

UPPER SHIRLEY HIGH

...learning without limits



Year 8

Mini Options

Booklet

2025

A Guide for Year 8 Students,
Parents and Carers

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A Message to Year 8 Students

Welcome

In the coming weeks, you are going to be stating your preferences for the subjects you will study in Year 9 at USH. Following the success of previous years, we are offering our students the opportunity to study the subjects you love for longer, whilst having the chance to try new and exciting options. New subjects for you to study include: Film Studies, Textiles, Photography, Creative iMedia, Music Technology and Business. We are very proud of the broad range of subjects that we can offer you at USH and we will continue to work hard to ensure that you will experience a high-quality curriculum offer.

In order for you to benefit from the courses that you choose and reach your full potential, we have very high expectations of your maturity, motivation and the way that you apply and commit to your studies. We expect you to be organised, punctual and maintain a high-level of attendance.

During this process, you will be able to discuss your subjects in lessons to help you make informed decisions about your choices and we will follow this with taster sessions, as well as the Options Evening on Thursday, 6th February. For many students your age, your career intentions will not yet be certain, whereas some of you will already have a strong idea which career field you would like to work in, but this too could change.

This booklet is intended to help you and your parents / carers, together with members of staff, plan your next three years of education at USH. There are exciting choices to be made, so it is important that you optimise your chances of success in subjects that you enjoy and in which you have ability and interest. It is also important that you make choices that mean that you have a broad and balanced education that stimulates your desire to learn and will be relevant for the future pathways you choose.

When making your choice, think about these questions:

- What am I really interested in?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- What knowledge and skills will I gain?
- What am I good at?
- Would my choice make for a well-balanced timetable?
- What subjects are relevant to my future studies or possible career choices?

English, Maths, Science, History and Geography are taken by all students. The first option is choosing a language from Spanish or French and then there are an additional four choices (plus two reserve choice) from the subjects listed in this book. You will also have lessons in PSHE and core PE, in which you will not take exams. In some cases, there might not be enough students selecting a particular course, which will mean that it will not be able to run, or the timetable means that your first choices cannot fit together. **This is why your two reserve choices are extremely important, so think carefully about those.**

At the end of Year 9, you will refine your curriculum choices down to **four** options subjects, which you will study for your GCSEs. No GCSE content is covered in year 9, so it is hoped that this extra year of study will allow you to make the right and informed decision for you.

Finally, we wish you every success in making these important decisions and we are here to help with whatever you need.

The Options Timeline

Option Form – complete the online form <https://forms.gle/GkJprDVWMnUU9CHq7>

Booklets given to students	Monday, 3rd February
Completed form deadline https://forms.gle/GkJprDVWMnUU9CHq7	By Friday, 28th March

**Please note we do not allocate option choices on a first come first served basis. We would much rather that you took your time making considered choices than racing to get your form handed in as quickly as possible.*

External Help:

These are very useful websites with a lot of interesting information about a wide range of careers:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

<https://access-southampton.co.uk>

Useful Contacts

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the following staff:

Name	Role / Responsibility / Subject Taught	E-mail
Mrs Fortune	Head of Year 8; student specific enquiries; general enquiries about the options process	Claire.Fortune@ushschool.org
Mrs Russell	Pastoral Support Worker for Year 8; student specific enquiries; general enquiries about the options process	Charlotte.Russell@ushschool.org
Mr Bhardwaj	Assistant Headteacher - Overseeing the Options Process	Gopaal.Bhardwaj@ushschool.org
All subject-specific questions should be sent to the Subject Leaders (emails on the individual subject's page)		

Some words of wisdom ...

- ❖ Do not rush your choices; It is not a race to complete your form first.
- ❖ Keep thinking about your choices; you have plenty of time to make your final decision
- ❖ Try to choose a good balance of subjects; this will keep your options open in the future
- ❖ Do not focus too much on the exact career you think you want when you are older – how many times have you changed your mind already? It's highly probable you may change your mind again; however, it could be useful to have an idea as to what career area you are interested in, but do not restrict yourself too much.
- ❖ Think about the skills that each subject offers – try to keep a good balance between humanities, languages, arts and technologies – this will make you a more rounded student.
- ❖ Do not take a subject just because your friend is taking it; you will not necessarily be in the same class.
- ❖ Consider your reserves carefully; owing to managing group sizes, teacher availability and timetable complexities, we may not be able to accommodate your five preferences and may need to use your reserve choices.
- ❖ Remember you are able to choose different subjects at the end of year 9, so do not worry if you do not get your 5 preferred options this time round.

Thinking about the future...the Curriculum at KS4.

English Baccalaureate (EBACC)

An initiative outlined by the Government has been to identify a 'desirable' range of subjects for students to take examinations in at the end of year 11. This range of GCSEs has been named as the English Baccalaureate and even though no formal certification is given, it is perceived by academic colleges to be a strong choice of subjects, as it shows flexibility in your academic learning skills. To be following the EBACC route, you take GCSEs in all of the following areas:

- English
- Maths
- Two Sciences
- One MFL (which could include a qualification in a Home Language)
- One Humanity: (Geography or History)

These subjects are referred to as facilitating subjects, as they enable you to keep a wide career choice open. Some Russell Group universities may ask about the English Baccalaureate on their application forms. There have been discussions at government level to make the EBACC route compulsory for the majority of students; this has yet to be formally introduced, so at the moment we are giving students the choice as to whether they select options, which mean they are fulfilling the EBACC suite of subjects.



Year 8

Mini Options Choices

Subject Information

(FINE) ART

WHAT is Fine Art?

