

Physics at the University of Birmingham School

At the University of Birmingham School, Physics is a friendly, welcoming and exciting department to work in, currently staffed by four specialist teachers and a Physics Technician. Our Physics lessons are taught in large, bright, modern labs. We have three physics laboratories as well as a Physics prep room, and all our labs are equipped with visualizers and a range of specialist equipment. As a department we are exceptionally well resourced, with multiple class sets of all the usual physics equipment and a class set of iPads.

From year 7, pupils are taught Physics, Chemistry and Biology separately by subject-specialist teachers. Small class sizes (around 25 students) allow more individualised learning to take place. Pupils have two Physics lessons per fortnight in year 7, two in year 8 and three in year 9. Students are taught in mixed ability classes. In years 7 and 8 we develop a strong foundation around the core ideas in physics while putting an emphasis on qualitative explanation of idea. In year 9, we focus on developing students' mathematical skills in preparation for their GCSE study.

In years 10 and 11 we offer AQA GCSE Combined Science (trilogy) or AQA GCSE Physics (along with GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Biology). Students have four lessons of Physics a fortnight with their specialist teacher. All GCSE students benefit from specialist teachers. Our separate science students are in classes of around 30 students, with our combined science students benefiting from smaller groups, most of which are approximately 25 students each.

Physics is a popular subject in the sixth form. We currently have around 90 students studying AQA A-level Physics in year 12 and year 13. Students have ten lessons a fortnight in year 12 and year 13, with their teaching split between two teachers. In year 12, one lesson a fortnight is dedicated to the teaching of physics skills to support with the development of numeracy and practical skills. It is often commented on how bright and conscientious our sixth form students are in the Physics department and each year many students go on to study Physical Sciences and Engineering at university.

As a school, we have a big focus on enrichment as part of our character education program on Friday afternoons. In the past we have run several physics and science themed enrichment programs, including Engineering, Astronomy, STEM club, the Physics Olympiad, and Oxbridge preparation. We look forward to the contributions new members of the team would make to our diverse enrichment program.

The Physics team is a group of enthusiastic and committed teachers with our own dedicated technician. We are always keen to discuss and develop our practice and curriculum. As physicists, we are passionate about showing our students how exciting our subject can be. As a team, we look to plan collaboratively wherever possible and share resources, allowing us to focus on our practice and minimise workload.

If you are interested and have questions or would like to know more about the department, please contact the Subject Leader for Physics Curtis Maltby at c.maltby@uobschool.org.uk.

