



Year 9 Options Booklet

A guide to the subject courses available to Year 10 and 11 students.

inclusivity

intellect

integrity

inspiration



Bridgewater
School

Introduction

The options process

Making good choices

The transition into Key Stage 4 marks an important and exciting milestone. It is a time when young people begin to shape their future pathways and develop greater independence in their learning.

We want every student to approach this stage with confidence and optimism, inspired to explore their interests, stretch their intellectual curiosity and believe in their ability to succeed. As they progress towards their GCSE examinations, students are supported in making choices that will open doors to a wide range of future opportunities, whether within our Sixth Form or beyond.

At the heart of Key Stage 4 is a commitment to high expectations, strong values and personal growth. Academic success is built through perseverance and pride in learning, and we encourage all students to develop good study habits, effective revision skills and engage fully with their subjects in order to develop the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.

Choosing subjects is an important and sometimes challenging process, and we aim to guide each and every students through this with care, honesty and integrity. Our inclusive approach ensures that every student feels valued and supported, and that choices reflect their individual strengths, interests and aspirations. Working closely with parents and staff, we can ensure that decisions are both well-informed and made in the best interests of each young person.

We look forward to supporting our students as they move through the school and towards their future successes.

Here to support you...

It is important not to become over-anxious about choosing your options; it is unlikely that you will do anything that will significantly spoil your future opportunities, because we will take care to ensure that you keep a balance of subjects.

Compulsory and optional subjects

Core subjects

All students follow a core curriculum of compulsory subjects during Key Stage 4:

- **English Language and English Literature** (GCSE)
- **Mathematics** (GCSE)
- **Sciences** (GCSE)
 - There are three GCSE Science pathways to choose from: Combined Science (single iGCSE), Double Science (2 GCSEs) or Triple Science (3 GCSEs)
 - Double and Triple Science are separate subjects (Biology / Chemistry / Physics)
- **Physical Education** (non-examined)
- **PSHCE**

Science pathways

Your Science pathway will dictate how many optional subjects you can choose.

Pathway 1: Combined Science

Step 1 ⇨ Choose 5 optional subjects

Pathway 2: Double Science

Step 1 ⇨ Select 2 individual sciences from Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Step 2 ⇨ Choose 4 optional subjects

Pathway 3: Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

Step 1 ⇨ Choose 3 optional subjects

Optional subjects

- Art & Design
- Business Studies
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- History
- ICT
- Music
- Physical Education (examined)
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

It is important that you do not focus too heavily on one subject group and maintain a good balance of GCSE subjects. This will help to ensure that you have a broad educational experience and keep your options open for Sixth Form study and Higher Education should you choose to follow that path. Your teachers will be able to give you advice and guidance on this.

A good balance of options is likely to include a Modern Foreign Language, a humanities subject such as History, Geography and Religious Studies, as well as a creative subject such as Art, Design & Technology, Music or Drama.

Think about the way a subject will be assessed – will you have essays to write, research assignments or presentations to make? Speak to your teachers and make sure each subject will bring out the best in you.

Careers

Opening the door to opportunity

We want you to be able to choose whatever career path interests you and to have the necessary qualifications, determination and ambition to realise your aspirations.

Whilst there are still compulsory subjects in the GCSE curriculum, this is the first time that you have a real element of choice about which subjects to study for GCSE.

We hope that you will keep an open mind and choose the subjects which you enjoy and about which you are passionate; these are usually the ones at which you are most successful. An excellent set of GCSE grades will open doors for you later in life, but we also want you to stand out from the crowd and develop your full potential as an individual. Your extra-curricular participation is an essential part of this and you must make sure you get involved both in and out of school.

You may be concerned about choosing the right GCSE subjects for your future career, but this should not worry you at this stage – the essential subjects for most careers or courses are covered by the core GCSEs. The only exception to this is if you have a specialist interest in, for example, Music or Art, or if you may wish to study one of the option subjects at university. In these cases you should choose to take the relevant subject at GCSE.

It is at this stage of your academic journey that you need to become aware of the skills you are gaining from all of your subjects. Your future career will probably be varied and will depend as much on the variety of your skills as much as your particular speciality. Employers are looking for motivated, articulate and intelligent employees with the following skills:

- Good communication and team working skills
- Confidence in making presentations
- Numeracy
- Familiarity with ICT
- The skills of discussion and debate
- Good writing techniques
- Competency in evaluation and analysis

You should be able to work effectively in a group and also on your own, showing the ability to manage your time well and make the most of your ability.