Fine art at USH is a busy and vibrant course in which you will get the opportunity to explore the use of a wide variety of materials, techniques, and styles before finding your own specialist area.

Fine Art develops visual awareness and creative skills. You will gain practical experience in the use of colour, tone, line pattern, shape, texture, form, as well as gaining knowledge of important historical and contemporary artists and designers.

WHAT will I study in year 9?

You will explore and investigate a range of techniques including drawing, print making, acrylic painting, watercolours, inks, oil pastels, mixed media processes and three-dimensional works that extend your skills and knowledge in Art.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Students create a sketchbook of work which is assessed throughout Year 9.

WHERE next?

Art enhances fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, problem solving skills, lateral thinking, complex analysis, and critical thinking skills. No matter what career you choose, those who can arrange, present and display material in a way that is aesthetically pleasing have an advantage. Art makes students look at things anew. Communicating with colour, shape and form awakens the imagination.

Students achieving a GCSE in Art can continue their studies at 'A' level or Diploma, which can lead to study at a foundation course in art and/or a degree in various areas of art and design, for example: interior design, product design, fashion, photography, graphic design, and fine art.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Art - Mariella.DeRuiter@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

Art has allowed me to develop my creativity. We are encouraged to take risks and try new ways of working.

Going back through my work from year 9 and 10, I can see how much progress I have made. It makes me feel really proud of what I have accomplished.

I have learnt that art is another way of keeping a diary, I record my thoughts, feeling and ideas through a range of media.

BUSINESS STUDIES

WHAT is Business Studies?

GCSE Business aims to equip learners with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect business decisions. The qualification will encourage learners to make informed choices about a wide range of further learning opportunities and career pathways, as well as develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware.

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

Enterprise aims to develop a student's practical understanding of the enterprise sector. The course will cover the ideas, mindsets and success of enterprises and entrepreneurs. This will include planning, finance, and how to take a product to market. Students will develop useful skills that are not generally covered at school, including problem solving, decision making, innovation, project management, team working and communication.

Students are given the opportunity to develop sector-specific knowledge and skills in a practical learning environment across three components. The main focus is on the knowledge, understanding and skills required to research, plan, pitch and review an enterprise idea that includes:

- Development of key skills that prove aptitude in planning an enterprise activity, including market research, planning, carrying out financial transactions, communication and problem solving.
- Knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, such as the features and characteristics of enterprises and entrepreneurs, and the internal and external factors that can affect the performance of an enterprise.
- Attitudes and ways of working that are considered most important for enterprise, including monitoring and reflecting on performance of an enterprise idea for a small enterprise.

HOW can students ensure success in Business Studies?

We want our students to develop as independent learners and encourage them to use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts from opinions, form arguments and make informed judgements. A high level of ability in mathematics is recommended to succeed in this course as 10% of the GCSE is for calculations. Students will also need to have a good level of English to enable them to develop and explain business solutions. Students are recommended to have a keen interest in the world of business and world-wide current affairs.

HOW could taking Business Studies help with future aspirations?

Business Studies prepares you for A Levels as well as BTEC and NVQ courses in many different subjects. You will become skilled in making decisions, being creative, solving problems, understanding finance, dealing with data, communicating and working as part of a team. Even if you do not want to go on to study business further you will have benefited from studying a Business Studies course because many jobs you do will involve managing resources and people. However, a Business Studies course could lead to work in a business-related profession such as accountancy, law, marketing or the leisure and tourism industry.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Formal GCSE examinations take place at the end of Year 11, consisting of two 90-minute papers of equal weighting. Throughout the course students will be assessed following the completion of each unit and be given feedback.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Business – helen.hartshorn@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I have loved the practical elements of the course. It brings the theory we are learning to life!

Business helped me improve my knowledge of the world around me. The subject has elements that link to real life which helps your understanding.

CITIZENSHIP

WHAT is GCSE Citizenship?

Citizenship looks at different aspects of living in Britain today, it has units around law and the justice system, politics and democracy, the structure of the UK, including different identities and culture, as well as looking the UK's increasingly complex relationship with the rest of the world which has become especially important in recent years. Simply put, Citizenship combines Law, Politics and Economics into a GCSE course.

WHAT will Year 9 look like?

Year 9 topics aim to introduce students to the political landscape and build knowledge of inequality of the wider world through a series of case studies and introductory units. We will look at:

Year 9 case studies:

- What does it mean to be British?
- The Rwandan Genocide
- Youth Crime in the UK

Year 9 Introduction units:

- Human Rights
- Politics and democracy
- Crime and the legal system

WHY should students choose this subject?

If you are the kind of student who is interested in world events, politics, true crime and follows the news then this is the course for you. You will have the opportunity to:

- Discuss and debate important issues
- Work in groups to produce campaigns and presentations
- Reflect upon political decisions
- Think and reflect on your values and beliefs
- Conduct your own research and use social media to create a real change

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

At the end of year 11, you will be assessed through the completion of 3 exam papers, 2 based on the learning taking place in class, and the third paper based on a campaign you have carried out during the course.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

English, Politics and Citizenship would be helpful but the most important thing is an interest in people in the world and the ability to express your view clearly.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

There is a lot of politically related content, which requires being up to date with what is happening in the world by following news regularly. There are lots of facts and figures you need to learn and remember for the exams.

HOW could taking GCSE Citizenship help with future aspirations?

