

Prospectus 2018



Founder Academy of the
Mercian Trust



Welcome

Welcome to Aldridge School. I am delighted that you are considering entrusting your child's secondary education to us. I believe that as a comprehensive school it is our responsibility to work to meet the needs of every individual, challenging them to achieve their best, supporting them to become responsible young adults and preparing them for their next steps into the world of work or further education. Our aim is to develop young people who are Respectful, Responsible, Resilient and Ready to Learn.

Aldridge School has a dedicated, talented and conscientious team of staff who work together to provide a high standard of teaching, excellent pastoral care and professional support services. Our broad curriculum is designed to meet national expectations, be relevant and interesting, support our students in achieving the best possible standards in external examinations and equip them with the skills they need to be successful in adult life. Students at Aldridge School are friendly, polite and respectful. Strong relationships between staff and students contribute significantly to ensuring that students are happy and feel safe.

Aldridge School is a good school. It is a school which is proud of its traditions and successes which have been achieved through hard work and high expectations. If your child joins Aldridge School I believe that they will enjoy seven happy and successful years of secondary education.

If you would like to find out more, please contact us to arrange a visit to see our school at work. We look forward to meeting you.



Ian Bryant
Headteacher



Our Partners

Aldridge School is a founder member of the Mercian Trust and works alongside the other members Queen Mary's Grammar School, Queen Mary's High School, Shire Oak Academy and Walsall Studio School. We provide a comprehensive and traditional education which is both academic and rooted strongly in its community. We enjoy strong links with surrounding primary schools, working with students in Years 5 and 6 including work in Science, Maths, English, Performing Arts and Enterprise.

We are proud of our community and we work hard to promote this pride in all our partnerships, so that we can make sure that future students from these schools enjoy an easy, enjoyable transition to Aldridge School.

Parents and Carers

Our partnerships also extend to parents and carers of Aldridge School's students, in order to help your child achieve the best possible education and experience.

We hold regular progress evenings, including in the first half term of Year 7, when you will have the chance to meet with your child's form tutor or Head of House to discuss how your child is settling into life in Aldridge School. We will send you regular progress updates and the opportunity to attend a full parent/teacher consultation every year. We recommend regular contact with the Head of House if you have any concerns about your child's welfare or development.

We keep you up-to-date with the school diary via our extensive website, which serves as an interactive hub for sharing important information with you.





Curriculum

No two students have the same educational needs, their requirements can change and evolve over time. This is why we have customised our curriculum to meet the needs of individuals and groups as they develop and grow, making sure they are fully equipped for age 11-19 progression.

By the time your child reaches Key Stage 4, they will have developed all the necessary knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes to succeed.

We keep English and Maths at the core of your child's learning and provide a variety of pathways and methods to ensure their success at every stage. We are committed to equipping students with the right knowledge and skills to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and Learning

Study after study shows that the single most important factor in determining the quality of a student's education is the quality of their teacher. A good teacher sets high expectations for their students, and never gives up on underachievers. Likewise, a good student is not necessarily the one who is the brightest; it is the one who tries their hardest and is enthusiastic.

Aldridge School is no exception to this rule. We have structured our teaching and learning programmes to be engaging, interesting and motivating for students.

All faculties in the school aim to ensure that we continue to offer the highest standards, most innovative and challenging learning tailored to your child's needs and abilities. We do this by using rigorous monitoring and tracking systems and analysis of performance data.

Music Scholarships

"All music teachers are united in their aim to help pupils achieve the highest standards possible"
— Ofsted

Music is amazing. It has the ability to transport us back in time, to elicit emotions, to energise, to sadden, to give us space to reflect or the energy to carry on.

Aldridge School has a long and proud tradition of outstanding musical teaching, in both our general curriculum and our scholarships, which are awarded to twenty five of our most gifted and aspiring students each year. Aldridge School has an ambitious annual music making programme and your child will have the chance to join one of our many instrument ensembles. We support our music students with exemplary teaching staff, who are supplemented by a group of passionate, high level instrumental tutors.

Music scholars will take part in extra studies, which sets them on the path to the highest level of music and academic qualification. Their lessons include performance, Grade 5 theory and exploring different musical styles to develop their composition skills. They could reach as high as Grade 8 on two or more instruments and may even elect to take a performing diploma.

