

The Curriculum in Blocks 4 and 5

An introduction to studies
starting in September 2008

March 2008

BLOCK 4 AND 5 CURRICULUM

SEPTEMBER 2008

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INTRODUCTION

How to use this booklet

This booklet refers to courses to be started by Block 4 in September 2008 and describes the important changes that have been made to the curriculum for Bedales Block 4 and 5 students with effect from September 2006.

The introduction explains the rationale, outlines the subject choices, provides some guidance for students making their choice of subjects and describes the help available. The booklet then goes on to give details of all the available courses – both the core (compulsory) ones and the range of options surrounding them. At the end of the booklet (pages 19-20), you will find answers to some frequently asked questions.

Background and rationale to the new curriculum

This curriculum, developed from an extensive review and consultation, is an important innovation and represents an excellent and distinctive opportunity for our students. Offering considerable scope for creativity and allowing individual students to choose a programme in line with their particular abilities and interests, it reflects the Bedales ethos more fully than the entirely GCSE-based curriculum it replaces. In drawing it up, we had four aims in mind:

1. To reduce the pressure of external assessment, whilst still ensuring that all students qualify themselves appropriately for A level and beyond.
2. To maintain a broad education for all to the age of 16.
3. To enable students to take examinations in their areas of strength.
4. To give students opportunities to pursue their interests and areas of expertise.

The system it replaced, whereby the majority of Bedales students took nine or ten GCSEs, had many limitations: syllabuses designed to cater for the whole ability range squeezed out opportunities for appropriate, imaginative and challenging work with particular groups and individuals, and time-consuming coursework in many subjects was tied to laborious, prescriptive mark schemes.

The new curriculum comprises four areas:

1. Core GCSE subjects: English (single subject), Mathematics, Dual Award Science and a modern foreign language.
2. Core non-examined courses: Physical Education, Personal, Social and Health Education.
3. Bedales Assessed Courses (BACs).
4. Additional GCSE or other externally examined courses.

The scheme is best understood from the diagram below.

The subjects in each column will be timetabled together, so only one subject can be taken from any one column. The distribution of subjects in the lower half of the table has been arranged to maximise choice, but, inevitably, some subject combinations will not be possible.

| | CORE CURRICULUM (5 GCSES) See pages 6-7 | | | | NON-EXAMINED CORE SUBJECTS See page 8 | |
|------------------|---|---|--|--|---|------|
| | English (single subject) | Mathematics | Science: IGCSE Dual Award or equivalent (counts as two GCSEs) | Modern Language: French German or Spanish | PE | PSHE |
| Periods per week | 3 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| | BEDALES ASSESSED COURSES See pages 9-18 | | | ADDITIONAL GCSEs and other externally examined subjects See pages 9-18 | | |
| | Ancient Civilisations* Art English Literature Outdoor Work Theatre Arts | Art Design English Literature PRE (Philosophy, Religion & Ethics) | Classical Music Dance Design Theatre Arts ICT ECDL | French** Geography History ICT | Geography History ICT Latin Music | |
| Periods per week | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |

* Ancient Civilisations is subject to a minimum take-up.

** The placing of the sets for modern languages may be adjusted in the light of student choices and timetabling constraints.

How to build an individual student's programme

1. Everyone must take the five core GCSE subjects and the two core, non examined courses (PE and PSHE). Each student will then take three or four other subjects, choosing from the Bedales Assessed Courses (BACs) and the additional GCSE or other externally examined courses.
2. In order to ensure that students maintain breadth, the following rules apply:
 - a) Each student must take one subject from Art, Dance, Design, Theatre Arts, Music or ICT.
 - b) Each student must take one from Ancient Civilisations, English Literature, Geography, History or Philosophy, Religion and Ethics.

Methods of assessment and reporting

Bedales Assessed Courses will be assessed and reported on the same basis as GCSE courses – i.e. on a scale running from A* to G – with A* to C being considered as pass grades. An external assessor or moderator is involved in setting the standards in each subject and all the courses have a centrally agreed grading system.