- Citizenship provides you with skills that are valuable to colleges, universities and future employers, such as oral and written communication, critical thinking, organizational, and problem-solving skills.
- Employers value people who understand and tolerate cultural diversity in our multi-cultural society.
- The units on the justice system and democracy make this useful to students who are interested in courses around law or politics in the future.
- It is useful for any job that involves working with people, ranging from doctors, lawyers, and the police to charity workers, social workers and humanitarian jobs overseas.
- You will develop a better understanding of yourself and the people who share our world.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of PSHE and Citizenship - Suzanne.Dibden@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

Citizenship has been my favourite subject since my first lesson in year 9. I can share my opinions about the issues in our world and make a change at the same time

Citizenship is one of my favourite subjects; it relates to life in the outside world and is always relevant.

Citizenship has something for everyone. From politics to media, to murder cases, you'll find something you enjoy in the subject.

DRAMA

WHAT is GCSE Drama?

GCSE Drama is a creative and stimulating subject that enables students to explore drama techniques and develop performance skills. Students have the opportunity to create their own work by responding to a stimulus, as well as working with text and improving skills necessary to interpret and deliver a script. It is an exciting GCSE course that enables students to work as part of a team in order to create powerful, meaningful and memorable drama.

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

The focus in year 9 is to build their confidence working with script, memorising lines and creating and performing monologues. They will work in mixed groups selected by the teacher and are pushed to become creative thinkers. Practical and theory lessons are timetabled each week.

WHY should students choose this subject?

Students should choose this course if they want to study a subject that is both practical and creative. They need to be passionate about performing, committed to refining techniques and have a willingness to learn. Drama builds confidence and self-esteem, which are key life skills essential in any walk of life.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

Students need to be creative and therefore an interest in the Arts is useful, they must be prepared to perform in front of each other and to an audience. A passion and enjoyment of drama, or the dramatic elements taught in English would be recommended. Students who have taken part in productions, clubs and enjoy watching live theatre would also do well in this subject.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

All GCSE assessments are completed in year 11.

Component 1: Understanding Drama: 40% of final mark

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Written exam - 1 hour 45 minutes

Component 2: Devising Drama: 40% of final mark

- Performance of devised drama
- Process of creating devised drama
- Devising log 2,500 words

Component 3: Texts in Practice: 20% of final mark

- Performance of two extracts from one play (Usually two monologues)
- Performed to a visiting examiner

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

You will have to learn lines of dialogue from a script and memorise them for a performance. You must be willing to rehearse after school and/or during lunch to improve the quality of your performances at times. You will develop your vocal and physical skills to create believable characters and will have to perform character monologues throughout the course. The written exam asks a variety of questions that you need to answer in as much detail as possible.

HOW could taking GCSE Drama help with future aspirations?

Drama is an excellent starting point for anyone who wants to study Drama, Performing Arts or Theatre Studies in college or university. Career routes include acting, directing, teaching, and many others.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Theatre Arts – Janine.Lambert@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I am so glad that I picked Drama because each lesson is brilliant. Theory drama is really engaging and you learn what vocal or physical skills to use during practical lessons. There are lots of opportunities to develop new skills.

I chose Drama because I really enjoy performing to others. I can explore playing characters that have complex backgrounds. Drama has helped me improve my public speaking.

FILM STUDIES

WHAT is GCSE Film Studies?

Film Studies gives students the opportunity to explore the medium of film through a variety of different projects, and to deepen their understanding of how films achieve the impressive effects that they do. They will consider how the use of camera, editing and sound are used to convey meaning in films, as well as looking at other issues that affect the production of films such as genre, narrative and the social context. There will also be several opportunities for students to develop skills in screenwriting, and planning and creating their own films using specialist equipment and editing software.

WHY should students choose this subject?

This subject is perfect for students who enjoy watching and thinking about films whilst creatively exploring their own ideas for genre films. They will study a variety of different films made inside and out of the mainstream Hollywood industry, and try their hand at screenwriting and filmmaking.

WHAT will I Study in year 9?

There are three main projects throughout the first year of Film Studies, each of which assess a variety of the different skills including film analysis, screenwriting and practical filmmaking skills. Students will become knowledgeable in the key elements that make up film sequences, and will be not only able to identify and discuss their use in films, but will also be able to utilise some of them in their own film projects. The first year of the course also explores a variety of genres and looks at how different films from different decades and locations present those genres in unique forms. There will also be several opportunities for students to try their hand at both screenwriting and filmmaking in particular genres, e.g. writing a science fiction screenplay or making a horror film.

WHAT will the GCSE be like?

Students will complete the course by sitting two exam papers at the end, which are designed to test their knowledge of six case study films which will be taught throughout years 10 and 11. One exam will cover three American films; the other paper will cover three global films including a non-English language film.

In the second and third years, students will also complete a portfolio of coursework, which is 30% of their final GCSE grade. For this, students will individually write a short genre film sequence that they will either film and edit independently, or write a screenplay for with an accompanying shooting script. This is followed by the writing of an evaluative analysis about the effectiveness of their project and its impact on audiences.

HOW could taking GCSE Film Studies help with future aspirations?

Following the GCSE Film Studies course, students will be able to choose a large number of pathways at college/sixth form, including courses such as A Levels in Film Studies, Media Studies or BTEC Media Production. The film studies course will also develop useful skills which will support A Level English literature, English language, ICT, graphics and photography.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Film - Sarah.Ohalloran@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I picked Film Studies because it sounded like a fun subject and you even get to make your own films too. It's one of my favourite subjects.

I picked Film Studies as I am really interested in a career in movies/adverts and TV. It has taught me so much about what goes on behind the camera.

Film Studies is a great subject – you get a chance to do filming and editing and go on amazing trips!

FOOD & NUTRITION

WHAT is this subject about?

