

Rationale

Chemistry teaches useful skills. Because it is a science, learning chemistry means learning how to be objective and how to reason and solve problems. It helps you to understand current events, including news about petroleum, product recalls, pollution, the environment and technological advances.

Chemistry is at the centre of everything you can see, smell, touch and taste. Whether studying the chemistry of life, or developing the advanced science behind modern technology, chemical scientists use their expertise to improve our health, our environment and our daily lives.

GCSE chemistry

As AQA is the most widely-chosen Chemistry GCSE exam board, we have access to plenty of online resources (ExamPro, TES) and examples for delivering content and carrying out practicals with lots of supportive documents for exam preparation.

The specification for GCSE Chemistry is divided into 10 units. There is a logical progression through the units, although we often choose to change the order of teaching to fit the ability of our students.

e.g. in yr 9, all students start the course with C1 (Atomic structure and the periodic table) as this unit contains the basic concepts in chemistry. Many of the concepts will have been taught in middle school and it is important to ensure that all learners have the same starting point before moving on to more complicated topics.

A level chemistry

Our students are entered for the AQA A level course. Students sit 3 exams at the end of year 13, and have their competency in practical work assessed throughout the 2 year course.

As AQA is the most widely-chosen Chemistry A-level exam board, we have access to plenty of online resources (ExamPro, TES) and examples for carrying out practicals with lots of supportive documents for exam preparation. As VGT is a practical assessor, we have access to a lot of the relevant up-to-date publications from AQA and she has received extra training which helps ensure students are assessed accurately.

The course is straight forward in the way the content progresses from one topic to another. The courses are easy to split between two and even three teachers which makes the delivery of the course simple and effective.

As content is easy to separate into individual stand alone units, teachers can 'mix and match' units to work on their specialisms/interests. The A level timelines are assigned by VGT to make sure that both teachers teach units they are comfortable and confident with. We also do a small amount of rotation of units year-to-year to make sure the resources are constantly checked and improved.

Why is it important that we teach this subject? – beyond 'it's on the specification'

What is the bigger rationale behind the subject?

What's magical about it? Can we articulate it?

What would they be missing out on if they weren't taught this subject?