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PROSPECTUS

Contents

Why Choose BSS6	Page 1	Geography	Page 22
What Students Say	Page 2	Geology	Page 23
An Excellent Ethos	Page 4	History	Page 24
Excellent Achievement	Page 6	Languages	Page 25
Excellent Progress	Page 8	Maths	Page 26
Enriching Excellence	Page 10	Music	Page 27
An Excellent Environment	Page 12	Physical Education	Page 28
Art	Page 13	Physics	Page 29
Biology	Page 14	Politics	Page 30
Business	Page 15	Psychology	Page 31
Chemistry	Page 16	Religious Education	Page 32
Computer Science	Page 17	Sociology	Page 33
DT	Page 18	Theatre Studies	Page 34
Economics	Page 19	What Our Alumni Say	Page 35
English	Page 20	Viability of Courses	Page 36
EPQ	Page 21		

Why Choose



Most of the choices you've made so far about your education – the schools you've attended and the subjects you've taken – have been important, but they have been limited.

The choices you now face are much more significant. There are new routes you can follow in training and education. Schools, colleges and workplaces are interested in your becoming part of their community after GCSEs.

So in this slightly bewildering world of many new choices, why consider BSS6? We believe we have an enviable combination on offer:

- High standards;
- Great progression into university and careers;
- Over 22 subjects;
- Modern, purpose-built sixth form facilities;
- Opportunities to make new friends;

If we were to sum up BSS6 in a word, we'd say 'excellent' – but don't just take our word for it. Students' comments on the next page give you a flavour of their views:

What students say ...



My move to Bishop Stopford sixth form has developed me further as an individual. This atmosphere is the perfect environment for learning and allows the best personal development of individuals.



As a Reading Partner, I felt like I was giving back to the younger students. The year 7 student I worked with hopefully found a friend in me, as well as improving his reading.



I really like the extra freedom, independence and trust which I have been given as a sixth former to take responsibility for my own learning.



The sixth form block provides a fantastic learning environment and enables great independent study.



As someone interested in applying to Oxbridge, the school has given me tremendous support, with meetings, emails and information about the application process. I have been guided every step of the way.



The enrichment opportunities here are fantastic: both academic and social.



It's a friendly community atmosphere, created by both students and staff.







An Excellent Ethos

At BSS6, we are proud to be a professional learning community. You are treated as a mature learner. That means taking responsibility for your own learning, and making sure you consolidate and extend what you do in classrooms, laboratories, workshops or practice rooms in private study.

Your time at BSS6 starts with an induction, where you'll get a taster of our ethos and the ways we work. You'll meet students you will have never worked with before, find out why our Sixth Form Leadership Teams are so important, and receive information about courses. This preparation will leave you in no doubt that everyone is committed to making BSS6 a great place for you to learn.

The professional ethos is reflected daily through your adherence to our dress code, your attendance, organisation and revision. While you're here you will also develop further skills and disciplines for professional learning.

It's a given that you'll contribute to the learning of other students in BSS6 – to younger students as well as your peers.

A hallmark of BSS6 students is enthusiasm: enthusiasm for learning and for the other opportunities we offer. The sixth form study centre, for example, is in use until 5.30 every day, and successful students invariably make great use of it.



Excellent Achievement

Students' results at BSS6 have consistently been judged as 'Excellent'¹. These are achieved through the combination of the quality of teaching we provide, and the commitment you bring to your studies - resulting in high standards of which we are justifiably proud.

Having such high standards means that most students leave us able to pursue their first choices for careers or higher education, gaining places with world class universities and employers.

We all know the main reason for being at BSS6 is to make progress academically, but one of our beliefs is that you need to be successful in other ways for that to happen. Your personal success is as important as those grades you get at the end of two years of study.

For that reason, you'll be given a tutorial period throughout Year 12 and a mentor in Year 13. The Sixth Form Leadership Team will work with you to keep your studies on track, and to help you to manage the other priorities you have alongside your A Levels. It's very easy to get things out of balance, so we pride ourselves on swift and responsive interventions to make sure you achieve your potential.

¹ALPS A Level Performance

For more details on exam results, see the relevant sections of our website (www.bishopstopford.com).