Food and nutrition is an exciting course, designed to give pupils an opportunity to extend and apply their skills and knowledge of food within a variety of contexts. Topics covered include: Where food comes from (provenance) & how to prepare the following commodities (ingredients) meat, fish, eggs, dairy, fruit, vegetables, cereal grains & potatoes. Principles of nutrition, diet and good health. The science of food – what happens when ingredients are combined under different conditions.

WHY should I choose this subject?

This subject should also be of great interest to anyone who is passionate about food, cooking and nutrition wishing to learn an invaluable life skill. Independent project work is a vital part of the course and students should be prepared to create written support of their practical work.

WHEN and HOW am I assessed?

All assessment takes place in year 11.

Component 1: Principles of food preparation and nutrition. Written Examination 50% 1 hour 45 minutes.

Non-Examined Assessment (NEA – practical & written)

Component 2: Food preparation and nutrition in action 50%. Task 1 – (15%) Food science investigation and Task 2 (35%) practical exam and supporting coursework.

WHICH subjects should I have an aptitude in?

Cooking, English and Science. Organisation is an essential skill young people need to be successful in GCSE food, to ensure that they bring the correct ingredients to lessons and use their time well in terms of meeting coursework deadlines and kitchen timings.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

To reach the highest-level students must master a range of challenging and interesting technical practical skills. These range from making puff pastry and patisserie to filleting chicken and fish. Students will also be required to understand a range of detailed nutritional and scientific principles that underlie the cooking processes and good health. All of this is achievable with high levels of commitment to the subject.

WHERE could this subject take me in the future?

Working in the hospitality industry - chef, front of house staff (waiting staff, sommelier, mixologist, maître d'), Hotel management, events organiser, Food teacher, Development chef for major supermarkets or food manufacturers, Food product buyer for major supermarkets of food manufacturers, Food scientist/microbiologist, Dietician, nutritionist, Baker, butcher, Private chef, Chef in the armed forces, Environmental health officer, Confectioner or Food technologist.

No matter what your future, learning about cooking and nutrition will ensure a happy and healthy future full of delicious food.

WHO do I need to speak to for more information?

Subject Leader of Food - Joseph.Davies@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

Although I mainly chose the course because I liked the practical side of the course, I have really enjoyed learning about nutrition and food science too.

Even though I am not sure exactly what I want to do in the future, I loved learning a valuable life skill in an engaging way.

Food is challenging, enjoyable and really fast paced; I love it!

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

WHAT is Graphic Communication?

Graphic Communication is a part of your daily life. Using computer software or hand-rendered methods, visual concepts are developed to communicate ideas that inspire, inform and captivate people. They can be seen on everyday items such as packaging, advertising posters and T-shirts. Graphic design informs, persuades, organises, stimulates, identifies and attracts attention. Without graphics life would be very uninspiring.

WHAT will I Study in year 9?

The lessons in Graphics are based around developing who you are as a designer. The course explores both hand-rendered and digital outcomes, using traditional art media, printmaking methods as well as building your skills and knowledge in Photoshop and 2D Design. You'll develop your research skills, problem solving and your ability to work from your own initiative on creative project briefs. As a designer, you will learn to develop your own style through the exploration of contemporary designers and their work. Project briefs will be set by your teacher, but you will be encouraged to make a personal response.

You will record your creative journey in a sketchbook and digital slides. Homework is seen as an extension of your creative journey and is set weekly.

The GCSE course

The full specification is available at www.aqa.org.uk

Unit 1: 60% of total mark*

A portfolio of work which must include more than one project. The themes are set by the teacher but the students are encouraged to make a personal response.

Unit 2: 40% of total mark*

An externally set task, which culminates in a ten-hour examination period, during which time students will complete a final piece of work.

***Both units are marked by the teacher and moderated by AQA.**

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

Graphic Communication combines well with almost any subject. The discipline of independent study, ability to problem solve, present ideas clearly and think creatively is an extremely useful set of transferrable skills to use across all subjects and in future careers. This subject can give a student confidence and a real sense of achievement.

HOW could taking Graphic Design help with future aspirations?

GCSE Graphic Communication spans a large area and can lead to a number of career choices including; Graphic Design, Illustration, Animation, Advertising and publications, the opportunities are vast! This is a creative and enjoyable course which can also help you develop your skills in other subjects such as Mathematics, English, Art, ICT and Media.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Graphics Teacher – Claire.Weston@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I enjoy Graphics because it is a fun lesson and you learn a lot of new digital drawing skills and art techniques. I also feel well supported by my teacher when I need help.

Graphics has a real sense of community, everyone helps each other. I have become much more confident in using Photoshop tools and enjoy the freedom we have to explore our own creative ideas.

I like the freedom we are given in Graphics to create our own designs. I genuinely feel that I have developed as a designer and learnt a lot of new digital tools.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

WHAT is a BTEC Introductory Award in Health and Social Care?

This is an introductory vocational course that allows students to study the world of health and social care. Students will have the opportunity to study a range of skills during Year 9, providing a strong grounding in the subject ready for further study in Years 10 and 11.

WHAT will I study?

Students will study a range of content from the below units:

- Developing a personal progression plan
- Finding out about Health and Social Care services
- Communication skills for Health and Social Care
- Making healthy snacks when caring for people
- Advising others about healthy lifestyles
- Providing a creative activity when caring for people

WHY should students choose this subject?

If you are the kind of student who is interested in how we develop as humans and how health and social care support works. This is also suitable for you if you like caring for people and are considering further study or a career in the health and social care or education sector. You will have the opportunity to:

- Explore and develop an understanding of human life stages
- Examine and evaluate health and social care practices
- Explore important aspects of health and wellbeing
- Create your own projects to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

English, Maths and PSHE would be helpful, but the most important thing is an interest in caring for others and a keenness to learn new things.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

Students will be required to keep detailed course notes throughout the year and will need to be organised.

