



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

16+ PROSPECTUS
2021



A BRIEF HISTORY

Westminster is a long-established school on an ancient site. Its origins can be traced back to 1179, when the Benedictine monks of Westminster Abbey were asked by Pope

Alexander III to provide a small charity school. The School's continuous existence is certain from the early 14th century. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540, Henry VIII personally ensured the School's survival by statute and Elizabeth I confirmed royal patronage in 1560.

Head Master's welcome	3
A Westminster education	4
Our unique location	5
Boarding and day	6
Our co-educational community	7
A day at Westminster	8
A place of wellbeing	10
Academic life	11
The Sixth Form curriculum	12
Before you decide	13
Beyond the subject choices	16
The broader curriculum	18
Adventures and Expeditions	19
Music	20
The Art School	21
Drama	22
Sport for life – and to win	23
Westminster and the community	24
After Westminster	25
The admissions procedure	26
Scholarships and Bursaries	28
Frequently asked questions	29
Information for overseas candidates	30
Choosing your Sixth Form subjects	31

Course information section	
Art	34
Art History	35
Classics: Latin and Ancient Greek	36
Economics	37
English Literature	38
Geography	39
History	40
Mathematics	41
Modern Languages and Linguistics	42
French	43
Chinese	44
German	45
Russian	46
Spanish	47
Music	48
Philosophy and Theology	49
Sciences	50
Biology	51
Chemistry	52
Physics	53
Electronics AS Level	54
Drama and Theatre Studies	55

How to find your way around	56
Timeline	58

Welcome

Dear parents and pupils,

I hope that you will find this 16+ Prospectus informative and that you will go ahead with an application to Westminster School.



The co-educational Sixth Form at Westminster offers an exciting, stimulating and challenging environment for learning. The School is one of the foremost centres of academic excellence in the country – a reputation due not only to its pupils' unrivalled examination results and admission to the top universities worldwide but, even more importantly, because of their enjoyment of academic enquiry, debate and search for explanation well beyond the published syllabus.

In addition, pupils enhance both their intellectual and social development by taking full advantage of the many opportunities that are offered in sport, music, drama, debating, community service and other forms of civic engagement. All of this and more you will read about in the following pages.

Historically Westminster is a boarding school and approximately one quarter of Sixth Form pupils, are boarders. Some boarders come from far away but most are Londoners who prefer to avoid the daily grind of commuting. For day pupils also, Westminster is very different from a conventional school. Many remain long after the teaching day has finished, perhaps to work in the library, or for extra sport, to rehearse for a play or concert, or to attend a lecture.

In recent years, we have opened a House for girl boarders and day boys, and an indoor sports centre adjacent to the School's playing fields at Vincent Square. Both have significantly enhanced

the facilities for pupils joining us in the Sixth Form. In September 2017, girls were elected as Queen's Scholars for the first time, and a new floor and observatory have recently opened in our refurbished Science building, which also houses the Computer Science Department.

Westminster pupils follow syllabi in A Levels and the Cambridge Pre-University (Pre-U) examinations, depending on the subjects studied. Using both these qualifications allows scope for the choice and specialisation, on which Westminster pupils thrive. Pupils here study four subjects that provide both breadth and depth throughout the two years of the Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13), while the principle of choice fits well with Westminster's academic tradition of drawing out and nurturing individual talents and interests.

We find that the sheer intellectual enjoyment that this individual approach brings ensures that pupils go on to win places at excellent universities. Those academic departments, as you will read in this brochure, that follow the Pre-U specifications do so because they are more stimulating than the equivalent A-level syllabi and, therefore, allow Westminster pupils to realise their potential more effectively. That potential is demonstrated in their examination results, as elsewhere: in 2019

Westminster pupils achieved more than 50% of their A-level and Pre-U grades at A* or D1/D2. Westminster is the only school to have achieved this feat every year since the A* was introduced.

Once you have read this brochure and explored the website, westminster.org.uk, it is always best to have a glimpse at first hand of what lies ahead, so I strongly encourage you to come to one of our Open Days before the formal process of interviews and tests gets under way. I shall look forward to meeting you, showing you the School and introducing you to the Heads of the academic departments, who will answer any questions you might have.

I know that the application procedure for a change of school can sometimes seem a stressful experience for pupils (and, often, their parents), but I hope that, in applying for Westminster, excitement will outweigh anxiety. In giving and gaining as much information as possible at this stage, I am sure that the choices eventually made will be the right ones. One thing I can say is that new pupils who join us in the Sixth Form settle in very quickly and happily and make a great success of their time here.

One final thought. In our most recent inspection (2016) the Inspectors said this: *"The School's liberal ethos, tirelessly promoted by senior leaders to the pupils' benefit, truly engenders a pupil body liberated from dogma, prejudice or unthinking conformity, as the School's aims envisage."*

This makes us distinctive. If this strikes a chord with you then we are the right school to be applying to. Good luck with the process.

Patrick Derham – Head Master

A Westminster education

Central to Westminster's ethos is the rapport between teachers and their pupils.

This inspires passion for the subject, encourages confidence in learning, conveys knowledge and develops skills of rational, independent thought. Our pupils' academic success comes from their enjoyment of intellectual enquiry, debate and search for explanation, reaching well beyond published syllabi. They delight in a huge range of opportunities to develop initiatives and to discuss their ideas. We are a happy, busy and purposeful community.

The broader ethos of the School resides in the enduring values reflected in the 1560 Charter of Westminster's Elizabethan foundation, where it is stated that: *'the youth which is growing to manhood, as tender shoots in the wood of our state, shall be liberally instructed in good books to the greater honour of the state.'*

While academic and cultural attainments are highly prized, the School is fully committed to nurture each pupil's spiritual, moral, emotional and physical wellbeing. We seek to develop individual talent wherever it lies – and to prepare young people for fulfilled private and public lives.

A 'halfway-house' between school and university

The Westminster Sixth Form is often regarded as a 'halfway-house' between school and university. As such, it aims to provide a safe, stable and enriching community, in which pupils are encouraged to learn about the world around them in order to engage actively with it and lead a fulfilling life beyond Westminster. With an enviable programme of outside speakers and an ever-increasing range of academic, artistic, sporting and cultural expeditions, Westminster's global dimension provides pupils with every opportunity to develop their cultural capital and understanding. Alongside this, the School coordinates a popular and thriving civic engagement programme, which encourages Sixth Form pupils to engage with the local community in a meaningful way, thus developing social understanding and responsibility.

"Pupils express delight in how the School has encouraged them to explore beyond the boundaries of what they might have thought they could do."

ISI Report November 2016



Our unique location

When other schools moved to the suburbs in the late 19th century, Westminster School remained on its original site at the very heart of London.

Some of our buildings date back to the 11th century and, while the community comprises pupils and teachers of many different faiths, we retain close links with Westminster Abbey: the Dean of Westminster is the Chairman of the Governing Body and the Abbey is the School's chapel.

Westminster School now extends beyond Dean's Yard and into the surrounding quiet streets, having, in recent years, expanded to include:

- the Weston Building for the Humanities;
- state-of-the-art laboratories and an observatory in the newly refurbished Robert Hooke Science Centre;
- the Sports Centre near Vincent Square;
- the Manoukian Music Centre;
- an inspiring new location for Purcell's boarding house
- the Millicent Fawcett Hall Theatre;
- the recently opened Sir Adrian Boult Building, a new events space.

Situated between Parliament, The Supreme Court and Westminster Abbey, the School's inspirational location has always been of significant influence. Politics and the law are abiding interests among the pupil body and the importance of spiritual and moral reflection is also deeply embedded. Minutes away is the best of everything metropolitan: museums, galleries, concert halls, theatres and the energy of a great city – all of which enrich our curricular and co-curricular programmes.

There are approximately 760 pupils at Westminster School – 120 are admitted each year at 13+ (Year 9) and 85 at 16+ (Year 12).



“I love the sense of having an extended family, with whom you share a huge number of experiences.”

Boarding and day

Boarding has been central to life at Westminster since the School was founded.

The Westminster Sixth Form is unique in London as the only co-educational Sixth Form with day and boarding pupils. While academic and cultural attainments are highly prized, Westminster is fully committed to the nurture of each pupil's personal development. The boarding school ethos and structure have been central to the fulfilment of a Westminster education since the School's foundation. The School is run along boarding lines and based around a House system, where the House becomes a 'home away from home' for day and boarding pupils alike. The extended day and week enable the provision of the overall curriculum and in particular ensure depth of pastoral care and breadth of opportunity.

There are five mixed boarding houses with girls-only floors and one girls' boarding house with day boys. One boarding house is boarders-only, and all Houses have pupils from every

year group. For those who board, Westminster allows for a regular home life with the large majority returning home on Saturday afternoons.

Co-operation accompanies competition at Westminster and the School shows that high-achieving individuals working together in a climate of mutual respect create something much greater than the sum of their individual achievements. In addition to teachers, Housemasters and Personal Tutors play an important role in the rich, relational experience that Westminster offers.

Day pupils are encouraged to participate in the opportunities provided by the boarding life of the School. They can join boarders for breakfast and supper, and many choose to remain at School in the evenings too, to rehearse or to attend the evening programme of activities. The Library remains open until 9.00pm.



Our co-educational community

The co-educational environment creates an intellectually and culturally stimulating Sixth Form experience at Westminster.



Westminster has enjoyed a co-educational Sixth Form for the last 40 years. Some 70-80 girls join the Sixth Form each year, about a third living in as boarders.

All pupils belong to a House. This provides them with a supportive and stable community for the duration of their time at Westminster and allows them to get to know pupils of different ages, genders and backgrounds.

Before they even arrive at Westminster, all the new pupils joining the Sixth Form enjoy a comprehensive induction programme coordinated by the Head of Upper School, and become part of the diverse social fabric that makes the School such an exciting place to live and learn. Representing one third of the Sixth Form, girls enjoy the academic challenge and debate in the classroom, an extraordinary breadth of co-curricular activities and a large number of voluntary and leadership opportunities within the School and wider community.

Further information and advice may be obtained from the Head of Upper School, Miss Clare Leech, at: clare.leech@westminster.org.uk.

“I feel like girls have a strong voice at Westminster; the School is a very inclusive and welcoming environment. And I think the boys really like having girls around, especially the younger ones – it's like having a whole lot of big sisters!”



A day at Westminster

The Westminster Day offers so much more than lessons from 9 to 5. The following timetable outlines the range of activities a pupil could enjoy on an average day.

*“I never stop...
I just love everything!”*

Morning



7.50am

Breakfast is served in the medieval College Hall. Day boys and girls start to arrive from all over London.

8.40am

All pupils register in Houses.

Lessons continue on Saturday mornings and on Saturday afternoons, pupils can enjoy a full range of sporting fixtures. There are often musical and theatrical rehearsals at weekends, as the dates of concerts and plays approach. Pupils who are not involved in these activities go home at 1.00pm on Saturdays.



9.00am

On Mondays and Fridays there is a short service in Westminster Abbey, the address often given by an eminent visiting speaker. On Wednesdays, there is a short assembly called 'Latin Prayers'. Lessons begin at 9.25am.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, lessons begin at 9.00am.

Lunchtime



12.40pm

Lunch on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

From 1.10pm, pupils can enjoy a wide range of talks from pupil-led societies. Societies include African Caribbean, English, Environmental, Feminist, History, Huxley, Model United Nations, Politics and many more. Pupils can also take part in other co-curricular activities such as drama and music rehearsals, art club or learning an additional language.

On Mondays, all pupils meet with their Tutors at 1.50pm until 2.10pm.

1.00pm

Lunch on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Lunch is followed by afternoon sports (Station).

On Saturdays, pupils who are not involved in sports fixtures or weekend rehearsals go home after morning lessons.

Afternoon



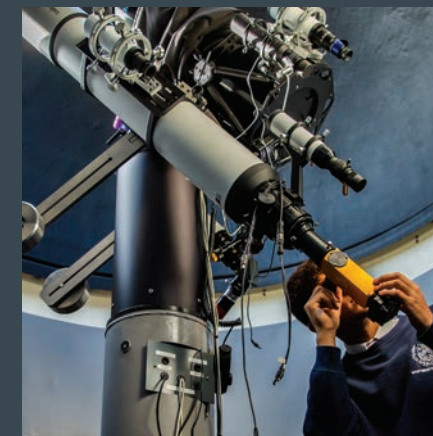
1.30pm

Tuesdays and Thursdays, pupils enjoy an extensive range of sports in the afternoon, including: football, cricket, rowing (Water), netball, hockey, tennis, climbing, judo, DanceFit, Gym Fitness, cycling, basketball, yoga, athletics and hula-hooping.

We play matches against a full range of other schools on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons.

2.00pm

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (2.10pm on Mondays): lessons begin, ending at 4.10pm (4.25pm on Mondays).



4.00pm

Tea on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

4.10pm

Tea on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

4.30pm

Every Fifth Form (Year 9) and Lower Shell (Year 10) pupil participates in at least two Lower School Activities each week. Options include: Animation, Astronomy, Bookbinding, Carpentry, Debating, Drama, Duke of Edinburgh, Fencing, Fives, Football Training, Model Building and Robotics.

Evening



5.45pm

Lower School Supper.

6.00pm

Upper School Supper.

6.30pm

Supervised trips to London events begin.

7.15pm

Boarders do their prep (homework) in their studies or in the Library. Day pupils are also welcome to study in the Library.

9.00pm

Prep time ends. Pupils use the next hour to socialise, to play pool, chess or table tennis in their Houses, or to play football in Yard. Some enjoy the programme of activities available in the Sports Centre, some prefer to continue studying.

10.00pm

Bed times vary according to Year groups.

“It’s not about having someone to look after you; it’s about having people to look out for you, and there’s a world of difference.”



A place of wellbeing

We are fully committed to the happiness, welfare and wellbeing of our pupils.

We want our pupils to flourish, to develop resilience, confidence in themselves, and sensitivity to others. We aim to do all we can to set them up for meaningful, happy and satisfying lives, at School and beyond.

The well-established community of Houses enables a strong, well-integrated system of pastoral care, which ensures that the needs of each individual pupil are addressed, and that all pupils – whatever their age, background or gender – enjoy their time at School. When issues occur, they are communicated swiftly to the Housemaster, who talks with the pupil’s parents, teachers and Personal Tutor to devise the best way forward.

Boarding houses have a dedicated Matron and all pupils have access to our state-of-the-art Health Centre, run by an experienced Nursing Sister and visited regularly by the school GP. We have the full-time support of a School Counsellor and pupils can also talk through particular problems with experienced Independent Listeners. The Chaplain and the Heads of Year also play an important role in ensuring the welfare of the community. Senior pupils from each House are trained as Peer Supporters to provide additional support and advice.

The Head of Wellbeing and their team deliver a relevant and engaging programme within the curriculum, addressing the experiences and challenges of teenage life. We promote discussion, learning and reflection, to guide pupils and to help them make constructive choices in their lives.



Academic life

Westminster provides an exceptionally strong and highly successful academic environment, which enables pupils to fulfil their intellectual ambitions and to develop life-long skills of sophisticated, independent thought.

Westminster pupils are encouraged to love academic life, to think for themselves, to question and to argue things out. Departments develop their own curricula, which go well beyond exam specifications and stretch and challenge our pupils.

Teachers at Westminster are inspiring. They demonstrate outstanding individual scholarship and a contagious enthusiasm for their subject. We are at the forefront of developments in teaching and learning, and, as a leading

academic institution, we participate regularly in important educational research studies. Westminster teachers are best qualified, therefore, to guide and support pupils with a variety of learning styles and needs.

The love of learning and confidence to develop independent thought flourishes in pupil-led societies and initiatives. Every week, pupils give talks, which are well-attended by their peers, on a wealth of subjects, and they group together to succeed in an impressive range of

national and international competitions. As such, the community provides an exceptional learning environment, both within the classroom and without, so that Westminster pupils emerge well-informed, articulate and confident to meet the challenges ahead of them.

After Westminster, the vast majority of our pupils take up places at leading international universities, such as: Amsterdam, Cambridge, Harvard, Hong Kong, Imperial, Oxford, Sciences Po, Stanford, UCL and Yale.



The Sixth Form curriculum

Sixth Form admission to Westminster is by competitive examination and interview in November the year before entry. Candidates select the four subjects, in which they are to be examined, based on their likely choice of courses for study.

