



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust



PROSPECTUS

2020 - 2021



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A Message from the Headteacher

I sincerely hope that in reading this prospectus you will get a sense of what we in Sir Graham Balfour strive to achieve. I am immensely proud of the students of our school, who are caring, diligent and focused. I am equally proud of our staff, who, with our governors and you, our parents and carers, are dedicated to making sure our young people's life chances are greatly enhanced by having been a member of our school community.

I believe that in order to succeed, people need to feel happy and secure; our mission statement, 'Learning, working and succeeding together', very much sums up our approach. We work hard to create a vibrant and mutually supportive climate for learning in which everyone, students and staff, can thrive. We are an inclusive school and cater for students of all abilities and backgrounds. We are proud of our caring ethos and our commitment to ensuring every child matters. Our sense of community is also very important to us. Students, staff, governors, parents and friends are all encouraged to play a full and active role in school life. Only by working together can we hope to move forward as a school.

We believe passionately in traditional values, such as a strong work ethic, clear discipline and care and concern for others, but we also fully embrace technology. We are an ICT-rich school and our parents have on-line access to a whole range of information about their son/daughter re: attendance, behaviour and progress.

With approximately 1000 students, we are a mid-sized high school. This makes it possible for us to get to know each student as an individual. Our innovative, vertical, mixed age House Groups help us to create a real sense of community by encouraging students to take responsibility for the welfare of others.

We are incredibly ambitious for our students and their attainment. We are fully staffed with subject experts; we have a substantial professional development schedule which ensures that our teachers receive the latest training, and have the time to implement new strategies which help students learn and progress. Our curriculum is largely traditional and rigorous; we offer quality courses at GCSE and A level and our results have shown consistent improvement over a number of years. Ofsted in 2019 rated us a Good school.

We are fortunate to have a first rate learning environment. We are housed in bright and modern purpose-built accommodation which opened in 2002 under a Private Finance Initiative. All these factors mean that your child will receive high a quality education should they attend Sir Graham Balfour School.

I do look forward to meeting you in the near future and always welcome visits to the school.

Lesley Beck

Headteacher



Sir Graham Balfour's Vision & Values

Our vision is summed up in our mission statement – ‘Learning, Working and Succeeding Together’

For us, the ‘together’ is absolutely critical; collaboration, cooperation and teamwork are essential for developing the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary for academic and personal excellence. As well as the drive to achieve academically, the ability to self-regulate, to communicate clearly with others, to know and be proud of who you are, to be compassionate to others and to be ambitious for yourself and others are equally important.

We passionately believe that the circumstances of birth or upbringing should not be the key determining factors to success in life and we are relentless in our ambition for ALL children to achieve as well as possible at Sir Graham Balfour School, regardless of their sexual orientation, socio-economic, ethnic, religious or gender status.

Our Values

Our aim as a school, working alongside parents and our community, is to help students to become outstanding and effective citizens; to make responsible, appropriate and healthy choices in all things. Staff and parents will not always be there, at the point where critical decisions need to be made. This is why we are committed to **values based learning**; *rules* prescribe a set of appropriate/inappropriate behaviours (e.g. don't run in the corridors) which are specific to given contexts, whereas *values* provide a set of aspirational guidelines within which children must choose the right behaviour or action for the vast array of contexts they will be faced with in life (e.g. how do I need to move around the school if I am taking responsibility for myself and others?).

These are the values which we believe will help our students to become excellent citizens of Stafford and beyond:

- Commitment to excellence
- Responsibility for ourselves and others
- Care for the local and wider Community
- Respect, Kindness and Compassion for ourselves and others
- Ambition for ourselves and others
- Perseverance and resilience
- Pride in working hard and the success it brings



Our values drive and shape every aspect of school life, taking the place of school rules. They seek to reinforce the development of the whole person, in addition to the academic. They are values which will, if routinely exemplified and embedded, give our young people all the skills and characteristics necessary to become outstanding citizens of the future.

A Smooth Transition

We try to ensure that students transferring to Sir Graham Balfour have the smoothest transition and are ready to begin learning from day one. The Pastoral Faculty works very closely with year 6 teachers in our partner primary schools. Meetings are held to ensure that we build on the knowledge and experience students gain in primary school. Each faculty holds Taster Sessions for year 5 students to attend, together with two full days for year 6 prior to making the move to high school in September.

This information and early contact helps us to support every individual child and allows a seamless transition from primary to secondary school. This means finding out about both their academic ability and identifying pastoral support they may need. This allows us to place them in classes or teaching groups that best suit individual needs and abilities.

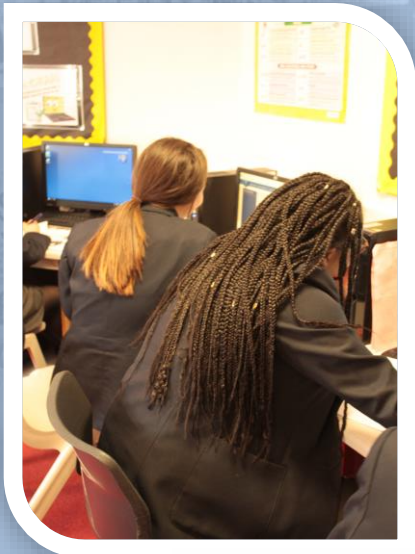
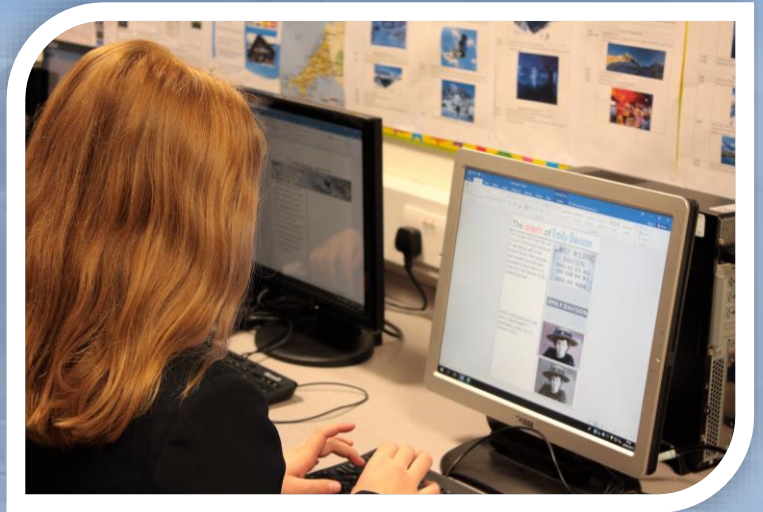
We know that coming to the “Big School” can be a worry to young people and their parents and that the fear of bullying is always there. In addition to our strong discipline system and House Time programme we also have our Buddy System which uses older students who are peer mentors to support and care for younger ones.



Transition Day – Cooper Perry Primary School

Learning and Teaching

At Sir Graham Balfour we place the greatest emphasis on the quality of the student's learning as we believe that this is at the heart of everything the school does. We provide every student with a broad and balanced curriculum, suitable for young people who will go onto higher education/university/apprenticeships and employment when they leave us.



The school takes great care to ensure the curriculum is appropriate for students of all abilities. Children who are academically gifted can be sure of expert and challenging teaching, whilst those who have particular learning difficulties receive a wide range of specialist support.

Our aim is always to be flexible in order to meet the individual needs of individual students, whilst also working hard to ensure we have the highest possible standards of learning and teaching.



Business Studies

Business Studies GCSE

Business Studies is a fascinating, challenging and relevant subject, especially in the current climate. The five main topic areas covered are Marketing, Human Resources, Managing Finance and The Wider Economy. Students will learn a new range of vocabulary; tools and techniques used in the business world, and they will gain a real insight into what it takes to succeed in the modern Business environment, from a small independent company, to a truly multinational one. Students will also develop important transferable skills such as time management, money management, presentation skills and teamwork, which will benefit them in other subjects, and outside of education.

