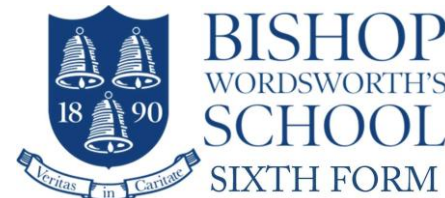


Photography



AQA Specification

General information:

Photography encompasses the study of diverse light and lens-based media. We teach you not only how to use a camera but also how to think like a photographer. Our approach to photography is inherently creative. Creativity involves elements such as playfulness, curiosity, sensitivity, independence, self-awareness, risk-taking, meaning-making, originality, forming new connections, and questioning established conventions and beliefs. Mastering materials, techniques, and processes effectively and safely is fundamental to all the assessment objectives within the course. This proficiency is crucial for students to develop a personal language, express their ideas, and confidently link their intentions to outcomes. You will need to be self-motivated and open-minded.

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 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, you will explore digital art, learn how to confidently use Photoshop, Illustrator and Lightroom and explore digital editing. You will then independently, 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. The course concludes with Component 2: An Externally Set Assignment (40%), completed in February of Year 13.

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 2025, 100% of students achieved grades A* to A 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 artwork in the art rooms outside of lessons when available. They can display their work around the school, be published in Wordsworth magazine and support younger students with their artwork.

During the A Level Art course, we have the incredible opportunity to visit London several times over the two years, immersing ourselves in the city's vibrant creative culture. These trips are a vital part of our artistic journey, allowing us to experience world-class art and design firsthand. We explore inspiring locations such as the South Bank, Tate Modern, the Design Museum, the Hayward Gallery, and the Barbican Centre—each offering a unique perspective on contemporary and historical art. We also visit the V&A, the National Gallery, and the National Portrait Gallery to study masterpieces up close, gaining valuable insight into technique, composition, and context. Highlights of the course include the D&AD New Blood exhibition in Shoreditch and the London Illustration Fair, where we encounter cutting-edge creative talent and emerging industry trends. Each visit deepens our understanding of art in all its forms and fuels our own creative development.

Throughout the A Level Art course, we actively take part in a wide range of design, art, and photography competitions both locally and nationally, giving us the chance to showcase our creativity beyond the classroom. Our students have entered prestigious events such as the Rotary Photography Competition and have exhibited their work in local museums and libraries, gaining valuable exposure and recognition. We also take part in creative workshops at Salisbury Cathedral, where the stunning architecture provides a unique source of inspiration. In addition, we've had the privilege of exhibiting at Gallery 21 in Salisbury, presenting our work in a professional setting and engaging with the wider art community. These experiences not only enhance our artistic skills but also build confidence, ambition, and a deeper connection to the creative world around us.