Excellent Progress

Your time in the sixth form is actually very short. Most students study with us for two years and make important life choices during that time. We know how important this is, and a real strength of ours is the uniquely tailored support we offer.

Tutorial teachers and mentors are important in this respect. They listen, advise and help you to put into action what you need to do next to achieve your goals. They also liaise within school and with home, if necessary, to help you through your studies and as you prepare for the future.

Careers information, advice and guidance are available, whether you have a plan for your future, or if you are really unsure about which way to go. You will be very well supported by experienced staff working alongside the Sixth Form Leadership Team to make choices about your future. There are well established programmes to prepare you for making applications to higher education and apprenticeships, or for going directly into employment.

You can take part in work shadowing or placements. You will also take part in assemblies, seminars and conferences with a variety of higher education institutions and (if it is relevant to you) our Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry or / and Oxbridge preparation programme.





Enriching Excellence

Whatever Year 11 was like for you, BSS6 is different! Nearly 35% of students join us from other schools, so even if you are currently at Bishop Stopford, this will be a new experience for you.

BSS6 is about so much more than A Level lessons: you have many other opportunities to develop your abilities. You are able to continue your current interests, and there are openings in the wider school community in ways you might not have even considered.

As part of our commitment to students in providing Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, we run a series of conferences, working together to raise your awareness on a wide variety of topics. Our objective is to prepare you successfully for life after school, whether in higher education or in the workplace.

There are opportunities provided to keep the balance between academic and social learning. A wide range of societies are run by sixth formers, where you can take part in informative and high-quality presentations and discussions. These include MedSoc, Debating, Film, Law, and Maths and Physics Societies. Of course, activities change year on year, because BSS6 students are innovators.

You can also develop your profile by taking on a leadership role in the sixth form. For example, being a reading partner for a younger student, helping at a sports club or practice, becoming a form buddy or providing mentor support for another student in a specific subject.

In addition, your BSS6 student leaders, led by your Head Students, organise many charity, sporting and social events throughout the year and you may wish to become part of this team as you move into Year 13.



An Excellent Environment

When you come to BSS6, you will join nearly 400 students. The atmosphere is vibrant. You will meet students who are leaders in their academic specialisms, in sport and music, and those with many, many other interests and talents. Whoever you are, there will be someone with similar interests to you at BSS6.

Our aim is to provide you with the privilege of learning to the highest level, but to develop your own identity and outlook too. We want you to spend your time with us developing your personal values and beliefs, and forming life-time friendships. When you leave BSS6, you should take away great academic achievements, but also unforgettable memories of an excellent two years.

Students who join BSS6 enjoy the benefits of a high specification, university-style sixth form centre. It has excellent facilities for private study, seminars and 1:1 conversations, as well as larger group study and social areas.

Wi-fi is available throughout the centre and study space has been designed for you to use your own IT. There are also plenty of computers available.

To complement the BSS6 centre, the school library is well stocked with resources, and provides another pleasant and well used study space. You can also use The Olive Grove restaurant as a more informal study area.

Art



You probably know already whether or not you have the skills to be successful at Art. With an inquisitive mind, good observation and analytical skills and, above all, a willingness to take risks with your own work, this course will help you to develop as an artist.

The course is theme-based, where you'll explore a wide variety of media, scale and art movements to help you to create your own personal style. While your final pieces of work are important, your preparation and research are also assessed and count significantly towards the final grade. The many aspects of this course mean that while it is a challenge, the results show us that with commitment and hard work, your talents can be developed to produce amazing outcomes.

Biology



If you're successful in Science and Maths at GCSE and are good at expressing yourself, then Biology is probably on your list of A Level choices. It's not only a great basis for careers in science, complementing other science A Levels, but it develops a range of skills and knowledge which are applicable elsewhere.

Being a scientist in any discipline is about investigation, analysis and evaluation. In Biology this involves investigating a whole range of systems in animals, plants and the environment, using a range of procedures. Theory will be backed up by lab work and field work, where you'll learn a range of skills and data collecting techniques. You will also use your investigative skills to research theories and apply them to practical situations.



