



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE



The Shell Curriculum

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The Shell Curriculum

Central to the Marlborough education is a commitment to learning as a skill for life; learning for its own sake rather than as a means to an end. A strong performance in public examinations provides a valuable passport to opportunity; however, true academic excellence is born of intellectual curiosity and academic rigour, not of relentless focus on assessment and results. Thus we support our pupils to develop skills and habits of mind that will serve them through the rest of their lives, well beyond their comparatively short time with us.

The Shell curriculum is deliberately broad-based and at its heart lies ‘Form’ – where “everything in the area of human experience is potentially of interest and therefore relevant”. It is a combined Humanities course taught in groups of twelve, that takes the place of History, Religious Studies and English. One day a group will be enjoying the poems of John Betjeman, the next trying to decide why William the Conqueror conquered, or whether Boris Johnson will be the next Prime Minister. Form is varied and exploratory, and teaches the pupils to read and listen critically and to express themselves coherently.

Your son or daughter will also study Mathematics, Science (taught separately as Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Modern Languages (two chosen after a three-week carousel of six different languages), Latin (and for some, Greek), Geography, Art, Design Technology, Music, PE and ICT.

The Shell year should be one of discovery and opportunity, of feeding current interests and igniting new passions. It is a fecund transition phase in the academic life of your son or daughter, during which foundations for future success, within the College and beyond, should be laid. I sincerely hope that he or she enjoys this initial stage of their journey.



Ed Tolputt
Deputy Head (Academic)

Shell 'Form'

In line with the College's aim to develop intellectual curiosity 'Form' seeks to enrich Shell pupils' academic experience and to help them explore beyond the confines of subject boundaries.

Form enables small groups of pupils to work with a Form teacher in the investigation of three combined Humanities subjects: English, History and Religious Studies. Just as boarding houses provide an excellent basis for pupils' social development and learning about community life, so Form lessons aim to provide the basis for intellectual growth and the sharing of ideas.

Central to Form lessons is the common study of the development of human civilisation, enabling pupils to appreciate something of the chronology of that development as well as its ideas, cultures, actions and beliefs. Underpinning the course is the truism that learning is not a passive process and that, through conversation and exploration, pupils can be guided towards a greater understanding both of their own place in the world and of the views of others.

In addition to the almost daily contact between Form teachers and their Forms, the course includes whole year group events, lectures and activities, as well as study trips locally and further afield. A central core of skills required by the English, History and Religious Studies departments ensures a consistency of experience for all pupils as well as common levels of preparation for the next stage of their academic career.

Shell Form core skills include:

- development of oral English through debate, presentation, rôle-play, recitation, etc.
- promotion of reading for pleasure as well as reading for study, with introduction to different ways of reading for different purposes
- introduction to the uses of the College's libraries and to effective use of dictionaries and other standard works of reference
- development of skills for analytical writing: research, note-making, essay planning, drafting and writing
- creative writing in a range of styles and genres and for a range of audiences and purposes
- development of secure understanding of the grammar and spelling of English and of basic grammatical terms
- introduction to the skills of literary criticism and basic literary terms

- recognition of concepts of cause and effect, progression and regression, differing rates of change or continuity over time and people in context of their place in the past
- understanding of historical narrative and imagination, buttressed by nascent critical evaluation of 'facts'
- ability to relate current affairs to class learning and vice versa
- ability to adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion and philosophy
- becoming aware of one's self, personal feelings, identity and worth – one's relationships with others and the personal qualities and responsibilities needed for being a member of a community
- exploration of religions and beliefs and the ability to reflect on fundamental questions and to engage with them intellectually and personally
- ability to distinguish between objective and subjective approaches to the ways in which humanity tries to answer ultimate questions
- consideration of a spiritual dimension to life through the experience of reflection with recognition that in many human beings the experience of life evokes a sense of mystery, awe and wonder about its origin and purpose.

