

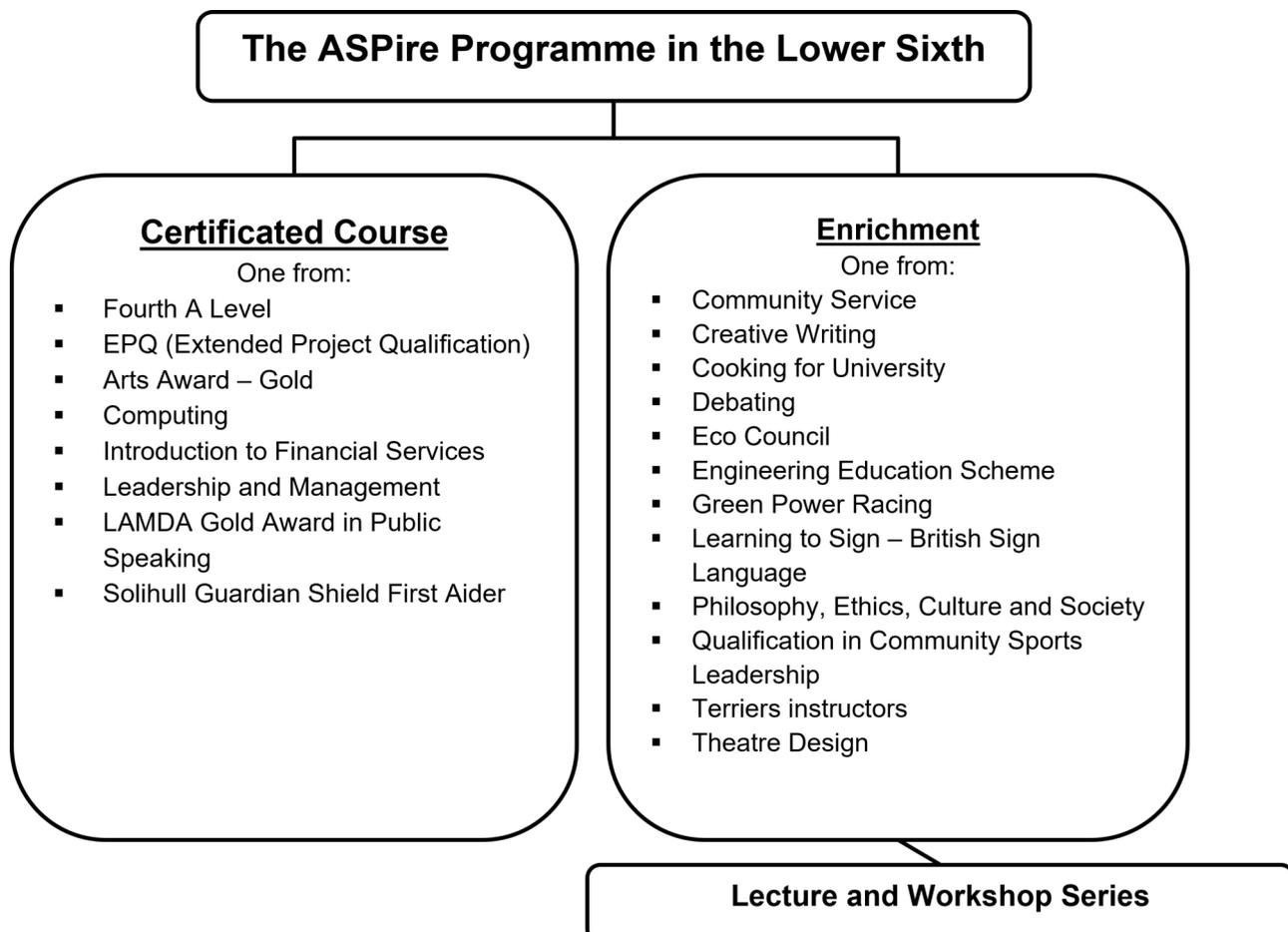
## Certificated Courses and Enrichment in the Lower Sixth

In a world where so much emphasis is put on exam success, we have designed the Advanced Skills Programme (ASpire) to enable the development of the whole student. Our guiding principle is to provide you with opportunities to learn that go beyond the curriculum, to gain experiences outside your day-to-day life in the classroom and to develop skills that will set you up for your future.

With the application process for university and for jobs becoming even more competitive, we also believe that the ASpire Programme will help you to stand out from other applicants by being able to demonstrate learning beyond the curriculum and a wide range of critical thinking and problem-solving.