It is important to bear in mind that, along with the facts you learn through school subjects, a wider range of other essential skills is also being acquired.

Ultimately, the final decisions should be yours. You will be doing the exams, assignments, research and controlled assessments – and nobody else!

Please note: *The option blocks change each year to reflect the balance of choices made by each individual cohort. We will endeavour to accommodate everybody's preferred choices but we will speak to individual students if we need to use one of your reserve choices. Once the option blocks have been set, no further changes can be made unless they can be accommodated within those blocks.*

English Language

Examination Board: Edexcel

GCSE English is a compulsory subject for all Year 11 pupils at Bridgewater School, except those from overseas who are offered courses in English as a Second Language. A good command of the spoken and written word is invaluable for your future, whatever you choose to do.

Course content

English Language is a course which assesses reading skills, exploring a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, in addition to developing both imaginative and transactional writing skills. The department is lively and dynamic, offering a high level of individual support, as well as focused revision sessions, to ensure that each student achieves their potential. Staff take into account the learning needs and styles of all pupils as well as choosing the texts they teach to ensure they are both accessible and of interest to the students.

Useful information

A Grade 4 in English Language is essential for further studies. Students who have not gained a Grade 4 must resit English alongside their A Level subjects.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Component 1: Written examination	Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section A: Non-fiction texts – study and analyse selections from a range of non-fiction texts. Section B: Transactional Writing – explore and develop transactional writing skills. 	End of Year 11	60
Component 2:	Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing (coursework). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment A: Poetry and Prose Texts – study and analyse selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts. Assignment B: Imaginative Writing – explore and develop imaginative writing skills. 	Coursework submission in May of Year 11	40

Careers

English Language is a must-have subject for university and a qualification required by most employers. Career options are extensive and varied, from journalism and law, PR to scriptwriting, and everything in between!

English Literature

Examination Board: Edexcel

GCSE English is a compulsory subject for all Year 11 pupils at Bridgewater School, except those from overseas who are offered courses in English as a Second Language. Most GCSE candidates take both English Language and English Literature at Bridgewater.

Course content

English Literature offers a wider range of literary studies, including contemporary and literary heritage texts. During the course, pupils will study a range of topics including Shakespeare, modern drama and prose, as well as poetry from the 18th Century through to the present day. To enhance students' knowledge and interest in literature, we arrange theatre visits and attend workshops, lectures and poetry readings.

Useful information

To do well you need to understand key themes of each text, appreciate how writers use language to convey their ideas, and demonstrate an awareness of the contextual circumstances in which texts were produced and received.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Component 1: Written examination	Poetry and Modern Prose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A: Unseen Poetry • Section B: Anthology Poetry • Section C: Modern Prose 	End of Year 11	60
Component 3:	Modern Drama and Literary Heritage texts (coursework). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment A: Modern Drama • Assignment B: Literary Heritage / Shakespeare 	Coursework submission in May of Year 11	40

Careers

English Literature skills open doors in several areas and is a must-have subject for college, university and work. Potential careers include author, actor, politician, teacher, newsreader, journalist etc.



Mathematics

Examination Board: Edexcel

Mathematics is one of the fundamental subjects underpinning all sciences and technology. Maths enables students to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, which will be of use outside of study and can also help in other subjects.

Course content

GCSE Mathematics involves the study of arithmetical topics such as computation, approximation, measurement and personal finances, as well as ratio, which leads on to work involving scale drawing, similar objects and Pythagoras.

The course covers the geometry of 2D and 3D shapes and calculating associated angles, lengths, areas and volumes. Students will continue to develop skills in interpreting and presenting information in graphical and statistical form applied to different situations and in solving problems involving probability.

Algebra is the language of Mathematics and links all the topics in the course. Students will improve their

knowledge of its power and the ability to use it with increasing confidence and expertise to communicate and prove mathematical solutions.

Useful information

To do well you need to work logically, showing a clear understanding and apply methods in order to solve problems. You will also need to display proficiency in non-calculator skills.

A Grade 4 in Mathematics is essential for further study. Students who have not gained a Grade 4 must resit Mathematics alongside their A Level subjects.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Unit 1: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper: non-calculator	End of Year 11
Unit 2: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper: calculator allowed	End of Year 11
Unit 3: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper: calculator allowed	End of Year 11

Careers

A GCSE qualification in Maths will be of interest to all employers and educational institutions. Potential careers include banking, engineering, medicine and a multitude within technical and scientific industries.

