



ASHFORD SCHOOL  
*Inspiring Minds*

# Key Stage 3 Curriculum **HANDBOOK**

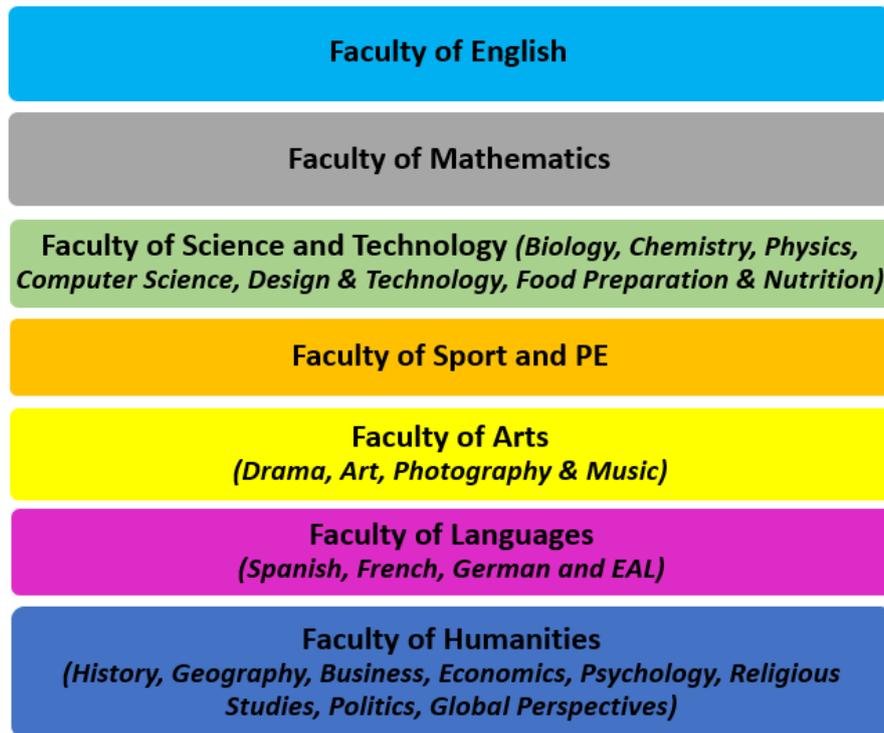
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### The Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The initial years at Ashford Senior School provide rich opportunities for students to experience new academic subjects as well as widen their curriculum knowledge in core subjects. During this time, students study a comprehensive Key Stage 3 curriculum and are taught by generally one teacher per subject.

Academic subjects are organised in faculties as follows:



In Years 7 to 9, students study: English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art, Drama, Design and Technology, Computer Science, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Music, Physical Education. Year 7 pupils follow a carousel of French, German and Spanish for half a term each. Year 8 and 9 pupils study two Modern Foreign Languages.

During Year 9, GCSE options are discussed and students start making decisions about GCSE subjects during the Spring Term.

The School works on a **two-week timetable**, so all students are given a two-week homework timetable at the beginning of the academic year.

The central purpose of homework is to enhance the learning of our pupils. It gives opportunities for work which is independent of the teachers, such as revision activities and wider reading. To help Year 7 settle in, they will not receive homework for the first 3 weeks of the academic year. For the rest of the first half term they will commence English, Science, Mathematics and MFL homework. After half term they will receive homework in all subjects.

Assessments are organised by subject teachers during lesson times and in accordance with departmental programmes of study. Core Assessments in English, Maths and Science take place in April of each academic year for Years 7, 8 and 9.

## Ashford School Learning Habits

At the heart of academic life are the Ashford School Learning Habits. These are designed to reflect the qualities that we most value in Ashford School students and are used to help promote the very best progress and outcomes from the student body. Pupils in Years 7-9 are strongly encouraged to gain Commendations in the six Learning Habits, covering:

### Independence

#### ***This means we***

- Take responsibility for our own learning
- Take full advantage of the opportunities we are given
- Ask ourselves what we can do better, and are proactive in making improvements

### Resilience

#### ***This means we***

- Rise to new challenges, and take risks with new things
- Respond constructively to criticism, and embrace failure as a route to success
- Strike a balance between aspiration and acceptance

### Scholarship and Curiosity

#### ***This means we***

- Think creatively and critically
- Pursue depth of understanding, and question the simple answer
- Welcome reasoned debate, and communicate our ideas effectively

### Tolerance and Collaboration

#### ***This means we***

- Are courteous, polite and encouraging at all times
- Welcome the ideas and perspectives of others
- Hold our own views up to scrutiny and are prepared to modify our opinions