Assessment

- ❖ All assessment to take place in year 11
- ❖ Removal of controlled assessment; GCSEs in Business will now be assessed entirely by exam
- ❖ Introduction of quantitative skills (calculation and interpretation) with a minimum of 10% of the subject marks to be allocated to these skills

A level business will give you an exciting insight into the dynamic world of business. It is not just a theoretical subject; it is about real life scenarios that are happening and developing around us every single day. You will learn about businesses, and the way that they operate in today's constantly shifting environment. You will investigate problems which real businesses are currently facing. Then by using key higher level skills of understanding more complex business information, analysis, and evaluation, you will then develop potential short term and long term strategic solutions within the specific context.



Business Studies A level (Please note that you are not required to have studied the subject at GCSE)

Theme 1: Marketing and people <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meeting customer needs• the market• marketing mix and strategy• managing people• entrepreneurs and leaders	Theme 2: Managing business activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• raising finance• financial planning• managing finance• resource management• external influences
Theme 3: Business decisions and strategy - This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• business objectives and strategy• business growth• decision-making techniques• influences on business decisions• assessing competitiveness• managing change	Theme 4: Global business - This theme develops the concepts introduced in Theme 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• globalisation• global markets and business expansion• global marketing• global industries and companies (multinational corporations)

Assessment

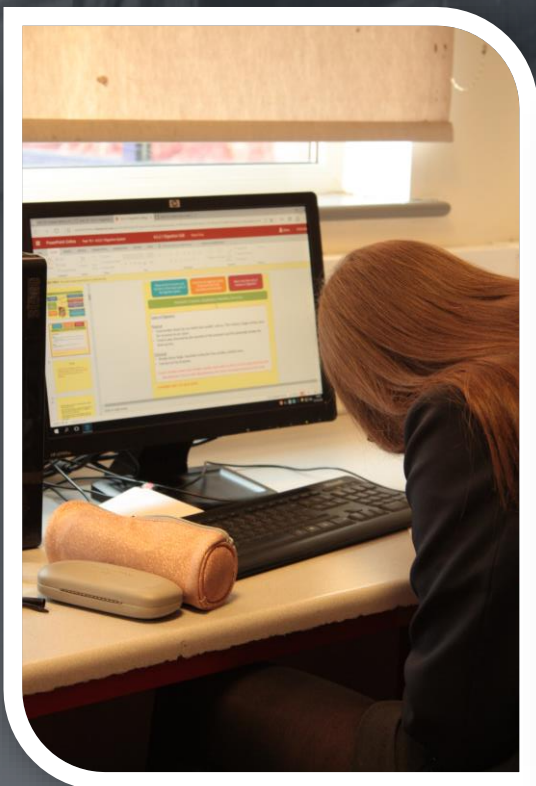
- ❖ Paper 1 Marketing, people and global businesses (Themes 1 & 4) 2 hours - 100 marks
- ❖ Paper 2 Business activities, decisions and strategy (Themes 2 & 3) 2 hours - 100 marks
- ❖ Paper 3 Investigating business in a competitive environment (Themes 1, 2, 3 & 4) 2 hours – 100 marks
(For Paper 3, there will be a pre-released context document issued on our website in November of the previous year. A new context will be given to centres each year and will relate to the examination series for the following summer).

Computing

The aim of the Computing Department is to equip our students in as many ways as possible to meet the technological and information-centred challenges of a continually changing e-world. As more and more of our daily work and leisure lives become increasingly dependent on digital networks, the Internet and the microchip, it is vital that we foster in our students healthy, productive and creative relationships with these technologies and systems. We aim to develop the practical, intellectual and independent learning capabilities of our students so that they can confidently and wisely engage with ever-evolving technologies well into the 21st century.

Computing plays a central role in our school-wide curriculum and is taught in dedicated, hour-long lessons every week from years 7 to 11. We are a successful department with an excellent track record of results and a popular choice at KS4 and 5. Students learn a wide range of software skills - how to create professional documents using word processing, publishing and PowerPoint software, use spreadsheet software to do calculations, use databases to record large amounts of data and to edit sound and videos and embed them in a variety of applications like PowerPoint and web pages. Students learn to code using a variety of visual and text based programming tools and languages like Kodu and Python.

Students are encouraged to develop appropriate techniques across a wide variety of applications software programmes through problem solving; designing systems for audiences; linking of experiences from other curriculum areas and individual creativity.

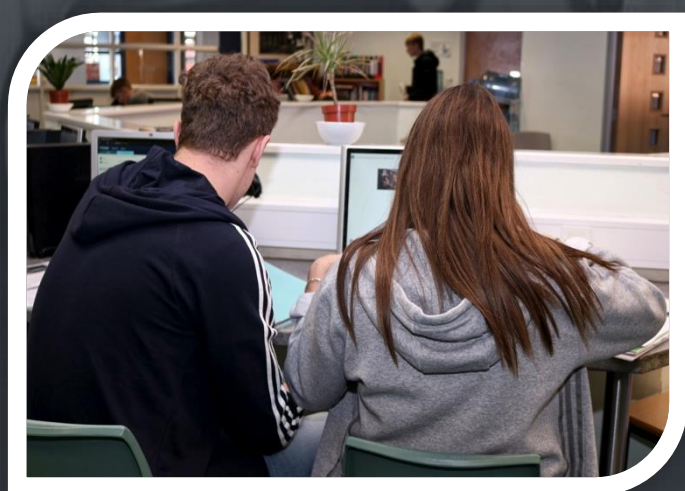


Our computer suites are well-equipped with the latest hardware and software and are maintained to a high standard. All students have access to laptops, school Internet and email facilities. Our dedicated Computing team is made up of experts who will guide your child to success in all aspects of Computing. On joining the school, students are given the responsibility for their own user area and e-mail accounts. They are encouraged to use the facilities during lesson times, break, lunchtime and after school.

At KS3, students get a balanced dose of digital literacy and Computing. In year 7, they learn about e-safety and make imaginative games using Kodu. In year 8, students make webpages using HTML programming language and also explore the history of computers and computer architecture. In year 9, students learn to use databases effectively to solve real-life problems; they also use Micro:Bit and Python programming language to learn complex programming concepts.

At KS4, we offer GCSE Computer Science. This course comprises of 80% exam modules and 20% Computing project. There are two written exam papers at the end of year 11. Skills taught include a focus on Computer Systems e.g. hardware, software, cyber security; Computational thinking, including algorithms and programming, students are assessed on their ability to write, correct and improve algorithms and finally the Programming project, where students will apply the knowledge and skills they have learned.

At KS5, we offer A level Computer Science. This course comprises of 80% exam modules and 20% programming project. Students are encouraged to explore a range of programming languages like Python, Visual Basic or any other language that they have an interest in. This specification focuses on the knowledge, understanding and skills students need to progress to higher education or thrive in the workplace. Specification covers a range of interesting topics like fundamentals of programming, data structures, systematic approach to problem solving, theory of computation, fundamentals of algorithms, computer organisation and structure to name a few. This course is the perfect foundation for any further studies in Computing at college or university level.



Creative Technology

Food Preparation & Nutrition, Graphics Products, Resistant Materials & Textiles



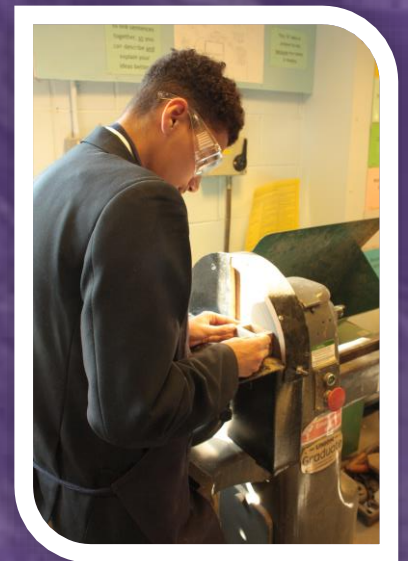
At KS3 students spend approximately 10 weeks in each of Graphic Products, Resistant Materials, Textiles and Food Preparation and Nutrition. During these years, students have an opportunity to explore a wide variety of materials, practise using modern and more traditional technologies and become familiar with a range of equipment. Students will also take part in competitions, develop thinking skills, and make a variety of products in their specialist area as well as producing a detailed design portfolio.