Keith Budge

Headmaster

CORE GCSE COURSES

ENGLISH

Head of Department: Graham Banks

Examining Board: AQA Specification A (3702)

Work in English continues to build around the detailed study of whole literary texts. All students take English GCSE in Block 5, which is compulsory nation-wide as part of the core of the National Curriculum. Every student receives a free copy of the AQA anthology of stories and poems.

There are two final papers, one of which tests comprehension and writing skills in non-literary contexts whilst the other tests imaginative writing and comprehension of poetry.

Coursework accounts for 40% of the marks. Half of the English coursework involves assessment in speaking and listening. The remainder is assessed by means of a folder of four essays: a study of some aspect of media, a piece of original writing, a critical essay on a Shakespeare play and a study of a novel written before 1914. The course therefore includes work in the three genres of poetry, prose and drama.

A considerable amount of time is spent on studying texts for coursework for three reasons. The final exams themselves are fairly straightforward but the skills involved can be developed through the coursework. It would be possible to cut corners and produce adequate coursework from lightweight material, but we believe that able students respond best to the challenge of demanding texts studied in detail. We also see this as an essential preparation for those who want to continue with the subject to A level.

Written work is set fortnightly for prep and much of the time in class is spent in discussion, valuable in itself in developing critical and rational thinking, but also a continuous preparation for the oral part of the coursework.

MATHEMATICS

Head of Department: Philip Robinson

Examining Board: Cambridge International Examinations and Edexcel

Students are entered for the GCSE (Edexcel) with the A set following the IGCSE Extended course of the International GCSE (IGCSE) in Mathematics, set by the Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIE). There is no coursework on either course. The final examinations consist of two papers. Many of our more successful students go on to take AS/A2 mathematics in the sixth form.

SCIENCE

Head of Department: Gary Skinner

Examining Board: Edexcel

All Block 4 Students will study the Dual Award IGCSE specification from EdExcel International. This stresses the fundamentals of science and is an excellent preparation for AS and A2 studies, as well as giving scientific knowledge needed 'for life'. The students will be setted according to their performance in Block 3 tests and exams, but these sets will be fully flexible if it emerges they are not in 'the right place'.

The specification can be seen here:

http://www.edexcel-international.org/VirtualContent/83582/IGCSE_Double_Award_Science_specification.pdf

All will be entered for the Higher Tier examinations in 2010, unless it is felt that this would be counterproductive. A judgement about this will be finally made after Mocks in January 2010.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Head of French: Virginie Godet

Head of Spanish: Ruth Carpenter-Jones

Head of German: Rebecca Parkyn

Examining Board: AQA (3651/61/91)

In today's world, knowledge of modern languages is an indispensable part of education. The study of languages opens many opportunities for careers and travel, promotes an awareness of international affairs among students and gives them a deeper understanding of their own language.

The Bedales core curriculum requires each student to attend lessons leading to 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. One or two of these languages can be continued to GCSE, but if more than one language is studied, the combination may be subject to timetabling constraints. Latin can be taken to GCSE in place of, or in addition to, a second modern language.

In Spanish, French and German, language skills tested at GCSE are categorised as speaking, listening, reading and writing. They are given equal weighting. Students are strongly advised to spend some time in the foreign country(ies) to help with their oral and comprehension work.

Lessons in a number of other languages such as Italian, Chinese and Japanese can be arranged on a private basis.

NON-EXAMINED CORE COURSES

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GAMES

Heads of Department: Frank McMorrow and Sonia Cartwright

P.E. and Games are compulsory for all. Blocks 4 and 5 have one double period of P.E. a week. The aim is to allow the individual to develop through the medium of various sporting activities. These include athletics, badminton, basketball, dance, fitness, tennis, swimming, lifesaving, volleyball, table tennis and handball.

In the Games programme we aim to achieve excellence in our major games and to compete against other schools but also allow others the opportunity to follow their sporting interests. Our major games are football, hockey, rugby (Block 4 only), girls' football, tennis, cricket and netball. Block 4 has three afternoon sessions whilst Block 5 has two linked with the sixth form. Students can choose from a wide menu of sporting activities. If students are not attracted to team sports in any Block they can opt to work in the Outdoor Work programme.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

Head of Department: Sarah Chubb

PSHE aims to achieve a balance between delivering factual information and providing a space and language for students to explore and discuss issues – some pertinent to them now and some preparing them for situations and choices met in adulthood. The Bedalian Ethos is at the heart of our approach.