Biology

Examination Board: AQA

All students will study the Sciences at GCSE during Years 10 and 11 - either as Combined Science or separate subjects. GCSE Biology provides students with a firm background from which to go on to study this at A Level.

Course content

The GCSE specification covers a broad range of topics allowing students to develop their understanding of the key concepts of Biology which include:

1. Cell biology
2. Organisation
3. Infection and response
4. Bioenergetics
5. Homeostasis and response
6. Inheritance, variation and evolution
7. Ecology.

Assessment

There is a strong focus on practical skills throughout the GCSE Biology course with students undertaking a range of required practicals and other experiments allowing them to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. This enables students to develop key observational, analytical and evaluative skills which support a range of other subjects for GCSE and beyond.

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 1-4 above	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 5-7 above	End of Year 11	50

Useful information

The complex and diverse phenomena of the natural world underpin the key ideas in Biology. From life processes to interdependence of living organisms and their interaction with the environment, Biology provides the foundations for understanding the material world.

Careers

Careers include marine biologist, occupational health therapist, doctor, physiotherapist, veterinary nurse, dentist, optician, forensic scientist, etc.



Chemistry

Examination Board: AQA

All students will study the Sciences at GCSE during Years 10 and 11 - either as Combined Science or separate subjects. GCSE Chemistry provides students with a firm background from which to go on to study this at A Level.

Course content

The GCSE specification covers a broad range of topics allowing students to develop their understanding of the key concepts of Chemistry which include:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
2. Bonding, structure and the properties of matter
3. Quantitative chemistry
4. Chemical changes
5. Energy changes
6. The rate and extent of chemical change
7. Organic chemistry
8. Chemical analysis
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere
10. Using resources.

Assessment

There is a strong focus on practical skills throughout the GCSE Chemistry course with students undertaking a range of required practicals and other experiments allowing them to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. This enables students to develop key observational, analytical and evaluative skills which support a range of other subjects for GCSE and beyond.

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 1-5 above	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 6-10 above	End of Year 11	50

Useful information

The key ideas in Chemistry range from the nature and properties of matter, to the variety of chemical reactions that can occur. GCSE Chemistry will help students develop curiosity about the natural world, insight into how science works and an appreciation of its relevance to their everyday lives.

Careers

Potential careers include chemist, food tester, doctor, pharmacist, food scientist, nurse and chemical engineer.



Physics

Examination Board: AQA

All students will study the Sciences at GCSE during Years 10 and 11 - either as Combined Science or separate subjects. GCSE Physics provides students with a firm background from which to go on to study this at A Level.

Course content

The GCSE specification covers a broad range of topics allowing students to develop their understanding of the key concepts of Physics which include:

1. Energy
2. Electricity
3. Particle model of matter
4. Atomic structure
5. Forces
6. Waves
7. Magnetism and electromagnetism
8. Space physics.

Useful information

Physics sets out to explore the physical processes that explain the world around us. Key ideas of modelling, cause and effect and the phenomena of action at a distance are considered, and students will be able to express physical laws and models in mathematical form.

Assessment

There is a strong focus on practical skills throughout the GCSE Physics course with students undertaking a range of required practicals and other experiments allowing them to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. This enables students to develop key observational, analytical and evaluative skills which support a range of other subjects for GCSE and beyond.

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 1-4 above	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on topics 5-8 above	End of Year 11	50

Careers

Potential careers include astronomer, aviation, architect, electrician, nuclear technician, physicist, sound engineer, teacher and video editor.



Science (Single Award)

Examination Board: Edexcel

All students will study the Sciences at GCSE during Years 10 and 11 - either as Combined Science or separate subjects. Students may choose to select Single Award iGCSE Science. This gives students the opportunity to study elements across the three sciences without the extended demands of the double or triple science awards.

Course content

Students will cover the fundamental concepts of each subject whilst studying the iGCSE Single Science award.