### Creativity

#### ***This means we***

- Are adventurous with the disciplines we try and the tasks we do
- Read widely and develop our opinions broadly
- Celebrate original and imaginative thought, and emulate it wherever possible

### Reflection and Responsibility

#### ***This means we***

- Think about the needs and contributions of our peers not just ourselves
- Examine our own behaviour, to ensure we act with measured confidence and self-assurance
- Look critically at our place in the school community and what can be done to improve it

## Art

Head of Department: Mrs Rayner, [raynern@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:raynern@ashfordschool.co.uk)

**“To study art is to study the visual language of all times and cultures”**

In order to be truly creative, students need to feel safe in their environment, they need to be allowed to make mistakes, they need to be taught the rules and then be free to break the rules. Only then can we truly teach our students to be exceptionally creative. Our department trains pupils from Year 7 upwards to think independently. Our activities and group discussions allow students to communicate thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways, developing creative problem-solving skills and allowing the opportunity to take considered visual risks.

The Art Department aims to establish a high standard of creative work throughout many artistic disciplines or practices. These practices encompass drawing, painting, sculpture and ceramics, printmaking, textiles, photography and digital media.

Through exploring these mediums, we develop in each pupil a visual appreciation and awareness of all aspects of their environment. Pupils learn to record and observe the world around them in a variety of ways. They develop their imaginations and learn to express their ideas and emotions both visually and verbally. Their knowledge and understanding of significant Artists and Craftspeople, both historical and contemporary, will expand as they learn how and why different cultures developed their individual artistic styles.

You can see what we have been up to on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/ashfordschoolartdept/> or visit our virtual gallery at [Art - Ashford School](#)

### **YEAR 7: OBSERVATION AND REPRESENTATION.**

Interiors, observations, still life objects, the human figure in its environment. The formal elements including The colour wheel, scale, shade, tone, composition, pattern, mark making, perspective, negative space. A wide variety of materials are used to explore these elements of art.

### **YEAR 8: OBSERVATION AND ABSTRACTION**

From the REAL to the ABSTRACT. This year is about showing the students how artists have used observational starting points to create abstract art. “Why did art start to change?” Discussing the invention of photography and its effect on art. Impressionism, Post Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism.

### **YEAR 9: IDENTITY, CONCEPT AND IDEA**

In this year the pupils will be exploring the theme of IDENTITY through observations and experimentations, abstract and representational. This will begin with observational drawings but may then move to more conceptual forms. Students will study portraiture and expressive self-portraiture, symbolism, and conceptual art, leading on to the question, “what is art now?”

## **Biology**

**Head of Department:** Mrs Towill, [towills@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:towills@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Pupils are taught by staff who have specialised in Biological sciences at University or through varying careers. This provides unrivalled opportunities to explore the subject and instils a love of learning for Biology from a very early age.

**Starting Year 7** with a basic introduction into cells through examining plant and animal life provides pupils with opportunities to understand microscopes, grasp the concepts of cellular size and embed basic biological foundations. This allows them to go on to examine reproduction, variation and the importance of skeletons in animals.

**In Year 8** pupils begin to understand more complex topics and understand the association with Chemistry through reactions such as respiration and photosynthesis. They have huge exposure to experimental work within this year and begin to develop independent investigation skills. Pupils will focus on an independent project on ecology at the end of the year

**The Year 9** course sees pupils embark on the GCSE course, where an importance of required practicals begins to be understood and the more theoretical topics begin to be taught.

The Biology department hopes that all pupils thrive throughout their KS3 learning experience and begin to understand the complex way in which all organisms are dependent on one another and how all Sciences are entwined.

## Chemistry

Head of Department: Dr Hiatt-Gipson, [HiattGipsonG@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:HiattGipsonG@ashfordschool.co.uk)

By exposing pupils from the start to Chemistry through the eyes of a science subject specialist, in a subject specialist laboratory, we achieve our aim of instilling confidence and creating interest and ambition in all our pupils for their future study of the subject.

Starting **Year 7** with an introduction to simple experimental techniques, such as the use of Bunsen burner and essential glassware, ensures that future laboratory work is carried out safely and with a greater focus on the phenomena rather than the practicalities. We move on to general chemistry such as particle theory, solutions, acidity and combustions; all topics which lend themselves to exploration of some of the simpler realities of the chemical world.

In **Year 8** a more theoretical approach is begun, working with the concepts of atoms, elements, compounds and chemical reaction, example and types. Again, experimentation and observation are central to progress, stimulating and provoking questions and disciplining thinking. By the end of Year 8 we are ready to make a start with more complex ideas.

