

Photography Curriculum Intent

We love the opportunity to be our own creative individuals, express our feelings and emotions and develop our knowledge of media and techniques. As a result, our overriding aim in the Art and Design department is to teach students the necessary skills & tools needed to be able to express themselves in various creative responses. They will learn to think and act as photographers, working imaginatively and intelligently. Students will learn to use various tools and resources to develop and stretch their photographic skills and subject knowledge across their GCSE and/or A Level course.

 Art & Photo Overview 2026-27

KS3	Students can choose to study 'Enrichment Photography' in year 9 to develop their artistic skills further. Before this students may have been exposed to Photography in Photography club but this would mark their first formal education in lens based media. Students study National Curriculum content and develop transferable skills and foundation knowledge to support the transition to KS4 and GCSE study in Year 10. They will use various new techniques and record this in their slides. They will explore ideas, and techniques and analyse and evaluate their work and others. This year will strengthen their resolve and understanding of the Photography course. In year 9, students start with a black-and-white project where they learn about camera control, keywords and concepts, and basic to intermediate Photoshop skills. This exposes them to different photographers and also different camera and post-production techniques for each shoot. Each photo shoot has a different theme and works to build upon their skills in different areas of photography. Black & White holds all the shoots together but the project champions exploration and experimentation. Very much like a foundation degree year structure. After the black and white project, they are exposed to a Colour project. This aims to develop and refine the knowledge and skills learned from the previous project but in a more complex manner and also having to control another aspect of colour.
KS4 AQA GCSE Specification	During years 10 and 11 in photography, there are two coursework projects which add up to 60% of the final GCSE grade. The remaining 40% is based on an externally set exam project. For each project students are expected to research a set theme and present this in a digital sketchbook. Students are taught to look at the work of photographers and artists to influence their own work and. There are a number of key skills that students will learn, this includes: using a digital camera in fully manual mode, introduction into studio lighting, retouching and enhancing on editing software such as photoshop. Students will also be taught how to write about their own work and the work of others. In year 10, they move on to a digital portraiture project where they are introduced to using the studio lighting and learn more advanced photoshop skills. They move on from this and make an Identity project that they have to interpret themselves in an artistic way. The portrait project and Identity project are then combined, any work produced in year 9 is used as "Supportive Work". This comprises of 60% of their GCSE mark and then the remaining 40% is an external exam project set by AQA. This gives the students the opportunity to work more independently and choose a subject matter they can investigate and produce a photographical response to. Students choose to work on one of seven outcomes.

KS5
[AQA A Level](#)
[Specification](#)

In Photography, we follow the AQA two-year A level course. One of our key objectives is teaching how to use a variety of different materials and processes - both digital and physical. We begin Year 12 by exploring the photographic process, using our fully equipped darkroom to chronologically teach darkroom processes in order of development such as cyanotype and photograms, as well as developing photographs. We encourage the building of 3D texture into work, for example transferring photographs onto fabric, and creating relief collages and models that demonstrate different forms of lighting. Photoshop forms a key part of the course, with lessons on digital editing an important part of our student's development. Other themes we explore in Year 12 are Landscape, Still Life, and Commercial photography. Students are given freedom, with guidance where needed, to choose their own photographers and styles of work as inspiration within each current theme. Throughout the year, the focus on process and refinement of presentation in sketchbooks and online is underlying. Year 12 is a non-examination year.

Years 12 and 13 are continually required to link work they create to a range of photographers and artists, using them as a starting point of inspiration and information from which to develop work that evolves into its own. We consistently encourage students to develop ideas for shoots and responses that show a key story and purpose that is unique to them as creatives. A core expectation across the course is that students are increasingly independent in terms of taking photographs outside of school hours, and visiting areas and galleries to enrich their studies wherever possible. We also encourage them to enter their work in our own, and external Photography competitions.

The theme of study for Year 13 is independent; throughout the year, students create a series of responses based on a theme they have set themselves. This independent project is accompanied by an essay of between 1500-3000 words based on their personal investigation. This supports them to then complete an external project theme given to them by the exam board in the first week of February (Exam - note, there is no *written* exam). The work of the entire two year course is then handed in in early May for formal assessment.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 9	Black and White - Nature shoots - Basic photoshop skills - DSLR camera techniques	Black and White - Basic photoshop skills - DSLR camera techniques - Visual literacy - Exploring processes ie. long exposure	Black and White -Still Life -Studio lighting -Macro photography - Presentation refinement. -Collage - Collections - exploring colour collections and collections of	Colour Visual elements explored Line Tone Pattern Shape Form Space	Colour Collages montages Weaving Abstraction Surface pattern	Colour Landscape Perspective distance Scale Camouflage Distortion Silhouette