The programme is here to provide you with something different and to enable you to have fun whilst learning and developing your skills. Through this programme, we want to support you to meet your aspirations.

The ASpire Programme is made up of two parts: the Certificated Courses in the Lower Sixth and the Enrichment Programme which runs through both the Lower and Upper Sixth. Details of the options available in these two programmes are given here.





## Certificated Courses

You will be asked to indicate a first, second and third choice from a selection of options. These have been designed to cover a range of interests and result in a qualification which can then be included on UCAS applications and CVs. We encourage students to consider completing the Extended Project Qualification. If academically appropriate, students can choose to study a fourth A Level subject. Alternatively, they may choose from one of our specially selected courses, which include: Gold Arts Award; Computing; Introduction to Financial Services; Leadership and Management; LAMDA Gold Award in Public Speaking and our bespoke Guardian Shield First Aider course.

### Fourth A Level

This option is available to those students who seek the challenge of a fourth taught course. It is important to note that Further Mathematics is only offered as a fourth A Level although all other subjects can be added as a fourth option if academically appropriate. The school would expect those doing four A Levels to be predicted at least six Grade 8s at GCSE and an 8 in each of their proposed A Level subjects. Due to the implications of this choice, students **MUST** consult with Mrs Chillcott, Director of Post-School Pathways & Academic Guidance, who oversees the options process. Due to timetable constraints, students who take a fourth A Level cannot also opt for another AS/Pire course.

### Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Most students in the Lower Sixth complete an EPQ. It forms two sessions on a student's weekly timetable and requires them to undertake a research project on a topic of their choosing. The outcome is either a 5,000 dissertation or an artefact (something made by the student – a piece of artwork, music or podcast to give a just three examples). Alongside this final piece, the student will submit evidence of their research and organisation of the project.

Students are free to choose a research topic that is of personal interest to them. Each year the range of topics is diverse. Previous projects include a series of podcasts about the importance of radio, a children's book about autism and dissertations about the prison system, climate change, mental health, cryptocurrency and car design.

One of the most important aspects of the EPQ is that it embeds skills that will help the student in their transition to university helping them work independently and think critically. One session a week is a taught skills session that focus on topics such as referencing, time management and organisation. The other session each week is spent with a supervisor who will discuss the student's individual project with them and guide them through the process. It is also worth up to 28 UCAS points and, as the qualification is so well regarded by universities, a high grade in the EPQ can lead to a student receiving a reduced offer from their chosen university.

The hard work culminates in a wonderful presentation event in March where students display their findings to invited guests, including friends and family. By this point they have become experts in their chosen topic and demonstrate real pride in their work.

### Arts Award - Gold

From drama and dance to poetry and photography, take your skills, knowledge and working practices in your chosen art form to the next level. This Level 3 course provides a framework for you to develop to your own strengths, whilst expressing your creative identity and building the skills you might need for a potential career in the arts. This is achieved through developing a portfolio presentation, taking part in arts events and working with practitioners in your chosen field. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option.*



## Computing

Many aspects of different jobs require the use of computing skills - from research through to product design and even the development of new insurance products. So, whether you want to enhance your programming skills in HTML or web design or to design the next million-selling app or game, then this might be the option for you. Guided by our expert IT department, complete courses on Microsoft's Virtual Academy to develop a broad portfolio of skills or become an expert by following your chosen learning pathway. Certification is provided by Microsoft itself. Further learning opportunities and challenges are available through taking advantage of Codecademy's online Tutorials and the chance to join the HM Cyber Security challenge.

## Introduction to Financial Services

This option is for all students who want to gain greater insight into how the financial services sector works. Students will complete the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investments (CISI) Fundamentals of Financial Services – Level 2 award. CISI's courses are highly thought of and are used by organisations operating in the financial services sector to up-skill their trainees. The course covers many aspects including looking at ethics, different types of banks, commonly used financial products, such as shares, bonds and insurance, as well as an introductory understanding of markets and how they work. This broad-ranging course will not only challenge your intellectual skills, but also your abilities to work with financial data. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option.*

## Leadership and Management

In a world where organisations are facing ever-more challenges, more emphasis is being put on the quality of leadership and management. This course will help you develop your identity as a leader through teaching you about topics such as: different leadership styles; how to motivate and lead a team; and, how to deal with feedback. At the same time, by working through command scenarios, you will also learn to evaluate your own success and failure. This course will help you develop your team work, communication and problem-solving skills, as well as becoming a reflective leader and assessing your performance. As a result, it will help you hone skills that are much in demand by business. This course will provide you with a Level 3 qualification and ties into a range of ILM courses that are increasingly being offered by universities. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option.*

