year 13, and a portfolio of coursework (worth 30% of your final A level).

What can I do afterwards?
Media Studies A level caters for many university/college courses and the world of work. You could join the thriving British Film, Special Effects and gaming industries, and there are many job opportunities in areas of the media such as radio, TV, music and the Press.

Angel Gitau
Angel studied Media alongside a double Business BTEC course. She is now at university studying Business Management, with Distinction in her BTEC, but the skills she learnt through Media Studies were very important in her applications. She developed confidence and presentation skills, as well as having the chance to demonstrate her creativity and teamwork. Angel took advantage of the opportunities offered to work on courses with Film Oxford and she applied, and was accepted, on to a course in film-making at the British Film Institute in London.
Modern Languages - French/German/Spanish (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including at least a grade 6 in your chosen language: French, German or Spanish.

What will I study?
Themes include:
Theme 1: the evolution of society in the target country
This theme covers social issues and trends, change in family structures and new attitudes towards marriage, relationships and family. It also covers the world of work and the impact of tourism.

Theme 2: Politics and the arts
This theme covers artistic culture (through music and festivals and traditions) and political and artistic culture (through media).

Theme 3: Immigration and multiculturalism
This theme covers social issues and trends – the positive impact of immigration, economic and cultural contribution of immigrants. We confront the challenging issues of migration and isolation, immigration in politics and public opinion.

Theme 4: Historical and literary studies
This theme covers political culture, important historic time periods and a study of literary classics from the target country.

How will I study?
You will become an effective communicator in your chosen language through class discussions, debates and presentations. There is an online book from the exam board, including interactive audios, videos, readings and assessment materials. Independent study will require investigation into the news, blogs and other useful sources.

How will I be assessed?
This course does NOT have an AS. You will be assessed at the end of the course for the full A level covering all 4 themes, film and literature.

Paper 1 – listening, reading and translation skills.
Paper 2 – written response to works (literary and film) and translation from English.

Paper 3 – speaking assessment: a discussion on a theme, and a presentation and a discussion on your own research project.

What can I do afterwards?
There are many business openings for candidates with an A level in French, German or Spanish – French is the eleventh most commonly spoken language, Germany is the UK’s largest trading partner, and 350 million people speak Spanish as their native language. An A level in one of these languages will also make your university application stand out, even if you do not decide to study it at university. And, if you do so, don’t forget, statistics show that language graduates earn more money than most of their peers! Modern Languages are Facilitating Subjects according to the Russell Group, and are seen as helpful for undergraduate study.

Mukahang Limbu
Mukahang studied English Literature, History and German at A level, gaining A**A in his final exams. He is now reading English and German at Queens College at Oxford. He was very interested in Drama and wrote scripts for many successful House Drama productions – and he auditioned, rehearsed and directed lots of other students in his House. He created his own videos in German, which won him prizes and he went to Auschwitz and then gave assemblies on the Holocaust. He has also been part of published poetry collections and won poetry competitions. This involved him reading his own poetry in Oxford and London, and joining an Arvon creative writing residential course. These things – and being Head Boy – have all helped him to build the confidence needed to make competitive and successful university applications. “Course in film-making at the British Film Institute in London.
Music (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
Music A Level is all about passion and commitment for the practical performance elements but also having a subject. You will need a minimum of Music GCSE Grade 6 and 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including maths and English. Students must also play an instrument proficiently to a minimum of ABRSM Grade 6 and ideally have Grade 5 Theory. You do not have to have GCSE Music but you must participate in other music activities both in school and outside, you must also discuss this with the Head of Subject.

What will I study?
Component 1: Performance – students must take part in a public recital performing a balanced program of music lasting a minimum of 8 minutes. This is an externally assessed performance in front of an audience and visiting examiner.
Component 2: Composing – students have to create two compositions, one to a set brief and one that is a free choice. Compositions must be substantial and last for a minimum of 4 minutes each. Students also have to complete a compositional technique task, composing in a given style using a prescribed technique – this must be at least 1 minute long.
Component 3: Appraising – students must demonstrate their understanding of musical context, elements and language to analyse and evaluate; vocal music, instrumental music, music for film, popular music and Jazz, Fusion and New Directions.