			belongings linked to identity.			
Year 10	Portraits - Title page, mind map and timeline. - Learning how to analyse the work of other portrait photographers and artists. - Going over the camera settings, in particular using the aperture. - Learning how to develop and refine a photoshoot.	Portraits - Investing different artists - learning about the oracy in photography. - The use of key words and photographic language. - How to annotate their own work using keywords.	Portraits - The use of photoshop to digitally manipulate their photographs. - Using inspiration from other photographers to influence their own work. - Introduction to high key, low key and back lighting in the studio.	Portraits - Going more into detail on photoshop and learning more techniques for students to then use their own work. - More advanced studio lighting. - Physical collages and editing techniques.	Identity - Teaching students to be more independent, they can find artists/photographers that they admire and do photoshoots based on them. Preparation for being more independent in year 11. I expect them to have 4 artist research pages and 4 of their own shoots completed.	Identity - Introduction to this theme. - Title page, mind map and moodboard. - Introduction on how to find relevant photographers and how best to respond to them.
Year 11	Identity - I expect 6 shoots and 6 artist research pages to be done. - One off workshops where I teach	Identity - Re-cap on how to analyse photographers' work and how to annotate their own images.	Mock Exam: topic 1 - Choice out of 4 to 6 topics, independent work and research. - Set a minimum of 4 to 6 shoots	Mock Exam: topic 2 - Choice out of the remaining 5 topics, independent work and research. - Set a minimum of 6	Exam - Exam paper is set. - Choice out of 6 topics. - Learning new studio lighting skills and photoshop	Outcomes - Students work on the outcomes of their projects. Either in photobooks, websites, sketchbooks.

	them new editing skills in photoshop.	- 6 more shoots and 6 more artist research pages. - Evaluation.	and artist research pages. - Students need to think of a question that they can make a photographic response to.	shoots and art research pages.	workshops to enhance their project. - Choice between digital and physical sketchbooks.	Artifacts, frames. - Students prepare for their own exhibition.
Year 12	My Story: Genre Project Darkroom process - Cyanotypes - Photograms - Analogue camera - Developing photographs by hand. - Sepia toning - Ink painting into photographs.	My Story: Genre Project Landscape - Urban - Suburban - Natural - Exploring what we can define a landscape to be through artist's work and personal response.	My Story: Genre Project Still Life - Black and white - Colour - Shutter speed - Water and ink experiment. - Natural objects vs manmade Commercial - Food shoots - Fashion. - What it's like to work as a professional photographer: exploration.	My Story: Genre Project Portraiture - New lighting techniques in the studio. - Introduction to different photographers and learning how to problem solve with different lighting scenarios. - Digital Skill refinement - Going further with Photoshop. - Personalised guidance linked to individual realised aims. - GIFs and moving image.	Portrait Project - Students create an introductory project about portraits. - They research and make critical choices regarding their theme and topic within portraits. - Students create 6 photoshoots. - Work is researched analysed and planned. - Exhibition visits and Journal research key.	Identity - Guided into independent work with experiments within chosen themes for Year 13. Option to change theme within this term. - Submission of chosen final theme and plan. - Expectation to work on responses over the summer break.
Year 13	Independent projects	Independent projects	Independent projects	Independent projects	Exam and work hand-in.	Course ended.

	- Working on series of responses using a range of artists and photographers as inspiration. - Focus on development and refinement. - Essay title created and essay outline discussed and begun.	- Key focus on how ideas develop into an overall series of responses that are clearly linked. - First draft of Essay completed by the close of term.	- Bringing personal investigation project together, identifying key areas to complete. - Essay completed by end of Autumn-term. - Two day mock exam - Exam theme released early February.	- Working on exam theme project. Focus on process - both photographic and the process of moving through different ideas in response to the theme.	-Planning for exam. -Two-day exam to create further work within exam theme. - Opportunity for final refinement of personal investigation post exam. Students work on the outcomes of their projects. Either in photobooks, websites, sketchbooks. Artifacts, frames. - Work hand in early May.	- Students prepare for their own exhibition.
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Subject Photography KS4 & 5		FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT		
		FORMATIVE; The instructional guidance that identifies central points of learning and plans for the progression of individuals students.	SUMMATIVE; This describes individuals learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against a standard or bench mark. (Assessment)	EVALUATIVE; This is about institutional accountability and comes after terminal exams.
TIME SCALE	Annually	Assessed on tracker Feedback sheets Parents evening	Year-end review Mock exams Evaluation end of topic Project evaluations	Results GCSE/A level Data drops Final outcomes Growth mindset is a valuable part of lessons and forms coaching and verbal evaluation given by teachers and pupils.

	Interim Half termly	Termly units of work Sketchbook trackers Photo shoots	One half termly piece assessed (minimum) When data is collected Every two weeks are either teacher, self or peer assessed. End of unit Tracker filled in to monitor progress. Photo shoots	
	Weekly	Verbal feedback, HL, classwork, self, peer and teacher assessments. Lesson ready HL varied and open ended. Trackers filled in to monitor progress One to ones		
	Hourly	Lesson objectives Critical enquiry Complex questioning Success criteria		