There is a carousel system and students cover the following topics: Keeping Safe (drugs, alcohol, smoking); Current Affairs; Careers; Religion, Ethics and Spirituality; and Safe Sex (emotional and physical). We also try to keep abreast of current affairs and to provide a forum for issues which arise out of daily Bedalian life.

OPTIONS – BEDALES ASSESSED COURSES, GCSEs and other externally examined courses

ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS - BAC

Head of Department: Julian Spencer

The Ancient Civilisations BAC will introduce students to the history, literature and culture of selected ancient civilisations. Although focused on Greece and Rome, the course will explore other civilisations with which the Greeks and Romans came into contact and focus in detail on the consequences of the interactions of different cultures. It is expected that the course will run in the academic year from September 2008, subject to a minimum take-up.

The course will provide an excellent introduction to A level Classical Civilisation and will also be good preparation for other A level subjects in which writing analytically, particularly about literature or history, is important. The Art and Architecture module will be relevant to students studying Art and Design.

Course Outline

The course will comprise five modules taught in four periods per week.

Art and Architecture

The development of art and architecture from Egypt to Rome.

History

The study of an historical period in which different ancient cultures came into contact and conflict, such as the Persian invasion of Greece or Rome's wars with Carthage.

Roman Life

Roman Life explored through literary sources, local sites, and practical work.

Literature

Epic (Homer's *Odyssey*) and Drama (a Greek tragedy and a comedy).

Empire and Religion

The Roman Empire's interaction with other religions.

Assessment

Assessment of each module will include an oral element, either a presentation by the student or a formal interview. Written assessment will be through one or two extended essays for each module except History (end of term examination) and Empire and Religion (continuous assessment).

ART - BAC

Head of Department: George Hatton

This is an innovative course designed to help students to gain the confidence to express themselves freely in a range of materials through the study of one of the most explosively creative artistic periods of modern times. An investigation of the Pop Art movement in Europe and the USA in the 1960s will be our central theme, and the techniques of Print-making, Painting, Sculpture and Ceramics will be explored, with the coursework pieces and a "visual diary" forming a record of what the student has discovered.

Aims

The course will offer the opportunity for students and staff to explore and gain experience in the following areas:-

1. Aesthetics An analysis of the basic language of Art. An investigation into Colour, Line, Shape, Pattern, Texture, Form, Volume and space.
2. Impression Objective analysis of the natural and man-made environment.
3. Expression The personal response to ideas and feelings.
4. Communication Investigation of the third major Symbolic field, the communication of ideas that cannot be achieved through Language and Number.
5. Environmental Issues The development of a critical awareness of the environment, and of man's ability to affect it in a positive or negative way.
6. Manipulation The exploration of the potential and qualities of a range of materials.
7. Art: Historical and Social Ideas in their context, with reference to a range of ethnic and national examples.

Students will choose three projects produced during the five terms of the course. These will form the main body of the final presentation and will be accompanied by the student's "visual diary". The work will be internally marked and externally moderated by a team of tutors from Winchester College of Art (The University of Southampton).

CLASSICAL MUSIC - BAC

Head of Department: Nicholas Glead

This course is designed for the musician who is academically ambitious. Specific musical genres will be studied with wider reference to their historical environments. Set works from within these genres will be analysed so that students gain not only an understanding of the aesthetic aspirations of various ages, but also valuable insights into the process of composition. Further, hands-on experience of the compositional process will be received through studying and putting into practice the principles which underline 18th century harmony and counterpoint. Students will also be required to produce a small portfolio of "free" compositions. In order to develop a greater aural perception, exercises in the dictation of rhythms and melodies will form part of the weekly programme. This, together with the aural recognition of style and design, will encourage students to *hear what they see and see what they hear*. Every student will be required to receive instrumental and/or vocal tuition throughout the course and to develop both their technical and interpretational skills. A short, examined Recital will take place at the end of terms three and five. Participation in ensemble work will form a part of the continual assessment which is a hallmark of this course and necessary for every student's development as a musician.

