

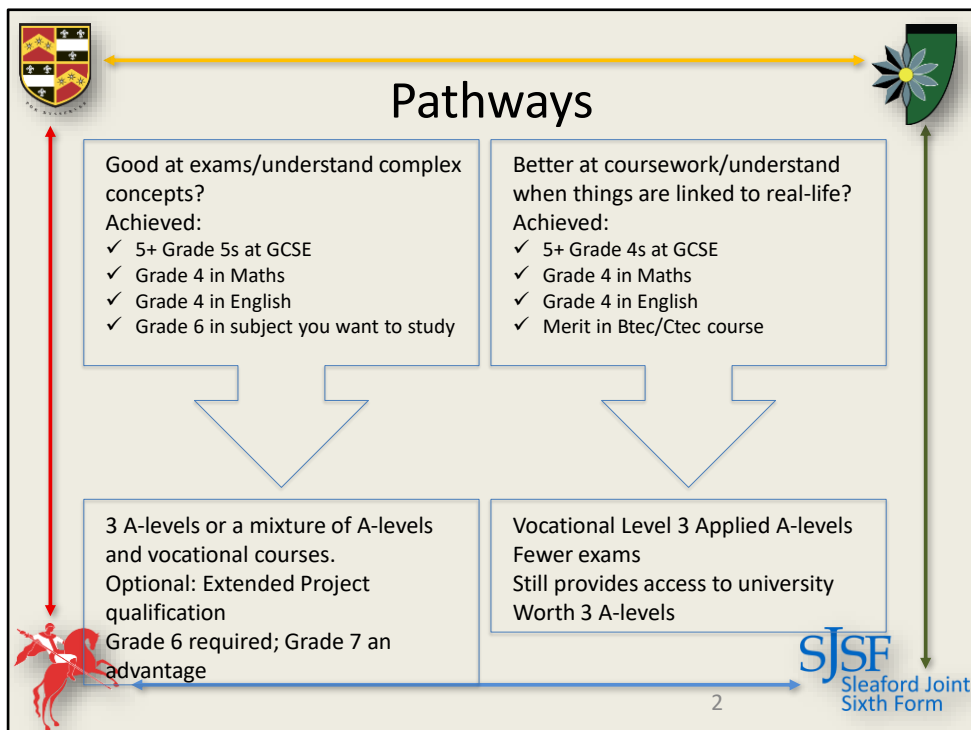
Good evening.

As you have heard from our senior students, we take great pride in encouraging our young people to be aspirational and reflective, and to be prepared for the world that meets them beyond Sixth Form. Needless to say, we're incredibly proud of their progress and, if I were a parent accompanying my child this evening listening to our Prefects, I would feel confident in them studying here.

I am Russell Smith, Head of Sixth Form here at Carre's Grammar School. In a few moments, I will pass over to Sarah Chant, who is the Head of Sixth Form at Kesteven and Sleford High School.

We hope to provide some information on:

- the pathways on offer to your child
- the role of vocational courses in the SJSF
- what is required to access their preferred courses, and then...
- how to make the most of this evening



Selecting the right courses is an essential first step in enabling our students to be successful in the Sixth Form. It is important that students think carefully about which subject is selected, why it has been selected and whether there is a genuine interest in the subject.

It's important that you carefully think about the right choices but, ultimately, it will be accessing the grades needed (coupled with your strong desire to study the subject) that is the most important first step.

We're fortunate in the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form that we continue to offer such a large number of course options. This is a major benefit of having three schools who collaborate so closely, as it means that subjects are likely to appear in more than one option block. This increases the chance that you can study the courses you would like to take.

It is important to select the right pathway to maximise the likelihood of success at the end of Year 13.

## Traditional A-level Courses

- Most RCT students take traditional A-level courses, or a combination of 2 A-levels and 1 vocational course
- Tend to be more abstract than vocational courses
- Most popular route for those strongly considering university
- High examination component at the end of Key Stage 5

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The vast majority of our students take traditional A-levels, especially if performing well in examinations is not a concern for them. A-levels are arguably more closely linked to Higher Education and the demands of post-18 study, but this does not mean that universities consider them more favourably (in the vast majority of cases).

A-levels tend to be more abstract than vocational courses, as they tend to explore theoretical information which is not always fully applied to a practical context. This type of study is very closely related to the way students will study if they go to university, which is mostly coursework during the year but a heavy exam period at the end of the course.

A high proportion of our students enjoy the academic rigor that comes with traditional A-level courses and are supported to develop their independent study habits so that they are well prepared when the exam season approaches.

