



Herschel Grammar School Sixth Form

Course Information – Entry 2027

SIXTH FORM CHARTER

Responsibility Success Care

What can you expect?	What are your responsibilities?
A high standard of teaching – effective, engaging, challenging lessons and regular feedback	To work hard both inside and outside the classroom; to listen, act on feedback and be proactive in promoting your own learning; to strive to meet your academic targets; to meet deadlines
Lessons that begin on time	Full attendance unless there is a very good reason; to be punctual at all times
Facilities for independent learning; opportunities to develop new skills	To manage your own time appropriately and to develop as an independent learner
A willingness of staff to listen and to build positive, working relationships with you	To respect staff and fellow students at all times; to be courteous and smartly dressed
Individual pastoral care and academic mentoring from tutors, Heads of Year, subject staff	To support one another in your learning – to take responsibility for one another's well being
A school that celebrates and rewards success as well as supporting you when you need additional help	To accept help when necessary and to work in partnership with your parents and staff to promote achievement
A safe and secure environment in which to work	To help and contribute to the school's security
Structured guidance on post-18 options and a fair reference that reflects your strengths	To act in a responsible and adult manner, helping the staff to run the school and acting as a role model to younger pupils
A community that values more than simply academic success and that fosters a range of enrichment and community-based activities	To engage fully in aspects of school life beyond your studies, including community involvement and helping to build a diverse, vibrant and stimulating Sixth Form environment

Herschel Grammar School

Northampton Avenue,
Slough, Berkshire SL1 3BW
Tel: 01753 520950
Email: mail@herschel.slough.sch.uk
Web: www.herschel.slough.sch.uk

How will I choose my subjects?

Your choice of subjects is an important decision - your future career could depend on it. Think carefully about the advice from teachers, parents, friends and careers staff. To help you make informed decisions, you should read the subject information in this guide very carefully. Ultimately though, *you* must make the final decision if your Sixth Form study is to be enjoyable and successful.

Which subjects go best together?

Your main considerations should be what you will enjoy studying in depth for two years and where your strengths lie. Some university courses and careers have specific requirements, for example Medicine, and you should be aware of these. You may wish to think about combinations of subjects carefully. This will give an impressive breadth to your programme of study and promote the development of a range of skills.

Further sources of advice:

- https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects - gives information on different degree courses and their entry requirements
- https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/six-things-you-need-to-know-before-making-your-a-level-choices - useful "do's" and "don'ts" when choosing A Levels
- https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/ - a helpful tool from the Russell Group to help ensure A Level choices are well-informed

As a student at Herschel, you will not take AS Levels at the end of Year 12: instead you will sit internal exams to help assess progress and help you prepare for the linear A Level exams taken at the end of Year 13.

All these issues will be explored at an individual "post-16 discussion" held in the Spring term.

General Entry Requirements

You are expected to have the intention and willingness to study hard in school. The most successful learners spend about 30 hours per week on independent study at school and at home. In addition, you will need to achieve the following:

Minimum Entry Qualifications for enrolment

1. At least five GCSE passes at Grades 9-5
2. At least Grade 5 in Mathematics.
3. At least Grade 5 in English Language or English Literature
4. A GCSE average point score across all GCSE subjects of at least 5.5 points
5. To enrol on a four A Level programme at Herschel Grammar School, a GCSE average point score of at least 6.8 is required (across all subjects)

For example, if student x gained the following grades …

Grade 8 English Language, Grade 5 English Literature, Grade 6 Mathematics, Grade 6 Biology, Grade 9 Chemistry, Grade 7 Physics, Grade 8 History, Grade 9 French, Grade 4 Business, Grade 6 Physical Education

… they would give a total of 68 points across 10 subjects i.e. an average point score of 6.8

6. All A Level courses have additional subject-specific entry requirements – see individual course description for more precise information

Subjects taught at Herschel

(see pages 6-23)

A Level Subject	Minimum entry requirement at GCSE
Biology	Grade 7 in Biology **or** grades 8-7 in Combined Science, **and** at least a Grade 6 in Maths
Business	Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Business Studies or Economics if taken
Chemistry	Grade 7 in Chemistry **or** grades 8-7 in Combined Science. A Grade 6 or above in Maths is also desirable
Computer Science	Grade 7 in Maths **and** 6 in English Language or Literature **and** 7 in Computer Science if taken
D&T: Product Design	Grade 6 in GCSE Design & Technology. Strong candidates who have not studied DT GCSE **and** who can show a portfolio of relevant work may be considered
Drama & Theatre	Grade 6 in Drama. If Drama not taken at GCSE a Grade 6 in English Language or Literature
Economics	Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Business Studies or Economics if taken
English Literature	Grade 6 in **both** English Language **and** Literature
Geography	Grade 6 in Geography (NB Requirement for residential fieldwork)
Government & Politics	Grade 6 in English Language **or** Literature, **and** Grade 6 in a humanities subject (Geography, History or RS)
History	Grade 6 in History if taken. Strong candidates who have not studied GCSE History may be considered
Mathematics	Grade 7 in Maths (Higher Tier)
Further Mathematics*	Grade 8 in Maths (Higher Tier)
Media Studies	Grade 6 in English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Media Studies if taken
Physical Education	Grade 6 in PE if taken **or** Grade 6 in Biology **or** 6-6 in Combined Science. Participation in a competitive sport inside or outside school.
Physics	Grade 7 in Physics **or** grades 8-7 in Combined Science, **and** at least a Grade 7 in Maths. It is highly recommended that A Level Maths is taken as a complementary subject.
Psychology	Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or English Literature, **and** Grade 6 in Biology or 6-6 in Combined Science

- Business and Economics are NOT permitted as a subject combination
- *Further Maths will need to be a **fourth subject** and is only available to those who have also chosen to study A Level Mathematics.

