

The Business and Economics Department Curriculum Intent

In line with our department vision, the Business and Economics Department intentions in Years 9-13 can be found below.

The department endeavours wherever possible to make links to previous, as well as future learning. All teachers build the skills of the pupils up over time from a base, to then practising and perfecting them as they build their overall understanding of the subject as a whole.

Years 9-11

Classes are of mixed ability in GCSE Business, with all ranges of targets in each class. There has been a swift uptake of the number of pupils studying Business in recent years, but despite have two and sometimes three classes in each option block the teachers in the department prefer to teach in mixed ability classes.

Pupils are introduced to Business in Year 8. They have an activity day in October, twinned with Media Studies, the other subject they don't have access to in Years 7 & 8, where they work in their tutor groups on a combined project from the two subjects for the same goal. In these sessions, the pupils apply Business skills that they do not yet possess, but learn quickly in a day in advance of some of them being interested in taking it as a GCSE option subject. The pupils are also given details of the course in an informative assembly due to the large numbers in each cohort.

The department teaches the AQA specification for GCSE Business. The syllabus covers all areas of Business applicable to key stage four children in a clear way, with the four main business functions taught after pupils learning the basic principles and outlines of the subject. The department teaches the content in a different order than recommended by the exam board to enable progression by building up an understanding of business over time, and leaving the technical concepts of external influences in Year 11, when the pupils have more maturity and grasp of the real world.

Although there are appropriate ready-made lessons and resources for every lesson in the schemes of work for each unit of GCSE Business, individual teachers are encouraged to teach in their own style. They are asked keep the content common, as well as particular assessment points, but have freedom in how to approach different areas, and be creative in various activities for the pupils in their classes to engage in.

Pupils start off learning the first unit, called The Business Framework. These are the foundations for which the subject is laid, and the principles taught here underpin everything that comes after it. Time is taken in this unit, not only for the content, but also to introduce the exam structure and technique, along with the common skills the pupils will need to apply throughout. They then move on to Marketing, which they spend a similar length of time on, with this being allocated to hone the skills early, and show their creativity in a variety of ways, as the unit lends itself to it.

The pupils then discover Operations Management in their next unit. In a similar way to the first unit this underpins the other business functions and enables them to understand much more how businesses run as a whole. At this point the pupils are introduced to the integrated nature of business, as they can link concepts to those in Marketing. Human Resources is taught next, including the importance of people in business; where much of this can be applied to the pupils in their school environment. Then comes Finance, which the pupils first started to consider at the start of the course, but financial statements from accounting are taught. Here the pupils now can identify all areas of the four main business functions, and will be able to discuss integration links.

Finally, the pupils learn about The External Environment. This unit is all about the impact the world outside of a business impacts on the different functional areas they have studied beforehand. As a result, the pupils are effectively revising many topics they have been taught in the past. Here, special focus is given by teachers to the economy, as Economics is such a popular A-Level at the school; its rapid growth is linked to three Economics specialists teaching this area of GCSE Business.

As with all other subjects the Year 11s sit a PPE at the end of the autumn term. The department sets a combination of Paper 1 (Operations Management & Human Resources focused) and Paper 2 (Marketing & Finance focused). This means that the pupils get to demonstrate, apply and analyse their knowledge of all four functions, with the first and last units sandwiching them. After this process, teachers regularly set Papers 1 and 2 in full or in part to assess the pupils and sharpen the skills that they have been developing throughout the course. As well as this, the pupils are assessed at the end of each of the aforementioned units in mini exams, tailored to the exam board.

One key aspect of the teaching of GCSE Business is the pupils applying what they have been taught to the world outside of their school. Most teachers in the department have industry experience, with anecdotes to bring the subject to life, which happens in every lesson. Equally, all teachers use real life and made up case studies to reflect the specification and the different types of scenarios that the pupils will be examined on.

