



Heartlands
High School

GCSE OPTIONS 2025
Heartlands Journey



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A warm welcome from our Head of School, Elen Roberts

We are driven by a desire to inspire students to find their own individual talents and enable them to develop a passion for their chosen specialisms. Making option choices is an important and exciting decision. These choices are critical in shaping their academic future and career paths so they must be made with careful consideration to maximise individual achievement and to provide the widest possible range of future educational and professional opportunities.

Consequently, we provide a lot of information and expert advice to you and your child during this process, so that the optimum curriculum offer can be made for each and every student.

We recognise the importance of collaboration between parents/ carers and the school to establish the best route for each child, providing the support and encouragement needed at this pivotal stage in their secondary education.

Our school ethos is founded upon high aspirations. We have a track record of delivering excellent results and at the core of this is committed dedicated students working hard in subjects they love.

The national landscape for qualifications has changed and the standards expected of students in external examinations are now higher than ever. With this in mind, our curriculum model has been carefully designed to maximise students' achievement and make them desirable candidates for Sixth Form Centres, colleges, apprenticeships, Universities and ultimately, employers.

Alongside this set of courses our Character Education programme, SEARCH ethos, Citizenship and PSHE programmes actively promote the broader personal development of students. These values are integral to our success as a school in shaping students into adults who not only have excellent qualifications, but also the character to succeed and lead happy, healthy lives.

Elen Roberts
Headteacher

Planning for the Future

This is an exciting opportunity for you to choose courses which you enjoy and which suit your interests, skills and future career ambitions. Most students will not have decided on a career path, but many will know which subjects they prefer and are interested in pursuing.

In order to go to university or into high-quality professional training, such as an apprenticeship, it is a very important for students to achieve a good set of qualifications at GCSE level so that they can progress onto A-levels or other suitable Level 2/3 courses.

English and Maths are critical subjects for their progression and it is now a legal requirement that students resit these subjects if they do not achieve a standard pass at GCSE on their first attempt.

We expect all of our students to follow a broad academic journey, and it is important that students consider this option carefully with a view to future educational and career aspirations, as well as their own individual strengths.

Parental and school guidance in this process is invaluable in supporting them to make choices which will allow them to thrive and develop their passion for learning.

Journeys Explained

The school offers three distinct journeys: Bespoke, Heartlands and Extended.

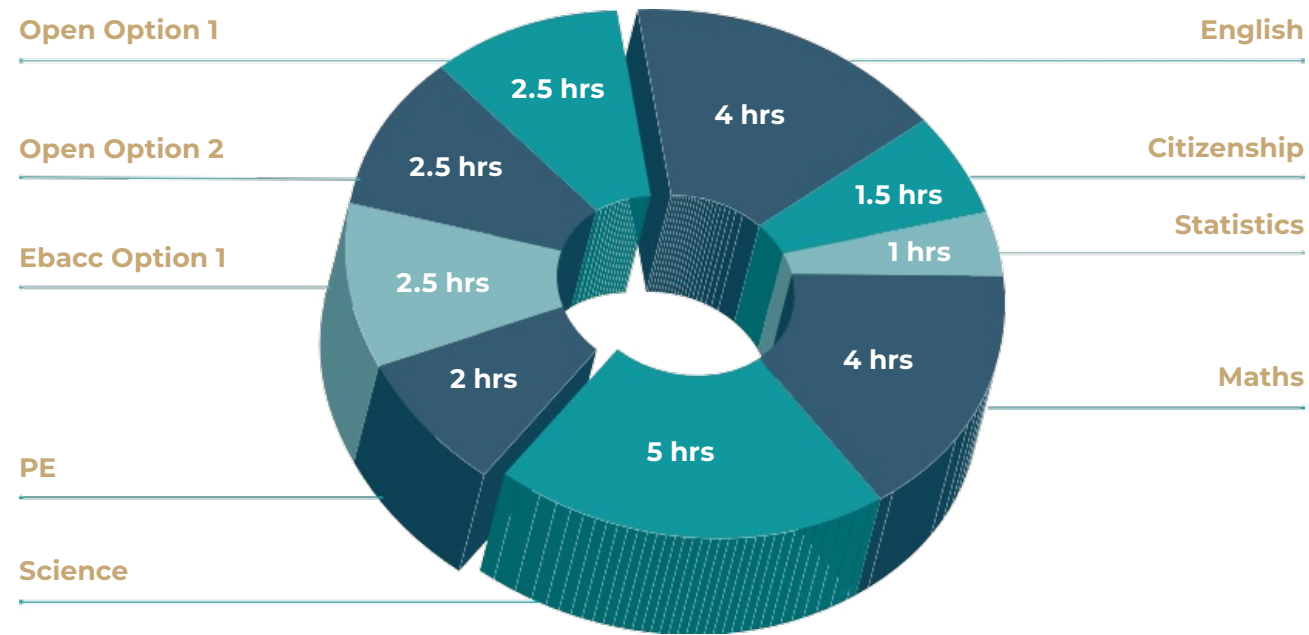
These are recommended to students and parents, and provide the flexibility to design a curriculum package for each student which is tailored to their needs, abilities and potential. Student journeys are based on your child's prior and current attainment.