HOW could studying a BTEC Tech Award in Health & Social Care help with future aspirations?

- This course provides an excellent basis to move on to Level 1/2 study in this area in Years 10 and 11
- Career paths could include: teaching, nursing, speech and language therapy, social work, hospital management, human resource management in a health setting

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Health and Social Care – Sarah.Baillie@ushschool.org

"I enjoy Health & Social Care because it helps me think about where I want to head in life. It's a lesson that helps me develop my skills more."

"I think it's a really interesting course and it helps you learn about the people around you and how to deal with situations appropriately."

CREATIVE iMEDIA

WHAT is OCR Creative iMedia?

Creative iMedia will help students to develop an understanding of media codes and conventions for producing media products with computers. It will raise students' confidence in creating digital video, visual imaging, digital graphics, interactive digital media, and animation with audio products. Each unit of the qualification has interactive digital media at its heart. It provides students with knowledge and understanding in a number of key areas, as they design, plan, create and review interactive digital media products appropriately to meet client and target audience requirements

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

Year 9 is a skills development year where you will be learning about how to use computers to make a range of different media products from podcasts to music videos, graphic design and photography for magazines & advertising and other digital media such as apps and games. You will put this knowledge into practice and have a chance, both individually and in small groups, to research, design, plan, make and evaluate several different products across year 9. This will enable you to build up a portfolio of your work which will then be put into your own personal showreel.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

You will need to have analytical and communication skills; strengths in ICT, as well as creative subjects such as art or design technology should mean that this option would be suitable. You should also have an interest in the mass media - films, TV/streaming, radio/podcasting, advertising and magazines and digital media. The main emphasis of the course is on using photo editing software to create digital graphics and the creation of characters and comics. Students will learn to source suitable assets from the web, as well as create their own assets using a range of software tools.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

The ability to manage time effectively is the key to success in this subject. The work is heavily project based across year 10 and 11 and is *continuously assessed* so students will need to be very organised and ensure that very strict submission deadlines are met. They will also be expected to respond to and use feedback to improve and refine work produced throughout the course. There is also a 90-minute end of course exam in this subject which tests the student's knowledge and understanding of the media industry, factors influencing product design, pre-production planning and distribution considerations.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Students are assessed in BOTH year 10 and year 11 in year 10 and 11 there are 2 project-based components (internally assessed coursework units worth 60% of the overall grade for the qualification) and 1 examined unit (externally assessed and worth 40% of the overall grade for the qualification).

HOW could taking the OCR Creative iMedia course help with future aspirations?

Students can continue on to further vocational and academic study at level 3, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships. Currently all local colleges run similar vocational media production courses at level 3. This course goes well as a companion to Film Studies and Photography.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Creative iMedia – Michael.Park@ushschool.org

Some messages from our students:

I love finding out about the Media industry and analysing my favourite TV shows; there is so much that goes into making a show!

You get to use a wide range of media software and freedom of choice when designing products. I love the independence we have in lessons – it has improved my organisational skills as a result.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

WHAT is Design & Technology?

"Design and Technology is a practical and valuable subject. It enables children and young people to actively contribute to the creativity, culture, wealth and well-being of themselves, their community and their nation. It teaches how to take risks and so become more resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable. Students develop a critical understanding of the impact of design and technology on daily life and the wider world. Additionally, it provides excellent opportunities for students to develop and apply value judgements of an aesthetic, economic, moral, social, and technical nature both in their own designing and when evaluating the work of others." - Design & Technology Association.

What will I Study in year 9?

Building on your basic knowledge of design & technology from Years 7 and 8, you will progress towards learning about more complex techniques, materials and design concepts. These projects are about developing and refining your design and making skills, as well as your understanding of design & technology theory. This will enable you to work more confidently and independently when designing and making your future Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) based products in Years 10 and 11.

The GCSE Course

The full specification is available at <https://bit.ly/3jMpyng>

Component 1: 50% of total mark

Written examination: 2 hours. A mix of short answer, structured and extended questions assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding of the design & technology principles.

Component 2: 50% of total mark

Design and make task - non-exam assessment: approximately 35 hours. A sustained design and make task, based on a contextual challenge set by the examination board, assessing candidates' ability to apply the design & technology principles.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

This is a creative and enjoyable course which can help you develop your skills in other subjects such as Mathematics, English, Art, ICT and Media.

How could taking Design & Technology help with future aspirations?

This GCSE would prepare you for a career within the Design & Technology sector. Potential jobs include: Graphic Designer, Sculptor, Software Programmer, Engineer (Civil, Mechanical), Product Designer, Furniture maker, Architect, CAD/CAM Operator, Project Manager, Interior Designer, Electrician or Theatre Designer and so many other jobs.

The discipline of independent study, problem solving and acquisition of construction skills are extremely useful life-long skills.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Head of Design & Technology – Claire.Weston@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

'D&T is a fun subject because you make things you would find in the real world. You can learn about woodwork, joinery and even 3D printing.'

'I really enjoy creating my designs and 3D modelling. My confidence has increased over the lessons.'

'DT has enabled me to develop new skills and have different opportunities such as the Design Ventura Competition.'

'DT has pushed me in all sorts of directions left, right, up, down, linear, rotary – it's inspired me to be more creative and step outside my comfort zone.'

MFL: FRENCH / SPANISH

WHAT are GCSE Modern Foreign Languages in French and Spanish?