Enrichment Block

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	Grade 6 in English Language plus the ability to work independently on a project and meet deadlines

Students benefit from participation in the **Year 12 Enrichment Block** alongside their A Level studies. This involves a weekly Wellbeing lesson (that includes sport) as well as the option to study the Extended Project Qualification – see information in th subject profiles. This programme helps you cope with the wider demands of Sixth Form study and prepares you for a life at university and beyond.

How do I apply?

All applications must be received by FRIDAY 29 January 2027

To apply to Herschel Grammar School:

ALL APPLICANTS (whether internal or external) should apply online via the link on the Herschel Grammar School website – available from mid-December.

What do I do now?

1. Look through this booklet to become familiar with the subjects that you are interested in.
2. Check your predicted grades to see if the subjects you wish to do are suitable. Talk with your subject teachers about this.

For students currently at Herschel Grammar School:

By the closing date of 29 January 2027:

3. Apply online **after** you have received your mock results.
4. Discuss your subject interests in your individual post-16 discussion in the Spring Term.
5. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter inviting you to the Induction Day on Wednesday 30 June.
6. Enrolment will be based on exam results. If you don't achieve the grades you require, don't panic! On GCSE Results Day we will discuss what choices you have.

For students applying from other schools:

By the closing date of 29 January 2027:

3. Apply online, preferably **after** you have received your mock results, if time permits.
4. Following receipt of your application and reference, you may be invited for a post-16 discussion.
5. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter inviting you to the Induction Day on Wednesday 30 June.
6. Enrolment will be based on exam results. If you don't achieve the grades you require, don't panic! On GCSE Results Day we will discuss what choices you have.

Remember: ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY 29 January 2027

BIOLOGY

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 7 in Biology or grades 8-7 in Combined Science, and at least a Grade 6 in Maths. If you have a deep curiosity about the world in which we live and want to know more, Biology can be rewarding.

Exam board: OCR

Description of subject:
This is a dynamic and exciting subject to study at A Level. Success can lead to a plethora of options at university - courses like Biology, Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and other scientific fields as well as being recognised as developing forensic thinking for courses such as Law and Economics. Lessons comprise a mixture of theory and experimental work. You will gain an understanding of the biological world, yourself and key problems facing the world such as climate change.

Over the two-year course you will study:
Module 1: Development of practical skills in Biology
Module 2: Foundations in Biology
Module 3: Exchange and Transport
Module 4: Biodiversity, evolution and disease
Module 5: Communication, homeostasis and energy
Module 6: Genetics and ecosystems

You will conduct a large variety of practical work throughout the two years of the course. These practicals are compulsory and you will maintain a portfolio of work to demonstrate the skills you have developed.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
This is split into three written papers and a non-examined practical component.

Student comments:
"A well-organised and resourced course. Lessons are always fun and fast-paced, and the teachers are approachable."

BUSINESS

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or Literature. You do not need to have studied Business Studies or Economics at GCSE, but if you have, we would expect at least a Grade 6. It is also highly important that you have an interest in the world around you.

Exam board: Edexcel

Description of subject:
A Level Business helps to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of the business world. You will learn how to generate enterprising and creative approaches to business opportunities, problems and issues, helping you to acquire a range of relevant business and generic skills, including decision making, problem-solving, the challenging of assumptions and critical analysis, as well as applying numerical skills in a range of business contexts. The teachers have many years of practical business experience which is used to help bring the subject to life. This is a topical subject that achieves strong results and a high level of student retention.

In Year 12:
You will be introduced to business through
Theme 1: Marketing and People, and
Theme 2: Managing Business Activities.
You will begin building knowledge of core business concepts and applying them to business contexts to develop a broad understanding of how businesses work.

In Year 13:
You will extend your breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding through
Theme 3: Business Decisions and Strategy, and
Theme 4: Global Business, which requires you to take a more strategic and evaluative view of business opportunities and issues around our world.

Assessment takes the form of three specific written exams at the end of Year 13 which examine the components studied in both Years 12 and 13:

Paper 1 (35% of A Level): Marketing, People and Global Businesses (2 hours, 2 questions)
Paper 2 (35% of A Level): Business activities, Decisions and Strategy (2 hours, 2 questions)
Paper 3 (30% of A Level): Investigating Business in a Competitive Environment (2 hours, 2 questions)

Each question is set in a context, drawing on topics from across Themes 1 and 4 for Paper 1 and Themes 2 and 3 for Paper 2, and all four themes in Paper 3. Sections A and B both comprise of one data response question, broken down into a number of parts, with one extended open-response question at the end.