At KS3, through a variety of food preparation tasks and scientific investigations, students are taught the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. These are set in the context of the Catering and Hospitality Industry. There are opportunities to be involved in Catering Competitions including the Rotary Chef.

In years 10 and 11 students can specialise in one of the four main Technology subjects as well as opting to take Health and Social Care, Child Development and Engineering.

Child Development

Students have the opportunity to watch the development of a pre-school child over the course of the year, observing physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

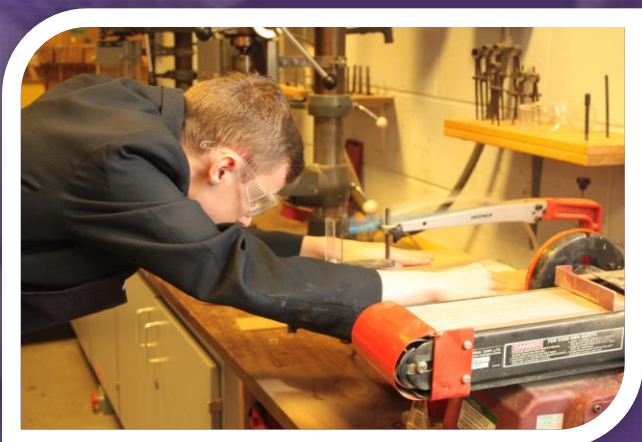


Health and Social Care

Students have the opportunity to explore early years care as well as care homes, the role of hospitals and the role of medical professionals.

Engineering

Students have the opportunity to design and make a product using metal and plastic components. Students also get the chance to enter competitions with local firms Perkins and ABB.



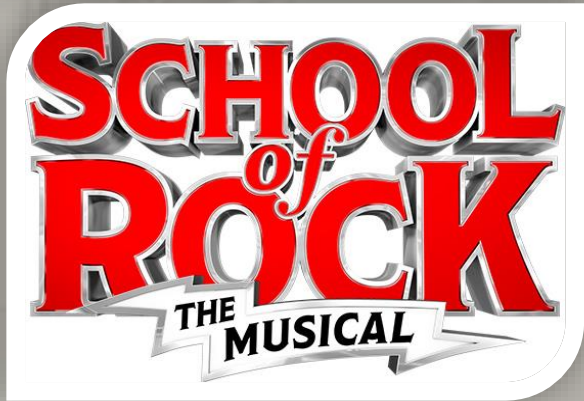


KS4 Food Preparation and Nutrition

Students have the opportunity to develop a range of food preparation techniques in the context of food commodities. Students get many opportunities to work with a range of ingredients and potential to explore key concepts of the Hospitality industry.



Drama

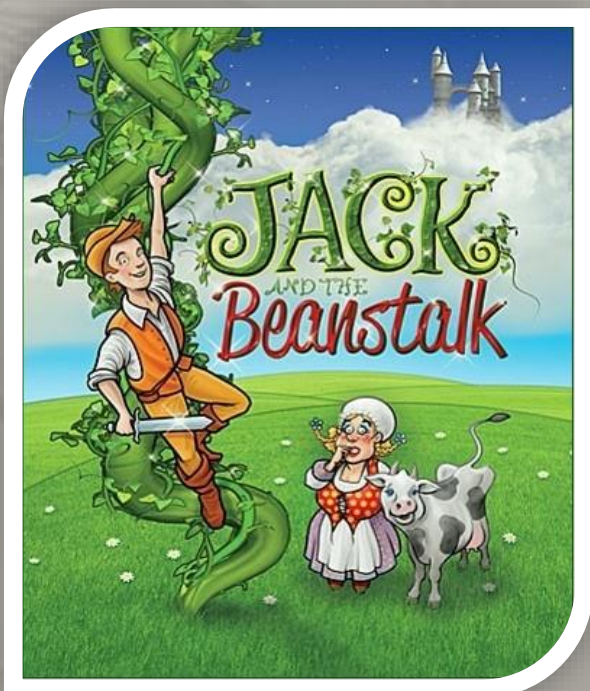


Students studying Drama at GCSE will have the opportunity to develop and display their creative and analytical skills over the two years. We will study various Theatre methods and famous practitioners throughout the course and study texts such as *The Tempest*, *The History Boys* and plays from other cultures. Students will also develop, create and perform their own play and evaluate what they have produced. Finally, students will have to watch various plays throughout the two years and write how they are effective to captivate the audience.

It is essential in Drama for students to engage with the text we study. We choose interesting texts to prepare students for the unseen texts in the examination. Thus, we teach skills to make students confident in reading and understanding any text from different time periods. We aim to foster a collegial atmosphere where students can evaluate their own learning and respond to texts in a critical way. We often work in pairs and small groups and use debate to develop and strengthen the students' point of view. Therefore, we build communication skills and encourage team work. Over the two years, focusing on the key skills enables students to learn and revise these skills in preparation for the terminal exams.



Throughout the two years of the course, you will be able to develop your communication skills, using verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Also, you will be developing your teamwork, trust and intercultural knowledge by working in groups with others and studying plays from other cultures. Furthermore, you will be developing your skills of analysis and reasoning when explaining how your work has been crafted.

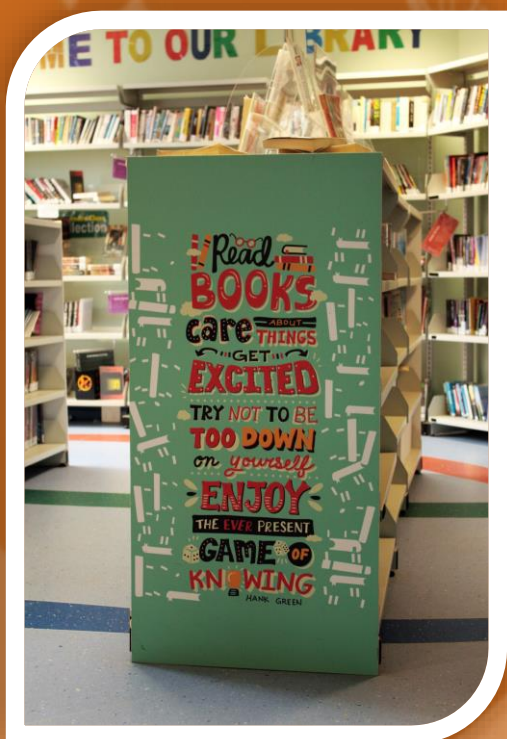
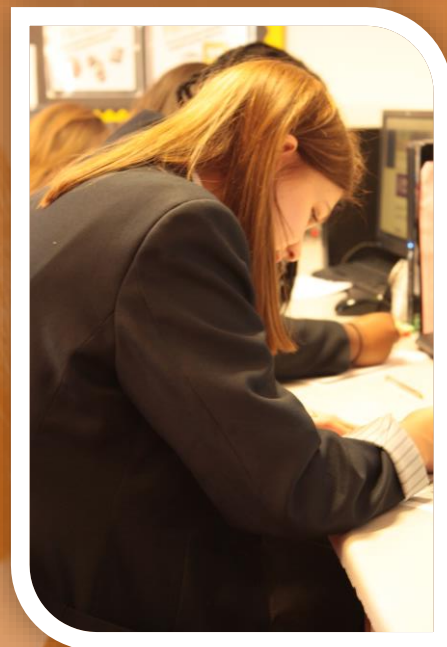


English

The English faculty consists of a team of specialist, experienced English teachers, working across all Key Stages. We recognise the importance of literacy skills and being able to communicate effectively at all levels, in school, in social situations and in the world of work. Our overall aim is to enable all students to develop sophisticated literacy skills in order to become independent readers, confident writers and effective speakers and listeners.

Our curriculum has been tailored to meet the needs of all learners at Sir Graham Balfour, using skills required to prepare them for the external examinations in year 11.