There is a great deal of flexibility in the way in which pupils may approach their choice of courses at Sixth Form level, and that may make the choice quite a difficult one for many. It is for this reason that the choice we are asking you to make now is a provisional one. Pupils will be allowed to change their choices and some even make modifications to

their choice up until Exeat in the Play Term of Year 12. However, further assessment in the new subject intended for study may be required before permission is given to change. You will understand, however, that the School does need to plan ahead and that getting an idea of provisional numbers for each subject is important.

At Westminster, most pupils study four subjects for both years and end up with four full A Levels, or a combination of four A Levels and Pre-Us, although some pupils each year do give up one subject at the end of Year 12. For the moment, we need to know the four subjects that pupils think they wish to study in the Sixth Form.

Departments choose the qualification which they feel provides the best educational experience and potential outcomes for our pupils and as such pupils may study towards an A level, International A level or Pre-U qualification in their subject.

In addition to their specialist courses, pupils follow the Cultural Perspectives and Options courses. Only Electronics offers an AS Level at the end of Year 12, a course offered in the Options programme, and pupils do not necessarily continue to A Level in Year 13. More details of the non-examined courses can be found in *Beyond the subject choices* and these choices can be made on arrival at Westminster.

The Sixth Form subjects are arranged in four blocks, one subject to be chosen from each block. Some subjects appear in more than one block to give a wider choice of subject combinations. The provisional blocking for September 2020 is shown here.

Block 1 Art History English History Mathematics Mathematics with Further Mathematics Philosophy and Theology	Block 2 Art Biology Chemistry Economics English French Geography History Latin Philosophy and Theology Physics	Block 3 Art Art History Biology Economics English French Geography History Mathematics with Further Mathematics Philosophy and Theology	Block 4 Chemistry Chinese [‡] Economics English Geography German Greek History Physics Philosophy and Theology Russian Spanish	AS Subjects (taken in Options lessons) Electronics
Theatre Studies[†] Music				

[†] Theatre Studies will be taught in blocks to be decided once subject choices have been made.
[‡] The Chinese course is not suitable for native/fluent speakers; please do not enter this subject if you are in this category as your entry paper will be discounted. For more information please contact admissions.



Before you decide

Please read the notes below carefully as they describe in detail what you will need to consider when choosing your Sixth Form subjects.

- 1 At this stage, we are asking pupils to choose their four entrance examination subjects; one subject must be chosen from each Block.
- 2 The subjects in each of Blocks 1 to 4 offer two-year courses leading to full A Level or Pre-U.
- 3 Mathematics with Further Mathematics leads to two A Levels and uses the time allocation of Blocks 1 and 3; it, therefore, counts as two choices but only one entrance examination. Those studying this subject must take two additional specialist examination subjects.
- 4 There is no formal entrance examination for Art. Candidates portfolios are assessed on the day of the entrance exams. Those selecting Music or Art must sit the exams in the UK.
- 5 Some pupils may wish to study Electronics. However, no decision needs to be made until a candidate has been offered a place.
- 6 Whilst we will do our utmost to accommodate any combination of subjects, no particular combination can be guaranteed other than those listed in the blocking system on page 12.

It is important that the choice of subjects be related as far as possible to university and career plans. Advice on choosing subjects can be found on page 31; there is additional advice on thinking ahead to university and on subject courses later in this booklet.

Further information or advice about the curriculum may be obtained from Mr Peter Sharp, Deputy Head (Academic), at: peter.sharp@westminster.org.uk.



*“The teachers here
are always trying to
work out how to bring
out the best in you.”*

Beyond the subject choices —within the timetable

We aim to ensure that pupils find the Sixth Form at Westminster an exciting but also challenging place. For this reason, the School offers a wide variety of co-curricular courses and activities, which form an integral part of every pupil's programme in the Sixth Form.

In Year 12, a great range of non-examined courses is on offer in the four weekly lessons of the 'Options Block', alongside some examined courses, including additional languages and Electronics.

Most Sixth Formers pursue a wide range of Options that do not lead to formal qualifications, but it is hoped that the interest evoked in each will add greatly to a pupil's own intellectual and personal development, and open up new and exciting possibilities for further study, research or discovery.

In three 'rounds' of eight weeks prior to the summer examination season, most pupils select three courses in each round, from a long list of choices, under two distinct headings: Cultural Perspectives and General Options.

Cultural Perspectives

These courses are designed to expand cultural and critical awareness within a greater global perspective, chipping away at the comfortable sense of 'self-evidence' that can make us assume that our own way of doing things or viewing the world is the only way, and that today's society is the norm of human experience – somehow unquestioningly right and natural.

The aim is to broaden horizons in place and time, asking fundamental questions about why some behaviours or attitudes have shifted from unacceptable to normal or vice versa, how nations and communities develop and express their sense of identity, and how we ourselves can make connections with apparently alien societies.

The range of courses on offer reflects the wide-ranging and varied interests of the teaching staff. Recent examples include: The Psychology of Fundamentalism; A History of the Imagination; The Constitutional Future of the United Kingdom; Psychogeography; Facing East, A View from the West; Deep Time; Medical Ethics and Changing Attitudes; Russians in Exile; and The Economics of Nationhood. One of the great attractions of the courses is the chance they offer to range far beyond conventional examined subjects. Prizes are awarded each year for essays produced as a reflection upon the experience.

General Options

The choice of General Options is similarly wide-ranging, and includes courses which are:

- (i) directly related to university study or applications (Anthropology, Psychology, Linguistics, the Thinking Skills course);
- (ii) supplementing or extending existing examined subjects (Conservation Science, Greek Tragedy, the Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Irish Literature);
- (iii) of a more general academic or cultural interest for non-specialists (Western Philosophy, Art History);
- (iv) more practical, including Volunteering in the Community, or which teach and develop particular skills, including British Sign Language, the Art of Illumination, Bookbinding, Computer Programming, Knitting and Film and Video Production.

Study Skills

Effective study skills are essential for all successful learners. In addition to the guidance provided by subject teachers, the Study Skills department is available to support pupils, who might benefit from some specialist input. The School should be informed of any particular needs, including details of exam concessions and copies of relevant diagnostic reports where appropriate. It should be noted that exam concessions previously agreed will not automatically transfer; regulations state that a new application must be made post-GCSE. For more details, see 'Westminster School's Protocol for Exam Concessions', available within the online registration.

Careers

Careers advice is available to all members of the Sixth Form from the Higher Education and Careers Department. A range of careers evenings and workshops is held throughout the year, which all Sixth Formers are invited to attend, as well as Futures Day in the Election Term of Year 12, where pupils are exposed to a variety of different careers and pathways. The Head of Careers, Mr Simon Wurr, is available to advise on work experience and careers: simon.wurr@westminster.org.uk.



The broader curriculum

In addition to their timetabled subjects, there are many opportunities for pupils of all years to extend and enrich their academic life.

Further languages can be studied outside the timetable. Boys in the Fifth Form and Lower Shell can take introductory courses in new subjects, for example: Psychology, Art History or Film Making, as one of their Lower School Activities. In the Upper School, all pupils enjoy a varied, year-long programme of lessons designed to explore different cultural perspectives. In addition, they can take a range of short courses, ranging from Computer Coding to Journalism and Design.

Pupils from all years enjoy the thriving programme of events and talks planned

by pupil-led societies. Departments also have their own programmes of workshops and visiting speakers, and all Sixth Form (Year 12) pupils attend the John Locke Society lectures, which are held regularly, mainly throughout the Play and Lent Terms (winter and spring), where they can learn from individuals at the top of their field. These lectures are also open to Remove (Year 13) pupils. Recent guests have included Damian Barr, Nick Bullock, Sir Nick Clegg, Reverend Richard Coles, Lucy D'Orsi, Fox and Owl Fisher, Professor Anthony Grayling CBE, Dominic Grieve QC, Jan Rostowski, Sir Simon Schama CBE and Terry Waite CBE.

Adventures and Expeditions

Westminster life may be based in London, but it also extends further afield.

Westminster has an extensive Expeditions Programme, offering academic, cultural and leisure trips for pupils of all ages. Linguists are well catered for by visits or exchanges to Spain, Germany, Russia, France and China. Recently, Art Historians have been to Florence, Paris and Venice, Historians to Aachen and Berlin, Geographers to South Wales and Iceland and Artists to New York. On the sporting front, skiers have been to the French Alps, the Canadian Rockies and Vermont, and rock-climbers to Spain and Portugal.



"The trips I've been on have taught me so many new things and have actually changed the way I think when I'm back in the classroom."

Music

Music is central to the cultural life of Westminster School.

Music has always been a very important part of life at Westminster. Several world-famous musicians have been educated at the School, including Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir George Benjamin, Ian Bostridge CBE and The Right Honourable The Lord Lloyd Webber, as well as the pop stars Mika, Dido and Grace Chatto from 'Clean Bandit'.

A large number of Sixth Form pupils involve themselves in the four choirs and huge range of instrumental ensembles on offer at the School. Choirs and organists sing and play in services in Westminster Abbey twice a week and give various concerts throughout the year. The Choir of Westminster School records with the international record label, Signum. Its most recent album was recording of the week on Classic FM's Drive and was included in the BBC Music Magazine top ten Christmas playlist. Pupils regularly gain choral

and organ scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge. The long list of instrumental ensembles includes the Symphony Orchestra, which performs annually at both St John's Smith Square and London's Barbican. The standard of chamber music is exceptional and the School's ensembles regularly achieve recognition at competitions such as the Pro Corda National Chamber Music Festival.

We have had an exceptional number of pupils playing in the National Youth Orchestra, as many as six at any one time. Accomplished musicians have opportunities to conduct orchestras and to play concerti; while those developing their technique benefit from masterclasses, workshops and talks with leading professional musicians.

Every year, Westminster produces a musical, a highlight for pupils of all ages. Recent productions have included

Little Shop of Horrors, My Fair Lady, Oklahoma and Cabaret. The School's Chamber Choir leads our services in Westminster Abbey, and this is also where we hold our candle-lit Christmas Carol Service – a very special occasion for the whole school community.

Our choirs and orchestras take turns to go on an annual summer music tour in the form of both destinations abroad such as Venice, Prague, Berlin and Salzburg, and UK cathedral residencies to cities such as Ely, Bury St Edmunds, Lichfield and Ripon.

Up to four 16+ Music Scholarships are awarded each year. Additionally, biennially, one 16+ pupil is awarded the Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. Further details can be found on page 28.



The Art School

In the Art Department the emphasis is on drawing and painting, including life drawing.

Westminster's Art School is situated on Great College Street, behind Dean's Yard. There are numerous architecturally-diverse spaces that enhance creativity, spaces where ambition can be limitless.

Specialist equipment, including a printmaking studio, a dedicated IT suite, film-making facilities and a well-stocked library are set alongside many additional facilities such as the large darkroom with equipment for black-and-white processing and printing.

The traditions abound: drawing, painting and sculpting are forever present. The world-class galleries in central London, for study and inspiration, are right on our doorstep.

The Art School is available to all pupils and often remains open late into the evening to support extended work. There is a vibrant programme of visiting artists. Pupils' artwork is showcased in the Department Gallery and studios and each year a major Summer Show is hosted to celebrate the achievements of pupils.

"I thrive because there are no creative boundaries. The School actively encourages artistic innovation."

Drama

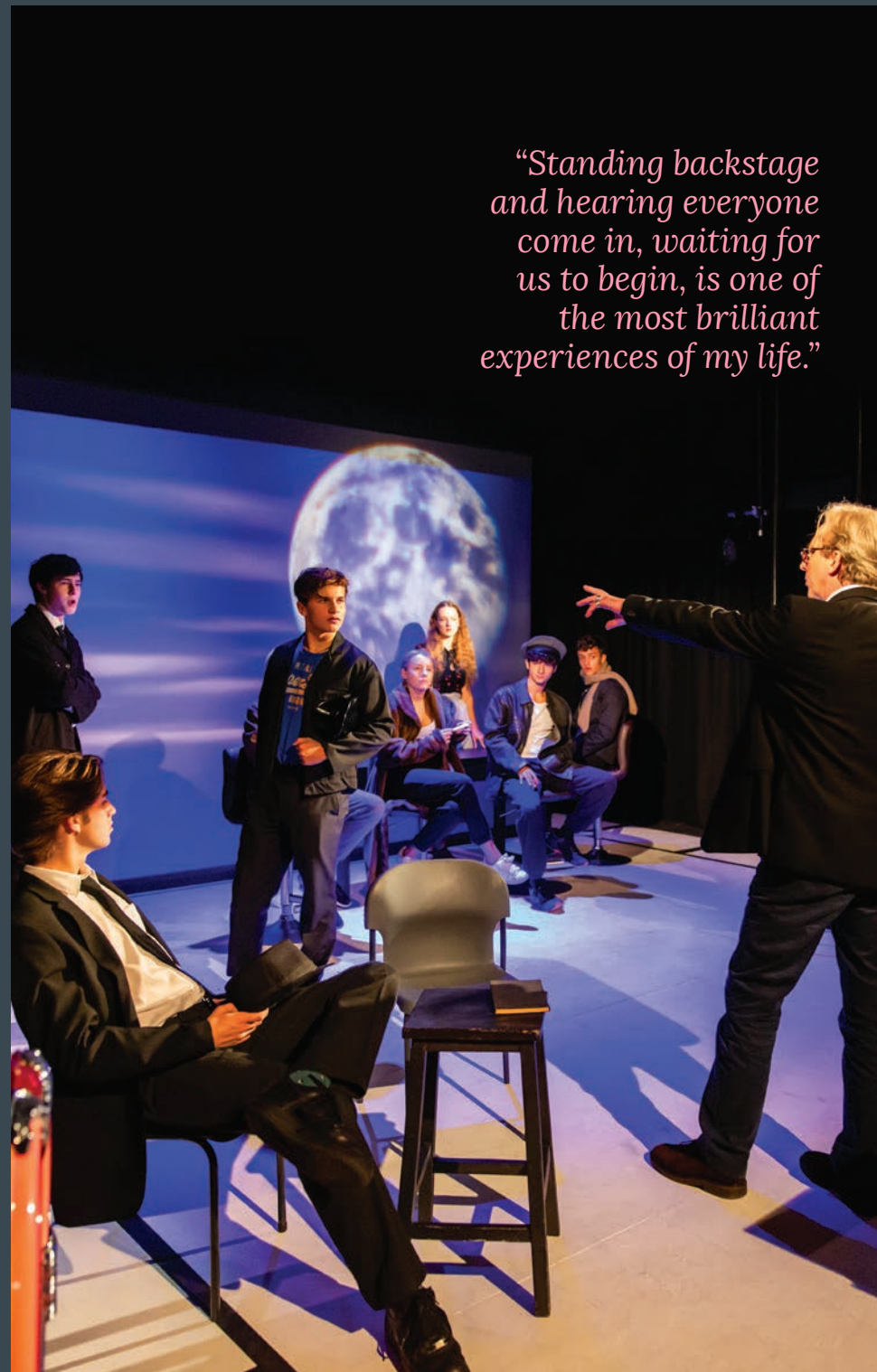
Drama flourishes at Westminster.

Most pupils will take part in shows during their time at the School – on stage, backstage or perhaps both – and some go on to pursue successful careers in the performing arts, making a name for themselves in television, theatre and film.

Regular productions of musicals and large-scale classical plays involve pupils from the whole school community. Another highlight of the theatrical calendar is a festival produced and performed by Sixth Form pupils, this year showcasing scenes from iconic movies. In addition, we produce original translations, plays in foreign languages and a lively programme of House Drama. Pupils are encouraged to write, direct and design their own productions.

The School's drama facilities are superb: state-of-the-art theatre and studio spaces at the purpose-built Millicent Fawcett Hall; the School Hall, a traditional proscenium arch with fly tower; and Ashburnham Garden, where we often put on summer productions against the unique backdrop of the ancient Abbey Walls. Visiting companies regularly come to Westminster to perform and give workshops.

Our theatrical alumni include Helena Bonham Carter, Imogen Stubbs, Peter Brook, Peter Ustinov and John Gielgud.



“Standing backstage and hearing everyone come in, waiting for us to begin, is one of the most brilliant experiences of my life.”



