OLD SWINFORD HOSPITAL



SIXTH FORM CHOICE

FROM THE HEADMASTER

'A' levels are exciting, and I hope you will find the information on the following pages helpful in making your choice. In making that choice, you should have in mind that you must enjoy the work you do, but you must also be able to cope with the work in that subject.

There is a world of difference between GCSEs and 'A' levels. Teachers give you specific instructions for GCSEs but for 'A' level working on your own becomes much more important. Teachers' expectations will be different and you must have the ability to follow up what is done and said in class. Self-discipline and independence have to be developed.

Most boys at Old Swinford have the ambition to go on to Higher Education. There are usually about 160 in the Sixth Form, so the variety and choice of 'A' levels is large. In 1990, 75 boys in the Upper Sixth will take 'A' levels and 14 of them will be aiming at places at Oxford and Cambridge. Some boys, though, will be more attracted to Polytechnic courses; a few may wish to go straight into Management or other Training. The Careers Department and Head of Sixth Form give advice on all this.

The strength of the OSH Sixth Form lies not only in its size, but also in the fact that you are not simply being given an 'A' level academic education. Very important, too, is the training in Leadership and the assumption of Responsibility; opportunities for both of these come to every boy. Sixth formers help run the school, and these final two years should be the culmination of all previous education.

A traditional Sixth Form like ours also provides a wealth of out-of-school activities from Sport to Drama, Music and Debating. The particular nature of Old Swinford makes the provision of these easier than in many schools.

The Sixth Form will be, I hope, for you, an exciting challenge.



The Headmaster
The Oak Room

THE SIXTH FORM

This prospectus gives detailed information about the Sixth Form, which forms a significant section of the school, about 160 students out of 525. The emphasis in our Sixth Form is on high academic achievement, development of powers of leadership and responsibility and preparation for higher eduction or appropriate careers, all within the framework of a traditional Sixth Form.

ENTRY INTO THE SIXTH FORM

The vast majority of our own Fifth Formers stay on into the Sixth Form and follow a full three 'A' level timetable. Students with fewer than five GCSEs at Grade C or above will, after consultation with parents and Head of Sixth Form, either repeat the Fifth Form (though with Sixth Form privileges) or embark on a three year 'A' level course, beginning one or two 'A' levels and retaking a certain number of GCSEs in the Lower Sixth. Everyone will have oppportunities to retake some GCSEs if necessary, and form teaching in some subjects is provided.

Each year there is also a number of places for new students who come straight into the Sixth Form, either as day boys, day boarders or boarders. Candidates for these places are interviewed in the Spring Term, usually March. A good level of academic achievement is a necessary qualification and if there is doubt as to whether a candidate will be able to manage three 'A' levels, a place may be offered conditional upon six GCSEs at Grade C or above. There is no restriction on where day boys and day boarders may come from and there are no tuition fees to pay.

SIXTH FORM SUBJECTS

There is a wide range of 'A' level courses. Groups can be advantageously small and operate in the following subjects:

Archaeology	Computer Science	Geology
Art	Design	German
Biology	Electronics	History
Business Studies	English Literature	Mathematics
Chemistry	French	Further Mathematics
Classical Studies	Geography	Physics
		Religious Studies

It is normally possible to arrange other 'A' level subjects eg Latin, Ancient Greek, Music.

In addition to three 'A' level subjects, all Sixth Formers have each week a certain number of periods of General Studies, including an element of Religious Studies. At the end of the Lower Sixth some students will sit the JMB A/S level examination in General Studies, and at the end of the Upper Sixth, subject to results in the 'mock' examinations, the JMB 'A' level. Also, all Sixth Form students have a Games afternoon each week. They may continue participating in the activities of the school's Combined Cadet Force on Friday afternoons should they wish.

THE TIMETABLE

Each main 'A' level has eight or nine teaching periods. General Studies, Games and the CCF take up another section of the timetable, and, as in all Sixth Forms, students will have a number of periods for Private Study. In the Lower Sixth, all Private Study (for boarders, day boarders and day boys) initially takes place in the School Library. Later in the year, boarders and day boarders may use the study facilities in their Study Bedrooms or boarding houses. Upper Sixth Private Study takes place in Study Bedrooms, boarding houses and designated day boy study areas, but students may continue to use the facilities provided by the School Library. Sixth Formers may also work in the Computer Centre during Private Study if no teaching is taking place there, and special arrangements may be made to use certain Games facilities eg Squash Courts.