After an initial transition unit in year 7, learners begin a journey through the English Language and Literature curriculum, reading a wide range of texts, from Shakespeare through Dickens to Morpurgo; all suited to age and ability. We hope that every child will experience the 'magic' of a good book and so we encourage and support students in their independent reading. Additionally, we study non-fiction texts, past and present, as well as the social, moral and historical contexts of all texts.



All this exciting reading helps to strengthen students' own ability to write. They will learn to express their ideas fluently and accurately in different forms of writing. Speaking and listening is developed through a range of approaches, including individual presentations, class discussion, paired and group work; all essential to develop skills for the future.

For Sixth formers, we offer A Level Literature, during which time we study Shakespeare, modern drama, a wide range of poetry, World War I texts and a modern novel. Often, we provide trips to universities or theatres to deepen students' understanding.

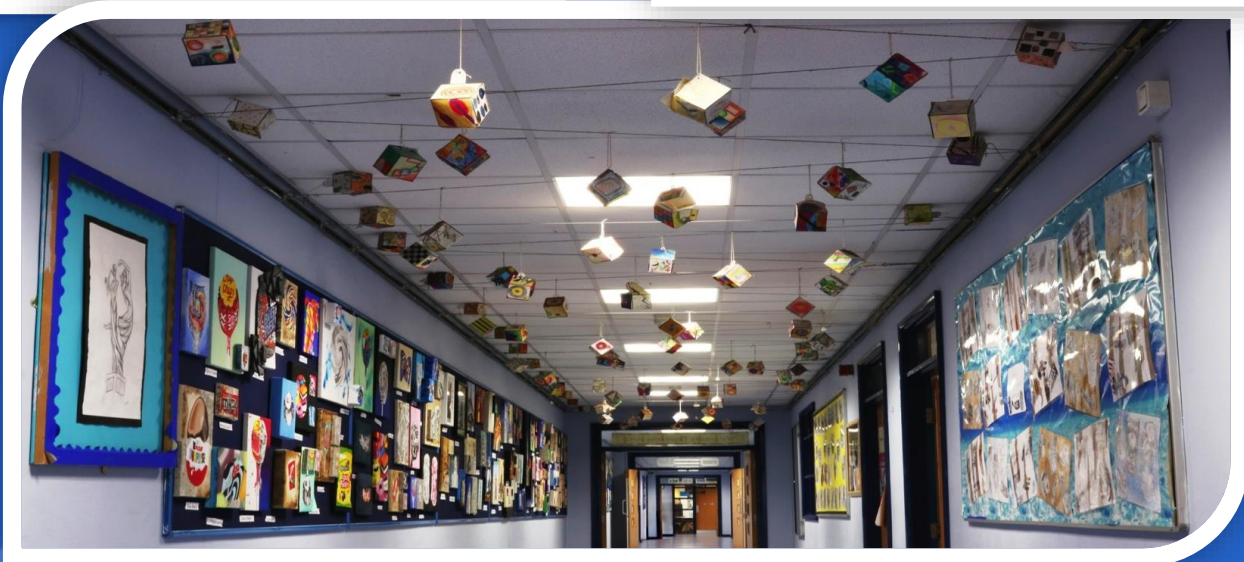
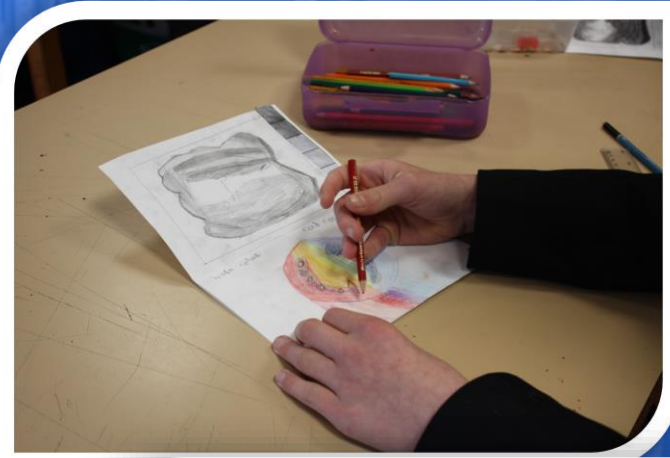
Not only do we strive for academic excellence, achieving above National averages for our subject, our work in the English faculty underpins much of the wider school curriculum and develops vital social skills. We also hope that our passion for literature will help students to appreciate their literary heritage and grow into avid readers – and perhaps even the writers of the future.

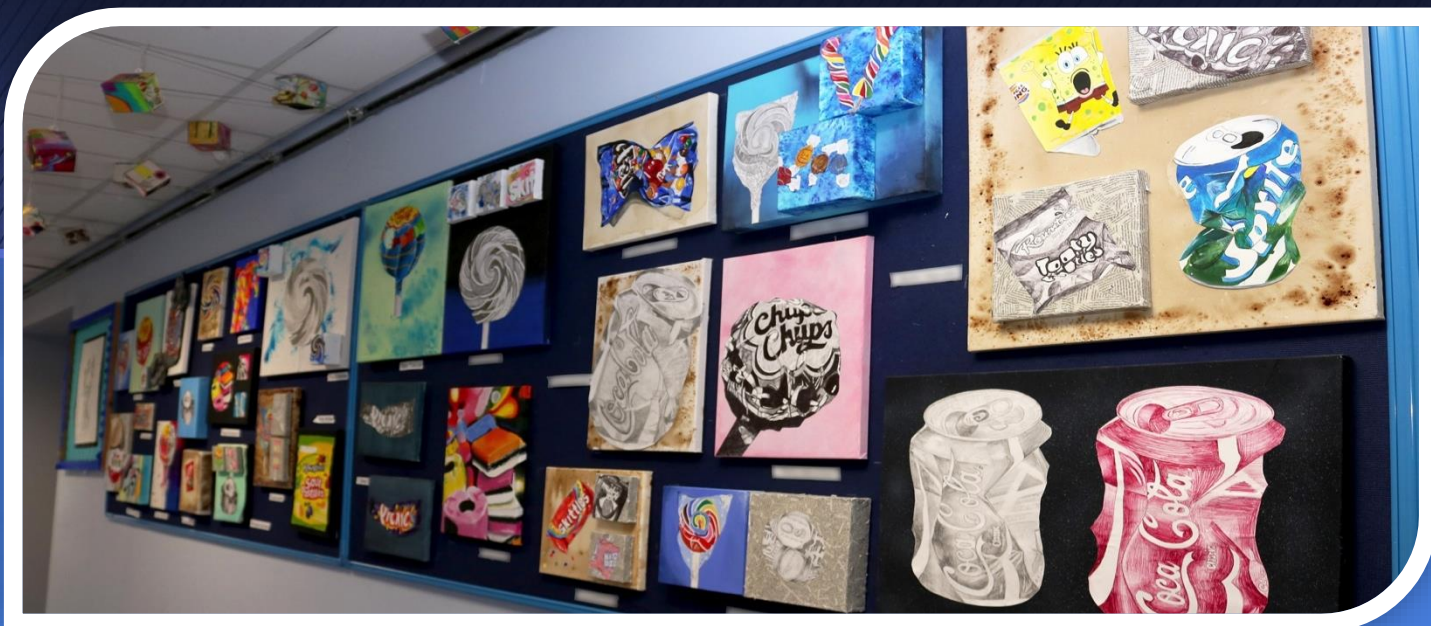
Expressive Arts

Art, Music



In Art we firmly believe that every student has skills to develop and a creative side to nurture. We cover many skills in many different ways and encourage unique responses. Lessons in Key Stage 3 include 'Bugs', where three dimensional skills in modelling are taught, 'Pop Art Portraits' and units on Miro, Kandinsky, Hundertwasser, Oldenburg and O'Keeffe - all combining to develop skills in colour blending, observational drawing and individual creative development. This forms a firm foundation for students to move forward into Key Stages 4 and 5.