Sport for life — and to win

All pupils at Westminster participate in a wide variety of sporting activities (known as Station) on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Station takes place on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, as well as Saturdays for fixtures and competitions. We offer some 25 different sports in our Station programme, providing pupils with a wide choice. In addition, there is a Civic Engagement option. No particular sport is compulsory in any given term, although once choices have been made in the first term, those involved in major competitive sports such as Water (Rowing), football, Fives or netball will participate in these on both afternoons. Others might choose one sport on Tuesday and a different one on Thursday.

“We push each other to be the best we can be, not just because the team wants to win, but because we want everyone to enjoy and get the most out of what we’re doing together.”

Historically, the principal sports at Westminster are cricket, football and Water. All three have a long tradition at Westminster and we can rightfully claim a place in their annals. The first known cricket match between public schools was Westminster v. Harrow in 1796; the Westminster colours were chosen supposedly after rowing against Eton in 1837, and we competed against Charterhouse in the first ever inter-school football matches in 1863.

Our Facilities

Westminster's Pavilion, playing fields and Sports Centre are at Vincent Square, a ten-minute walk from Dean's Yard. Football, netball, cricket, tennis, basketball, hula-hooping and rounders are played on Vincent Square. Officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 2014, the Sports Centre offers over 6,000m² of space for a broad range of athletic pursuits and includes changing facilities and a cafeteria. It houses a state-of-the-art Fitness Suite, a multi-use Movement Studio, a Rowing Training Suite, fencing pistes, six cricket nets, two climbing walls, four table tennis tables, five badminton courts, a weights room, a dojo, and courts for basketball, netball, indoor football, hockey, handball and volleyball.

On the main school site there are facilities for Fives and shooting, whilst the School's Boathouse, which was completely rebuilt in 1996, is situated on the Tideway at Putney.

Westminster and the community

Westminster School is outward-looking.

Our pupils heed the call to be politically, socially and ethically engaged. We enjoy a unique educational partnership with the Harris Westminster Sixth Form. In addition, Sixth Form pupils enjoy mentoring at the Westminster Summer School – a week of activities for pupils in the maintained sector with high academic potential, in collaboration with Imperial College, King's College London and McKinsey and Company. We also host the Linacre Summer School.

Many pupils work with local primary school children: mentoring, reading

one-to-one, teaching English as an additional language, at breakfast or after school clubs, and coordinating their own Science, Music and Sports clubs at local schools. All Upper Shell boys work together after their GCSEs to host a day of workshops – from dissection to dance – for primary school children.

Sixth Formers enjoy further volunteering opportunities: working at local hospitals, academic mentoring, visiting older people and supporting the homeless. The annual Westminster Phab is a popular and, for some, a life-changing

experience, where 30 Sixth Form pupils become the sole carers of people with physical and mental disabilities for a week of the summer holiday.

Our outreach programme allows Westminster pupils see beyond the immediate priorities of their academic, co-curricular and social lives. It encourages them to acknowledge their position in a wider society and to take responsibility for others. For many, it is the start of life-long civic engagement.



“Pupils engage in service outside the School with great enthusiasm and great integrity.”

ISI Report November 2016



“It’s a great environment to be in; the School encourages all sorts of broadening of intellectual and social horizons – but also they don’t mind if you just want to have a bit of fun.”

After Westminster

Pupils continue their studies at leading universities after Westminster – more than half at Oxford, Cambridge and Ivy League universities; almost all on top courses.

Our experienced team of Higher Education advisers guides and supports Sixth Formers through the exciting process of making decisions about the future and completing applications. University preparation classes are held at lunchtime and after School to help pupils develop skills for assessment tests and interviews. Each pupil also benefits from tutorials with a personal subject mentor specialising in the subject for which he or she wishes to apply.

Popular careers panel events are held throughout the year, at which experts from different fields – Medicine, Law, Journalism, Engineering, Investment, Digital Media and Marketing – share their

experiences and give advice. This is in addition to the superb programme of visiting speakers each week. Boys in the Upper Shell also enjoy a Futures Day where they are given practical advice, in workshops that introduce them to the world of employment and encourage them to think purposefully about the choices ahead. All pupils are encouraged to take appropriate work experience, and assistance is provided where possible.

Our aim is that Westminster pupils should continue to live highly successful and fulfilling lives, in a full range of professional, creative, political and entrepreneurial fields.

The admissions procedure

There is a huge amount of information in this brochure and you might decide not to read everything. It is, however, very important to read this section carefully and also the two sections that follow – *Guide to applying* and *Frequently asked questions*.

If, having read these sections, you have any further queries about the admissions procedure, please telephone our Admissions Office on **020 7963 1003** or email sixthformadmissions@westminster.org.uk. If you are applying from overseas, it is essential that you read the section entitled Information for overseas candidates.



Open Days

The best way to learn about entry to Westminster School at 16+ is to join us for an Open Day. In 2020, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, our June Open Day (Saturday 20 June) will be virtual. A second, on-site Open Day is planned for Monday 7 September.

Open day timetables

Saturday 20 June 2020

The Open Day will take the form of a webinar, beginning at 11.00am. Details of the precise schedule will be published nearer the time, but the event will include introductory talks from the Head Master and senior members of staff, a virtual tour of the School and opportunity to submit questions to subject specialists, the Head Master and other senior members of staff.

To sign up for this event, please visit our website, www.westminster.org.uk, and follow the links for Open Days.

Monday 7 September 2020

4.00pm – Arrival and registration.

5.00pm – Introductory talks from the Head Master and senior members of staff.

5.40pm – Tours of the School led by current pupils and the opportunity to talk with subject specialists, the Head Master and senior members of staff.

When you arrive, please make your way to Church House. The entrance is on the north side of Dean's Yard. The entrance to Dean's Yard is next to the main entrance to Westminster Abbey.

The closest Underground stations are St James's Park and Westminster. There are parking restrictions until 6.30pm and the Congestion Charge operates until 6.00pm Monday to Friday. There is no Congestion Charge at weekends and parking restrictions may vary.

There is an underground car park in Abingdon Street opposite the House of Lords open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you are planning to attend the September Open Day, it is essential to book online. To request a ticket please visit our website, www.westminster.org.uk, and follow the links for Open Days. Once we have received and processed your booking, we will email your ticket to you. You will need to bring this with you to the Open Day.

Registration

Registration opens on Monday 1 June 2020. Candidates and their parents register online. Please go to the Admissions page at www.westminster.org.uk and follow the link labelled *Apply for admission at 16+*.

Follow the instructions step by step, but before you go online to register please read the section *Guide to applying* (page 27).

If you experience a problem, please email sixthformadmissions@westminster.org.uk or telephone 020 7963 1003.

The closing date for registration is Wednesday 30 September 2020.

Candidate age

Westminster is a school for pupils under the age of 19. The date of birth of a candidate applying for admission in 2021 must be between 1 September 2004 and 31 August 2005.

Guide to applying

Before you go online to register, please read the following information:

- Decide whether you are applying for a day or a boarding place.
- For boarders who will not be able to return home over half-term holidays and 'Exeat Weekends', or when unwell, we require the name and address of the UK guardian, with whom he or she will stay. If we are not satisfied with the arrangements for a guardian, we will not accept the application.
- Parents will be asked to pay the registration fee of £200 using a credit or debit card.
- We ask to see each candidate's most recent school report, from the last 12 months, so please have this ready to upload.
- Candidates will be asked to choose the four subjects that they are thinking of taking for A Level / Pre-U and in which they will be examined on 7 November 2020.
- Those wishing to be examined in Mathematics with Further Mathematics must select it in Block 1 and Block 3. There is only one entrance examination for both.
- Candidates choosing Mathematics with Further Mathematics should not choose Art as an entrance examination subject.
- Candidates from overseas should read carefully the section of this brochure entitled *Information for overseas candidates* (page 30).
- We also ask candidates to complete a personal statement exam paper on the day.

Entrance examination

The examinations will be held on Saturday 7 November 2020 for all candidates. They will take place between 9.00am and 3.30pm in Westminster. All candidates will be required to bring their valid Child Oyster Card or Passport (hardcopy) as photo ID; images on their 'phone will not be accepted.

Candidates sit examinations in each of the four subjects selected – each lasting an hour. There is information about the examination requirements for each subject in the *Course information section* (page 34).

We also ask candidates to write a personal statement paper on the day. We will provide questions and headings to help candidates with this.

Interviews

Those candidates, who have performed most strongly in the examinations, will be invited to come to Westminster for interviews. Candidates not being invited for interviews will be notified in writing, via email, at the same time.

The interview day will be Saturday 28 November 2020 and all candidates who have been invited, including those from overseas, must attend interview on that day. Candidates will have interviews in each of their four examination subjects and they will also have a general interview.

School references

Should a candidate be invited to interview, following the entrance examinations, we will write to the Head Teacher of their current school for a reference. No exceptions will be allowed.

Offers

Offers of places will be sent out on Wednesday 9 December and the deadline for acceptance will be Wednesday 16 December 2020. Some candidates will be placed on a waiting list – these candidates will be contacted if they are going to be offered a place.

Entrance fee

Parents accepting the offer of a place must pay the non-refundable Entrance Fee of £1,500. Please note that this fee is not offset against the final term's fees.

Acceptance deposits

Parents accepting the offer of a place must also pay an Acceptance Deposit of £3,000 (£5,000 for international boarders). Acceptance deposits will be refunded, upon request, at the start of the academic year after the pupil has left Westminster.

GCSE / IGCSE requirement

The offer of a place is conditional on a candidate achieving a minimum of eight GCSE / IGCSE passes at A/7 grade, of which at least four are at A*/8, preferably in the subjects to be studied at A Level / Pre-U. Overseas candidates and those requiring a visa to study in the UK should refer to the section entitled: *Information for overseas candidates* (page 30).

Tier 4 visa sponsorship

£1,000 will be charged for those requesting Tier 4 visa sponsorship.

What happens after accepting a place

In March 2021, successful candidates will be invited to spend a day at the School. By this time, they will have been allocated to Houses, so this will be an opportunity to get to know the other pupils going into the same House and also to meet existing pupils. Candidates will also meet their Housemasters for the first time. There will be another opportunity to meet with Housemasters after GCSE / IGCSE examinations and before the summer holidays.

Fees

Fees are subject to annual review at the end of the academic year. The fees for the academic year 2019 / 20 were set at £13,869 per term for Sixth Form boarding entry and £10,497 per term for Sixth Form day pupil entry.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Queen's Scholarships

The Queen's Scholars are part of Queen Elizabeth I's Royal Foundation of the College of St Peter, which encompasses both Westminster School and Westminster Abbey. They have the privilege of attending certain Abbey services and have a variety of ceremonial duties to perform in connection with the Abbey and the Crown.

Four Queen's Scholarships per year are awarded to girls entering the Sixth Form at 16+, based on the overall performance in the subject exam papers and interviews.

The total number of Queen's Scholars is 48 and all of them board in College, with the girls accommodated in their own separate area. The girls are known as Queen's Scholars just as the boys are and will have the post-nominal 'QS'.

What is College like?

College is a relaxed and friendly boarding house and the Queen's Scholars mix with other pupils, just like everyone else. The present building dates back to the early 18th century and is in Yard, at the very heart of the School.

The Housemaster is Mr Gareth Mann, also known as Master of the Queen's Scholars. There will be an opportunity on the day of interviews for pupils to see the House and meet Mr Mann.

The monetary value of the new 16+ Queen's Scholarship for girls is set at halfway between 50% of the boarding fee and the full day fee. Based on the current year's fees that would be £7,800 per term. The Governing Body reviews the fees in June and will publish the fees for 2020/21 in early July 2020.

16+ Music Scholarships

Up to four 16+ music scholarships worth 10% of the day fee, and free tuition on up to two instruments, are awarded each year. Additionally, biennially, one 16+ pupil is awarded the Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. Applications are part of the online registration. Auditions will be held in November for those candidates, who are invited to interview. A good Grade 8 standard on the candidate's first instrument is usually expected. The Director of Music is very happy to discuss the process with prospective candidates. For further information, please contact the Music Administrator on 020 7963 1017 or email music.office@westminster.org.uk.

A number of means-tested bursaries (up to 100% of the day fees) are available at 16+ entry each year. We aim to act as sensitively as possible and very few members of staff and no other pupils will be aware that a pupil is receiving financial assistance. When a full bursary is awarded, it covers the cost of uniform, equipment and compulsory school expeditions. Please note that bursaries are available for day pupils who live in London only and who meet the eligibility criteria.

Candidates who wish to apply for a bursary should ask their parents to complete the Bursary Part A (Initial Assessment) Form, which is available as part of the online registration process. For assistance, please contact the Bursary on 020 7963 1028 or email sixthformadmissions@westminster.org.uk. If a candidate who is applying for a bursary is called back for interview, his or her parents will be invited to meet the Bursar on the interview day – 28 November 2020.

Bursaries are available where the parents and children fall into one of the following categories:

- British citizens in possession of a British passport (The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- Citizens of the EEA or Switzerland, as defined by the UKVI, in possession of an EEA or Swiss passport or ID, who live in London. See website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration;
- Has indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

Parents should consult the UKVI website for a detailed explanation of the criteria established by the United Kingdom. These criteria are used by the School.

Parents who qualify under the above criteria must also live inside the M25 London orbital. The expectation is that their child will commute from home to School each day.

For more information about eligibility for bursaries, please refer to the website: www.westminster.org.uk/admissions/bursaries.



Frequently asked questions

Q. If I can't make an Open Day, how else can I visit the School?

A. Please email the Admissions Department – registrar@westminster.org.uk – to arrange to join one of the regular tours of the School. You should be aware, however, that the other families on the tour will probably be interested in 13+ entry and you will not have the opportunity to speak to subject teachers. These tours also get booked up weeks in advance so do come to an Open Day if you can!

Q. How do you set exam papers when only one year of the GCSE / IGCSE syllabus has been covered?

A. Be assured that we do take this into account when we set the papers. For information about specific examinations, please refer to the *Course information* section (page 34).

Q. I haven't studied the subject before, how will I cope with the exam?

A. The exams in Art History and Economics are based on the assumption that candidates will not have studied these subjects before. They are not offered at GCSE / IGCSE level at Westminster, so all Westminster pupils moving up from Year 11 will be starting from scratch. There is also a Russian examination for those who have never studied the language.

Q. Why am I sitting only one exam for Mathematics?

A. If you have chosen Mathematics with Further Mathematics in Blocks 1 and 3 you will only have one Mathematics entrance examination, although Mathematics with Further Mathematics count as two A Levels.

Q. Are past papers available?

A. No, but look carefully at the information about the examinations by referring to the *Course information* section (page 34).

Q. What if the A Levels / Pre-Us I want to take don't fit into your four teaching blocks?

A. Read the notes on the *Sixth Form curriculum* (page 12). If your question is not answered there please email the Deputy Head (Academic): peter.sharp@westminster.org.uk.

The subjects appear as they do in the blocks because these are the subject combinations that suit most Westminster pupils, and which allow most Westminster pupils to go to their first-choice universities to read the subjects, in which they are most interested.

Q. What happens if I change my mind after selecting the A Levels / Pre-Us I want to study?

A. We expect pupils to study their entrance examination subjects when they arrive at Westminster. Pupils who wish to make changes to their choices should discuss this with the Deputy Head (Academic), who will probably require them to sit an examination in the relevant subject(s).

Q. How many applications are made and places are offered?

A. We usually have about 550 applicants. We interview approximately 160 candidates and we offer between 75 and 85 places, with a waiting list.

Q. How many girls apply compared with boys?

A. The great majority of candidates are girls but we have a significant number of boy applicants. Applications from girls and boys are treated in exactly the same way.

Q. Is it easier to gain entry by selecting one or the other: boarder or day?

A. No. Selection is based upon academic criteria.

Q. Can I study more than four A Levels / Pre-Us?

A. In general the answer is no, but there are a few exceptions. For more information, please refer to *Before you decide* (page 13). Studying for more than four A Levels does not give pupils any advantage in university applications and may result in lower grades across the board.

Information for overseas candidates

All candidates whose parents do not live in the UK should read this section carefully before proceeding with an application.

Candidate age

The date of birth of candidates applying for admission in 2021 must be between 1 September 2004 and 31 August 2005. The School reserves the right to demand proof of a candidate's date of birth.

