



HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL SIXTH FORM

SUBJECT INFORMATION BOOKLET

AMBITIOUS & SUPPORTIVE

www.HolcombeGrammar.org.uk

Art and Design - Fine Art (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ART

A-level Fine Art encourages creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on technical skills. Students explore different media, from painting to sculpture, while developing their individual artistic voice. It fosters imaginative problem-solving, observational skills, and attention to detail, all valuable in creative industries, design, or even architecture. The subject allows personal expression, while teaching discipline in crafting artwork. Fine Art provides a foundation for further studies in art and design, equipping students with visual literacy and the ability to interpret and critique the world through an artistic lens.

Art and Design - Photography (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LIT or 6 ENGLISH LANG and PORTFOLLIO

A-level Photography enables students to explore the technical and creative aspects of photography as an art form. Students learn about composition, lighting, editing, and critical analysis of visual imagery. This course builds skills in using cameras and software, essential for careers in visual media, advertising, and filmmaking. Photography sharpens observational and technical proficiency while promoting creativity and conceptual thinking. It also develops students' abilities to communicate visually and understand the impact of images in today's media-rich world, making it a great foundation for higher education or professional creative paths.

Art and Design - Graphics (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LIT or 6 ENGLISH LANG and PORTFOLLIO

A-level Graphics equips students with advanced creative, visual communication, and technical skills. It covers topics such as illustration, digital design, and typography, which are fundamental to fields like advertising, media, architecture, and product design. Art and Design (Graphics) is highly valued in a variety of careers due to its emphasis on creativity, innovation, and aesthetic judgment. This subject provides a solid foundation for further study in a wide range of disciplines, opening doors to careers in graphic design, animation, marketing, and more. Its versatility makes it one of the most respected and sought-after A-levels.

Biology (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 7 BIOLOGY or 77 DOUBLE AWARD SCIENCE

A-level Biology offers an in-depth understanding of the natural world, from cellular processes to ecosystems and genetic diversity. It enhances critical thinking, data analysis, and problem-solving skills. Students delve into topics like human biology, evolution, and environmental issues. This subject is vital for those interested in careers in medicine, veterinary science, conservation, and biotechnology. Biology helps students understand life at molecular, organism, and global levels, providing a solid foundation for further scientific study and offering insights into solving some of the world's pressing challenges, like climate change and health care.

Business Studies (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE/S: GRADE 6 MATHS and 6 ENGLISH LIT 5 BUSINESS (IF TAKEN)

A-level Business Studies provides an understanding of the principles and practices of running a business. It covers key areas like marketing, finance, operations, and human resources, equipping students with knowledge of how businesses function and succeed. Analytical skills are honed as students study real-world business challenges, making it ideal for aspiring entrepreneurs or those pursuing careers in management, finance, or marketing. The subject builds practical and theoretical insights, encouraging strategic thinking and decision-making, and offers pathways into business courses at university or directly into the business world.

Chemistry (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 7 CHEMISTRY or 77 DOUBLE AWARD SCIENCE

A-level Chemistry delves into the building blocks of matter and the reactions that govern everything from the environment to our bodies. It develops problem-solving, analytical, and practical lab skills, crucial for careers in medicine, pharmacology, engineering, and environmental science. Chemistry explores topics like organic chemistry, chemical bonding, and thermodynamics, preparing students for further study in a variety of scientific fields. Understanding chemistry is essential to addressing global challenges, from developing new medicines to solving energy crises, making it an invaluable subject for those interested in both research and applied sciences.

Computer Science (OCR)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 MATHS and 5 COMPUTER SCIENCE (IF TAKEN)

A-level Computer Science provides students with a strong foundation in programming, algorithms, and computational thinking. It nurtures problem-solving skills and logical reasoning, key to success in today's tech-driven world. Students learn to develop software, understand hardware architecture, and explore emerging fields like artificial intelligence. With a focus on real-world applications, this subject is ideal for those interested in careers in software development, cybersecurity, data science, and more. Computer Science opens doors to a wide range of tech careers and higher education in one of the fastest-growing global industries.

Design Technology (EDUQAS)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

A-level Design Technology teaches students how to apply creative and technical knowledge to real-world design problems. From product development to engineering, students learn skills in materials science, prototyping, and CAD (computer-aided design). This subject encourages innovation, creativity, and critical thinking, preparing students for careers in design, engineering, and architecture. It blends theory and practical application, providing a comprehensive understanding of how to create functional, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing products. Design Technology also fosters project management and collaboration, essential skills for the professional world.

Drama (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LANG or 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level Drama and Theatre fosters creativity, collaboration, and a deep understanding of performance arts. Students explore acting, directing, and stagecraft, while studying the theory and history of theatre. The course develops skills such as communication, critical analysis, and problem-solving, all valuable in a variety of careers including performing arts, teaching, and media. Drama encourages self-expression and teamwork, offering opportunities to perform and devise original work. It provides a foundation for further studies in drama, theatre, or related fields, while cultivating an appreciation for storytelling, human emotion, and the power of live performance.