A long line of past students have continued their studies at Oxford, Cambridge, major universities and the Royal Music Colleges. Several will have done so this summer.





Uniform

We want you to be proud to be a student at Aldridge School, and wearing our uniform is a way of showing that pride. School uniform is **COMPULSORY** and **MUST** be worn properly at all times including on the journey to and from school.

- Blazer - Navy blue blazer with school badge on breast pocket.
- Trousers / Skirt – Black 'suit' style material – no 'skinny' type trousers, no trousers that are tight around the ankle, no jeans or jean type material, skirts and trousers made of stretchy fabric are not allowed. Skirts to be knee length.
- Shirt / Blouse - Saxe blue only (tucked into trousers).
- Tie - House tie
- Pullover – Blue plain 'V' necked long sleeved pullover (with school badge) – no cardigans.
- Socks – Black
- Tights – Plain black/tan/natural
- Headscarf - Blue/Black/white only
- Shoes – sensible black leather shoes – no motif, (e.g. Nike, Adidas, Puma etc) no trainers, no canvas shoes (e.g. Vans, Converse etc) shoes must be able to be polished.

PE Kit Expectations:

- Indoor Activities – Aldridge School Shorts/Navy Polo Shirt/Blue socks and Training Shoes (Bare foot for gymnastics)
- Outdoor Activities (Weather and Activity Dependant)
- Aldridge School Shorts/Polo Shirt/Blue socks and Training Shoes (Football boots and shin pads for football)
- Reversible scarlet rugby top/blue shorts and socks with rugby/football boots and a gum shield is strongly recommended
- Aldridge school Tracksuit/Aldridge School fleece are optional extras
- Swimming – Black Swimming Costume/Swimming Shorts/Towel/Black or white swimming cap (a note from parents must be provided to give permission to wear goggles)
- For health and safety reasons, religious headscarves must be replaced for every PE lesson with a sporting hijab and all earrings and watches must be removed. Please see our Uniform Policy for full details.

Care, Guidance and Support

Linking students via our house system, comprising Barr, Daniels, Linley and Scott, helps your child to settle in quickly to life in a large, exciting environment like Aldridge School, and builds a family-style community of support, trust and care during their time with us.

Aldridge School takes the care of students seriously. We have a team of experienced staff whose sole responsibility — along with a dedicated form tutor — is to look after the welfare of every student and to keep in regular contact with you regarding this.

Our strong ethos of care and welfare has been praised by OFSTED, who commented that students are safe in school and students overwhelmingly say that they feel safe. They value the work of pastoral leaders based in 'the hub' who listen to their concerns and take action when necessary.

Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance

Our careers education helps to prepare your child for adult life. We provide them with the knowledge and skills to manage their journey through learning, training and work.

All students follow a Careers Education programme that includes enterprise days, visits to universities and one-to-one interviews with an independent careers advisor.

Safeguarding

The safety and welfare of your child is paramount at Aldridge School, with all staff and volunteers sharing in this commitment. We have an experienced team who are dedicated to child protection issues. The safeguarding team is lead by Mr Eaton.

These staff members should be your first point of contact for any child protection concerns. We deal with all matters in the strictest confidence and we also have external expert help available. You can read the full Child Protection Policy on our website www.aldridgeschool.org follow the 'Communication' link at the top of the homepage.





Student Development

We will never leave a student behind, whatever their needs or circumstances. Our Student Development department offers a full complement of additional educational services for students who need a helping hand or some personal focus to help them achieve their full potential.

Staff

We have a Learning Support teacher on site who also functions as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. We also have a team of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants, who provide in-class support, as well as booster sessions and intervention lessons for special educational and additional needs students.

Support

Social club: we offer a wide variety of support services, including a lunchtime social club, which gives vulnerable students a safe and nurturing environment in which to play games and connect with other students.

Pragmatics: our pragmatics group supports any student who may have speech, language or communication needs, and is visited regularly by a member of the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

Booster sessions: if your child does not have special educational needs, but is having difficulty meeting our expected progress rates in core subjects.

SEN interventions: if your child has special educational needs regarding cognition and other learning difficulties, we can extract them from their time-tabled lessons to support them with a personalised programme for numeracy and literacy.

Faculty of English

The English language is spoken by 1.8 billion people, and remains one of the most widely used languages around the world. In the literary world, Britain has some of the most celebrated authors and works in memory, from Shakespeare to Charles Dickens, Jane Austen to JK Rowling.

