

Economics & Business Department Curriculum Statement



Intent

Our department's aim is for our students to achieve academic excellence in our subjects, so that they are able to continue their studies in them at Higher Education or to commence employment as school leavers. The courses for both subjects are essay based and they encourage important analytical, evaluative and computational skills that should equip our students well for the future. Given the applied nature of our subjects, the parlous state of our economy, the higher profile of entrepreneurship in our society and the 'practical' nature of our students and their parents, keying into the working world is particularly important to us. Many students choose our subjects because they are interested in understanding the commercial world and also because they believe, with some reason, that they might be of more help to them in gaining employment at the end of their studies. With this in mind, we supplement our teaching with a good range of extracurricular/supra-curricular activities. The curricula we offer not only underpins the IB learner, but that of the schools values of Intellect, Empathy and Courage.

Implementation

a) Content & Skills

Students join our KS4 course having no formal prior knowledge of the course content. Most students believe that the course might be useful in the future and, at the least, might be different from the subjects in their earlier years. We attract a diverse range of students, a student profile that we tend to keep into KS5.

In terms of content, both KS4 courses use standard building blocks. In Economics this comprises: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, International Trade and Global Economics. In Business Studies: Marketing, Finance, Operations and Human Resources. Students are taught and need to demonstrate the skills of Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation. The new 9-1 courses have introduced a slightly greater emphasis on computational skills in preparation for the more technical handling of some of the topics in KS5 and beyond.

In KS4 Business Studies the order of the course is largely determined by the recommendations of the exam board. Operations is placed after Human Resources to

allow for HR to be studied straight after external influences - as this is often where they have the greatest effect. This also means that mock examinations can explore and test understanding of the relationship between HR and the external environment. In KS5 the order of the course is determined by the teaching staff. Students are often very receptive to starting the course with Marketing at Standard Level, which is often successful in securing interest and engagement in the subject. At Higher Level the course opens with the more difficult computational tasks which underpin a lot of the analysis that is needed through the course. It also serves to demonstrate the more difficult aspects of the course early on so students are able to make an informed choice about their future in the subject. Human Resources has recently been moved forward in the order of study to accommodate those who wish to complete their Internal Assessment on a HR based topic, which is the majority of students. During recent lockdowns, the order of the course is something that was restructured in order to allow for the more difficult concepts to be taught face-to-face when possible. The Internal Assessment was only launched once students and staff were allowed back into school and the Primary Market Research needed to complete the IA had to become online surveys or telephone interviews.

In KS4 Economics the order of the course follows that which is suggested by the exam board in relation to the J205 specification. In KS5 the department would typically follow the order that the book and specification follows. This year we have divided it between Micro (JVC) and Macro (TND) and that is common amongst centres that have more than one teacher delivering the programme. Due to lockdown: we have divided Yr13 HL JVC - International Economics (next IA for Jan 22) and TND is teaching Macro.

Transition from KS4 to KS5

Our department tends to have a wide retention rate of students transitioning from KS4 to KS5 (and historically from Year 12 to Year 13 when A levels were modular) but it is not essential to have studied our subjects in KS4 to study them in KS5.

The content of the IB courses for both subjects tends to reflect the basic structures from KS4, albeit in greater detail and at a higher technical proficiency. The emphasis remains as essay-based subjects but in both courses there is a higher degree of computational work, especially as, for example, the Finance and Operational components of the Business Management course and the Linear Demand and Supply Functions of the Economics course demand it. Whilst the skills set of Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation are still important in the IB courses, they are less overt in comparison to their treatment by the UK exam boards.

The requirements of the Extended Essay in our topics means that students are encouraged to read and research the topic to a much greater extent. All our students now have to engage in detailed academic review and referencing and we aim to improve this skill by providing access to research libraries and improving technique. In response to this, we have also worked closely with the school librarian to source books that are entertaining and/or of merit in order to encourage students to 'read around the subject' and underpin their coursework. We have also invested in a range of books to keep in

classrooms, where students are encouraged to borrow them and report back with a review.

The Department actively arranges the following extracurricular/supra-curricular activities:

Student Investor Challenge: On average 40 Year 12 students participate in this national competition each year. Two years ago, one of our teams was placed in the final 8 teams out of 10,000 competitors.

Young Enterprise Tenner Challenge: All Year 10 Business Studies students arrange themselves into teams of around 5 students. Each team is given £10 cash and four weeks to turn the money into more. They are expected to pay the £10 back and can keep the profits. Young Enterprise arranges a series of competitions throughout the process to develop various Business skills.

Young Enterprise Company Programme: 25 Year 12 students participate in this competition each year. We often win the borough competition and compete in the East London Finals.

BASE Accounting: On average 20 Year 12 students participate in this national competition organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants. We competed in the national finals three years ago.

The Department has developed a special relationship with Commerzbank, a German Investment Bank. Each year we take 20 Year 12 and 13 students to workshops hosted by the bank in the City. The bank has employed at least 2 of our school leavers as apprentices each year for the past 3-4 years.

The Department actively supports our Careers Advisor during Power Days aimed at the non-uni cohort. We also support Sixth Formers in their Job Applications, Internships, and Interviews.

b) Learning environment

In KS4, average class sizes are around 30 students. There are no selection criteria to join these courses, classes are not streamed.

In KS5, class sizes can be up to 32 students - we are very popular subjects with the sixth form.