We aim to give you the tools to communicate effectively in French and/or Spanish in a range of contexts and situations so you become a confident speaker. Learning to communicate in a different language is key in a multicultural society like ours.

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

You will develop a better understanding of Spanish and French speaking countries and their traditions as well as gaining a range of transferable skills which will equip you for your future. In Year 9 you will study a range of new topics that will be useful for you if you visit the country or you decide to continue studying Languages in the future: holidays, shopping, future plans, identity and culture.

WHY should students choose this subject?

The ability to communicate in a foreign language is much valued by colleges, universities and employers. Modern linguists are flexible thinkers who are not scared to take risks. Learning a foreign language is challenging but it **will** open doors.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Students will be assessed across all four language skills which are set in common contexts, addressing a range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes Year 11 GCSE exam test each of these skill areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and account for 25% of the final grade. The speaking exam, which is conducted by the language teacher but assessed externally, takes place in April of year 11. The remaining of the final grade comes from examinations in listening, reading and writing.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

An aptitude in the language/s chosen, along with an ability to communicate clearly in your home language will also be desirable. Perseverance is key, learning a language is not easy, but is extremely fulfilling. For all the patterns certain elements of any language follow, there are some that are a little less clear and we will explore these together, with the aim of creating an understanding for each student.

WHAT is challenging about these subjects?

Consolidating language studied in lessons in an independent and proactive manner is the key to success in languages and achieving the best grade possible. Developing good routines in their preparation outside of the classroom by using their Knowledge Organisers, Language Nut, Quizlet/Memrise and revision quizzes will be essential. Completing all homework to the best of their ability will also be key to develop writing skills. Learning a foreign language means being committed to put ourselves out of our comfort zone sometimes but also it is fun!

HOW could taking a GCSE Modern Foreign Language in French and / or Spanish help with future aspirations?

In the future, you may have the opportunity to work overseas or you may prefer to stay based in this country. Either way, learning a language is not only about speaking it but also about the skills you pick up while doing so. Having a GCSE in a foreign language will demonstrate to employers that you have mastered some other key work skills: problem solving, adaptability, confidence, developing a mental agility, and possess good oral and written communication skills.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of MFL – Bethany.Samborski@ushschool.org

Some messages from our students:

Speaking another language means I can understand others and their culture a bit more.

Learning a language has given me more confidence as I had to try something new and not give up. The languages teachers at USH have always supported me.

MUSIC PERFORMANCE

WHAT is Year 9 Music Performance all about?

Music is an opportunity to explore a wide variety of music, including classical, film, pop, rock, jazz, blues and musical theatre. If you choose Music for year 9, you will perform music set by the teacher, *and* music of your own choice. We will also look at the music industry and discover how to organise a music event, and considering all of the job roles linked to the music industry. ***Students are permitted to take both options (Music Performance and Music Technology) in year 9.***

Music is a creative, practical subject and we spend year 9 learning skills which are valuable for all, even if music is just a hobby for you. By the end of Year 9, you will have the confidence to continue improving as a musician by yourself, whether you take the subject forward to Year 10 or not.

You will be welcome in Year 9 Music whether you can play an instrument already or not. As part of the course we will play instruments regularly, but you could be a beginner who has never played music outside of the classroom before, or someone who has already been working hard for a long time on your favourite instrument.

WHY should students choose Music Performance?

Music is ideal for students who love playing instruments or singing, and listening to a wide range of music. During the course, students perform in ensembles and as a soloist in front of the teacher and sometimes the class, develop skills in composing music and learn how to organise a music performance and work as a musician.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

There is continual monitoring of students' learning throughout the course. In Year 9, students will be marked on their listening skills and musical knowledge, creativity in composition tasks, and progress in performing music.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

No other aptitudes are strictly required for Music and I would encourage anyone who thinks they may enjoy it to choose it. However, the following may help you to choose:

- An interest in improving as a performer is very important. Attendance at extra-curricular music will be a huge help to students who wish to succeed at KS4.
- As a performing arts subject, students will be expected to make music with and in front of others, so those who are also excelling in Drama or are confident with speaking may also have the confidence to succeed in Music Performance.
- Students who can understand and analyse moods will succeed in composition and listening, which may appeal to those who enjoy English or Art. It could also be a good supporting option for those considering choosing Film Studies.

HOW could taking Music lead to future aspirations?

There are a number of directions Music Performance can take you in: performer, composer, arranger, producer, conductor, academic/researcher at a university music department. Many musicians make a portfolio career doing more than one of these things. Sound and lighting engineers also benefit from an understanding of the needs of the performers they work with. Aspiring actors need skills in music (especially singing) as well as acting and dancing.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Music - George.Smith@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I spend my whole week looking forward to coming to music. It's the best subject and I can't wait to continue it at college.

Music has helped me to improve how I play my instrument and, even though I used to feel nervous about composing, I'm so much more confident now we get to perform to each other a lot.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

WHAT is Year 9 Music Technology all about?

Music Technology is about creating music for the modern era, including club music, Rock, R'n'B, Funk, Rap, Pop, and Electronica as well as the chance to work on music for film, video games, television and other media. Students will be taught to record, produce and mix music using technology, including different kinds of microphones and computer software. This option is every bit as creative as the Music Performance option but does *not* involve any live performing. ***Students are permitted to choose both music options for year 9.***

In this subject students will use technology to create music in modern styles. The ability to read music and play an instrument or sing is not needed for Music Technology, although it will come in very handy, and students will all gain basic keyboard skills in this subject. As there is no performing requirement, this is an accessible subject for all students who enjoy music lessons regardless of background, ability, or interest in learning an instrument.

WHY should students choose Music Technology?

