

## Rationale:

Our vision for students studying Business Studies at A Level is that every student of the course will leave The Cedars Academy with a heightened understanding of how businesses work, the difficult decisions they have to make, how they influence consumer behaviour and a broad understanding of the economy and its impact on the market. This understanding should allow them to seek job opportunities and further education that support their aspirations. We want our students to have high aspirations of themselves seeing themselves as the future workforce for the most prestigious businesses and entrepreneurs who play an active part in the economy.

During the course students learn 8 core themes. There are

- What is a business?
- Leadership, Management and Decision Making
- Decision making in finance
- Marketing and decision making
- Decision Making in Human Resources
- Analysing strategic positions
- Choosing a strategic direction and implementing strategies
- Managing Strategic change

As the above highlights the course focuses on the decisions that need to be made in the business given business data. Therefore much of the course focuses on data, case studies and models that are used in industry to understand the position of a business and models that support change. All in all students need to know 18 business models and have a good understanding of businesses that compete for the market in a variety of industries.

As The Cedars Academy does not currently offer GCSE Business Studies students will have limited prior knowledge of business. The first unit to be covered in the course 'What is a business' provides much of the foundational knowledge needed to succeed in the course and introduces students to basic concepts that they can introduce throughout the course. Further students pull from their own experiences as consumers and their maths skills from Maths GCSE to calculate ratios and percentages and better understand business case studies. The trust has a strong network of business partners who come in to talk to students to discuss how much of the business theory discussed in the course affects businesses on the ground so they can gain a greater insight. Further, many families in the community are small business owners and students can often draw from their own experiences of working in or having parents who own small businesses.

Year 11 students joining The Cedars Academy in Business Studies are set transition work which focuses on a business/industry and requires them to familiarise themselves with it whilst completing tasks and answering questions. These tasks are to elicit their level of understanding of the business world and also encourage them to put forward opinions based on what they have learnt through case studies and video documentaries made available to them. The review of this work provides the teacher a good foundation on which to base the the level of challenge and support in Year 12 lessons.

Students are provided with Prep and Check booklets at the beginning of the year. Prep booklets provide students with pre reading and definitions that must be completed/reviewed before a lesson. These booklets ensure that students enter lessons with a basic level of knowledge which can then be heightened during the lesson. Deeper learning therefore takes place as the teacher can focus on debates and dealing with common misconceptions. Check booklets provide regular reviewing and formative assessment opportunities to regularly check understanding and analytical, numerical and vocabulary skills allowing the teacher to quickly provide support where needed to challenge when students have grasped a concept. These are also supported by longer assessments such as times

essays and trial exams which alongside informative feedback provide students with clear indicators of where they are and how they can move forward and improve outcomes.

## Curriculum Overview

<b>Year 12</b>	<b><u>Topics 1 &amp; 2</u></b> <b><u>Half term 1</u></b> What is a business?  Managers, Leadership and decision making	<b><u>Topic 3</u></b> <b><u>Half term 2</u></b> Decision making to improve marketing performance	<b><u>Topic 4</u></b> <b><u>Half term 3</u></b> Decision making to improve operational performance	<b><u>Topic 4</u></b> <b><u>Half term 4 &amp; 5</u></b> Decision making to improve Financial Performance	<b><u>Topic 5</u></b> <b><u>Half term 6</u></b> Decision making to improve HR performance
<b>Year 13</b>	<b><u>Topics 1 and 2</u></b> <b><u>Half term 1 and 2</u></b> Analysing the Strategic position of a business Choosing a strategic direction	<b><u>Topic 3 and 4</u></b> <b><u>Half term 3 and 4</u></b> Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies Managing strategic change			

## Timetabling

Students have 5 lessons a week with one teacher who is the sole Business Studies teacher at the school.

This is extended to 6 periods a week in Year 13.

## Key Stage 5

Topics are determined by the examining body.

The examining board has been chosen for several reasons.

- Topic 1: What is a business? And the following units which look at the 4 operational areas of HR, Marketing, Operations and Finance provide a strong understanding of Business Studies particularly for students who have not studied Business Studies at GCSE
- The examining body is used by the other A level providers in the Trust which allows for moderation of marked assessments across the Trust
- The teacher teaching the course at The Cedars Academy is a senior examiner for AQA Business Studies and has marked all three papers over the past three years allowing her to best prepare the students for the exams in this course.
- Although the course has elements of economics it is mainly a course focused on Business Studies which students enjoy and proves more popular for its grounding in lots of current examples of business.