The **Year 9** course is based on the more accessible aspects of GCSE Chemistry, which includes experimentally orientated topics such as rate of reaction, energy transfer, and the periodic table. More sophisticated theory is introduced through, for example, studying atomic structure and the Earth and atmosphere.

Assessment throughout Key Stage 3 includes topic tests and summer term assessment. Progress in these common assessments is tracked and, alongside other teacher feedback, informs the re-setting of pupils for the start of Year 8 and Year 9.

## Computer Science

Head of Department: Miss Thompson, [thompsonc@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:thompsonc@ashfordschool.co.uk)

*“Whether you want to uncover the secrets of the universe, or you want to pursue a career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, basic computer programming is an essential skill to learn.” – Professor Stephen Hawking*

KS3 Computer Science is built around the principle that every child should have the opportunity to become a creator of technology, not just a consumer. In a rapidly changing world, digital skills are a vital part of both work and home lives and the KS3 course aims to develop interest and understanding as well as encouraging students to be creative and independent in how they approach tasks.

In **Year 7**, students begin by looking at basic ICT and presentation skills and quickly progress on to units on programming in Scratch, covering all the core constructs of programming languages. They also cover core spreadsheet skills in Excel. In **Year 8**, students begin to investigate pre-GCSE topics regarding how computer hardware functions, and how this hardware is used to represent text and numbers in computer systems. They then progress their programming skills, moving on to a written rather than a block-based language in the form of SmallBasic. They also learn about how HTML and CSS are used to develop webpages. In **Year 9**, students further their SmallBasic skills, covering arrays and string manipulation. They also continue to investigate the topic of representation, studying how images and sounds are stored on the computer. Finally, they look at topics on modern computing issues such as cybersecurity and data science.

Work is project based and pupils are assessed on both quiz-based assessments and what they produce at the end of each unit, marked against a set of criteria that is made clear to them from the start. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and progress, checking their work against the criteria and asking for help as and when needed.

## Design and Technology

Head of Department: Mrs A Playford, [playforda@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:playforda@ashfordschool.co.uk)

The aim of the KS3 curriculum is to immerse our students into an array of design opportunities which focus on form and function. Students are encouraged to be critical and analytical in their approach to design and to have the courage to explore and learn from their mistakes. In addition to the introduction of traditional and modern subject material, cross-curricular links are established between the Sciences and Mathematics. The STEM challenges in all years afford our students the opportunity to explore real world engineering challenges whilst working in small groups.

In **Year 7** the primary focus is to familiarise them with the workshop environment and the design process. This is achieved through the completion of two significant design tasks and two micro practical tasks.

By **Year 8** we expect students to explore design more three dimensionally and where practical include evidence of previous learning when solving technical problems. When designing students are encouraged to consider the needs of a target market and how the user would interface with the product.

In **Year 9** students embark on an open design task which encourages independent research and experimentation with a sharp focus on creativity through form and or material choice. The work of others (e.g. designers, architects and engineers) is studied along with the impact design has on society.

Throughout the Key Stage students are taught the principles of technology (structure, mechanisms, electronics and material technology) through e-learning and exploration. Computer aided design and manufacture (CAD CAM) and traditional graphical communication skills, which include isometric and orthographic projection and rendering, are introduced and their skills and confidence developed. Students are also introduced to programming using the BBC Microbits. In Year 7 the emphasis is on utilising the on-board inputs and outputs, however by Year 9 students interface their BBC Microbit with a Breadboard to enable them to design a more diverse system.

Students are assessed though project work and skill assignments. Continuous assessment takes place though classwork and verbal contributions.



Festive decoration



Art Deco tiles



Sustainable lamp



Passive amplifier

## Drama

Head of Department: Mr Hornsey, [hornseym@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:hornseym@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Drama enables pupils to explore, develop and express ideas and concepts which will help them make sense of reality.

Drama is a life skill and a creative art form. By performing it helps pupils develop their ability to use voice and physicality through role plays and improvisations. They can express and manage their thoughts and feelings – shared and experienced – while working in a safe and controlled environment. The development of these skills encourages self-confidence and self-awareness. It promotes the development of the individual in a group context: roles and ideas are negotiated, problems solved, and decisions made together.

**In Year 7** students learn the element of trust and how it is an integral within a performing space. Students then feel comfortable and gain self-esteem and confidence to be able to perform in front of peers. They study the basics of characterisation, improvisation and role-play.