The other key facet of teaching in the department at GCSE is that of group working. Pupils are regularly sat in groups on tables and are routinely put into pairs of 2-3 children, who work together in every lesson. They are all expected to work together to collaborate on class tasks, either in pairs or larger groups, and there is a large emphasis on discussions within them. There are many whole class discussions and Q & A sessions in each classroom, and the pupils are coached to learn from each other and enhance the understanding of everyone else in the class through questioning, risk-taking and answer modelling.

The pupils are offered a trip in Year 10 to enhance their understanding of some of the functions they have studied in GCSE Business. This is to a factory, with a focus on Operations Management and Marketing; however other areas are brought in. The Year 11 pupils benefit from extra sessions where appropriate to help them with their understanding and exam technique. The Year 11s also have access to mentoring, which the Sixth Form pupils run, which is being extended to other year groups in places as well.

The pupils undertake group projects throughout the GCSE Business course. These vary in length, but tend to have between 2-6 children in each team, depending on the activity. These projects are designed for the pupils to learn the concepts whilst they are being creative and working in teams, as well as applying what they have been taught with their enterprising ideas. These enhance the pupils' soft skills and help to prepare them for further study, as well as the working world.

The pupils are taught new information at GCSE in chunks, with this taking place both throughout the course and in individual lessons. Teachers model concepts with their classes, before asking the pupils to apply what they have been taught. The GCSE Business specification has been sequenced in a way that the department feels the children will learn the subject best, as well as building up their skills. Retrieval practice takes place frequently, both recent and content covered earlier to make links and consolidate. Pupils are tested with a milestone assessment at the end of each unit to prepare them for their final exams, as well as regular methods of assessment in many lessons. Real world examples are a key component of all teaching in the department, which help to bring Business to life, and there is much discussion, in pairs, groups, and as a class.

Years 12-13

The Business and Economics Department runs four courses in Years 12 & 13 – A-Level Business, A-Level Economics, BTEC Level 3 Business (single) and BTEC Level 3 Business (double) (worth two A-Levels). Each of the two A-Levels and the single BTEC have two teachers, sharing the 9 teaching hours in a 5/4 split, and the double BTEC class has three teachers, roughly with 6 hours each over the fortnight.

As with all subjects, pupils are given information about the courses offered in Year 11. This is through a workshop on activities day run by the Head of Sixth Form, in assemblies and in tutor time by pastoral staff, and at Sixth Form open evening. In addition, teachers of Year 11 GCSE Business classes outline the subjects offered and the entry requirements in lessons, and, as aforementioned, in particular refer to Economics when teaching that part. Pupils who have studied GCSE Business of course have a background in the subject, and they are guided as to whether the A-Level or BTEC is better suited to their style of learning.

The department teaches A-Level Business using AQA. This specification has a broad spectrum of all areas of business, and is common with the four functions many pupils are aware of. It also has a similar question style, so that a child who studied GCSE Business has a grounding in the language examined at A-Level. The course is challenging, with an emphasis on models and theories, which suits the nature of those teaching it. The exam board used for A-Level Economics is also AQA. The course is split between the two teachers, with one focusing on microeconomics and the other macroeconomics. As with Business, the wording is also familiar to many of the pupils we have already taught at Piggott. The syllabus allows teachers some flexibility in the order of teaching, meaning some concepts the exam board recommends scheduling for Year 13 can be taught in Year 12, and vice versa.

BTEC Level 3 Business has a single class and a double class in each year group. Pupils who really enjoy and have a lot of interest in Business from their teaching at GCSE choose the double option, which covers more areas of the subject; however the single option is still quite broad with the units chosen by the department. Both options have Investigating Business as an introductory unit, which incorporates some operational issues, as well as units in Marketing, Finance and Human Resources, so that the pupils understand the key areas of Business. The double class in addition study Management & strategy, International Business, Market research and Event planning. This course is more applicable to some pupils, and much more hands-on, with much greater emphasis on vocational learning and assessment over time.