- Our Faculty of English and Media delivers a rich programme of study in language, literature and media
- We teach three discrete subjects across Key Stages 3-5
- We have twelve dedicated teaching rooms, including a well resourced media hub
- We are a full team of 14 specialist staff with diverse interests within our discipline
- We provide students with a diverse range of opportunities to develop literacy and literary skills
- We enthuse students with the history, diversity and culture of English and Media.





Key Stage 3 Curriculum

We integrate the curriculum at this Key Stage to give your child the opportunity to study English language, literature and media. As well as exploring fiction and non-fiction texts from different genres, traditions and periods, your child will also study linguistics (a scientific approach to language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics). The combination of these two branches of study will develop them as skilled and confident readers and writers.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

At Key Stage 4, your child will study for the following qualifications:
GCSE English Language (OCR)
GCSE English Literature (OCR)

Faculty of Mathematics

Mathematics opens doors; it is the foundation for further study in Science and Engineering, it encompasses many skills which help with everyday life and most importantly it is a brilliantly beautiful subject in its own right. At Aldridge School our Mathematics Department aim to build and develop your child's Mathematical and problem-solving skills, as well as promoting a love of the subject which will help them realise their potential as lifelong learners of Mathematics.

- We have a team of 13 qualified Mathematics specialists including 5 staff who teach A-level Mathematics
- We promote a positive attitude towards Mathematics and have high expectations for all of our students
- We offer courses and Programmes of study which enable students of all abilities to succeed, including extra support when required and a Scholarship programme in Years 7 and 8.
- Our Programmes of Study in Key Stage 3 and 4 are fully integrated with www.mymaths.co.uk enabling students to access revision materials outside of school.
- We aim to equip students with transferable skills to help them in the real world, building functional and problem solving activities into our Programme of Study.





Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Your child will study modules based on Number, Algebra, Geometry and Data Handling. All modules are integrated with www.mymaths.co.uk. We group students according to ability to enable us to offer stretch and challenge for all students. We conduct regular chapter tests and half-termly Assessments to enable us to track student's progress and understanding.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

We follow the Edexcel Specification and students take their GCSE at the end of Year 11. This comprises 2 Calculator Papers and 1 Non-Calculator Paper. Students are still grouped according to ability with extra support offered to those who need it. There is a programme of chapter tests, assessments and mock examinations to ensure students are on target and in the appropriate group. There are enrichment opportunities offered to different groups of students at different stages throughout KS4

Faculty of Science

Aldridge School's Faculty of Science offers the most up-to-date courses in all three sciences, with special emphasis on practical and hands-on learning. It is an enthusiastic department, staffed by subject specialists who like to keep abreast of current events in Science, and have a wide variety of teaching styles to cater for all types of learners. The Faculty of Science is well resourced and provides a variety of trips and after school clubs. These help students demonstrate their full abilities and give them confidence in Science.

- We have a team of 18 qualified Science specialists, 11 of which are specialist A Level teachers who teach Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- We offer a variety of courses at GCSE including combined science and separate science to ensure students take the course most suited to them
- We focus on practical skills and knowledge and content to ensure students gain a rounded science education
- We believe in planning our lessons with a 'high-fun factor', as well as giving real-world context, so that students are able to see connections to the world in which they live.

