



Bedales  spoopyjs

Bedales Assessed Courses

Grass

Bedales' attachment to its landscape is deeply rooted. In 1900 J H Badley moved his fledgling school from Haywards Heath to rural Hampshire because he wanted his students to grow up surrounded by natural beauty and pure air.

The setting allowed him to pursue Ruskin's precept of educating 'Head, Hand and Heart' – blending practical work with intellectual and spiritual development.

The heart of the school is its grassy Orchard – where students congregate and in the summer sit, chat and reflect.

In the early years, students built the pathways through the 120-acre estate, levelled the playing fields and helped with work on the surrounding farmland; the school Chronicle carefully recorded the state of the carrot harvest and the tally of eggs laid by the hens.

Outdoor Work is still transforming the Bedales landscape. Students have planted miles of hedgerows, cleared scrub, created gardens, made fences and dug lakes (usually as a 'whole-school effort' over an autumn weekend). The estate is full of trees donated, planted and dedicated by past and present students.

Gardening and working in the landscape are part of the Bedales experience from the youngest ages. And now, for the first time, Outdoor Work has become part of the curriculum, as one of the Bedales Assessed Courses.

But the landscape is not just for work: the design of the Orchard Building allows views of the landscape to be enjoyed from within. So whether on a fine day, when students are to be found relaxing in the Orchard, or on a wintry one, the inspiration of our grassy landscape is there for all.



Bedales has a long tradition of leading the way in educational change. Our determination to do what is right for our students led to the creation of a unique curriculum for Blocks 4 and 5 (Years 10 and 11).

After much constructive debate, consultation and preparation, Bedales students embarked for the first time in 2006 upon a range of innovative courses designed to complement a core of GCSEs.

Since then our students have combined five to seven GCSEs with other courses, many of which are Bedales Assessed Courses (BACs).

In devising the new curriculum, we were determined to create some really stimulating courses that gave our students and staff opportunities to pursue their interests and areas of expertise. At the same time, we wanted to ensure that students could be assessed in their areas of strength.

Driving us on was a strong desire to move away from the constraints of too many externally examined courses, and to win back the freedom necessary to reflect the school's creative ethos, and its emphasis on the individual, in our teaching and learning.

Bedales Assessed Courses were devised by Bedales departments to combine rigour with flexibility, and to allow scope for individual exploration within a clear syllabus framework. Some of the main features of the courses, and the way in which they are integrated into the whole curriculum, are described in the following pages. As the first cohort of BAC students completes their courses, we are convinced that this was the right move to make, and that this ambitious project has significantly enriched the educational experience of our young people. I trust that you will share something of the excitement we feel about this important innovation.

Keith Budge, Headmaster

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Educational Innovation at Bedales

The vision of Bedales' founder, John Badley, was to create a school which would be profoundly different from the public schools of his day.

From 1893, when Bedales began, there was a determination to shape the school around what was considered best for the individual child's educational welfare and happiness. Two strands predominated: breadth ("Head, Hand and Heart") and the cultivation of the individual's intellectual and personal qualities ("Intelligence, Initiative and Individuality").

Many of Badley's early innovations are now mainstream: co-educational boarding (since 1898); the emphasis put on the Arts, Sciences and voluntary service; the importance of pastoral care; and listening to students' views (the School Council, established in 1916).

Even so, the contrast between Bedales and other schools remains strong. We believe that our informality engenders a genuine sense of partnership between teacher and student: a shared excitement about ideas and educational discovery. We also believe that our strongly creative tradition is particularly well served by our new courses.

“The consultancy team has seen some daring thinking, enthusiastic teachers and challenged pupils...the courses provide a wide range of intellectual and personal challenge that is suited to students’ differing needs and abilities.”

ISI consultancy report 2007

The Need to Change

Badley, looking at the conventional public schools in his day, decided they “simply wouldn’t do” as a means of educating young people. We came to the same conclusion about the standard programme of nine or ten GCSEs.

As a group of educators, we wanted to introduce a curriculum that mirrored our ethos and suited our students. Looking at the experience of our students during the GCSE years, we decided we could do better.

All too often, a large number of excessively prescriptive GCSE syllabuses squeezed out opportunity for appropriate, imaginative and challenging work with particular groups and individuals, and they placed too much emphasis on terminal written exams. Coursework, potentially such a rich tool for developing independent learning skills, was tied to laborious mark schemes.