## Vocational Courses

- Main difference is how the course is assessed
- 95% of universities and colleges in the UK accept vocational courses like any other, including competitive universities from the Russell Group
- Over 25% of RCT students study at least one vocational course (2021-22 academic year)
- In 2023, over a quarter of students accepted into higher education held at least one Btec/Ctec qualification at Key Stage 5 (UCAS, 2023)

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There's a myth that vocational courses are not as prestigious as academic A-levels, but this view is now outdated.

There are still some Russell Group universities that maintain this stance, such as Oxford and Cambridge, and some academic courses that require a specific combination of A-levels, such as Medicine, but the vast majority of courses and universities see vocational courses as the equivalent to A-levels. It's just a different way of studying.

Vocational courses are typically more coursework orientated, whereas A-levels are mostly geared towards a large exam component at the end of Year 13.

A Distinction in a vocational course is exactly the same weighting as a grade A in an A-level. Therefore, if exams are not your strong point, a vocational course is a very appropriate alternative.

It's important to mention that a review of our curriculum will take place once we receive an outcome of the national curriculum review. We would ask that students consider their choices using the information available to them at this stage. We can reassure parents and students that we are committed to reacting to the outcome and to ensure the courses we offer meet the needs of our students.




# Entry Requirements

A summary of the entry requirements for each subject is in your prospectus pack

**Note the:**

- Overall requirements for Sixth Form
- Subject specific requirements

Academic A Level Pathway or Mixed Pathway of A levels and BTECs / CTECs: a minimum of 5 GCSEs full course at grade 5+ (or grade B) and at least Grade 4 in English Language or Literature and Maths.	
Level 3 Vocational/Applied Pathway: the equivalent of at least 5 subjects at Grade 4+ (or grade C), including English Language or Literature Grade 4+.	
Subject	Students must also meet the individual additional requirements listed below for their chosen subjects.
Applied BTEC Science, Single/Double	Grade 4 or above in GCSE Sciences
Art & Design CTEC Level 3	Met at BTEC Level 2 or Grade 4 GCSE Art
Art & Design (Photography) C/TEC	The minimum entry requirements for level 3 applied programmes
Art (Creative) A level	Grade 5 in GCSE Art plus a portfolio review
Art A Level (Photography)	Grade 5 or above in an Art/Creative specialism is required, in addition to meeting the minimum entry requirements for level 3 specialist study.
Biology	All students must have Grade 5+ in Maths owing to the considerable mathematical content of the new A Levels. It is strongly recommended also that students have attained Grade 7 or better in GCSE science subjects. The minimum entry requirements for Double Award Students are grades 6 and 7 in Science. The minimum entry requirements for Triple Award Students are 5 in Biology plus 5 in one other science. Performance in the exam components may be taken into account, given the 100% examined nature of the A Level.
Business A level	Grade 6 in English and Grade 5 in Maths
Business CTEC	Grade 4 Maths is required. English and Maths Grade 5 would be an advantage.
Chemistry	All students must have Grade 6+ in Maths owing to the considerable mathematical content of the new A Levels. It is strongly recommended also that students have obtained Grade 7 or better in GCSE science subjects. The minimum entry requirements for Double Award Students is 6 and 7 in Science. The minimum entry requirements for Triple Award Students are 5 in Chemistry plus 6 in one other science and performance in the exam components may be taken into account, given the 100% examined nature of the A Level.
Childcare and Education	The minimum entry requirements for Level 3 programmes
Computer Science	Grade 4 Maths
Construction and the Built Environment	Grade 4 in English and Maths
Drama	Grade 5 English plus audition
English Language	Grades 5 in English Literature or English language AND grade 5 in English literature or English Language



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The entry requirements document is included in your prospectus pack for reference this evening.

We encourage you to check the requirements carefully, both for entry to the SJSF and for each subject you wish to study.