CHEMISTRY

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 7 in Chemistry or grades 8-7 in Combined Science; a Grade 6 or above in Maths is also desirable.

Exam board: OCR Chemistry A

Description of subject:
Chemistry is an interesting and exciting subject that explains much of the world around us and opens the door to a wide range of options for further education. This subject is a must for courses like medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and many other challenging degrees in science at university. Lessons comprise a mixture of theory and experimental work. You will gain an understanding of all three key branches of chemistry - physical, organic and inorganic. An ability to understand and apply your knowledge and carry out numerical calculations are key components of A Level Chemistry.

Over the two-year course you will study six modules:
- Foundations in Chemistry
- Periodic Table and Energy
- Core Organic Chemistry
- Development of practical skills
- Physical Chemistry and Transition elements
- Organic Chemistry and Analysis

In addition, every student will carry out practical work linked to the topics studied in the course. You will keep a record of these practicals to demonstrate the skills you develop.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
This is split into three written papers and a non-examined practical component.

Student comments for Chemistry:
"I've gained an understanding of how Chemistry can be applied to real world situations."

"A challenging subject so it's very important to work hard from day one if you want to understand it!"

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need a Grade 7 in Maths **and** 6 in English Language or Literature **and** 7 in Computer Science if taken.

While not essential, prior study of Computer Science at GCSE provides a useful foundation for this course. You will also need a keen interest in technology, programming, mathematics, and computers.

It is strongly recommended that you take A Level Maths alongside this qualification if you are considering a career in computer science required. While not essential, prior study of Computer Science at GCSE provides a useful foundation for this course. You will also need a keen interest in technology, programming, mathematics, and computers.

Exam board: OCR

Description of subject:
In A Level Computer Science, you will learn the skills to enable you to choose and control what your computer does for you. You will be able to solve problems and carry out investigations in aspects of computer science that interest you.

In Year 12:
You will learn about the theory of computation and the fundamentals of computer systems, including computer organisation and architecture. You will learn about communication, networking and the consequences of the use of computers. You will acquire the necessary skills to write computer programs, including how to design algorithms to solve a range of interesting and increasingly complex problems. You will also learn how to program using object orientated techniques, structure programs for maximum efficiency, and test the program.

In Year 13:
You will continue to develop the knowledge and skills acquired in Year 12, as well as learn about databases, big data and functional programming. You will also complete a practical project on a topic you find interesting.

Some examples of the types of problem to solve or investigate are:
- a computer game
- an application of artificial intelligence
- a control system, operated using a device such as an Arduino board
- a website with dynamic content, driven by a database back-end
- an app for a mobile phone or tablet
- an investigation into an area of computing, such as rendering a three-dimensional world on screen

Throughout the course, you must be prepared to practise your programming regularly outside of lessons.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:

Coursework:	20%
Paper 1:	40%
Paper 2:	40%.

Student comments on Computer Science:
"It makes you think outside the box."

"There's a lot to learn!"

"The specification is challenging, but if you have an interest in the subject, you'll succeed."

D&T: PRODUCT DESIGN

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in GCSE Design & Technology. If you have not studied DT a design portfolio will be required along with a teacher recommendation.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
This subject considers the commercial processes of designing and manufacturing products. Why are products designed? How are they made? What materials and processes are involved, and how are they used? Moral, cultural and environmental factors arising from making and using products are also considered. By choosing this subject, you will:

- Extend your understanding of Design & Technology with a focus on product design, user-centred design and engineering.
- Carry out extensive research and gather information from a range of primary and secondary sources.
- Test a range of materials and match working properties to applications.
- Investigate design opportunities using industry-standard 3D Computer Aided Design programmes.
- Study modern manufacturing processes and use computer numerically controlled machines to produce design solutions.
- Extend and apply your knowledge of designing and making to achieve industry quality outcomes.
- Develop a greater awareness of the responsibilities that designers have to engineer sustainable products.
- Generate a Portfolio which involves completing a number of design & engineering assignments that could lead to developing links with industry and drawing upon the experience of professional designers, engineers and manufacturers.

Over the two-year course:
You will study core technical principles through a range of design projects and engineering assignments. Design and manufacturing principles are introduced through manufacturing and prototyping tasks, along with 3D CAD modelling.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
The theory will be examined in two exams and accounts for 50% of the overall qualification, as does the coursework component.

Future Pathways
A Level Product Design allows you to generate skills and understanding within engineering, industrial design, manufacturing, marketing, architecture, interior design, web design, project management and certain medical industries. It would complement a variety of other A Level choices, particularly Maths and Physics.

Student comments for D&T: Product Design:
"This course allowed me to have full creative freedom and develop my skills and knowledge of design".

"This course was a fun and productive one, filled with experimentation and hands-on practical development."

"A level Product Design has really helped me in my engineering degree. It taught me how to problem solve and consider the end user. The CAD skills I gained have given me a head start at Uni compared with some other students"

"I feel really grateful to be here (The Dyson Institute) and it wouldn't be possible without all of the DT department's support"

DRAMA & THEATRE

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in Drama, if taken, and a Grade 6 in English Language or Literature if Drama was not taken at GCSE. If you enjoyed the novels, plays and poetry in GCSE English and/ or the text and practical components of KS3/GCSE Drama, then A Level Drama & Theatre is a course you will enjoy.

