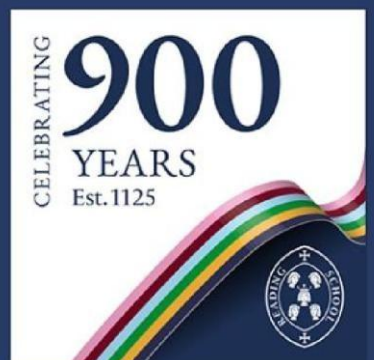




Reading School

Sixth Form Information for Entry
to Year 12 in September 2026



Headmaster

Dr C Evans

Assistant Headteacher/Pastoral

Mr D McGall

Sixth Form Pastoral Lead

Miss A Stratford

Sixth Form Intervention Lead

Mrs H Majorossy-Young

Sixth Form Transition Lead

Mr D Whitehorn

Scholarship Lead

Mr M Cooper

Sixth Form & Boarding Administrator

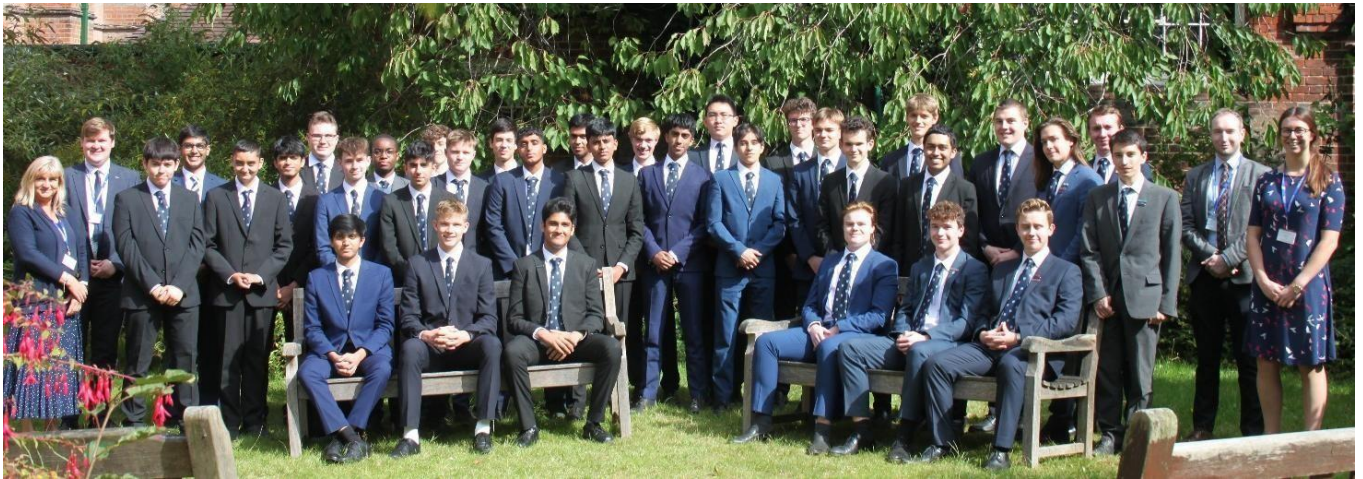
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Introduction



We are delighted that you are considering joining the Sixth Form at Reading School.

Our aim is to provide you with a vibrant learning environment that will enable you to make the most of your undoubted talents, whether they be in academic, sporting, cultural or artistic arenas. It is our hope that your time in the Sixth Form will provide you with a springboard to an outstanding university education, a fulfilling career and a life of learning.

Since its founding in 1125, Reading School has maintained a commitment to learning and a drive to stretch the understanding and aspirations of all those within our community. Academic standards and expectations are very high at Reading School and we believe that it is this culture of aspiration and ambition which enables every student to achieve their very best.

We expect teaching and learning in Reading School to go far beyond the level of A-level examinations and to expose our students to questions more commonly experienced at university. This is an ambition demonstrated through our success in international academic competitions as well as outstanding numbers of students who move on to study highly competitive courses in Russell Group Universities or Oxbridge.

Our ethos encourages students to stretch the boundaries of their understanding through independent study, discussion, team work, research and inspirational lectures. At the same time, our students enjoy the support of highly qualified and exceptionally gifted teachers alongside the pastoral support and guidance provided by the Sixth Form team.

Whilst academic excellence may be what first attracts students and their families to Reading School, we would argue that our emphasis on character education, community, integrity and leadership are at least as important. There will be ample opportunities for Sixth Form students to play an active part in the life of the School. There are any number of formal and informal leadership opportunities, from taking part in our flagship Future Stories outreach scheme to helping to organise charitable fund-raising events or mentoring younger students as part of our House system. This is all alongside a wealth of opportunities to participate in music, drama and sport.

The student body is led by the School Captain and aided by his deputies and an extensive team of prefects who are selected from within the Year 12 group in the spring term. Our desire to encourage integrity and character is further embedded in our programme of weekly chapel services, PSHE, careers consultations, community service and work-placed learning. We challenge all Sixth Form students to actively engage with these extra-curricular activities and to act as role models for the younger students at the school.

The purpose of this information booklet is to help all applicants to the Sixth Form, whether from Year 11 at Reading School or from other schools, to make decisions about their future. However, such a brief overview cannot give a complete picture and we would encourage prospective Sixth Formers to explore the range of videos available on the School website as well as to attend our Sixth Form Open Day to get a better feel for Sixth Form life at Reading School.

We are eager to welcome new students to the School and have capacity for around 180 students in Year 12 next year. We always value the vibrancy and perspective that is added by external candidates when they join us in the Sixth Form.

Best wishes,

Mr D McGall

Assistant Head - Pastoral

Curriculum

This information booklet illustrates the subjects on offer for study in the Sixth Form and the pathways available to students. All of the subjects we offer are two-year linear A-level courses. While our policy is to make every effort to accommodate all combinations of A-level subjects, places on some subject courses may be limited due to staffing constraints. In exceptional cases it may not be possible to run a subject if there are insufficient students applying for it.

However, the curriculum at Reading School is not simply about academic pathways, but about the education of the whole person. A huge amount of our curriculum in the lower school is built around choice and embedding an understanding of the value of leadership, community and service in our students. In the Sixth Form this takes a slightly different form, with our character education programme built into the expectations of all students who join the Sixth Form.

Personal Development and Character

We believe that 'who' you are is just as important as 'what' you can do.

To this end we strive to create a space where students can explore and develop their character. Education is about preparing people to be happy and successful, but it is also about fostering a commitment to go out into the world and have a positive impact.

Our expectation is that you identify multiple ways to develop your character and contribute to the school community.

'**Learn, Lead, Serve**' is a simple narrative we think helps on the journey.

Learn: Embrace every opportunity to learn. Be courageous and try new things whilst honing the skills required to learn effectively both in the classroom, and outside of it through extra and super curricular opportunities.

Lead: Seek opportunities to lead others. Not so much about being in charge but about developing a range of skills that allow you to get the best out of others and achieve collective objectives. Excellent leaders can shift their approach to fit the group and the challenge.

Serve: Do you believe in reciprocity, that in order to receive we must be willing to give? We feel that you must engage in opportunities to contribute to the communities of which you are a part. There are lots of chances to do this in school but also in our local community.

We believe that being involved in as many different facets of school life as you have time for develops you beyond what you can learn from your subjects alone. This could be 'leading by example' on the sports field, or facilitating the learning of a younger student in school, or a disadvantaged student from one of our local primary schools. It could be running a club or society, mentoring a peer, becoming part of the prefect team or simply by being willing to help when asked. These things develop character both for the benefit of the individual and the collective. Developing character and contributing to the community are an integral part of being a Reading School student.

Academic Pathways

The linear A-levels are very different from the modular AS system. It is imperative with linear A-levels that students start courses of study that they are committed to completing, and, as a consequence we encourage every student to think very carefully about their options and find out as much as possible about the subjects you might want to study.

The priority for every student in considering which pathway they adopt is to reflect on which route is most likely to achieve top grades. For example, attaining 3 A*s is likely to yield better university offers than 4 A grades.