As we explored possibilities, we consulted closely with parents and universities, as we were determined that our new courses should only enhance our students’ prospects in applying to university.

We decided that the best course was to pursue reform in a measured way, retaining the ‘core’ GCSEs but supplementing them with a varied menu of internally and externally assessed courses.

Although Bedales students will, like their peers elsewhere, sit public exams for each of their final three years at school, they will find themselves extended beyond the confines of GCSE, whilst not being pressed into the examinations

treadmill. Instead, they will be working with material that is specifically designed to promote our central educational aim, “to develop inquisitive thinkers with a love of learning who cherish independent thought”.

In October 2007, after the first year’s experience of the BACs, we commissioned a consultancy team of school inspectors to provide an internal progress report on BACs. As well as complimenting us on what we had done, they encouraged us to make our courses yet more distinctive, a challenge to which we are responding.

The New Curriculum

The new curriculum is built around a group of five compulsory subjects – GCSEs in English, Mathematics and a Modern Language, plus the International GCSE (IGCSE) Double Award in Science*. This ensures both that the full range of core skills is covered and also that the minimum requirement for much of higher education is met. These five are the only GCSEs required.

* The IGCSE curriculum is more demanding than the standard GCSE. The Double Award includes the three subjects of Physics, Chemistry and Biology and is a good foundation for any combination of them at A level.

The only other compulsory courses are Physical Education and Personal, Social and Health Education.

Students then choose from a considerable range of Bedales Assessed Courses and other GCSEs or externally examined subjects.

The internally designed Bedales Assessed Courses are the most important and innovative elements of the new curriculum. They are intended to fulfil our central educational aim of developing inquisitive thinkers.

The content of the courses is broad and stimulating, offering cross-curricular opportunities and being suited to a wide variety of learning styles.

Since we aim to develop a broad range of skills through the delivery of BACs, internal assessment includes a mixture of written assignments, presentations, projects and performances, together with terminal examinations as appropriate. Each course is externally moderated.



The Structure of the Curriculum

CORE EXAMINED SUBJECTS (5)

English
Mathematics
Modern Language (French, German, Spanish)
Science (IGCSE Dual Award)

CORE NON-EXAMINED SUBJECTS

Physical Education
Personal, Social and Health Education

ADDITIONAL GCSEs AND OTHER EXTERNALLY EXAMINED SUBJECTS (maximum of 2)

Geography
History
ICT
Latin
Music
Second Modern Language

BEDALES ASSESSED COURSES (maximum of 3)

Ancient Civilisations
Art
Classical Music
Dance
Design (Product Design)
Design (Textiles)
English Literature
Outdoor Work
Philosophy, Religion and Ethics
Theatre Arts

Student Programmes

Each student, working closely with his or her tutor, will construct a programme based on the five core subjects and up to five other courses chosen from BACs (maximum three) and other externally examined subjects (maximum two).

The curriculum layout allows a wide variety of subject combinations, including programmes with an even spread across different subject areas as well as programmes with a definite specialist bias.

Students are guided in their choices by experienced tutors who help them strike the right balance for them between essay-based, arts and technical subjects.

Examples of student programmes

In addition to the core of English, Mathematics, one Modern Language and Dual-Award Science:

David has chosen French and History GCSEs, and BACs in Theatre Arts, English Literature and Dance.

Harriet has chosen Spanish and History GCSEs, and BACs in English Literature, Outdoor Work and Classical Music.

Alice has chosen French and History GCSEs, together with BACs in English Literature, Art and Design.

Molly is taking Spanish and History GCSEs, alongside BACs in Art, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) and Design.

Kate has chosen Spanish and History GCSEs, with BACs in Ancient Civilisations, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) and Theatre Arts.

“I believe the BAC was a lot more imaginative than the GCSE. People had the freedom to be highly individual. BACs encourage students to work independently, and the course taught and challenged me in many ways.”