Exam board: Edexcel

Description of subject:
Drama & Theatre is the study of human behaviour. At A Level, the texts studied and the plays performed will provide opportunities for you to explore the social, cultural and historical effects on the human psyche as well as look at the influences that have affected theatre practice, both past and present. You will be expected to take a variety of plays from "page to stage" as a director, performer and/or designer, sharing and justifying interpretations of the texts through practical exploration and performances. There will be many opportunities to develop your imagination and express your creativity. During the two years, you will also be expected to attend compulsory theatre visits to analyse live theatre. If you enjoy Drama & Theatre as a participant and an audience member, this may be the course for you. You will be encouraged to work as a member of a theatre production team to develop your design or performance skills and directorial skills to create contemporary theatre productions for a variety of audiences.

Course Components

Component 1 - Devising:
You will devise a piece of theatre which you will then perform and record the process in a portfolio.
Assessment: Internally assessed and externally moderated (40%)

Component 2 - Text in Performance:
This is a group performance from a performance text. You will also perform a monologue/duologue from a different text.
Assessment: Externally assessed by a visiting examiner (20%)

Component 3 - Theatre Makers in Practice:
Explored practically. From a choice of 9, you will choose and interpret one set text as a director and evaluate a piece of live theatre you have seen.
Assessment: Exam 2 hours 30 mins. Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation, Section B: Questions on a set text, Section C: Director's interpretation (written paper 40%)

ECONOMICS

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or Literature, though Grade 7s are preferable given the demands of the course. You do not need to have studied Business or Economics at GCSE, but if you have, we expect at least a Grade 6. You must also have a healthy interest in current affairs by regularly following the news and be able and willing to learn how the world really works. You will be expected to keep this knowledge up-to-date, and be able to apply real-world from the news, or imaginative and creative, yet realistic hypothetical examples, to the theories being taught.

Exam board: Edexcel – Economics A specification

Description of subject:
A Level Economics helps you develop a theoretical and practical understanding of the role of economics in our world. Economists study microeconomics (the economics of individual markets) and macroeconomics (the economics of whole economies). Being heavily related to current affairs, which are forever evolving and revolving, Economics is a subject that will interest those with a natural curiosity for understanding more about, and continually questioning what is happening in, the world in which we live. The teachers have many years of practical experience which is used to help bring the subject to life. This is a topical subject that achieves strong results.

Year 12 introduces you to microeconomics through **Theme 1**: **Introduction to markets and market failure**, and macroeconomics through **Theme 2: The UK economy – performance and policies**. You will begin building knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of the subject, and contextually apply this to real- world scenarios to develop a broad understanding of how the economy works.

Year 13 furthers your breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of micro and macroeconomics through
Theme 3: Business behaviour and the labour market, and
Theme 4: A global perspective, which requires you to take a more strategic, globalised and evaluative view of the economic world around you.

Assessment takes the form of three **specific** A Level written exams at the end of Year 13 which examine the components studied in both Years 12 and 13:

Paper 1 (35% of A Level): Markets and business behaviour
(2 hours, examining Themes 1 and 3).

Paper 2 (35% of A Level): The national and global economy
(2 hours, examining Themes 2 and 4)
The format of both Papers 1 and 2 are three sections: A - multiple-choice and short-answer questions; B - one data response question; and C - an extended open response question (choice of one from two).

Paper 3 (30% of A Level): Microeconomics and macroeconomics (2 hours, with questions drawn from all four themes). Two data response questions broken down into a number of parts, each including one extended open-response question (choice of one from two).

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in both English Language and English Literature. If you have enjoyed studying the set novels, plays and poetry at GCSE, then A Level English Literature may be for you.

Exam board: OCR

Description of subject:
Over the centuries, the most accurate measure of a country's changing views, obsessions and philosophies can be seen in the texts written by its citizens.

You will be expected to read widely, including literary criticism, and write essays of course. Most importantly, you will need to participate in discussion to formulate your own educated and persuasive viewpoint as to the best way to interpret the texts studied.

If you have an enthusiasm for language and a love of reading, then this might be the course for you. We offer a team of highly experienced A level teachers, who will share with you their passion for Literature whilst helping you to develop and express your own views effectively.

In Year 12 you will study **Components 1 and 2**

1. Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', followed by Chaucer's 'The Merchant's Tale' and finally Goldsmith's 'She Stoops to Conquer'. An opportunity to explore two literary works which are regarded as 'foundation stones' for English Literature generally; the former play famously examines the question 'To Be or Not to Be', while the latter poem is an 'earthy' satire on marriage and romance and finally we have Goldsmith's 18th century comedy of manners, a play which through farce invites an audience to question the traditional view of love and marriage. The assessment is a closed text exam.

2. George Orwell's '1984' and Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale'. The first is one of the most quoted texts of the last 50 years – just think of "Big Brother's watching you" – while the second has been made recently into a serialised tv series. Both are dystopian alternative futures; their authors warnings as to what modern trends are leading us towards. Assessment is a closed text exam.