Business



If you have an interest in business, this is an obvious choice for you. However, while learning about planning, managing and financing successful businesses in an ever-changing world, you will develop a useful range of transferable skills. This means Business is an excellent course for everyone to consider.

You will learn the importance of problem solving, how to research effectively, present and justify points of view based on sound analysis and evaluation of texts and data. You will also consider important factors such as how making good, ethical decisions and judgments is vital to success in life as well as in business.

Chemistry



Bonding, grouping, chains, rings, polarity and energy are all words which take on new meanings for chemists. Science-based careers are highly likely to require Chemistry A Level, and Chemistry is also a good choice for a broad based A Level programme.

The course is really varied. You'll get the opportunity to synthesise substances, learn about the fine structure of atoms and how this creates the beautiful colours we see. You'll also find out how some industries use the techniques you've been taught at A Level. There will be theory lessons and lab-based work, with practical skills being a really important part of the course. Our biggest challenges – the economy and green issues – need chemists to save the day. Make a start in A Level Chemistry.

Computer Science



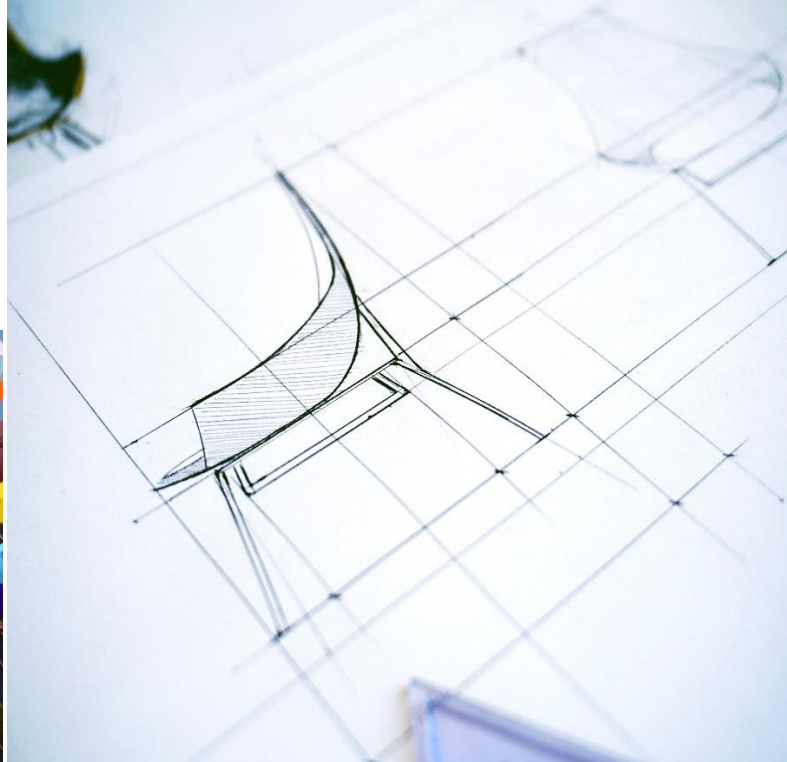
If students ask why they should study Computer Science, the answer must be ‘Why wouldn’t you?’ You are living in the Digital Age where computers and computer programs have become an integral part of day-to-day life.

From driverless cars to smart watches, there is a demand for an army of Computer Scientists to design, develop and apply the hardware and software required to fuel our global community’s thirst for technology our global community desires.

Computer Science is not just about coding: it’s a diverse mix of problem solving, ethics, creativity, teamwork and communication skills. Computer Science graduates are employed as solutions architects, game developers, systems analysts, network managers, business intelligence analysts, web developers and multimedia programmers.

So instead of buying the next big app, why not learn the skills at A Level to develop it?

DT



These creative and thought-provoking qualifications will give you the practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and confidence to succeed in a number of careers – especially those in the creative industries. You will investigate historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic influences on Design and Technology, whilst enjoying opportunities to put your learning into practice by producing your own practical outcomes. You will gain a real understanding of what it means to be a designer, alongside the knowledge and skills sought by higher education and employers.

Product Design and Fashion and Textiles are taught together, as the non-examination assessment (NEA) structure is identical and a portion of the theory work is the same, such as design styles and environmental issues.