In A-Level Business the pupils start off with the principles of Business, including structure and objectives, as well as leadership and decision making; these underpin the rest of the course. The pupils then move onto study the four main functions of Business (Marketing, Operations Management, Human Resources and Finance) in their next four units. At the end of Year 12 they sit a PPE on all areas. In Year 13 the pupils are taught about strategy, encompassing the whole organisation, and strategic change; bringing the subject together holistically and helping to prepare pupils for the future study of Management and their careers in the business world.

A-Level Economics begins with the principles and basic concepts in both microeconomics and macroeconomics, especially supply & demand and aggregate supply & aggregate demand. The pupils then explore and apply these into different markets and countries, and with more complexity. The pupils move onto behavioural economics and an economy's main indicators, before labour markets and Government policies. They are also assessed in a PPE. In Year 13 the pupils move onto

business economics with market structures dominating their micro studies; in macro international trade, development economies and financial markets are studied.

In BTEC Level 3 Business, as with A-Level, the pupils begin with the foundations of business, which will then help them with other areas of the course; they are assessed on this over Year 12. Both classes also study Marketing, which has a controlled assessment. Finance is a taught unit with an exam, with the Human Resources function focusing on recruitment & selection. The double pupils set up and run an Event, learn in more depth about International Business and Market research, with another controlled assessment in Management and Strategy. They are assessed throughout the course in different means, both as individuals and in a group. Independent and teamworking are emphasised in this style of learning, with good support from their teachers.

The teachers in the department are all specialists in the areas that they teach, the timetable is focused on getting the right teachers with the right classes. There is regular training and collaboration in the department within the three distinct areas that are taught in the Sixth Form. As with GCSE, many of the teachers have real world business experience to share, and some are experienced examiners, passing on their expertise to the children, helping them to achieve.

Pupils in the department are encouraged to undertake wider reading around the subject. They are given reading lists, news articles, real life examples and encouraged to explore and develop their passion for what they are learning. In A-Level Economics there is a magazine produced by the pupils with their articles, and in A-Level Business the pupils are given group projects to display their creativity, organisation and teamworking skills. BTEC Level 3 Business pupils run an event in a team from start to finish, encouraging independence and co-operation.

The department runs a trip to London for Year 13 A-Level Business as a revision day, run by Tutor2u, our subject area experts, from whom many of the resources in the department are bought. There is also a Bank of England visit for A-Level Economics pupils. BTEC Level 3 Business classes have guest speakers coming to the school to share their expertise, experience and application to business. In addition, other external activities such as innovation days and project management workshops take place both in and out of school.

The Business and Economics Department has a number of prefects in Year 13. These help with open evenings, and in particular the Sixth Form open evening. They also assist on the Year 8 activities day, as above, and by speaking to the Year 8 children in an assembly. The prefects offer and give support in lessons with Year 9 pupils, and some of them and other Year 13s mentor Year 11s to help to prepare them for their GCSE Business exams.

There is an open-door policy for all Sixth Form pupils who study Business and/or Economics. This means that the pupils can come and see their teachers for any help and guidance when they need it. There is regular communication between pupils and their teachers, both in and out of lessons, and in the office is always a member of staff to help a pupil with their work. The department runs before and after school revision sessions, and a key component of success is one-to-ones with individual pupils, especially Year 13s in the run up to their final exams. Pupils in the Sixth Form enjoy working in our department, and we enjoy working with them, making it a beneficial collaboration.

All of the courses in the department in the Sixth Form have been sequenced in the way we feel is most beneficial for the pupils to learn. Recaps occur in most lessons, as well as links to past and future learning, and indeed across the different disciplines, e.g. micro and macro in Economics. Real life examples are taught in every lesson, e.g. business news stories, and whole class discussions take place frequently. Pupils are assessed in a plethora of ways, both commonly and through milestones.