

How are the school's examination results?

The school has a track record of performance in the top 5% of GCSE results in the country. This track record goes back a large number of years. During the pandemic and the two years when results were determined by teachers and not by examinations, students continued their excellent performance. At A Level, student performance has consistently outstripped national averages for more than a decade, with towards 50% of all grades at A or A* last year.

Examinations are not everything. School is about wider development: experiences on trips, making music, dramatic performance, sporting endeavour - all are opportunities to learn generosity in victory, grace in defeat, to aspire to excellence, and most importantly to have fun. But we are realists about the value of examination performance for university entry and future employers. These are students' passports to their future, and we do not apologise for taking them seriously.

What do you study on the curriculum?

We balance the traditional with the innovative. There is computer science for students, covering coding in python, as well as art and music - spanning genres, media and time periods. We believe in the importance of developing linguistic skill, and in encountering some of the most prized works of literature (Shakespeare and Dickens are important to us), and we also embrace a global perspective, looking at world music and international sport. Our curriculum cherishes the best that has been said, thought and made throughout intellectual and creative history. But it is also driven by a belief in character education, developing resilience, learning to respond to loss and suffering, and treasuring moments of joy and peace. Students study PSHCE for two hours per week - at all ages - because we consider students' personal development to be as important as their academic flourishing.

How much homework do students get?

Developing private study skills is a key aim of secondary school. As students work towards their first public examinations, we know that those who are able to assess their own academic needs and support their own study are most successful. Students will receive a couple of hours of independent study each evening. We run sessions after school every day, where students can go to their teachers to seek additional support and guidance, or even simply a focused space to complete some of that work.

How often do students sit tests or exams?

Rehearsing understanding is an integral part of learning, and lessons will frequently involve students undertaking work that might involve tests or practice answers. Formal

examinations are only scheduled to take place once or twice per academic year, though class teachers may employ short tests each fortnight to ensure students have a clear sense of their performance. Each lesson also begins with 'revisiting learning' so that learning from one lesson to the next is not treated in isolation or forgotten.

When do students sit GCSEs?

At the moment, we operate a system of GCSE entry in which students sit their GCSEs in parts across three years (from Year 9 to Year 11). They take two GCSEs in Year 9, three in Year 10 and the rest in Year 11. We have done this because it allows students to get used to examinations and gives them confidence from an early stage. We have many years of evidence that students in Year 9 are as able to perform as well as students in Year 11, and indeed the fact that they are sitting examinations in bite-sized parts reduces stress and enhances students' capacity for success.

What do you do for pastoral care?

Pastoral care for students throughout the secondary age range is really important to us. Tutor groups are the first port of call for this. Tutors see students each day for 25 minutes, and during this time there are opportunities for discussion that are designed to improve confidence and signpost avenues for personal support. These tutor groups have a family atmosphere, made up of students from each year group, so there is natural mentoring and guidance from older and younger students in this context. A resilience lead offers sessions for students who would benefit from guidance about managing the troubles that life puts before us; a counsellor is available where students require someone to talk to on a confidential basis; a group of colleagues in the safeguarding team are there to oversee day-to-day matters and they work with other organisations to ensure students have the support they need.

What is behaviour like at the school?

Good order is essential for good learning, and we have always been clear that learning requires rigour as well as warmth, boundaries as well as understanding. Behaviour has consistently been judged outstanding by Ofsted. That outstanding judgment is not just about focus in lessons, it is also about a climate and atmosphere of students seeking to better their own lives by contributing to a culture of academic excellence and care for one another. We are well aware that life is not always plain sailing; teenagers do sometimes make mistakes. Those blemishes in one's record should not be indelible - it is possible to move beyond and through moments of difficulty towards richer relationships and a renewed appreciation of the structures that keep us all safe.

What extra-curricular events take place at school?

Since 2014, we have made extra-curricular central to the school's work. The school's academic timetable may finish at around 3pm, but the school goes on working well after with extensive sporting opportunities available for students - supported by teachers from across the school (not just in PE). Music and art are very rich parts of school life: the school choir frequently works with professional musicians, concerts and exhibitions abound and the cultural life of London is celebrated within school and during school trips. We are fortunate to have a number of speakers who come to talk with students from universities, professions and businesses and these are experiences that reach towards the world beyond school. In addition to sporting and creative activities, the extra-curricular programme promotes political understanding (we have a thriving Amnesty International group for example), technical proficiency (coding club is very popular; music technology is a favourite with many students) as well as opportunities for further study and exploration (dissection club, journal society, debating and philosophy groups).

What do you study in PSHCE?

Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic education is a backbone of school life and all students partake in these sessions. They develop students as individuals, make them aware of the challenges of the world, equip them with tools to manage these challenges, and promote active citizenship and community engagement. The government has recently extended its statutory guidance on relationship and sex education, and we make this an important part of the programme as a whole. We also use these sessions to encourage global awareness. This week was world peace day, and as part of our sessions on world peace day, we have been looking at refugees and those seeking asylum and what the UK is doing to offer sanctuary to those persecuted and in danger.