The year's work will culminate with the writing of a Form Project, an original, extended piece of writing; or a portfolio of work, seeking to explore a theme in an analytical, reflective and creative manner. An individual piece might take the form of an extended essay, an original artefact or even a performance, as long as the level of research, analysis and exposition evinces independent scholarship and genuine engagement with the theme. A portfolio should contain several, smaller pieces, but these pieces should provide evidence of different styles of approach to the main theme.

Art

All Shell pupils study a stimulating, informative and engaging introductory course which offers a balanced programme of art practice. The essential skills of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics and lens based media are explored, partly through a focus on the work of relevant contemporary and preceding artists. Pupils acquire a deeper understanding of artistic language through their practical studio work and written responses. They are also encouraged to discuss art in class, enabling a more mature insight, greater visual inquiry and awareness.

Individual teachers formulate their own course content, with prep being set fortnightly. Our rich, varied and thorough teaching of Art during the Shell year, will give pupils an opportunity to make an informed and confident decision when making their GCSE choices.

Classics

The Shell Classics course aims to develop the linguistic skills necessary for the study of Latin and Greek, and to foster a natural curiosity about the ancient world. The Classics department is home to a 2,000 year old Egyptian Mummy and an excellent cast collection of Greek sculpture. Many places of archaeological interest, such as Avebury, Bath and Stonehenge, are within easy distance of the College.

All pupils study Latin in the Shell, using either Cullen & Taylor's *Latin to GCSE* or the *Oxford Latin Course*. Both texts combine stimulating narrative with a regular review of grammar and topics in Roman history and social life. There is a strong emphasis on exploring the derivations of Latin words in the English language so that all pupils can begin to appreciate the difference between an inflected and non-inflected language and see how Latin still lives today within English and Romance languages.

Greek is taught to pupils in the higher Latin sets during some of the time normally allocated to Latin, and the course lays the necessary foundations for GCSE Greek. Pupils are also encouraged to enter the district reading competitions (for the reading aloud of Latin) in which we have an excellent record.

Design Technology

With an intake from so many different feeder schools we anticipate a wide variety of design experience amongst our Shell pupils. Design Technology therefore seeks to provide a broad foundation course in this rapidly developing area of the curriculum. Encouraging young people to have an influence in the designed and made world in which they live.

Creativity is a key ingredient in future proofing careers and we want our pupils to be the ones leading with initiatives. Equipped with the skills necessary to devour any challenge put in front of them, the doers, thinkers and dreamers.

Problem solving is at the heart of design activity and each student will tackle a series of structured design challenges in our workshop environment. Some of these challenges have an aesthetic bias whilst others draw on a developing awareness of technology; most will result in a manufactured product. Our ICT facilities provide opportunities for pupils to experience 3D printing, graphics, laser work and computer aided design.

As a foundation course we aim to encourage pupils to think logically and clearly through problems, whilst providing a sound platform for GCSE option choices.

Exercise & Sport Sciences (ESS)

The Shell Exercise & Sport Sciences curriculum is designed to assist pupils to develop their ability to move well through a series of fun and active teaching activities. Pupils are taught in small, co-education classes, with the support of a teacher, graduate assistants, and input from the strength & conditioning team. The entire programme is spread across our fantastic sports facilities, championed by the state-of-the-art physical conditioning suite.

The Lower School Exercise & Sport Sciences curriculum has been completely redesigned to be progressive across the Shell and Remove years. The Shell are introduced to a number of exciting activities which develop across the two-year curriculum, such as: Track and Field, where pupils challenge their ability to run, throw and jump; Free Flow (a series of movement challenges based on the principles of gymnastics, play and climbing); Fundamental Movement, where pupils develop their fundamental skills and challenge their movement patterns; aquatic activities such as stroke development in swimming, and lifesaving skills; Agility Ball Skills, allowing pupils to sample a range of ball games, from Fives to Handball to Basketball, which challenge their coordination, speed and agility; and summer sports like Tennis, Athletics and Softball.