You will receive specific instruction and support from a specialist teacher for your chosen area of study and access to traditional and modern practical equipment.

Economics



Economics is a dynamic, ever evolving subject. It can change direction at any time, because of a decision made anywhere in the world.

We cannot tell you everything which will be taught because of the unpredictability of our subject. And that is one of its great attractions.

You will learn how the economy operates, both locally through businesses and individuals, and at national and international levels.

You will also learn how to apply analytical skills and data handling skills to some of these issues.

Expect surprises: they happen as each day unfolds. Keeping up to date is absolutely essential for success in this course.

English



If you are interested in the way that language works to communicate for different purposes and audiences, enjoy reading and giving your views about texts, then English A level is for you.

In Language and Literature, you will analyse the literary and linguistic devices in both fiction and non-fiction texts and produce creative pieces of your own. In Literature, you will study an exciting range of texts from the 1300s to the modern day.

Whatever English A Level you choose, you will need to be prepared to express your ideas in written form and verbally, and engage with a wide range of texts. It is a great A level to have for a vast array of careers and one that will challenge you, whilst still being enjoyable.

EPQ

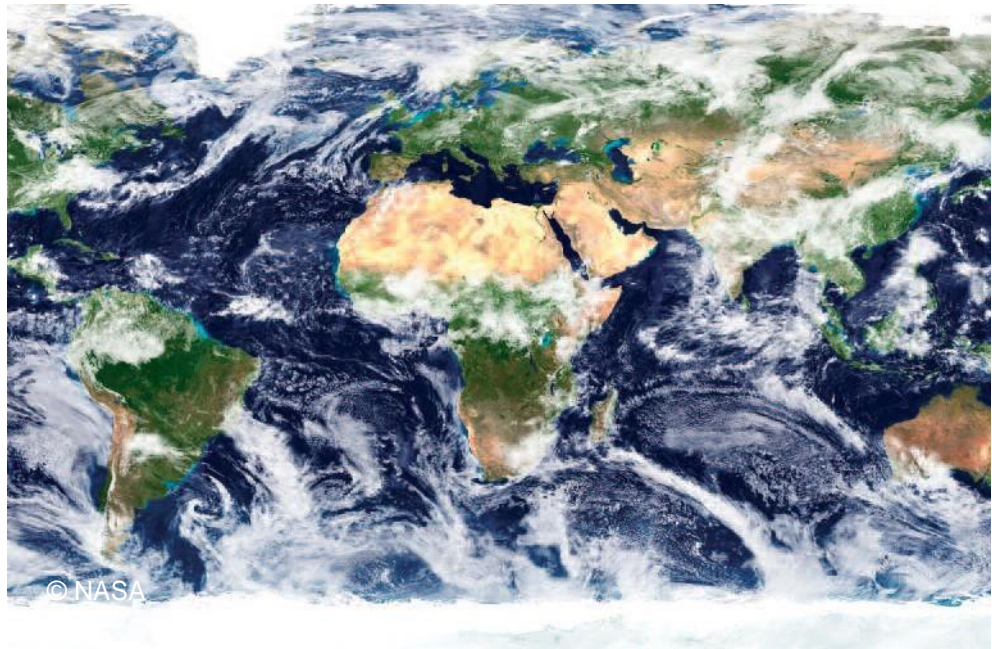


Are you interested in one subject or topic area beyond all others? A passionate and specialist interest is what's needed to be successful in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). You will develop your own interest to a greater degree than is possible through taught lessons alone, and you will develop research and presentation skills as part of your learning.

For the EPQ, you will select a narrow topic area and investigate it thoroughly. It's a great opportunity to prepare for undergraduate study and take your learning to another level.

The EPQ requires independence at a sophisticated level, and is different from other courses in that it begins part way through Year 12, when your ideas and skills have developed enough to take on this independent challenge. It is studied alongside your three A level programme.

Geography



Most of us are interested in the world around us: its physical features, its people, the threats it faces. A Level Geography gives you the chance to explore all of these areas in great detail.