A Block 5 student, 2008

Some Key Features of the Bedales Assessed Courses

Ancient Civilisations

Ancient civilisations are the foundation of modern ones, and their relevance can be found everywhere. This Bedales Assessed Course introduces students to the history, literature, art and societies of several of the ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean. Their interactions with each other, and their legacy to us, are studied through topics such as the invention of history as Greeks confronted a rival civilisation in the Persian Wars, the development of architecture from Stone Age Britain through Egypt to Greece, and the dawn of drama in the fifth century BC. There is ample opportunity for students to explore topics through independent learning and practical activities. Assessment includes traditional testing, project work, and presentations to an audience. **Julian Spencer, Head of Classics**

Art

In this novel Bedales Assessed Course we hope to unleash the students' creativity and enable them to find their individual 'voice', through the study of the Pop Art movement in Europe and the USA in the 1960s – one of the most explosively creative artistic periods of modern times. The techniques of Print-making, Painting, Sculpture and Ceramics will be explored through work based on drawing and the analysis of the world around the students, and an exploration of the materials and language of Art. Other cultures and areas of human expression, such as music and literature, will also be referred to. **George Hatton, Head of Art**

Classical Music

The Bedales Assessed Course in Classical Music is designed for the musician who is academically ambitious. Placing greater emphasis on theory and history than GCSE, it is equally suitable for students considering Music A level and for those who seek a more informed enjoyment of their practical music-making. There are parallel and related topics in Analysis and History, Compositional Techniques and Free Composition. The detailed study of increasingly substantial works will form a major element in the course. **Nick Gleed, Director of Music**

“Winchester School of Art is delighted to be associated with Bedales School as external moderator for the Bedales Assessed Course in Art. The period chosen for the course offers both depth and breadth of study, and encourages the students to be ambitious and imaginative in their work.” **Professor Bashir Makhoul, Head of Winchester School of Art**



“I really loved this course and enjoyed learning about dance theory at the same time as the practical aspect...I chose it because it’s a passion of mine.”

A BAC Dance Student

Dance

Dance today is a vital art form and a wonderful medium for self-expression and personal development. Students on the Bedales Assessed Dance Course will learn to perform, understand and appreciate Dance in a wide variety of styles. Set topics include an in-depth study of a professional British dance work post-1950 and an extended specialist study resulting in a substantial written and practical response. Performances to other students and to wider audiences form an integral part of the course. **Jo Alldridge, Teacher in charge of Dance**

Design

Bedales has a distinguished tradition in Design and many professional designers began their work as students here. The Bedales Assessed Course aims to instil a love of high quality and individuality through the choice of media available in the department including woods, metals, plastics, electronics and textiles. Students are encouraged to think as designers first and foremost and embrace the flexibility and variety of the subject by opting for different media in their initial portfolio tasks in the first two terms of the course. They have the opportunity to work across the department in their final three terms on their extended task. Students will generate and submit design sketchbooks and portfolio sheets along with their practical work but will also have the opportunity to further demonstrate their knowledge in a terminal viva voce. **Ben Shaw, Head of Design and Technology**

“The first cohort of pupils to follow this challenging and rigorous course are to be congratulated on the high quality of their work. They have engaged with a significant body of literary experience and demonstrated their deepening understanding in the type of responses which are required at AS and A Level.” **John Teasey, Senior Examiner for AQA, English Literature**

English Literature

The Bedales Assessed Course in English Literature offers the opportunity to study a wide range of texts from the Elizabethan age to the twenty-first century. As well as Shakespeare, the Romantic Poets, Jane Austen and George Eliot, pupils will encounter writers like Michael Frayn or Kazuo Ishiguro. Once the course is under way, teacher and class will have a great deal of flexibility in selecting texts of mutual interest, thereby building on enthusiasms within the group. Ten texts will be studied over the two years (more than many schools cover at A level) and the resulting knowledge of poetry, plays and novels from diverse periods will far outstrip what can be achieved within the confines of a GCSE course. **Graham Banks, Head of English**

“I found this course very exciting. The texts chosen were brilliant, diverse, inspiring and fulfilling. The course allowed us to explore in depth the texts in a mature way and I feel it has greatly prepared me for A-Level English. This really was an exceptional, fun course and I recommend it to all!”
A Block 5 student

Outdoor Work

Students on the Bedales Assessed Outdoor Work Course may find themselves cutting the joints for a timber-frame building, dipping sheep or making a sculpture in wrought iron. They may learn how to prune apple trees, lay a hedge, conserve a natural habitat or set up a small business based on a traditional craft. Essential to the assessment of the course will be their willingness to work with others, their effectiveness in understanding instructions or in showing leadership, and their good humour and resourcefulness in overcoming difficulties. **Peter Coates, Head of Outdoor Work**

“We are delighted to be extending our existing association with Bedales School by acting as external moderators for their Outdoor Work BAC. This course offers the students a unique opportunity to learn traditional building and rural craft techniques and to work with animals. It features a highly unusual mark scheme that gives credit for crucial personal skills such as team-work, initiative and problem-solving.” **Diana Rowsell, Head of Learning, Weald & Downland Open Air Museum**

