



## GCSE Classical Civilisation

### OCR J280

The Classics department believes that the education of all pupils at Bedford School can be further enhanced, supported and enriched by learning about the classical world, even in the most general sense. Classical Civilisation GCSE provides pupils with an opportunity to study the archaeology, art, literature, politics, social history, religion and philosophy of the Classical Greek and Roman worlds. It is particularly suitable for boys who have an interest in finding out more about the ancient world and who possess relatively strong skills in English and History. Students will study two Civilisation topics and two Literature topics over the two year course.

In the Civilisation topics, students will examine important aspects of Greek and Roman life and society by studying primary source material from the ancient world and drawing conclusions from the evidence about why these customs developed, what they meant to the Greeks and Romans and to what extent the ancient world has influenced modern society. The Civilisation topics currently taught to GCSE are City Life in Rome (Religion, Entertainment, Life in the Home and Education) and Community Life in Sparta (Social, Military and Political Structure, Military and Cultural Achievements, Education of Boys and Women).

The Literature topics consist of the detailed study of one Greek and one Roman text in translation. The aim is to gain a knowledge, appreciation and understanding of some of the major works which have fascinated generations of readers and influenced countless later writers. At present pupils study Homer's *Odyssey* (the epic story of the Greek hero's adventures as he journeys to return to his homeland after the Trojan War) and then complete a written assignment of their choice under controlled supervision on Virgil's *Aeneid* (the Roman national epic telling the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas' adventures as he journeys to Italy after the Trojan War on a divine mission).

The four units of study are explained below in more detail:

#### **(Unit A351) City Life in the Classical World: Rome**

What drove such a civilised and advanced race of Romans not only to idolise a set of anthropomorphic and immoral gods but also to put their enemies to death in the arena for their ultimate pleasure? Pupils will study aspects of religion, education, the home and entertainment to learn what life was really like for slaves, citizens and Emperors in the capital city of the vast Roman Empire, and uncover the ruthlessness of power & politics in society at the heart of what made Rome so great.

### **(Unit A352) Epic & Myth: Homer's *Odyssey***

Homer's *Odyssey* is considered as one of the most important works of Western European literature. With a focus on understanding the cultural and social context of the Heroic Age, pupils will undertake a critical study of 6 selected books, showing your knowledge and evaluation of the plot, characterisation, narrative and descriptive techniques. Assess whether Homer's gods, heroes and villains, as well as his storytelling and plotlines, are just as dramatic, entertaining and relevant today as they were in classical times.

### **(Unit A353) Community Life in the Classical World: Sparta**

Why do we still admire Sparta for being the most successful fighting force in the Classical World? Pupils will study aspects of their community life, such as the social and political structure, education of boys and role of women, military organisation and heroism on the battlefield, in order to discover not only what enabled the Spartans to maintain its social and military ideals, but also whether their methods were really admirable or not.

### **(Unit A354) Controlled Assessment: Culture and Society in the Classical World: Virgil's *Aeneid***

The story of the Trojan hero Aeneas' journey from Troy to Italy on a divine mission to found a new race and city whose empire will know no boundaries, Virgil's *Aeneid* is the first national literary epic in Western literature, commissioned by Augustus, to celebrate Rome's divine origins, leaders, glory and destiny. With a focus on understanding the cultural, social and moral context of the Augustan regime in 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC, pupils will undertake research and written analysis under controlled supervision, showing their knowledge and evaluation of one of the prescribed key themes. Students could be assessing Virgil's characterisation of Aeneas as the ultimate proto-Roman hero; or appreciating the roles of gods, mortals and fate in aiding or blocking Aeneas' mission, or analyzing what influence Virgil's epic tribute to Rome has had on Western Literature, and whether his storytelling techniques are just as dramatic, entertaining and relevant today as they were in Roman times.