We offer three academic pathways:

Three A-levels

Many students have a clear sense of what their intended pathway into Higher Education is and can clearly identify three A-levels that suit their intended future studies. We believe that students from Reading School should expect to offer more than three A-levels to prospective employers or universities and therefore expect all students to undertake learning above and beyond the curriculum to bolster their applications. For all this will mean utilising the resources the School provides to undertake Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which supplement their learning and to undertake supra-curricular reading. In 2023, 54% of students at Reading School completed three A-levels.

Four A-levels

For some students four A-levels is a more appropriate option than three or five, because a fourth A-level with a predicted top grade will be a distinguishing feature on their university application. Students who wish to apply for early entry courses at university (e.g. Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry or Oxbridge applications) might consider four A-levels, although achieving three A-Levels with grades A* is better than achieving four A grades, so students should weigh up this choice carefully. In 2020, 46% of students at Reading School completed four A-levels. To complete four A-levels at Reading School, students will need to achieve at least 64 points from their best 8 GCSEs.

Five A-levels

Students with the very highest raw marks in Additional Mathematics or in GCSE Further Maths may study Maths and Further Maths in one option block, allowing them to study three further A-levels. This is only a sensible option if each of the five A-levels studied is on track for an A* grade. There is very limited value studying five A-levels, if at least three of them are not awarded top grades. Over the last five years on average just 2 students per year have completed five A-levels.

Individual students will be advised on which academic pathway to follow based on their performance in their GCSEs, if they have taken on too many or too few A-levels. Over the last few years, each of the students who have completed five A-levels have achieved 72 points from their best 8 GCSEs.

Decision Making

When making decisions about Sixth Form studies we encourage students to consider their own strengths, and interests, the combination of subjects they pursue, requirements for Higher Education courses and the breadth of skills they demonstrate.

What do you enjoy?

If you enjoy a subject now, then that is usually a good guide as to whether you will enjoy it at A-level, even though GCSE and A-level may be rather different. It is vital that you choose subjects you will enjoy. A word of warning: ignore the teacher factor – is it the subject you enjoy, or is it just that you get on well with your current teacher? Also, make sure it's something you enjoy, not something your parents think you should do.

What are your strengths?

The standards at A-level are a significant jump up from GCSE, and so it is important to identify the subjects you are good at. What are your current strengths? Are you better at more practical subjects, or those that involve more theory? Are you good at subjects that are more essay based? Think about your strengths and look carefully at the subject details.

Do I need particular subjects?

Some students already have clear career goals, although at this age many do not. Many careers and university courses do not need particular subject choices at this stage, but some do. For example, it is not a requirement to have studied Economics at A-level to study it at university, but you will need Maths for most Engineering courses and Physics is nearly always required too. If you are in doubt about whether you need to choose a particular subject, do ask for advice, or visit the UCAS website, which provides detailed information about subject requirements for particularly university courses. Read the "Looking Beyond Alevels" section of this booklet for more information on this.

Do I need a range of subjects?

For students studying more than three A-levels it is often beneficial to study a course that shows breadth. This will never be a pre-requisite for a university course, but most university courses are based on offers for grades across three subjects, and a fourth can often therefore be chosen for personal interest and maintaining a skill which could be useful to a future employer (eg. a language or performing art). This is only the case for students who are already achieving top grades in the courses that are most relevant for their degree. **Essay writing**

Many competitive courses will see a qualification in a subject such as English Literature or History A-level as a distinct advantage. Essay writing subjects are held in high regard for the skills they nurture and the academic rigour they demonstrate. **The next step**

It is an often-overlooked consideration that some university courses have particular subject requirements and students should consider what subjects they may need in order to move forward to their next goal.

Minimum Subject Entry Requirements

Art: Fine Art & Photography

To take Fine Art, a GCSE in either Fine Art or the Art, Craft, and Design endorsement is required, for Photography GCSE Photography is required. We recommend that if students wish to progress onto competitive Fine Art-related university/training courses post-18, students need grade 7 in Fine Art, Art, Craft, and Design, or Photography as appropriate. Additionally, if applicants previously studied at Reading School, we would hope that they show excellent attitude review scores for CPR or CCRI (4+), and that students have a demonstrated track record of meeting deadlines set. The course requires significant independent work in addition to what is covered during lessons, so the number of subjects to be studied and subject combinations should be chosen with care.

Biology

GCSE grade 7 in Biology or grade 7-7 in Combined Science. If Biology is to be studied as one of four subjects, a minimum of 64 points from best 8 GCSEs and a grade 8 in Biology (or 8-8 in Combined Science) and Maths are required.

Chemistry

GCSE grade 7 in Chemistry or grade 7-7 in Combined Sciences. GCSE grade 7 in Maths is also required. If Chemistry is to be studied as one of four subjects, a minimum of 64 points from best 8 GCSEs and a grade 8 in Chemistry (or 8-8 in Combined Science) and Maths are required.

Classical Civilisation

GCSE grade 7 in English Language and grade 7 in at least one of English Literature, History or Ancient History.

Computer Science

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics. Computer Science GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied, then a grade 7 is required. If Computer Science GCSE has not been studied, then a minimum grade 7 in two sciences is required.

Economics

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics. Economics GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied, then a grade 7 in GCSE Economics is required.

English Literature

GCSE grade 7 in both English Language and English Literature.

English Language and Literature

GCSE grade 7 in both English Language and English Literature.

French

GCSE grade 7 in French.

Geography

GCSE grade 7 in English Language. Geography GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a grade 7 is required.

German

GCSE grade 7 in German.

History

History GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a minimum of a grade 7 is required. If GCSE History has not been studied, a grade 7 in a similar subject (English, Ancient History, Geography) is required.

Latin

GCSE grade 7 in Latin.

Mathematics

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics.

Further Mathematics

Further Maths is a popular option at Reading School with around half of A-level Maths students opting to study this course. Students are able to study Maths and Further Maths in either one or two option blocks. A GCSE grade 9 is required for either option. For students that have studied a further qualification, such as FSMQ (Additional Maths – OCR 6993/01) or Level 2 Further Mathematics (AQA 8365), a grade A or equivalent is highly desirable for studying Maths and Further Maths in one block, although it is not required. Beyond GCSE requirements, students will also need to ensure suitable benchmarks are met on common assessments in order to continue with the subject. Students who wish to be considered for this course should record Further Maths as one of their preferences on the admissions form. No student will be obliged to study Further Maths.

Further mathematics can only be studied as a fourth A Level subject and so to be successful in getting a place on this course, students must have a best 8 GCSE points score of 64 or above.

Music

GCSE grade 7 or higher in Music and practical grade 6 level on your primary instrument (ABRSM/Rockschool/Trinity etc.) The study of a secondary instrument to at least Grade 4 level is highly recommended, along with general piano skills. For candidates who have not studied GCSE, Music Grade 7 on an instrument and Grade 5 theory is acceptable. A-level Music also requires that students make prominent and consistent contributions to the school's extra-curricular music activities, committing to at least one choir and one instrumental ensemble.

Philosophy

Philosophy is a serious option for students who wish to develop the analytical skills that are required for further academic study and success in future careers. It is highly recommended that students have a minimum of Grade 7 in GCSE English and have a similar Grade or equivalent in either GCSE Religious Studies or OCR AS Level Religious Studies.

Physical Education

For any students who have studied PE at GCSE, a minimum of a grade 8 is required and be able to evidence either regional representation in a sport or a recognised governing body coaching qualification. If a student has not done GCSE PE, they must have at least a grade 7 in Biology and be able to evidence either regional representation in a sport or a recognised governing body coaching qualification.

Physics

To study Physics A Level at Reading School, a minimum of GCSE grade 7 in Physics (or 7-7 in Combined Science) is required, in addition to a GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics.

If Physics A Level is to be studied as one of four subjects, a minimum of 64 points from best 8 GCSEs is a prerequisite, with specifically GCSE grade 8 in Physics (or 8-8 in Combined Science) and GCSE grade 8 in Mathematics.

Politics

GCSE grade 7 in English Language, English Literature, History or Ancient History.