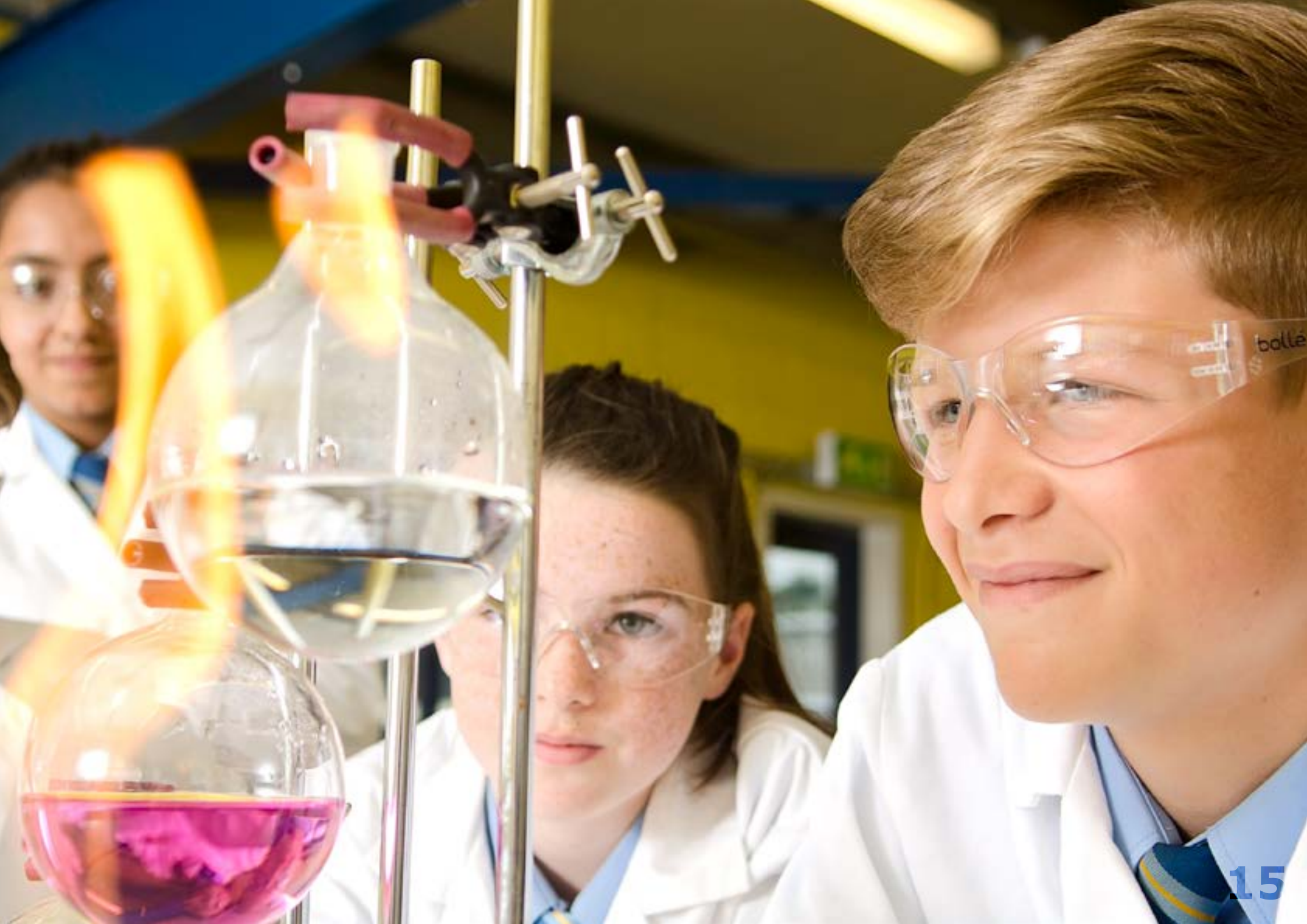
Key Stage 3 Curriculum

At KS3 students study aspects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics and experimental skills. Students are grouped according to ability and student progress is tracked through end of chapter tests. This enables us to cater for all abilities and provide support, stretch and challenge. Students also have the opportunity to complete research projects enabling them to gain a depth of knowledge on new scientific advancements.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

We follow the AQA Specification and students take their GCSE at the end of Year 11. We offer a variety of programmes of study including the combined science and separate science courses. Both courses combine relevant and inspiring content and core practical work. Students are still grouped according to ability and student progress is tracked through end of chapter tests.





Faculty of Humanities

"History will be kind to me for I intend to write it." – Winston Churchill

In today's technical age, it is easy to focus on technical skills and aptitude as the pinnacles of knowledge. Yet it is humanities which grapple with the larger questions that explain our past, illuminate the present and get us ready for the future.

The Faculty of Humanities encourages students to develop passion and commitment for the subjects we teach. Our staff of 20 teachers support and extend your child's learning by providing fieldwork opportunities. In the past few years, we have visited Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Dovedale, the Dorset Coast, Cumbria, Shrewsbury and — going a little further afield — Poland, France, Italy and China, to mention just a few.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

In Religious Studies your child will look at Christianity and other world religions: including Judaism, and Islam. We study key issues such as morality, concern for others, prejudice, peace, conflict and much more.

In History your child will study British history from the Norman Conquest to the present day, as well as having the opportunity to investigate European and world history, including Nazi Germany and the Black civil rights protest movement in America.