It is important that all Sixth Formers learn to use the opportunity of Private Study periods for work on their 'A' level subjects and advice on work planning, study technique, note-making, wider reading and revision will be given at the beginning of the Lower Sixth.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Lord Foley's Awards

These academic awards are made in the Spring Term of the Fifth Year. For details see the School Prospectus or contact the Headmaster.

Exhibitions and Distinction Prizes

The Exhibitions and Distinction Prizes described in the School Prospectus are available for Sixth Formers.

CAREERS GUIDANCE

Students are given guidance on the procedure for application to university, polytechnic and institutes of higher and further eduction. Available in the Careers Centre are prospectuses and guides for these institutions and students can borrow material as required. In addition, the Head of Careers is available in the Careers Centre for consultation, while more formal interviews are also part of the programme.

Students are advised on entry into the professions, the Armed Services, Commerce and Industry and there is ample opportunity to visit higher educational establishments and places of work. In fact, students are encouraged to attend overnight conferences at universities and polytechnics where appropriate. 'Mock' interviews are conducted by subject teachers and the Head of Sixth Form as training and practice for university and job interviews.

A comprehensive bank of resource material concerning careers and jobs in Industry and Commerce is available for loan for short periods, and access to the Careers Centre allows Sixth Formers to browse and sift through such literature and consult reference books and documents.

There is a programme for visiting speakers throughout the year and there is also the opportunity for work experience for those who desire it during Adventure Week in July.

The head of Careers works in close consultation with the Careers Officer based in Stourbridge, with whom students can also make appointments.

LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

Great emphasis is placed on the opportunities Sixth Formers have for exercising responsibility and developing powers of leadership. There is a traditional structure of House Prefects, School Prefects and similar posts of responsibility and Sixth Formers are asked to contribute to the running of the school in very many ways, eg helping to organise inter-house competitions. School Prefects have a meeting with the Headmaster each week.

In the Lower Sixth, students are encouraged to undertake Outward Bound Courses; the Feoffees of the school are prepared to subsidise a student who is chosen to go on such a course by paying a part of the cost. The school takes part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and Sixth Formers may work towards their Gold Award.

THE SIXTH FORM CLUB

A new purpose-built Sixth Form Club opens at Easter 1990, providing social and recreational facilities. From time to time the committee of Sixth Formers organises social events, and girl-friends may be invited to the club at specified times during the week.

YOUNG ENTERPRISE

The school takes part in the national Young Enterprise organisation each year by setting up a company with its own officials to market a product.

INDUSTRY

'Challenge of Industry' and 'Understanding Industry' courses and conferences are regularly held at the school for the Sixth Form and are funded by the Feoffees, who believe that knowledge of Industry, its workings and its management is essential at the present time.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

There is a wide range of sports on the Sixth Form Games afternoon on Wednesday. For those not in School Teams and who prefer exercise other than sports and games, there is the opportunity to perform some aspect of Community Service locally.

A FINAL WORD

It is important that you choose your 'A' level subjects wisely, so please read the following pages carefully. You will find a good deal of information on the various subjects but do not hesitate to consult subject teachers, tutors, the Head of Careers or the Head of Sixth Form if you require any help or advice. There will be an opportunity for Sixth Form students and their parents to discuss 'A' level choices with subject teachers at the beginning of the Lower Sixth before firm decisions are made.

'A' LEVEL COURSES

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Department offers:

1. Full 'A' level SMP course in Pure and Applied Mathematics with Statistics. The full range of grades will be available to candidates who sit papers 1R and 2R.

2. Limited grade 'A' level SMP course (the syllabus is reduced in content) in Pure and Applied Mathematics with Statistics. The highest grade available will be a C grade. The candidates will sit papers 1F and 2F.

   Pure Mathematics is the study, to a greater depth, of the type of Mathematics done at GCSE level; the complete course includes a study of Trigonometry, Algebra, Vector Algebra, Complex Numbers, Calculus and Numerical Analysis.

   Applied Mathematics deals with the application of mathematical principles to problems in Mechanics, Kinematics and Electricity.

   Statistics uses the mathematical principles learned in Pure Maths to analyse numerical facts and aid decision making. Topics include probability, the normal curve and other distributions, tests of significance and hypothesis testing.