The course is intended to give students knowledge and skills which will enable them to appreciate music more fully as a practical skill, a cultural medium and a valuable academic discipline. It will provide them with a secure grounding in the theory and history of Music,

as well as developing important powers of analysis and synthesis, all of which are necessary for further musical studies both at school and in places of higher education.

DANCE - BAC

Teacher i/c Department: Jo Alldridge

The Bedales Assessed Course in Dance will involve developing skills in performance, choreography, appreciation and analysis via the study of Dance works, choreographic projects and performing opportunities. The course focuses on Dance in Britain in the last century and is contemporary in style; however, it must explore other genres and cultural elements.

Relationship to advanced courses

The course will prepare students for, and link effectively with, the A level course as well as providing excellent study skills and a valuable broader knowledge that will benefit students wishing to study Theatre Studies, Design, Music and Art.

Syllabus at a glance

| | | | |
|--------|--|--------|---|
| Term 1 | Development of skills Performance Choreography Appreciation Theory of Dance | Term 4 | Assessment Unit 3 Specialist study area. |
| Term 2 | Assessment Unit 1 Performance | Term 5 | Assessment Unit 4 Final choreographic task Assessment Unit 5 Final portfolio submitted |
| Term 3 | Assessment Unit 2 Professional Dance work study. | | |

Aims

The aim of the course is to develop:

- a) understanding and appreciation of a range of Dance styles;
- b) aesthetic and artistic sensibility to Dance works;
- c) the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to perform, choreograph and appreciate Dance, including an awareness of its artistic contexts;
- d) life skills and attributes including decision making, critical and creative thinking, and the ability to co-operate with others.

Suitability for candidates of different abilities

The main requirements are a genuine interest in Dance. Commitment to develop Dance skills and an enthusiasm for knowledge and understanding of the subject are needed.

DESIGN - BAC

Head of Department: Ben Shaw

The Bedales Assessed Course in Design will comprise a mixture of practical exercises, theoretical knowledge and a range of core skills which are essential to the designing

process. The syllabus is broad, emphasising the role of innovation and creativity, an awareness of the subject's historical background and a detailed understanding of the requirements of professional design and manufacture.

Although students may experience core lessons relevant to the whole group, there will be a choice of working in one of two disciplines - **Textiles** or **Product Design**. Students can choose to work in one or both media in the Block 4 portfolio tasks. The extended tasks are designed to allow the students to work either exclusively within their chosen specialism or work in a multi disciplinary manner across the department. The design theory and product analysis will be taught concurrently across the subject specialisms. There is scope for students to work in such diverse areas as architecture, computer control, interior design, furniture, graphic or fashion design.

Aims

Students taking this course should:

- experience the joy and satisfaction of making;
- demonstrate their design capability which requires them to combine skills with knowledge and understanding in the manufacture of products of quality;
- develop positive and creative attitudes to designing, making and organisation;
- understand factors that make up the designing and making process;
- have an awareness of the iconic designers and periods of history in the last century;
- recognise the wider implications of design and manufacture in society.

Method of Assessment

- Portfolio Tasks – Students will complete a range of smaller material specific tasks in Block 4 which will be considered as a wider portfolio mark. Design related work carried out in within the school but outside of BAC lessons can also be submitted as part of this portfolio.
- Extended Task – Students will be asked to respond to an open brief by investigating, designing and making a new product. This is an extended task that will take three terms to complete.
- Design Theory Presentation – Students will independently investigate one of the aspects of design history covered in the theory lessons and produce a visual and oral presentation.
- At the culmination of the course the students will be asked to display their work and attend a *viva voce* examination.

Relationship to advanced courses

The course will prepare students to continue with A level Design as well as including skills and subject matter pertinent to both Art and Business Studies.

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| ENGLISH LITERATURE - BAC |
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| <i>Head of Department: Graham Banks</i> |
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The Bedales Assessed Course in English Literature will involve the detailed study of ten literary texts. These will be a mixture of modern texts and canonical 'classics' written before 1900.