English language

Candidates are expected to demonstrate fluency in both written and spoken English. Lessons at Westminster move at a fast pace and a pupil who does not speak good English will not cope. Candidates are not allowed the use of dictionaries during the entrance examinations.

GCSE / IGCSE qualification

There is no GCSE / IGCSE requirement for overseas pupils, who attend schools that do not prepare pupils for GCSE / IGCSE examinations.

UKiset

All applicants who have English as their second language are required to provide a UKiset (UK Independent Schools' Entry Test) profile as part of their application. UKiset is an adaptive online test taken in English that has been designed to support admission into the UK independent education system. UKiset tests a child's underlying academic abilities through three principal reasoning areas – Verbal, Non-Verbal and Numerical Ability – together with a piece of creative writing and the English Placement Test. In total, the test takes approximately two and a half hours.

To arrange a test you must first register online at www.ukiset.com. This must be taken before the application closing deadline, Monday 30 September 2020.

After the candidate has taken the test, a report is generated for their parents and a separate, in-depth report is created for us. If you have taken UKiset and wish for your report to be sent to us, please contact the UKiset team at enquiries@ukiset.com.

Entrance examinations

Overseas candidates who cannot sit the entrance examinations at Westminster School are expected to arrange invigilation at their local British Council. Parents are responsible for making the necessary arrangements and for payment of any costs incurred. Westminster School must be satisfied in advance with the security of the supervision arrangements. The examinations must be taken on the designated Examination Day, which is **7 November 2020**. If this is not possible, permission must be obtained from Westminster School for the examinations to be taken on either 6 or 8 November 2020. The examinations cannot be taken before or after those dates. Candidates offering Music or Art as one of their four subjects must sit their entrance examinations at Westminster School on Saturday 7 November 2020; these cannot be taken overseas. Any cost incurred in the sending out and return of the examination papers must be borne by the candidate. Wherever possible the preference of Westminster School is for examination papers to be sent out by electronic mail to a secure address. Completed examination scripts should be scanned and mailed electronically, in addition to sending hard copies of the scripts to us by **11 November 2020**.

If a candidate is invited for interview he or she must come to Westminster School on the designated Interview Day, which is **28 November 2020**. No exceptions can be made.

Guardians

All pupils at Westminster School, whose parents live abroad, must have a guardian.

What is the role of the guardian?

- The guardian must take the place of a pupil's parent during term time in a very real sense.
- He or she must be available at all times to discuss with members of staff any problems that may have arisen.
- In the event of illness or suspension from School, the guardian must take the pupil into his or her home.
- Westminster School is closed over half-term holidays and for two 'Exeat Weekends' each term. At these times, a pupil may not stay at school and must go to his or her guardian.

Candidates who are resident overseas must provide the name and address of the proposed guardian and state their relationship to the guardian.

An application will not be accepted if the name and address of a guardian have not been provided or if, in the opinion of Westminster School, guardianship arrangements are unsatisfactory.

Visas

Westminster School is authorised by the Home Office to issue candidates who have been offered places at the School with Certificates of Acceptance to Study (CAS). Please look at the GOV.UK website to find out how you can apply to come to or remain in the UK as a child student under Tier 4 (Child) of the points-based system and other related information: <https://www.gov.uk/child-study-visa>.

Choosing your Sixth Form subjects



It goes without saying, of course, that this is an important decision, and one that deserves careful thought.

Talk to as many people as possible (parents, teachers, friends), but remember that, ultimately, this is up to you, and it is a decision best made according to the reasons you find most compelling. It might be helpful, however, to bear the following in mind:

- First and foremost, choose a subject that you find stimulating, and try to avoid the 'means-to-an-end' mentality; if the means are not attractive then there is a large chance that the end will turn out to be less appealing than perhaps it seems at the moment.
- Find out as clearly as possible what the A-level or Pre-U course involves, and make sure you are aware not just of its content, but also the methods, by which you will be working (e.g. number of essays, quantity of coursework, number of practicals, amount of factual learning and so on). Moreover, do not assume that the course will necessarily be similar to GCSE; try to find out exactly what will be involved.
- Although it is true that your Sixth Form subjects should be ones, in which you are aiming for top grades at GCSE, do not choose a subject simply on the basis that you are good at it now; to be in the running for the top grades at A Level or Pre-U you must be willing to work very hard, within and beyond the syllabus, so make sure the subject is one with which you engage.
- Aim for a group of subjects that complement and reinforce each other, but that include sufficient breadth to keep your options open. To this end, it is important to be aware of the requirements that different degree courses may have.

University course requirements

There is a very large and exciting range of courses on offer (many of which go far beyond the subjects offered at school level). This range means that you must not assume that the course requirements are the same across all the universities. Although many universities will only make offers based on three subjects, taking four demonstrates your ability to cope with an intensive workload and as such is viewed favourably by the most competitive universities, for the most competitive courses.

What follows is a very general guide; do not assume that it will apply in every single instance, and if you think you are interested in a particular course at a particular university, the best thing to do is to go directly to their admissions guide to see precisely what they are looking for. In addition, the Westminster Heads of Departments will be able to advise you further and it is always worth emailing them to ask them for an informal meeting to discuss your personal circumstances and suitability to read their subject.

N.B. For some courses the corresponding A Level or Pre-U is not necessarily required; it would, however, be very unusual in most cases not to choose to do the A Level if at this stage you already know it is likely to be the focus of your degree course. Bear in mind, too, that for university admission interviews you will have to convince an academic that you have a genuine interest in their subject.

Architecture
Most leading schools of Architecture require a strong portfolio of drawings (which in practice means that Art in the Sixth Form is necessary). Mathematics A Level and / or Physics can be helpful, too.

Art History
Although Art History A Level is rarely an absolute requirement, candidates who have taken it tend to fare much better in their university application than those who have not.

Classics, Oriental Studies, etc.
For language-based Classics courses, the Pre-U in Latin and / or Greek is usually required, and where not absolutely required will obviously still be a significant advantage. For Oriental, African and Near-Eastern Studies, an unspecified modern or classical language is often required or recommended. Evidence of linguistic ability will, in all cases, be needed.

Economics
Mathematics is categorically not needed to study Economics at A Level, but at university level, it is essential for most courses. Further Mathematics is highly advisable and at some top universities, it is increasingly a requirement.

A-level Economics is described by most top universities as ‘desirable’. It may also be useful for a pupil to take the Thinking Skills Option as a preparation for the Thinking Skills Assessment test (TSA) that is required by Oxford if applying to read Economics and Management and by Cambridge if applying to read Land Economy.

Engineering
Mathematics and Physics are required for all types of Engineering; Further Mathematics is strongly recommended for the top university Engineering courses. Chemistry is required for Chemical Engineering.

English
The Pre-U is required.

Geography
The A Level is almost always required.

History
Usually the Pre-U is required.

Law
There are no A-level requirements, but very high grades are needed because competition tends to be fierce. Pupils tend to offer a broad range of subjects with at least one essay-based subject. The Thinking Skills Option might be a useful preparation for the Law university admissions test (the LNAT).

Mathematics, Computer Science
These courses will require Mathematics A Level and Further Mathematics is effectively essential for courses at competitive universities. For some computing courses, Physics may also be required.

Medicine
Requirements vary between the different medical schools, but A-level Chemistry is required, and usually two of Mathematics, Physics and Biology. Few medical schools admit pupils without Biology. The fourth subject does not have to be a science-based subject.

Modern Languages
For French, German and many Spanish courses, the relevant Pre-U courses will be required. Other Modern Languages can be taken up at university, but most language courses would expect you previously to have studied at least one, and preferably two languages.

Music
Requirements differ between Music courses at universities and at Music colleges. The Head of Academic Music can advise.

Philosophy, Politics and Economics
A number of leading universities now offer PPE courses, including the LSE, Durham, York, UCL, Oxford and Warwick. Most universities impose no specific requirements but state that a background in Mathematics is advantageous, if not essential. Economics itself is also useful but there is no specified subject combination. Selectors do, however, like to see that applicants possess both analytical and writing abilities.

Other Humanities subjects
Biology, Economics, Geography and History are useful for Social and Human Sciences courses, as well as for Archaeology and Anthropology. Philosophy, Theology and related subjects often have no specific requirements, although the Philosophy and Theology course is a good introduction to the central concerns of both. Prospective Philosophy candidates might also benefit from Mathematics. History is a good basis for all single and joint honours Politics courses.

Psychology
At least one Mathematics / Science subject is desirable for applications to Psychology courses. We recommend pupils include Biology and Mathematics in their combination.

Science
University Physics requires Mathematics A Level as well as Physics; Further Mathematics is strongly recommended for the top university Physics courses. Some Chemistry courses require Mathematics or Physics A Level, as well as Chemistry. Biology courses tend to require at least two Mathematics / Science A Levels: Biology A Level is essential and Chemistry A Level is highly desirable.

Fine Art at university / Art and Design schools / Drama
The Head of Art and the Director of Drama can advise.

Applying to American universities
A number of Westminster pupils choose to apply to American universities. The application process for US Colleges is very different from UCAS and requires considerable forethought. To apply to US Colleges you may be required to sit SAT subject tests in addition to the SAT. It is not necessary to choose your A Levels with an eye to sitting specific SAT tests, but bear in mind that the subject choice is limited and if you are not studying a given subject at A Level and you still want to take an SAT test, some extra work will be required.

You can choose to take the ACT with Writing instead of the SAT combination, but you should note that the ACT has an additional Science component. More information on the ACT can found at www.actstudent.org. Information on the SAT and SAT subject tests can be found at www.collegeboard.com. In addition to thinking about A-level choices, it is important to consider co-curricular activities that will help you make a more complete application.

You can seek Higher Education advice from your Housemaster or from Miss Clare Leech, Head of Upper School, who can be contacted at: clare.leech@westminster.org.uk.

Art

Department contact **Mr S J Crow**
Email simon.crow@westminster.org.uk

Art is a popular and successful subject offering a wonderful opportunity for those fascinated by the visual world to expand and develop their work. There is ample scope for highly personal production and written response, with an emphasis on self-motivation. Study of Art to this pre-degree level is a lifestyle choice treated far beyond the confines of any mere examination criteria. The course offers a unique experience in itself by making a rich and imaginative contribution to a pupil's CV. However, Art is an essential choice for those intending to make an application to creative courses at university, including Architecture.

The A-level course contains two units: a portfolio of coursework (including a written investigation) and a concluding practical project/exam. In all cases pupils are required to direct their work in accordance with personal motivations and enthusiasms. The learning will not be dictated. Deadlines are generous and ambitious work is encouraged. An enviable range of techniques and processes is available, and it is possible to offer a bespoke programme for each pupil. The unique environment of the Life Class provides a forum for serious and sophisticated young artists to engage with a long-established discipline. These compulsory sessions underpin our ambitions to make great art.

The Art Department endeavours to undertake ambitious study tours in this country and abroad, including New York. These experiences build on the sense of purpose that flows through the studios and supports the atmosphere, encouraging spontaneous and unselfconscious work. Our fundamental concern is to ensure a base of 'transferable skills'. Imagination, creativity, lateral thinking and expressive activities are all prized assets of the artist.

These skills are developed and encouraged through an intellectually-demanding programme. Art History is cunningly threaded through the course to provide a rich source of reference and creative stimulation. This is complemented by regular critiques and seminars. The culminating 'Summer Show' is a chance to exhibit the best of a pupil's production to a large invited audience.

Our approach is predominantly Fine Art-based, although the skills developed through the course are essential to any artistic discipline including design-based alternatives such as product, automotive and graphic design; photography, filmmaking and animation are enhanced by audacious digital advancements creating exciting opportunities.

Architecture is recognised as the ultimate visual discipline, it represents a superb ambition for a young person, blending the creative, visual, psychological and mathematical. Indeed, Walter Gropius, the founder of the influential German art school the Bauhaus, described it as the most important discipline of all. Many leading architects, including Richard Rogers, consider Art to be the primary subject for potential pupils; a portfolio is required for interview.

Beyond Westminster, artists have a vast number of options. The default application is to an Art Foundation Course, a one-year diagnostic programme designed to assist pupils in deciding to which of the many disciplines they are most suited. Direct entry to a university is possible, provided the pupil is convinced of their chosen speciality.

The number of courses on offer is phenomenal and reflects the growth of an image-conscious world: it is imperative that we have intelligent and talented people leading the way. Jobs in the multi-million-pound industry of Art and Design can offer a fulfilling and rewarding career path.

If pupils are passionate about the visual world, enjoy exploring creative, aesthetic and expressive activities, then they will find that they are utterly fulfilled by the A-level course. However, pupils are advised that a previous study of Art and Design, for example at GCSE level, is essential.

Entrance examination

No formal examination is used, and the procedure is intended to be a genuine opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the best of their abilities. Portfolios including sketchbooks and any other endeavour will be inspected on the day of the entrance examinations. Careful preparation of the work is expected, and good presentation skills will be valued. Organising the work by use of an A1/A2 black portfolio (making occasional use of plastic sleeves for example) is the preferred method for submitting the work. Candidates who are called back to interview will return with the portfolio and discuss their work with the Art Department.

Art History

Department contact **Ms R Goodman**
Email rosa.goodman@westminster.org.uk

Art History is an ambitious and highly exciting subject. We live in an increasingly visual world and global society, and History of Art will equip you with the tools to decipher the meanings of images and find significant links between different cultures and periods of history. The study of History of Art requires pupils to develop analytical skills that can be applied to many walks of life, as well as tools to understand how images and objects shape our social and political identities. If you enjoy looking at works of art in their original settings and in museums and galleries, or if you are curious about the value and status of art in society, you will find this subject stimulating and very rewarding.

Westminster offers an excellent opportunity to study Art History in unique surroundings in the centre of London. The department is located in Sutcliffe's, where classes are intimate (of about ten pupils) and are treated like university seminars and tutorials. Courses are structured around discussions, presentations, note taking, visual images and visits to galleries, museums and buildings. Major collections such as the Tate Galleries, The National Gallery, the V&A, The British Museum, The Wallace Collection, The Royal Academy, The Saatchi Gallery and the Courtauld Institute, help to bring the history of painting, architecture, sculpture, film and installations into the classroom. There are currently two trips on which all pupils are expected to go, one to Florence in the Sixth Form and one to Paris in Year 13, alongside a voluntary trip to Rome or Venice.

Subject combinations

The subject is recommended to those who enjoy History and English but also wish to explore visual culture and language. It is equally enjoyable for Linguists, Classicists and Artists and combines well with most other subjects. Indeed, a typically forensic approach to

observation and research taken by Scientists is of great value in Art History. Anyone wishing to study Architecture, Politics or Philosophy would find it useful and highly informative.

Course specification

At Westminster we take the Edexcel A Level course which spans over 2000 years, specialising in Western works, but also looks at work outside the European tradition. Pupils will sit two final examination papers at the end of two years. Paper 1 includes a visual survey of Western art: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture from the Classical World to the 21st Century, testing visual literacy in an unseen paper. Paper 1 also includes the course's two 'Thematic Topics': *Nature* encompasses man's relationship with his environment, from Landscape to Land Art; *Identity* considers gender, nationality, divinity and ethnicity, with particular focus on Portraiture and Propaganda. The majority of our case studies for Paper 1 are in London. There are two historical topics in Paper 2: 'The Renaissance in Italy', which considers the art and architecture of 15th and 16th-century Rome, Florence and Venice; We also study 'Modernism in Europe 1900 – 1939' looking at the Machine Age and the Art of War, and their effect on the Avant-garde. There is no coursework component for the Art History A Level, but all pupils enter ARTiculation, a national art debate which exercises research and presentation skills. All members of the department are specialists in their teaching area.

Beyond the Sixth Form

Art History is a rigorous academic subject, and a pupil will be expected to develop research and essay skills. It prepares pupils well for further study at university. The subject can be studied alone or in combination with a range of other subjects at most universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

The commercial world of the 21st Century is highly visual. The cultural and creative industries are one of the UK's greatest selling points and fastest growing sectors, worth well over £100 billion per annum, and visual literacy is more valuable than ever. Art History's unique combination of visual sensitivity and intellectual rigour has proved valuable in areas such as journalism, marketing, advertising, publishing, law, and film and television work. More directly related careers include those in lecturing and research, conservation and restoration, museum and gallery administration, commercial galleries and auction houses. It must be remembered, too, that many pupils study the subject at school but go on to further study in a wide range of other subjects (some of which relate to Art History), such as PPE, SPS, Archaeology, Anthropology, or Architecture.