Spanish

GCSE grade 7 in Spanish.

Theatre Studies

GCSE grade 7 in either GCSE English Language or English Literature. Drama GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a grade 7 is required. A genuine interest in theatre is essential.

Subject Oversubscription

At the point of offers being made in March 2026, if a subject is oversubscribed and all sets are at full capacity, students with the lowest predicted grades may be asked to choose an alternative subject or take up their reserve choice. After offers have been made any requests to change subject into a department that is oversubscribed will be put on hold until GCSE results are published. At this point a combination of the best 8 GCSE point scores and the mark achieved in the relevant subject will be used to determine ranking.

Admission Arrangements

Applications for day and boarding places must be made directly to Reading School for both internal and external applicants. The window opens on 1st December 2025 with a closing date of 31st January 2026. The online application form can be accessed on the school website from 1st December 2025.

External students who receive a conditional offer will be invited to a consultation meeting in the transition days in July 2026 to discuss their subject options, career pathways and extra-curricular interests. The purpose of these appointments is to make transition into the Sixth Form as easy as possible, as well as to finalise A-level subject choices.

All successful internal applicants will be expected to register through an online process in August 2026 once they have received their GCSE results to confirm subject choices and to sign a Sixth Form Agreement. The date for this will be communicated closer to the time.

External applicants in receipt of a conditional offer are expected to send a scanned/photo copy of their results to the admissions office by email no later than midday on GCSE results day. They are then expected to register through an online process to confirm subject choices and to sign a Sixth Form Agreement.

Further details will be sent out in the conditional offer.

All applicants in receipt of a conditional offer will be kept on a waiting list, pending publication of their GCSE results, at which point we will happily accommodate students who have met the entry requirements and for whom there is room.

Options Changes

Students frequently change their mind about their preferred choice of subjects. All offers are conditional and are linked to subject choices. There is no guarantee that requests to change options can be accommodated and requests that are received after the final A-level subject selections are made can only be finally processed after GCSE results day.

Entry Requirements into the Sixth Form

For entry into the Sixth Form students must have achieved the equivalent of a total of at least 56 points from 8 GCSE subjects and at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a DfE recognised equivalency. Individual subject requirements must also be attained as published in this Sixth Form Information Booklet. If a student is pupil premium/service premium or Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child then the equivalent of a total of at least 54 points from 8 GCSE subjects and at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a recognised equivalency is required.

For students wishing to study four A-levels, at least 64 points from their best 8 grades are required.

For students studying overseas, we ask you to contact NARIC direct at: <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>. NARIC will convert grades for alternative qualifications into a GCSE equivalent. All NARIC statements will need to be emailed to the admissions department at Reading School. If NARIC are unable to get GCSE equivalency, we will be unable to proceed with the application. Overseas students must also have at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a DfE recognised equivalency.

Inclusion

To any student with special educational needs or a disability, who is applying for a place at the School, evidence should be included of the need or disability so the SENDCO can assess the applicant appropriately and so they can put in place plans for providing support should the student join the School.

Subject Specifications

The following guidance notes give details regarding the specifications and examination boards offered in each subject in our Sixth Form. It is a worthwhile exercise to check these specifications and ensure that the content of the courses you subscribe to match your expectations and interest. If there are not enough students to make a subject viable, very occasionally it has been impossible to run a course. We continue to strive for a rich and broad curriculum and are pleased to have such a varied range of subjects including some which benefit greatly from a small student to teacher ratio. **Please note that French, German and Spanish all appear under the Modern Foreign Languages sub-heading; Photography appears in the Art sub-heading; and Government and Politics appears under Politics.**

Art A-level Options: Fine Art and Photography

In order to maximise the opportunities available to our Sixth Form applicants, we are making both Fine Art and Photography available at the point of application. However, we want to be transparent that we may only be able to run one of these options. Please do select the course you're most interested in. We will communicate with all Art A-level applicants if the other options are more popular and the option they have selected will not therefore run. We will then allow students to amend their choice either to the Art option that is running, or to a different A-level of their choice.

To be successful, these courses require you to be independent and commit to extended learning outside of the classroom; it is hard work from the start, however, the more you put in, the more you will enjoy yourself, and the more rewarding the course will be.

Component 1: Personal Investigation (60% of A Level)

- September Year 12 – February Year 13
- Portfolio of practical work showing a range of media and approaches to making
- Coherent and logically structured extended written response of a minimum of 1000 words

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of A Level)

- February Year 13 – May Year 13
- Response to an assignment provided by the exam board
- Preparatory period + 15 hours supervised time

Art Option 1 - Fine Art: (A651QS WJEC Eduqas A-level Art and Design: Fine Art)

The focus of Art at A-level is to extend and develop skills learnt at GCSE, whilst aiming to encourage students to take more creative risks and really grow as artists. The course will provide you with opportunities to explore ideas in a wide range of media and forms. There are many elements you will master as the course progresses, such as being confident in taking creative risks, learning from and resolving mistakes, creating personal responses to project starting points, and developing and refining your practical skills. Additionally, working independently, and being able to contextualise your own practice through studying and understanding the work of other practitioners is of vital importance.

Being a Fine Art student provides you with a unique and exciting opportunity to explore, discover and develop highly personal and creative ideas in response to the world around you. This course will introduce you to a broad variety of materials, techniques and processes. You will engage with extensive research, experimentation, and development work to enable you to make final outcomes that successfully combine skill, aesthetics, and concept.

Art Option 2 - Photography: (A656QS WJEC Eduqas A-level Art and Design: Photography)

Are you creative and imaginative? Do you enjoy exploring ideas and looking at things in different ways? Would you like to study a subject that is very hands-on? If so, A Level Photography could be a good fit for you. You will develop your understanding of the visual world, learn practical skills, and respond to ideas and issues in ways that are personal to you.

We live in a visual culture, where we have never been exposed to so much visual imagery. Photography is about looking, learning, thinking, and communicating ideas. Photography means “drawing with light”, with contemporary photographers using a range of digital and analogue techniques to create images that make a personal statement about things that interest or concern them. The most exciting aspect of photography is that you are capturing the world as you see it.

You will learn the science, craft, and art behind photography, what good photos can be and how to take them, and how to edit digitally to sympathetically enhance your photographs. You will learn how to analyse and critique your own work and the work of others, investigating a range of critical references that will inspire you in your own practice.

The subject links particularly well with other arts endorsements, however many students have not taken an Art and Design qualification at GCSE level, nor are they taking any other arts-subjects for A Level. Students take the subject as they already enjoy it, would like to give themselves a well-rounded education alongside primarily written subjects, or take a subject that offers a practical way of working when compared to many other A Level classes.

Most photography lessons are spent editing and critiquing photographs previously taken, so students must be particularly willing and proactive in taking photographs in their own time so that they are able to progress through the course at an appropriate pace. Being organised and hardworking is vital in order to meet deadlines set.

Students should be aware that this course will have costs associated with it, as digital work will need to be professionally printed, and students will need to factor in the cost of transportation if they wish to take photographs outside of their local area or visit exhibitions. A personal DSLR/mirrorless camera and use of a PC/Mac/laptop at home to run the software Affinity Photo is strongly recommended. As part of the Reading School Promise, eligible enrolled students can apply for help with costs associated with the course.

Biology

(OCR H420)

A-level Biology will give you an exciting insight into the contemporary world of biology. It covers the key concepts in biology and practical skills are integrated throughout the course. This combination of academic challenge and practical focus makes the prospect of studying A-level Biology highly appealing. It is both an exciting and important time to be a biologist. Biologists are working to solve the biggest challenges currently faced by people and the planet – fighting global pandemics, disease, protecting the environment and feeding our growing population. Some of the most innovative and exciting work in science occurs at the boundaries where biological knowledge is combined with techniques from Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, Maths and Computer Science, such as:

- Biochemistry - investigating the chemical processes of life, combining Biology with Chemistry to study organisms at the molecular and cellular level.
- Biomaths and Computational Biology - using mathematical techniques to solve biological problems. Biotechnology - combining Biology with Chemistry and Engineering to create new biology-based technologies.
- Biophysics - using the laws of physics to better understand movement and structure and answer biological questions.
- Bioengineering - combining biological knowledge with Engineering and design to produce new and innovative products.
- Agri-science, regenerative medicine and synthetic biology - three of the UKs 'eight great technologies' with Biology at their core.

