



BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMME (BALP)

2018/19

INTRODUCTION

The Bromsgrove Accelerated Learning Programme (BALP) is a one year course that takes place in the Fifth Form at Bromsgrove School. Its primary aim is to prepare students for study in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or GCE A levels. The course is built around a core of the following subjects:

- First Language English
- Mathematics
- IGCSE Physics, Chemistry and Biology (triple award)
- History or Economics (choose one)

All core courses lead to a separate qualification and are examined at GCSE or IGCSE level (and in the case of Economics, AS level).

The BALP course also offers opportunities for students to sit exams for qualifications, where such exams exist, in their own language.

The BALP course develops students' ability to learn independently and by enquiry, in order that they are fully prepared for Sixth Form and undergraduate study; lessons very much focus on developing skills in practical work, critical thinking, group work and communication. BALP students are fully integrated into the School's House system and everyday School life. This includes a broad extra-curricular programme which spans sport, community service and the arts. The year concludes with a post examination 'super learning' programme that focuses on extra-curricular opportunities linked to the core subject areas of Maths, English and the Sciences, as well as History, Politics and wider cultural activities. Pupils will also focus on the development of academic research skills which is excellent preparation for their further studies.

The BALP course seeks to educate the whole person. Through a balanced academic curriculum, contemporary teaching, an extensive extra-curricular programme and full integration into one of Britain's leading Independent Schools, we hope to foster personal development and growth, as well as build a high level of skills and knowledge base for future study.

THE CORE

English

First language English teaches students to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing. Students learn to understand and respond appropriately to what they hear, read and experience. They are encouraged to enjoy and appreciate a variety of languages, which in turn complements other areas of study by developing skills of a more general application. The course is assessed through reading and writing examinations.

Mathematics

Mathematics aims to build students' confidence and skills in areas such as calculus, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and statistics. The course aims to accommodate both those who intend to study Mathematics in the Sixth Form and those who require generic Mathematics skills to complement other curriculum areas. The course is assessed through a written examination.

Science (IGCSE Biology, IGCSE Chemistry, IGCSE Physics)

The Biology, Chemistry and Physics courses seek to bring together practical and theoretical skills. Students are encouraged to design and pursue their own ideas in class and develop their own ability to effectively question and understand their local environment. Each Science (Physics, Biology and Chemistry) is studied as a separate subject, taught by specialist teachers in the School's new state of the art laboratories. The course is worth three separate IGCSEs and is assessed through a number of written examinations.

History

The History course focuses on 20th century History. Students learn about International Relations from 1943 to 1991. This will involve focusing on Cold War tensions as the US and the Soviet Union's Grand Alliance quickly collapsed at the peace conferences following 1945. The course will then look at the intensification of the tension through the arms race, Soviet expansionism and the division of Europe. The three flashpoints of Berlin, Cuba and Czechoslovakia will also be explored in depth, as will the move towards détente in the 1960s and 1970s. The course will draw to a close with a study of the Second Cold War period in which the US were able to force the eventual climb down and demise of communism. The course is assessed through coursework and a written examination.

OR

Economics (AS Level)

The Economics course encourages students to develop an understanding of key economic theories and concepts that will enable them to critically evaluate issues, problems and institutions that affect everyday life. Students will be encouraged to develop a critical approach to methods of enquiry and to draw on data from local, national and international sources. The course is assessed through a written examination.

SPORT AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

BALP students take full advantage of Bromsgrove's extensive activities and sports programme which encourages initiative, discipline, qualities of leadership, self-motivation and an ability to work with and for others. Activities on offer include: Art, Debating, Street Dancing, Sailing, Riding, Photography, Kayaking, Taekwando, Italian, Guitar Workshops, Film Club, Chess and Aerobics. Participation in a wide variety of team sports such as Soccer, Hockey, Netball and Athletics is encouraged and welcomed.

POST EXAMINATION PROGRAMME

Following terminal examinations in the summer term, the Accelerated Learning Programme recommences focussing on both cultural and academic studies in preparation for Sixth Form study. This will include super-curricular opportunities to go on educational visits to support further studies, or intensive 'super learning days' within departments such as Science, Mathematics and English, until the School breaks up for summer. Pupils will have the opportunity to develop important research skills through the production of a 'mini-EPQ' (Extended Project) which will promote the importance of quality research, referencing and presentation skills; lifelong skills that will serve them well regardless of their chosen direction in the Sixth Form.