Work experience and outreach programmes are important parts of the department's work and pupils are able to participate in a number of schemes. The department has direct links with Sotheby's, The Courtauld, Christie's, The Art Fund, The Estorick, The National Gallery and other exciting places. The Art History Society invites excellent speakers every term from all walks of art-related life.

Entrance examination

The A-Level course is challenging and worthwhile and, with hard work and a thirst for the subject, excellent grades are obtained. Pupils are not expected to have prior knowledge of the subject for the entrance examination. They will be asked to compare images and write a brief essay either about an exhibition they have seen or a response to a given article. We are looking for clarity of thought, enthusiasm and visual awareness.

Classics: Latin and Ancient Greek

Department contact **Mr A E A Mylne**
Email andy.mylne@westminster.org.uk

Latin and Greek are taught as separate subjects and the courses follow similar structures. For both languages, we follow the OCR A-level course: this is a two-year course with exams in Latin / Greek language and literature at the end of Year 13. There is no coursework element, but essay writing is a significant component of the exam. Studying Latin and / or Greek will help pupils gain a rigorous understanding of the structures of grammar, and the ability to interpret written texts in a sensitive, clear and nuanced way. Latin and Greek are subjects that are often studied together, but it is perfectly possible to take either language on its own.

It is possible for a pupil who is new to the School and who does not have Greek or Latin GCSE to study the subject for A Level. Whether or not it is advisable in a particular case will need to be assessed by the Head of Department. Those pupils who have in recent years followed this course of action have done well.

The A-level syllabus aims to develop linguistic and literary skills. We divide our teaching, therefore, into language and literature lessons. During language lessons, pupils can expect to receive a thorough and rigorous grounding in the grammatical systems of Latin / Greek (and therefore English), and plenty of practice at translating from Latin / Greek into English, and from English into Latin / Greek. The Department prides itself on the high standards set for language learning, and pupils taught here are often judged to be among the very best in the country. In Year 13, we supplement the language classes with an additional weekly language tutorial, to help pupils refine their skills at translating into Latin / Greek.

For literature, we make the most of the flexibility offered by a two-year A-level course. Because there are now no public examinations at the end of Year 12, we are free to set our own syllabus for literature for the majority of Year 12. From the outset, pupils will be expected to build on the literary skills developed at GCSE and to develop their fluency in reading Latin / Greek literature in the original. We choose texts for the Sixth Form that will help to achieve this, and that will also give pupils an understanding of the range of and interplay between different literary genres. Among the texts available to us are some of the finest pieces of Western literature, and our hope is that pupils will be inspired and enriched by the ideas and emotions contained within them. Our driving aim is that we should equip our pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to be engaged, accurate and independent readers of classical literature.

Many of our pupils go on to study Classics at university, and we have had an excellent success record in helping them to gain places at their first-choice university. Classics as a degree is wide-ranging in its content, and often includes the study of literature, history, philosophy, art and architecture, philology and so on. It is extremely well respected in the workplace, and Classics graduates go on to the same range of careers as other humanities graduates (e.g. law, finance, the civil service, NGOs or think-tanks, advertising, media).

Entrance examination

The entrance examination will test a pupil’s ability to translate Latin and Greek and their knowledge and understanding of grammatical forms and rules. We do not expect pupils to have gone beyond the GCSE syllabus, and – if they are still only part of the way through the syllabus, or have been learning Latin or Greek for comparatively little time – there will be the opportunity to declare this, and for answers to be assessed accordingly. There will also be a section that tests their literary skills, through discussion of a piece of literature in English. Those who proceed to the interview stage may be asked some questions about the set-text work that they have done in school. The main part of the interview will, however, be devoted to assessing the general linguistic and literary aptitude of candidates, based on discussion of a short passage of Latin or Greek.

Economics

Department contact **Mrs L J Newton**
Email lisa.newton@westminster.org.uk

Economics offers the chance to produce essays about real-world issues using a combination of written arguments, diagrams and data. Over the last few years, pupils have been immersed in the causes and effects of the global financial crisis, the impact of emerging markets and the dynamics of booms, recessions and recoveries. Going forward, Brexit, the demise of the high street and the impact of AI on growth and jobs will continue to be hot topics. The subject considers key policy debates including the control of inflation; economic growth; inequality; the regulation of big business and environmental economics.

Economics is a constantly changing subject that offers many new perspectives on the modern world. If you have ever wanted to know why we cannot just print money to help poor people, whether pharmaceutical companies should be regulated or not, what the best pricing strategy for the new iPhone is, how the government should best tackle global warming or drugs, then Economics can set you on the road to finding answers.

Economics is a social science – it studies human behaviour whereby we need to decide how to use scarce resources to satisfy unlimited wants. As a social science, it encompasses many different disciplines and combines well with subjects such as History, Geography, Philosophy and Theology, Mathematics and the Sciences. A good social scientist can use economic models to analyse problems, but can also write essays that are cogently expressed and supported by a discerning choice of relevant national

and global examples. In this way, it is both an essay-based subject that allows debate, but also a technical subject. The Eduqas syllabus covers national and global macroeconomics and microeconomics (business economics, financial markets, negative externalities). The whole subject will be examined at the end of Year 13. There is no coursework.

The ability and desire to contribute to discussion and write essays is very important.

Mathematics and Economics

No prior knowledge of Economics is assumed for this course but a top grade in Mathematics GCSE is **highly desirable**. While numerical ability is an advantage, it is **by no means essential** to being a successful pupil in Economics at A Level. However, for those who wish to pursue Economics at University it is essential that pupils have at least A-level mathematics if they later want to read for a single honours degree in Economics. Further Mathematics is strongly recommended for the top university Economics faculties in the UK. It is important to research the course requirements.

Careers

Economics is useful for a very wide range of careers, for example:

- In the City; in investment banking, commercial banking, asset management, trading and financial research.
- In the economic development world, for example, the World Bank.
- Broader careers such as management, advertising, accountancy and law.

Entrance examination

Candidates will be invited to sit a one-hour exam requiring written answers to a variety of questions but none requiring any specific economic knowledge or understanding. Candidates may be invited, for example, to answer questions on a newspaper article, to interpret a graph, do some GCSE-style Mathematics questions, write an essay on a non-economic topic such as ‘Is it justified to insist that people’s faces should be visible in public places?’ or ‘Should an individual be able to sell his or her kidney?’

English Literature

Department contact **Dr T E Durno**
Email **tom.durno@westminster.org.uk**

English at Westminster is an exciting and challenging course at the heart of the humanities. Pupils study a wide variety of texts, ranging from cutting-edge contemporary writing to the medieval foundations of English literature. Literature specialists in the English Department devise courses tailored to imaginative, talented candidates who relish demanding reading, lively debate, and thoughtful creative and critical writing. While literature is always the starting point, lessons frequently lead to work on historical, philosophical, sociological, and political topics. Having worked towards the Pre-U in recent years, the Department will be switching to an A-level syllabus beginning in 2021. The characteristic qualities of Westminster English, which range well beyond any taught syllabus, will remain the same: sensitive reading, critical thinking, and imaginative, articulate expression.

Teaching is in small, lively, seminar-style classes of about 12 pupils, where their opinions and responses are actively sought in discussion. They will have two teachers, offering different areas of specialism and a range of critical approaches. There are about 120 pupils taking English in the Upper School each year, about 60 in each year group. Alongside their study of class texts, pupils are encouraged to develop their personal reading, creative and critical writing through integrated prize essays, writing competitions and journalism. English teachers support the individual study of English pupils with regular one-to-one supervisions.

Pupils choose English alongside a full range of other subjects: many take advantage of the breadth offered by a four-subject combination to take English alongside Mathematics and Sciences. The study of human nature through literature makes English a highly regarded fourth subject for future medics. Around 20 pupils apply successfully to read English at university every year, all to top universities.

Graduates of English from Westminster enjoy successful careers in finance, business and entrepreneurship, as well as the law, advertising, the media and creative industries.

In Year 12, teachers work with the enthusiasms, strengths and needs of the class to develop a rich and stimulating course, providing pupils with a strong foundation in literature and critical analysis. Our aim is to develop critical skills and canonical knowledge which will allow pupils to address any set text intelligently in Year 13. Examples of texts studied in 2019-20 include: Chaucer’s ‘Franklin’s Tale’ and ‘General Prologue’; ‘Gawain and the Greene Knight’; the poetry of John Donne; Shakespeare’s Romance plays and Ben Jonson’s comedies; Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’; Aphra Behn’s ‘The Rover’ and Rochester’s poetry; Alexander Pope’s satires; ‘Wuthering Heights’ and ‘Sons and Lovers’; Absurdist theatre, ‘Goodbye to Berlin’, ‘Beloved’, ‘The Birthday Letters’, and Jez Butterworth’s ‘Jerusalem’; poetry by Elizabeth Bishop, Sarah Howe, Claudia Rankine and Ocean Vuong.

At the end of Year 12, pupils begin their study of set texts for public examinations. Again, class teachers decide on texts that will best suit the strengths and enthusiasms of the group, while developing the literary repertoire of their pupils. At the end of Year 12, coursework study is supported by an academic conference at Westminster designed to develop wider reading, and to underline good study habits and research methods for undergraduate study.

Pupils taking English enjoy a vibrant literary co-curricular life. We have a thriving pupil-led English Society, a Poetry Workshop, a Creative Writing magazine, and a Liberal Arts magazine, ‘Camden’. English pupils also enjoy a rich programme of external speakers including leading academics, key figures from the literary press, writers and

directors; recently: Michael Pennington, Ian Patterson and Joanna Biggs. There are frequent opportunities to make the most of London theatre and literary life.

Eventual qualification

The English Department will be moving from Pre-U to an A-level syllabus in 2021. Westminster English pupils consistently achieve top results. In 2019, we achieved 29% Distinction Level 1, 65% Distinction Levels 1 and 2 and 94% Distinction Levels 1, 2 and 3. (Distinction Levels 1 and 2 are equivalent to the A* at A Level; Distinction Level 3 corresponds to the A Grade.) Universities typically ask for a D2 or D3 grade when they make their offers.

Entrance examination

Pupils wishing to study English at Westminster in the Sixth Form will sit a one-hour entrance paper, in which they will answer one essay question. The question will ask them to respond to a piece of unseen literature. Pupils should not worry about the use of specialised knowledge or terms in answering this question. The aim of the exam is to assess a pupil’s intuition, accuracy and originality, rather than to test what they have learned in their English lessons at their current school. The best preparation for the exam is to read widely and carefully in literature and strive to work as hard as possible in their existing GCSE literary studies.

Geography

Department contact **Ms J J Hughes**
Email **julia.hughes@westminster.org.uk**

The major requirement for any prospective pupil of Geography is an interest in society, the world around us, and the issues at the forefront of political, economic, environmental and social debate. The immediacy and international relevance of the course allows pupils the opportunity to develop ideas and opinions in group discussion and through written analysis.

Course specification

The A Level is a broad course, combining the natural and human worlds, and examining the interaction between the two. There are four papers, all taken at the end of the second year. In papers one and two the answers require responses to stimulus material, allow pupils to demonstrate wider knowledge and explore one theme in detail in a short essay. Papers three and four are both essay-based and allow a deeper exploration of issues, drawing on the synoptic links between different topics. There is no coursework at A Level.

Papers one and two look at the key elements of the physical and human environment, and include core topics on atmosphere and weather, river processes and the lithosphere, as well as population and resources, migration and settlement dynamics.

In papers three and four, there is in-depth treatment of a selected number of themes, taken from both the physical and socio-economic elements of the subject. There is also greater emphasis on the interplay of the natural and human environments and how they shape contemporary issues. These units include themes such as globalisation, trade and the global economy, geopolitics, social justice, tourism, sustainable development, hazard management and desertification.

The John Stace Geography Society is a flourishing pupil-led society, with a remarkable range of outside speakers as well as talks and presentations by senior pupils. This complements the central location of the School, allowing pupils the opportunity to attend lectures and events at the Royal Geographical Society and benefit from a range of close connections that the department has with a variety of business, environmental, geopolitical and civic organisations.

Fieldwork is an integral part of any geographical study and all pupils currently attend a five-day field course in the Gower Peninsula. This offers the chance for first-hand investigation and the opportunity to apply theories and key ideas to a new location. There may also be opportunities to take part in an optional overseas expedition; recent trips have included Morocco and Jordan.

Eventual Qualification

100% of A-level Geography candidates gained an A* in the summer of 2019, with an average of 93% of pupils gaining an A* in the past four years. A number of pupils successfully apply to top universities to study Geography every year and Old Westminsters regularly return to school events to share their passion and further insights in the subject.

Subject combinations

Any of the Sciences, Mathematics, History and Economics offer good academic links as companion subjects to Geography. The combination of humanities and sciences within the field of Geography allows considerable flexibility when making A-level subject choices.

Geography is not a vocational subject, but those who pursue the subject at university develop a range of analytical, numerical and research skills, which make graduates eminently employable.

Geography’s wide-ranging disciplines lend themselves to careers where a logical, methodical approach to problem solving is required. Geography graduates have gone on to work across a wide variety of sectors including finance, international organisations such as the UN, politics, law and the charitable sector.

Entrance examination

The exam lasts one hour and comprises two sections. The first is a data response section with short answers expected. The second section requires candidates to read and interpret material, which could be a graph, diagram, map or image and then write a short essay from a choice of titles on key geographical themes. These titles are designed to allow candidates studying any GCSE specification to attempt an answer. The principal aim of the exam is not to test knowledge, but rather to provide candidates with the opportunity to display their geographical interest and understanding.

History

Department contact **Dr R M Huscroft**
Email richard.huscroft@westminster.org.uk

History A Level is a popular choice at Westminster and can be taken in combination with a very broad range of other subjects, both arts and sciences. For many pupils, it proves an attractive university option. It is studied in stimulating surroundings and the department aims to take full advantage of the unique opportunities afforded by these.

Within the A-level course, a wide range of topics, from medieval to modern, is taught. Pupils do not have a direct choice of topics, but they do have the chance to express a preference for studying particular periods at the start of the Sixth Form, which we do our best (but cannot guarantee) to accommodate. Each pupil will study units on British and European (or American) History with two different teachers; typically, these will cover two distinct chronological periods. At the end of the two-year course, three examined papers are taken. Pupils must also submit a coursework essay of between 3,000 and 4,000 words. For this, pupils will be encouraged to identify their own topic of research from within a taught unit.

London and Westminster provide a particularly stimulating and well-resourced environment for the study of History. Visits to sites, museums, galleries, archives and libraries play an important part at some stages of the course, and some sets have travelled abroad (to Ireland, Paris, Normandy, Aachen, Istanbul, etc.) for background study on their respective periods. The Camden Historical Society invites well-known scholars to its meetings to talk on their areas of special interest.

There is also an active pupil-led History Society, which meets on Monday lunchtimes to hold discussions or hear papers; an Arts magazine, which acts as a forum for pupils to publish their best essay work, or indeed their own papers on topics of individual interest; and a thriving and successful school Debating Society, in which historians normally play a prominent role.

To study History successfully involves considerable amounts of reading and writing. Although fluency and technical skill comes with practice, it is hoped that those who embark upon the course possess sound literary skills and enthusiasm for reading. Those who derive most benefit from History are those who enjoy discussion and debate, both orally and on paper. The study of History at GCSE or IGCSE is not a pre-requisite for A-level study.

History may be combined with any other subject that the timetable allows. Some of our most proficient historians study a predominantly science-based timetable. A foreign language (either modern or ancient) is particularly valuable for an historian wishing to carry the subject to university level. Maths (together with Economics) combines well with History for those looking towards PPE or similar courses at university. History continues to be highly valued by the professional, media, civil service and business worlds, both for its inherent content and for the rigorous intellectual training that it gives.