3. Double Subject Course (2 Years)
   Students wishing to specialise in Mathematics may take Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics with Statistics as separate subjects, so gaining two 'A' level passes at the end of the two year course. The examinations taken are those of the JMB.

   These courses occupy twelve periods per week - six periods in pure Mathematics and six periods in Applied Mathematics and Statistics.

   The standard required for Double Mathematics courses is extremely high, and only students with very good GCSE grades together with the AO Additional Mathematics qualifications should consider taking them.

   Pure and Applied Mathematics with Statistics (Double Subject)
   Examinations: 'A' level Mathematics (Pure)
   'A' level Mathematics (Applied and Statistics)
   Students taking the Further Mathematics 'A' level courses will normally take, at the end of their first year, SMP 'A' level single subject of the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations Board.

4. AO Additional Mathematics (SMP)
   The Additional Mathematics syllabus provides a worthwhile and flexible vehicle for both deepening and broadening the mathematical horizons of able Fifth Formers.
   The course provides a firm base of Sixth Form studies requiring mathematical skills (not just Mathematics 'A' level).
   The course covers work on:

Statistics and Probability	Algebras and Structure
Mechanics	Complex Numbers
Trigonometry	Calculus

SCIENCES

In our present technological society, we can be certain that we shall require more scientists to meet the demands of the modern world.

Students intending to follow a Science course at University, Polytechnic or College must have the appropriate Science 'A' levels. For those intending to follow a non-scientific course for Higher Education, one Science at 'A' level is highly regarded as a basic training in logical thought and presentation.

PHYSICS

The syllabus is designed to enable students to derive interest, enjoyment and a sense of achievement from their study of Physics. Students are expected to adopt a questioning approach to the work so that they will gain a greater understanding of the principles of Physics.

The syllabus consists of:
(a) General Physics and Mechanics
(b) Mechanical and Thermal Properties of Matter
(c) Waves, Oscillations and Optics
(d) Electricity and Magnetism
(e) Radiation, Atomic Physics and Electronics

Practical work is undertaken by all students throughout the two year course and opportunities exist for further project work, particularly in Electronics. Students should be aware that 'A' level Physics requires some mathematical ability, so those who are not taking 'A' level Mathematics are advised to take AO Additional Mathematics. In fact, high grade passes in 'A' level Physics are difficult to achieve without the support of the 'A' level Mathematics course.

BIOLOGY

In the new 'A' level syllabus, emphasis is given to function rather than a detailed study of specific types. The topics covered include Cell Biology, Genetics and Evolution, Physiology and Biochemistry, Anatomy and Morphology, Ecology and Classification. During the course, students are expected to carry out a great deal of practical work such as Microscopy, experimental work in Physiology and Genetics and various fieldstudy projects, for which a certain degree of manipulative skill is required. There will be a fieldstudy week in the Summer Term of the first year, when the bulk of ecological practical work will be done.

CHEMISTRY

Chemistry is the science of the material world. We live in an age of chemistry-based technology so that our whole way of life has been made possible through chemistry.

The importance of chemistry stems from its central position among the basic sciences. On the one hand, it is linked with physics through physical chemistry and on the other, with biology through biochemistry. Life depends basically on chemical reactions. Chemistry is, therefore, fundamental to medicine and physiology. It plays an important part in the development of such sciences as geology and it underlies many branches of technology such as atomic energy, metallurgy, fuel technology and particularly engineering. Chemistry also enters into every manufacturing industry as well as medicine and agriculture, for these are all concerned with the properties of chemical substances.

Chemistry is essentially an experimental activity and it is taught from this viewpoint, the practical work reinforcing the theoretical principles and concepts of the discipline which themselves are related to economic and social development.

The course in chemistry is essential for those students who:

1. Hope to study Chemistry or one of certain related subjects (eg Medicine, Biochemistry, Veterinary Science) at University or College.

2. Need an 'A' level qualification in Chemistry for an intended career.

An 'A' level qualification in Chemistry is also a desirable and widely accepted additional qualification in many other fields both at University and in Industry.

Commitment and consistent efforts are vital ingredients for success.

The syllabus followed is JMB Chemistry syllabus B. The practical component of the course consists of continual assessment of practical skills and the theory papers consist of objective answers, short structured questions and a longer essay-type section.