Biology is the study of life. It is a subject of continual advance and change. Students are encouraged to keep up to date with these many new issues and to gain an appreciation of the dynamic nature of science. Biology not only encompasses aspects of the physical sciences and mathematics related to the living world but also provides an opportunity to consider the ethical issues arising from the rapid advances in the life sciences.

Biology teachers place great importance on learning through practical work and Reading School biologists will experience a wide variety of innovative techniques such as genetic engineering, colorimetry and investigations. Students are encouraged to consider extension work and enter competitions. All Year 12 biologists are entered for the Biology Intermediate Olympiad and the British Biology Olympiad Competition in Year 13 run by the Royal Society of Biology. We have had some students selected for the UK team and compete in the International Biology Olympiad competition, most recently in 2024. Alumni are involved in training the UK team here at Reading School.

The specification followed at A-level is OCR Biology A (H420)

- Module 1 – Development of practical skills
- Module 2 – Foundations in biology
- Module 3 – Exchange and transport
- Module 4 – Biodiversity, evolution and disease
- Module 5 – Communications, homeostasis and energy
- Module 6 – Genetics, evolution and ecosystems

Students will sit three examination papers in biological processes (37%), biological diversity (37%) and unified biology (26%). The practical endorsement is reported separately.

Studying Biology will provide you with valuable knowledge, skills and experience. You will gain skills that you can use no matter which career path you choose, both in and out of science will be highly valued by employers and will look great on your CV. These skills can open the door to working in business and enterprise, marketing, law, hospitality, politics and policy, journalism, art, economics and much more.

Many Reading School students go on to study biology-related courses at undergraduate level including Medicine, Biochemistry, Biological Science, Biomechanical engineering, Neuroscience, Biomedical Science, Zoology and Veterinary Science. In the last five years we have had over 100 successful applicants to Medicine. Many medical schools request Biology as an essential component of their entry requirements (for more details see www.medschools.ac.uk). However, it should be noted that many A-level Biology students study many other degrees and combine it with non-scientific subjects there is also no requirement to study other sciences or Mathematics with it.

Chemistry (OCR H432)

As well as being a fascinating subject in its own right, Chemistry is the cornerstone of Medicine, Veterinary Studies, Textile and Polymer Science, Molecular Biology, Food Science, Geology and a host of other subjects. The A-level course contains a good balance of practical work supporting the Practical Endorsement supported by a carefully structured theoretical framework. The course is designed to cover the needs of many students. In addition to the obvious chemical careers, potential physicists or engineers will find much that is stimulating and challenging. There are several topics of direct relevance to the wouldbe medics, indeed a top A-level grade in Chemistry is essential for acceptance into a Medical School. In fact, anyone who finds Chemistry interesting, no matter what their future plans, should at least investigate the subject and examine the text books and course material.

It is the department's policy to enrich its students' experience and expose them to some of the applications of Chemistry in industry. Students are encouraged to attend lectures and industrial visits or work experience can be facilitated if the opportunities arise. We are also keen for students to participate in competitions, such as the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge or the highly challenging RSC Olympiad. Boys have achieved very highly in these competitions in the past and will always be encouraged to participate in activities that further their understanding of the subject.

The syllabus followed is OCR Chemistry A and is divided into six modules over two years. These include aspects of physical, inorganic and organic Chemistry.

- Module 1 – Development of practical skills in chemistry
- Module 2 – Foundations in chemistry
- Module 3 – Periodic table and energy
- Module 4 – Core organic chemistry
- Module 5 – Physical chemistry and transition elements
- Module 6 – Organic chemistry and analysis

Students sit three examination papers at the end of Year 13 on the periodic table, elements and physical chemistry (37%), synthesis and analytical techniques (37%) and unified chemistry (26%).

Classical Civilisation (OCR H443)

No prior knowledge of the Classical World is required in order to study this course.

The study of Classical Civilisation equally allows students to explore a new subject area or to extend their interest within this field. It is a very accessible course, as students explore the history and cultures of the Romans and Greeks, using English translations of the original source material. Students have succeeded in this subject regardless of previous experience and a good proportion continue with the subject beyond Alevel.

The OCR course provides the opportunity to study:

- Classical thought (Democracy of the Athenians)
- Classical visual and material culture (Imperial Image – focusing on the first Roman emperor Augustus)

- Classical literature (including Virgil's Aeneid and Homer's Odyssey, both epic tales of love, battles and blood)

On this course you will gain an in depth understanding of a wide range of themes and topics in the study of the classical world. You'll read and analyse a range of classical texts and gain an appreciation of a number of archaeological objects, ancient images and monuments.

You will be introduced to themes, methods and theories in the study of the literature and history of the ancient world as well as exploring works of art from ancient Greece and Rome, looking not only at the objects themselves, but also on the contexts within which they were produced and used. Myths and mythology are studied throughout the course, exploring the uses of mythological stories, characters and motifs since antiquity right up to the present day.

This course balances the academic study of Classics and Ancient History today with excellent preparation for the 21st-century workplace. You will leave knowing how to identify, select, organise and interpret information, write analytically and develop independent thinking.

Therefore, it complements the Arts subjects, particularly History and English Literature; whilst providing excellent breadth as a subject in its own right.

Computer Science

(AQA 7517)

Computer Science is a fascinating and constantly evolving, futuristic subject that is incorporated into a multitude of industries. Extending a student's ability to design complex computational algorithms by abstracting from real life situations is a key learning objective on this course.

The Computer Science course provides the opportunity to meld both technical and creative skills, whilst cultivating a depth of knowledge of the standards and historical reasons as to how society arrived at the current level of computational ability. The syllabus provides the opportunity to develop a deep appreciation of the fundamentals of programming and data structures, moving on to understand the importance of adopting a systematic approach to problem solving. A review of the structure of computer systems, systems architecture and the features of communication and networking are the precursors to appreciating the consequences of the uses of computing. As well as considering a systematic approach to problem solving, big data and aspects of functional programming, students embark on a voyage of discovery, where they complete a programming coursework project to provide a computerised system to implement a solution to a real-world challenge.

The AQA Computer Science course is assessed via:

- Paper 1 - On screen programming exam, with questions based on a preliminary program studied prior to the exam. (40% of the A-level)
- Paper 2 – Written theory topics. (40% of the A-level)
- NEA – Investigation of a practical problem, leading to the development of a solution. Both knowledge and skills acquired during the course will be required. (20% of the A-level)

Success on this course will require the student to be independent and committed to extending their learning outside of the classroom. It is essential that the student has a home computer in order to fully engage with the material and concepts covered.

Prior programming or algorithmic experience is desirable, but not a prerequisite, as a practical approach is taken from the onset of the course. The desire to code is essential for a successful student outcome.

Economics

(OCR H460)

Economics is a lively and evolving social science that studies the choices individuals, businesses, governments and entire societies make. Economics helps you to look more deeply into the world around you, allowing you to develop a broader appreciation of how and why it functions as it does. It can also give you new perspectives on some of the most pressing and challenging problems facing the world today. We look at broad issues such as, why are some countries doing better than others, is globalisation causing more harm than good, what are the consequences of migration and an ageing population, are income inequality and the gender pay gap getting better or worse, and why are so many people economically inactive in the UK – to name but a few. The course will help you make sense of what you hear in the media, be it about interest rates, the cost of living, freezing income tax brackets, carbon emissions, the exchange rate or the provision of public services. The two main components of the subject are:

- Microeconomics, which involves a study of the behaviour of consumers and businesses, analysing how markets work and may often fail. Closer examination of housing, energy, labour, financial, health and education markets help students explore the real-world application of microeconomic theories and concepts. We also look at the theory behind the operations of firms and business enterprises, and the rationale for government intervention.
- Macroeconomics, which is the study of the whole economy – topics such as inflation, unemployment, economic growth, the balance of payments, government policy and international trade are all key issues. Is the government meeting its major economic objectives? Could UK government policy be more effective?