Syllabus at a glance

| | | |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Term 1 | Post 1900 novel | Post 1900 play |
| Term 2 | Pre 1900 novel | Post 1900 poetry text |
| Term 3 | Pre 1900 play | Post 1900 novel |
| Term 4 | Pre 1900 novel | Post 1900 play |
| Term 5 | Pre 1900 poetry text | Shakespeare play |

Range of texts to be studied:

- Four novels – two written before 1900 and two written since
- Four plays – two written before 1900 (one by Shakespeare) and two written since
- Two poetry texts – one written before 1900 and one written since. A 'poetry text' is taken here to mean a body of work by a single poet, by a recognised group of poets (e.g. the Romantics) or by poets with similarity of theme or method (e.g. Herbert and Hopkins).

An essay of about 800 words is to be written on each text. The final folder submitted for assessment should contain **five** essays. All three genres of prose, poetry and drama must be represented with at least two essays on texts written before 1900 and at least two essays on texts written after 1900.

Scheme of assessment

The course is assessed by means of a folder of five essays comprising about 4,000 words. The folder must contain:

- At least one essay on a prose text
- At least one essay on a poetry text
- At least one essay on a drama text
- At least two essays on texts written before 1900

GEOGRAPHY - GCSE

Head of Department: Colin Prowse

GCSE examining board: OCR (1949)

This exciting course affords opportunities for in-depth exploration of myriad contemporary geographical issues whilst at the same time instilling rigorous conceptual and methodological understanding necessary for A-level and beyond. The three core modules in Block 4 are MY PLACE (involving statistical analysis of primary data from the local area through to personal reactions to "postcode poverty"), PEOPLE AS CONSUMERS (ranging from carbon footprint analysis to the role of religion in mass consumption), and EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS (including a 10 day long field trip to Namibia). In Block 5 our modules are GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and GIN (Geography in the News), the latter being an on-going theme through the two years which affords incredible scope. Throughout all the work we encourage linking both right brain (creative) and left brain (logical) processes and on-going meta-cognitive reflection.

We adopt a radical mode of working involving no file, no text and almost no paper. Nearly all lessons provide one-to-one access to a school networked computer. All work is kept electronically (a collection of work) from which a selection of pieces of work is submitted for assessment (70% of the total marks). Open discussion, oral presentation, field work, report

writing, illustration and debate are all important vehicles for learning, but judicious use of the internet is key to excellence in the production of work and a crucial experience for life beyond school. The GCSE includes one formal exam at the end of Block 4 based on materials released six weeks in advance and focussing on the three core modules (30% of the total marks).

HISTORY - GCSE

Head of Department: Jonathan Selby

Examining Board: EdExcel (1334)

We believe that the study of History in Block 4 and 5 can help to develop generally useful skills of **analysis, evaluation and construction of argument**. At the same time the course offers one of the few remaining opportunities in GCSE examinations for developing an argument in a piece of extended writing. The syllabus we follow is 'Modern European and World History'. The material studied follows on from the work done in Block 3 on the First World War and Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

In Block 4 students will work on American History from 1941 to 1980. This unit covers all the central issues that affected America at this time; the impact of World War II on American society; McCarthyism, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the struggle for Civil Rights; other protest movements like the hippies; and the Watergate scandal and its impact on politics. Students will then conduct an in depth study on the Vietnam War, concentrating on why the United States was unable to win the war and the impact the war had on people in Vietnam and America.

In Block 5 most lesson time will be spent studying 'Superpower Relations 1945-1990', which covers the Cold War up to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Particular attention will be paid to the causes of the Cold War and major incidents within it, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Nuclear Arms Race.

During the span of the course, students will also complete two course work units which account for 25% of the overall mark. They will be on aspects of British History during the Twentieth Century; the Blitz and Northern Ireland.

The course aims to provide access to the main political ideas that shaped the Twentieth Century and give an insight into the issues and conflicts that exist in contemporary society.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY – GCSE

Head of Department: Karen McCathie

Examining Board: EdExcel and British Computer Society (BCS)

The aim of this course is to achieve a dual award by the end of Block 5: the ECDL¹ Extra Level 2 certificate which is equivalent to a Grade B GCSE; and the EdExcel GCSE Full Course in Information and Communication Technology.