Biology

1. The nature and variety of living organisms
2. Structures and functions in living organisms
3. Reproduction and inheritance
4. Ecology and the environment
5. Use of biological resources

Chemistry

1. Principles of chemistry
2. Inorganic chemistry
3. Physical chemistry
4. Organic chemistry

Physics

1. Force and Motion
2. Electricity
3. Waves
4. Energy resources and energy transfers
5. Solids, liquids and gases
6. Magnetism and electromagnetism
7. Radioactivity and particles
8. Astrophysics

Useful information

The Single Science option allows students to learn about unifying patterns and themes in science and use them in new and changing situations. Students will acquire knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts and principles and apply them to a range of contexts.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Paper 1: Written examination	1hr 10mins written paper on the Biology content	End of Year 11	33.3
Paper 2: Written examination	1hr 10mins written paper on the Chemistry content	End of Year 11	33.3
Paper 3: Written examination	1hr 10mins written paper on the Physics content	End of Year 11	33.3

Careers

Studying Science helps develop key transferable skills sought by all employers. Science specific careers include engineering, biomedical sciences, forensics, technicians, research and consultancy.

Art & Design

Examination Board: AQA

If you enjoy Art and want to develop your skills and learn more about artists and designers, this GCSE course is for you. Gain the ability to investigate, research, experiment and create, using a variety of visual techniques such as painting, printing, weaving, collage, sculpting, photography and more. Boasting a 100% pass rate for the last ten years, our exam results are excellent, with students consistently achieving A*-C or 9-5 grades. Students also have the opportunity to enter local art competitions such as LivingEdge and the ISA.

Course content

In Year 10 you will work on three assignments and will explore a variety of ways of working e.g. pencil, pen and ink, pastel, collage etc.

In the second year of the course you will continue to build on the skills you have gained, with the opportunity to explore more personal ideas.

Useful information

All Art Department resources are available to students at lunchtime if required, however it is recommended that you acquire a good set of drawing pencils and possibly watercolour paints for homework tasks.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Component 1: Portfolio	An exhibition of your work will be assessed by both Art staff and an external moderator. This will consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 assignments which represent your best work.	At the end of your course (May)	60
Component 2: Externally set task	You will choose 1 assignment from a number of questions offered by the Board. You will then have a set period of time to research and prepare, before producing a 'Final Piece' under examination conditions.	2 day task, completed in a total of 10 hours (Apr)	40

Careers

There are numerous careers in the field of Art & Design such as architecture, marketing, interior design, fashion, illustration, animation, graphic design, textiles, photography and film.



Business Studies

Examination Board: Edexcel

Business Studies is an exciting and fast-moving subject which explores different business contexts ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts. Students take part in simulated business situations in order to give them the opportunity to put the theory into practice.

Course content

Topics studied in the new syllabus include:

Theme 1: Investigating small business

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting a business idea into practice
- Making the business effective
- External influences on business.

Theme 2: Building a business

- Growing the business
- Making marketing decisions
- Making operational decisions
- Making financial decisions
- Making human resource decisions.

Lessons incorporate business events in the news to explain the topic being taught. This enables the lessons to be kept lively and related to what is happening in the world.

Lessons are often a mixture of instruction, discussion, video clips, business case studies and reviews of topical business events in the news.

Useful information

Enrichment opportunities:

Enterprise Club – students are encouraged to set up their own business and sell their products / services.

Student Investor Challenge – Competition involving teams investing a virtual £100,000 on the London Stock Exchange. Students must keep their portfolios healthy, following the market and judging when to buy and sell.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45mins written paper on Theme 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A – Calculations and short-answer questions (35 marks) • Section B – Case study with questions (30 marks) • Section C – Case study with questions (25 marks) 	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1hr 45mins written paper on Theme 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A – Calculations and short-answer questions (35 marks) • Section B – Case study with questions (30 marks) • Section C – Case study with questions (25 marks) 	End of Year 11	50

Careers

Related areas include accountancy, management, marketing, sales, HR, operations and customer service.

Design & Technology

Examination Board: Cambridge

Design and technology gives young people the skills and abilities to engage positively with the designed and made world and to harness the benefits of technology. The course enables learners to identify, consider and solve problems through creative thinking, planning and design, and by working with different media, materials and tools to produce a made product.

Students gain technical and design awareness and develop skills such as initiative, resourcefulness, enquiry and ingenuity. They also develop the communication skills central to the design process.

Course content

Students will learn how products and systems are designed and manufactured, how to be innovative and make creative use of a variety of resources, including digital technologies, to improve the world around them.

Useful information

Students will need:

- A good level of sketching and creativity
- Good maths skills for problem-solving
- A high level of organisational skills to respond to deadlines for coursework

Assessment

The GCSE is a single qualification. Both the exams and controlled assessment will be completed in Year 11. Year 10 will be used to learn theoretical topics and complete a practice controlled assessment.