The A-level Economics course is a two-year 'linear' course and is structured to develop both microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts and theories in a variety of contemporary contexts. The course is externally assessed by three examinations at the end of Year 13, and quantitative skills are embedded within the assessment. Students studying Economics combine it with subjects across the curriculum and it complements Mathematics, Sciences, Humanities and Languages.

While A-Level Economics is not a prerequisite for studying Economics or Finance at university, many Reading School economists go on to study Economics-related courses at top UK universities (including Oxford, Cambridge and Russell Group universities). Popular courses of study are Economics, Economics and Management, Maths and Economics, PPE, Economics with Geography or Economic History, as well as degree apprenticeships. Students who are considering taking Economics beyond A-level are strongly encouraged to consider studying A-level Mathematics, in addition to A-level Economics. Students considering applying to the most competitive undergraduate economics programmes should also investigate whether Further Maths is recommended.

English Literature

(OCR H472)

English Literature is a 'gold-standard' A-level, regarded as a 'facilitating subject' by universities. This means that it is a discipline which opens up a wide range of courses to you for study at undergraduate level. Regardless of which academic path you choose to follow, A-level English Literature will be seen as a worthwhile stepping-stone. In recent years we have helped future medics, engineers and accountants (as well as journalists, publishers and teachers) challenge themselves to achieve top grade results in our subject at the same time as they expanded their understanding of their other academic specialisms.

Whether you are a committed literature lover, a budding writer, or even a science purist, English Literature is a course which will engage your intellect and help you to improve how you express yourself. Carrying on studying English Literature to A-level makes you a much better and more interesting university and employment candidate.

It will sharpen your skills of analysis, make you a more skilled constructor of critical arguments, and ensure you can sprinkle your influential ideas with magic fairy dust.

If you enjoyed your study of Gothic fiction, detective texts, Shakespeare, poetry and novels during Years 7 to 11, then English Literature A-level is for you. In the Sixth Form, though, there's much more group discussion, sharing of personal responses, and debating alternative interpretations in class; our A-level students really value the collaborative, conversational focus of the lessons.

A-level English Literature is a two-year linear qualification. It comprises three components, two of which will be examined at the end of Year 13: two 150 minute examinations (worth 40% of the overall qualification each) and a 3,000 word non-exam assessment folder (worth 20% of the overall qualification). Texts which are being studied by the current cohorts include 'Hamlet', 'The Great Gatsby' and 'Paradise Lost'.

Geography

(AQA 7037)

Geography is a popular A-level choice nationally, as well as in Reading School. Teaching is characterised by a lively approach, aimed at developing the geographer's natural curiosity and concern about major contemporary issues. It is Geography's ability to integrate the study of Earth's places, peoples, environments and societies that makes it so relevant to the understanding of the increasingly interconnected world in which we all live and work.

The Geography department at Reading School is staffed with experienced, enthusiastic teachers who are passionate about the world and the role people can play within it. The AQA A-level course comprises of a Physical Geography paper (40%), a Human Geography paper (40%) and the NEA, Non-Examined Assessment (20%). The Human and Physical Geography sections are taught simultaneously by different teachers across the two years. The topics covered in each section are as follows: Physical Geography – coastal systems and landscapes, hazards and carbon and water cycles. Human Geography – changing places, global systems and governance and resources security. At the beginning of Year 13, we also run a five-day curriculum trip to the coast to collect data for the NEA.

History

(AQA 7042)

History is an exciting, interesting and constantly stimulating subject. History is a highly regarded subject for courses at degree level, including Medicine, as well as for a wide variety of professions. It is the most popular degree amongst MPs, popular with lawyers and, at A-level, it is a fantastic complement to scientific courses as it trains students to take in information from a range of sources. Within our experienced and innovative department there is also a determination to make the course as relevant and enjoyable as possible.

Students will study two taught modules for A-level History. Firstly, they will study the Cold War, 1945-1991. Many students will have touched upon the relevant global themes of the 20th century in their GCSEs and we build upon this by investigating the Cold War in fascinating depth. The students have to fully immerse themselves in the political drama, the apocalyptic tension and ideological suspicion as this depth study gets to the heart of one of the most interesting human dramas the world has seen, one which continues to affect us today. Secondly, they will study the Tudors, 1485 – 1603. England's most famous family have continued to ignite imaginations across the world for a reason: they carried out one of history's most exciting soap operas and they continue to matter to this day. Henry VII's successful invasion, Henry VIII's break with Rome and subsequent creation of the Church of England, Mary's burning of heretics and Elizabeth's defeat of the Armada are just the headlines, behind which lie dark plots, dastardly rebellions and delicious intrigues. Both these modules are taught by teachers who love the content and know the exam board's demands, and are studied by students who become deeply passionate about the subject.

As part of the course, students will also complete an independent investigation into an historical issue. The three they can choose from are: the Crusades, the American Civil War or the French Revolution. This extended piece of writing will involve bringing together a vast array of evidence that students have located themselves and reaching substantiated conclusions.

History of Art

See Art A-level options above

Latin

(OCR H443)

The study of Latin helps to develop logical thinking, as well as enhancing analytical and evaluative abilities. As such, many students that opt for Latin do so to complement the Maths/Further Maths and Physics subjects that require many of the same skills.

At the same time the study of literature augments other subjects, most particularly English Literature and History; the study of this language obviously provides the basis for other Romantic Languages. During the course students will have the privilege to study some of the greatest Classical works, as well as exploring the nuances of translating them. Latin is an extremely well-regarded A-level subject, however the most important reason for taking Latin is that the students really enjoy the course. On account of its versatility the study of Latin can lead directly to a whole plethora of careers, including the civil service, law, computer programming, journalism or accountancy; and indirectly to becoming a mathematician, scientist, medic or engineer.

The OCR course roughly equates to 50% language and 50% literature. Students will study both poetry and prose.

Mathematics and Further Mathematics

A-level Mathematics (H240)

A-level Further Mathematics (H245)

Examination Board – OCR

Mathematics is an extremely popular choice providing an intellectually stimulating and analytically rigorous course that develops a systematic, yet intuitive, method of tackling problems that is highly regarded by both Higher Education and employers.

Often described as ‘The Queen of the Sciences’, Mathematics provides the backbone to numerous disciplines. The majority of students who opt for Mathematics choose it as a ‘service’ subject to enable them to pursue a course in a science-related subject or the social sciences such as Economics, Actuarial Science and Accountancy. However, a significant number do go on to read Mathematics at university.

The designation of the Further Maths options will be based on a candidate’s raw score at GCSE. Some sets will be sitting Maths and Further Maths in one block and others in two. Any student who is taking Mathematics only will be assigned to an appropriate set based on their GCSE raw score.

The courses followed in the Sixth Form lead to the OCR qualifications. They are all examined by linear examinations at the end of the two years.

There are additional opportunities offered to Sixth Form mathematicians. The Senior Maths Challenge gives pupils the chance to progress to the Mathematical Olympiads and demonstrate their prowess. A team challenge and various other master classes may also be on offer during the two-year course. Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at Cambridge and other prestigious universities, will be required to sit STEP, MAT or other such admissions tests either at the end or during the Upper Sixth. Help and guidance is available within the department for these tests.

A-level Mathematics only:

To embark on an A-level Mathematics course it is essential to have a complete grasp of GCSE work, in particular an ability to manipulate algebra. Experience shows that pupils who achieve less than a Grade 7 at GCSE struggle to succeed at A-level. For this reason, a Grade 7 at GCSE is a requirement.

A-level Further Maths (in addition to A-level Mathematics):

A-level Mathematics and Further Maths can be studied in a single block, or as a double block option. Very able mathematicians have the opportunity to pursue this course in a single option block. Current Reading School pupils should be recommended by their Year 11 teacher and all students will need to have gained a strong grade 9 at GCSE in order to be considered to study Further Maths in a single option block. For those that have studied an additional mathematics qualification, earning a top grade such as grade A in Additional Maths (FSMQ – 6993/01) or grade 9 in Level 2 Further Mathematics (AQA 8365), is highly desirable.

