



Dear Parents

July 2025

Subject choice for those entering Grade 8 in 2026

At Bishops the boys have to do a number of compulsory subjects. In addition, they need to choose one of two First Additional South African Languages and one of five electives from Creative Arts.

First Additional South African Language choice

Most boys will take Afrikaans as their first additional language, and some may opt for IsiXhosa as their first additional South African Language. There are some boys, who are immigrants, who have exemption from the first additional language requirement, and in most cases, they study French. Those boys would not take Creative Arts: French or Creative Art: IsiXhosa but would opt for one of the other courses. We require a decision about which first additional language your son will choose.

Creative Arts Choice

While some schools offer this as a broad arts subject, because we offer a number of arts and language subjects through to matric, we require an early choice of one of the subjects: French, IsiXhosa, Music, Visual Arts or Dramatic Arts. Please see page 3 to 5 for more detail about each course. French and IsiXhosa beginners can be accommodated. Please note the difference between Music I and Music 2.

The maximum number of boys that can be accommodated in any one course is 50, and if more than that apply, then boys will unfortunately have to be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. In the case of Music II, the maximum number of boys that can be accommodated is 24. While the associated subjects (not Music II) can be continued in Grade 10 and beyond, it is perfectly normal for a boy to take one for the richness of the learning opportunity and then not after Grade 9. We require a decision about which course your son will choose for Creative Arts.

Please indicate your preferences on the online form by 18 August 2025. [Click here](#)

If you have any queries or issues you would like to talk through, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in learning,

Michelle van Schalkwyk (Mrs)

DEPUTY HEAD: ACADEMIC

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**Details of Subjects in the General Education and Training Phase
(Grade 8) at Bishops**

ENGLISH (HOME LANGUAGE)	NATURAL SCIENCES – Science
(FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) AFRIKAANS Or ISIXHOSA	NATURAL SCIENCES – Biology
LIFE ORIENTATION	SOCIAL SCIENCES – History
MATHEMATICS	SOCIAL SCIENCES – Geography
TECHNOLOGY	ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
CREATIVE ARTS French (for beginners and also foreign students) or IsiXhosa or Visual Arts or Music or Dramatic Arts	CONVERSATIONAL ISIXHOSA/AFRIKAANS

CONVERSATIONAL ISIXHOSA/AFRIKAANS

Boys who take Afrikaans First Additional Language will, in addition to Afrikaans, have three lessons of Conversational IsiXhosa every two weeks. This does not preclude them from taking Creative Arts: IsiXhosa. Boys who take Afrikaans FAL, Creative Arts: IsiXhosa, also take Conversational isiXhosa. Boys who take IsiXhosa First Additional Language, will in addition to IsiXhosa, have three lessons of Conversational Afrikaans every two weeks. Boys who are exempt from offering a South African First Additional Language, because of their immigrant status will, in addition to French, will also need to choose one of the Conversational languages referred to above. These courses will cover basic communication and cultural nuances of each language.

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CREATIVE ARTS

Grades 8

At Bishops the subject, Creative Arts, is divided into four separate courses and all pupils have to choose one of them:

Visual Arts, Dramatic Arts, French, IsiXhosa or Music.

Visual Arts, Dramatic Arts, French, IsiXhosa and Music 1 may be continued to Grade 12, but Music II is only offered through to Grade 9. Below is a short explanation of what the pupils can expect in each course: if further details are required, please approach the staff member indicated. While it is possible to change course during the two years, this is ill advised because it limits the richness of the experience since most boys do not take these subjects to Matric.

VISUAL ARTS:

The Grade 8 boys are introduced to the formal elements: line, tone, texture, shape and colour, and also to a variety of visual arts disciplines and techniques. These include drawing, painting and sculpture.

In Grade 9, practical projects focus initially on perspective, both linear and atmospheric, explored using both drawing and painting techniques. The focus in the second half of the year is on depicting the human form and portraiture.

There is a practical examination for both Grades 8 and 9 (either painting or drawing) in May/June and in November, and this provides an important indicator of the level attained in the course. The overall mark for both mid-year and in November is derived from coursework (60%), with the practical examination counting for the other 40%.

Using a sketchbook is an integral part of the course, and regular homework assignments provide the boys with opportunities to practise their drawing skills and to explore key concepts and principles of visual arts. The outline of course content for each term can be found on the Bishops Visual Arts intranet site.

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DRAMATIC ARTS:

This course seeks to develop critical thinking, and to hone the skills needed to work collaboratively, creatively and confidently, while developing an appreciation for the dramatic arts.