**By Year 8** we expect students to be confident in performing and extend their knowledge with varying dramatic techniques, such as, slow motion, still image, thoughts aloud etc. Students take these techniques and imbed them into devised and scripted pieces, enabling them to use their creativity and imagination to create a clear and coherent performance.

**Year 9** prepares students for future onward study of the subject. Students start by studying Drama Practitioners and linking to specific styles and forms of theatre. From this, they then prepare scripted or devised pieces of great depth and length, ensuring all production elements, such as, sound, lighting, set and costume, are used to create theatrical productions.

Pupils are assessed in a variety of ways, for example, verbal and peer feedback after every class performance. Students complete a written evaluation to analyse and reflect on their skills studied each term. Students self-assess, as well as receiving written and verbal feedback.



## English

Head of Department: Mrs Smith, [smithr@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:smithr@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Whether pupils are studying Shakespeare, modern sonneteers, novels or 21<sup>st</sup> century non-fiction, English teachers promote a sharply inquisitive and exploratory approach to learning. Pupils are encouraged to be curious about the history of English Literature, to ask questions about the nuances of language, to learn new words, speak confidently and to be active readers. Essay writing is a core part of all programmes of study, but teachers also promote creative writing opportunities through *Young Writers* external competitions and the English Faculty's publication 'A Magazine'.

### English Language at Key Stage Three

All students follow a literacy programme which includes learning activities based on punctuation, spelling patterns and grammar. Termly literacy tests take place across Years 7, 8 and 9, but contextualised grammar teaching is also an important aspect of English Language lessons as this helps to build vital inferential comprehension skills.

To foster a love of reading, the English Department organises an annual author or poet visit to the school, as well as celebrating events throughout the year in their English lessons, such as World Book Day. Teachers ensure that all pupils engage in reading regularly, in class and in form time. They will visit the Somerville Library every fortnight in order to explore the wide range of fiction and non-fiction available to them, as well as spend dedicated time reading and discussing their reading habits with their teacher.

### English Literature at Key Stage Three

Creativity is a core part of all English programmes of study. In **Year 7**, pupils study *Diverse Voices* in a short story unit, before completing their own short stories. They progress to explore poetry and non-fiction through the theme of war and conflict. Shakespeare is introduced with *Romeo and Juliet*. Pupils will discuss Shakespeare's canon and oeuvre, analysing how the Bard uses language and stagecraft to lay the foundations for tragedy.

In **Year 8**, pupils study dystopian worlds through their study of *Animal Farm* and short stories such as *The Examination Day*, before embarking on an exploration of persuasive rhetoric from great political speakers, both past and present. A unit on *Twelfth Night* enhances their understanding of Shakespeare and the comedy genre. The pupils are then introduced to a selection of extracts of Gothic literature in the summer term, exploring how this genre has evolved, yet remains popular.

In **Year 9**, pupils study a unit on Sherlock Holmes and the detective genre, followed by the play *Blood Brothers* and enjoy some text transformation activities such as creating a new scene or a newspaper article in response to particular events. In the final term, pupils will start their study of GCSE English Literature Power and Conflict Poetry, covering fantastic poems by Seamus Heaney, William Blake, Percy Shelley, John Agard, Beatrice Garland and Carol Ann Duffy.

## Food Preparation and Nutrition

Head of Department: Miss Bates, [batesc@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:batesc@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Over the course of the year your child can expect to experience a plethora of practical activities. These enable the introduction of, and development of, the following skills; health safety and food hygiene, whisking, kneading, creaming, rubbing in, boiling, frying, rolling, grilling, steaming.

In each year group the students will follow an appropriate ethos as detailed below:

**Year 7** – The main intention is to equip the students with basic skills, using common methods and processes to produce basic dishes.

**Year 8** – To develop skills learnt to produce homemade dishes from scratch.

**Year 9** – To utilise skills learnt to build up a recipe repertoire, and to be able to adapt and develop various recipes themselves.

In addition to the practical exercises, much theoretical material is taught: Food nutrition and health, food commodities, food safety, food choice, food provenance, science and then more focused skills. We consolidate knowledge and understanding of each topic with a range of short individual or group activities that allow students to apply their knowledge.

The aim is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to enable them to make healthy food choices in the future. Plus, we introduce concepts and develop understanding in readiness for GCSE.



## French

Head of Subject: Mr D Higbee, [higbeed@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:higbeed@ashfordschool.co.uk)

The French Department aims to promote the enjoyment of learning French from KS3 onwards. Our team of teachers and French assistant work together and teach with enthusiasm and dedication in order to make the lessons engaging and stimulating.

