

Arden Sixth Form



Arden
Sixth Form

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Presidents' Introduction

Arun

As someone who had been at Arden since Year 7, I had a rough idea of what to expect; I thought Sixth Form would start like Year 10 did for me, with a gentle introduction to the courses ahead.

I thought there wouldn't be the stress or time pressure that became Year 11; I thought there would still be time to relax. You can but you must use all of your time effectively. You need a work life balance in order to both learn and stay healthy.

Teachers take you through the course step-by-step so that you can 'chunk' the huge amount of material you have to learn. They offer revision sessions and will support you.

A large part of A level is actually planning your own time; completing all your pre-learning and taking on board teachers' feedback in order to improve.

I initially underestimated the workload and big step up in terms of independence for A levels. You learn quickly what you have to do to change. I would say that I felt settled in socially a couple of weeks in and on top of my workload and performing well a couple of months in...

Settling in won't be immediate, but you will be okay!

The teachers at Arden have been extremely supportive and understanding.

Leavers' Survey

Georgia

Arden encourages you: The passion and excitement from subject teachers helps so much.

As an external, I really valued the open days and the way that the forms were constructed which meant that I immediately felt supported even though I was, obviously, nervous. Everyone was friendly from the start. The fact that the Sixth Form has a separate building really helps with this as it means that you don't have to cope with a whole massive school right from the start. You get to know your year in the study rooms and in social times so I felt integrated straight away.

We learn in lots of different ways which is a huge change from GCSE. Lessons are more like seminars and this is because of the smaller class sizes. This is a change from the more linear learning we had before and I really have benefitted from this.

The close knit community of the smaller Sixth Form has really helped me. The staff and students know each other really well. When Mr Pillinger handed me my predicted grades he was already in a place to discuss them with me and I really appreciate that personal touch... Arden Sixth Form gives you a personal experience!

We are extremely proud of our Sixth Form at Arden.

Each year, students from other schools join those who have been at Arden for their GCSEs, to create a rich learning environment. Building on this foundation, the governors and school leadership team are committed to providing not only excellent teaching but also access to all the support and opportunities that allow our Sixth Form students to learn, mature and flourish. Our focus is two-fold; providing a fun, challenging and inspiring Sixth Form journey whilst equipping and enabling them for whatever they choose to do next. We hope that this prospectus will inform and enthuse you about the excellent opportunities available at Arden.

Mr Martin Carter, Chair of Arden Governors



Arden
Sixth Form

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Whether you have spent your secondary school years at Arden or you are considering joining the Academy from another school, we are sure you'll find this prospectus interesting, useful and an insight into the rich life of Arden.

Our Sixth Form is a key academic pathway towards your success and a springboard into Universities, Apprenticeships and future employment. Your journey through Key Stage 5 is about growth and development. Academically you will move towards your own goals and aspirations; as a young adult, you will develop skills of employability and develop as an individual in preparation for higher education or the world of work.

Arden is justifiably proud of its impressive reputation for being one of the best performing comprehensive schools in the country. The Sixth Form provides tremendous opportunities for students who recognise the value of learning and who have the drive and ambition to reach their full personal, professional and academic potential. Those who choose to study at Arden are assured of tuition from inspiring, highly dedicated specialist teachers.

We are particularly proud of the fact that at Arden you are assured that a fully structured pastoral support network is in

place to guide your decision-making, support your progress and to help you plan for the next steps in fulfilling your aspirations.

The choices you make at this stage can have a profound effect on your future; you have already made the right move in choosing to take your education to a higher level, now it is time to make some careful decisions. A key step is choosing where to study. The superb academic performance of our Sixth Form students, with A Level pass rates of 25% A*-A and 50% A*-B, attests to the positive choice that Arden would be for you. Arden welcomes students who are diligent, hardworking, ambitious and independently minded - young adults who deserve the finest education we can deliver.

If you work with us, Arden Sixth Form will provide you with the academic success and personal development you are searching for. We will work tirelessly to help you develop into a happy, successful adult with a bright future laid out before you.



Associate Headteacher
Mr D Warwood



Executive Headteacher
Mr D Burgess



Chief Executive
Mr M Murphy



The support I have had from each member of the Sixth Form Office and from all my teachers these past two years has been amazing. Most of my teachers have taken time out of their lunches or after school to help me with something if I didn't understand it.

Leavers' Survey



Welcome to Arden

Thank you for considering Arden. This prospectus provides an insight into what studying A Levels at Arden will be like. We have been successfully delivering A Levels at Arden for over ten years and can boast fantastic results across all of the subjects we offer. We hope that this booklet, along with the information available on our Open Evening, will help you make a fully informed decision about your post-16 choice and the subjects you would like to study.