Entrance examination

The History exam for applicants to the School in the Sixth Form is an hour-long exercise in two parts: a source analysis or comprehension, and a short essay. The aim is to set the source analysis on a period or topic of history that no candidate will have formally studied at school, and to offer general essay questions for which all candidates can use whatever specific knowledge they possess. In preparation, therefore, for both the written paper as well as the interview, candidates should try to ensure that they have, at least, a strong working knowledge of the topics they are studying as part of their current history course (which need not be GCSE/IGCSE) – or, if they are not currently studying the subject in a formal sense, that they are able to communicate their interest and commitment to the past through informed analysis.

Mathematics

Department contact **Miss P Brownlee**
Email polly.brownlee@westminster.org.uk

The best reason for a pupil to take A-level Mathematics is that they will enjoy studying it: that is, that they will find satisfaction in stretching their intellect to understand abstract ideas and tackle taxing problems. Many people, however, opt for the subject because they feel, not always correctly, that they ought to or need to. Pupils will need to take A-level Mathematics if they want to study Mathematics or Computer Science, Physical Sciences, Engineering, Economics, Management or PPE at university; they will find Mathematics A Level helpful while studying Physics A Level, but probably not for any other A Level; they may find Mathematics A Level useful if they are thinking of taking Biology, Psychology, Medicine or Geography at university, but it is not essential; Mathematics A Level can be a good indicator of the ability to cope with the logical aspects of Philosophy at university.

It is often also asserted that it is a good idea for a pupil to take Mathematics A Level, even if the course is unlikely to be interesting or directly useful to them, as a way of signalling numeracy to prospective employers, but this is only true if they are good at Mathematics and will find the A Level relatively straightforward. If they are not strong mathematicians, the A Level can be a real struggle and each year some pupils, including those who have done very well at GCSE, find themselves working very hard and then being disappointed by their results.

Mathematics is a very popular A-level subject at Westminster, studied by about three quarters of the Sixth Form with every possible combination of other subjects. We have eight sets each year studying the single Mathematics A Level: all follow the same course,

studying all three of Pure Mathematics, Mechanics and Statistics, and are taught by two different teachers. Those who are able to are taken beyond the A-level syllabus both by covering extra material and by developing their problem-solving abilities; conversely with those who need it, we would concentrate on obtaining the best possible A-level grade.

There are in addition seven sets studying for two A Levels in Mathematics – Mathematics and Further Mathematics – in which additional topics are covered and the subject is investigated in a more rigorous and sophisticated way. As well as the areas mentioned above, Further Mathematicians study Discrete Mathematics. These sets are taught separately from the single-subject mathematicians and have fourteen periods a week, shared by three teachers. The course also includes our own problem solving and critical thinking strand.

Those who are thinking of reading Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics or Engineering at university ought to take Further Mathematics and it is very strongly recommended for those who wish to take Economics at university. The best reason for taking Further Mathematics, however, is simply that for those who are reasonably good at and get pleasure from Mathematics, the course is more stimulating, more challenging and, therefore, more enjoyable than the single A-level course. All Further Mathematics pupils take part in a variety of National Mathematics competitions, with great success, with many proceeding to the Olympiad rounds; they are prepared for these as a matter of course in their lessons.

At Westminster, many more pupils take Further Mathematics than at most other schools: the majority, in fact, of the better mathematicians in the GCSE year. There is no reason to be concerned that if two of a pupil’s four A Levels are in Mathematics they will lack breadth in their studies: it is clear that universities are still very keen to accept pupils who have shown the high degree of intelligence and determination that a successful performance in Further Mathematics demonstrates.

Entrance examination

The entrance examination in Mathematics will involve only arithmetic, algebra and geometry that pupils of any educational background are likely to have studied by the end of Year 10, but the problems set will not necessarily be routine or familiar: they are designed to test understanding rather than rote learning. There is no separate examination for Further Mathematics candidates.

Modern Languages and Linguistics

Department contact **Dr J C Witney**
Email john.witney@westminster.org.uk

Westminster offers an opportunity to undertake an intellectually satisfying course of study that will add distinction to any personal profile, particularly at a time when there is strong demand from employers for knowledge of foreign languages.

The flexible programme will appeal not only to those who wish to advance beyond GCSE or IGCSE, but also to those who wish to start a language from scratch. We welcome those with a sense of enquiry or those who are simply curious about a language and its culture. It is also an excellent opportunity to develop an understanding of a language that one might wish to study at university. There is a steady stream of Westminsters who go on to read, for example, a Middle Eastern or South East Asian language at top universities, having started the language in the Sixth Form.

The Sixth Form provides an exciting opportunity to develop linguistic skills for beginners and for those who wish to build on their existing knowledge of a language. It is also possible for those pupils who are native speakers or who have a heritage background to perfect their writing skills and cultural knowledge to prepare for public examinations.

FRENCH, CHINESE, GERMAN, RUSSIAN and SPANISH are usually studied by pupils with a GCSE or IGCSE in the relevant language and within the main timetable. It is worth noting that Russian may also be started from scratch in the Sixth Form. Provision may be made for native or near-native speakers of these languages to take a one-year intensive course if there is sufficient demand. Further details of these languages can be found in the pages that follow.

The department is also able to offer teaching in Arabic, Dutch, Japanese, Italian, Modern Greek and Portuguese. Courses are designed for beginners, those with some knowledge of the language, or for advanced learners. Teaching is in small groups, enabling rapid progress to be made, and success may be measured by sitting a public examination. Classes take place in Options lessons or outside the framework of the standard timetable, depending on staff and pupil availability.

Arabic
Beginners follow a course teaching conversational Modern Standard Arabic and learn Arabic script and basic grammar. It is usually possible to provide a second-year class for more advanced learners if there is sufficient demand. There has been an enthusiastic take-up of the language, and the course offers a good grounding for those who wish to apply for the study of Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages at university. Timetabling is by arrangement with the teacher.

Dutch
The department is able to offer an introduction to Dutch or to prepare pupils for public examinations. Timetabling is by arrangement with the teacher.

Italian
A one-year course to GCSE is offered for beginners in the block of Options lessons. This is a popular and highly successful course taught over four lessons per week, and requires a commitment to prepare for the public examination at the end of the year. There is also an opportunity for native speakers to follow an intensive course to Pre-U and timetabling is by arrangement.

Japanese
The course consists of Japanese language and includes a study of various aspects of Japanese society, culture and business. Pupils will focus on reading, speaking and listening skills to gain a very practical introduction to the language. Native speakers of Japanese are also prepared for public examinations, as appropriate. Timetabling is by arrangement with the teacher.

Modern Greek
Individual and small group tuition is offered for those wishing to start the language. More advanced pupils are prepared for public examinations. General conversation practice is also available. Timetabling is by arrangement with the teacher.

Portuguese
The department can usually offer courses at beginners' level as well as preparation for public examinations, depending on demand. Portuguese is gaining in popularity as global attention turns to Brazil's increasing influence and economy. Timetabling is by arrangement with the teacher.

Linguistics
The department offers a general introduction to Linguistics within the Options programme. Linguists seek to understand the common properties of language, the place of language in life and society, and the ways in which language is organised: it is the study of the nature and structure of language. It traditionally encompasses semantics, syntax and phonology. Branches of study also concern philosophy and logic, speech science and technology, computer science and artificial intelligence, and study of the brain and cognition. Interest in this subject is growing steadily, and there is a large entry each year for the UK Linguistics Olympiad (www.uklo.org), for which no formal knowledge of linguistics is required.

French

Department contact **Dr S G Blache**
Email sebastien.blache@westminster.org.uk

French is a popular subject and linguists and scientists alike have enjoyed the opportunities that the course offers. French can be usefully combined with a wide variety of subjects. Studying French beyond IGCSE involves, of course, the consolidation of grammatical knowledge and the enrichment of one's vocabulary, but above all, it is about embracing and reacting to French or francophone culture seen as the living expression of the language. This is made possible through teaching in small groups and using various authentic sources, drawn from websites, blogs, films, newspapers and magazines, short stories, novels, plays and poetry. Furthermore, weekly conversation classes with the assistant help develop fluency and confidence; they naturally complement the syllabus and extend cultural awareness of contemporary societies.

Course specification
The Principal Course at Pre-U is an exciting alternative to the A Level and a very successful way of building up critical faculties, both in English and French. University responses have been extremely positive and experience has shown that the Pre-U Course is a better preparation for Higher Education in developing initiative and independent study. A wide range of contemporary topics is offered and serves as a platform for a vibrant discussion of current affairs.

The course encourages pupils to combine cultural background and experience. It builds upon the knowledge gained at IGCSE and promotes both the quality and accuracy of the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing). We welcome pupils who obtained a very good grade in their French IGCSE; it is absolutely not a requisite to have sat an AS (or equivalent) beforehand.

Cultural topics and literature
One of the key features of the course is the inclusion of cultural topics, which will inform language work and provide essential background knowledge to a French mind-set. They include, for instance, Perspectives on World War II, The Bourgeoisie or Friendship and Fraternity. These, and others, will be explored through film, text and other media. Literary texts are also studied.

Outside the classroom
Work experience: Pupils following the French Pre-U Course are strongly encouraged to spend time working in a francophone environment for the summer holiday prior to Year 13. In the past, many have managed to secure very satisfying placements and have striven to make the most of their experience abroad. They are accordingly encouraged to plan their trip well in advance, and to discuss this with their teacher. This has been a great alternative to language trips and family exchanges as pupils are using the language in an authentic situation. It can also add a note of distinction to one's CV.

The Maurice de Pange Lecture Series is a platform for scholars to come and talk about their area of expertise. On top of enthusing pupils with intellectually-stimulating talks that offer them a flavour of things to come after the Pre-U course, it enables them to confront their ideas with those of specialists and further engage with French culture, history and literature. Recent speakers have included: Dr Joseph Harris OW (Royal Holloway), on 'Racine's Britannicus'; novelist James McManus OW on Baudelaire's "Black Venus", Jeanne Duval; journalist for *Le Point* Marc Roche, on "Brexit"; Prof Julia Water (Reading) on the Francophone Mauritian novel; and curator of the Tate Britain exhibition "The Impressionists in London" Dr Corbeau-Parsons.

The French Society is entirely pupil-led and meets once a term; it is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to showcase their research and share their interests with their peers.

Competitions: In January, Westminster organises an internal debating competition in French and the two best teams in Year 12 qualify for the South of England Competition. Pupils have been extremely successful in the *Joutes Oratoires* and have regularly qualified for (and won) the National Finals at the Institut Français in March. Since 2019, Year 12 pupils have been taking part in the Public Speaking Competition organised in tandem with Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle and Collège Sévigné (Paris).

Beyond the Sixth Form
A very high number of pupils each year take up places at top universities to read French or a combination involving French, whether it is with another Modern Language or with subjects as varied as English, Law, History or Philosophy. In addition to the normal programme in Year 13, special provision is made in the Play (Autumn) Term for those applying to study French at university. It is by no means limited to them and all are more than welcome to attend these twice-weekly extra classes (language and literature) preparing them for the entrance tests and interview.

Entrance examination
The entrance examination lasts one hour and consists of two parts. Part One is a gap-fill and a reading comprehension; Part Two is writing – a 180-word composition in French from a choice of three titles, whose topic areas fall within those defined by the IGCSE boards.

Chinese

Department contact **Ms H Wang**
Email haitong.wang@westminster.org.uk

Chinese has been taught at Westminster for 40 years and is a well-established part of the curriculum. It offers pupils not only a chance to study the most widely-spoken language in the world, but also the oldest established culture and the longest-recorded history. With China now one of the world’s most powerful economies, Mandarin is currently one of the most sought-after languages in business and finance, while universities value the language as an asset that enhances any course of study.

The Mandarin Pre-U course follows on from the GCSE, building up a wider vocabulary, gaining confidence in grammatical structures and learning new characters so that pupils can explore written material such as Chinese novels or newspapers. Watching and discussing Chinese films or current affairs is not only popular with pupils but also allows them to understand more fully the cultural differences and to gain confidence in using the language.

For the past few years Pre-U pupils have taken part in the HSBC National Mandarin speaking competition and, out of hundreds of schools taking part, have always reached the finals. We also have many programmes, talks and events, which give the pupils further opportunity to understand and experience the cultural differences.

To an untrained westerner, Mandarin is frequently viewed as a difficult language to learn since it bears no resemblance to our own and the characters appear complicated and indecipherable, but the Pre-U pupils at Westminster have found the truth to be very different. Over the past few years, the vast majority have passed their Pre-U exams with grade D1, the highest possible grade.

Entrance examination
Those wishing to study Pre-U Mandarin Chinese in the Sixth Form will need to have a sound basic knowledge of the language and will probably have already achieved an 8 or 9 at GCSE level. The entry process consists of a written paper and an oral conversation in Chinese. Both tests will be at a GCSE level and are designed to require a basic understanding of the language.

The Chinese course is not suitable for native/fluently speakers: please do not enter this subject if you are in this category as your entry paper will be discounted. For more information please contact Admissions.

German

Department contact **Mr Oliver Hopwood**
Email oliver.hopwood@westminster.org.uk

German at Westminster has a strong history and well-established ties with schools in Berlin and Munich, where the Puchheim Sixth Form exchange has been running for over 55 years. The Pre-U course aims to prepare pupils for lifelong use of German by fostering exceptional linguistic aptitude in both writing and speech, by encouraging cultural exploration within literature, film, art and music, and by fostering international links across the German-speaking world. German can be studied alongside other Modern Languages, but is also an excellent complement to a broad curriculum of Humanities and Sciences. Universities and employers consistently look favourably upon applicants with high-level language skills, and German’s structure and richness make it highly transferable and extremely useful in an increasingly competitive and international business world. The cultural wealth found in German is also of immense intellectual reward, enabling pupils to appreciate a vast historical, literary and artistic heritage.

Course specification
German Pre-U language lessons build on knowledge of vocabulary and grammar from IGCSE level, using authentic articles, clips and debates to allow pupils to explore a topic, develop their own views, and learn to express them idiomatically in independently-formed German. Time with our native German language assistant helps to consolidate and practise this. We also use films, short stories, music, poetry, and visual arts to enhance and inform all areas of study. The course enables pupils to look at ideas and trends in such a way as to bring the topics alive, and feeds cultural awareness as well as linguistic ability.

The Pre-U dedicates space to studying specific cultural topics through German literature and film. Previous topics have included German Small-Town Life, the Post-War Era, Immigration, and the Berlin Wall. In Year 13, there is in-depth study of a literary work, by such greats of the German literary canon as Goethe, Mann, and Brecht, among others. Half of the oral examination requires pupils to research a cultural area of interest to them and discuss it with the examiner.

Beyond the curriculum
The Pre-U course encourages language acquisition and breadth of understanding beyond the confines of the curriculum; pupils undertake individual reading projects and develop presentation skills guided by their own research. Other literary study might include works by Rilke, Heine, Kaschnitz, Grass, Böll, Schiller, Wolf or Kehlmann – there is a wealth of choice. It is envisaged that the course should also provide a stepping-stone into reading works independently according to their own interests. London’s wealth of cultural resources related to Germany is frequently integrated into the classroom and this year the Sixth Form saw a theatre production of Günter Grass’ ‘Blechtrommel’ and a film screening of ‘Das geteilte Himmel’. There is also usually a trip to the BFI to study the development of German cinema. Towards the end of Year 12, Germanists often stage an abridged version of a German play at School as part of a European Festival of Theatre.

Munich exchange
One of the best ways to absorb the German language and culture is to visit Germany itself. Since 1964, the department has run a highly successful exchange programme with a school in Munich, and it is expected that all pupils participate. The exchange lasts three weeks each way, in February and July,

and provides a highly enjoyably opportunity to discover a new city, visit places in and around Munich that are of cultural, historical or geographical interest, and make new friends. Such sustained immersion in a German-speaking environment has consistently proved to be of immense linguistic and cultural value to our Germanists.

University and beyond
We have an outstanding record of success at Pre-U, with all Westminster candidates achieving a Distinction in 2019, and pupils regularly go on to study German at top universities, often with another modern language, or in combination with History, Economics, Law or Science. Imperial College London is currently offering courses combining Engineering with German with a year abroad in Germany, showing that German can be an excellent complement to a scientific pathway. Alumni have then gone on to successful careers in business, finance, the art world, medicine and a host of other fields. German Pre-U is an outstanding stepping-stone to an international career in business, the law, diplomacy and the art world, as well as the fields of science, technology and engineering.

