ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (Higher)

What are the aims of this course?

The course aims to develop an awareness of the central position of environmental science in modern society by increasing knowledge and understanding of environmental issues, the impact these could have on society as well as possible solutions to these.
Environmental science aims to produce responsible citizens, through studying relevant areas such as the living environment, the Earth's resources and sustainability. Environmental scientists are involved in tackling issues such as global climate change, pollution, use of land and water resources and changes in wildlife habitats.

What are the recommended entry levels for this course?

Pupils would be expected to have gained a pass at National 5 Geography, Environmental Science and a Science subject. A pass at Higher level in Geography and/or Biology would also be accepted.

What content is included in this course?

There are three units in Higher Environmental Science:

- **Living Environment:** learners will consider the applications of the living environment on our lives, as well as the implications on society/the environment through the key areas of investigating ecosystems and biodiversity, interdependence, and human influences on biodiversity.

- **Earth's Resources:** In the geosphere learners will investigate resources under the surface of the Earth; in the hydrosphere water resources will be studied; soils and biofuels will be examined in the biosphere; and the atmosphere looks at wide and varied topics such as composition, heat transfer and climate zones.

- **Sustainability:** Sustainability and sustainable development will be analysed within both developed and developing countries using the contexts of food, water, energy and waste management.

What skills will I develop?

The course helps all pupils to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live, with necessary skills of enquiry, reasoning and evaluation, fieldwork methods such as observation and recording, land use mapping, small area sampling, plant and soil sampling, and the use of keys in identification of plants, insects, fish and invertebrates.

What learning and teaching approaches will I experience?

These involve a mix of class teaching, fieldwork, visits to local sites and, in addition, some experience of laboratory work. Frequent use is made of visual material including DVDs, videos, brochures and internet resources.

How will I be assessed?

Higher Environmental Science is assessed both internally and externally. Internal assessment will be continuous, in the form of unit outcomes. In June, candidates who have passed internal assessments sit an external national exam to assess breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding from across the mandatory units. Pupils will also have to complete a research assignment on a topic of their choosing.

What are the homework requirements?

Homework plays an important part in regular revision of key words and ideas, practice at exam-style questions and completion of class work. Students are expected to carry out individual research on relevant topics and present their findings to the class.

What are the possible progression routes?

A useful course for pupils wishing to follow a career in areas such as conservation, sustainability, waste management , land and water management and environmental consultancy; Higher Education courses in Geography, Biology and Environmental Science; or Higher Geography in S6.