How will I be assessed?
You will be constantly assessed through practical performance and written tasks set in lessons by your teacher. Formal assessment is;
Component 1: Performance Recital to an audience and visiting examiner.
Component 2: Portfolio of Compositions: manuscripts and recordings internally examined and externally moderated.
Component 3: 2 hour formal written exam.

What can I do afterwards?
A level Music then give you access to an Arts degree at university, an Arts placement or being a Musician as a career through Music School.

Music Technology (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
You will need 5 or more grade 5s at GCSE, including English and Maths and will need a minimum grade 6 Music GCSE. You will need to play an instrument and have an interest in music technology outside the classroom as well as in.

What will I study?
You will explore sequencing, sequenced realised performance, multi-track recording, development of popular music styles from 1910 and the principles of music technology.

How will I study?
Through research and study to develop an understanding of theory. Through the practical application of that theory in a range of music technology styles, experimenting and perfecting practical work and manipulating work that has been done by someone else. You will complete practical technology tasks, written coursework and exams in which you will have to manipulate pre-recorded work and analyse the technology of pieces you are listening to. You will work on this in lessons and must spend time at home and in the studio developing your own understanding of music technology as this will be a demanding course, building in many completely new skills.

How will I be assessed?
You will produce a music technology portfolio on CD containing three tracks of work on Sequenced realised performance, multi-track recording and Creative Sequenced Arrangement. This will be accompanied by a logbook which provides a written outline of the process and work. You will have a 1hr 45 min listening exam and will complete a second portfolio on:

Sequenced Integrated Performance, Multi-track Recording and Composing using Music Technology with a logbook detailing the equipment used.

What can I do afterwards?
You can continue to study Music Technology at college or university or use this as a stepping stone into the music industry directly. There is also a strong link between what you learn on this course and live sound – working in a theatre, in media or as a technician in a studio.
Philosophy and Ethics
(A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grades 9-5, including grade 6 in RE and/or English.

What will I study?
Component 1: A study of religions – Buddhism. Specifically you will look at the life of Buddha, ancient texts, the historical development of Buddhism, Buddhist practices (e.g., meditation) and at sources of authority.
Component 2: Philosophy of Religion. You will study a variety of topics including the existence of God, evil and suffering, religious experience and religious language.
Component 3: Religion and ethics. You will look at ethical thought, including divine command theory, virtue theory and ethical egoism, natural law and its application to abortion and voluntary euthanasia. Also you will look at situation ethics and its application to homosexuality. Finally, utilitarianism and its application to animal testing and the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

How will I study?
Through class discussions, debates, trips, reading, artefacts, essays and examination practice. In all of these components you will gain knowledge of specific topics and scholars. You will also be required to engage critically with the material to see if the ideas/arguments make logical sense. This is very different from the GCSE course where students study a religion from a believer’s perspective.

How will I be assessed?
Units 1, 2 and 3 = 33% of the A level each and are assessed by an exam of 2 hours.

What can I do afterwards?
The Russell Group of universities has made it clear that RS A level provides a ‘suitable preparation for university generally’.
Career prospects for those who take this subject at degree level are bright with 28% of graduates going on to work in the law, social and welfare work. 11% went into education and 5% became managers.

Linnet Drury
Linnet one of the most talented of her extremely able year group, and a well-known figure around school, as she worked actively with younger students preparing public speaking and debating teams, rehearsing pantomime or House Drama rehearsals, or leading the students’ environmental group. Her own skills were so strong that she was asked to join the English Speaking Union’s international public speaking team. One of our Head Students, Linnet took Philosophy and Ethics alongside Maths, Further Maths and English Literature, and, gaining straight A* grades, she is now reading Maths and Philosophy at Pembroke College, Oxford.
Photography (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
You will need 5 or more grade 5s at GCSE and will need a grade 6 in English or English literature GCSE. You should ideally have studied Art at GCSE (at grade 6) and will need to have shown an interest in photography and building a portfolio for yourself.

