

Photography

AQA Specification



General information:

Photography is really the study of a wide range of light and lens-based media. We teach you how to use a camera and to think like a photographer. Our approach to photography is creative. What is creativity? Well it's really one or more of these: Playfulness, curiosity, sensitivity, independence, self-awareness, risk taking, meaning making, originality, making new connections, questioning established conventions and beliefs. The ability to handle materials, techniques and processes effectively and safely underpins all the Assessment Objectives. It is important in enabling students to develop a personal language, to express ideas and link their intentions to outcomes in a confident and assured manner. You will need to be self-motivated and have an open mind.

Course content:

The course is designed to develop your ability as a young Artist, questioning and reflecting on themes that will initially be set for you. The course will allow you to pursue and develop an idea creatively and confidently with the support of expert teaching staff.

Your initial project will be based on the theme of structures, where you will get the opportunity to explore other areas of Art and Design both digital and traditional and then decide which personal route you want the project to take. In your initial Project you will also be learning how to use a camera. Experimenting with a range of photographic processes and techniques, e.g. montage, digital techniques, manipulation and printing, an appreciation of viewpoint, composition, depth of field, practical understanding of portraiture, street photography, still life, experimental or abstract photography. You will be developing creative/aesthetic interpretative themes within Fine Art/Photography. Presenting your work effectively to communicate your ideas, recording the development of your ideas, analysing your own and others' work in a sketchbook (or digital book), developing an understanding of techniques related to the printing of photographic images, presentation, layout and mounting. Within the initial project and second project, which will be a live brief of your choice, you will explore digital art, learn how to confidently use Photoshop, Illustrator and Lightroom and explore digital editing. You will then independently work in response to a theme from a selection of visual and written starting points before finally at the end year 12, start your own personal Investigation, which will make up 60% of your overall grade. This will ensure you understand the expectations of the subject and prepare you for a degree or career in Photography or Art and Design.

How is the course taught and assessed?

Component 1: The Portfolio (60%) which you will start at the end of Year 12. This will be supported by a written assignment to contextualise your investigation (1000-3000 words). The course concludes with Component 2: An Externally Set Assignment (40%), completed in February of Year 13.

Student's work is assessed against four assessment objectives (AOs)

AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops

AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Entry requirements:

In addition to the general entry requirements for BWS, a grade 6 in GCSE Art, Graphic Design, Photography or Design Technology and a portfolio of work to support if needs be.

Results information:

Photography is a very successful subject at BWS. In 2023, out of students entered, 75% of students got A* - A grade at A level.

Top destinations for students:

Common choices include Art Foundation Courses. Degree in Photography, Commercial Photography, Visual effects, Graphic Design, Illustration, Animation, Concept Art, Visual Arts.

Beyond the curriculum:

Students are offered the opportunity to continue their art work in the art rooms outside of lessons when available. They are able to display their work around the school, be published in Wordsworth magazine and support younger students with their art work. Students work is also showcased on the schools Instagram page. Pupils frequently take part in external competitions and work on live briefs in and out of the school. Students will also be given the opportunity to visit London Galleries and a go on a residential trip to broaden their depth of experience - we have previously visited New York, Florence, Rome and Paris. These trips are a vital learning resource they inspire and inform ideas and responses, developing students understanding of their subject in a wider context.