In Geography your child will study a variety of topics including Place (UK, Africa, Russia, China and the Middle East); Natural Hazards (Hurricanes, Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Tsunamis); Ecosystems (Tropical Rainforests and Deserts); Physical Landscapes (formed by Rivers, Coasts and Glaciers) and Human Geography (Tourism, Urbanisation).





Key Stage 4 Curriculum

In Religious Studies we follow AQA Religious Studies Specification A, students will learn how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture, and develop valuable skills that will prepare them for further study. They will be expected to complete homework and review recap and revise in order to develop their knowledge and understanding. Students will be assessed throughout the two years using questions modelled around the exam paper they sit at the end of Year 11.

In History we follow the GCSE OCR B specification. Your child will study a broad range of topics such as the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the making of modern America and life in Nazi Germany. They will also carry out a study of a local site (Kenilworth Castle). Students will be expected to develop their knowledge inside and outside the classroom and will be given exam style questions regularly to assess their progress.

We also now offer a GCSE in Ancient History (OCR), focusing on the fascinating figures of antiquity, including Alexander the Great and Cleopatra.

In GCSE Geography we follow the AQA specification and students take their GCSE at the end of Year 11. The GCSE Geography course requires students to extend their locational knowledge and to develop competence in maps, fieldwork and geographical skills. Different approaches to fieldwork are undertaken in at least two contrasting environments.

Faculty of Performance

"Teachers are good role models. They all express a strong enthusiasm, which is relayed to all pupils. Staff interaction with pupils is very positive and contributes considerably to effective teaching".
OFSTED

Our Faculty of Performance comprises of Music, Drama and Physical Education, and lives by the motto: "Making school memorable". Our teachers are passionate about ensuring that each student obtains their optimum performance, regardless of initial ability, and giving them an experience to look back on with pride and joy, as well as the self-confidence to go on and achieve in life.

We back this up with extensive extra-curricular work before school, after school, evening performances, weekend residential trips and tours in holiday periods.

Drama

In Drama, students follow the department's own schemes of work, developing their understanding of Drama skills and techniques whilst, importantly, gaining an awareness of how to work collaboratively and creatively and building their confidence as individuals.

As students progress, they should develop a critical understanding of Drama, allowing them to create interesting pieces of theatre, become engaging performers and reflective responders.

These elements link into the three areas of assessment – Creating, Performing and Responding. Specifically, we aim to provide students with the means to:

- create imaginative pieces of theatre using a range of Drama skills and techniques
- perform confidently making full use of their physicality and vocality
- articulately analyse performances using the appropriate Drama terminology





Music

Aldridge School's reputation for music extends far beyond that of the local community. We have four musicians on the teaching staff, as well as nine instrumental teachers, all with an excellent track record of music provision from beginner level, right through to diploma level, with a range of visiting musicians who work with students throughout the year. We have seen many former students entering the music profession, either as teachers or performers, and such students have taken up higher education at established music colleges or at university.

At Key Stage 3 students are assessed on their listening, composing and performing skills. This gives students a full understanding of musical awareness and allows them to develop a lifelong love of the art. Skills and understanding are developed through practical study and well-planned homework tasks to create a solid foundation to aid further progress into Key Stage 4 at GCSE level and beyond.

Physical Education

Physical Education develops your child's physical competence and gives them confidence in their ability to perform in a range of activities. We supplement your child's development with extra-curricular activities where the "Sport for all" policy is the aim. We run recreational clubs as well as school teams, which cover everything from beginner swimmers to national appearances in sporting events.

At Key Stage 3 students are assessed on performance levels, fitness levels, attitudes towards sport and exercise, social understanding and cognitive aspects. This is to give a fully rounded understanding of physical education and allow them to apply it to their everyday life. Skills and understanding are developed through practical study and well-planned homework tasks to create a solid foundation to aid further progress in to Key Stage 4 Physical Education, whether it is in GCSE, BTEC or at participation level.

Faculty of Design

Aldridge School's faculty of design promotes creativity through students being able to express their ideas. Students learn many transferable skills to prepare them in life for which ever route they decide to take, as well as being exposed to career paths which fall under the creative industries umbrella. The faculty is well resourced with state of the art manufacturing methods such as 3D printing, laser cutting and fantastic cooking facilities. Students are encouraged to reflect on global issues such as cultural diversity and sustainability as well as grasping a good understanding of the history of the design industry and its influences. We actively encourage participation in extra-curricular activities and competitions.