In Year 13 you will prepare for examination on all of the above texts – via closed text exams, each of which is worth 40% of the final together with:

Component 3:
Coursework, itself worth the remaining 20%. This consists of two essays, together of 3000 words, the first on the play RC Sherriff's 'Journey's End' and the latter a comparison of Adichie's 'Purple Hibiscus' with Sylvia Plath's, 'Ariel'.

This is internally assessed and externally moderated.

We look forward to seeing you.

Student's comments:
"English is my favourite subject. I enjoy the lessons and I have great support from all of the teachers in the department."

"English is based around discussion which leads to lots of interesting conversations and shared views which I really enjoy."

GEOGRAPHY

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in Geography.

Exam board: Edexcel

Course components:
Paper 1:
Tectonics and hazards, coastal landscape, water insecurity, energy security.
Assessment: written exam (30% of A Level)

Paper 2:
Globalisation, regenerating places, superpowers, global development.
Assessment: written exam (30% of A Level)

Paper 3:
Synoptic investigation of a geographical issue.
Assessment: written exam (20% of A Level)

Coursework:
Independent investigation.
Investigate your own geographical title
Assessment: written report of approximately 3000 words (20% of A Level)

Note: Undertaking residential field work is a requirement for this course.

Future careers for Geographers include Information Technology, Management, Financial Sector, Marketing, Global Information Systems, Travel Consultant, Government Statistician, Banking and Business Management, Town & Transport Planning, and Environmental Consultant.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in English Language or Literature, **and** Grade 6 in a Humanities subject (e.g. History, Geography or RS). If you have a lively and enquiring mind, and a desire to explore new ideas, this is the option for you.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
The course involves investigating the political institutions of Britain and the USA, key political ideologies and notable political thinkers. You will study British and American politics and major international events, look at the Houses of Parliament, elections and electoral systems, and the laws that rule us: all will be examined in depth. If you enjoy reading about controversial issues such as law and order, race relations, ideologies such as Nationalism and the MAGA movement, pressure groups such as Plane Stupid or Palestine Action and the controversies relating to civil liberties, and the new era of post-Brexit politics, this A Level should be one of your choices. You will be expected to read widely and write essays of course, but more important is your willingness to debate ideas with others, and have opinions of your own. A love of current affairs, news websites and debating is essential.

Government & Politics is an excellent qualification for those of you thinking of a career in Law, the Media and of course Government itself. We visit the Houses of Parliament, attend study seminars in London and meet the politicians themselves. You will be taught by experienced teachers who are AQA examiners and moderators. Government & Politics has excellent pass rates and students achieve the highest grades.

Course components:
You will take three exams comprising a range of short and long answer questions:
Component 1: UK Politics
Component 2: Comparative British and American politics
Component 3: Political Ideas

Student comments:
"Politics has laid the foundation for my future career in News Media."

"We loved running Herschel's Mock elections – it seemed to inspire the whole school!"

HISTORY

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in History if taken. Strong candidates who have not studied GCSE History may be considered for the course.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
History is interesting because it is about people, why they acted in a certain way and what the consequences of those actions were. History is a challenging and widely respected subject and studying History at A Level will enable you to develop both your analytical and your communication skills.

We use a range of classroom activities, including group presentations and essay writing. You will also be required to do some background reading to consolidate and develop your knowledge.

So, if you wish to become an individual who has an enquiring mind and is able to form your opinions rather than believe everything you see and hear, then A Level History is for you!

Course Components:
Component 1: Breadth Study – Germany 1871-1991
A chance to explore Germany's development from its unification in the 19th century to its re-unification at the end of the Cold War.
Assessment: Exam - analysis and interpretations (40% of A Level)

Component 2: Depth Study – Britain 1951-2007
This component allows you to explore Britain as it deals with changes within British society through to it finding its new place in the world after the Second World War.
Assessment: Exam - analysis and use of contemporary sources (40% of A Level)

Component 3: Historical Investigation
A personal study allowing you to develop and demonstrate your historical and research skills. The topic for this will be decided upon by AQA each year.
Assessment: Extended Essay – 3000 words (20% of the A Level)

Student comments:
"Lessons are enjoyable and feedback is always useful."

"History gives me a greater understanding of the world."

"I am always supported in my studies."

MATHEMATICS

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 7 in GCSE Maths (Higher Tier).

Exam board: Edexcel

Description of subject:
A Level Mathematics involves developing skills in algebra, geometry, probability, mathematical physics (known as "Mechanics") and statistics, which are then applied to a wide variety of abstract and real-life situations.

In Year 12 you will study:
- Pure Mathematics - in which you will extend and deepen your knowledge of algebra. You will also learn how to add up an infinitely long list of numbers and discover why baked bean tins are the shape that they are.
- Statistics - in which you will learn how to present and use data, to make predictions and calculate probabilities, as well as assessing whether or not the dice you are using are biased.
- Mechanics - in which amongst other things you will learn how to estimate the height of a building using a barometer.