Economics (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 7 MATHS and 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level Economics provides insights into how economies function, from individual decision-making to global markets. Students develop analytical and quantitative skills by exploring topics like inflation, trade, government policy, and economic growth. Economics helps students understand complex societal issues, preparing them for careers in finance, government, and international relations. With a focus on both microeconomics and macroeconomics, this subject builds a strong foundation for university-level study and careers that require critical thinking and the ability to evaluate market forces and economic policies.

English Language and Literature (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LANG

A-level English Language and Literature offers a unique blend of linguistic analysis and literary appreciation. Students study both how language works and how literature reflects society, fostering strong analytical, interpretive, and writing skills. It develops the ability to deconstruct texts and understand meaning, themes, and context, which is essential for careers in media, teaching, and law. This course encourages creativity, critical thought, and the effective use of language, making it a great foundation for university-level study in a wide range of humanities subjects.

English Literature (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level English Literature immerses students in classic and contemporary works from diverse genres, time periods, and cultures. It sharpens analytical and interpretive skills, enabling students to understand themes, character development, and literary techniques. Critical thinking is honed through debates on the societal impact of texts. English Literature nurtures a deep appreciation for storytelling and language, making it ideal for careers in writing, journalism, teaching, and the arts. It provides a solid foundation for further study in literature, history, and philosophy, fostering a lifelong love of reading and analysis.

Further Mathematics (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 8 MATHEMATICS

A-level Further Maths expands on core mathematical concepts, providing a more challenging exploration of areas such as calculus, complex numbers, and advanced algebra. It enhances problem-solving abilities, logical thinking, and analytical skills, all highly valued in fields like engineering, physics, and computer science. This subject is particularly beneficial for students who plan to pursue mathematics, economics, or any science at university level. It provides a deeper understanding of mathematical theories and their applications in real-world scenarios, offering a strong foundation for technical or research-based careers.

Geography (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE/S: GRADE 6 GEOGRAPHY and 6 ENGLISH LANG

A-level Geography examines the physical and human processes that shape our world, from natural disasters to urban development and globalisation. It fosters critical thinking, data analysis, and problem-solving skills. Geography students explore pressing issues such as climate change, sustainability, and resource management, making it highly relevant for careers in environmental science, urban planning, and international relations. This subject encourages an interdisciplinary approach, blending science with social studies, and prepares students for university-level study and careers that require understanding of global systems and human-environment interactions.

History (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE/S: GRADE 6 HISTORY and 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level History develops critical thinking, research, and analytical skills through the study of significant events, individuals, and periods that have shaped the modern world. Students learn to assess evidence, form coherent arguments, and understand the complex causes and effects of historical developments. History is ideal for those interested in careers in law, politics, journalism, and education. The subject nurtures a deep understanding of societal changes and human behaviour, providing a broad perspective on current events and preparing students for further study in the humanities and social sciences.

Law (OCR)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LIT or 6 ENGLISH LANG

A-level Law equips students with critical thinking, logical reasoning, and a deep understanding of legal principles. It covers topics such as criminal law, contract law, and human rights, fundamental to fields like government, business, and law enforcement. Law is highly valued in many careers due to its emphasis on critical analysis, argumentation, and understanding of legal systems. This subject provides a solid foundation for further study in a wide range of disciplines, opening doors to careers in law, politics, business, journalism, and more. Its versatility makes it one of the most respected and sought-after A-levels.

Mathematics (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 7 MATHS

A-level Mathematics equips students with advanced problem-solving, logical reasoning, and analytical skills. It covers topics such as algebra, calculus, and statistics, which are fundamental to fields like engineering, economics, physics, and computing. Mathematics is highly valued in a variety of careers due to its emphasis on precision, clarity, and structured thinking. This subject provides a solid foundation for further study in a wide range of disciplines, opening doors to careers in finance, technology, research, and more. Its versatility makes it one of the most respected and sought-after A-levels.

Media Studies (EDUQAS)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level Media Studies explores the role of media in society, from film and television to digital platforms and advertising. Students develop skills in media production, critical analysis, and understanding of media theory. It encourages creativity and practical skills, making it ideal for careers in journalism, film, advertising, and social media management. The subject fosters an understanding of how media influences public opinion, culture, and behaviour, and helps students critically engage with the media they consume. It is highly relevant for those interested in working in the ever-evolving media and communications industry.

Philosophy, Ethics and Theology (OCR)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ENGLISH LANG and 6 ENGLISH LIT

A-level Philosophy, Ethics, and Theology delves into the fundamental questions of existence, morality, and belief systems. Students engage in critical thinking, argumentation, and the evaluation of ethical dilemmas and philosophical ideas. This subject is ideal for those interested in careers in law, politics, academia, and counselling, as it fosters skills in reasoning, ethical decision-making, and understanding diverse worldviews. It provides a strong foundation for further study in philosophy, theology, or the social sciences, encouraging intellectual curiosity and deep reflection on the human condition.