Further Maths is also offered over two option blocks for students who will benefit from a more measured pace. Such pupils will need to have achieved a grade 9 at GCSE and no additional qualification is required. Students will be offered a conditional place on the course contingent upon their performance on common assessments throughout the Michaelmas term. For students that do not meet particular benchmarks, discussions will take place with the Mathematics department and Sixth Form team as to whether it is appropriate for the student to continue on the course.

Ultimately, students who demonstrate their suitability to remain on the course will be allocated to study Maths and Further Maths in a single block (12 lessons per fortnight), a block and a half (18 lessons per fortnight) or two blocks (24 lessons per fortnight). No student will be obliged to study Further Maths.

Modern Foreign Languages – French, German and Spanish

French (AQA 7652)

German (AQA 7662)

Mandarin (Edexcel 9CN0)

Spanish (AQA 7692)

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.” —

Frank Smith **Why Study Languages?**

Studying a language at A-level is an exciting and rewarding experience. It is a facilitating subject at university, as the range of skills developed during the course will be a real strength with any degree and will keep your options open. A-level languages apply not only for the linguists who are passionate about languages and cultures, but also to those interested in medicine, law, business, politics, etc. because of its focus on communication skills. Science oriented students will also find an interest for the opportunities to work/research abroad (CERN, ESA, Cyber Valley...). Languages can be studied at degree level both as a subject on their own, as part of a joint degree and as a subsidiary subject, combined with a wide range of other subjects, including Politics, Maths, Science, History, English, Marketing & Engineering.

The A-level specification constitutes an integrated study with a focus on language, culture and society. Having a language to A-level improves your employability: it fosters a range of transferable skills including communication, critical thinking, research skills and creativity, problem-solving, analytical and presentation skills which are valuable to the individual and the job market. Becoming fluent in a language which is widespread and useful for mainly fields in and out of the UK is indeed a skill that enables you to stand out in a competitive environment.

A-level Languages at Reading School

Our A-level teachers in MFL are all experts in and passionate about their subjects, and include a number of native speakers. Students studying French, German or Spanish at A-level will enjoy lessons that are unlike any other subject in Sixth Form. Lessons typically involve reading and listening to authentic materials (music, podcasts, films, newspapers, novel...) and discussing them as well as discussions and debates around important society and cultural issues (politics, human rights, immigration, cinema...). The content goes beyond a simple 1st person perspective to embrace wider issues and broaden students' horizons. Students have a privileged experience thanks to the smaller classes, which is an ideal environment to develop their oral skills and spontaneity with the target language. We also endeavour to offer our students a range of opportunities to use their skills outside the classroom through a number of events and trips, including study days and exchange trips with foreign schools.

The course includes a wide range of topics which can appeal to a wide range of tastes. Wish you could take Film Studies, EPQ, PPE, Literature, Geography, History and more, but only have one block left? Choosing a language is for you!

The AQA course focuses on the following topics:

French (AQA 7652)

- Artistic culture in the French-speaking world (a culture proud of its heritage, contemporary francophone music, cinema: the 7th art form)
- Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world (the right to vote and political commitment, demonstrations, strikes – who holds the power?, politics and immigration) • Aspects of French-speaking society: current trends (the changing nature of family, the 'cyber-society', the place of voluntary work) French-speaking society: current issues (positive features of a diverse society, life for the marginalised, how criminals are treated)
- Film study of *La Haine* by Mathieu Kassovitz
- Book study of *No et moi* by Delphine de Vigan

German (AQA 7662)

- Artistic culture in the German-speaking world (festivals and traditions, art and architecture, cultural life in Berlin, past and present)
- Aspects of political life in the German-speaking world (Germany and the European Union, politics and youth, German re-unification and its consequences)
- Aspects of German-speaking society: current trends (the changing nature of family, the 'cyber-society', youth culture)
- Multiculturalism in German-speaking society (immigration, integration, racism)
- Film study of *Das Leben der Anderen* by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
- Book study of *Der Vorleser* by Bernhard Schlink

Mandarin (Edexcel 9CN0)

- Societal changes in modern China and among Chinese people (Family; education and work) • Aspects of Chinese culture in the Chinese-speaking world (Tradition: festivals and customs; cultural activities: movie, music, TV etc.)
- Everchanging Chinese society (Communication and technology; economy and environment) • Influence of 1978's reform and opening up (Gaps between rich and poor; China-UK relationship etc)
- Film study of *Please Vote For me* (请投我一票) by Chen Weijun
- Book study of *A Pigeon Call Phoenix* (一只叫凤的鸽子) by Cao Wenxuan

Spanish (AQA 7692)

- Artistic culture in the Hispanic world (modern day idols, Spanish regional identity, cultural heritage)
- Aspects of political life in the Hispanic world (today's youth, tomorrow's citizens, monarchies and dictatorships, popular movements)
- Aspects of Hispanic society (modern and traditional values, the 'cyber-society', equal rights)
- Multiculturalism in Hispanic society (immigration, integration, racism)
- Film study of *Ocho apellidos vascos* by Emilio Martínez-Lázaro
- Book study of *Las bicicletas son para el verano* by Fernando Fernán-Gómez

Examination content

- Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing – 50%

This includes a range of spoken and written comprehension questions, with an individual mp3 player for each candidate. It also includes summary and translations skills.

- Paper 2: Essay Writing – 20%

This includes a persuasive reflection on the film and the book studied during the course, which will allow the candidate to develop their critical skills.

- Paper 3: Speaking – 30%

This includes a discussion around one of the AQA topics, followed by a presentation and followup conversation around a research project chosen by the candidate.

Music

(AQA 7272 601/8304/4)

Since September 2021, Music in the Sixth Form has followed the AQA specification. Similar to the format of GCSE music, the course is divided into the disciplines of performance, composition and analysis, but there is naturally a considerable increase in the rigour of these areas when compared with GCSE.

What does the course aim to do?

Through the range of genres, styles and eras contained in the Areas of Study they will explore musical context, musical language and performance and composition skills. The AQA course is rigorous in its content and will well prepare students for undergraduate studies.

In dedicated composition lessons, pupils will begin by learning the craft of chorale writing, following the guidelines and rules set out by J. S. Bach. Composition lessons will follow on with improving orchestration, chamber ensembles and popular music, all of which inform their general musicianship, as well as prepare them for the briefs set by AQA in Year 13.

Analysis lessons are designed to make pupils fully self-sufficient and confident in their analysis of music in any style. By the end of the course, pupils will be able to pick up an unfamiliar score and pull out key compositional ideas and techniques used by the composer, discussing them in a language appropriate for undergraduate level. The analysis part of the course requires pupils to learn more advanced music theory in many respects, with particular focus on harmony.

With Reading School Music Department, our strong co-curricular programme means that pupils will be involved with various vocal and instrumental ensembles throughout the year, with A-level students taking on leadership roles within them. There are also ample opportunities for boys to run their own events in collaboration with other local schools as well as attend masterclasses to inform their practice.

The course is weighted as follows:

Performance (35%)

- Minimum ten-minute performance externally assessed
- Performances may be either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both
- We recommend that repertoire chosen is broad in styles to display versatility
- Performances can either be recorded separately or given as a full recital

Composition (25%)

- Two compositions to be submitted to the exam board
- Compositions with a combined duration of a minimum of 4 minutes 30 seconds
- One to a brief set by AQA
- Second composition is a free composition

Written Examination (40%)

Section A

Listening, theory and short essays on all areas of study:

Areas of Study A (40 marks)

- Baroque Solo Concerto of Bach, Vivaldi and Purcell
- The Operas of Mozart
- Romantic piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg
- Jazz music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Pat Metheny and Gwilym Simcock
- Popular music of Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, Muse, Beyoncé, Daft Punk and Labrinth

Section B

- Baroque solo concerto and Romantic piano music – detailed analysis.

Section C

- Jazz music or popular music – detailed analysis.

Philosophy

(AQA 7172)

What does the course aim to do?