In Year 13 you will study:
- Pure Mathematics - in which you will find that π crops up in all kinds of unexpected places not always connected to circles. You also get to meet another special number 'e' that occurs everywhere from atomic decay to high street banking.
- Statistics - in which you will start to learn the principles by which scientists decide whether a particular medical treatment works. You will also learn about the elusive "p-value" who's meaning usually stumps most undergraduates when writing their final-year dissertations in the sciences.
- Mechanics - in which you will learn to apply mathematics to a greater variety of real-world situations involving velocity, acceleration and forces.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
2 x 2 hour papers on Pure Mathematics
1 x 2 hour paper on Statistics and Mechanics

Student comments:
"It's challenging - and there's a lot of algebra involved."

"It's amazing that when you get to A Level you can see how all the Maths fits together.

FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Please note that Further Mathematics can only be studied as a FOURTH subject and must be studied alongside A Level Mathematics.

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 8 in Maths (Higher Tier).

Exam board: OCR(MEI)

Description of subject:
For some students, a single A Level in Mathematics is not a sufficient challenge; similarly, it is often a requirement (or at least a major advantage) to have Further Maths to study Mathematics, Engineering, Economics or the Physical Sciences at Oxford, Cambridge and some other top universities.

Over the 2 years you will study:
- Pure Mathematics topics such as: complex numbers; matrices and vectors; calculus; differential equations; hyperbolic functions and proof by induction.

You may also study:
- Further statistical topics including: linear; regressions; discrete and continuous random variables; hypotheses testing; correlation and chi-squared tests.
- Further topics in Mechanics such as: momentum and impulse; elastic strings and springs; work, power and energy; collisions and centre of mass.
- Further explorations of topics in Pure Mathematics such as: matrices; differential equations; calculus and series. You might also encounter topics such as number theory and group theory.
- You may also learn how to use technology to find solutions to advanced mathematical problems - the skills used in the Computational Fluid Dynamics of airflow over a Formula One car.

Student comments:
*"If you're good at maths, do Maths. If you're **really** good at maths, do Further Maths!"*

MEDIA STUDIES

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need a Grade 6 in GCSE English Language **or** Literature and Grade 6 in GCSE Media Studies if taken.

Exam Board: OCR

Description of subject:
This exciting and popular linear academic subject allows learners to study a range of media forms in terms of a theoretical framework which consists of media language, representation, media industries and audiences. The following forms are studied in depth through applying all areas of the framework: newspapers, magazines, television, online, social and participatory media. Advertising and marketing, film, music video, radio and video games are studied in relation to selected areas of the framework. Aspects of this framework are studied in the following way across the following three components.

Paper 1: Media Messages (35%)
A study of newspapers, Music videos, adverts and online Gaming gives us a broad knowledge of how Media conglomerates produce and distribute messages, and how audiences consume them in various ways. We focus on *Disney* as a multi-media company, as well as *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail.*

Paper 2: Evolving Media (35%)
An in-depth study into Long Form Television Dramas, considering the effects of streaming platforms, such as Netflix and BBC iplayer, compared to traditional means of film and TV and the impacts of the modern world.

A study of media companies is also considered where we look at how conglomerates such has Disney and Nintendo have grown and produced much of the media we enjoy today.

NEA (30%)
An independent product creation with a set focus each year that combines traditional and online means of communication; such examples include making your own music video, branding an original magazine or filming the opening to a crime drama show.

There are many opportunities for interactive trips, industry-focused study days, careers opportunities, which allow you to experience the media industry to both, help your study and explore future options.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for the Herschel, you will need a Grade 6 or above in PE if taken. Those who have not taken GCSE PE can still study this A Level but Grade 6 in Biology or in **both** grades of Combined Science, is required. You should have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in sports and a willingness to explore new ideas.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
A Level PE is a combination of theory and practice. The ability to maximise performance is something that athletes are always seeking to do and in this course you will learn how that happens. From studying the practical application of scientific principles from Biology, Chemistry and Physics you will learn how elite performers use these to get the best out of themselves. You will also learn how performance is related to more than just physical attributes and training. By studying sports psychology you will find out how memory affects reaction time or how elite athletes combat nerves when performing in front of a live audience. You will gain insight into the way in which sport has evolved over generations and how sport today is influenced by everything from the ancient Greeks to modern technology.
PE is the preferred A Level if you wish to study Physiotherapy at university as well as sports science, SPECS and Occupational Therapy. It is also highly regarded for entry to al science-based courses and the uniformed services and armed forces.

You will enjoy this course if you:
- participate regularly in a recognised sport or physical activity. This can be done through school club participation. Only 1 sport is required.
- are interested in finding out how the body works and responds to exercise.
- want to learn how to use scientific methods for improving performance.
- want to learn more about sports psychology.
- are interested in how society influences and is influenced by sport

In Year 12 you will study:
- Skill Acquisition
- Movement Analysis
- History of Sport
- Sports Psychology
- Applied Anatomy and Physiology

In Year 13 you will study:
- Exercise Physiology
- Biomechanics
- Sport Psychology
- Sport & Society
- Technology in Sport

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
Paper 1: 2 hour written exam (35% of A Level)
Paper 2: 2 hour written exam (35% of A Level)
NEA: School-based assessment:
Performance in the full context of one sporting activity
Written analysis and evaluation of weaknesses in performance (15%)

PHYSICS

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 7 in Physics **or** grades 8-7 in Combined Science, **and** at least a Grade 7 in Maths. It is highly recommended that A Level Maths is taken as a complementary subject.