ELECTRONICS

Electronics and Electronic Engineering is a rapidly developing and expanding field and serious skill shortages mean that well-qualified graduates are at a premium. Companies in the Banking and Financial sectors also recognise the value of Engineering degrees.

The range of degree courses relating to Electronics has increased greatly in recent years to include:

Electronics and Software Engineering
Electronic Systems Engineering
Microelectronics and Systems Engineering
Electronics with Business Studies
Computer Systems Engineering
and many others.

Final year degree options often include Telecommunications, Medical Electronics, Optoelectronics, Robotics and Satellite Communication.

Companies such as British Telecom offer generous sponsorship and career opportunities to University students. Astec, the largest manufacturer of power supplies in Europe, takes a keen interest in the 'A' level course and provides an insight into Industrial Electronics and development projects.

In our new purpose-built Electronics Centre there are excellent facilities for the completion of project work. Each student has his own CRO, signal generator, test gear etc.

No previous knowledge of Electronics is required to enter the course. 'A' level students taking the course as a third subject, particularly those studying Arts subjects, are most welcome.

The syllabus followed is the AEB Electronic Systems 'A' level. Topics covered include Communications Systems, Processing of Signals (Digital Electronics) and Audio Systems.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

The course is the University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations Computer Science syllabus. It covers all aspects of computing; however, emphasis will be on problem solving using computers, both in the context of applications and in the approach to fundamental priniciples of computing and programming. Features of the examination will include questions relating to a Case Study made available in advance; exercises and assignments of a practical nature set by the Delegacy and treated as coursework, and a Project which will involve the definition, documentation, implementation and solution of a problem chosen by the candidate. It would be advantageous, but not essential, for the student to be following an 'A' level Mathematics course.

General Studies - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Students follow a seven-week course which summarises work processing techniques producing a curriculum vitae and a general letter of application. There is also an explanation and application of the Careers information held on the hard disc system.

General

The information Technology and Computing Department is equipped with an S.J. Research level 3 Econet network linking BBC model B, Master 128 and Archimedes A3000 microcomputers. These computers are accessible outside lesson times and at certain times in the day for all students to use. The network is available throughout all Boarding Houses and Teaching Rooms providing communication and information around the school.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography provides interesting work for the student of sciences and/or arts. The course followed is the modern approach fo the JMB syllabus. This includes an interesting range of subject work with modern techniques and thus provides a good basis for further study in higher eduction. Geography has the added advantage of being the spring-board to a wide range of careers.

Geography involves the study of Meteorology, Biogeography, Geomorphology, Soils and Human Geography and therefore combines well with the sciences and the arts. The school has a recording weather station and a weather satellite (meteosat) receiving station which is of great benefit to geographers.

The subject has undergone great change in recent years and now involves considerably more practical work and fewer 'regional' studies than in the past. There is greater emphasis on quantative techniques and on fieldwork. On the 'A' level course, students have the opportunity to undertake a week's field course at a Field Studies Council centre such as in the Penines or South Wales.

GEOLOGY

Geology is the science of the earth. It involves a wide range of areas of study such as Mineralogy, Palaeontology (the study of fossils), Petrology (the study of rocks) and Stratigraphy (the study of strata and thus earth history). No previous knowledge of the subject is needed and therefore, anyone with the interest and the aptitude is welcome. It is a subject that spans the divide between the Pure Sciences and Geography and as such combines well with a wide range of 'A' levels. To study geology in higher education it is advisable to combine it with a science subject such as Chemistry, Physics or Mathematics. Geography is also a suitable partner as joint courses are available in several universities and polytechnics.

The course involves much practical work and fieldwork. Stourbridge is an excellent centre for fieldwork in the Welsh borderland where many classic geological sites are located. Students also have the opportunity to undertake a week's fieldwork on the Isle of Arran during their two years. The students on the course are affiliated to the local BCGS (Black Country Geological Society) and can therefore take advantage of their field trips and lectures by visiting university geologists. During the school's Adventure Week excursions to Cornwall, North Wales and the Outer Hebrides have taken place.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Why choose Archaeology? For some, it will be a chance to start a new subject from scratch, completely unexplored academic territory. For some, it will be a curiosity to know more about the past and the history of the environment in which we find ourselves. For a few, as always, it will be the "third" 'A' level, by a process of elimination. As long as this last group is prepared to be interested and to do the necessary reading, it quite often happens that some of them find the subject becomes their chief interest at 'A' level.