All of the above are also supplemented by engaging and relevant theoretical concepts of Sport Sciences, with a view to developing pupils' interest in the GCSE Sport Sciences course available as an option in the Remove.

Geography

The Shell Geography course encourages pupils to look more closely at their immediate environment and to develop a broader interest in the world that lies beyond it. The themes that we study will give pupils a good grounding in the core topics that they will meet at GCSE. There are three core components of the course: wilderness environments, hazards and global issues.

Core topics include the wilderness environments of Antarctica, Amazonia and Siberia and coral reefs, as well as tsunamis, avalanches and super volcanoes, natural hazards. Global issues include water footprints, water conflicts, ageing and youthful populations and issues raised by internal and international migration, including migration into the UK. In addition, one or two special topics are chosen by individual teachers.

Throughout the course there are structured units of work which allow pupils to develop their IT skills and to take advantage of the vast bank of resources now provided by the Internet. We introduce Geographical Information Systems (GIS) which provide IT tools for investigating important and relevant physical and human phenomena.

Information Technology

In their Shell year all pupils have an IT Skills course focused in the classroom on the development of programming skills and serving as a foundation for the Remove and Hundred GCSE Computer Science course that is offered. Directed independent learning to supplement more generalized IT skills is also available.

ICT is also part of the PSHE programme, and issues around the use of the Internet, email and other communication tools, the use of social-networking sites, and online safety are all examined in detail.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Department has two aims: to provide the skills necessary for the productive study of other subjects and to introduce pupils to the beauty and excitement of mathematics itself.

The ability to think logically and to solve problems is a very important life skill and one to be enjoyed by young and old alike. Pupils at Marlborough College are encouraged to think critically, creatively and, above all else, to engage whole-heartedly in the mathematical puzzles that are introduced.

To extend able pupils intellectually is important, yet it is equally vital to build the confidence of those for whom mathematics does not come easily; it is, therefore, the policy of the Department to keep the lower sets as small as possible, whilst more able pupils are stretched with challenging problems to give them the best chance of achieving the new level 9 grade at IGCSE. At every level, the composition of sets is reviewed regularly.

In addition, we seek opportunities to extend pupils beyond the normal work of the classroom by entering them for such national events as the UK Schools Mathematics Challenge and the Junior Mathematical Olympiad.

Modern Languages

Pupils in the Shell are required to study two modern languages. The Department enables each pupil to make an informed choice from the languages on offer, by holding a three week Language Circus of six languages: French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish. This takes place during the first three weeks of the Michaelmas Term. Pupils are encouraged to approach this opportunity with an open and enquiring mind, and they express their preferences at the end of the process. The decision as to which languages pupils proceed with is taken in consultation with the language beaks and Housemaster/ Housemistress. The Department aims to satisfy language choices as far as possible.

In the case of German, Italian, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish, the study of a language *ab initio* provides a novel intellectual challenge and the opportunity of discovering a different culture. In the case of French, pupils improve and deepen their knowledge of the language, laying the necessary foundations for success at IGCSE, and also spend part of the course learning about aspects of French culture – film, drama, literature and poetry – taught in French as the medium of instruction. It is also possible for pupils with previous knowledge of Spanish to join a continuation group, following initial assessment.

It is expected that (I) GCSE choices will be based upon the two languages which pupils choose in the Shell. In exceptional cases, if a pupil wishes to revert to a language which they have previously studied this will be possible up until Christmas.

After the Shell, pupils must continue one language to IGCSE (French, German, Italian & Spanish) or GCSE (Mandarin & Russian) and may continue both as two (I) GCSE options.

Music

The Shell music curriculum is divided into three equal courses, which will be roughly distributed across the three terms.