Exam board: OCR Physics A

Description of subject:
A level Physics is a natural science that studies matter and its motion through space and time. It involves thinking about abstract concepts such as fields and applying them to practical situations such as electric motors.

Physics is the truly universal science. It is the rational development of experiments, observations and theories to explain the fundamental structure of all we perceive, from the smallest subatomic particle to the entire Universe. Physics deals with fundamentals - the nature of space and time, matter and energy.
Physics underpins all sciences. Many major developments in chemistry, biology, geology and medicine have been made by physicists. Physics is also the foundation of much modern technology; mobile phones, flat screen televisions and the internet to name but a few!

In Year 12 you will study:
Quantities, Units, Scalars & Vectors
Work, Energy & Power
Forces + Momentum
Circular Motion
Oscillations
Materials
Energy, Power & Resistance
Charge & Current, Electrical Circuits
Capacitors
Electric Fields
Magnetic Fields & Electromagnetism

In Year 13 you will study:
Waves
Quantum Physics
Thermal Physics
Gravitational Fields
Astrophysics & Cosmology
Medical Imaging
Nuclear & Particle Physics

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
This is split into three written papers and a non-examined practical component.

Student comments:
"Really interesting - and you'll learn so many cool concepts!"

"Studying Physics is like a roller-coaster: whatever happens, you'll have fun!"

"A difficult subject, but with hard work and dedication, a good grade is more than achievable."

PSYCHOLOGY

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in Maths **and** English Language or English Literature, **and** at least a Grade 6 in Biology or 6-6 in Combined Science, as Psychology is a subject which requires the ability to express yourself accurately and fluently on paper and to understand numbers and physiology at a basic level. Confidence in Maths and Biology is essential to succeed on the course.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour, and AQA Psychology (New Specification) introduces you to the broad range of Psychology topics.

This course of study comprises written units with no coursework. The emphasis is on applying knowledge and understanding, thereby developing your transferable skills of analysis, evaluation and critical thinking.

The specification offers a broad range of topics including research methods in context, memory, social psychology, attachment, psychopathology, biopsychology, approaches, cognition and development, schizophrenia and forensic psychology.

Is Psychology for you?
You will need to be good at extended writing, enjoy analysing numbers (statistics) and have a keen interest in the human body, particularly the brain. You will need to be able to apply your knowledge to real life scenarios.

Psychology is an exciting and challenging subject that will require hard work and commitment.

Course Components:
Paper 1: Introductory topics to Psychology
Social Influence, Memory, Attachment and Psychopathology

Paper 2: Psychology in context
Key Approaches, Biopsychology and Research Methods

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology
Issues & Debates, Relationships, Schizophrenia and Aggression.

Assessment at the end of Year 13:
All three components are examined in 2hr exams, each worth 33.3% of the qualification.

Student comments:
"Psychology provides a deeper understanding of the human mind, giving reasons for certain behaviour and actions. You can learn a lot about yourself!"

"Psychology makes you consider your own thinking. The things you learn have an impact both inside and outside the classroom."

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Qualifications to start the course:
In addition to the general entry requirements for Herschel, you will need at least a Grade 6 in English Language as well as have the ability to work independently on a project, manage your time effectively and meet deadlines.

Exam board: AQA

Description of subject:
The Extended Project Qualification is a one-year course that provides you with the opportunity to explore an idea or hobby that really interests you. It is equivalent to an AS Level and will teach you skills that are valued by employers and universities. This course is for you if you are self-motivated and enjoy working independently – whether in a practical way, like designing or performing, or researching, investigating and writing.

For the majority of students at Herschel it will involve a dissertation of 5000 words, though a small number may research and design a product. Examples of recent EPQ research areas by Herschel students include the architecture of the Nazi era, euthanasia, the rise of IS, stem cell research, an Art installation, the Marvel film franchises, Black Lives Matter, Method Acting, sexism in the gaming industry, cosmetic surgery in South Korea, space travel, the meaning of infinity: there really is no limit to the areas for your research!

Once you have decided, you will be given guidance to help develop the skills you need to manage your Project. Whatever you chose, you will be expected to work independently, supported by your teachers. You could learn more about something that interests you: or investigate a controversial topic; expand your knowledge of one of your other subjects; or gain practical skills that will help you in Higher Education and the workplace.

How is the course assessed?
You will be assessed on:

- How well you manage your work, such as planning your time and choosing what methods to use
- How you select and use information and resources throughout the Project
- The range of skills you develop and use
- How effectively you review your own work

At the end of the course, you will achieve an A* to E Grade, equivalent to an AS Level. An A* Grade is currently worth 28 UCAS points.

What the students say

The teaching is very effective, and the teachers and students are friendly. I really enjoy coming to school. I like the way the school pushes you to do your best and gives you responsibility for your learning.

