

Art, Craft and Design

AQA Specification



General information:

Art is a creative subject in which students respond independently to themes and questions, making it a vital field of study at an A level. Engaging with art fosters critical thinking, self-expression, and cultural awareness. Students will present their investigations in a sketchbook, visually articulating the understanding and context of their work, while researching artists and information relevant to their practice. Students will have the opportunity to realise intentions and curate an exhibition as a group, providing hands-on experience in showcasing art. Additionally, students can visit London galleries and participate in trips to broaden their depth of experience. These excursions are essential learning resources, inspiring and informing ideas, and enhancing students' understanding of their subject in a broader context. Throughout your studies, you will receive full support from an experienced team of practitioners and a dedicated technical support team. Art at this level not only hones technical skills but also cultivates a profound appreciation for the diverse dimensions of human expression and creativity.

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 and technicians. Your initial project will be based on the theme 'Structures'. This will start with a focus on drawing techniques and ways to develop a personal response to the theme in a short intensive project that will give you a comprehensive understanding of the assessment objectives. You will also explore digital art, learn how to use Photoshop and Illustrator, and look at photography and digital editing. You will then independently work in response to a theme from a selection of visual and written starting points. We will work together to ensure you understand the expectations of the subject and prepare you for your A 'level. From doing this initial project, you will be able to confidently explore all the areas of Art and Design before specialising on your chosen path, whether that is to keep studying Art Craft and Design and all the areas of Art or you may want to specialise in Photography or Graphic Design. 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 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, worth 60%, which you will start at the end of year 12. This will be supported by a written assignment to contextualize your investigation (1000-3000 words).

The course concludes with Component 2: An externally set Assignment, worth 40%, to be completed in the February of Year 2.

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.

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Entry requirements:	Results information:	Top destinations for students:
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.	Art is a very successful subject at BWS. In 2025, 100% of students achieved grades A* to B at A level.	Common choices include Art Foundation Courses, degrees in Fine Art, Graphic Design, Photography, Architecture, Marketing, Product Design and more.

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.

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