Music Tech is for those with an interest in creating modern music and is directly useful to anyone with future aspirations in the music industry. In this course you will be able to:

- Learn about a wide variety of popular styles of music
- Gain vital knowledge and skills relating to the modern music industry
- Use IT and sound equipment to compose, record and produce your own tracks and beats
- Make music without the pressure of live performance.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Students will be continuously credited for their progress and improvement. Students are not only assessed on the result of their projects, but also on their ability to reflect, self-assess and improve. Students ability to use software will be monitored, and they will have to both be creative *and* follow the conventions of the musical styles we study.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

- Effective use of computers is essential for so students should be confident in **ICT**
- Students who excel in **Maths** or **Science** will have good numeracy and problem solving skills which will help them to excel in Music Technology
- As there is *some* written work involved, students could consider their ability in other written subjects
- While *not* essential for the Music Technology option, the ability to play an instrument and a basic knowledge of music reading will be a huge advantage

HOW could taking Music Technology help with future aspirations?

There are many directions Music Technology can take you, such as a composer, arranger, producer, sound technician for a recording studio or live music venue to teaching Music Technology. Many musicians make a portfolio career of doing more than one of these things. Other music technicians go on to study Acoustic Engineering, Electronic Engineering or Computer Science.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Music - George.Smith@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

Music Technology is different to Music Performance, but I have really enjoyed learning it in year 9.

We have learnt about a number of different genres and I have loved producing my own versions – it is such a creative subject and it has helped me improve my independence and organisational skills.

SPORTS LEADERSHIP

WHAT is Sports Leadership?

The qualification for Sports Leadership is a nationally recognised qualification run by the Leadership Skills Foundation, that enables successful learners to assist in leading purposeful and enjoyable sport/physical activity. The course prepares students with employability skills for life improving motivation, self-esteem, communication, teamwork and confidence. This course focuses on developing students' practical performance but also tools to become coaches, officials and volunteers in sport.

WHY should students choose this subject?

Students should choose this course if they are passionate at developing themselves in PE. They should also look to choose this course if they would like to improve their employability skills including; teamwork, organisation, planning, leadership, communication and being a positive role model to others. This course explores the role of leading a practical session as a coach, being a leader in sport and other roles of officiating and volunteering.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

A passion for sport and developing personal skills and fitness is essential. In addition, an open mind in developing personal and employability skills, such as communication, organisation, planning and being a positive role model to others.

WHAT does Sports Leadership entail in Year 9?

The programme of study focuses on Leadership Skills, designed at students exploring key skills and behaviours needed to lead others in sport, implementing these leadership skills in a range of situations and recognising the roles and responsibilities of a Sports Leader. Students will also plan and assist and lead practical activities, being assessed in their planning of a sports session, assisting and leading a sports session as a Sports Leader. This will give them the confidence in leading a group. This course should provide students with the tools and personality traits to help them be successful in their next steps in sport (PE GCSE or BTEC Sport).

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

The **theory** side of this course means students will be expected to write and develop their understanding of key aspects of how to lead a practical session. They will develop an understanding of the key roles, responsibilities, qualities and behaviours a sports coaching needs to lead a group. Students will need to be prepared to organise and write down session plans and evaluate and analyse other student's sessions.

Practically, the course focuses heavily on team building activities and providing opportunities for students to develop their creativity and confidence in their own leadership qualities. They will demonstrate this through leading warm-ups, designing small sporting drills and activities and preparing themselves to lead 2 x 15mins sessions in their chosen sport. ***Students should note that unlike Core PE – they will not just be playing sport during these practical sessions. The focus will be on them leading and coaching/teaching others.***

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

Students are assessed throughout the year, both practically and through written assessments. Students will be assessed by planning and leading two 15-minute practical sessions towards the later end of the course. Throughout the course, students' complete written assessment tasks in their Learner Evidence Resource Booklet. These must be completed to the required standard if students are to complete the course.

HOW could taking Sports Leaders help with future aspirations?

Taking this course is a good stepping stone to take GCSE PE or BTEC Sport at Key Stage 4. The transferable skills which the Sports Leadership course develops will also be an asset in the world of employment. The growing opportunities within the leisure and sport industry, such as leisure management, teaching and coaching, fitness training, even part time careers in officiating and volunteering, provide a wealth of opportunity to the passionate sportsperson.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of PE – Christopher.Janata@ushschool.org

PHOTOGRAPHY

WHAT is Photography at USH?

The fantastic world of Photography is a part of the broad and varied curriculum we offer at USH. Students are introduced to both the technical and creative side of the subject through exploration of work by contemporary photographers, as well as first-hand experience with our range of cameras and equipment. This allows students to express themselves through a breadth of visual language; students learn about a variety of photographic media, techniques and processes, which include hands-on experimentation with both traditional and digital media. Our Photography course offers students a bespoke experience, tailoring the course to the needs of the individual.

WHAT will I study in year 9?

This course will teach students to look at our visual world in an innovative way. Tuition is enjoyable, structured, friendly and supportive; students develop both their confidence and their technical skills, which results in most students achieving high-grade passes on this course. We aim to cultivate student's creative potential which will enable them to apply imaginative, analytical and critical thinking to the other subjects that they study. Students also have the opportunity to experience a wide range of enrichment activities. We also carry out a lot of collaborative work with City College, Solent Showcase and Arts University of Bournemouth; all of which offers our students a diverse and culturally rich experience.