Physical Education (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 PHYSICAL ED and 6 ENGLISH LANG

A-level Physical Education combines theory and practice, covering topics such as anatomy, sports psychology, and biomechanics. It enhances students' understanding of physical fitness, performance, and health. This subject is ideal for those pursuing careers in sports coaching, physiotherapy, or physical training. PE develops teamwork, leadership, and analytical skills, preparing students for further study in sports science or health-related fields. It also provides valuable insights into the role of physical activity in well-being, helping students become advocates for healthy lifestyles.

Physics (AQA)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 7 PHYSICS or 77 DOUBLE AWARD SCIENCE

A-level Physics explores the laws governing the universe, from subatomic particles to cosmic phenomena. Students develop critical thinking, mathematical, and experimental skills. Physics is essential for those interested in careers in engineering, astrophysics, and technology. The subject fosters a deep understanding of how the world works and prepares students for further study in various scientific and technical fields. Its emphasis on problem-solving and practical experimentation makes it a vital foundation for innovation in industries such as energy, aerospace, and telecommunications.

Politics (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 ANY HUMANITIES and 6 ENGLISH LANG or ENGLISH LIT

A-level Politics introduces students to the workings of political systems, ideologies, and international relations. It fosters critical thinking, argumentation, and an understanding of current affairs. Students learn to evaluate political decisions, policies, and their impacts on society, preparing them for careers in government, journalism, law, and public service. The subject is highly relevant in today's globalised world, where understanding political dynamics is crucial. It provides a strong foundation for further study in political science, international relations, or law, equipping students with the tools to engage with and influence public discourse.

Psychology (OCR)

ENTRY GCSE/S: GRADE 6 MATHS and 6 ENGLISH LANG and 6 BIOLOGY

A-level Psychology explores human behaviour, thought processes, and emotions. It covers key areas like cognitive development, mental health, and social psychology. This subject helps students develop critical thinking, data analysis, and research skills, making it ideal for careers in counselling, education, or healthcare. Psychology also fosters empathy and an understanding of human motivation and behaviour, providing a solid foundation for further study in psychology, neuroscience, or social sciences. It offers practical insights into everyday life and helps students understand the mental and emotional factors that drive actions.

Spanish (EDEXCEL)

ENTRY GCSE GRADE/S: 6 SPANISH

A-level Spanish enhances language skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, while also introducing students to the culture, history, and literature of Spanish-speaking countries. It develops communication skills, cultural awareness, and linguistic precision, making it valuable for careers in translation, international business, or tourism. Proficiency in Spanish, one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, opens doors to travel, global opportunities, and further study in language or cultural fields. It also provides a solid foundation for learning additional languages, making it a versatile and practical subject.

“The school is determined to prepare pupils for their next stages of life and learning. Students in the growing sixth form succeed in their studies. Many go on to top universities and high-profile careers.” – Ofsted 2024

“Students in the sixth form appreciate the excellent learning environment that the school offers. They enjoy the quality and depth of discussions and debates that they experience in their lessons. Students are mature and articulate.” – Ofsted 2024

“There is a very comprehensive programme of careers information and guidance that includes one-to-one careers sessions and mock interviews. Students in the sixth form value the guidance that they are given for their next steps. They feel well informed about university courses, apprenticeships and employment. Work experience weeks in both Years 10 and 12 give valuable insights into the world of work.” – Ofsted 2024

2025-26 Blocking Structure

At Holcombe Grammar Sixth Form, we use a blocking structure to organise A-Level subjects in a way that ensures students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum while maintaining the flexibility to pursue their individual academic interests.

A blocking structure groups A-Level subjects into a number of fixed timetable "blocks". Students select one subject from each block to form their full programme of study. This structure is shaped by student preferences, staffing availability, and logistical timetabling constraints.

Why is the Blocking Structure Necessary?

- **Maximising Choice:** By organising subjects into blocks, we aim to offer the widest possible range of subject combinations while ensuring that they can be timetabled effectively.
- **Efficient Timetabling:** It helps us plan lessons, allocate specialist staff, and ensure that rooms and resources are used efficiently across the school week.
- **Responding to Demand:** The blocks are informed by initial student choices, meaning popular subject combinations are prioritised wherever possible.
- **Avoiding Clashes:** Without a blocking structure, it would be impossible to guarantee that students can attend all their chosen lessons without timetable clashes.

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Art and Design (Fine Art, Photography & Graphics)	Biology	Biology	Design Technology
Chemistry	Business	Business	Further Mathematics
Economics	Chemistry	Computer Science	Geography
Mathematics	Computer Science	English Language and Literature	History
Media	Law	English Literature	Mathematics
Physics	Mathematics	Mathematics (for Further Mathematics only*)	Physics
Politics	Psychology	Psychology	Physical Education
			Philosophy Ethics and Theology
			Spanish

*All further mathematics students **must** select Block C and D. Further mathematics students must also select a subject from Block A and B (four subjects in total)