All students study Music at Key Stage 3 and are taught a variety of topics to develop their listening skills in order to enhance their enjoyment of the music and sounds which are found all around us every day. There is also a strong emphasis on practical work, with every student having the opportunity to learn the keyboard in class during year 7. If they wish to develop this interest further, lessons are available from visiting tutors in many instruments, plus singing. Year 8 includes a lot of group work in order to develop children's teamwork and social skills whilst creating their own songs, and year 9 is treated as an introduction to GCSE Music, which is available as an option to all students. Children are encouraged to use the Music Practise Rooms at lunchtimes and many form their own bands and are keen to take part in our annual Christmas and Summer Concerts. The extra-curricular groups such as the Choir and Orchestra often perform at local venues such as the Gatehouse Theatre, St Mary's Church and residential care homes.



Humanities

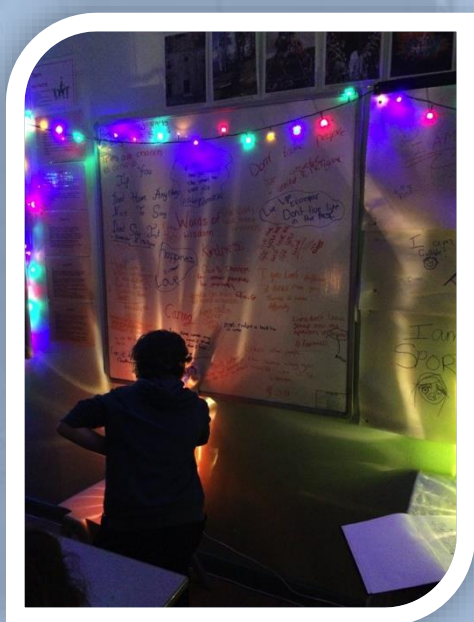
Geography, History, Religion, Philosophy & Ethics, SMSC, Travel & Tourism

The Humanities Faculty at Sir Graham Balfour School has a clear mission statement to “open students’ eyes to the world”. It is our aim to “Introduce students to people they have never met, places they have never visited, events they never got the chance to witness and ideas that may never have crossed their minds”. We want students to explore our planet; its past, its present and its future in order to help them to understand the world they live in and how they can make a positive contribution to it throughout their lives. The faculty offers a range of courses across all three key stages.

In Geography students begin by studying a range of places, developing an understanding of the physical and human processes that are responsible for shaping our planet and how these processes affect and pose challenges for people. Students will also look in detail at the issue of sustainability and gain an understanding of how they can live their life in a less damaging way.

Students have the option to carry on their Geography based studies in to Key Stage 4 with a GCSE course in Geography or a BTEC course in Travel and Tourism. Whilst Travel and Tourism students will focus on the process and impacts of the tourist industry, Geography students will broaden their knowledge of key processes within both the UK and the wider world. In addition all GCSE Geography students have the option of experiencing a 5 day trip exploring the fascinating landscape of Iceland. Students can then choose to complete their Geography studies by completing an A Level course which focuses on key global issues of the 21st century and also includes a residential fieldwork in North Yorkshire.

In History we aim to develop students’ understanding of the significant events that have shaped the world they live in. We explore a range of British, European and international history, giving our students a broad spectrum of chronology and topics, including invasion, revolution and social reform in order to develop students’ knowledge and their key historical skills of analysis and interpretation.



Students can then choose to study History as a GCSE where we investigate, in detail, significant periods of history from the Normans through to the conflicts of the late 20th century in order to develop deeper understanding of these periods. From there students can choose to complete their study of History with an A Level course which will focus on other specific periods of history both nationally and internationally.

Throughout their 5 years at Sir Graham Balfour school all students will study SMSC. This stands for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education and is a course designed to allow students to investigate a wide range of contemporary issues with consideration to different religious, political and moral viewpoints as well as allowing students to learn what it means to be a good citizen in 21st century Britain.

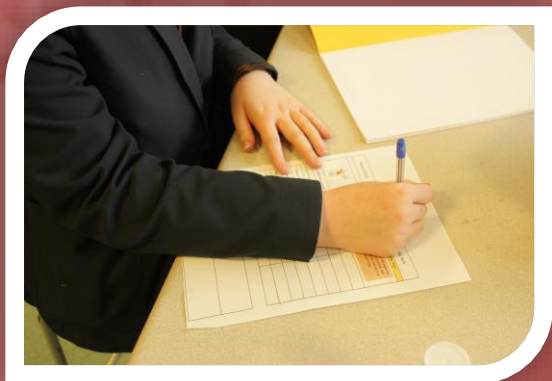


Students can also choose to study Religion, Philosophy & Ethics at GCSE level where they will investigate some of these contemporary issues from a philosophical and ethical perspective through the perspective of two very different global religions.

We firmly believe that the Humanities Faculty has the potential to make a difference to the life of every student at Sir Graham Balfour School, giving them the skills and understanding needed to make a positive contribution to our planet.



Mathematics



Mathematics at Sir Graham Balfour School is taught by a team of dedicated subject specialist teachers. Our aim is to provide students with the opportunities to further their Mathematical knowledge and transferable problem solving skills through engaging and challenging lessons. Mathematics is taught in a suite of visually stimulating rooms including an ICT room with sixteen computers.

A varied approach to teaching underpins the curriculum throughout years 7 to 13; students learn through an array of different activities that encourage them to discuss their ideas and share with others in a positive working environment. Non-routine problem solving is a feature of most lessons allowing students to deepen their understanding of topics whilst also making links between different areas of the curriculum and the world in general. The Mathematics faculty prides itself in the consistently excellent GCSE and A level results students achieve. Preparation for external examinations is rigorous with students sitting a programme of pre-public examinations from which areas for further study are identified.

In years 7 and 8, students are set to allow them to follow one of four pathways of study tailored to their individual needs based upon their prior attainment from Key Stage 2. Students study the areas of number, ratio and proportion, algebra, shape and measures, data handling and probability.

At the start of year 9 students commence their studies for EDEXCEL GCSE Mathematics allowing three years to complete the course. Four programmes of study, Higher A, Higher B, Foundation A and Foundation B build upon the four pathways of study from years 7 and 8.

Currently students in years 12 and 13 study OCR MEI Mathematics with the option to study Further Mathematics.

To support students with their learning, the Mathematics faculty runs "Maths Surgery" during lunchtimes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Students can attend to seek help with homework or any area of Mathematics from a member of the Mathematics faculty. Students are also provided with login details to the excellent website www.mymaths.co.uk which provides a comprehensive and extensive array of online lessons and self-marking questions and can be accessed from home.

It is our belief that homework should support the curriculum by assessing the progress of students after every module of study. Dedicated homework tasks assess all modules of all programmes of study. These are available to students via the school's virtual learning environment. Students are also set online homework which has a strong problem solving focus.



Modern Foreign Languages

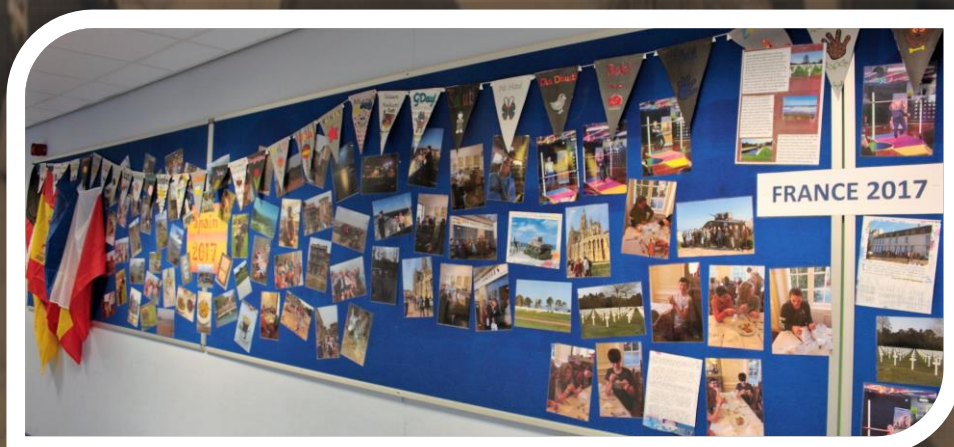
French, German, Spanish

The MFL team at Sir Graham Balfour is committed to providing a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience for all our students. We work to develop pupil confidence and to prepare our students to become responsible and tolerant citizens in a multi-lingual world.