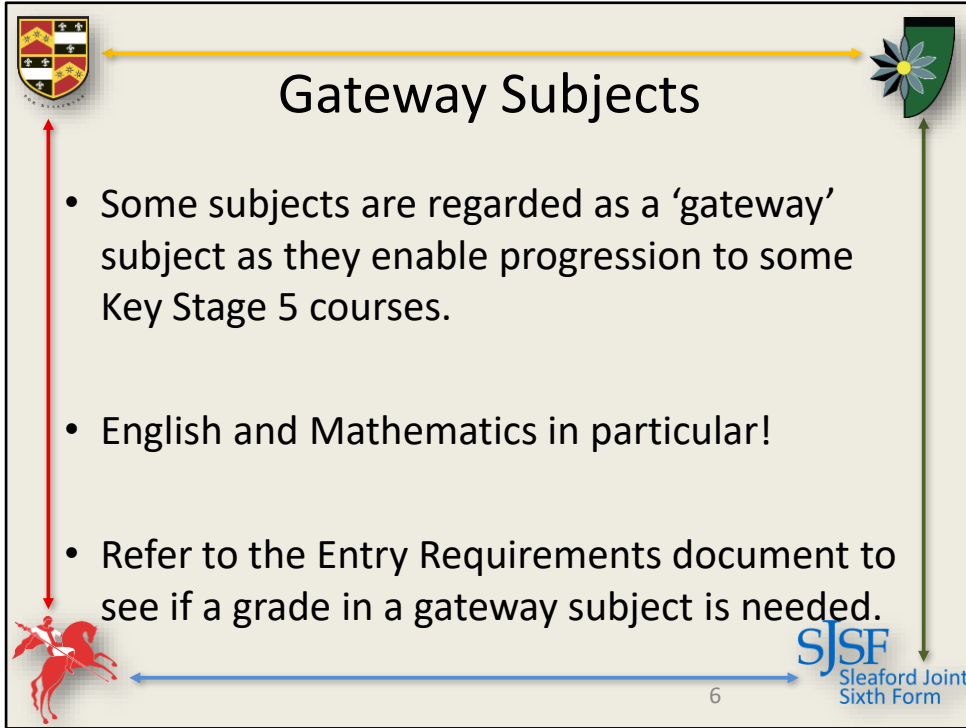
To access a place in the SJSF, there are certain requirements.

To study A-level subjects (this is the academic pathway), the entry requirements are 5 or more grade 5s at GCSE (which are full course) including a grade 4 in English and a grade 4 in Maths.

The vocational pathway is at least 4 GCSEs at grade 4, including a grade 4 in English and Maths.

If you achieve the entry requirements for a place in the SJSF, there are also subject-specific entry requirements. For example, if you want to study **Business**, you will need to have :

- Met the entry requirements for the academic pathway.
- And achieved grade 6 in Business and a grade 5 in Maths. A grade 6 in English can be accepted if Business has not been studied at GCSE.



**Gateway Subjects**

- Some subjects are regarded as a 'gateway' subject as they enable progression to some Key Stage 5 courses.
- English and Mathematics in particular!
- Refer to the Entry Requirements document to see if a grade in a gateway subject is needed.

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The slide features a central title 'Gateway Subjects' with three bullet points. It is decorated with a crest in the top left, a green flower in the top right, a red horse in the bottom left, and the SJSF logo in the bottom right. Four colored arrows (yellow, red, green, blue) point from the corners towards the center. The number '6' is centered at the bottom, and the SJSF logo is in the bottom right corner.

English and Maths are both regarded as 'gateway subjects' as many subjects require a certain grade in English or Maths or both.

For example Sociology and Law A levels need a 6 in English, while Psychology requires a 6 in English and 5 in Maths.

To study a science A level, a grade 6 is also needed in Maths as well as 2 sciences.

Some subjects have a recommended grade such as Maths A level. While a 6 is the minimum grade, we recommend a grade 7 or above, because students who do not get a 7 usually find the subject very challenging which can be very demotivating.

**Just because you can, doesn't mean you should**

"I can't believe I got a 7 in my Maths mock, I might do Maths at A-level"

"I've got a grade 6 in Biology. They want a grade 7 but how hard can it be?"

"Psychology is a new course. I fancy trying something new"

"Why would I do Ctec Sport when I can do A-Level PE?"

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If subjects are required to access your Post-18 aspirations, then it makes more sense to study them...but it is important to explore whether you can you still achieve your next steps without them. One student this year has a place to study Physiotherapy at University by doing double Ctec Sport and Ctec Business – both on the vocational pathway.

There's a lot to be said for studying the subjects you enjoy. If you're interested, you'll remain engaged and are likely to perform better.

New courses are appealing but be careful. It may be that you're not yet aware of the difficulties and problems yet, so do your research carefully.

We do recommend you fully investigate the applied route. You get exactly the same UCAS points for a Distinction in Ctec Sport as you do for A-level PE. This is also the case for other vocational courses. Think carefully about which course is best suited to you.