Entrance examination
Candidates should ideally have an 8 or 9 at IGCSE level in German. The entrance examination consists of two main parts. The first is a translation exercise from English to German, which tests grammar and vocabulary. The second is a written exercise, usually writing a letter in German about oneself, school, family, holidays and/or leisure activities. Oral skills will then be tested at interview. There will be an optional extension on the written paper designed for candidates wishing to demonstrate their analytical skills.

Russian

Department contact **Dr H A Aplin**
Email hugh.aplin@westminster.org.uk

Russian is open not only to those who are already doing the subject, but also to any able and enthusiastic linguists who would like to start it in the Sixth Form. Russian often proves attractive because it is different, yet not alien; those who take it up from scratch are able to join the rest of the Sixth Form group after an introductory course during the first term, and in the past have gone on to success at A Level or Pre-U and to read Russian at university.

The move to advanced Russian from GCSE is a progression from what a pupil already knows rather than a sudden leap into difficulty. The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are all developed further, and we concentrate throughout on studying Russian language and culture, not merely preparing for examinations.

We read as widely as possible in a range of genres: the Russian media are a source of often enormously interesting material; and we try to make the course an introduction to Russian literature, reading fiction, drama and poetry by some of the great Russian writers of the 19th and 20th centuries. The more a pupil reads, both in Russian and translation, the better.

In addition, everyone is encouraged to learn about and appreciate Russian life, culture and history. Outings are arranged to films, exhibitions and the theatre. A visit to Russia during the Easter holidays in Year 12 is valuable and exciting linguistically and culturally: a language course combined with accommodation in a Russian family provides both academic stimulus and an opportunity for closer acquaintance with the Russian way of life.

Russian combines readily in the Sixth Form with other languages, modern and classical, as well as with English, History and other Arts subjects; it has also been studied successfully with Mathematics and Economics, and also with the Sciences.

More than a dozen top British universities offer courses in Russian and are very keen to recruit pupils with a good prior knowledge of the language. We have an excellent record in placing pupils at Oxford colleges in particular. Russian (usually language and literature) can be studied in higher education with another language, on its own, or in a variety of more broadly based combinations such as Russian and English, Russian and History, Russian and Philosophy, Russian Studies, and so on; it can serve as an introduction to the other Slavonic languages, too.

A degree in Russian (as in any other modern language) can lead to a wide range of careers, very often unrelated to Russian. It can also, however, have specific career uses in the professions, the media, commerce, government and international organisations (such as the United Nations). Graduates in Russian have become much sought-after in recent years as many companies begin to exploit the tremendous business potential offered by the new Russia.

Russian has a distinct rarity value, and is bound to be of continuing importance in the world; indeed, the prospects for Russian at the moment seem more open than ever.

Entrance examination

The entrance examination for those with prior knowledge of Russian involves reading comprehension questions, the composition of a GCSE-style letter in Russian, and a question testing literary aptitude. Oral skills will be tested at interview.

Those wishing to start Russian from scratch have to answer questions testing general linguistic aptitude and also literary aptitude – no knowledge of Russian is required at all.

Native and near-native speakers can usually be prepared for public examinations outside the timetable and would, therefore, in most cases actually put themselves at a disadvantage if they selected Russian as one of their four subjects for the entrance examination – if in doubt about this, please enquire.

Spanish

Department contact **Dr S J Berg**
Email sander.berg@westminster.org.uk

Course specification

Pupils will follow the Pre-U Principal Course syllabus. They will be taught by two teachers: one will help them to develop and enhance their language skills, including a thorough foundation in grammar, listening, reading and writing. Especially in Year 13, the material used will be largely authentic and topical (newspaper articles, TV interviews, etc.). The other teacher will introduce them to various aspects of Spanish and Latin American history, literature and cinema. Topics studied in recent years include the Spanish Civil War, justice and injustice in Latin America, films by Almodóvar, poetry by Neruda, novels by García Márquez, a play by Lope de Vega and short stories by Borges (over the two years).

Oral classes

Each pupil will have a dedicated oral class of 20 minutes per week, with one of our two native-speaker language assistants. These take place after School or during the lunch break. In Year 12, the classes are usually in pairs; in Year 13, they are always one-to-one.

Independent study

As well as the language-based classwork, pupils will work through a Spanish grammar textbook on which they will be tested at regular intervals; this will help them to develop essential, independent study skills in preparation for university. In addition, we expect that pupils will want to read as widely as possible around the texts, authors and directors we cover in class in their free time, either in Spanish or in an English translation; their teachers will happily provide suitable recommendations throughout the course. Pupils will be expected to read a Spanish novel (in translation or in the original) every now and again.

Outings

Westminster’s location is clearly an advantage for our pupils and, as such, trips are frequently organised throughout the year to see live performances of plays or screenings of new films, whether studied in class or not. In the last few years, we have been to see a flamenco show, plays by Lorca, films by Almodóvar and more. We also take part in Spanish debating competitions.

Work experience and language courses in Spain

The department actively encourages all Sixth Form Hispanists to spend time in a Spanish-speaking country during the course of their studies at Westminster. A number of pupils have used companies to organise their work placement for them, which can be undertaken either during the Easter holidays or over the summer holidays. Accommodation is usually with families and there is always a wide selection of placements to choose from, depending on individual interests. If pupils prefer to take a language course during one of their holidays, then this can be arranged, too; we have links with language schools in Valladolid, Madrid, Cádiz and Almuñécar.

Cuba trip

In the Easter holidays of Year 12, the department organises a trip to Cuba, which, although not compulsory, is highly recommended. The country is changing all the time and the people are warm and welcoming. Pupils stay in ‘casas particulares’ (bed and breakfast) and have plenty of opportunities to speak to locals about their unique country. The trip takes us to Havana, Viñales and Trinidad, and the programme includes salsa lessons and horseback riding.

Spanish in the Sixth Form and beyond

Spanish with another modern language or with English, History, Economics or Art History is a popular combination at Westminster and this frequently leads to corresponding undergraduate applications in these subjects, but it is by no means the only option on offer. Pupils may wish to combine Spanish with a Science or Mathematics, since a working knowledge of any foreign language, and in particular Spanish, given its global importance, is highly valued by employers in any field of work.

Entrance examination

Candidates wishing to study Spanish in the Sixth Form should, ideally, have achieved 8 or 9 at IGCSE level, to cope effectively with the grammatical content of the course but, clearly, the main qualities required are simply commitment and enthusiasm. The examination paper for new entrants to Westminster is based on GCSE-type material, with which candidates should already be familiar; as such, no specific preparation is required. The test consists of three sections:

Grammar: Sentences to translate from English into Spanish, involving a variety of tenses and basic-level subjunctive and GCSE-level vocabulary. Example sentence: ‘Last year I visited my grandmother who lives in the north’.

Essay: An essay of approximately 250-300 words in Spanish on a topic the candidate should be able to relate to. Pre-learnt and irrelevant material will not be taken into account at the time of marking.

Extension: A commentary in English on a Spanish literary text. Native or near-native speakers of Spanish are strongly encouraged to do this part of the test. Regular candidates can attempt it in the knowledge that what they write will not count against them.

Music

Department contact **Mr M Heighway**
Email **michael.heighway@westminster.org.uk**

Music plays an integral part in life at Westminster, and the A-level course provides a rigorous and stimulating perspective on the excellent and wide-ranging musical activities across the School. Many internationally renowned musicians have been educated at Westminster including Henry Purcell, Adrian Boult, Roger Norrington, Ian Bostridge, George Benjamin, Julian Anderson, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Christian Mason, Mika, Dido and members of the band Clean Bandit.

Academic Music standards are extremely high, and a good proportion of pupils go on to read Music at University or Music College. Lessons take place in The Manoukian Music Centre, an excellent facility opened in 2005, which is fully equipped with rehearsal / performing hall, recording studio, classrooms, practice rooms, rehearsal rooms and instrument storage to the highest standards. The Manoukian Music Centre and the School Hall both house Steinway concert grand pianos and, in addition, there is a Goble harpsichord in the School Chapel. Concerts take place annually at St John's Smith Square, Westminster Abbey and the Barbican.

The A-level Music course comprises three modules: Performance, Composition, and Listening / Analytical Skills (30%, 30% and 40% of the examination structure). Through these activities, pupils develop a more informed appreciation of how and why a very wide variety of music has been written and performed; this, in turn, improves pupils' skills in performing and composing across a range of styles.

Alongside the teaching of the formal examination syllabus, the course includes an introduction to: Baroque Figured Bass, Harmony and Counterpoint, Composition, Aural Skills, Improvisation, Repertoire, Analysis and History, Musicianship Skills and Instrumental Studies. The School's library has a fascinating range of ancient and modern books, DVDs and has subscribed to a range of top online research and listening libraries.

The School's proximity to several of London's leading music venues allows for frequent trips to concerts and operas to hear world-class performers. Participation in the School's orchestras, choirs, chamber music ensembles and jazz bands, if appropriate, is expected. Every year there are masterclasses, workshops, competitions and concerts of pupils' own compositions, often featuring a number of international guest soloists.

Entrance examination
As part of the online registration process, candidates are asked to submit an audio recording of two contrasting pieces of their choice played on their first-study instrument. On the examination day, they are expected to take a written assessment, which tests aural perception, music theory and musical literacy. Successful candidates will be called back for a brief interview and an audition on their first (and, if they choose, second) instrument.

It is desirable to have achieved a distinction or merit at Grade VI-VII (or equivalent standard) on a principal instrument before starting the course in the Sixth Form. Some degree of elementary keyboard proficiency, and at least Grade V Music Theory (or equivalent) are prerequisite, and those taking the course should have taken music at GCSE level (or an equivalent qualification).

Philosophy and Theology

Department contact **Mr S Bailey**
Email **stephen.bailey@westminster.org.uk**

Does God exist? What are the arguments for and against His existence? What is knowledge and how do we acquire it? How should I live? Is there an objective moral truth we should all follow, or do I make my own ethical rules? Do I have free will, and why is there evil in the world? These are the sorts of philosophical and ethical questions examined in this Pre-U subject. It serves as a comprehensive introduction to Western Philosophy.

Lessons are lively and based around in-depth discussion of often-controversial topics. Pupils who take Philosophy and Theology are a diverse group: some take science-based subjects and others prefer more arts-centred courses. The analytical skills developed by Philosophy and Theology pupils often complement a wide array of other disciplines and our pupils go on to study a variety of different courses at university from Medicine to History to Philosophy. The Philosophy and Theology Pre-U is highly regarded by all universities and is recognised by them as imparting vital academic skills.

The Philosophy and Theology Department prides itself on not being straightjacketed by the exam board specification. Whilst preparing our pupils for the all-important Pre-U exams, we also believe that it is important to go beyond the confines of the curriculum, to meet the demands of our questioning pupils. Pupils will also be expected to engage with original texts and be encouraged to read as widely as possible.

A selection of the topics studied is shown below:

- Philosophy of Religion**
- A study of Plato and Aristotle and their influence on the Western philosophical and theological tradition
 - Arguments for and against God's existence, including the work of Bertrand Russell, David Hume, Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant
 - An examination of the psychological theory of Freud and Jung
 - A study of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and other sociologists
 - The problem of evil and suffering in the world
 - Religious experience, life after death and religious language
 - Religion and Science

- Ethics**
- Five ethical theories: Utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics, natural law theory and existentialist ethics
 - The purpose of ethical language
 - Free will and determinism
 - The nature and role of the conscience and psychological challenges to ideas of conscience
 - War, peace and justice
 - Environmental ethics

Coursework
There is no coursework for the Philosophy and Theology Pre-U. Assessment takes place solely by examination at the end of Year 13.

Entrance examination
It should be noted that studying GCSE Religious Studies is NOT a requirement of the Pre-U course.

The entrance examination will not presume any prior philosophical or theological knowledge. The exam will consist of a passage from a philosophical or theological text and questions related to the passage. There will also be an essay-type question on a general topic related to philosophy or ethics. Successful candidates will demonstrate a high level of engagement with the questions and a clarity and originality of thought.

Sciences

Department contact **Mr C Ullathorne**
Email charles.ullathorne@westminster.org.uk

There are numerous good reasons for choosing to study Sciences at A Level and they stretch well beyond those of employability and transferability. The principles describing how the universe functions and the elegant and beautiful patterns of its behaviour provide an absorbing course of study that will challenge a pupil's imagination and creativity and will enhance and refine powers of observation.

Pupils may be considering whether to do an arts subject to complement their science education. The university study of Natural Sciences, Chemistry or Physics needs Mathematics – and Further Mathematics is strongly recommended for those who are predominantly potential physicists – so if pupils are considering a two plus two or three + one Sciences / Arts combination, they need to be clear about what they wish to study at university and to consider carefully whether their options really are as open as they might seem. If pupils are thinking of a two plus two combination, the Head of Science will be happy to advise them on the implications.

However, a single arts subject, for example English, History or a language (classical or modern), combined with Mathematics and two Sciences works well and is popular with both pupils and universities. Courses with a greater degree of breadth include Earth Sciences and Materials Sciences, both of which combine traditional A-level Sciences and Mathematics with engineering disciplines and other branches of Science such as Geophysics and Paeleobiology. These are becoming increasingly popular choices and deserve due consideration when choosing A-level subjects; specific undergraduate course entry details should be carefully checked. Of course, for those considering applications to universities outside the UK, the choice of subjects may well yield other implications and contact with the School's US Universities representative, for example, would be advisable.

Science teaching at Westminster is strongly practically based, capitalising on the fine, well-equipped laboratories and the essential nature of science. It is also taught in the belief that knowing 'Science' is better than knowing 'about Science', so the teaching aims for rigour in the development of scientific thinking and skills. The courses are challenging, but are very rewarding indeed, features that are independent of the examination board specifications being followed.

There are many opportunities for pupils to become involved with scientific projects beyond the formal curriculum, including lecture societies, research groups, competitions and the writing and production of the department's high-quality Hooke Magazine. The Robert Hooke Science Centre, in which all Science lessons are taught, has recently been refurbished and had an extra floor added, including an astronomical observatory, so is an incredible place in which to learn.

The Head of Science is always pleased to advise on subject choices involving Sciences and their implications, including Medicine.

Biology

Department contact **Dr P A Hartley**
Email paul.hartley@westminster.org.uk

Biology is an expansive and fast-moving discipline. Recent decades have seen significant revolutions in genetics and genetic manipulation, population biology and medical technologies. The course at Westminster aims to equip pupils not only with a comprehensive understanding of the core principles of this subject but also an awareness of where the discipline is heading. As such, we study theories and mechanisms that have been established for over a century, alongside research that has been published this year.

The most common and best reason for a pupil to choose Biology at A Level is that they enjoyed studying it at GCSE, and it is hoped the course will enable them to increase their enjoyment of the immense variety, complexity and interdependence of the living world. Many pupils take the course because they are considering Medicine and these pupils receive significant support through the process of applying to medical school. Although most pupils study Biology alongside other science A Levels, some pupils take the course alongside humanities in order to keep an experimental subject in their portfolio of courses, or to support an application to Social Sciences courses at university.

Teaching and learning
All pupils have two teachers: one for Molecular and Cellular Biology and another for Physiology and Populations Biology. Lessons are a mixture of presentations, group work, problem-based tasks and class discussion. Pupils are expected to contribute actively to discussions and read widely outside lessons. Practical skills are essential to an understanding of the discipline, so pupils should expect experimental lessons to be a regular part of their learning. These will often be very different from the practical work pupils have experienced at GCSE, involving new techniques and equipment.

In Year 12, pupils also have a weekly seminar lesson, which involves discussion and debate, and aims to develop a wider awareness of the subject and confidence in discussing scientific ideas and issues.

There is a thriving Huxley Science Society with a Biology Committee, run by pupils, which organises presentations, debates and visits to exhibitions and laboratories. During Year 12, pupils complete an advanced and open-ended experimental research project that does not form part of the A-level course – an opportunity for pupils to investigate something that really interests them without the pressure of jumping through assessment hoops. In April of Year 12, all Biologists go on a field trip where Ecology is taught in situ. Westminster enters pupils for national competitions and was the top-performing school in the British Biology Olympiad in 2014, and between eight and 13 pupils have been awarded Gold medals each year since and last year saw one of our pupils win a Gold medal at the IBO in Iran, representing the UK.