Joining Arden Sixth Form would place you at a top performing state sixth form. We consistently add value, performing above the national average. Our students achieve some outstanding results and we are proud of what we have developed here at Arden: academic excellence in a caring and supportive environment. We strive to get the best out of the students who study here.

The whole A Level system has undergone a period of reform and there has been a move back to 'Linear Examinations'. What this means is that there will be no external assessment of attainment until the end of the course. The entire grade will be decided upon by the end of Year 13 examinations. There may be a few subjects that will still have an element of coursework, so please read the subject information, provided on our website, carefully to ensure you know exactly what is ahead of you.

For September 2020, students will choose three subjects to study as part of a two year linear A Level course. This means that you need to think very carefully about which subjects you study. We aim for our curriculum to be able to support those who wish to study four subjects but this must be supported by an excellent GCSE profile.

Under a fully linear examination system, increased significance will be placed on internal assessments and ongoing progress checks.

We hope you find the information provided helpful. Please do get in touch if you require any additional details.

Mr P Simpson, Head of Sixth Form

Amazing teachers who really push us and help us when we're stuck and keep us focused on our targets.

They consistently test us with mocks and tests which help us stay on top of our workload.

Leavers' Survey

Application Guidance

Guidance on Applying to Arden

The combination of subjects that you choose for Year 12 will influence your future pathways, so carefully consider both your subject choices and possible career plans.

We publish option blocks at the time of application. We have tried to maximise the number of possible permutations. We appreciate there will be some preferred subject combinations that are prohibited by these blocks but ask that you spend time considering alternatives, if necessary. We are happy to provide guidance, if required.

Experience tells us that those who choose subjects based on enjoyment, passion and skill, settle quicker into the courses and make better progress.

The Arden Curriculum

Arden provides a range of A Level courses that offer a solid foundation for a successful future with twenty seven subjects currently on offer. Due to being an academic curriculum, there is a common academic purpose which is taught by specialist staff with wide experience of teaching to the highest levels possible.

Detailed information for each subject will be available during the Open Evening, there will also be an electronic copy on our website www.arden.solihull.sch.uk

The success or failure of A Levels can depend totally on what subjects are chosen, so put as much thought into this as possible. We advise you to speak to your current teachers and Sixth Form students who are studying the subjects you are interested in to ensure you are making a fully informed choice.

The school achieves the right balance between independent learning and more structured support.

It has not been heavy handed in its demands of my son, but neither has it assumed that, as he is post-16, he has the skills to make his own decisions regarding his learning. We have appreciated this approach.

Parental Survey

Subjects offered at Arden Sixth Form:

Art & Design	French	Music
Biology	Further Mathematics	Photography
Business	Geography	Physical Education
Chemistry	German	Physics
Computer Science	History	Politics
Drama & Theatre Studies	Information Technology (Technical Award)	Product Design
Economics	Law	Psychology
English Language & Literature	Mathematics	Religious Studies
English Literature	Media	Spanish

Core Maths is also on offer as a fourth subject. Further details of all subjects can be found on the website.



Arden
Sixth Form

The Learning Environment

Arden's Sixth Form is housed in its own purpose-built block comprising classrooms, study rooms, computing suites and comfortable social areas. We have recently extended our computer facilities, thanks to the Arden PTFA.

The Learning Environment

The study facilities are constantly being expanded to ensure there is ample space for those vital private study periods. There are areas of school that are reserved for 'silent study' to help students make the best use of this time.

The Common Room provides a friendly social space that helps reinforce the warm camaraderie and academic buzz of Arden's Sixth Form.

A Caring and Supportive Environment

Arden prides itself on a pastoral support system where everyone is valued and cared for. A personal tutor is assigned to each student on joining the Sixth Form who will be the guide through the complexities of the next two years. These can often be a time of high pressure; we are here to support, as required.

Arden's pastoral care is both detailed and personal. This closely focused support structure is built around personal tutors, with whom every student meets daily at registration, as well as opportunities for private progress meetings. Our tutorial programme covers a range of important topics from Self-Esteem to Growth Mindset, and issues relating to online and personal safety.

The support I have had from each member of the Sixth Form Office and from all my teachers these past two years has been amazing. Most of my teachers have taken time out of their lunches or after school to help me with something if I didn't understand it.

Leavers' Survey

The space also boasts its own bistro café with a branded Costa machine. We have recently also added a vending machine selling snacks.

We are very proud to be a school based Sixth Form. Our attendance policy reflects the fact that we believe the best time to study is during the day and we are keen to develop a conscientious approach to the use of non-contact time.

An extended pastoral team provides more specialised emotional and personal assistance where required. We have a full time Pastoral Support Assistant who is available to talk to students on a one-to-one basis if the need arises.