Our aim is to promote the status of language learning throughout the school and to encourage young people and parents to recognize the valuable cross-curricular and life skills which foreign languages bring.

We are in a unique position of being able to offer three Modern Foreign Languages at Sir Graham Balfour. Through learning French, German or Spanish, our pupils build on their literacy skills in English and improve their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

We offer a curriculum that builds across all years of learning a foreign language. We set and work towards achievable yet challenging learning objectives in order to provide our students with a useful level of linguistic competence. Linguistic skills and confidence are the keys to becoming successful communicators.





The four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are developed during language lessons and pupils are often required to work in pairs or groups as well as independently. As pupils progress in their language acquisition and in their wider understanding of grammatical structures, they are increasingly able to cope with a variety of situations in which they can communicate with speakers of different languages.

Alongside linguistic competence we teach our students about other cultures; pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own culture and language and compare it with that of other countries.



Alongside regular set homework, pupils are encouraged to use the recommended websites at home in order to develop their language learning outside the classroom. In the lead up to exams, pupils should make use of revision guides and past paper practise in order to prepare themselves thoroughly for their exams.

Parents can support learning by encouraging their child to revise new vocabulary on a regular basis. Access to a foreign language dictionary at home also will help pupils become more accurate and expressive in their written homework.



Physical Education

Physical Education plays an important role within the curriculum at Sir Graham Balfour School. We strive to provide all students with a well-rounded and enjoyable programme of study, which aims to encompass a wide range of activities and skills to ensure there is something for everyone. All students receive at least two hours of core PE a week, with the opportunity to study GCSE and A level PE in key stage 4 and 5.

Alongside educating the students about sport, we also develop their understanding of how to lead a healthy and active lifestyle, ensuring students are taught about correct diet, nutrition and the importance of regular exercise. We also ensure all students have a clear understanding about their individual fitness levels and set clear guidelines on how to improve. Throughout PE lessons there is a clear focus on the development of leadership, communication and organisational skills.

We have a range of facilities including; a sports hall, four tennis courts, cricket nets, three netball courts, fitness suite, four trampolines and a climbing wall.

We also encourage our students to get involved with as many extra-curricular sports as possible, and as a direct result we have a number of very successful teams, who compete at district and county level.

The wide range of clubs, broad balanced curriculum and leadership opportunities ensure all of our students are guaranteed the opportunity to be creative, competitive and challenged.



Science

Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Science affects every corner of our life, and in this modern world an understanding of the importance and relevance of Science to our daily life is a must for all. We aim to bring this home to our students in a practical and interesting way. Every aspect of our lives involves Science and increasingly those who understand it are those who get ahead.

The courses we offer build a solid foundation in Science. At Key Stage 3 we cover the National Curriculum and embed the skills that will be needed at GCSE, the course is very practical and addresses current issues and technological advances. At Key Stages 4 and 5 we have spent a lot of time choosing the most relevant courses and they are well resourced on the school's 'Office 365'; an expectation is that students access these presentations after every lesson and summarise them to produce their own revision documents on an ongoing basis.



As members of the Science Faculty we are enthusiastic about our subject and it is our wish to ensure that all students enjoy the subject and feel free to participate in the lesson: our view is that the students are the ones who can mould a lesson into a productive and worthwhile experience for all concerned. The atmosphere in the class is such that all can join in; students ask and answer questions which drive the lesson forward in a purposeful and positive way.

Our modern and well equipped facilities and the innovative approach of our staff ensure that lessons are fun and informative. Practical investigation is a central theme of our teaching approach. Our specialist laboratory technicians help to ensure that all students have access to an impressive array of materials and activities. Our standard laboratory layout and our consistent lesson expectations allow students to have a clear Science 'identity'.

Science club at lunchtime allows students to do a range of experimental work that we usually cannot fit into normal lessons, and the Science drop-in sessions allow students to seek help from staff: these are open to all who wish to take advantage of the extra opportunities.

In Year 9 and Key Stages 4 and 5 students are taught by subject specialists and we are a balanced faculty with the same number of Biologists, Chemists and Physicists; as a group we put a lot of emphasis on ensuring that students have the opportunity to ask questions of knowledgeable specialists. The success of our Faculty is measured by the uptake of students wishing to do the 3 separate sciences at GCSE and at A level. Our results are good because all work very hard to achieve the common goal of success.

Sixth Form

Overview

Sir Graham Balfour is proudly part of the Stafford Sixth Form Partnership, which consists of five secondary schools working collaboratively to provide excellent Post-16 education within Stafford. Working as part of the Partnership allows us to offer a wide and diverse range of subjects and qualifications; allowing students to study subjects that they are both passionate about and that they require to progress along future educational or employment pathways.

In addition to the strong relationships that have been formed between the schools within the Partnership, SGB also seek to build effective bonds with our students and their parents/carers. Whilst we value and support every individual student who chooses to study post-16 with us, the ethos of a 'partnership' places upon each student and their parents/carers an expectation that they will help to promote a culture where all students pursue academic excellence, strive to master critical skills, contribute to the wider community and move on in their chosen pathway, confident of fulfilling their full potential due to the outstanding teaching, support and guidance that SGB has made available to them.

SGB prides itself on continuously seeking to improve our high standard of teaching and learning, the enrichment opportunities on offer and the guidance and pastoral support that is provided. Therefore, if your son/daughter does choose to continue their post-16 education at SGB, we are confident that all of their needs will be met.

Monitoring, Assessing and Report Progress

Students will receive regular feedback on progress through classwork, homework and assessments in the same way as they did in KS3 and KS4. Students and parents will receive several assessment grade reports, one full report, two file check reports and one parents' evening during each academic year of the course.



What our Sixth Form students say;

"I've learnt so much since I came to Balfour. Not just academic things, but I've also learnt important things that have allowed my knowledge and personality to grow, and they will shape the rest of my life." - Isaac, Year 12.

"It's scary starting sixth form or a new school. But, at Balfour I immediately felt welcome and safe. It's a caring place, full of people who want the best for us. I love coming to Balfour, because it's so much more than a school – it's a community." - Jordan, Year 12.

"All of the teachers here are very enthusiastic about their subjects. That's such a benefit for when you take your A Levels - they make you feel passionate about the subject, which ultimately helps us to do better and enjoy the subject more. The school offers so much, so that everyone has a chance to get involved with something they will enjoy. From sports clubs, to school trips and senior student roles such as the Sixth Form Committee – there are opportunities for everyone to try out new things and to get involved. We encourage everyone to get involved with as much as they can - you won't know if you like something, until you try it." - Katie, Year 12.

Sixth Form Subjects

Available at Sir Graham Balfour	Available at Other Partnership Sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ French❖ PE❖ Mathematics❖ Further Maths❖ Psychology❖ Biology❖ Business Studies❖ English Literature❖ Art❖ Geography❖ Physics❖ Chemistry❖ Computing❖ History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Creative Media Production (BTEC)❖ Economics❖ Further Maths❖ Law❖ Sociology❖ English Language❖ Music❖ Sports Leadership (BTEC)❖ German❖ Business (BTEC)❖ D&T Product Design❖ Health & Social Care (BTEC)❖ Philosophy & Ethics❖ Criminology (BTEC)❖ Government & Politics

Pastoral Care

The House System and Vertical Tutoring

The school is divided into four houses named after stately homes in Staffordshire: Chetwynd, Sandon, Tixall and Weston. Within each House there are eight house groups overseen by a house tutor. House groups meet every day for 25 minutes. We operate a vertical tutoring house system, this means a number of pupils from each year group make up a house group. The composition of mixed ages ensures that we can offer an extensive but informal programme of mentoring to all students. (It is important to note, however, that teaching groups in all subjects remain year group based).

The weekly house time programme consists of a House Assembly (and where appropriate a Year Assembly), News Article Discussion, Quiz, and a series of topical activities. Additionally, each house competes against the other Houses in areas such as sport and culture. Each term students are rewarded for their contributions to school life with a Celebration Assembly. The House with the highest number of house points at the end of the Summer Term is declared the winner of the House Point Competition.