Course specification
Pupils currently follow a course structured around (but certainly not constrained by) the CIE International A-level Biology specification. Assessment is by written and practical exams. There is no coursework. The course offers a good overview of all biological systems but especially focuses on human physiology, genetics and molecular cell biology.

Course requirements
Candidates should be expecting to achieve an 8 or 9 grade at GCSE or IGCSE Biology or Dual Award. There is some biochemistry in the course, so for candidates who have taken single sciences a good grade at GCSE or IGCSE Chemistry is desirable. Numeracy is important in this subject too, so a pass at GCSE Mathematics is essential.

Subject combinations
Although most pupils studying Biology A Level also study at least one other science, every year a few pupils choose to study Biology without other sciences and in combination with arts and humanities subjects; there is absolutely no disadvantage to such a subject combination.

Life Sciences at university
A large number of our pupils go on to read Medicine or Biological / Natural Sciences at university and recent years have also seen our pupils taking up undergraduate courses in Anthropology, Biochemistry, Dentistry, Human Sciences, Physiology, Psychology and Veterinary Medicine.

Most Life Sciences courses at university will require A Levels in Biology and one or two other Mathematics / Science subjects. Many of the most exciting developments in Biology have, after all, come from the overlap between different scientific disciplines.

Entrance examination
The examination is not based on any specific GCSE (or IGCSE). The required content will include all KS3 Biology, and some further understanding of enzymes, respiration, photosynthesis, and movement across membranes at IGCSE level is expected. The exam is designed to assess a pupil's potential to study the subject at A Level and they should expect to interpret and discuss graphs and diagrams, communicate key principles in the subject and apply their knowledge to unfamiliar situations. For example, questions could be set about photosynthesis in aquatic plants (rather than land plants that are taught at KS3/ KS4) or gas exchange in insects (rather than the physiology of human gas exchange taught at KS3/KS4). In each case, no existing knowledge of aquatic plants or insects would be assumed, but understanding of key principles like photosynthesis and gas exchange would be required

Chemistry

Department contact **Mr E T A Coward**
Email **ed.coward@westminster.org.uk**

The principles of Chemistry underpin our understanding of the world around us and are relevant to all areas of science, from the chemical processes in living organisms to the formation of stars millions of miles away. The core concepts introduced in Chemistry form an important part of any professional scientist’s toolkit, regardless of their specialisation.

Pupils at Westminster study Chemistry for a variety of reasons: many study it in conjunction with other Sciences and / or Mathematics and go on to study Science at university; many are hoping to study Medicine at university; and a handful study Chemistry on its own because they simply enjoy it, although this would prevent the study of Science at university level. The most common combinations are those with Biology, Mathematics and Physics.

Chemistry beyond GCSE is conceptually challenging and requires good factual knowledge. While the need for the memorisation of facts remains important, much greater emphasis is placed on the understanding of the principles underlying the material and in relating this to laboratory experience. Indeed, considerable time is devoted to practical work and the department has four large, well-equipped teaching laboratories as well as a research laboratory. There are many opportunities to study Chemistry outside the timetable, for example via the Options programme or by participating in the Chemistry Olympiad, where Westminster has in the past ranked as the top school in the country.

Course requirements

Candidates should be expecting to achieve Grade 8 or 9 at GCSE or IGCSE Chemistry (or in Combined, Co-ordinated or Integrated Science) and Mathematics.

Course specification

Pupils currently study the CIE Pre-U specification, although this is subject to change. The focus is on extension beyond the curriculum and as such, an appreciation of the broader themes in Chemistry is important. Application of principles, rather than rote learning, is at the core of the subject.

Much of the Westminster course is focused around practical work, which allows for the reinforcement of theory, as well as the chance to research material independently around the specification. In the summer of Year 12, all pupils undertake open-ended project work on a wide range of topics.

Many of the core concepts of the specification have been touched upon at GCSE, although are considered in much greater and more quantitative detail. Pupils often mistakenly believe they need to ‘unlearn the lies’ they have been told at GCSE level, but in reality the scientific model is merely refined to give a more in-depth understanding.

Topics include:

- Chemical Calculations
- Atomic Structure
- Structure and Bonding
- Introduction to Thermodynamics
- Advanced Organic Chemistry
- Main Group Inorganic Chemistry
- Entropy
- Quantitative Equilibrium
- Quantitative Kinetics
- Spectroscopy and Chromatography
- Transition Metal Chemistry

Chemical Sciences at university

Chemistry graduates possess adaptability and an analytical mind, which makes them attractive to a very broad spectrum of employers. About one in three Chemistry graduates will continue with their academic studies and aim for higher degrees such as PhD or DPhil. For the study of Chemistry at university, it should ideally be combined at A Level with Mathematics (an additional Science is also desirable).

Pupils wishing to read Medical, Veterinary or Pharmacological Sciences or Chemical Engineering at university must take A-level Chemistry. Many other courses in Engineering and Materials Science also welcome the subject. Increasingly scientists are finding themselves working in fields that involve all of the scientific disciplines. The expanding field of Biochemistry makes the combination with Biology an attractive one.

Entrance examination

The entrance examination is designed to test understanding of basic principles rather than factual knowledge. Whilst some knowledge is of course desirable, the potential of the candidate to study Chemistry at a higher level is what we wish to assess. The exam paper will be based on core material and ideas that are covered in all types of GCSE course. There is a choice of questions, allowing all candidates the opportunity to answer on the areas of the subject, with which they feel most confident. Candidates will be expected to think on their feet and apply their understanding to unfamiliar situations. As such, no special reading is necessary.

Physics

Department contact **Mr C J R Ullathorne**
Email **charles.ullathorne@westminster.org.uk**

Course requirements

GCSE Separate Sciences (Physics) or Dual Award, at grade 8 or 9. A good grade in GCSE Mathematics is also required. Whilst it is not compulsory to take A-level Mathematics when opting for Physics, it is strongly advised to do so; in most years, nearly all A-level Physics pupils take at least one A Level in Mathematics.

Course specification

The Scheme of Work for Upper School Physics has recently changed, to encompass the new specifications that are available. The Sixth Form Physics course features a wide range of topics.

These will include:

- Materials Science
- Electrical circuits
- Waves
- Quantum Physics
- Information Theory and Signal Processing
- Gravity

Then in the Year 13 year, the topics develop to include:

- Mathematical Modelling
- Cosmology
- Electromagnetism
- Nuclear and Particle Physics

Throughout the course, pupils will have opportunities to develop practical skills, practise data handling, use their imagination, use ICT as a research tool, increase their understanding of the importance of Mathematics in Physics and to see Physics in social and historical contexts. There will be internal coursework elements that will focus on using and developing instrumentation, and on collating and presenting information. The often deliberately open-ended nature of the investigative work reflects the emphasis on experiencing Physics as it really is.

Subject combinations

Those thinking of pursuing Physics, Physics with Mathematics, Theoretical Physics or Engineering at university should consider taking Physics, Mathematics and Further Mathematics plus a fourth Arts or Science subject. It is extremely helpful to study Further Mathematics if a pupil is considering Physics or Engineering at one of the top universities. Without Mathematics, Physics cannot be taken beyond school level. Physics as a subject is well regarded by medical schools, so it is worth considering with Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. Many universities now offer degree courses in Physics or Engineering with a foreign language, so it could be worth combining Physics with a modern language.

Co-curricular

There are many ways in which pupils gain co-curricular experience, including lectures, projects, seminars, discussion groups and so on. The department is exceptionally well equipped with a seismometer, solar telescope, up-to-date data-logging equipment, etc. and there are opportunities to use the facilities for research. The new observatory in the redeveloped science building is offering an incredible boost to the possibilities in astronomy.

Entrance examination

The entrance examination consists of short-answer questions that are designed to test some basic knowledge and recall, but more to test a candidate’s ability to learn an idea and run with it quickly. Extensive revision is not required, and would be of no help. The exam is not based on any particular GCSE (or IGCSE) course and, as such, no particular knowledge is assumed beyond Key Stage 3 (i.e. Year 9).

Essentially the exam will combine a variety of questions, some in which pupils are expected to perform calculations – for example, a question might require a candidate to calculate the acceleration of a rocket of a certain mass with a certain combination of forces on it. Other questions may introduce an area of Physics they have not seen before and ask them to think critically about it – for example a question might give some information about a recent experiment they will not have come across, perhaps at CERN or NASA, etc., and the candidate will have to demonstrate that they can analyse what the data are showing.

Electronics AS Level

Department contact **Mr Michael Collier**
Email michael.collier@westminster.org.uk

In 1980, the entire mobile ‘phone market was estimated to be for 900,000 handsets; today this number of handsets is sold every day. In 1977, the first Apple computer had 4096 bytes of memory; today a typical MacBook Air has at least eight billion bytes. A century ago, a few privileged households owned a gramophone; now, in the Western world, every teenager carries thousands of songs in their pocket. All of these changes are the result of the rapid expansion of Electronics over the last 50 years. The study of Electronics at AS Level will show how basic physical principles can be applied by engineers to develop the massive range of communication, entertainment and industrial systems that are common today.

- The EDUQAS AS-level Electronics course is followed; this course comprises:
- Electronic System Synthesis
 - DC Electrical Circuits
 - Input and output subsystems
 - Energy and Power
 - Semiconductor components
 - Logic Systems
 - Operational Amplifiers
 - Timing Circuits
 - Sequential Logic systems
 - Microcontrollers
 - Mains Power Supply systems

The course is a mix of theory and practical application sessions. Each pupil will complete coursework projects in Programming, Digital Systems and Analogue Systems, as well as a written exam at the end of Year 12.

AS Electronics is taken as a fifth subject in the Options Programme and any pupil who wishes may take the course. Commitment is initially to the AS course, which is completed in Year 12, although many pupils choose to continue with the A2 course in Year 13.

Entrance examination
There is no entrance exam for this subject.

Drama and Theatre Studies

Department contact **Miss A Graham-Brown**
Email annie.graham-brown@westminster.org.uk

The whole economy needs creative skills. According to the World Economic Forum, by 2020 creativity will be in the top three most important skills for future jobs, alongside complex problem solving and critical thinking, which are skills innate to and honed by a creative education.

This course develops practical, creative and communication skills. Pupils will extend their ability to create drama, in both performing and production roles. Pupils will also be required to write about live theatre and develop their powers of analysis and evaluation to become informed critics. The course will involve taking part in drama productions, as well as studying plays, playwrights and theatre practitioners, together with developing an understanding of the historical and social contexts of the drama.

The A Level can lead to further study of Drama at university, or to a vocational course at Drama School in Acting, Stage Management or Direction. Each year, one or two Westminster pupils go on to Drama Schools with a view to entering the theatre, film or television professions, and a number have gone on to make very successful careers. A-level Drama and Theatre Studies pupils at Westminster School have also gone on to study Law, English, History, Theology or Classics at university, subjects that draw upon and link to skills and knowledge developed on the A-level course. Drama and Theatre Studies complements a range of subjects and is useful in building confidence and developing excellent presentation skills for any career. It allows for active analysis of human behaviour and experience, through improvisation, devised performance and study of dramatic texts. There are

single or combined Honours courses in Drama at many high-ranking universities, commonly in conjunction with English. Oxford and Cambridge have less to offer, but there is a very good course at Cambridge called English and Drama with Education Studies, which has a strong practical Drama component.

In the words of one of our recent alumni... *I now know that giving the right impression, and having some knowledge of how your looks and actions will be interpreted by others, is crucial to social and career success. I use what I have learnt in my History lessons most days at Oxford – I use what I have learnt in Drama every day.*

Course specification
The course is structured around the AQA A-level Drama specification. During the two-year course, pupils learn to collaborate with others, think analytically and evaluate their own creative processes and the work of theatre makers effectively. They gain the confidence to pursue their own ideas by creating an original theatre piece inspired by the methodologies of a theatre practitioner, evaluate live theatre, and approach two set texts from the perspective of an actor, designer and director, developing a strong understanding of the playwrights’ original intentions and the social, historical and cultural contexts of the plays. Additionally, they will practically explore and workshop extracts from three contrasting plays, performing one of these extracts for an external examiner and writing coursework chronicling their practical processes for all three extracts. Whatever the future holds, pupils of A-level Drama emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills, applicable both in further studies and in the workplace.

Entrance examination
Pupils will be asked to write about a production they have seen or one they have taken part in, either on-or back-stage (20 minutes). There will also be a short extract from a play, which they will be asked to analyse in terms of its dramatic content, by answering a number of short questions (20 minutes).

How to find your way around



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Liddell's House | 9 Common Room and Head Master's Study |
| 2 The Sir Adrian Boulton Building | 10 Hakluyt's House |
| 3 Ashburnham House Library and Lecture Room | 11 College Hall (medieval dining room) |
| 4 School (the School Hall) | 12 The Weston Building |
| 5 Dryden's and Wren's House, College | 13 Milne's House |
| 6 Grant's House | 14 Ashburnham House |
| 7 Rigaud's House | 15 Purcell's House |
| 8 Busby's House | 16 Sutcliff's (the Art School) |
| 9 Common Room and Head Master's Study | 17 Manoukian Music Centre |



1300s

1370 First references to the School in Westminster Abbey's records

1400s

1461 The School moves from the Monastic Almonry to Dean's Yard

1500s

1540 Dissolution of the Benedictine Monastery, Henry VIII ensures the School's survival by statute

1560 New charter for the 'College of St Peter' from Elizabeth I with provision for 40 scholars

1561 Links established with Christ Church, Oxford, and Trinity College, Cambridge

1562 First Election Dinner

1564 Elizabeth I attends the Latin Play, performed in College Hall

1599 Former Monks' Dormitory first used as the schoolroom

1600s

1638 Dr Richard Busby becomes Head Master, serving until his death in 1695

1649 Busby leads the School in prayers for Charles I on the day of his execution

1659 Busby Library built

1666 The Great Fire of London, Dean Dolben and Scholars save St Dunstan's in the East

1679 The King's Scholars receive the Royal Pardon for their murder of a bailiff

1685 Westminster pupils' first formal attendance at the coronation

1700s

1733 The New Scholars' Dormitory, designed by Lord Burlington, is completed

1746 First recorded cricket match – Old Westminsters v. Old Etonians

1750 The Grant family begins to manage a boarding house in Little Dean's Yard

1753 First recorded 'pancake grease'

1786 Rebellion in the School – Francis Burdett felled by Head Master's cudgel

1800s

1810 Vincent Square secured as the School's playing field

1813 The School's Rowing Ledger begins

1837 Westminster's victory over Eton at rowing hastens death of William IV

1855 Last wholly oral 'Challenge' scholarship examination

1858 Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales attend the Latin Play

1868 Public Schools Act gives Westminster independence from the Abbey

1877 First House for day boys 'Homeboarders' House' is established

1900s

1906 Science laboratories built in Great College Street

1939 Outbreak of the Second World War, School evacuated from London

1940 The Blitz: Busby Library destroyed

1941 School and College destroyed in an air raid

1943 Under School opened in Little Dean's Yard

1950 George VI reopens College

1960 HM Queen Elizabeth II reopens School, marking Westminster's Quatercentenary

1967 First female pupil joins the School

1973 Girls first become full members of the School

1988 Robert Hooke Science Centre opened by The Queen

2000s

2001 Opening of Millicent Fawcett Hall (the School's theatre)

2005 Opening of the Manoukian Music Centre and Weston Building

2010 450th anniversary of the Elizabethan foundation: HM Queen Elizabeth II visits the School and unveils a statue of Queen Elizabeth I, by sculptor Matthew Spender

2013 New Sports Centre at the Royal Horticultural Hall opened by The Queen

2017 First female Queen's Scholars join College

2018 Launch of The Westminster School Campaign – the School's major Bursary campaign

2019 Opening of the rebuilt Sir Adrian Boult Building

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Abbey is a breathtaking space and it's a huge privilege to have it as the School's chapel. All pupils attend services twice a week and the School holds concerts and special services in the Abbey throughout the year, giving everyone a chance to speak and perform in this beautiful and historic building.





WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

THE REGISTRAR
WESTMINSTER SCHOOL
LITTLE DEAN'S YARD
LONDON SW1P 3PF

+44 (0)20 7963 1003
sixthformadmissions@
westminster.org.uk

 @wschool
 westminstergram_

WESTMINSTER.ORG.UK

Registered charity number: 312728

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