You don't have to have studied Geography at GCSE to take the A Level. What's more important is that you're willing to take part in analytical and problem-solving tasks which relate to practical issues at a local, national and international level.

Whether it's fieldwork in a national park, studying environmental concerns or population explosions, Geography will develop your investigative skills and your ability to present information accurately for analysis.

Geology



If you're considering a science course, but want a change from those you've done, then Geology may well be the option for you. Our planet is a fascinating and diverse place. How it's formed and where it comes from are the two essential components of Geology. You'll look at critical issues which put the building blocks of our planet at risk and get to grips with the raw materials all around us. By understanding the nature of these, we can protect our planet and contribute to its survival.

You'll learn practical skills to equip you as a geologist through fieldwork, as well as applying your knowledge in exam conditions. You're guaranteed unforgettable experiences on this course.

History



It'll just be a long list of dates and events to remember, won't it? If that's the first thought that comes into your mind when you think of History, think again! History's about discovering how the world we live in today came about; it's about analysing and processing information to explain why events occurred in the past. History also provides you with opportunities to develop skills which are useful in many walks of life: analysis, synthesis and evidence-based argument, to name just three.

While studying the early Tudors, Russia, the United States or Early Modern Witchcraft, you will be considering sources, causes for different actions and turning points in the great back story of our world. What could be more relevant than that?

Languages



It makes perfect sense that being competent in a language increases your chances of getting a job. The skills of language learning are highly valued.

You will stand out from the crowd if you have learnt a language to A Level. Not only will you have the benefit of being able to communicate with others, but you will also have a stronger cultural awareness.

You will also have developed skills which can be used in a variety of contexts, whether or not you go on to pursue your language to a higher level.



Maths



No-one can miss the messages in the media: Maths is important and having a Maths qualification after GCSE is excellent for a wide range of careers. From architecture to zoology, Maths opens up a world of opportunities for you.

In the Sixth Form, you can study both Maths and Further Maths to A Level.

All Maths courses are assessed through exams, and as well as good performance in GCSE, you need to be disciplined in your practice of the Maths you learn in lessons to be successful at A Level.

Music



A Level Music demands passion, enthusiasm and commitment. You'll need to have reached grade 6 on an instrument, as performance is an essential part of the course. However, if all you're interested in is performance, then you might need to think again.

You'll learn how harmony works from the master, J.S. Bach, then how to break the rules, as a composer yourself, applying techniques and devices along the way. You'll also build listening and analytical skills by studying music spanning over four hundred years from different genres.

Like every great musician, you need to be disciplined in your studies and practice. You're expected to take part in school ensembles, as well as visits to performances and workshops. All these experiences enhance your chances of musical success.

Physical Education



Physical Education is one of those courses where you're likely to know already whether or not it's for you. The course obviously has a practical dimension, and being involved in a sport outside the curriculum is essential. The quality of the skills and techniques you show in your chosen activity are assessed in the first year and once more in the second.

But the course is theoretical too. Lessons focus heavily on the theories surrounding sport, and there is a strong scientific element, where physiology is studied as well as the psychology of sport. Social and cultural aspects are also covered.

Your independent learning will be physical as well as knowledge based. Achievement in both practical and theory is essential for success.

Physics



Q

uarks, crab nebula, the clockwork universe: the physicist has to be pretty good at thinking big and thinking small. From the smallest matter to the greatest galaxies, you need a great imagination to picture what is happening. Physics explores the rules which govern our universe. A problem-solving approach using maths' skills in an applied way will help you to begin to explain phenomena all around us.

Research is an essential skill of any scientist. This is coupled with practical work and lab investigations to find out how things hold together and to predict what may happen given certain circumstances. Exploring both the predictable and the unpredictable in a disciplined, scientific way is what makes A Level Physics so enjoyable and challenging.