Block 3 students have had the opportunity to achieve the ECDL Essentials level 1 certificate. In Block 4 students will have the opportunity to complete the full ECDL certificate

(ECDL Extra) in one year while simultaneously studying for the EdExcel GCSE ICT course. The GCSE ICT course will be completed in Block 5.

GCSE ICT is designed to encourage students to develop an understanding of the fundamentals of ICT and to provide the knowledge and skills suitable for participation in an evolving information-based society. Students will be confident in solving problems in most areas of ICT - regardless of software titles. Students who complete this course will be well prepared to study Computing in the sixth form.

GCSE Coursework accounts for 60% of the total marks and will be completed over the two years. The Coursework consists of four development projects where the application is chosen by the students. The first two involve creating a Database and a Spreadsheet application and will be completed in Block 4. The remaining two are free choice and could include Web-site creation, Desktop Publishing, Programming, Graphics creation, Animation, Video Editing and Multi-media presentation. The remaining 40% of the GCSE marks is an examination paper taken at the end of Block 5.

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| ICT (ECDL+) | <i>Head of Department: Karen McCathie</i> |
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Examining Board: BCS

The aim of this course is to achieve the ECDL¹ Extra Level 2 certificate which is equivalent to a Grade B GCSE

Block 3 students have had the opportunity to achieve the ECDL Essentials level 1 certificate. In Block 4 students will have the opportunity to complete the full ECDL certificate (ECDL Extra) in one year. The ECDL Extra certificate is a modular qualification, allowing each module to be taken at the appropriate time during the Block 4 course: Spreadsheets; Databases; Presentations; Word Processing; and a theory module called Unit E.

In Block 5 students can go on to explore their interests in creating videos, animations, music and pictures with a brand new course called Digital Cre8or that is due to come on-line in September 2008.

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| LATIN - GCSE | <i>Head of Department: Julian Spencer</i> |
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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 become competent in the Latin language and develop an analytical approach to language generally, including an awareness of the relationship between Latin and modern languages. Knowledge of Latin vocabulary and grammar helps the understanding of English and many other European languages. Students read a selection of original prose and verse literature in Latin, respond to it critically, and understand the historical and cultural context in which it was written. Latin GCSE is essential for anyone wishing to study Latin at A level.

The critical skills required for the study of literature are also applicable to English and other literature. The prose set text for 2010 is a selection from Julius Caesar and Tacitus about the Druids and Boudicca's revolt. The verse is from Book 6 of Virgil's Aeneid in which Aeneas visits the Underworld and is shown the future glory of Rome.

The course will take four periods per week. In Block 4 the focus is on language and the development of grammar and vocabulary to GCSE level. Towards the end of the year students start work on the prose set text. Language work continues in Block 5 but more time is spent on literature. The prose set text is completed and the verse set text is studied. The daily life of the Romans is studied throughout the course and there will be a trip to a local Roman archaeological site. Latin GCSE does not involve coursework and the examination weighting will be approximately: language 40%, literature 35% and culture 25%.

Examining Board: EdExcel (1426)

GCSE Music approaches the subject in a broad and stimulating way, along the three paths of *listening, performance and composition*. Links are made between these disciplines.

Listening

A number of styles and forms are grouped into four areas of study: Western Classical Music, New Directions in Western Music, Popular Song and World Music. Students will listen to and analyse a wide repertoire and have opportunities to develop musical ideas through composing and performance activities. Methods of analysis are explored with the help of scores and recordings (audio and video). During the course, and as a consequence of the character of most classes, it is usually possible to move beyond the requirements of GCSE and study style and analysis in greater depth.

Composition

Students will develop musical ideas in the form of compositions or arrangements. Two works will be submitted for assessment and a student must perform in one of them (either as soloist or member of an ensemble). Some students find composition a daunting prospect, but it often leads to outstandingly creative work.

Performing

All students will be required to perform as soloist and member of an ensemble during the course. Eventually, three performances will be offered for examination.

The BAC in Outdoor Work is entirely different from other courses. The success of the student is dependent upon the degree of effort and enthusiasm with which they approach the course, their reaction to the challenges which arise, and the execution of a practical project. It is a course which values and evaluates personal qualities, rather than academic abilities.