At Grade 8 level, the learners are introduced to: basic warm-up techniques; improvisation; African folktales; physical theatre; performance spaces; workshop theatre; praise poetry; scriptwriting and performance; comedy, tragedy and mime; dance composition and the research and performance of a monologue.

The Grade 9 course expands on the previous year's experiences by including: performance mechanics; a study of Elizabethan theatre; Slam poetry; stereotypes and stock characters; ritual, ceremony and symbol; an appreciation and analysis of film; characterisation and dialogues; dance composition and the research and performance of a monologue.

Continuous Assessment is based on both practical and theoretical applications, and a formal practical and theory exam at the culmination of each semester.

Wayne Tucker wtucker@bishops.org.za

FRENCH:

This course enables boys to be exposed to the second most spoken language in Africa and is beneficial for their possible future interactions with French-speaking individuals in all walks of life, from the business world to university and beyond.

A communicative approach is used, supported by a textbook with CDs, the use of computer technology and online websites, in order to give the learners, the necessary language skills. They get exposed to French culture, its geography and way of life through songs and presentations.

In Grade 8, the topics covered include (but are not limited to): greetings, numbers, family, animals, clothes, school, time, likes and dislikes, giving personal information.

The Grade 9 course expands on the previous year's content and continues to use computer technology for the boys to practise and to produce their work. The topics covered include, holidays and travel, shopping, ordering food and drinks, leisure activities, recounting events in the past, present and future tenses.

Our exams sessions include a French written exam and an oral exam. Our pupils are also regularly evaluated throughout the year.

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IsiXHOSA:

Our studies in Xhosa are designed to enable scholars to: acquire the language skills necessary to communicate appropriately; focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing; use IsiXhosa as a language and at the same time learn about the culture of the 'Amaxhosa'; learn more about the traditional 'lintsomi' (short stories) as part of literature.

Boys develop vocabulary, learn how to form sentences and eventually write shorter paragraphs and dialogues. Emphasis is on a relaxed environment to encourage boys to be listening, speaking, reading as well as writing IsiXhosa with confidence and enjoyment. From the third term Grade 8s use laptops to create advertisements and flyers as well as homework assignments such as dialogues and picture labelling.

The Grade 9 course expands on the previous year's content and continues to use computer technology for the boys to practise and produce their work. The topics covered include physical descriptions, holidays, shopping, ordering food and drinks, leisure activities.

A formal written exam and an oral exam are undertaken at the end of each year while regular evaluation takes place during lesson times.

IsiXhosa as an Additional Language is offered at Bishops to Matric. It will give each and every boy the ability and opportunity to communicate in IsiXhosa, not only in the Western Cape, but in so many other beautiful parts of our country.

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MUSIC:

Music 1

Is available to pupils who are learning an instrument. There is a practical and a theoretical component. The theoretical component is made up of theory, aural and Music in Practice.

Practical:

Pupils will be required to have a 1-hour lesson (or 2 half-hour lessons) a week on their instrument (30 minutes for voice lessons). This is charged at 50% of the normal rate for music lessons.

Most pupils are of a grade 3 level in music in grade 8, but we are happy to accept pupils of a grade 1 level as well.

Theory:

The classes are streamed according to the music grade level reached. We aim to get boys to write the ABRSM grade 5 theory exam in their grade 9 year.

Aural:

This includes ear training as well as music appreciation in the form of listening.

Music in Practice:

Various modules are presented throughout the year on such topics as How to practice, performance anxiety, African music, Jazz.

Music in Practice also includes Sound Production - pupils learn to use a Digital Audio Workstation to compose music and will learn the basics of Sound Production.

Modules range from Classical Music to Pop and beyond.

Practical and written exams take place in June and November; the practical exam counts 50% of the total mark and pupils will be examined on scales, sight reading and repertoire. Continuous assessment is ongoing throughout the year.

If you choose Music 1 as an elective you need to complete the [Music 1 Application Form](#).

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Music 2:

No previous practical experience is necessary, and pupils will not need to have individual practical music lessons.

The course focusses on General Music Appreciation which is often broken up into modules. Examples of some of the modules covered are elements of music, music in video games, music in the movies, music history, Project-based learning, and different styles of music.

Music technology is also included – pupils learn to use a Digital Audio Workstation to compose music and will learn the basics of Sound Production.

A written exam takes place in June and November. Continuous assessment is ongoing throughout the year.

A maximum of 24 boys can be accepted for this course, and selection will be on a first-come-first-served basis.

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