Most lessons are taught in a suite of 3 rooms in the M block. Each room is equipped with the resources necessary to facilitate learning including. For example, mini libraries, class sets of textbooks and the resources necessary for learning activities such as mini whiteboards, access to a visualiser and coloured pens for two way communication with assessment (dialogue marking).

Students can expect to have variety to their lessons as we explore each of the four key skills necessary in both KS4 and KS5: Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation. Students are likely to engage in plenty of discussion as the subjects lend themselves to developing interest in the wider world. There is a heavy use of case studies to be able to apply the theory we have learned to real life situations. Students might participate in group work, individual note taking, teacher led activities, learning games, self and peer assessment, writing practice and studying documentaries/videos to name but a few techniques seen in our classrooms.

During lockdown learning, it was not possible to have such a broad range but the department certainly tried to keep the work interactive. Activities such as group work were still planned and students were encouraged to use technology to connect with each other and produce presentations.

c) Assessment & Feedback

Students in KS4 are given progress trackers to put into the inside cover of their exercise books, which are updated with grades and targets based on areas for improvement, specifically referring to the four key skills (KAAAnE). This allows them to reflect after homework, topic tests, subject tests, and end of year examinations and establish what they need to do to improve their work. Marking often uses 'dialogue marking' and students are usually asked to comment and respond to the teachers marking using purple pens at the beginning of the lesson. Good work is usually modelled on the IWB using a visualiser, so that students can see and discuss where marks can be gained or lost.

A similar system is used in KS5 where students work is often posted on google classroom and teachers engage in dialogue marking, summarising at the end of their work where students need to focus their efforts. Students are encouraged to identify their weak areas in order to rectify them.

Students can expect to be assessed throughout lessons by way of Q&A and teachers checking their written work. At various points through the course they may have mini tests in the form of digital multiple choice tests which are designed to purely test knowledge. At the end of each topic an end of topic test will take place which is timed and in exam conditions. The results of these, along with other activities in class and the mock examinations allow teachers and students to establish the learning that has taken place, key areas for improvement and likely achievements in the final examinations.

During lockdown it was not possible to hold end of topic tests in exam conditions and teachers responded to this by getting parents involved where possible to let them know that a test was taking place. Students were trusted to take any tests and the timed aspect to them would have meant a fair way to assess what students knew and assess their writing skills. In virtual classrooms, the use of Q&A was really capitalised on and teachers reported a higher number of students than usual actively participating in this kind of activity.

d) Monitoring

Each teacher has a mark book for every class and records scores of assessments as the course progresses.

The marks for each end of topic test will be recorded in a teacher's markbook but also in a shared markbook which seeks to compare and review where issues or outstanding achievements might present themselves. These grades can then be discussed in department meetings.

Work scrutiny is used to check that every child is using the self assessment system and setting themselves realistic targets. It can also be used to demonstrate good practice among teaching staff who are getting students particularly engaged in dialogue marking, for example.

Report data is based on teachers' mark books and mock examination results. The HoD can use this data to discuss with teachers the students who may benefit from extra help. The department runs workshops during lunchtimes for Year 11 students where they can get help from trained Year 13 students.

Parents are informed about and causes for concern, as well as the pastoral team responsible for that student. During lockdown the support of both the pastoral team and parents was paramount to allowing students to access extra help. Students are still being assessed on the impact that Covid has had on their learning and the department is committed to helping them 'catch up' through in class support, lunchtime workshops and workshops with our prefect teams.

Impact

Department members often carry out learning walks to observe their peers as the set up of the classrooms allows for this on daily basis - mostly on an informal basis.

Strategies for personalised learning are detailed in context sheets. Lesson observations, learning walks, and analysis of data are used by teachers and HoD to see disparity between teaching groups and those students with SEND, or disadvantaged within these groups. Strategies are discussed amongst the subject teachers to share good practice, in order to support the students.

2021 results for Business Studies at GCSE were as follows: 9-4: 100% and 9-5: 96.2%.
2021 results for Economics at GCSE were as follows: 9-4: 100%, 9-5: 100%

2021 results for Business Management at IB were as follows: Pass: 100%, 7-5: 100%, 7-6: 89.2%.

2021 results for Economics at IB were as follows: Pass: 100%, 7-5: 97.2%, 7-6: 75%.

In terms of University admissions for our KS5 Business Management students, of the 39 students that we have heard from:

- 28 (72%) took a course related to our department
- 16 (41%) went to a Russell Group Uni. Of those students 10 (63%) took a course related to our department

Of those 23 students not attending a Russell Group Uni:

- 6 (26%) went to Loughborough
- 5 (22%) went to a University of London college
- 2 went to Lancaster
- 2 went to Kent
- 1 to Leicester
- 2 to Reading (one is on the PWC apprenticeship degree programme)
- The remainder are at the University of Law (2), Bristol Uni of the West (1) and the Fashion Retail Academy (1)
- 78% took a course related to our department

For our KS5 Economics students, of the 32 students that we have heard from:

- 16 (50%) took a course related to our department
- 23 (72%) went to a Russell Group Uni. Of those students 12 (52%) took a course related to our department

Of those 9 students not attending a Russell Group Uni:

- 3 (33%) went to Loughborough
- 2 went to a University of London college
- 2 went to Kent
- 1 to Bath
- 1 to Reading
- 44% took a course related to our department