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Paper 1: Written / drawing examination	1 hour 15min written / drawing paper. Questions will be based on the Common content: Product Design. Answer one question.	End of Year 11	25
Paper 3: Written examination	1 hour written paper. Questions will be based on the Specialist option: Resistant Materials content and the Common content: Product Design.	End of Year 11	25
Component 2: Controlled assessment Internally assessed and externally moderated	To be completed over two terms. Each candidate must complete an individual project. Candidates should produce a folder of work and a made product.	Across Years 10 and 11	50

Careers

D&T opens the door to a wide range of careers within the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Whatever career you choose, the knowledge and skills, particularly those concerned with rapidly developing technologies, will be extremely valuable. You will also develop skills such as teamwork and time management which are highly prized by employers.

Drama

Examination Board: AQA

Drama offers students the opportunity to explore a range of creative and critical thinking skills. It also engages and encourages them to become imaginative and confident performers and designers. You will learn to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, think analytically and evaluate effectively. Emerging with a toolkit of transferable skills, applicable in further studies and in the workplace.

Course content

Students explore Drama as a practical art form in which idea and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. Students will be introduced to key practitioners, theoretical influences and influential playwrights, whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills.

In the practical components, students may specialise in performing, lighting, sound, set, costume and / or puppets.



Useful information

Insight into industry

During the two year GCSE, students will visit a variety of theatre venues to watch and review live productions. As well as being essential for their exam preparation, these activities will engage them in new and enriching cultural experiences and develop their understanding of how what they learn in the classroom works in the real world.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45 mins written paper on 'Understanding Drama'	End of Year 11	40
Unit 2: Practical & Coursework	Coursework portfolio on 'Devising Drama', which includes practical performance	Completed in Year 10	40
Unit 3: Performance	Performance demonstrating 'Texts in Practice'. Students may choose both the text and contributing as performer or designer	End of Year 11	20

Careers

Drama gives young people the chance to develop fundamental life skills which are essential for virtually any career. Students of the subject take a variety of career paths including working in the performing arts, media, TV, teaching and training, social and community work, law, drama therapy and politics.

Geography

Examination Board: AQA

Geography provides students with an excellent understanding of the world around them and the challenges faced by communities and the environment as we look ahead to the future. Skills developed include communication, technology, literacy and numeracy, problem-solving and interpersonal skills through debate and discussion.

Course content

The GCSE Geography course covers a wide range of physical and human topics such as the living world, natural hazards, urban change, sustainability and resource management.

Assessment

Exams take place at the end of Year 11 incorporating a mix of multiple choice, short answer, structured and extended writing questions. Students are also assessed on fieldwork during the final examination.

Useful information

Students will undertake at least two fieldwork studies away from school in physical and human Geography. This is an essential aspect of Geography and will give you the opportunity to relate your learning to real experiences of the world.

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper on 'Living with the Physical Environment': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A - The challenge of natural hazards • Section B - Physical landscapes of the UK • Section C - The living world 	End of Year 11	35
Unit 2: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper on 'Challenges in the Human Environment': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A - Urban challenges • Section B - The changing economic world • Section C - The challenge of resource management 	End of Year 11	35
Unit 3: Written examination and fieldwork	1 hour written paper on 'Geographical Applications': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A - Issue evaluation • Section B - Hypothetical fieldwork • Section C - Independent fieldwork 	End of Year 11	35

Careers

Physical systems – hydrologist, weather forecaster, earth scientist,
Geographical techniques – surveyor, cartographer, location analyst
Development & global issues – economic advisor and analyst
Tourism & culture – travel writer, heritage site manager
Environment – civil servant for DEFRA, conservation worker
Place policies – housing manager, town planner, urban regeneration



History

Examination Board: OCR

History is an exciting and interesting subject with great relevance in helping you to understand the origins of the modern world. It will help you to develop your ability to research, analyse, argue logically, think and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of material that is presented to you, developing lifelong skills that employers are looking for in their workforce.

Course content

The examinations will cover a range of periods, allowing you to study a broad sweep of History and understand how it has had an impact on our lives today. Opportunity to study range of topics including:

International Relations 1918-91: looking at the work of the League of Nations, rise of Hitler and the Cold War.

Thematic Study of War & Society: from the Vikings to the war in Afghanistan, this explores themes of conquest, defence, religion and civil wars.