What will I study?
You will explore relevant images, artefacts and resources relating to Photography and the wider discourse of art and design. Your responses to these examples must be shown through practical and critical activities, which demonstrate your understanding of different styles, genres and traditions.

How will I study?
Through research and study to develop an understanding of theory. Through the practical application of that theory in a range of different styles, experimenting and perfecting practical work. Through written analysis of the work of other photographers and my own work.

How will I be assessed?
Through a portfolio of work that includes journals and written analyses. Through an externally set final exam in year 13, in controlled conditions (15 hours). 12% of your final mark will be written assessment.

What can I do afterwards?
You can continue to study photography at degree level in many universities. It will also equip you for many of the areas of business and advertising that look for artistic and photographic skills as well as marketing and publishing. For those who love photography, the course will enable you to create portfolios of work that you can take forwards to becoming a photographer – sending your work through to publications, working freelance or working for a photography company.
Physics (A level)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above including English with a minimum grade 6 in Physics (or 6-6 Combined Science) and Maths. It would also be helpful to study A-Level Maths but this is not essential. Due to the popularity of this subject at OSA, a cap on the number of students entering the course may be required. In this case, priority will be given to students with the highest GCSE science grades.

What will I study?
The Physics syllabus is broad and comprehensive covering everything that an A level Physics course would traditionally include. More specifically topics include: electronics; optics; material properties; wave behaviour; motion; radioactivity; oscillating systems; gravitational fields; electromagnetism; electric fields; astronomy; hot and cold matter; and sub atomic particles.

How will I study?
You will study in many different ways, including research projects, group work, calculations, independent study, but in particular through practical investigations and problem solving. You will be taught how to analyse data and accurately evaluate the uncertainty in it. You will learn how to approach questions in a logical and critical way.

How will I be assessed?
A level Physics is assessed by linear exams. In addition there is a Practical endorsement which is completed throughout the course and is a pass or fail unit.

What can I do afterwards?
Physics is a challenging subject that is respected by universities and employers in many different fields for its analytical approach and its academic rigor. Employers see a student with a qualification in Physics as someone who has demonstrated an ability to work through a demanding course and who has gained a wide variety of technical and transferable skills.

A level Physics can be used as a stepping stone to degree courses and careers in: Physics, Medical Physics, Engineering, Medicine, Economics, Finance, Business Management, Consultancy, Astronomy, and Meteorology. Physics is one of the Russell Group’s Facilitating Subjects, and seen as helpful for undergraduate study.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 including a minimum of at least two at grade 6 in Biology (or Combined Science), English or Maths. Due the popularity of the subject at OSA, a cap on the number of students entering the course may be required. In this case, priority will be given to students with the highest GCSE science grades.

What will I study?
The first year of study consists of four main approaches in Psychology: Biological (aggression), Cognitive (memory), Social (obedience and prejudice) and Learning theories (conditioning and observation). For each of these approaches there are compulsory research practicals – a chance to carry out some first-hand research.

In the second year, you will study Clinical Psychology (focusing on schizophrenia and OCD) and Child Psychology (attachments). You will look at research methods through extended consideration of conceptually more demanding aspects of the scientific approach, analysis of qualitative data and use of inferential statistics.

You will also study Issues and Debates in Psychology, as well as looking at a number of classic and contemporary studies.

How will I study?
Active learning is encouraged through class discussion, debates, research based investigations, group presentations, review of contemporary issues and real life scenarios, trips, essays, extended reading and literature research, exam practice and independent tasks.

How will I be assessed?
Each unit is externally examined.

What can I do afterwards?
A qualification in Psychology is useful in many professions as students will have developed a wide range of transferable skills including teamwork, communication, data analysis, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, numeracy, statistical and IT skills. Psychology is particularly relevant to any job that involves working directly with people, including PR, marketing, customer services, social work, counselling, education, police and scientific based jobs.