In Years 7 and 8 the Dynamo course is followed. In Year 9 groundwork for GCSE starts. Teaching is dynamic and lively, and staff use a variety of activities and resources to teach the four key language learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Towards the end of Year 9, pupils decide which languages they wish to continue for their GCSE.

The Department strives to promote the cultural awareness of francophone countries and to make the language come alive through arranging activities so support students' language learning. These activities in KS3 include:

- Celebration of festivals and traditions from French speaking countries.
- A visit from Mingalaba to promote languages and careers in sport.
- This opportunity to take part in a day trip to Le Touquet.
- Opportunities to work with the school's French assistant.



## German

Head of Subject: Mr Fritsch, [Fritschs@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:Fritschs@ashfordschool.co.uk)

As the most widely spoken language in the European Union, German is the native language of approximately 100 million people, according to [Deutschland.de](http://Deutschland.de). Not only is it the official language of Germany, but also of Austria and Liechtenstein, and is one of the official languages of Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg. In February 2018, 15.4 million people were learning German as a foreign language. Culturally, German is widely thought of as the language of 'Dichter und Denker' (writers and thinkers), thanks to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Kant, Marx, Humboldt and Nietzsche. German is the language of innovation, invention, academia and the language spoken by global market leaders.

Here at Ashford School German is taught from scratch in **Year 7**. Students learn basic introductions and physical descriptions before moving onto the topics of school and hobbies. Great emphasis is placed upon spoken confidence at this early stage and students enjoy showing off their skills through fashion shows and a special performance of *Aschenputtel* (Cinderella).

In **Year 8** students are introduced to the future and conditional tenses and a lot of work is done on adjectival endings through the topic of House and Home. Students also study the topics of free time, hobbies and school. A strong focus is placed upon practising the weird (and very wonderful) concept of word order in German.

In **Year 9** the perfect tense comes into play as students learn how to describe a recent holiday. They are also introduced to the concept of the German case system. Students finish Key Stage Three well-placed to thrive and succeed at GCSE level.

There is the opportunity for students of German to practise their language skills in-country each Easter. We currently alternate our visits between Cologne and Berlin. Throughout the Key Stage Three course, great emphasis is placed upon culture and getting to know more about Germany. Students complete cultural projects based on film (*Das Wunder von Bern*) and literature (*Das Nibelungenlied*) as well as finding out about differences between the UK and Germany. We also offer a pen pal exchange with a school in Munich.

## Geography

Head of Geography: Mrs Craddock, [craddockr@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:craddockr@ashfordschool.co.uk)

*"Geography explains the past, illuminates the present and prepares us for the future. What could be more important than that?"*

*Michael Palin*

The aim of the KS3 curriculum is to introduce pupils to a variety of traditional and contemporary topics in Geography, with a balance between physical and human content in each year group. Key geographical skills and cross-curricular (literacy, numeracy and ICT) skills are developed in the schemes of work. Opportunities are offered for outdoor enquiry through the use of the school grounds to conduct fieldwork.

In **Year 7** students extend their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world's regions but also focus on the Geography of the British Isles. Students will develop geographical skills such as reading maps across a range of scales, interpreting photographs and analysing data to identify geographical patterns and processes. By **Year 8** we expect students to be able to make links between the physical and human world by investigating topics such as deforestation, whilst also encouraging them to formulate their own opinions on issues such as ways of reducing the development gap and whether tourism does more harm than good. **Year 9** prepares students for future onward study of the subject, once again, by studying a wide variety of topics with an overriding synoptic outlook. These topics include tectonic and atmospheric hazards, energy and resource management and climate change. The students will use a variety of skills throughout the year and concepts such as inequality, interdependence and reliance will be discussed in more depth.

Pupils are assessed in a variety of ways. For example, through end of unit tests, project work and decision-making exercises. Ongoing assessment also takes place through verbal contributions and classwork.



## History

Head of Department: Dr Quinton, [quintone@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:quintone@ashfordschool.co.uk)

We encourage pupils to think deeply about human and societal issues through the study of past events in local, national and international spheres. Our goal is to produce well-rounded, politically and socially aware young people who can draw parallels between different eras and who understand the relevance of History to the present, allowing them to be active and informed citizens of the future. We teach a thousand years chronologically at Key Stage 3, allowing pupils to build a mental timeline and establishing foundations for more complex future learning.

In **Year 7**, pupils study the Norman Conquest of England and the nature of medieval religion, politics and society. The culmination is a trip to Canterbury and an interdisciplinary local project on medieval pilgrimage, drawing on the History, RS, Geography and English curricula.