The only real qualification needed for the subject is a willingness to be interested. In fact, it is better to be totally ignorant than to have absorbed some of the lunatic notions about our ancestors currently available in cheap paperbacks.

Those who take the course should gain an Advanced level pass (Cambridge Board) after two years.

What does the course involve? Some time is spent on expeditions to look at sites in the countryside, though no excavation is done (arrangements can be made for students to go on 'digs' in the holidays). Original objects are studied in the classroom and simple scientific experiments carried out to show how archaeologists gain information about sites.

The main bases of work in the classroom is the Archaeology of Britain. The results of the latest excavations are used to show the state of our knowledge about our ancestors from the earliest times. According to the inclinations of the group, we study Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or Mediaeval Archaeology.

The course also includes a study of the main developments in Prehistory over the world: the earliest fossil men from Africa; cave paintings; the beginning of farming; the discovery and exploitation of metal.

A third component is the philosophy, technique and interpretation of archaeology: why society spends vast sums of money on examining the past; what exactly can old pieces of pot tell us; how you would begin to set up an archaeological survey of an area.

For 'A' level, each candidate has to complete a Project which combines investigation in the countryside, study of excavated objects and published material. A Roman Villa or Town might be studied, but the study of an Iron Age Hill Fort or the archaeology of one's home town or village is equally acceptable.

By the end of the course, it is hoped that the student will have a greater appreciation of the development of his own environment, the importance of preserving something of the past and the way in which the archaeologist sets about recovering evidence to build up a picture of the past.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

If you enjoy reading, discussing and analysing novels, plays and poems, then what could be better than spending two years doing it with, we hope, an 'A' level pass at the end?

The Oxford Board 'A' level course covers all styles and periods of literature from Chaucer to the present day. Students will study two Shakespearian plays for Paper One; poetry (including Chaucer and/or Milton) and novels for Paper Two; and Twentieth Century Authors for Paper Three. Throughout the course they will learn how to develop their critical powers through discussion, essay writing and detailed analysis of prose and verse passages.

The set texts, however, should not be the sole concern of the 'A' level student. The course begins in the Lower Sixth with a history of English Literature and wider reading is expected throughout. Theatre and cinema trips are arranged as appropriate.

Studying 'A' level English Literature is not an academic exercise, it's a way of life!

MODERN LANGUAGES

French and German

These courses assume development of fluency in all language skills, a considerable refinement of grammatical awareness and the experience of, and sensitivity to, a variety of functions, styles and registers of language (from colloquial to informal, from journalistic to a range of literary styles etc). Through the medium of the language, it is hoped to encourage a deeper examination of the foreign culture (including some appreciation, for example, of historical perspective and of economic, sociological or political issues), to sample a number of works of literature and to establish wider reading and listening habits. There is a need for willingness to develop a critical awareness, to use works of reference, to discuss and to show initiative in pursuing interests and research.

We are a small school and can, therefore, offer small Sixth Form groups which are well suited to French and German at 'A' level. We have a flourishing French Exchange Scheme and we hope to organise exchanges with West German, Swiss and Austrian students in the near future.

HISTORY

The 'A' level History course deals with aspects of British and Foreign History between 1815 and 1964. Certain aspects of the course differ sharply from GCSE History, in particular the use of documents to study selected subjects, for example the development of the Cold War. An understanding of general themes such as the struggle between the established order and movements demanding change in the various countries studied, is an important aspect of the course. Contrasting political movement, democracy, Nazism and Communism are also studied in some depth, as is the development of European Nationalism, international relations and the causes of international conflict.

To succeed on this course you will need to read widely and think for yourself. The 'A' level examination at the end of the course is intended to discover whether or not you can assess different approaches to, interpretation of, and opinions about the past. It is also very concerned to discover if you can present a clear, concise, logical and relevant argument. If you can, you will do well in the examination and will have acquired a very valuable skill.

ART

Students considering 'A' level Art must have shown signs of empathy or talent for this subject. It is important that the course is not seen as an easy option. Success at GCSE is by no means an automatic indication of ability to pass the 'A' level examination which takes into consideration a number of extra factors. Hard work, an enquiring mind, a lively imaginative approach and a strong sense of personal dedication are all essential qualities. Students will be expected to work in their free time and not rely solely on class periods.