Hannah Bowler
Hannah took Psychology, English Literature and History at A level, and her ambition was always to study Psychology at Warwick University – which is exactly what she did! Once she started the subject at A level, she was enthralled by it. She took up all the opportunities being in Sixth Form offered her – from lectures at the university, to an In2Science UK placement at the end of Year 12 giving her the chance to work alongside leading researchers investigating Parkinson’s disease.
What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above with grade 6 in English. Due to the popularity of the subject at OSA, a cap on the number of students entering the course may be required. In this case, priority will be given to students with the highest GCSE science grades.

What will I study?

Families and Households
This unit considers changes in family structures, patterns and trends: marriage, divorce, legislation, childhood, gender roles. It looks at sociological theory of the family; ideas, concepts and issues through changes in society; and how these changes have impacted on family life.

Education with Research Methods
In this unit you will study the role of education. You will look at factors in education that impact on achievement: educational social policies; and relationships and processes, internal and external to institutions. You will also learn how sociological research is conducted in relation to education.

Belief Systems in Society
This considers the changing role of science and religion in contemporary society and its significance through religious organisations/movements, social groups and participation.

Crime and Deviance
Here you will focus on theorists’ explanations of crime and deviance; patterns by social groups; globalisation in contemporary society; control, prevention and punishment; and the sociological study of suicide.

How will I study?
Class discussions, presentations, independent research, extended reading; collaging notes for revision purposes and assessments; media representations of past and current thinking on issues/topics relevant to the course.

How will I be assessed?
Regular assessments in class, with external exams on all four units at the end of Year 13.

What can I do afterwards?
Many students go on to do University degrees in Sociology or related subjects, but the subject is good preparation for courses or careers in most ‘people-centred’ areas, such as teaching, policing or social work.
Sport (BTEC Level 3)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above including Science.

What will I study?
Interest in a wide variety of sports is essential for this course. You will study units in Anatomy and Physiology (examination unit), Fitness, Training and Programming (controlled assessment), Professional Development in the Sporting Industry (coursework), and Sports Leadership (practical and coursework).

What can I do afterwards?
The course is the equivalent of one A level and will allow you to study sport as part of an academic programme of study at university. It is also good preparation for a career in the sporting and fitness industries.

Dan Shaw
Dan took BTEC Sport alongside A levels in Chemistry, Biology and Maths. His passion for sport led to a Distinction* in the subject, and he found the study of that, alongside his science subjects, a really good preparation for university study of Chemistry at Durham University. The independence the course promotes, as well as the opportunity to look at the application of the more theoretical areas he was studying, are really standing him in good stead.
LAMDA Grade 8 (Musical Theatre)

What qualifications do I need for this course?
LAMDA is 100% practical and is the perfect option for someone wanting to keep up their Drama but worried about the commitment of A Levels. You will need a minimum of Drama GCSE grade 5 and 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including English. Students who do not have GCSE Drama must have participated in other drama and dance activities both in school and outside, you must also discuss this with the Head of Subject.

What will I study?
Acting: Monologue or Duologue that must last between 3 and 5 minutes, with a brief 30 second introduction announcing the play title, author, character and outlining the context of each extract.

Scene 1
Interpretation and Technique
Ancient Greek and Roman (500BC - 48BC), Elizabethan and Jacobean (1558 – 1625) or Restoration and Post-Restoration (1626-1799)

Scene 2
Interpretation and Technique
1800-2000

Scene 3
Interpretation and Technique
January 2001 – Present Day

After your performance you will chat with the examiner – answering the following questions:

The process involved in developing the three characters for the performance?
The Characters role within the context of the play as a whole – must know about all three characters but will only be questioned on one selected by the examiner
Key principles and influences in the process of acting for one of the following practitioners: Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski, Katie Mitchell, Kneehigh, Artaud or Joan Littlewood.

How will I study
Everything you do is practical, you will need to spend time rehearsing as a group and individually, both in lessons and independently. You will perform regularly but also practise how you respond to the exam questions – so you are fully prepared for the examination day in February.