**Year 8** pupils study the Tudors and Stuarts in the first half of the year, focusing on the way politics and religion intersected to create dramatic upheavals such as the Reformation and the English Civil War. They then study industrialisation, the British Empire and Slavery, drawing pupils' perspective of British History outward in preparation for studying international History in Year 9.

**Year 9** is international in scope as pupils study World War 1 and its far-reaching consequences in different parts of the world, including Europe, Russia, the Middle East and America. The final topic of the year explores the theme of persecution and the fight for freedoms; it includes the Holocaust, the abolition of slavery and the American Civil Rights movement.

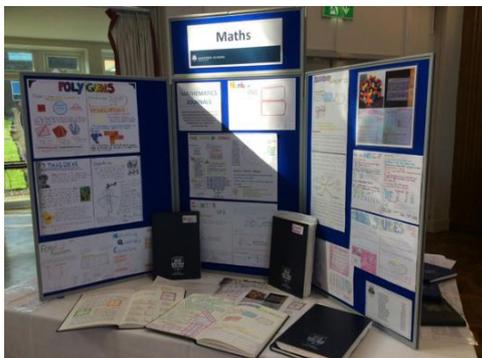
Crucial transferrable skills, such as distillation, evaluation, debate and persuasive writing are continuously applied and strengthened as students discover and engage with the excitement and colour of past events. Assessed work takes the form of essay-writing, exam-style answers, presentations and more creative work which engenders empathy.



**Y7 pupils on the Canterbury Trip**

## Mathematics

Head of Department: Dr Britton, [brittons@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:brittons@ashfordschool.co.uk)



Mathematics makes sense of the world by looking at the patterns around us and the intricate and beautiful ways in which the natural world is constructed and realised. Numeracy is the application of these skills to numbers.

Mathematics contributes to the school curriculum by developing pupils' abilities to calculate; to reason logically, algebraically, and geometrically; to solve problems and to handle data. Mathematics is important for pupils in many other areas of study, particularly Science and Technology. It is also important in everyday living, personal finance, in many forms of employment and in public decision-making. Mathematics presents frequent opportunities for creativity and can stimulate wonder when a problem is solved for the first time, a more elegant solution to a problem is discovered, or when hidden connections suddenly manifest themselves.

Mathematics enables pupils to build a secure framework of logical reasoning, which they can use and apply with confidence in all aspects of their lives. The power of mathematical reasoning lies in its use of precise and concise forms of language, symbolism and representation to reveal and explore general relationships. These mathematical forms are widely used for modelling situations, a trend accelerated by computational technologies. The subject transcends cultural boundaries and its importance is universally recognized. Mathematics helps us to understand and change the world.

### Mathematics at Key Stage Three

At Key Stage 3 the curriculum focuses on the key concepts and processes vital to the understanding of Mathematics; these are the essential skills and processes that students need to learn to make progress. The programme of study for **Year 7** builds on Key Stage 2 to develop mathematical reasoning and competence in solving everyday problems in the following key areas: number, shape, space and measurement, algebra, data handling, thinking skills and logic. A numeracy program is built into the curriculum to ensure key skills are met, whilst students are encouraged to explore cross-curricular applications of mathematics in such diverse areas as computing, art and science. In **Year 8** pupils deepen their understanding of key topics, but also being to develop a more rigorous approach to Mathematics in areas such as proof, graphing and understanding 3D shapes. In **Year 9** pupils are prepared for KS4 by reviewing key topics from Year 7 and Year 8 and then introducing some important new concepts, such as Pythagoras' Theorem, trigonometry, quadratics and simultaneous equations. Opportunities for enrichment include individual and team national challenges, together with a variety of linked co-curricular activities, such as iPad Maths Puzzles and Creative Problem Solving.

## Music

Head of Department: Mrs Simes, [simesl@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:simesl@ashfordschool.co.uk)

“Music doesn't lie. If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen through music...” (Jimi Hendrix)

Music is a powerful tool for learning to understand yourself and others, crossing boundaries, and bringing real and positive change to peoples' lives. In Key Stage 3, we teach a skills-based approach to the three main areas of musical activity: performing, composing and appraising. This allows students to create and describe, in response to a wide palette of styles and traditions: **Folk, Classical, Blues, Rock and Roll, Film and Gaming Music.**

In **Year 7**, students:

- Gain skills in singing, and take part in Carols Services, Christmas Concerts and other performances throughout the year;
- Focus on **acquiring and developing music literacy** as a key to accessing music;
- Begin to develop the use of music-specific language to describe the music they hear both verbally and in written form.