The first two terms will consist of a Foundation Course, in which students will learn and improve practical skills. During the final three terms, students will apply themselves to a particular project of their own choosing, either on an individual or group basis. Projects have included renovation of a gypsy caravan, carving totem poles, building a chicken house, recreating a bronze-age kiln, and blacksmithing. Sessions will be timetabled at four daytime periods per week.

The emphasis of the course is on a more rounded education and the personal skills which are needed in the work place. It should enable the student to be viewed in a broader perspective than is generally available to potential employers and University selection boards.

Assessment:

Students will be permitted a generous degree of freedom as to how the project is presented. Pupils may wish to maintain a log-book which lists: work to be completed; details of visits to relevant sites (museums, farms, etc.); expeditions (working horse shows, agricultural fairs, etc.); the aim of the individual project; personal assessments of the

progress and outcome of the project; plans, drawings and photographs; comments from Staff. They may keep a photographic record of events. Others will present the finished product and verbally discuss their thoughts and objectives. In all cases the emphasis will be on the observation of the pupils at work, looking at their commitment, enthusiasm, attainment in practical skills, social interaction, co-operation, initiative and creativity.

External assessment will be achieved by observing the pupil at work, interview and looking at the practical achievements, together with any reports or diaries.

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ETHICS (PRE) - BAC

Head of Department: Alistair McConville

The Bedales Assessed Course in PRE is designed as a thorough introduction to the key problems of philosophy, the major debates about religion and the ethical issues of the day. It is wholly assessed by coursework. Students will submit one piece of work for each of the five units. Unit 3 is worth 40% of the final mark. The others are all worth 15%.

Unit 1: **Problems of philosophy 1:** the question of God: the origins of religion, philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God.

Unit 2: **Ethics:** the study of religious and non-religious perspectives on contemporary moral issues. E.g. Buddhist, Christian and Utilitarian perspectives on issues such as animal rights, abortion, the environment & free speech.

Unit 3: **Independent Learning Project:** politics, theology and society: following in the footsteps of the great thinkers, students will consider what constitutes the ideal society. How should society be run? What role should religion play in an ideal state? How should the balance between the rights and responsibilities of citizens be achieved? Students develop their own blueprint for a better world.

Unit 4: **a) Problems of philosophy 2:** knowledge, reality & the limits of science. Existentialism.

b) Religion in society: the relationship between religion and conflict. The Middle East as case study. Feminism and religion.

Unit 5: **The Art of Religion:** Aesthetics (what constitutes 'beauty'), art, literature & music in religion.

This course should appeal to anyone with an enquiring mind. Through discussion, debate and study of texts the course especially develops skills of self-expression and critical thinking. There is a focus, too, on developing independent learning skills. It links well with other arts subjects, as well as with the sciences, and is an excellent grounding for the AS & A Level in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics (RS).

THEATRE ARTS - BAC

Head of Department: Jo Murphy

The Bedales Theatre Arts Course will build on the current range of performance and study opportunities but will offer significantly greater breadth of choice in terms of design and technical opportunities. Students will be able to diversify their work by experimenting on a

wider range of theatrical styles and genres offering genuine variety in terms of performance and design potential.

Relationship to advanced courses

The course will maintain the key elements of the GCSE but its greater range will deepen candidates' theatrical knowledge and practice, providing them with a far more effective preparation for the A Level Theatre Studies course. It will also provide excellent study skills that will benefit students wishing to study English Literature, History, Art and Design in the sixth form.

Course at a glance

The learning activities on the course are contained within five module assignments. The new course offers opportunities to learn and to develop knowledge and skills through a range of practical activities and written assignments, culminating in some exciting performances in our Theatre and Studio spaces.

CAREERS

Careers Adviser (2008 – 2009): Chris Bott

Higher Education Adviser: Vicky Alderson-Smart

Students are encouraged to start thinking about possible career interests in Block 4 through the PSHE programme. KUDOS – a computerised careers questionnaire which relates interests, preferences and subjects to types of career – is available to all students and serves as a helpful focus for their careers research. During the Block 5 year, students have the opportunity to attend 'taster' lessons in AS level subjects and to discuss the implications of subject choices with tutors and Careers Department staff. The Connexions Personal Adviser visits to see students who request an interview. Students are thus guided and supported in their choice of a balanced sixth form programme which will not adversely affect degree or career prospects and are also encouraged to plan to undertake suitable work experience at an appropriate time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How did the new curriculum come about and how much have parents been consulted about its composition?