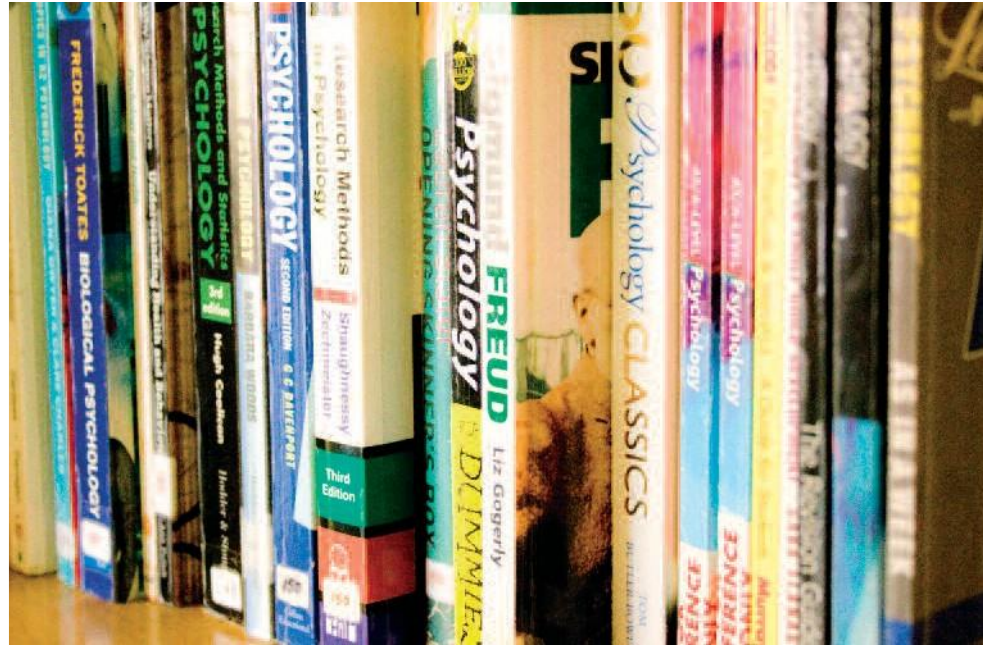
Politics



Love it or hate it, you can't escape the fact that politics has a direct impact upon your life. Because Politics is a living subject and constantly changing, there's never a dull moment. You don't have to be a budding politician for this course, but you will need to have an interest in the systems which govern our society.

Studying the political systems of the UK and USA will open your eyes to international relations and global issues. Everyone has a view on what's wrong with the world and how to put it right, so there are fantastic opportunities for discussion and debate. Keeping up to date with the news is essential, so that your analysis and writing are based on the latest developments.