How will I be assessed?
You will be assessed by a visiting external examiner on 5 learning outcomes;

LO1: perform the chosen scenes from memory, demonstrating an understanding of the material
LO2: use vocal skills in response to the text
LO3: create a physical response to the text
LO4: know and understand the content and context of the chosen scenes
LO5: know and understand the key principles and influences in the process of acting for one of the listed practitioners

What can I do afterwards?
LAMDA Acting equates to the same number of UCAS point as an AS Level in Drama. It will help give you access to an Arts degree at university, an Arts placement or an acting career through Drama School.
GCSE Maths and English resits
It is essential to have a grade 4 or above in English Language and Maths for most university courses and for numerous employment opportunities.
If you do not achieve level 4, it is possible to resit. However, you need to be committed to the work this will entail:
- attending all time-tabled lessons;
- completing assignments set and handing them in when requested;
- doing independent work outside the class.

Extended Project Qualification (AS level)
The Extended Project is an opportunity to undertake university-style research work in the Sixth Form. Research projects are up to 5,000 words long. You set the research question, according to your interests, and the only limit is that it should not be something you’re already studying in one of your A levels.

There will be initial sessions on improving your research skills, planning a project and so on, then you will work on this outside lesson time, meeting Dr Watson (who will supervise your project) regularly to discuss your progress. The qualification can help you make competitive university applications, and requires you to be an independent learner.

MOOCS and Super-Curricular Work
Based on the edge of the city of Oxford, with access to two local universities, students at OSA are offered a wide variety of opportunities to develop their learning beyond A level. Every year students apply to take part in the Nuffield Science Research programme and gain placements over the summer of Year 12. Some students do work experience with university departments or at the Weston Library. Students apply to take summer schools, such as the University of Oxford’s UNIQ or the Sutton Trust, or London University taster days. Study days are offered throughout the year at the Ashmolean, the Bodleian and other central Oxford venues, to develop subject knowledge in the Arts, English and the Humanities. The evening courses and lectures offered at various colleges and faculties are advertised to students, and small groups attend Psychology lectures, Maths seminars and so on. Locally each year there are short courses and special days which are subject-focused or career-focused. Students just need to put their names forward when something relevant hits their inbox!

High achieving and ambitious students, who are on top of their main programme at A level, might like to consider taking a MOOC – a free, online course, offered by a Higher Education institution in an area of their interest. These are advertised to students throughout the year, and are taken as part of some A level courses – for instance English Literature students are asked to take King’s College, London, Shakespeare: Print and Performance to help their study of Hamlet and other early modern texts.

Steps Students at OSA
A group of students are in Year 12 at Oxford Spires who do not follow A level programmes. They take a course in English, Maths, Science etc. with the English as an Additional Language area, and are students who have recently moved to the UK, often as forced migrants. Very much a part of the Sixth Form, the Steps students are in whole year pastoral sessions and take part in lots of the extra-curricular projects, working closely with A level students.

Posey Whidden
Most OSA students decide to continue their studies after A level at UK universities, but there is the support to move out of the UK if that is your choice. Posey studied A levels in Biology, Maths and Physics, but decided to apply to US universities in Year 13. Having gained top grades in her A levels, and in an Extended Project looking at how far multilingualism protects the brain from deterioration, she is now studying at Vassar College, just outside New York.
What Oxford Spires Academy can do for you

Personalised learning in the Sixth Form
Study after GCSE is very different for each student, and in the Sixth Form your programme and your learning will be personalised. You might need a challenging course to enable you to impress a competitive university, or you may just need a supportive environment to improve your academic performance. Students may have language and other learning needs.

Students come to Oxford Spires Academy from different countries, from different social backgrounds and with different educational needs. There is support for students who need to develop their English, for those who have learning needs and for those who have financial needs. Staff willingly provide the extra support students can rely on to support them through this challenging phase of education.

High Achieving Sixth Formers
Oxford Spires Academy was the first Oxford school to gain the Challenge Award from NACE, the National Association for Able Children in Education. Very able students do well in the Sixth Form, both inside and outside the classroom. But it is worth remembering what NACE themselves said about QSA in their assessment: ‘it has shown itself to be committed to developing a school where all pupils are challenged to be the best they can be. The more able and talented children are challenged and this helps the other learners to see what can be achieved.’