British Depth Study of the Civil War & Restoration 1629-1660: the social, political and religious tensions that led to Charles I being executed

Depth Study of USA 1919-48: social history topics eg Prohibition, Hollywood and Great Depression.

Study of the Historic Environment: A study of Kenilworth Castle and how it has changed over the years.

Useful information

Our results are always extremely impressive with cohorts often achieving 100% pass rates and high levels of 6-9 grades. 70% of the cohort achieved this last year. Many of our students go on to study History at A level and at university. Students, overall, consistently achieve 'significant positive added value' from having studied History at Bridgewater.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45mins written paper on 'International Relations and the USA'	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1 hour written paper on 'The British Thematic Study'	End of Year 11	25
Unit 3: Written examination	1hr 15mins written paper on 'The British Depth Study and the Historical Environment Option'	End of Year 11	25

Careers

Many employers see our subject as being one of the most valuable in terms of the skills that learners develop. Many famous people have studied History, ranging from ex-Prime Ministers to the Head of MI5!



ICT

Examination Board: Edexcel

In an increasingly digital world, ICT provides students with an opportunity to acquire useful and practical skills needed in further education and work that will enable them to thrive.

Course content

The content and assessment approach for the ICT GCSE has been designed to meet students' needs. Pupils will learn about topics ranging from digital devices and connectivity, to safe and responsible practice, and understand the impact of the internet on the way that organisations do business. They will gain knowledge and understanding of ICT, developing skills to apply that learning to produce ICT-based solutions and will be encouraged to practice using software applications effectively.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1.5 hour written paper on 'Living in a Digital World': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 1 – Digital devices • Topic 2 – Connectivity • Topic 3 – Operating online • Topic 4 – Online goods and services 	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Practical examination	3 hour practical exam on 'Using Digital Tools'. Candidates apply the knowledge and understanding acquired in all topics to produce ICT-based solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 5 – Applying ICT • Topic 6 – Software skills 	End of Year 11	50

Useful information

Students can access the ICT suite at lunchtime or after school via the Homework Club, however it is also useful to have Microsoft Office software available on a computer at home.

ICT is an International GCSE, taught in over 55 countries and recognised worldwide.

Careers

ICT develops important skills such as data handling, analysis and evaluation, and software usage which are transferable and useful for a wide range of jobs. Many employers now have expectations of digital awareness and ICT capabilities, requiring individuals who possess a solid understanding of the subject and its related technologies.



Modern Foreign Languages

French and/or Spanish

Examination Board: AQA

Learning a foreign language is not only useful for future career prospects, but also makes travelling abroad later in life a far more rewarding experience and allows you to appreciate other cultures, in other countries. People qualified in any subject who are able to speak at least one foreign language will be in increasing demand as the workplace expands both economically and geographically.

Course content

Throughout the course we aim to develop the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing. The principle objective is to enable students of all abilities to develop their MFL skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.

During Years 10 and 11, topics will be covered within the following broad contexts:

- Theme 1** – People and lifestyle
- Theme 2** – Popular culture
- Theme 3** – Communication and the world around us

Assessment

Assessment takes place at either Foundation level (grade 1-5) or Higher level (grade 3-9).

PAPER	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Paper 1: Written examination	Written paper Listen to and understand vocabulary & grammar	End of Year 11	25
Paper 2: Oral assessment	Oral examination Oral assessment based on visual stimuli	Apr / May Year 11	25
Paper 3: Reading examination	Reading examination Understand & respond to vocabulary & grammar	End of Year 11	25
Paper 4: Written examination	Written examination Use of stimuli to initiate written response	End of Year 11	25

Class activities may include oral work, role-plays, listening to audio material, watching interactive video material, written exercises, grammar work etc. In addition there will be the opportunity to work on MFL software in the ICT suites and use online software alongside the course textbook.

Useful information

All students are highly advised to study a foreign language. If you wish to study two, they will need to be selected as two option choices. Anyone intending to specialise in languages post-16 is strongly advised to study both French and Spanish at GCSE, although this is not essential.

Careers

Competence in a foreign language is an increasingly important and often essential qualification in many areas of employment including banking, telecommunications, marketing, travel, interpreting, teaching, hotel & catering, the Civil Service, Armed Forces etc. It is also possible to combine a foreign language with another subject at degree level (eg Law, Economics etc). This allows for greater flexibility in the ever-growing multilingual job market.