The first course of lessons aims to be flexible and informative, providing a broad perspective to the study of music in the curriculum. It is inclusive in approach, interactive in style and has been designed so that even the non-specialist musician can make a first-class contribution and perform in class to a high standard. There are many opportunities to develop individual aural skills and the broad range of topics include studying and writing a 4 chord song using 'GarageBand', studying the instruments of the orchestra through 'Programme music', film music and music for advertising and finally a topic based solely on film music, visiting the techniques used and using the terminology required to continue study to GCSE level. Performance in class will be encouraged either in group singing, African drumming, clapping games or solo performances (the latter by those having individual instrumental or vocal lessons).

The aim of the second Shell course is to encourage pupils to develop themselves as intelligent, analytical listeners by producing an internet based project on a band or musician of the pupil's choice. Particular attention is paid to the sociological, historical, technological and political issues that combine to make certain music or musicians sound as they do. Opinion is important; both of others and of the pupils themselves.

The final course is a practical, composition based course, where the pupils will learn the technical details of how to work the two pieces of computer software 'Sibelius' and 'Cubase'. They will also develop some simple composition and keyboard skills and complete a variety of short exercises.

Sciences

Biology, Chemistry and Physics are compulsory to IGCSE. The Shell year forms the foundation year in the Sciences which leads on to Edexcel's International GCSE (9-1) Science examinations in the Hundred.

We offer two routes to IGCSE, outlined below, with pupils being entered for the examination which is most appropriate to them based upon their ability.

Decisions on which of the IGCSE examinations pupils will be entered for are not finalised until the end of the Remove, following the end-of-year examinations.

The available examinations are:

- International GCSE (9-1) Biology, Chemistry and Physics 4BI1, 4CH1 and 4PH1 (also known as the Separate, or 'Triple', Sciences)

Pupils taking this route study all three Sciences and will be awarded 3 IGCSE grades

- International GCSE (9-1) Science (Double Award) 4SD0 (also known as 'Double Award')

Pupils taking this route also study the three Sciences but do so in less detail than Separate Science candidates. The results of the three IGCSE examination papers, one in each science, are then combined and this leads to the award of two IGCSE grades (from 9,9 to 1,1). The award of two grades, rather than three, simply reflects the reduced content and time necessary for this qualification.

It should be noted that the Separate Sciences offer a greater challenge to pupils. These examinations include additional content with a higher level of demand. They are taught in an equivalent amount of time to Science (Double Award) and so this route to IGCSE will not be appropriate for all. Currently, around 80 pupils study the Separate Sciences.

Strong and sustained academic progress across all Sciences, and an excellent performance in the Shell and Remove end of year examinations, are prerequisites for those wishing to be considered for examinations in the Separate Sciences.

Both the Separate Sciences and Science (Double Award) offer a sound preparation for pupils wishing to study one or more Sciences in the Sixth Form.

In addition to Biology, Chemistry and Physics, we are also pleased to offer Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Astronomy, 1AS0. This two year course may be studied by interested pupils beginning in the Remove.

Further information is available from the Head of Science and from Edexcel at:
<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-international-gcses-and-edexcel-certificates.html>

and

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/astronomy-2017.html>

Biology

The Shell course involves study in four topic areas.

'The nature and variety of living organisms' – reviews and expands on the foundations of biology such as microscopy, cells and the diversity of life.

'Nutrition' – explores photosynthesis and plant nutrition as well as human nutrition, the digestive system and the need for a balanced diet.

'Enzymes' – introduces the chemistry of life.

'Ecology' – considers living organisms in their environment, including how man's activities affect them.

'How Science works', which considers the principles of investigations – how data are collected, presented and interpreted, is incorporated into all four of the topic areas shown above.

Chemistry

The Shell course involves study in four topic areas.

'Principles of Chemistry' – introduces states of matter; atoms and atomic structure; elements, compounds and mixtures; chemical formulae and equations.

'Chemistry of the Elements' – introduces the Periodic Table; tests for gases, anions and cations

'Physical Chemistry' – introduces acidity, alkalinity and salt formation; rates of reaction.