Whenever there is a problem it is easy to talk to a member of staff who gives effective advice on how to get the issue tackled and resolved or you can speak to the Sixth Form Committee. In particular my tutor is an excellent mentor who genuinely cares for his students' academic and personal welfare.

The Sixth Form has many good opportunities (e.g. the Travel Scholarship, Mock Trial, and Duke of Edinburgh) and it's a great place to learn with really supportive teachers.

Having been slightly uncertain at the end of GCSEs, joining Herschel is probably one of the best decisions I have made because of the quality of teaching and support. For someone who had no idea what I wanted to do at the beginning of the year, it was reassuring to know that there was someone to help me see where my real interests lay, and to guide me through the process on how to pursue them. Staff are really helpful and enthusiastic by genuinely wishing to see us reach our full potential.

The younger pupils look up to us as role models and the teachers are also more open with us.

I think pupils in the Sixth Form are very focused and are determined to reach their potential. There is a general feeling of wanting to do well.

Life in the Sixth Form is a learning curve that has taught me an array of skills and equipped me with experiences for the future. The Sixth Form has provided me with the wonderful opportunity of being a Managing Director in the Young Enterprise scheme. I learnt to delegate tasks effectively, to take responsibility for mishaps and to motivate the team at all times. My organisation and communication skills have vastly improved and we won several trophies along the way!

As part of the Year 12 Community Involvement Programme we carry out an hour of community service each week; I carried out my placement at a local nursery. Overseeing children, assisting with activities and reading stories were just some of my duties. Not only was this something I could include in my personal statement but it was also a stress relieving and pleasurable experience, allowing me to give back to the wider community.

What Ofsted say (Inspection May 2024)

Sixth Form provision is outstanding.

Pupils thive in the vibrant community of this school.

Pupils are ambitious for themselves and what they can achieve, modelled by the high aspirations that staff have for them, but also fostered by an increasing independence as they progress through the school.

Lessons are engaging places of learning, where pupils are keen to ask questions and challenge one another's opinions, founded on the highly secure knowledge and skills they have accrued as a result of exceptional teaching.

A large range of clubs and house competitions, along with initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Young Enterprise schemes, supplement opportunities in the classroom. There is a range of leadership opportunities for pupils to engage with. They are proud to hold responsibilities such as house captain, being members of the year and school councils or contributing to the 'Eco-Committee'. Sixth-formers work as mentors for younger pupils and as head prefects.

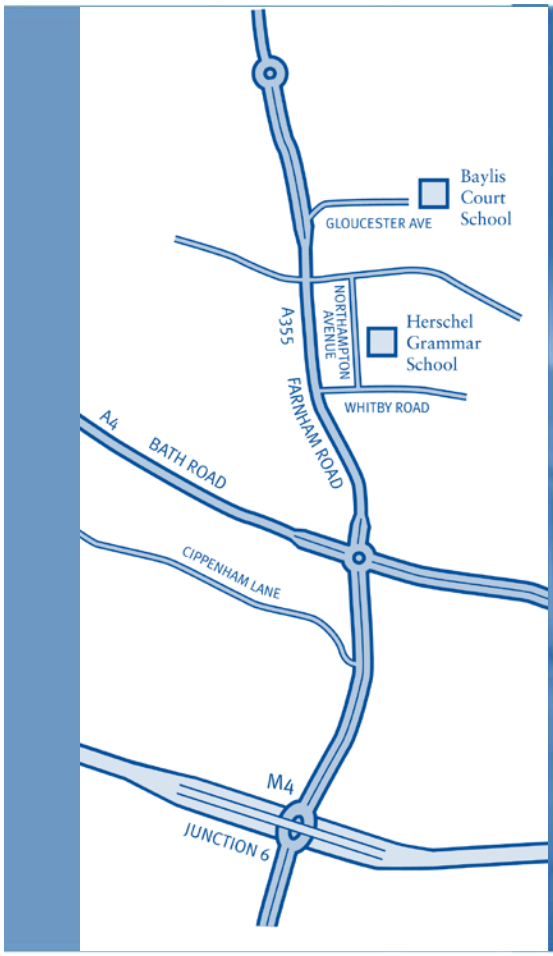
Relationships across the school are warm and founded on respect. Pupils live out daily the school's values of responsibility, success and care. Pupils are known well by staff, meaning they know how best to support them, both academically and more widely.

It is not just in examination outcomes that pupils thrive. They are happy and proud to be associated with their school. Pupils engage with work beyond the school in their local community, such as litter picking, volunteering in care homes and nurseries and supporting local events.

The school has a highly ambitious curriculum which supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to do exceptionally well.

Lessons are characterised by highly expert teaching. Explanations are clear, and pupils pick up the knowledge and skills they need to understand their learning at a high level. Staff are adept at asking questions both to check pupils' understanding and to ensure that pupils think hard about their learning. As a result, pupils routinely think deeply and challenge themselves.

A well-developed careers programme is also in place to support pupils in considering their options when they leave school. This connects across the school and is especially bespoke to students' needs and next steps in the sixth form.





Herschel Grammar School

Northampton Avenue,
Slough, Berkshire SL1 3BW
Tel: 01753 520950
Email: mail@herschel.slough.sch.uk
Web: www.herschel.slough.sch.uk