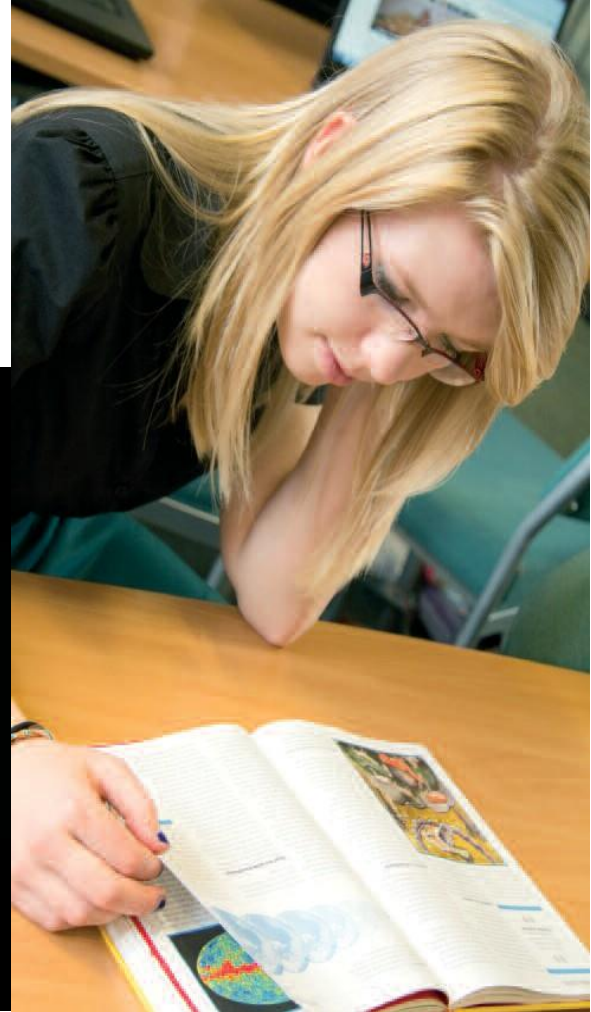
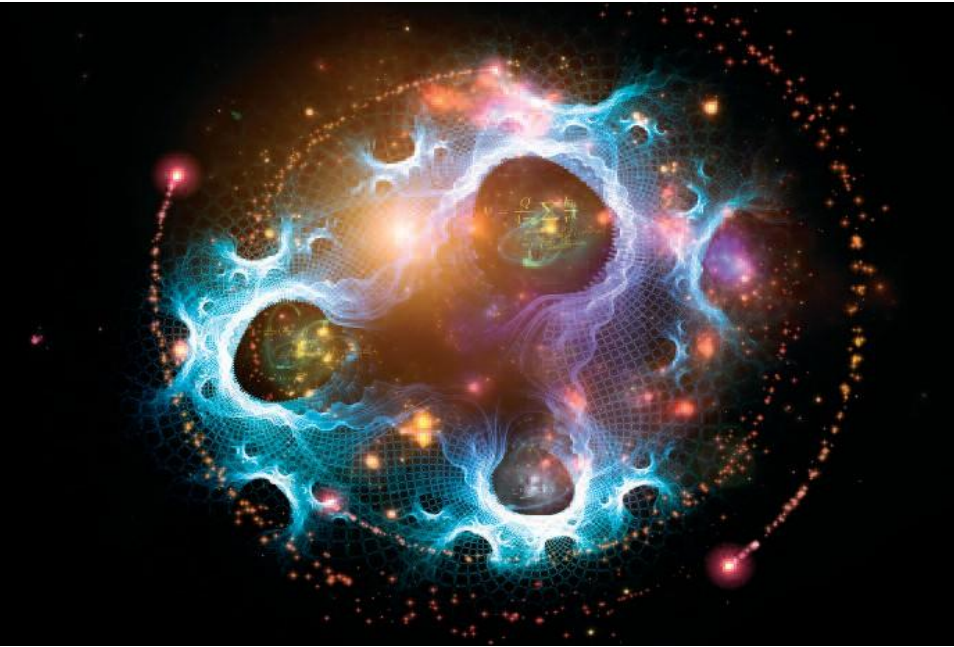
Psychology



You probably know very little about the organ that governs your every perception and sensation, thought and behaviour. Choosing Psychology will help you address this: Psychology is the science of the mind. Although we can't observe the mind directly, everything we do, think, feel and say is determined by its functioning. So psychologists take human behaviour as the raw data for testing their theories about how the mind works.

In Psychology you'll investigate and evaluate research on new areas of learning including biopsychology and the brain, memory, abnormality and childhood, as well as disorders of various kinds. As Psychology is a Social Science, you'll also develop and apply your knowledge of the methods required for investigations, and will write analytical essays