Inside the classroom, this means truly personalised learning – a with varying materials, classroom activities and groupings. The aim is to ensure that each student – of whatever ability – is able to reach their best.

From winning national poetry competitions to Gold Crest Awards for Science research projects; from meeting the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reaching gold in the Senior Maths Challenge – there is no doubt that Oxford Spires Academy Sixth Formers show top level success.

Competitive University Applications:
Oxford Spires has built a very successful programme to encourage students to apply for courses at Oxford and Cambridge, and to support applications for subjects, such as Medicine, where there are extra hurdles to be overcome. In recent years, we have moved from one or two such applicants each year to five successful Oxbridge entrants in 2021, and three starting medical degrees. Over 20 have made such applications for 2022. We support students if they choose to apply, with preparation, making their application and preparing for tests and interviews. Students have set up their own Medical Society, to help prepare themselves for the process. They invite speakers in, have worked with a parent mentor on reading and work experience placements, and have written their own regular magazine, The Scientific. In addition, our students are invited to join with Magdalen College School’s MedSoc, and access lectures and preparation days run by local doctors and the university. Many apply successfully for summer schools and science research placements to extend their learning and help build up their UCAS applications.

What Oxford Spires Academy expects of you - Sixth Form responsibilities

A few rules… Attendance
No one can succeed in school if they do not attend! Oxford Spires Academy asks that you take responsibility and make sure you are in school promptly every day, and explain any necessary absences – if possible beforehand. Students are expected to be on site for the whole school day at the beginning of Year 12. Home study is agreed for individuals when their reports reflect high levels of effort and achievement.

A few rules… Appearance
You will be expected to look business-like in school, with appropriate dress for the demands of your day – which could be working in lessons, taking visitors around the school or setting a good example for younger students. A few basic rules suffice: we ask you not to wear ripped denim, caps indoors or dress that is overly revealing.

Part-time employment
Students in the Sixth Form benefit greatly from part-time paid work. They must not, though, take on shifts in the school day as they are expected to be on site in lessons or working independently. Research suggests that Sixth Form students working more than 10 hours a week are very likely to achieve lower results.

Further details of what is required of students are in the annual Sixth Form handbook, on the school website.

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OSA’s House system
The House system at OSA is vital to the working of the school. As House Captains, Sixth Form students lead House competitions – for instance in drama, music, art, science and public speaking, as well as in most sports. You have the chance here to develop leadership, time-management and team skills, as well as showing responsibility – all of which make applications more successful. You also have the opportunity to develop the school, as most House events have been created by students. Heads of House also often ask Captains to work in a support and mentoring role with younger pupils, and you could end up making a great contribution to their lives and success.

Super-curricular opportunities
If you plan to make applications to top universities or for competitive subjects, then you will need evidence in your application that you stand out academically. This means not doing just ‘extra-curricular’ activities but ‘super-curricular’ ones – things to show your intellectual curiosity and your interest in your studies. We offer the Extended Project to allow you to develop your own research, as well as giving individual advice on university courses, online modules and special events. Being close to the centre of Oxford, there are many opportunities to attend university led sessions, as well as conferences and lectures by eminent speakers. You will also have individual guidance on your reading, on radio programmes and podcasts which will widen your understanding.

Outside the classroom
Students at Oxford Spires Academy prepare themselves for the responsibilities of adult working and university life through a whole range of activities outside the classroom. From writing creatively to taking part in science research projects, or undertaking a work experience placement or playing for a school team, there are lots of ways to make your mark and to show a potential employer or university what makes you special. Lead Students, their deputies and the Sixth Form leadership team help to guide the top of the school, as well as lower years, and they provide role models for other students. They arrange social and charity events as well as speaking in assemblies and parents’ meetings, acting as the pupil voice in meetings and working together on plans to improve areas of school life. They lead whole-school student voice meetings each term to involve students from all years and houses in vital feedback for teachers. OSA is proud of the contribution its Sixth Form make to the school, local and wider communities. Big charity fundraisers, taking part in national schemes such as the NCS for volunteers, and smaller in-school events are all part of what we offer.
Preparing for life
Work with our careers advisor, Study Higher and INTO University, as well as with school experts, encourages you to look at your future life. If university is the right option, there is plenty of help in maximising opportunities. If applications for apprenticeships or straight to employers are the better choice, then individual help is there for CV preparation, interview techniques and writing letters of application. Employability consists of much more today than simply getting the paperwork right – and mock interviews, discussion of skills such as working with others and showing yourself at your best, are important too.