The Sixth Form Leadership team is made up of staff with many years of teaching and pastoral experience. We support every individual student through the A Level journey, in whichever way is necessary.

It is of course also extremely important to engage parents in students' academic success. The Parents' Consultations are augmented by regular progress reports and intervention meetings, as required.

These important academic snapshots record personal development towards established targets, helping both the student and their parents/guardians gauge progress and help iron out any personal or academic issues in good time.



The teachers have provided us with loads of extra help and revision sessions. They have also provided us with loads of exam questions so we are never short of resources.

Students' Survey

Destinations After Arden

We are immensely proud of the destinations reached by Arden Sixth Form students.

We have a consistent record of students receiving and taking up offers at a diverse range of opportunities. Last year, the majority of the cohort went straight into a University place, with over 30% of them studying at a Russell Group University. Arden graduates are currently studying at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. We have successfully supported many students through the rigorous application process. We also have many students studying Medicine and Dentistry.

There is an ever increasing diversity of destination, with a sharp increase in students pursuing the apprenticeship route. Students in recent cohorts have taken up places on higher apprenticeships including JCB, IBM, National Grid, Chartered Surveying and Accountancy. The opportunities on Degree Apprenticeships and Sponsored Degrees are increasing every year, with past students currently studying on the PWC Flying Start Degree programmes and an Aerospace Engineering Degree Apprenticeship.

Your Brighter Future

Transition

We appreciate that adapting to life in the Sixth Form can take time. Whether you've been at Arden for five years already or are joining us for the first time, it can take time to settle.

We hold a Taster Day once the GCSEs are finished where students take part in lessons to give a flavour of what is to come and help to get a feel for life in the Sixth Form.

Our Enrolment Day takes place on the day of the GCSE results. The enrolment process involves a one-to-one conversation with a senior member of staff who will talk through the application, GCSE results and subject choices.

The support our daughter received in preparing for her university interviews was amazing. The practice panel interviews really helped her confidence.

Parents' Survey

We run an Away Day at the start of Year 12. It is an action packed activity day. It is great fun and gives a perfect opportunity to get to know each other in a relaxed environment.

The step-up from GCSE to A Level studies needs to be actively dealt with. As a result, we run a study skills session at the start of Year 12 and regularly revisit the concepts throughout the two year course.

We have recently added a 'Study Support Session'. This was created in response to the need for more structure during the transition between Year 11 and 12. After a study skills session with an external provider, Elevate, study skills are periodically introduced, revised and developed to ensure the most efficient use of study time. These sessions also allow a greater degree of personal mentoring. Students are able to discuss their achievements and difficulties with a member of staff. They are also used as a forum for exploring the wider world and the realms of general knowledge that some universities feel are lacking in today's students, as well as developing soft skills, which are vital in the wider community.

Futures

The assistance you will be given in terms of careers advice and post-18 options is of the highest order. All students take part in 'Futures' events in Year 12. Students are given personalised support with their chosen application process, alongside a constant focus on employability skills in both formal and informal settings.

There is a dedicated careers event put on each year. In a conference style programme, students attend interactive sessions facilitated by external speakers from apprenticeship providers, degree apprenticeships, sponsored degrees, universities and past Arden students. The aim of this conference is to help students make informed choices about their futures.

During Year 12, every student is also given a mock interview. This involves facing an external visitor to school in a one-to-one setting and having to answer a range of questions. Last year, many admitted it was a daunting prospect, however the feedback was 100% positive.

The post-18 application process is a well-established practice, with a huge amount of experience amongst the staff involved. From guidance and support with choices, through to personal statement and CV writing help, we are with the students every step of the way.

High expectations of behaviour, engagement and attendance were good preparation for the future.

Parents' Survey



Arden
Sixth Form



Beyond the Classroom

The relationships you will build with your teachers will be different to your previous experience: You will be treated as an adult and be expected to work together with your tutor to meet and exceed challenging goals.

Arden promotes a culture of self-development, providing numerous opportunities to build the extra qualities universities and employers want. We encourage you to be intellectually curious and extend your interests in subjects and careers in which you feel an aptitude and affinity.

We have many students who are interested in applying to some of the most competitive courses that are out there. Applying to study at either Oxford or Cambridge, or for a degree in Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, not only gives you a UCAS deadline 3 months earlier than everyone else, it increases the pressure on the application being the best it can be. We have set up specialist support for this group of students and have extensive experience in supporting them in their applications.

