



The Oldershaw School

A Level Biology - HOD: Miss A Brennan

Course Outline & Exam Ratio

Entry requirements are grade 6 in GCSE Biology or 6-6 in Combined Science and a 6 in GCSE Maths. The course provider is AQA and consists of 8 topics of study which are assessed by papers 1 and 2. Practical work is teacher assessed via a series of 12 core practical activities and further tested within paper 3 which also draws upon knowledge and understanding from the full range of content.

Year 12

During the first-year pupils study topics including biological molecules, cell structure, cells and the immune system, exchange and transport systems, DNA and protein synthesis, diversity and classification. Throughout the first year of study pupils will undertake 6 of core practical experiments they are required to complete, including dissection. A decision will be made based upon the student as to whether the AS level exams are taken.

Year 13

During the second year of study, pupils will cover topics such as photosynthesis and respiration, Homeostasis and nervous coordination, genetics, evolution and ecosystems alongside gene expression and gene technologies. Throughout the second year of study pupils complete the remaining 6 core practical experiments.

Having completed the course, pupils are assessed as follows:

Paper 1

Any content from topics 1-4, including relevant practical skills.

Written exam consisting of 91 marks – 2 hours.

Equates to 35% of A-level

Paper 2

Any content from topics 5-8, including relevant practical skills.

Written exam consisting of 91 marks – 2 hours.

Equates to 35% of A-level

Paper 3

Any content from topics 1-8, including relevant practical skills.

Written exam consisting of 78 marks, including a 25-mark essay question – 2 hours.

Equates to 30% of A-level

Progression Routes

A level Biology is designed to give pupils the necessary qualifications to progress into higher education. It is a mandatory requirement for most medical courses e.g. Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy. Biology is also required for a diverse range of other career paths including Oceanographer, Pathologist, Veterinary Surgeon/nurse, Biomedical scientist, Food scientist and a Zookeeper. If you are not thinking of attending a higher level course after sixth form, A-level Biology provides students with higher level thinking skills, specifically analytical practical skills and problem solving skills, alongside good communication and discipline which many employers are looking for.

Enrichment Opportunities

We organise STEM trips to local universities, in particular University of Liverpool and LJMU.

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