In addition, each pupil has an instrumental lesson with a specialist teacher, trying out strings, guitar, recorder, flute, clarinet or brass instruments in rotation, **OR** developing their ensemble skills with their own instrument. Students borrow an instrument from our extensive collection; practice time at home forms a large part of their homework requirement.

Continuing on from Year 7, **Year 8** students:

- Gain greater confidence with **keyboard skills** and gain further experience of ensemble work and improvisation, especially in Blues style; and
- Gain skills in Garageband, developing composition skills in the Music Technology Suite.

In **Year 9** students look to **acquiring the skills needed for GCSE Music** and beyond, especially in **ensemble and group work, appraisal and writing**, and **extended composition in units of work** looking at film music and gaming. A deeper familiarity with Garageband is nurtured, and students have the opportunity to experiment with Sibelius if they wish.

**The social role of music for dance** is considered, including several styles and cultures.

**Independent thinking and Creativity** are fostered.

Ongoing assessment takes place across the key stage through regular performances. Literacy is supported through class discussion, writing, and appraisal.

## Physics

Head of Department: Ms Martin, [martini@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:martini@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Our Physics course prepares students for the study of real world phenomena ranging from the nanoworld of the microcosmos to the planets, solar systems and galaxies that occupy our universe. Physical concepts are introduced in a logical and engaging order which allows students to build on their knowledge as it develops, and empowers them to ask and answer ever more involved questions.

For young minds, seeing is believing and at every opportunity the chance to carry out experiments, obtain data and analyse results is used to reinforce ideas and dispel misconceptions. Most lessons will therefore include opportunities for students to develop their practical skills and confidence when using a wide range of specialist equipment. Physics is taught by experienced subject specialists in all years who offer support and extension activities outside of the classroom as well as in it.

In **Year 7** the key topics studied are energy, light and sound. In **Year 8** students learn about space, electricity and magnetism. **Year 9** students will be taught about forces and motion, before starting the GCSE Physics course in October- the GCSE topics studied are energy, energy resources and electricity.

We assess regularly, using exam style tests at the end of each topic to allow the students to fine tune their revision skills and exam technique, while allowing us to track progress and feed back on how to improve. We also assess informally through homework, student presentations, contributions in class, group work and quizzes. Our goal is for students to leave KS3 inspired by the world around them, with a thirst for knowledge and the curiosity to question how it all works, so they are fully equipped to tackle Physics at GCSE to the best of their ability.

## Religious Studies

Head of Department: Mr Charman, [charman1@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:charman1@ashfordschool.co.uk)

The aim of the department is to deepen the knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews, recognising their local, national and global context, whilst introducing the students to philosophy and ethics. Lessons build on prior learning so that students appreciate religions and worldviews in systematic ways. Philosophical, ethical and religious topics are studied to enable students to formulate their own worldview. Being able to appraise the beliefs and practices they study with increasing discernment, based on analysis, interpretation and evaluation, developing their capacity to articulate well-reasoned positions is crucial throughout the three years.

From their very first lesson, **Year 7** students are required to think for themselves. They start by examining some key Abrahamic figures, with the focus on Christian and Muslim accounts, while considering religious and scientific responses. Students learn about key religious traditions, with a focus on Islam in the Summer term.

In **Year 8**, moral dilemmas are explored, including whether war is ever just, or whether the death penalty should be allowed. Introducing the students to ethics, and the importance that it has in society, puts them in good stead further up the school. This questioning approach continues as students study Buddhism and how these teachings can be applied in everyday life. Students finish Year 8 as detectives, building their own case on who they think is responsible for the death of Jesus.

In **Year 9**, students start with an in-depth study of philosophy of religion and examine the core arguments for God's existence and the challenges from atheism, in addition to the responses. The formation of a student's worldview when presented with philosophy is a core component of the unit. The course finished learning about key thinkers and ideas, such as Descartes, Logic and Feminist ethics. Assessment varies in scope, with essay writing a key skill developed with their other Humanities subjects.



## Spanish

Head of Subject: Mrs Calver, [calverc@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:calverc@ashfordschool.co.uk)

**“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”**

**– Nelson Mandela**

**“Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom” – Roger Bacon, English philosopher**

The aim of the KS3 curriculum is to enable students to understand and communicate in Spanish at a basic level, and to instil and nurture a love of Spanish language and culture.

In **Year 7** students are introduced to Spanish greetings, talking about family members, pets, school, physical description, stationery, food, describing where they live and what they like doing in their free time. They learn how to conjugate the full paradigm of the present tense (regular, stem-changing and common irregular verbs), the immediate future tense, and how to express opinions. They also learn about adjectival agreement and possessive adjectives.