Music

Examination Board: EDUQAS

A GCSE Music qualification demonstrates to a university or employer that you have more than just academic ability. Music is a creative skill that will not only train your ear and enable you to understand and develop composition ideas, it also improves your thinking and problem-solving skills.

Course content

Across the course, students will develop their ability in performing, composing, listening and appraising.

Useful information

It is compulsory that you have instrumental / voice lessons on your principle instrument during the course and practice regularly as 30% is performance-based. Grade 3 standard or equivalent is recommended when starting the course. Ensure you are in an extra-curricular ensemble as this will help your technique and awareness of others when performing in a group. We also suggest you listen to a wide variety of music genres.

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Non-exam assessment - Performance	A minimum of 2 pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance. The other may be either solo or ensemble. One of the pieces must link to an area of study of the learner's choice	Coursework	30
Unit 2: Non-exam assessment - Composing	Delivery of 2 compositions, one of which must be in response to the brief set by the Board. The second is a free composition for which learners set their own brief	Coursework (briefs released start of Year 11)	30
Unit 3: Listening / written examination - Appraising	Listening exam (1hr 15mins) on 'Understanding Music'. Comprising 8 questions, 2 on each of the 4 areas of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical forms and devices • Music for ensemble • Film music • Popular music 	End of Year 11	40

Careers

Music can provide an important foundation for many career paths such as music producer, musician, performer, composer, music therapist and teacher, amongst others.

PE

Examination Board: Cambridge

iGCSE PE is a stepping stone to further sports-related courses such as teaching, sports-science, leisure management, psychology, physiotherapy and medicine, with all the exciting possibilities that would follow.

Course content

The syllabus provides learners with an opportunity to study both the practical and theoretical aspects of physical education. It is designed to encourage enjoyment in physical activity by providing learners with an opportunity to take part in a range of physical activities and develop an understanding of effective and safe physical performance. This helps learners to develop an appreciation of the necessity for sound understanding of the principles, practices and training that underpin improved performance, better health and well-being.

Useful information

Check the practical activities that can be assessed to make sure that you can play to your strengths. You need to perform the skills in each activity consistently and be competitively involved in your chosen activities. This means clubs outside of school or playing for school teams.

Assessment

You will have 5 teaching periods of 1 hour over a fortnight. These will be split into practical and theory sessions. In the practical sessions you will perform team and individual activities. For students who have a strength in a particular sport which, for practical reasons, cannot be offered in school (such as equestrian), you will be expected to collate video evidence to demonstrate your skills and perform in a fully competitive situation. **Students are expected to compete competitively on a regular basis in at least one sport and commit to attending extra-curricular sports clubs in school.**

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Component 1: Written examination	Written paper (1hr 45mins)	End of Year 11	50
Component 2: Practical element	Performance in four physical activities (from at least two activity areas).	Assessed throughout	50

Careers

There are a wide range of careers open to you after this subject, including many areas of sports administration, teaching, development officer, various roles in the fitness and leisure industry, coaching or pursuing an interest in sports science.

Religious Studies

Examination Board: Edexcel

The study of Religious Studies provides the opportunity for students to develop an awareness of the world around them and insight into current and past world events. With this comes an understanding of complex issues, including those of an ethical and religious nature and a tolerance and empathy towards others.

Course content

You will study a variety of ethical issues, Humanist and religious ideas, including:

Matters of life and death – euthanasia, abortion, life after death

Crime & punishment – capital punishment, beliefs surrounding justice

Living a religious life in Britain today

Peace & Conflict – weapons of mass destruction, peacekeeping and Just War

Marriage & Family – attitudes towards sex before marriage, contraception, homosexuality and divorce

Key religious beliefs in Christianity and Islam

Class activities will include discussion and debate, role-play, extended writing pieces, ICT-based tasks, video work and exam style questions.

Useful information

You do not have to be a religious believer to study Religious Studies. You should just be interested in people and different cultures, and of course, keen to learn!

Assessment

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DATE	%
Unit 1: Written examination	1hr 45mins written paper on 'Religion and Ethics'	End of Year 11	50
Unit 2: Written examination	1hr 45mins written paper on 'Religion, Peace and Conflict'	End of Year 11	50

Careers

Religious Studies is a well-respected GCSE and is highly valued by employers and universities. Career opportunities are endless and in the past, students have progressed to study a variety of subjects at university including Law, History, Science-based subjects and Philosophy.