Students undertake work experience while in the Sixth Form, either to improve their chances in applications such as those for Medicine or teaching, or to gain workplace skills.

Preparing for future study
There is a strong focus on the development of independent work habits that will allow you to succeed in university courses. This involves skills such as working effectively with others, taking a lead in groups, thinking of creative solutions, making presentations and problem solving. There is also clear guidance on effective research, encouraging students on A level programmes to evaluate their internet use as well as finding information from a wider range of reliable sources. These skills are part of all courses you will take in the Sixth Form, and all Level 3 students take part in a week specifically on higher level learning skills at the end of Year 12. We work closely with the Bodleian Library, and many students are able to access resources and gain support in independent research, for A level coursework or Extended Projects.

Preparing for university
From the first term of Year 12 you will be encouraged to look at whether university is the right path for you. You will be encouraged to look in a more long-term way at careers, at where you want to end up afterwards – and university is one way to gain advantage in future job choice. The average earning capacity of graduates is still much higher than for those without higher education qualifications in the modern workplace, and access to many satisfying careers is, today, limited to graduates.

However, it is not a decision to be taken lightly, and you will be prepared for making decisions on the right course, given information from university speakers as well as from school staff on selecting universities, financial planning and options for GAP years. The Sixth Form Common Room and the library, as well as the school’s website, equip you with the latest careers materials, and you will be shown how to use internet-based information sources. There is preparation for potential Medics, Vets and Law applicants – where competition is particularly high – as well as for those applying to Oxford and Cambridge, and you will be guided by tutors and Sixth Form staff to make applications appropriate to your abilities. At the end of Year 12 and into Year 13, specific guidance is given on UCAS applications and writing successful personal statements.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance
The Sixth Form is a transitional phase. For Level 3 students it enables the leap from GCSE to Higher Education or employment. Most Year 13 students each year apply for places at universities, including Oxbridge. They go to read traditional subjects they have already taken at school – such as English, Maths, Languages, Sciences or Psychology – or subjects new to them – such as vocational degrees like Medicine or Law, or other disciplines they cannot choose for A level. Others will apply for apprenticeships or jobs with further training, or for courses at Art or Drama colleges.
Information for Parents

Oxford Spires Academy Sixth Formers are given a mixture of independence and support to allow them to thrive. Contact with parents shifts slightly at this age, but it is important that regular correspondence and information is maintained, so that students succeed on courses. There are formal reporting points in the year, which accompany tutorial reviews in school. These reports assess effort and attainment, and are available, as is data on attendance and behaviour, through Go4Schools – our data handling software. Parents and students have access to this data throughout the year – not just at report times. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet teaching staff, where issues can be addressed productively and success celebrated.

Sixth Form staff prepare newsletters for parents and try to keep them up to date with events and opportunities for students. Ad hoc communication is encouraged, particularly by email, to allow students to make the most of this all-too-short period of their lives.

Key dates

17 November  Sixth Form Open Evening (in person)

19 January   Sixth Form Advice and Information (online event)

Feb/Mar     Meetings with Sixth Form Staff

May/June   GCSE exams

26-28 June   Sixth Form Induction – FOR ALL APPLICANTS

24 August   GCSE results and Sixth Form Enrolment*

*It is best to avoid holidays on results day, but if necessary, students can enrol on the Inset days at the beginning of September.
Oxford Spires Academy,
Glanville Road, Oxford, OX4 2AU
oxfordspiresacademy.org
@OSASixthForm

Tel: 01865 415937
email: jwatson@spires.anthemtrust.uk

Oxford Spires is proud to be part of Anthem Schools Trust, an education charity that runs a group of state-funded primary and secondary schools to give children a better future. www.anthemtrust.uk