## LAMDA Gold Award in Public Speaking

Effective public speaking is an essential skill for life, and yet it is one which often fills people with dread. From university or job interviews to presentations for colleagues or potential customers, to giving a speech at a family or a charity occasion, being a good public speaker can enhance your reputation, boost your self-confidence and open up countless opportunities. This Level 3 course from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts helps you to hone your speech writing and presentation skills. Learn to research topics, craft impactful speeches which fully engage your audience, create effective visual aids and prepare impromptu speeches with minimal preparation time. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option.*

## Solihull Guardian Shield First Aider

This modular course provides a comprehensive introduction to crucial skills which could one day make a vital difference to other people's lives. The first module covers traditional first aid skills, including managing emergency situations, resuscitation techniques, dealing with a variety of common injuries and urgent illnesses and use of AED defibrillator machines. Module two covers mental health first aid, including how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue. Both of these courses lead to recognised qualifications, but most importantly you'll gain the confidence, skills and understanding to manage crises, support positive wellbeing and tackle stigma in the world around you. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option, and full certification may require additional time outside of the classroom, for example after school or weekend sessions.*



## Enrichment

The Enrichment Programme for the Lower Sixth is designed to take you out of the classroom and to give you the chance to learn, develop and apply skills in new settings. You will take part in this activity for up to three periods a week. This is your opportunity to challenge yourself and try something new.

Current activities include:

**Community Service** – Help the school to reach out to our local community by choosing to volunteer. Placements in the past have included local schools, nursing homes and charity shops. This programme gives you the benefit of being on a long-term (nearly nine month) placement. Please note that *places on this option are limited*, though we welcome applications from pupils who already have an established *voluntary* placement outside of school.

**Cooking for University** – Learn to plan, prepare and cook a range of quick, easy tasty and nutritious meals on a limited budget; also covers the basics of food hygiene.

**Creative Writing** – Hone your skills as a writer! Take part in this option to develop your creative writing across a range of styles, including poetry, drama, film scripts and short stories, and get your work published in school magazines. Ideal for the potential journalist, novelist or someone who just wants to write for fun!

**Debating** – Discuss some of the most challenging and provocative issues of the day. This course allows you to develop the skills of analysis, learn how to structure an argument, spot flaws and speak with confidence.

**Eco Council** – Lead the school's environmental initiatives, including gaining 'green school' accreditation. If you have ideas about how the school can enhance its green credentials, and the passion to lead younger pupils in projects to make this happen, this could be the option for you.

**Engineering Education Scheme** – Take part in a national scheme which provides an opportunity for 16/17 year old students who are considering a career in engineering. You will work in a team with applied science and technology companies to solve real life problems. *Please note, that places on this course are limited and students may need to submit an application.*

**Green Power Racing** - Practical engineering with the need for speed. One team, a chassis and a standard engine! Students work in a team to create and race a super-charged racing machine. *There are limited places on this course and students must submit an application.*

**Learning to Sign** – Learn the art and subtlety of expressing yourself without speaking! This exciting course provides you with the opportunity to learn British Sign Language. *Please note that a course fee applies to this option.*

**Philosophy, Ethics, Culture and Society** – Using a wide range of resources, this is your chance to explore big ideas about the world around you, ranging from ethical theory to extremism and post-modernism.



**Qualification for Community Sports Leadership (QCSL)** – A practical course in which you will learn how to deliver safe sporting and recreational activities. The course results in a Level 2 certificate. *Please note that a fee applies to this option.*

**Terriers** – Develop your leadership and communication skills and help shape young minds by volunteering to train as an instructor on our bespoke Outdoor Education Programme for the Third Form (Year 7). Take responsibility for activities such as cycle maintenance, orienteering, navigation and water safety.

**Theatre Design** – For those students who want to get involved in all aspects of performance design, including costume design, managing props and set design. This course provides an opportunity to take projects from desk to stage and much more beyond.

**Please note that the certified courses and enrichment options listed here are subject to change and may not be available in a given year depending on student uptake. Therefore pupils will be asked to indicate their first, second and third choice options.**

These sessions will be interspersed with **lectures** and **workshops**. Lectures take place approximately once every half term. Previous speakers have included a world poetry slam champion, an Olympic athlete, an explorer who has scaled Everest and a neuroscientist.