This course aims to foster rigorous academic study through the application of analytical philosophical method. Students are encouraged to read a range of set texts in epistemology and moral philosophy which will become the foundation for their development later in the course. Essay writing and debate lies at the heart of philosophy and students will be expected to invest significant time in planning and preparation in this area. This course has established itself as developing critical thinking, analytic, and communication skills that will serve students extremely well in graduate programs in almost any discipline.

Which topics will you study?

In Year 12, you will study Epistemology, the study of knowledge and justified belief, and Moral Philosophy, the study of moral principles that govern a person's behaviour. In Year 13, you will study Metaphysics of God, which contemplates the nature and existence of God, and Metaphysics of Mind, the intellectual and practical exploration into the true nature of what we call "Mind".

What skills will you develop when studying Philosophy?

Philosophy will help you develop your ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments as well as providing you with the necessary skills to examine information in a critical way as well as form judgments based on clear evaluation. In addition, as an essay-based subject, there will be plenty of opportunity for students to develop an ability to provide clear expositions of difficult ideas as well as rigorous and sustained commentary.

Who should study this course?

Philosophy appeals if you have skills in the Arts and/or the Sciences. Philosophy is a popular choice if you wish to impress when it comes to university applications. It also enables you to fine tune your reasoning so that your philosophical skills can be applied to a range of careers. Law, politics, the civil service, journalism, advertising, education, medicine are some of the professions where your ability to turn abstract subjects into solid concepts will be highly regarded.

What is the structure of the course?

This course will be taught across 6 lessons per week. Homework will be set on a regular basis. Students will receive both class and revision notes but the reading of textbooks along with classic philosophical texts as an accompaniment is highly recommended. The assessment is purely by examination. There are two papers of three hours each. Within each paper there are two sections, each one covering one of the four areas of the syllabus (Paper 1, Epistemology and Moral Philosophy; Paper 2, The Metaphysics of God and The Metaphysics of Mind). Each section has five questions with no choice (so you need to know the whole syllabus) and is a graded series of essay questions. The first four examine knowledge and understanding, building up from mere definitions (which must however be philosophically precise) to longer explanations of ideas and standard arguments. Finally, there is

a major argument and evaluation question, where you must debate and decide a philosophical problem, such as 'Is there anything that we know for certain?'

Photography

See Art Options, A-level Section above

Physical Education

(AQA 7582D)

Physical Education is a practical and rigorous course that covers a range of challenging aspects of sporting performance, physiology, psychology and sport's societal impact. This breadth of topics means it ties in well with science subjects as well as humanities.

It is not a subject to be taken on lightly and students without an elite level of sporting performance will struggle to achieve top grades, due to the heavy weighting of the sporting performance element in this qualification.

The AQA course focuses on the following key areas

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

These seven topics are assessed through two, two-hour exams, which make up 70% of the overall grade, with the final 30% coming from a practical performance assessment which requires students to demonstrate high levels of sporting skill as either a coach or performer, plus a verbal analysis of performance.

Physics

(AQA 7408D)

Physics is perhaps the most fundamental of all the sciences, seeking to explain the science of stellar evolution, the nature of the fundamental particles that form the "fabric" of the Universe and everything in between. Physics is a challenging and interesting subject which will help you to understand the world and universe around you. A-level Physics is a vitally important qualification for many careers.

Some students go on to study Physics at university. This may lead to a career in research and development, either in a university or in industry. High temperature semiconductors, a better understanding of sub-atomic particles and more efficient ways of storing energy for cars are just three areas of research being pursued at the moment.

Perhaps the majority of those who study A-level Physics do so to apply their physics knowledge in another subject area at university. Examples of this are the many branches of engineering, electronics and meteorology. For these careers, A-level Physics is essential. Other students will use their knowledge, practical and analytical skills as a pathway to follow a career in veterinary science, medicine, dentistry or biochemistry. Physics students are also very well positioned to take up law and accountancy and finance positions because Physics is highly regarded by universities as a test of problem-solving ability and logical thought.

At Reading School, we follow the AQA A-level syllabus (7408). The core content consists of the following topics: Measurements and their errors, particles and radiation, waves, mechanics and materials, electricity, further mechanics and thermal physics, fields and their consequences, and nuclear physics. New from September 2022 is the choice of optional module (please see the AQA specification for more detail). We offer either Turning Points or Astrophysics at Reading School. Students wishing to study Physics at A-level should **decide upon their preferred option at application**, so that the correct teaching groups can be built and maintained for Year 12 moving into Year 13.

A-level Physics is a two-year 'linear' course which is examined externally at the end of Year 13. A very broad practical approach is built in to the syllabus which allows students to develop their scientific analytical skills to a very high level. The course has a high level of mathematical content which students will learn how to use in theoretical and practical situations.

Politics

(AQA 7152 A-level Government and Politics)

Are you interested in how power operates, who makes the decisions that shape our lives, and why people disagree about how society should be organised? Do you enjoy debate, discussion, and thinking critically about current affairs? If so, A-level Politics could be the ideal subject for you. It allows you to explore the systems, ideas, and institutions that underpin government both in the UK and abroad, while developing your ability to analyse, evaluate and communicate arguments effectively.

Politics is about people and power — who has it, how they use it, and how others challenge it. Studying Politics helps you understand the world you live in: from elections and government decisions to global events and the influence of the media. The course encourages you to think independently, to question assumptions, and to develop a balanced and evidence-based understanding of political issues.

At A-level, you will study three main components:

The Government and Politics of the UK – exploring how the UK is governed, including the constitution, Parliament, the Prime Minister and the executive, the judiciary, and the relationships between these institutions. You will also study political participation, including elections, political parties, pressure groups and the role of the media in shaping public opinion.

The Government and Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics – comparing the American political system with that of the UK. You will study the US Constitution, Congress, the Presidency, the Supreme Court, civil rights, and the influence of money and media on US democracy. Comparative study develops your ability to evaluate the similarities and differences between the two systems.

Political Ideas – exploring the key ideologies that have shaped modern politics: Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, and one additional optional ideology such as Feminism, Nationalism, Multiculturalism, or Anarchism. You will consider how these ideas have developed over time, how they influence political debate today, and how thinkers have contributed to them.

Politics lessons combine debate, discussion, and analysis with research and essay writing. You will regularly engage with current political events and will be expected to read widely and follow the news to develop your understanding of how theory and practice intersect. The subject rewards those who are curious, analytical, and willing to challenge their own perspectives as well as those of others.

There is **no coursework** element to A-level Politics. Assessment is by **three written examinations**, each worth one-third of the overall qualification:

- Paper 1 – UK Politics and Core Political Ideas
- Paper 2 – UK Government and Optional Political Ideas
- Paper 3 – Comparative Politics: The Government and Politics of the USA

Politics links well with subjects such as History, Economics, Philosophy, Sociology, and English, as all require critical thinking and the ability to construct clear, persuasive written arguments. The skills developed through A-level Politics — reasoning, communication, research, and analysis — are highly valued by universities and employers alike.

Many students go on to study Politics, International Relations, Law, History, Philosophy, Economics, or PPE at university, and a Politics A-level is excellent preparation for careers in journalism, law, public policy, civil service, business, and education, as well as for anyone with an interest in understanding and shaping the world around them.

Theatre Studies

(AQA Drama and Theatre 7262)

The course consists of a healthy balance between practical and written work. One of the most exciting aspects of the AQA A-level course is that you are given several opportunities to approach work from the perspective of a performer, director or designer, experiencing all aspects of the theatre maker's craft. This work is accompanied by a working notebook and a reflective report, but by and large, they are performance led components which in total are worth 60% of your final grade. In one component you devise your own piece of original theatre and for the other component you work on the presentation of three extracts from different plays, one of which is attached to a theatre practitioner you will study the work of. The choice of material is very wide and governed by you.