- We have a team of 10 dedicated staff with specialisms including Pottery, Graphic Design, Illustration, Three Dimensional Design, Food and Nutrition and Textiles
- Both GCSE and A level results are excellent with over 50% of students electing to study a subject within the faculty at GCSE.
- Art and design consistently performs above the national average.
- Post 16 results continue to record 100% A-C results at A level or equivalent. Courses continue to develop offering a broad post 16 curriculum that is flexible in its approach, catering for students' interests in the different areas of design.





Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Art and Textiles

At Key Stage 3 students produce three projects of work per school year. Working on a range of tasks from 2D to 3D, students will have opportunity to develop traditional skills in art such as drawing and painting and how these can be combined with digital software. At least one project per year will have a textiles focus, skills will be taught in design, construction and how textiles itself is an art form. Topics taught are engaging and challenging, they inspire students to create their own works of art. Independence is encouraged throughout the curriculum. As students progress they will develop an improved understanding of critical and contextual studies in art and expressing their views on work being studied. Skills are developed to create a solid foundation in Art and Design to aid further progress in to Key Stage 4.

Product Design and Food technology

At Key Stage 3 students will have opportunity to work on a range of product design projects. Students will explore skills used in graphic design through to producing 3D outcomes. We place huge emphasis on developing problem solving skills through practical based activities, challenging students to produce a range of high quality products. Students develop traditional craft skills and modern manufacturing processes including CAD/CAM technologies. In food technology students will develop their skills in producing high quality dishes, gaining an understanding of ingredients used and a transferable life skill. Students will be educated on the importance of healthy eating and nutritional values. Projects planned enable students to express themselves creatively, instilling an enjoyment of cooking and a possible career path.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

At Key Stage 4 we offer a broad range of courses that enable students to further develop skills in an area of interest for them. We follow OCR specifications for subjects; Art and design, Textiles, Graphic Communication, Three Dimensional Design and Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Faculty of Business Communications

The Business Communication faculty is one of the more diverse faculties at Aldridge School, offering a range of subjects and qualifications including: Business Studies, Computer Science, Health and Social Care and Modern Foreign Languages. Formal qualifications range from GCSE and A Level to BTECs and Cambridge Nationals/Technicals, all of which are particularly aimed at skills for employment in the 21st century.

We embrace ICT throughout the school, with all classrooms equipped with data projectors and wireless access. We also have four dedicated computer suites, which usually means a 1:1 student-to-computer ratio in computer science lessons. We are part of the Microsoft Open Value Subscription, which enables us to install new Microsoft applications shortly after their release, and ensures that we keep students up to date with the latest software.

We enjoy running trips abroad to France and Germany so that language learning can be used in a more practical context. We offer extra-curricular opportunities in other languages and have run taster courses in Spanish, Italian and Russian in the last three years.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Students study computing throughout Key Stage 3, with 1 lesson each week. Over the three-year period of study students will learn about: Spreadsheets, Databases, Programming, E-safety, understanding how computers work and Website Design.

All students study French in Year 7, with the top sets having the opportunity to study an additional language in Years 8 and 9. Your child will get access to foreign languages through a wide range of media, including online courses, videos and authentic reading materials. As well as acquiring language skills, students will enjoy discovering the culture of the countries where these languages are spoken.





Key Stage 4 Curriculum

At Key Stage 4, we offer a range of academic and vocational courses for all students. We also cover Enterprise Education in the faculty, with whole days for students in Year 10, as well as a strong liaison with local primary schools. We are fortunate to have regular visits from local businesses and celebrities to encourage enterprise at the school, and students regularly take part in competitions for business and enterprise, having won more than their fair share of awards in recent years.

Computing students have the opportunity to study both academic and vocational subjects in both Computer Science and IT. We offer a GCSE in Computer Science or a more vocational IT qualification if the students are not particularly interested in a career in the IT industry but still want to gain skills and knowledge that will help them in their future aspirations.

Students have the opportunity to study Health and Social Care. This course is aimed at students interested in working with people in a variety of contexts. They will develop highly transferable skills in analysis and problem solving, as well as learning to become independent, reflective and to work effectively as a member of a team. Your child will get work experience in health, social care or 'early years' settings.

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