## Early Applicant Guidance

- Students considering Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry.
- UCAS deadline is 15 October (in Year 13)
- GCSE results are important (grades 7-9)
- Strong performance required in Year 12 (high predicted grades)
- Admissions tests usually required
- Related work experience is essential
- Evidence of serious and sustained interest is needed
- Consider course combinations required (UCAS website)

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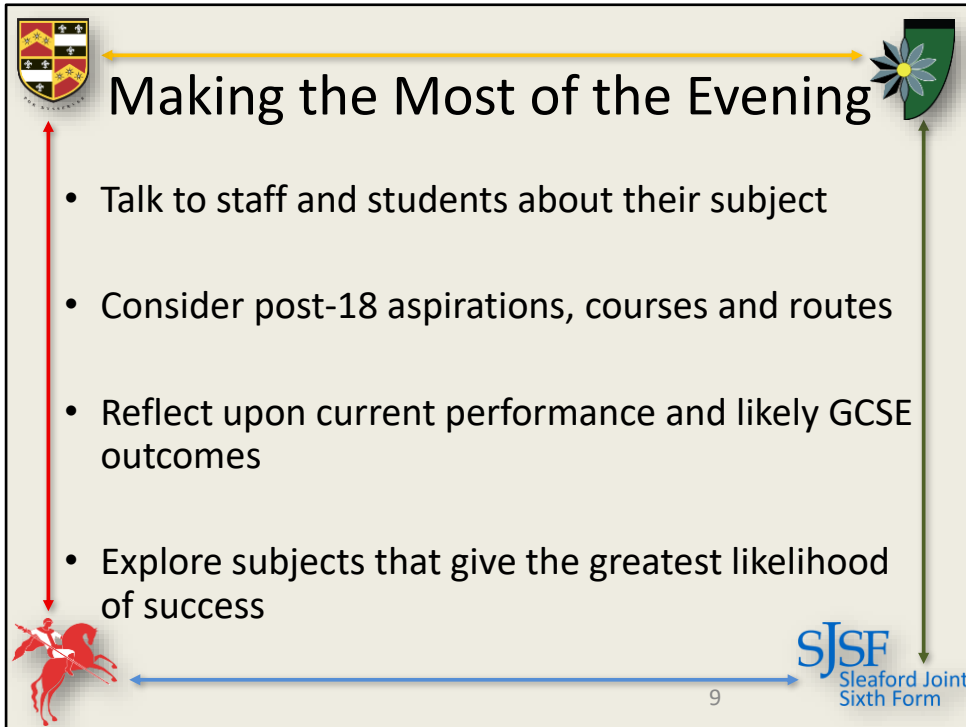
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If you're considering studying at Oxford or Cambridge, or taking a course in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry you need to carefully research your A level choices. For example, Natural Sciences at Cambridge have a very specific list of courses they want you to have studied. Do come and speak to me during this evening if you would like further information on these courses.

We offer a lot of help, guidance and support for early applicants, but it's important to know now that your GCSE results will be consulted as part of the application. If this is your post-18 pathway, you should be:

- Working to achieve GCSEs at grade 7 and above in your subjects
- Making plans to access relevant work experience to support your application
- Developing your skills by participating in super-curricular activities, and showcasing your academic curiosity beyond your subjects.





## Making the Most of the Evening

- Talk to staff and students about their subject
- Consider post-18 aspirations, courses and routes
- Reflect upon current performance and likely GCSE outcomes
- Explore subjects that give the greatest likelihood of success

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This evening is an opportunity to speak to staff and students from all 3 schools to start to decide which subjects you might wish to study, and whether the courses align with your strengths.

Please ask questions, get the perspectives from our students and start to explore whether the subjects will help you achieve your next steps.

## What Next?

- Consult the prospectus pack
- Submit your application by **Friday 15th November**
- Talk to your form tutor to discuss your thoughts
- Subject Mentoring/Counselling **after Christmas**
- Be aware of the **individual subject entry requirements**
- Select subjects that align to your interests, post-18 thoughts and that you're likely to succeed in
- Look on the UCAS website to identify the entry requirements for university or apprenticeship courses
- Consider, and don't discount, all options from all pathways
- SJSF Induction Event in **June 2025**

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Applications to the SJSF are due in by Friday 15 November. An application form is included within the pack that you have received this evening, along with a prospectus which documents course details and areas of study within the specification.

You should consult the entry requirements sheet and reflect upon whether you would be able to receive a place on your chosen courses if your most recent set of progress grades were the 'real thing'. This may provide you with the motivation you need to truly achieve your potential.

All students will receive a one-to-one mentoring conversation with a member of the Sixth Form team after Christmas, and will be able to trial your chosen courses in June prior to the start of the academic year.

This evening is a first step for many of you to identify what might be the best subjects to open doorways to your post-18 aspirations.



Thank you for listening.

Our Senior Prefects are available around the site to help direct you to subject areas.

You will also notice that subjects are split between the two Robert Carre Trust sites, and we would encourage you to visit both schools and speak to staff and students in subject areas. Our 2 schools close at 7.30pm, but St George's are open until 8pm.

Enjoy your evening. Thank you.