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

Photography is closely linked to other creative subjects especially Fine Art, Textiles and Graphics. Therefore, students need an aptitude in the creative thinking and drawing aspects of art. An ability to write fluently about the development of ideas, critically review and analyse the work of photographers is essential; a good level of literacy is an advantage.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

When asked about the challenges of the subject, current students mentioned; taking photographs independently on location outside of school and at home, the high level of commitment and creativity needed to gain top results, and producing detailed written analyses of the techniques used by the photographers studied.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

In Year 9 students are continually assessed on their practical skills. The knowledge obtained in Year 9 is a foundation for the GCSE course taught in Yr10 and 11. The GCSE assessment is a product of work produced in years 10 and 11.

Unit 1: 60% of total mark - A portfolio of work; themes are set by the teacher, but the students are encouraged to produce a personal response.

Unit 2: 40% of total mark - An externally set project over a ten-week period which culminates in a ten-hour examination, during which the students produce a final piece of work.

HOW could taking GCSE Photography help with future aspirations?

Photography could lead to academic or vocational degrees relating to press photography, photojournalism, fine art, editing, fashion photography or styling, the film industry, forensic science, curating, image library, and many more. Students will acquire creative and practical problem-solving skills and the ability to develop their ideas through research, practical application, analysis and critique.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Photography – Helen.Cadle@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

'Photography has given me the skills to see our visual world in a new way'

'I am passionate about my photography work, if I could, I would spend every minute of the day being creative.'

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

In Year 9 Religious Studies involves studying some of life's biggest questions. Many of the topics covered involved deep philosophical thinking and debate. We explore questions around the creation of the universe, the existence of God and the problem of suffering. Exploring these topics from both a religious and non-religious perspective, students examine how people shape their views. Students develop a better understanding of themselves along with the people who share our world, gaining an understanding of the different perspectives different people may have on an issue.

Year 9 is designed to provide a foundation for students who go on to study the GCSE course. Alongside the philosophical issues we also study the religion of Hinduism so that students understand how the GCSE blends the study of world religions alongside ethical issues. Key topics we study are arguments for and against the existence of God, does the existence of suffering prove there is no God, a study of Hinduism – including the animal rights, medical ethics and wealth and poverty.

WHY should students choose this subject?

A student who asks questions about society and is interested in what is happening in the world would be perfect for this course. Students will learn why people believe in different things and what reasoning is behind someone's actions. They also need to be open minded and understand that there are questions in the world which have no answer! Students will have the opportunity to discuss and debate important issues, work in groups to create resources to examine the topics and think and reflect on their values and beliefs.

WHEN and HOW are students assessed?

The GCSE course assessment consists of two papers which are taken at the end of year 11. An exam practice is taken at the end of each unit and we look at exam technique throughout the course

WHICH subjects should students have an aptitude in?

English, PSHE and Religious Studies would be helpful but the most important thing is an interest in people in the world along with the ability to express their views clearly whilst appreciating the views of others.

WHAT is challenging about this subject?

You must consider and argue viewpoints that might be different from what you believe about an issue. You will have to learn and use religious quotations and teachings. Assessment in Religious Studies involves short essay style questions (around 1 A4 side) so students should be mindful of the literacy skills required. The subject also requires you to think and think hard about life, morality and beliefs.

HOW could taking GCSE Religious Studies help with future aspirations?

- Employers value people who understand and tolerate cultural diversity in our multi-cultural society.
- Many students who take it use it to move on to courses studying Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Criminology at college.
- It is useful for any job that involves working with people; ranging from doctors, lawyers, the police to charity workers, social workers and humanitarian jobs overseas.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Religious Studies – matt.pitcher@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I would highly recommend picking RS, it's helped me with all my subjects

I never thought I would enjoy RS as much as I do.

RS is a good companion subject to any other humanities subject.

ART: TEXTILES

WHY choose Textile Design?

Textiles is a vibrant and dynamic course which teaches skills such as weaving, felting, stitching, appliqué, construction methods, and printing. It gives students the freedom to express themselves using techniques and materials they enjoy using. It is not only inspiring and enjoyable but equips them with the skills to continue the subject with confidence at GCSE, A-level and beyond.

It is a particularly good choice if you want to be creative and enjoy Art and Design but do not feel very confident at drawing and painting.

WHAT will I study in Year 9?

The course has been designed to encourage an experimental and enquiring approach to Textiles. There will be many ways for you to develop, refine, record, and present your ideas. You will be taught to confidently operate a sewing machine, use a range of embellishment techniques, analyse the work of existing textile/fashion artists, and to think and work independently.

You will complete three projects in Year 9 that will include weaving, embroidery, appliqué, fabric manipulation, printmaking, tie dye, hand embroidery and Fashion Textiles. You will keep a visual record of your ideas and progress in a sketchbook. Communication about ideas will be visual and written and you will produce a variety of practical final outcomes.

WHY should students choose this subject?

Textiles builds confidence and gives a real sense of achievement. It develops independent study and problem-solving skills. Students should choose Textiles if they enjoy being creative and imaginative, and like problem solving in a practical way.

HOW could taking GCSE Textiles help with future aspirations?

Students achieving a GCSE in Textiles can continue their studies at 'A' level or Diploma, which can lead to study at a foundation course in art and/or a degree in various areas of art and design, for example: interior design, product design, fashion, photography, graphic design, and fine art.

WHO should be contacted for more information?

Subject Leader of Art - Mariella.DeRuiter@ushschool.org

Some quotes from our students:

I love Textiles, not only does it challenge my thinking but I also find it calming and relaxing. I look forward to my Textile lessons.

I am passionate about my Textile work, if I could, I would spend every minute of the day being creative in the art rooms.

Learning how to use a sewing machine has opened up new ways of working for me. I can be creative and expressive through stitching.