The practical requirements for an 'A' level Art course are similar to those in the Fourth and Fifth Years, but students will be encouraged to develop more individual styles and programmes of work which cater for their specific interests. Facilities are available in all areas of the Art Department, ie Painting, Printing, Drawing, Pottery and Sculpture. The History of Art is also an essential part of the course, together with History of Architecture.

The Department puts a strong emphasis on Drawing, believing it to be the basis of all good design and the essence of all Art. Students will, therefore, gain experience of drawing as an aesthetic attainment and as an investigative and imaginative approach to observations.

The examination consists of three sections:

(i) A History of Art and Architecture written section, for which three hours are allowed.

(ii) An Observed Drawing section which may consist of either a figure drawing study, a plant drawing study or a still life study, for which six hours are allowed.

(iii) An Imaginative Composition painting to be produced over a three week period.

The candidate has to gain pass marks in all three sections in order to achieve the 'A' level.

Art is acceptable as an academic qualification in every university in Britain. If students need three 'A' levels at certain grades to meet entry requirements at university, then Art can serve as one of these.

Qualifications in Art can lead to a variety of careers in the world of Advertising, Design, TV, Theatre, Illustration, Teaching, Wallcovering and Textile Design, Fashion etc.

DESIGN

If you are considering 'A' level Design, do you have a vague notion that it is 'like Art but more practical' or 'like CDT but more arty'? Both these ideas are misconceived. The syllabus for Oxford Board Design opens with the statement 'Candidates are expected to acquire a general understanding of the design process at the level appropriate to Sixth Form studies'. Design is a demanding course of practical and theoretical study. A large amount of the student's own time must be devoted to the subject.

The Lower Sixth is spent studying design from several angles: Industrial, Social and Human. There are minor design problems to solve which must be supported by design work in graphic form and evidence of craft skills. Initiative, self-motivation, imagination, creativity and problem-solving abilities are all required. In other subjects your role (at least in lessons) may be largely passive. In Design you have to be much more independant.

The second year of the course is taken up by the final Project (chosen by the student) and preparation for the two written examinations. An exhibition of the two years' work is held and a visiting moderatore talks to each student in turn.

Students taking this 'A' level need not have a GCSE in CDT subjects, but must be interested in the 'why', 'how' and 'what' of their environment. They must have a good grade at English GCSE as most written work is in essay form. Above all, the student must be able to work by himself, plan ahead and be methodical.

Extracts from Design at 'A' level by an ex-student. More information can be obtained from Mr C.S. Williamson.

BUSINESS STUDIES

The course is designed to give students an understanding of the nature and problems of business through an investigation of the principles which govern business decisions and the solution of business problems.

The course provides a bridge between the educational needs post-sixteen and the needs of life after full-time education. It seeks to be of value and interest to most students whatever the other components of their studies, and whatever their intentions on completing the course.

There is no intention to provide career guidance or advice throughout the course nor does it aim to be of particular value to those with a specific career in mind, but it does develop a wide range of intellectual and practical skills and hence, provides a good foundation for any subsequent development.

Initially, students will study decision-making in organisations before progressing to consider this theme in relation to marketing, production, finance and people in organisations.

Students will need to apply themselves to a range of learning situations (eg individual and group work; case study) and should be prepared to handle the various numerate elements of the course.

All students are required to undertake a Project which involves a two week attachment within an organisation at the end of the first year.

This 'A' level course draws on a number of disciplines including Economics, Accounting, Decision-making Theory, Organisational Theory, Quantative Analysis and Marketing Philosophies to provide an insight into modern business practice.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

This JMB course aims to encourage the student:

(i) to acquire knowledge of the main achievements of the Greeks and Romans;
(ii) to develop a critical appreciation of their literature;
(iii) to understand the methods of historical and archaeological investigation, and philosophical reasoning.

No knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages is required, and the course does not assume any previous study of Classical Studies - though acquaintance with either or both of these areas of study would be of some advantage to the student.

Unadorned knowledge accounts, of itself, for less than half the marks in the examination: candidates must, in addition, display skills in understanding and evaluating evidence, and in communicating reasoned views coherently expressed.