“After getting involved in bronze-making and the refurbishment of a Gypsy caravan on the course, I got involved outside lesson time too...I think the caravan was an incredible achievement and our teacher did a fantastic job in encouraging us. It completely changed my view of my abilities.” *A Block 5 student, 2008*

Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE)

What is good? What is beautiful? What is truth? Is religion part of human nature? These questions lead those who ask them to the winding country roads, blind alleys and even roundabouts of philosophical thought. The PRE BAC aims to introduce students to the problems of philosophy, religion and ethics and start them on the uncertain but engrossing search for truth. Amongst other things we study different concepts of reality, the relationship of religion to art, literature and science, and engage in the ambitious project of describing our individual concepts of utopia. **Alistair McConville, Head of of Philosophy and Religious Studies**

“The Bedales PRE course combines the best in traditional teaching with exciting and imaginative work to help develop students’ own creative thinking. The course is rigorous but open-minded, and opens up to students the value of reflecting for themselves on some of the perennial problems of the human condition.” **Dr Christopher Hamilton, Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion, King’s College London**

“PRE was absolutely amazing. It covered a huge range of topics and helped to broaden our awareness of the ‘big questions’ asked in life.” **A Block 5 student**

Theatre Arts

The Bedales Assessed Course in Theatre Arts offers two dynamic years of drama, taught at and beyond GCSE standards. It enables students of all abilities to explore a wide range of theatrical styles, offering real variety in terms of performance and design potential and providing many opportunities for individual development and group awareness. A broad introductory course in the first year leads to two contrasting modules in the second year, which can comprise all sorts of varied elements from the following: scripted, devising, costume, set, lighting and sound design, make-up and masks, physical theatre and stage fighting, dance-drama and musical theatre, as appropriate.

Jo Murphy, Head of Drama

“The work undertaken is ambitious in scope as well as providing superb opportunities to explore the collaborative, demanding and disciplined art of theatre making.” **Alastair Muir, Freelance Director, Producer and Theatre Practitioner, University of Lincoln**

“Theatre studies was brilliant because it gave you the freedom to be as creative and individual as you desired yet within the framework of a well structured syllabus. The BAC was far more challenging and stimulating than what I have heard of the Drama GCSE.” **A Block 5 student**



Core examined subjects

English GCSE

Examining Board: AQA Specification A

All students in Block 5 take English GCSE. Much of the work is built around the detailed study of whole literary texts, and every student receives a free copy of the AQA anthology of stories and poems. Assessment is through coursework essays, speaking and listening, and two final papers.

Mathematics GCSE / IGCSE

Examining Boards: Cambridge International Examinations and Edexcel

Depending on their mathematical ability, students are either entered for the International GCSE (CIE) or the Edexcel GCSE. The most able students take the IGCSE examination in November of Block 5 and then study for an AS module in Pure Mathematics, which they take at the end of the academic year.

Modern Languages GCSE

Examining Board: AQA

In today's world, knowledge of modern languages is an indispensable part of education. The Bedales core curriculum requires each student to study for a GCSE in at least one modern language. Most students enter the school with a knowledge of French, and courses in Spanish and German start in Block 3. Lessons in various other languages, such as Italian, Chinese and Japanese, can be arranged on a private basis. A second modern language can be taken among the GCSE options.

Science IGCSE (Dual Award)

Examining Board: Edexcel International

All Block 4 and 5 students study the Dual Award IGCSE specification from Edexcel International. The aim of this course is to provide a good grounding in the sciences for anyone who is a citizen of the twenty-first century, and also to do the same for those who wish to continue with the sciences to AS level and beyond. The students will be setted according to their performance in Block 3 tests and exams, though these sets remain flexible.

Core non-examined subjects

Physical Education and Games

PE classes may include athletics, badminton, basketball, dance, fitness, tennis, swimming, lifesaving and volleyball. The major games are football, hockey, tennis, cricket and netball. As an alternative to Games, students can opt to take part in the Outdoor Work programme.

Personal, Social and Health Education

The PSHE course aims to achieve a balance between delivering factual information and providing a space and language for students to explore and discuss a wide variety of issues. There are six modules and the students move around on a carousel system, so that they complete every module during their Block 4 year. The modules are: Healthy Living Citizenship, Careers, Sex Education (physiological-medical), Sex Education (social/emotional/ethical), Current Affairs.