'Experimental Chemistry' – introduces the chemical laboratory, and provides pupils with elementary laboratory skills and the techniques required to carry out chemical experiments safely and effectively.

Physics

The Shell course involves study in eight topic areas.

'Optics' – builds upon work covered at Common Entrance, studying the properties of light and their applications.

'Forces and Materials' – provides an examination of the properties, uses and behaviour of various substances along with an introduction to forces.

'Charge and Current' – concerns the phenomena of static electricity, its properties, uses and occurrence in nature. It also lays down the foundations for future work on electricity.

'Energy Resources and Efficiency' – which considers the ways in which we use energy along with the concept of efficiency.

'Astrophysics' – considers the life cycle of stars, including classification methods for stars and methods for determining the temperature of stars.

'Waves and the Electromagnetic Spectrum' – are scrutinized and applied to areas such as sound waves and the electromagnetic spectrum.

'Sound and Motion' – introduces the concept of using sound to measure distances.

'States of Matter' – introduces the concept of thermal physics and applies it to solids, liquids and gases.

Learning Support

Our goal is to help pupils develop the skills they need to think and learn independently. We work individually and in small groups with pupils.

We identify pupils' needs through close liaison with prep schools and screening of literacy skills at the beginning of the Shell year. In addition, we have an ongoing system for internal referrals from Housemasters and Housemistresses. When a concern is raised, further assessments are carried out by the Learning Support Department which may result in a recommendation to consider assessment by an educational psychologist. A small number of pupils may be allowed extra time in examinations, but an assessment must be undertaken at the beginning of their GCSE programme to investigate this. Extra time at Common Entrance does not automatically carry forward.

We expect our pupils to develop a range of study skills and learning strategies that will enable them to study successfully across subject areas.

The development of effective higher level reading and writing skills is crucial to academic success and plays a central role in learning support lessons. We also show pupils a range of approaches to revision and exam technique. Our aim is for pupils to develop confidence in their own learning so that they can succeed academically whilst developing the skills that will equip them for life at university and beyond.

A small number of overseas pupils attend lessons with a teacher of English as an Additional Language.

Pupils usually attend one thirty-five minute tutorial per week with a specialist teacher, for which an additional charge is made.

Scholars

The Academic Scholarship and Leadership programme at Marlborough is rooted in the desire to develop pupils of outstanding intellect, character and commitment. Those pupils who obtain an Academic Scholarship will be joining an exciting programme designed for pupils who demonstrate exceptional talent, potential and a commitment to learning. These pupils will have the energy and drive to use their talents to the full and to take advantage of all that is on offer at Marlborough and beyond. The programme builds on the vibrant cultural and community life at Marlborough and it provides another elevated and enriching academic layer for those exceptional pupils needing rigorous scholarly challenges and stimulation.

Shell pupils joining the scholarship programme will benefit from a range of support to help them develop and foster a love and respect for learning for its own sake. Their Academic Scholarship Head of Year will help them to develop the skills required for ongoing scholarly reflection and understand the responsibilities associated with their role, encouraging them to become increasingly independent and self-directed, a journey on which their leather-bound Scholars' Learning Journal will be an important tool and a source of inspiration. They will be encouraged to attend at least three events hosted by the College each term and to gradually invite non-scholars to join them. They will be introduced and given access to some of the College's hidden treasures such as the Rare Books Collection, the Archives and the Classic department's Egyptian mummy. Every scholar is also entitled to an annual £100 allowance to help enrich and pursue their academic interests. The Lent Term will include a formal Black Tie Dinner for the Lower School Scholars with guest speakers drawn from the U6th scholars.

It is hoped that each scholar will benefit enormously from this layer of academic enrichment and, in turn, will have a responsibility to give something back to our wider academic offering. Through such challenge and collaboration, we aim for scholars to emerge ready to make a real and positive difference to all of the communities to which they will belong in their lives after Marlborough.





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