The general outline of papers covered is as follows:

(a) History and Society

(i) Athens and Sparta in the sixth and fifth centuries BC
(ii) The Age of Cicero - Roman society, government and politics 76-43 BC
(iii) The Early Empire - Tiberius to Nero 14-68 AD

(b) Archaeology

The value and limitations of archaeological evidence in studying the history and culture of:

(i) Mycenaean Civilisation
(ii) Roman Britain

(c) Literature

(i) Greek Epic - Homer
(ii) Greek Tragedy - Sophocles and Euripides
(iii) Roman Satire - Horace and Juvenal
(iv) Biography - Plutarch
(v) History - Herodotus, Livy and Sallust

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The course followed is that of the JMB Religious Studies (Advanced), Alternative A (Old Testament) and B (New Testament).

The Old Testament sections concentrate on the primitive traditions and early history of the Hebrews, down to the reign of David. There is no Old Testament set text as such, but passages illustrating the main themes and topics are detailed for special study.

The New Testament syllabus traces the growth and development of the early Church and its traditions in the first century, and includes the study of various branches of Biblical Criticism. The New Testament examination requires the study, in depth, of a prescribed text (or texts).

The course does not presuppose any particular religious commitment. The subject is treated as an academic discipline which requires:

(i) a knowledge and understanding of religious language, belief and practice as exemplified by the texts studied;
(ii) a critical awareness of the material studied, and an evaluation of its claims, values and contemporary significance;
(iii) an appreciation of the broader historical and cultural background against which the action is set, together with insights derived from archaeological discoveries relating to this history and culture.

GENERAL STUDIES

All students entering the Sixth Form pursue a two year course in General Studies.

The course is seen as an essential and integral part of the Sixth Form curriculum. Its aims are:

1. To extend knowledge beyond the areas covered by a student's 'A' level specialisations.

2. To foster the development of independant critical thought and judgement, in which rigorous rational analysis is given appropriate weight alongside intuitive and emotional response.

3. To encourage students to examine topics on which honest people may genuinely differ, and to encourage them to argue cogently for their own position whilst paying due regard to other points of view.

4. To foster the development of moral and social sensibilities and the capacity for aesthetic and creative responses.

5. To develop and refine competence in self-expression, both oral and written, whereby relevant information is communicated in an ordered and coherent way.

Methods of teaching include group discussion as well as formal lectures; visual aids and media resources as well as books and blackboards. Students may be encouraged to prepare short papers for delivery to the group and to conduct subsequent discussion of the topic. This should be a valuable preparation for future seminar work in higher eduction. Students are encouraged to extend their studies by reading newspapers and magazines, by the selective use of radio and television and by availing themselves of opportunities provided by the school for visits to the theatre, to concerts and outside lectures.

Although the Department does not make heavy demands on the student's time in Private Study or prep, it does expect to set work on an occasional basis and expect students to keep abreast of developments in current affairs.

In May of the Upper Sixth year, students take the 'A' level General Studies examination (Scheme 1) of the JMB, provided they have previously secured one of grades A-C in GCSE English and/or have attained a satisfactory mark in the January 'mock' examination. An additional, optional, Test in Spoken English is available for those candidates who wish to take it.

The 'A' level (two, three-hour papers) examination includes multiple choice questions on General Knowledge and requires essays on broad, general topics. There is generous scope for choice in the essays and the range of topics is wide. They generally fall into three main categories:

(i) The Social Sciences eg Politics, Economics, History, Geography, Current Affairs.

(ii) The Natural Sciences and Mathematics including the History of Science, Scientific Method and the Environmental, Social and Economic implications of developments in science and technology.

(iii) The Arts eg Literature, Theatre, Music, Films, Television, the Visual and Plastic Arts, Architecture.

Questions on Religion, Ethics and Philosophy may be set in any section of the paper.

The course is not designed exclusively for those seeking qualifications for higher education and its curriculum is not inhibited or dominated by examination constraints. In the areas of, for instance, Current Affairs, Politics, Civics, Ethics and Philosophy, there are opportunities for discussion of, and reflection upon, many topics which should be of concern to enquiring minds - topics which for many students would not otherwise by explored in the context of their formal 'A' level studies. In other subject areas, for which wide provison for many students is made in the Sixth Form curriculum, there are social dimensions and implications of the subject to be considered which do not usually figure as part of the academic 'A' level syllabus. Over the two year course, up to twenty members of staff contribute their different interests and expertise to the different units of the course. We hope that this will provide, irrespective of any examination considerations, a wide ranging and stimulating course of liberal education.