A key theme that runs through all topics is decision making. Students need to have the ability to understand and process information delivered through a variety of formats (data, customer interviews, contextual information, missions statements etc..) and make suitable decisions that are right for the business in question. As students progress through the topics they learn that they cannot put aside previous learning and must use it to strengthen

their arguments. For instance when looking at innovation and how businesses encourage innovation, students will need to consider whether their target market values innovation and if so in what way so that changes can be implemented. This will then determine finances and how much money is put aside to take risks and innovate products and what is considered to be a suitable financial reward for these risks. Later when learning about HR, students will need to consider recruitment practices that allow businesses to identify innovative staff. Therefore, case studies form a key part of this course allowing students to see businesses as a 'whole picture' and utilise prior learning to solve problems in each topic area.

Topics are delivered in way that allows students who have not been exposed to business studies before to understand that four key areas of business in Year 1 (Marketing, Finance, Operations and HR) so that in Year 2 when strategic decisions and models are utilised for the whole business they can understand the impact of changes on these different operational areas.

The course provides the ideal stepping stone for students who want to complete a business related course at University or go on to an apprenticeship with the knowledge and understanding of how businesses work and the difficult decision they have to make in order to remain competitive.

## **Assessment**

Formative and Summative assessment are timetabled on a regular basis. Assessments are cumulative because of the nature of the course as described above. Students follow the 'Prep and Check' booklets. Prep booklets include pre – reading and research that students are expected to complete before a lesson so that these can be discussed in the lesson to deepen understanding. Check booklet include regular assessments which assess knowledge and quantitative skills. These check then influence the how future learning is scheduled. For instance if students are struggling to calculate particular formulas case studies in future lessons will stress these formulas to allow for more practice. Or if students are struggling to apply their knowledge to new industries examples and case studies from those industries are utilised to strengthen student knowledge.

Students demonstrate progress through the quality of responses to 'Check ' questions and school wide assessments such as trial exams. In particular their ability to utilise case studies, analyse and evaluate arguments.

## **Literacy**

Subject specific literacy is taught and utilised through the prep booklets and rewarded in written work. Due to the nature of the course which can be applied to business news there is ample opportunity for students to communicate their thoughts and arguments in class and listen to a variety of arguments before committing to an answer on paper.

Examples of debates that students will partake in include:

- At what point do financial decisions become more important than ethical ones for a business?
- Who is a business more accountable to its community or shareholders?
- What are both the positive and negative effects of globalisation?
- Are certain leadership styles better than others?
- Does a business have to be innovative to succeed?

The above questions not only strengthen students skills in constructing an argument as there are no black and white answers but also better prepare them to be active participants in society as many of them have an ethical standpoint.

## **Beyond the classroom**

Roma Dhameja 22 July 2020



# Business Studies Curriculum Plan

Utilising the business network of the school external speakers are brought in to talk to students from a variety of industries

Students can utilise their learning from maths in order to aid them in the financial elements of the course as well as other social science subjects such as Sociology and Psychology when considering marketing and ethical considerations.

Having taught in and led the Business Studies department at Beauchamp College, the lead teacher for this subject regularly collaborates with staff at Beauchamp College and Beauchamp City Sixth form to moderate assessments and share resources as well as planning of talks and trips.

## **Differentiation**

Students accessing the courses with varying levels of confidence are supported through three main strategies

Teaching to the top and ensuring that students are challenged and supported through all material. Case studies are utilised from magazines such as Harvard Business Review giving them access to rich material and vocabulary and businesses/industries they may not be familiar with. Students are also challenged by being encouraged to draw conclusions on live business news.

Support through Prep booklets which allow students to access words and concepts before teaching takes place so they can reference the booklet at any time. Further support is provided through lots of examples and utilising business examples from businesses the students will be familiar with.

Differentiated questioning in the classroom also ensures that students are both challenged and supported.

The school wide PP policy and T&L strategies are implemented to support students from poorer socio economic backgrounds. The teacher works with the SEN coordinator to ensure that the needs of any SEN students is being met.

## **Marking and Feedback**

The school wide marking and feedback policy is implemented.