In **Year 8** pupils revisit the present and immediate future tenses, and are introduced to reflexive verbs, the conditional and the preterite tenses. They learn how to describe friends, clothes, mealtimes, places in town and holidays. They learn to use first two, then three tenses together, and to justify their opinions.

**Year 9** lays the groundwork for future study of the subject, consolidating the present, immediate future and preterite tenses, and introducing translation and the basic GCSE topics, in readiness for KS4. These include family and friends, technology, free time activities, customs and festivals, home and local area, travel and tourism and social and global issues.

In KS3, pupils are assessed in the four linguistic skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – in a variety of ways. For example, through end of unit tests, targeted questioning, verbal contributions in class, class and homework, and weekly vocabulary tests.

## Sport

Head of Faculty: Mr Buck, [buckm@ashfordschool.co.uk](mailto:buckm@ashfordschool.co.uk)

Physical Education and Games at Ashford School develops pupils' competence and confidence to take part in a range of physical activities that become a central part of their lives, both in and out of school.

### Year 7 and Year 8

- Physical Education - students have two PE lessons every week and the focus of these is to improve health and fitness. Activities include: swimming, fencing, health related fitness, badminton, gymnastics, basketball, tennis, athletics, dance, lifesaving, synchronised swimming, table tennis etc. Through these activities pupils develop a wide range of skills and the ability to use tactics, strategies and compositional ideas to perform successfully.
- Games - students have a hour 45 min games lessons every Wednesday and Friday. Games sessions will focus around core team sports of Hockey, Netball and Cricket for the girls and Rugby, Hockey and Cricket for the boys. These lessons include the whole year group and are set according to ability in that term's sport

### Year 9

- Physical Education - Year 9 have one PE lesson every week. When they are performing, they think about what they are doing, analyse the situation and make decisions. They also reflect on their own and others' performances and find ways to improve them.
- Students continue to have a 1 hour 45 min games lesson every Tuesday. This focuses on the main team sport for that term.

Through the high-quality PE and Games curriculum on offer we inspire all pupils to succeed and excel in competitive sport and other physically demanding activities.

## **Academic services**

### **Learning Enhancement**

The Learning Enhancement Department is led by Mr John Keeley and has two Learning Support Specialist and four Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).

We work closely with subject teachers to support specific areas pupils are struggling with, and in-class personalised help is offered by LSAs across all teaching faculties.

Some pupils are taught 1:1 or in small groups within the department. At Key Stage 3, support in these lessons is based on underlying skills, Mathematics and Literacy, whilst at GCSE the focus is on exam-based skills supporting exam technique, revision strategies and organisation. Other support offered includes social skills, self-help and emotional regulation, which takes place in close collaboration with the school wellbeing and pastoral teams. These targeted, bespoke, individually planned lessons incur an extra charge.

All pupils who receive learning support have a pupil passport, produced in collaboration with parents and the student. This is shared with teaching staff and includes strategies to support their learning.

### **Extension Materials**

Additional learning resources are made available in subject Teams areas. Pupils are encouraged to access these resources if they wish to complete further tasks or wider reading.

### **Somerville Library**

To support our Learning Habits and to encourage independent learning, library book displays and reading lists both reinforce and extend the academic content taught across faculties. The online catalogue is regularly updated and pupils are able to access over 2000 eBooks. The collection also includes audiobooks. Library help is on offer to all year groups when sourcing texts to support homework, project work or research tasks.

Year 7 students attend library induction sessions in September of each academic year. Our librarians also invite both day pupils and boarders to take part in reading initiatives to celebrate World Book Day and National Poetry Day, or to meet visiting authors when they speak at the School.

The Ashford School Reading Challenge is run jointly by librarians and the English Department from September to June. This initiative encourages students to curl up with a good book and discover new literary genres. The Reading Challenge book lists are updated on an annual basis and additional titles can be ordered on request by pupils. If pupils are unsure about what to read, librarians are happy to advise students about authors, novels and genres.

### **Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)**

This whole school reading initiative takes place on scheduled Fridays during afternoon registration. At this time all pupils across the School read silently and for pleasure. Silent reading also takes place in some scheduled KS3 English lessons.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL) Support**

The EAL Department is led by Miss Joana Dores and a team of specialist teachers. Lessons covering EAL are suitable for KS3 international students who need to improve their English language skills, but who may take part in the mainstream English lessons with the rest of their year group.

Support is given on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. All International students are assessed on arrival by EAL staff in order to determine the level of support each pupil requires.