We have recently further expanded our provision by joining the Solihull Oxbridge Network. This is a group of schools from the area, including grammar schools and Solihull School, who are pooling resources to ensure the most effective preparation for all students. This means that they have regular access to conferences where information, expertise and hints are shared from our link colleges; the opportunity for mock interviews with teachers they are unfamiliar with and academic enrichment sessions to stretch them beyond the bounds of the A level curriculum. In the past few years, ex-students, currently studying at Oxford and Cambridge have enjoyed supporting us with this. We firmly believe that the 'road to Oxbridge' should be a journey that is enjoyable and enriching whether or not the final destination is achieved.

Real life work experience is becoming a vital part of a student's development. Some careers demand it; all recommend it. Every year we have a Work Experience Week, where students are encouraged to find a suitable placement, which will help them develop skills beyond the classroom. Each individual student researches and sources their own work experience suited to their own needs.

The time spent on work experience can prove invaluable, often serving to reinforce a possible career path, or to provide you

with the knowledge to enable you to decide it's not for you. The opportunity to experience the 'real world' is an important element of many of Arden's courses.

We have an established link with a rural school, Schitsdrift, in South Africa. Each year a small group of students spend three weeks teaching in the primary school, to add value to the community. We have also developed links with The Zuri Project; a locally based charity that works with Opportunity Africa in Uganda. A small group of students visit a rural village in Uganda to work on a Cultural Development Programme. Both of these projects are designed to encourage the students to look 'beyond their borders'.

Many subjects also offer educational visits to enrich the curriculum. There is a CERN visit this year and Biology and Geography field trips, amongst others.

These opportunities are very enjoyable for Arden students and put their learning in a wider 'professional' context. It is also well known that both employers and higher education institutions value the depth of experience that is gained from learning outside the school environment.

There is plenty of opportunity to 'give back' by joining in with regular fundraising activities along with community outreach work, such as supporting our PTFA and the local Rotary Club. We are constantly expanding the opportunities for charitable giving.

Arden's reputation for Music and Drama is well deserved; both areas provide the chance to perform to a high standard or build experience behind the scenes in production, set design and lighting. For those with a sporting interest, we enter teams into national cups for both football and rugby. We are always looking to expand our sporting commitment, so will love to hear about what you would like to get involved in.

My son's A Level journey was not easy but I really feel that the teachers went above and beyond to support him, putting his needs first and genuinely caring about him and helping him to remain positive.

I think they are a really special team of teachers.

Parents' Survey



Arden
Sixth Form

Personal Development

Enrichment

You do not come to Arden Sixth Form just to get a set of qualifications. We are passionate about providing opportunities to expand beyond the curriculum and students have regularly commented that they are surprised at the breadth of what they are offered outside the classroom.

Students are expected to take part in at least two hours of enrichment activities a week. The activities currently on offer range from volunteering in the local community to supporting lessons across the school. We have successfully entered the Young Enterprise competition for the last 3 years. There are sporting opportunities and the offer of taking part in a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).

Essentially, whatever a student's interests, Arden is there to support and encourage participation. This broad spectrum of activities plays an invaluable role in enhancing and enriching the learning experience for a Sixth Former at Arden.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is also offered. This is a fantastic opportunity to develop interests and knowledge beyond the classroom. It is becoming increasingly valued as part of a Post-18 application.

The breadth of EPQ projects is a testament to the way in which Arden nurtures individual ideas and passions. From designing and creating artefacts such as go-karts, quad-copters and remote control hovercrafts, to essay based projects such as "Quantum Mechanics", "Was Shakespeare a feminist?" and "What makes a psychopath?".

Leadership Opportunities

Arden has a very powerful student voice. Students' perspective, ideas and concerns are sought out at every level from the form room to the classroom and beyond. Students working together with teachers, the senior leadership team and governors have ensured that every student's voice is heard and respected. Their contribution has led to a real improvement in the daily life of students at Arden. It has also helped them to develop into caring, responsible and confident young people.

Our Sixth Form Leadership Team has a different focus each year. Some will look at Sixth Form development whilst others look at how to give back to the wider school and local community. Other roles include helping Heads of Year, being part of the school's charity work and mentoring younger students.

Leadership Team

Attaining this status (formerly known as 'Prefect') is an achievement and a privilege. Those selected for the role have to bring ideas to the table and be willing to work hard. As the most senior students in the school, the Arden Leadership Team act as role models for the entire academy.

Though being in the leadership team involves giving up free time, it is extremely rewarding, providing opportunities to talk to younger pupils in assemblies and assisting with the running of the Sixth Form. Their visible presence plays a valuable role in reinforcing the strong links between the main school and the Sixth Form.

Bursary

We have a bursary available to support students facing financial difficulties. This is designed to help with any education costs during their time at Arden Sixth Form.

Very happy environment, enough freedom, support for individual growth to become an adult well prepared for university life.

Parents' Survey



Arden
Sixth Form



Arden set achievable targets and tailored additional support when needed.

Parents' Survey