The decision to implement the new curriculum from September 2006 was taken in September 2004 after an in-depth curriculum review and a full process of consultation with parents and staff. We held two forums and the responses ranged from neutral to extremely enthusiastic, with the majority showing a very strong level of support. There was some criticism of the reforms for not going far enough or being implemented fast enough.

What are the school's reasons for implementing the new curriculum?

The motivation for introducing these reforms has its roots in our desire as a teaching body to design a curriculum which both mirrors our ethos and suits our students. Throughout we have had the criterion that we must do nothing to disadvantage our students at university: with that in mind the most sensible course was to pursue reforms at GCSE and to do so in a measured way, retaining the "core" GCSEs. Teachers are excited about the new courses – and so will students be when they find that they are working with material that is much more interesting and stimulating than the exclusively GCSE material that their predecessors would have been working with.

Why have you decided to devise your own courses rather than letting students take GCSE in Block 4 and/or take AS level in Block 5?

These arrangements suit certain departments (we do early Mathematics with the top set, for example), but we do not think acceleration would work well if applied on a wider scale. There is an age-related element in the content and assessment methods of GCSE and A level which means that accelerated programmes only work well for the most able in a subject. We have a wide ability range and a number of subjects are taught in mixed ability groups either as a policy or because sets are dictated by subject choices. In addition, the inherent drawbacks of the current GCSE and AS syllabuses apply at whatever time one takes them. Our aim is to make the learning more creative, not just to jump through the hoops faster. Furthermore, to increase the number of accelerated courses would only exacerbate the atmosphere of perpetual imposed assessment which we are trying to move away from.

Will students be effectively choosing their A levels during Block 3?

Definitely not. GCSEs and Bedales Assessed Courses are both a preparation for A level, and Bedales Assessed Courses are intended to prepare the ground for A level work in general, as well as in subject-specific areas. Of course, any process of subject choice - including the existing system - has an influence on the future, but a wide range of options will remain open. Bearing in mind the A level subjects accessed through the core curriculum, as well as optional subjects and those introduced in the sixth form (such as Economics and Psychology), students would have a dozen or so subjects from which to choose their four AS levels.

What have we done to gauge the likely pattern of choices that will be made by the Block 3s?

There were two stages in the curriculum's development. We first tested the pattern of choices on live cohorts of current students when we were developing the proposals in summer 2004. Secondly, in October 2005, we used a cross-section of the current Block 3 and the whole of 6.1 in order to ascertain which courses these students would be likely to take. In November 2005 we asked the whole of Block 3 to look at a provisional curriculum design and some changes were made in the light of their responses. All this has helped us work out the pattern of choices – in particular which new Bedales Assessed Courses would prove popular. As we imagined, they have in fact, proved to be popular and we have also been able to project likely staffing levels, which remain broadly in line with current ones.

Will the new curriculum, with a maximum of seven GCSEs and the possibility of taking only five, disadvantage our candidates at university and with other sixth forms?

We initially surveyed universities in the early stages of exploring this route and received a favourable response. In Autumn 2005 we sent a detailed questionnaire to selected departments in 80 universities, covering all the university applications of the previous year's Bedales A level cohort. The response from 61 departments in 41 very varied universities has indicated clearly that a set of qualifications as described in this booklet would not disadvantage our candidates in applying to university. Some of the university responses have indicated, perceptively, that these courses may well prepare our students better for AS and A2.

We have approached Art schools which have confirmed that their entry requirements for Foundation Courses are based on portfolio evidence and (to a lesser extent) A levels and core GCSE subjects, so that the new curriculum would not have any adverse effect on applicants.

We have also consulted the sixth form colleges to which a small number of our students most often apply. They have not only assured us that the changes will not be detrimental to their chances of entry, but have also commented on the potential benefits of these courses as a preparation for A level.

If you have any further queries please contact Stephen Farrow on 01730 711555 or by email sfarrow@bedales.org.uk.