Religious Studies

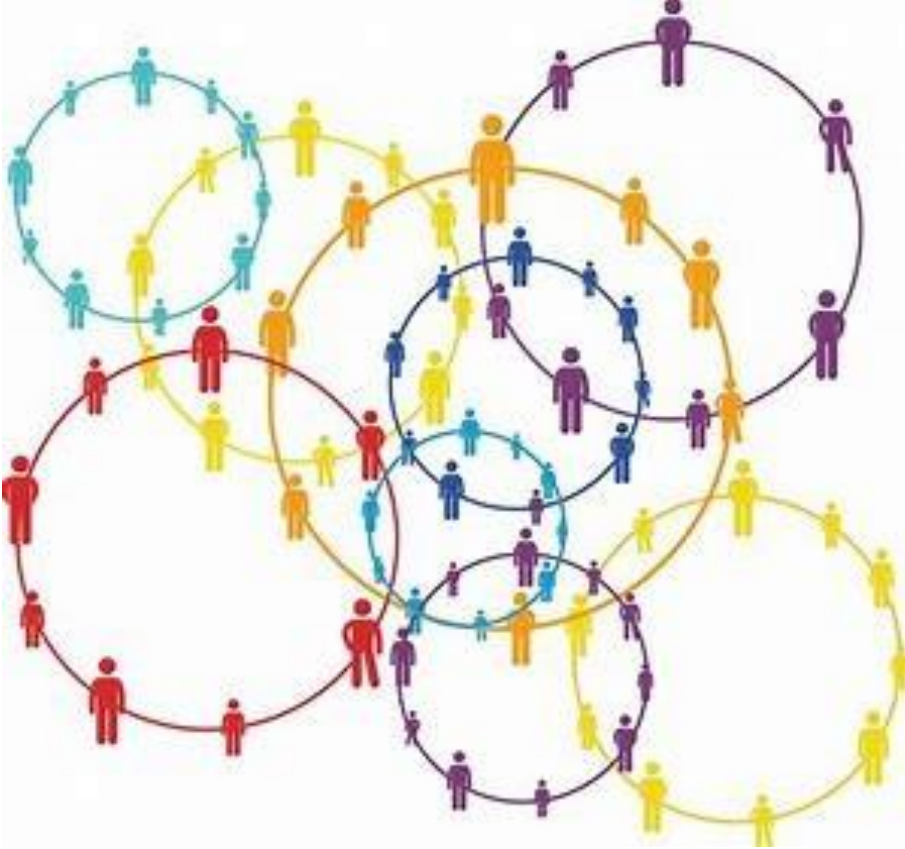


Thinkers required! If you're challenged by why you behave the way you do, why you believe the things you do and why the world is diverse in these areas, then exploring the philosophy of religion and ethics is an attractive option.

You'll go back to Ancient Greece and move through time, encountering philosophers and their influence on western thought. You'll also spend time considering theories of morality and applying them to subjects such as medicine, sex and war. Ultimate questions such as 'What caused the universe?' and 'Is there an intelligent designer?' are major components of the philosophy strand.

You won't leave the course with all the answers: what you'll take away are ways of thinking and analysing which will widen your perspective on your own existence.

Sociology



Sociology is the study of society and of people and their behaviour. It is an evidence-based subject – this means it is not just about personal opinions. Sociologists create theories and then collect evidence by carrying out research to work out whether the theories are true or not. They investigate the structures of groups, social institutions (like the family, school and prisons) and how people interact within these settings.

The methods that are used are theoretically analysis, statistics and observations. Some of the theories that we will explore are Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism and Interactionalism.

Theatre Studies



Theatre Studies is one of those A Levels which will engage your emotions as well as your brain. Your commitment to working in a team is absolutely essential for success. The course is both practical and analytical, so you have to commit to rehearsal time as well as a significant amount of reading and individual research. As well as developing your confidence in performance or design, you will also need to write analytically about plays and theatre practitioners.

You'll be expected to make visits to the theatre and present extracts from plays as well as devising your own drama. The discipline required to be successful is enormous, but so are the rewards.

Future Excellence

When you leave BSS6, you will be well prepared. Whatever your choice is, we will have supported you to get there, and encouraged you in the skills and attitudes to reach your full potential. But don't just take our word for it! Here's what some of our Alumni say:



Take advantage of all opportunities on offer, know what you are getting out of them and be able to articulate it. Get to know your strengths/weaknesses/likes and dislikes early on.

(University Lecturer: Belfast)



Always give 100% at whatever you do. Take advantage of all the additional activities; gain as much experience as you can. Enjoy your time at school and don't regret anything.

(Sports Development Officer)



Don't be afraid to stray from the path that you have set yourself if things don't go according to plan. Your education should be an adventure and there is more than one way to get what you want to achieve: it's all about the journey.

(Vet)



Make the most of the opportunities available at school - they won't always be available and what you now do will shape your future more than you currently know.

(International Lawyer – Tokyo)



Make the most of your time at Bishop! It is only once you leave you properly realise how lucky you were to go there and what a great school it is.

(Sales Manager)





All proposed A Level courses are run dependent on viable number of students opting for them. Decisions about viability of courses and responses to viability issues lie solely with Bishop Stopford School. (These include the right to withdraw courses, reduce contact time or to teach Year 12 and Year 13 students concurrently).

Where courses are oversubscribed, the school retains the right to limit numbers.



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