Optional externally examined subjects

Geography GCSE

Examining Board: OCR

The Bedales Geography department is very fortunate to have been invited to join a pilot scheme for a new GCSE course that allows the freedoms of a BAC course whilst remaining in the formal examinations system. This innovative course is specifically designed to be exploratory, self paced, negotiated, rigorous, relevant, topical and synoptic. As well as whole-class work, the course will include a high proportion of learning through individual investigation, seminar sessions, workshops and tutorials.

History GCSE

Examining Board: Edexcel

This course in Modern European and World History offers one of the few remaining opportunities in GCSE examinations for developing an argument in a piece of extended writing. The course aims to provide access to the main political ideas that shaped the twentieth century and gives an insight into the issues and conflicts that exist in contemporary society.

ICT GCSE (Full course)

Examining Board: Edexcel

The ICT course enables students to develop an understanding of the fundamentals of ICT and provides the knowledge and skills suitable for participation in an evolving information-based society and the solution of complex problems using a variety of software. Those who complete this course will be well prepared to study Computing in the sixth form.

European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)

Examining Body: British Computing Society

The ECDL course teaches a basic level of competence and confidence in using a computer. Students who complete this course will have the necessary skills for office-based tasks. The course places a high value on the real-life skills that are required in today's society. ECDL is started in Block 3 and completed in Block 4. Students receive a Level 2 certificate, equivalent to GCSE grade B.

Digital Cre8or

Examining Body: British Computing Society

This is a new award designed to meet the needs of students who want to make the most of digital media devices and computers. It is studied in Block 5 following completion of the ECDL certificate.

Latin GCSE

Examining Board: OCR

The aim of the Latin GCSE course is to give students an understanding of the civilisation, literature and language which have profoundly influenced many modern societies. Students will become competent in the Latin language and read a selection of original prose and verse literature in Latin.

Music GCSE

Examining Board: Edexcel

GCSE Music approaches the subject in a broad and stimulating way, along the three linked paths of listening, performance and composition. Work is based around four major areas of study – Western Classical Music, New Directions in Western Music, Popular Song and World Music.



The University Perspective

Bedales students have a reputation with universities for their independence of mind and have frequently offered unusual academic and personal profiles in their applications for courses. In designing the new curriculum, we wanted to maintain and enhance these factors.

Early enquiries suggested that universities would take a favourable view of our plans, and this was borne out in a more detailed survey of selected departments in eighty universities, covering all the courses chosen by Bedales students leaving in Summer 2005. The response from sixty-one departments in forty-one very varied universities reinforced our confidence that these courses will form a strong basis for A-level study and subsequent applications to university.

The great majority of responses to the questionnaire regarded the changes as having no negative impact on students' applications whatsoever, and several foresaw a beneficial effect on work at both sixth-form and university level. The clear message was that it was candidates' likely performance at A Level that was really significant in their applications.

We are convinced that our BACs are highly effective at preparing our students for sixth-form study in their respective fields. Not only that, but they actively hone the independent learning skills so cherished by universities.

We discussed our plans in detail with the very few institutions who expressed reservations, and were pleased to find initial doubts replaced by positive support when the scheme was explained in full.

We will of course be maintaining links with universities in

order to show them, for example, the details of our courses, the grading system (A* - G, as in GCSE) and how we validate the courses (using external assessors from higher education, schools or other appropriate agencies).

Universities see students' independence of mind squeezed out by an over-examined schooling system.* They are increasingly sceptical about the value of amassing large numbers of GCSEs.

Senior officers at UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) welcomed our initiative in developing more imaginative and engaging courses alongside GCSE (December 2007).

UCAS is the gateway to higher education, managing the application process for thousands of applicants a year. UCAS agreed not only to inform all UK universities and colleges about our courses but also to include the BACs in its publication 'UK Qualifications for Entry into University and College' and in the drop-down menu for on-line applications.

*Oxford Department of Educational Studies survey of Admissions Tutors, February 200

Further Information

Full details of each course are available on the Bedales website: www.bedales.org.uk

Please direct any questions to the Registrar in the first instance: jjarman@bedales.org.uk, 01730 711733.

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Design, concept and production by Picador Design Consultants, Bristol.
Photos by Alistair Hood, print by Kingsdown.

Stock: Challenger Offset – produced from Elemental Chlorine Free bleached pulp (ECF), FSC certified – sourced from sustainable managed forests.

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