The written paper, making up 40% of the final grade, includes the study of two vastly contrasting set texts from a performance perspective and analysis and evaluation of live theatre seen. The emphasis at A-level is very much on theatre as a performance art and everything is explored from a practical perspective. The plays – Jerusalem by Jez Butterworth and Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie - are taught not as literary texts but as productions to be brought alive which makes the subject vibrant and dynamic. You will be asked to form opinions and to analyse every aspect of the work, research into the social, cultural and historic background and nature of the plays also plays a key part in our work, allying Theatre Studies very strongly to other research-based subjects. Visits to the theatre are vital and the focus is on seeing professional work. We will experience a wide variety of style and genre throughout our studies. It is important to remember that there is a significant amount of written work and self-directed study, so a real enthusiasm and genuine interest in the subject is essential.

Looking Beyond A-Levels

It should be stated that the study of A-levels is, in and of itself, a valuable endeavour. Education is a gift and to only see your A-level studies as a means to the next step in your journey towards a career, is to overlook the importance of education and the power it has to enrich. Your A-level choices should be partly informed by looking at the stage beyond, which for many is university, but this should also be balanced with your interests and passions, which may be slightly tangential or even unrelated to your final destination. The essay-writing or communication skills you accrue on a History or Theatre Studies A-level may prove invaluable to a future medic or engineer, even though other subjects are requirements for studying medicine or engineering at university. Pursuing your future career should not be the only element you consider when selecting A-levels.

However, before embarking on A-level study many students should have a sense of the pathway ahead of them regarding future study or employment. It is much easier to achieve top grades at A-level with a clear sense of how your current studies may benefit you in the future. It must be emphasised though, that rarely do all higher education establishments have the same requirements, and very rarely is there no flexibility at all. On the other hand, you must recognise that if you have an unconventional combination of subjects for a particular course you may put yourself at a disadvantage with respect to others in the university selection process. You may wish to consult Careers staff to check details. Please email careers@readingschool.co.uk to book an appointment if you are a current Reading School student.

Some degree courses such as those in Science and Medicine may lead to specific occupations while others, more especially in Arts subjects, are less 'vocational'. However, you should be wary of letting this aspect totally determine your A-level subject choice and remember that the quality of both A-level passes and a degree are widely regarded as a measure of mental calibre in the professions, commerce and industry. The majority of graduates rarely employ their degree information but do employ their cumulative skills. In other words, whilst

you may wish to keep an eye on the future there is much to be said for choosing subjects in which you are interested and you are likely to be successful.

A further consideration may be your proposed career direction beyond university and you may wish to consult a range of publications, many of which are available in the LRC. If you do join Reading School for the Sixth Form, you will be able to access this resource. The LRC is also open to Sixth Form pupils during their private study periods. Laptops can be used in the LRC and student printing, photocopying and scanning is available. The LRC holds approximately 8000 books including titles to support reading beyond the curriculum, well-being and popular fiction. They also provide access to a range of excellent eResources that can be accessed from home including JSTOR and Britannica and an ebook service called VLeBooks.

Digital Learning at Reading School

We integrate digital learning into Sixth Form lessons at Reading School, so all of our Sixth Form students can benefit from the array of opportunities this presents, alongside the traditional teaching and learning that our school has excelled at over many years.

All students in the Sixth Form bring a device to school that will be used to augment their learning. These devices can be new, second hand, or devices already in the home. The School will provide guidance on which devices would be most suitable and we have listened to parent feedback related to cost and will align our recommendations to the cost suggested as most suitable by the majority of parents. If students are currently in receipt of free school meals, or have need of financial support with this purchase, the School will be able to offer assistance with this.

We have been doing this for some time now and teaching staff have built excellent digital resources and teaching into their lessons knowing that all students will be able to access it. We see this as a really positive step forward in our teaching provision for A-level students.

More specific guidance on this will come out to offer holders in due course.

Sixth Form Agreement

What the School agrees to:

Sixth Form students at Reading School can expect the school to support them through many opportunities to learn and grow. We endeavour:

- To offer a first-class education, which will challenge you to achieve your very best academically, as well as giving you the opportunity to explore existing and newly discovered talents through varied extra-curricular opportunities;
- To let you grow as an individual in a happy and caring environment where you will be supported in all that you do;
- To inform you about your progress in the Sixth Form and about the opportunities available at 18-plus;
- To make the School's expectations clear and consistent for all, with due regard for preparing Sixth Formers for adult life.

What you agree to:

- The School can expect you to enter the Sixth Form as young adults within the School community and understand the importance of acting as role models;
- To enjoy the opportunities and privileges, you are expected to set an example to the rest of the School in your studies and in all other aspects of life in the School community; • To challenge yourself in all that you do, and aim to leave the School with life changing qualifications and a breadth of different skills and experiences, ready to make a positive difference to the world.
- To bring the correct equipment to lessons
- To spend adequate time on your work as advised by your teachers
- To complete homework and coursework on time
- Attend all external examinations punctually. (If you do not attend an examination without good reason you will pay the examination fee.) All resits must be paid for in advance.
- Respect the academic expertise of subject staff and recognise that predicted grades made in Year 13 are not subject to negotiation.

We expect that you are responsible for your own learning and adopt the following:

Excellence

- Be enthusiastic learners
- Ask questions when you don't understand
- Learn from your mistakes
- Complete all work to the best of your ability and on time
- Take time to review feedback and work out how to improve next time
- Be eager to participate in class discussions and activities
- Be inquisitive and have an open mind
- Present work well and take pride in it
- Be eager to try new ways of learning and go outside of your comfort zone
- Be prepared to tackle difficult problems and activities
- Do independent work outside of your lessons to ensure you are working to your potential

Integrity

- Have good manners
- Show respect and tolerance to other students and staff
- Conform fully to the School's expectations about personal conduct and appearance (Please read the School Dress Code fully)

- Treat the School with respect and accept responsibility for maintaining the Sixth Form Common Room
- Never leave School premises without authorisation from your tutor and/or Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form You may leave the site after 12:50pm if you do not have any lessons after this time. If you are staying in school you are expected to sign-in at the LRC for the afternoon
- Holidays should not be taken in term time
- Driving lessons should not be arranged during school time unless it is during a study period in the afternoon

Leadership

- Be a positive influence on others around you
- Be confident in what you can do
- Bring your own ideas and information to lessons
- Take advantage of extra-curricular activities which take place outside school hours, looking to lead the lower years in these activities where possible, as well as support and represent the school when asked to do so e.g. at Open Days
- Understand the importance of acting as role models to students in the school

Community

- Help and encourage others to learn when they are stuck or confused
- Look after the learning environment
- Listen carefully to the teacher and fellow students when they are talking
- Be present in school from the start of your first lesson until the end of your tutor time or last lesson, depending on which is later. Please note that if attitude to work or attainment drops below the expected level, students may be asked to revert to a full 8:20am – 3:25pm school attendance schedule.
- Attend all tutor periods, House Assembly and Chapel
- Inform your form tutor and your subject teachers and make arrangements to complete any work missed, if you know in advance that you will be absent
- Attend games lessons on Wednesday afternoons
- Commit to performing community work on a regular basis throughout Year 12.

Disciplinary Procedure

If you fail to observe the expectations, the following sanctions will apply:

- Your tutor will discuss the problem with you and remind you of our expectations. This meeting will have the status of an oral warning and a record will be kept of it.
- If you do not heed this warning, the matter will be referred to the Sixth Form Intervention Team. They will see you about the matter and after the discussion a letter will be sent to both you and your parents. This will constitute a written warning.
- Should you fail to act upon this warning, the matter will be referred to the Head of Sixth Form and, in consultation with the Headmaster, you may be required to leave the Sixth Form

Progression into Year 13, Subject Drops and Subject Changes

We hope that all students will undertake two years of study at Reading School and will complete their Alevels successfully. Students who are achieving significantly below their own ability at the end of Year 12 will be encouraged to carefully consider their careers pathway and option choices.

We encourage students to commence their Sixth Form studies with an academic programme that suits them. Students may be allowed to drop a subject in the first two weeks of their first term or at the end of the summer term. Drops at other times of the year are discouraged, and students are reminded that beginning a subject which they later drop disadvantages themselves, the School and others.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no A-level subject changes will be permitted beyond the first half term of Year 12.

More specific guidance on this will come out to offer holders in due course.



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