School Parliament

Students are elected onto the School Parliament via an application process. We have representatives from each school year and each house. Additionally, the School Parliament elects a President and Vice-President for the duration of the Academic Year. School Parliament meetings are held every half-term, and are overseen by Mrs Beck. The purpose of the School Parliament is to:

- ❖ Address any issues of concern raised by any member of the School Community.
- ❖ Act as a consultative group for school developments.
- ❖ Take part in senior staffing appointments.
- ❖ Organise fundraising events for the school.
- ❖ Feedback to the School Governors.
- ❖ Attend meetings with the District School Parliament which is made up of representatives from all Staffordshire schools.



Anti-Bullying

At Sir Graham Balfour our approach is based on our comprehensive anti-bullying policy. We provide numerous opportunities for children to talk confidentially about their concerns. We tackle bullying within the curriculum and drop-in centres are run every lunchtime by the peer mentors. When serious and persistent problems occur senior staff are always involved. The school has been accredited the Staffordshire Anti-Bullying Pledge Plus award.

Attendance

Students' attendance at Sir Graham Balfour is generally very good. If a student is absent, however, we try to contact parents during the first day to discover the reason. All lessons are registered electronically so that absence or patterns of absence are identified early. Parents are expected to play their part in this vital process by communicating as early as possible any absences and any changes in address, e-mail or telephone details. Lateness is also recorded and, again, we contact parents to discuss how to resolve the problem.



PRAISE POSTCARD LEADERBOARD

Chetwynd

- Tyler Sivalls - 4
- Sally Patten - 4
- Josie Cook - 4
- Calvin Knight - 4
- Lauren Perry - 4

Sandon

- Alfie Smith - 5
- Adam Kipp - 5
- Oliver Cook - 4
- Conor Cook - 4
- Shane Cook - 4
- Adam Smith - 4
- Lucy Cook - 4

Tixall

- Jack Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4
- Thomas Smith - 4

Weston

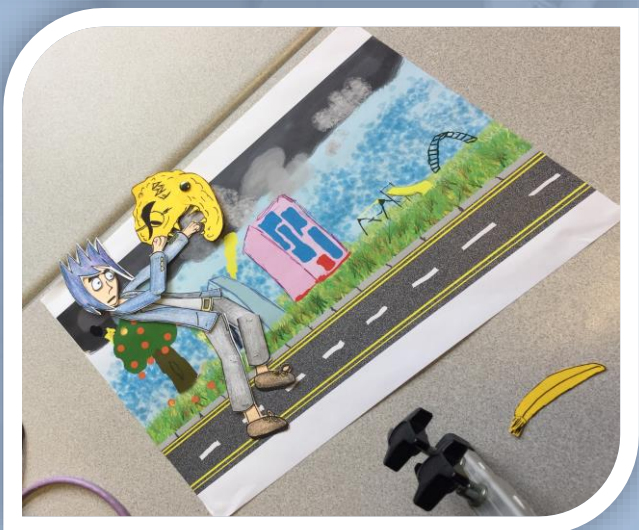
- Ben Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4
- Ben Smith - 4

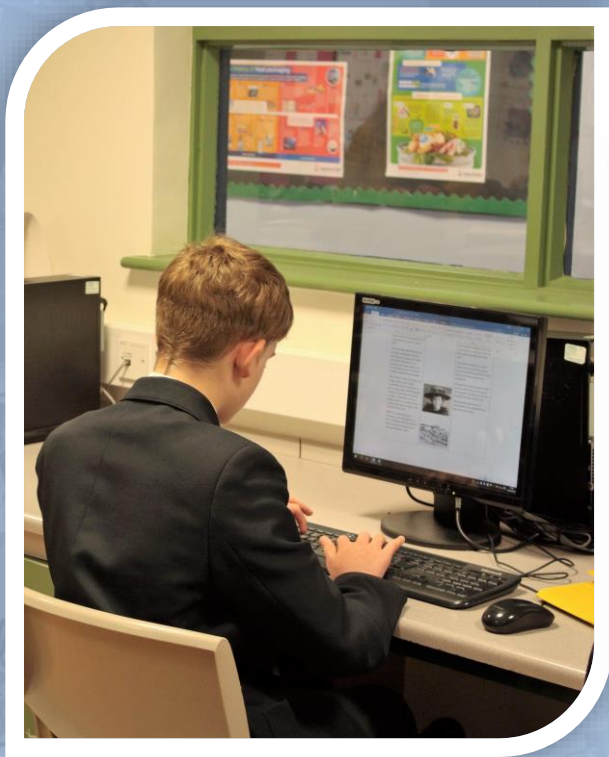
Extra Curricular

At Sir Graham Balfour we offer a vast range of extracurricular clubs and sporting activities, they include:

- ❖ Sir Graham Balfour Theatre Company
- ❖ Chess Club
- ❖ Homework Club
- ❖ Photography Club
- ❖ Balfour's Eco Club
- ❖ Maths Surgery
- ❖ Science Club
- ❖ Debate Club
- ❖ Music Clubs – String Group / Orchestra / Wind Ensemble
- ❖ School Choir
- ❖ Animation Club
- ❖ Basketball Club
- ❖ Netball Club
- ❖ Trampoline Club
- ❖ Climbing Club
- ❖ Rounders Club
- ❖ Tennis Club
- ❖ Cricket Club
- ❖ Football Club
- ❖ Rugby Club
- ❖ Fitness Club
- ❖ Handball Club

Animation Club (below left) and work carried out by the Balfour Eco Club (below right).

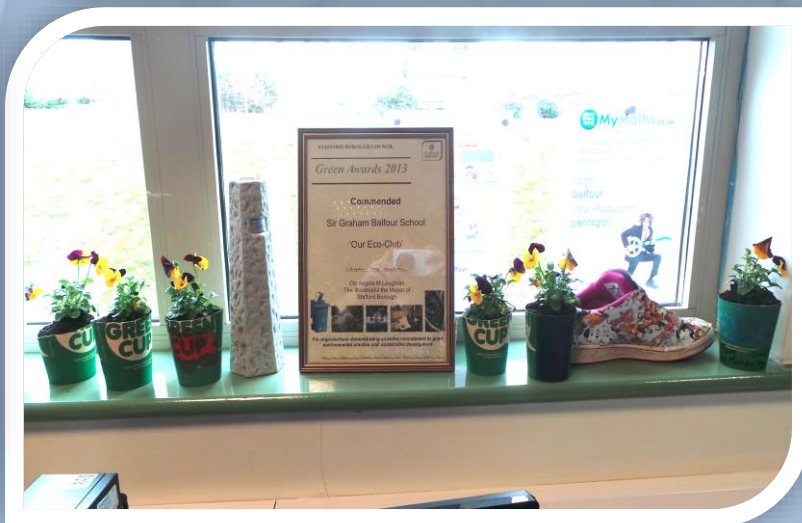
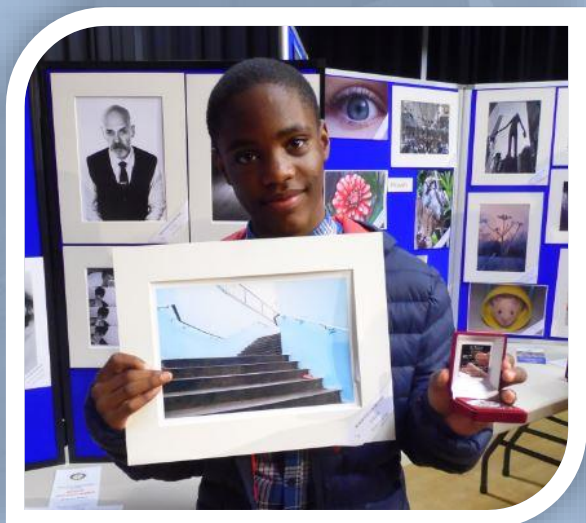




We have a variety of PE activities including: basketball, table tennis, handball, rugby, netball and football along with a peer mentor programme, a quiet space for students for break times and GCSE catch up sessions.

In addition there are also foreign trips to France, Germany, Spain, Iceland and the Battlefields.

We have other school visits, for example to The Black Country Museum, which enrich learning, alongside outside speakers and modern language plays.



Learning Support



Sir Graham Balfour has a well-resourced Learning Support Department which aims to identify and provide support for any barrier to learning an individual student may have. Sir Graham Balfour enjoys an excellent working relationship with Autism Outreach, Education Psychology Services and uses dyslexia friendly strategies throughout the school. The Learning Support Department effectively liaises with other external support agencies such as Speech and Language Therapy Services, Hearing and Visual Impairment Services as appropriate. Teaching assistants are used to provide withdrawal lessons for small numbers of students.



Additional support is provided in both literacy and numeracy for students throughout Key Stage 3 who require such interventions. At Sir Graham Balfour School the Learning Support Department can assess a student and identify additional needs in the following areas; literacy, numeracy, phonological processing, working memory as well as screening to assess the likelihood of dyslexia.

When a barrier to learning is identified strategies to support the student will be devised and shared with all appropriate staff, these strategies will be recorded, monitored, evaluated and reviewed. The academic progress of all students with additional needs is monitored closely and interventions are put in place as appropriate.

Dyslexia support lessons are available throughout Key Stage 3 as well as one-to-one mentoring for students with particular needs such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions. The Learning Support Department assesses students for access arrangements in public exams which may include use of a laptop, extra time or occasionally a reader or scribe.

The Learning Support Department works closely with all faculties to support students of all abilities overcome specific or general difficulties to realise their full potential.



Links with Parents

Reports and Communication

We place great emphasis on developing our partnership with parents; at set points in the year we communicate with parents via an Attitude to Learning with Teacher Comment Report and Attitude to Learning Reports (which show grades for a variety of areas relating to behaviour, effort, homework and attainment). Parents and students are also invited to attend the annual Parents' Evening, in order to speak in person with relevant staff. Parents can also keep a constant eye on their son's or daughter's attendance, achievements and current attainment via our SIMs Parent App, for which parents receive login details at the start of year 7. We also operate the 'Schoolcomms' system, which allows communication via email and SMS messaging to take place effectively; we send a text message to a parent when a child is absent and no prior notice of absence has been given; this helps to ensure that both parents and the school know where a child is at any point in the day. In addition, we are increasing the amount of information we send electronically, rather than by traditional methods; emails and updates on our website are key communication channels.

Homework, Sex Education and Admissions

Homework

Homework is a vital part of students' learning. It encourages the essential skill of independent learning, gives them the opportunity of reviewing work done in school and enables them to extend their work in breadth and depth. Homework will vary in nature and might include writing, revising, research, practical investigations or reading. Our DAC learning resource centre is open every day until 4.30pm and this provides a safe and private study area in which students may work. We run a Homework Club after school in Room 458 where staff are always available to help with homework.

PSHE / Sex Education

The school follows government guidelines on the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education and Sex Education. The moral, social and biological issues of sexual behaviour are taught in different areas of the curriculum.

Admissions

The closing date for application for admission to secondary school for the standard transition period during the current academic year is available from <http://www.education.staffordshire.gov.uk>

Parents wishing to admit a child to the school, other than at the beginning of year 7 should make an appointment to see the Senior Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Pastoral Support. In consultation with school governors, the Local Authority determines the number of students that may be admitted into each year; this is referred to as the school's published admission number (PAN). The PAN for Sir Graham Balfour is 170 students.

Sir Graham Balfour Cambodia

Our sense of community also has an international dimension. In 2004, we raised the money to build a school in Thmar Bang in Cambodia.

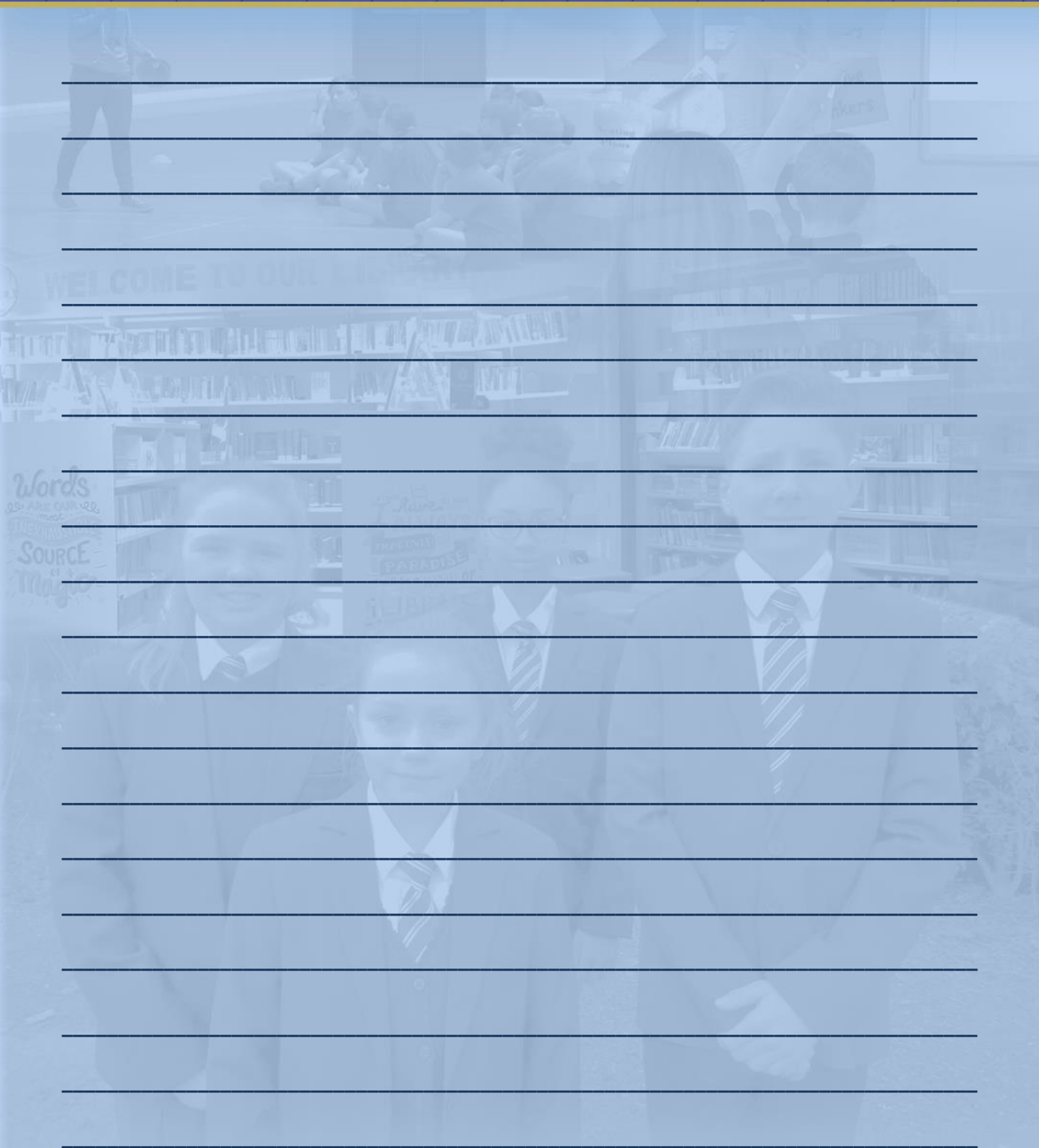
Our ongoing links with the school do much to promote the idea of global citizenship. A good deal of our fund-raising is focused on providing staffing and resources to Sir Graham Balfour Cambodia.

Every two years a group of senior students and staff raise funds sufficient to visit the school; there, they meet the children, teach them and reinforce the very strong links we have already.

We have a life-long commitment to this, our sister school.



Notes



Notes





Address: North Avenue, Stafford ST16 1NR Tel: 01785 223490 Email: office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk Web: www.sirgrahambalfour.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs L D Beck Deputy Headteacher: Mr M M Mason

Sir Graham Balfour School is part of the Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 10238899. The registered office is at Sir Graham Balfour High School, North Avenue, Stafford, ST16 1NR.