Heartlands Journey

Most students in the school will follow the Heartlands journey. Students who are best suited to the Heartlands journey study English, English Literature, Maths, Statistics, Citizenship and Science, one Ebacc subject (from Geography, History, French, Spanish or Computing) plus two additional options.

Students will study for 10 GCSE qualifications. The subject selection in this journey will ensure students study the academic subjects which will best prepare them for A-Levels and hopefully university.

Heartlands: 25 hours/week



Journey Structure

SUBJECT	EXTENDED	HEARTLANDS	BESPOKE
English Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
English Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Geography or History	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
French or Spanish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Geography or History or French or Spanish or Computing		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	1 CHOICE	2 CHOICES	3 CHOICES
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills			<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catering			<input type="checkbox"/>
Computing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Creative Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Drama	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Food Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
French	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Land			<input type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Product Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sociology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religious Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sports Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Compulsory Subject that your child can choose

Core Subjects (Compulsory)



English Language

Students will study a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including literary non-fiction and will learn how to identify the language and structural devices used by writers to achieve specific effects on the reader.

In addition, students will learn to write accurately and skilfully, adapting the style of their writing for different purposes and audiences. The accuracy of students' spelling, punctuation and grammar makes up 20% of the overall assessment for this GCSE.

Spoken Language is a taught component of English Language GCSE. Students receive an additional qualification of their proficiency in this area through an in-class assessment that does not form a part of their GCSE accreditation.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA



English Literature

Students will study a Shakespeare play, a pre-19th century text, modern prose/drama and poetry. They will learn how to identify the language and structural devices used by writers to achieve specific effects on the reader. They will also understand how to link and compare seen and unseen texts.

The accuracy of students' spelling, punctuation and grammar makes up 5% of the overall assessment for this GCSE.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA

Core Subjects (Compulsory)



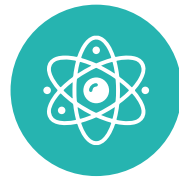
Mathematics

The new Maths GCSE covers broader and more challenging subject content. There is greater emphasis on problem solving and mathematical reasoning, with more marks being allocated to these higher-order skills.

Students will now be required to memorise formulae. Each paper will have a range of question types, utilising both structured and unstructured questions. Some questions in the papers will be set in context (both mathematical and non-mathematical).

Key topics include: Number, Algebra, Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change, Geometry and Measure, Probability and Statistics.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: Edexcel



Science

Students will study key concepts from Biology, Chemistry and Physics. An example of topics is shown below:

Biology: Cell biology, organisation of organisms, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis and response, inheritance, variation and evolution, ecology

Chemistry: Atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding, structure and the properties of matter, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, the rate and extent of chemical change, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere, using resources

Physics: Forces, energy, waves, electricity, magnetism and electromagnetism, particle model of matter, atomic structure

In addition, students will carry out 16 compulsory experiments that will then be examined within the exam papers.

Assessment Method: 100% exam - six exams, two in each science
Exam Board: OCR Gateway A, equivalent to two GCSEs

Core Subjects (Compulsory)



Citizenship

In Citizenship, students will develop the knowledge and skills to play a full and active role in society. Through the study of the political and legal systems in the UK, students will be empowered to effect change and make a difference.

There are 3 core themes. *Life in Modern Britain* looks at immigration, diversity, the media and Britain on the world stage. *Rights and Responsibilities* explores laws, crime and human rights. *Politics and Participation* examines democracy, parliament and making change. Students will also complete an active citizenship project during the course.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: Edexcel



Statistics

The GCSE (9-1) Statistics qualification incorporates numerous examples of real-life data and contexts, which build skills that students will use in other subjects, such as Science and Geography.

Based on the principles of the statistical enquiry cycle, students gain a rounded understanding of how to interpret and apply data to a number of scenarios, both across subjects and in the real world.

Offering GCSE Statistics is the natural partner for reinforcing techniques in GCSE Mathematics and supporting progression to A level.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA

Ebacc Options



Geography

This course is based on a balanced framework of physical and human geography. It allows students to investigate the link between the two themes and approach and examine the battles between man-made and natural worlds.

Students will develop a range of investigative and research skills that will allow them to analyse, explain and draw conclusions about the UK, Higher and Lower Income Countries, Newly Emerging Economies and a range of natural environments across the world.

Students will develop knowledge of:

- locations, places, environments and processes
- the interactions between people and environments and investigate how places change over space and time.

In addition, they will develop and extend their competence in a range of skills including those used in fieldwork, in using maps and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as well as researching secondary evidence.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA



History

In Paper 1, students will study change over time in a thematic study which will cover medieval, early modern and modern history and a historical environment study. Paper 2, includes a British Early Modern unit which is Early Elizabethan England 1558–88 and a period study which is Superpower Relations and the Cold War.

Paper 3 focuses on a 20th century, wider world depth study which is Weimar to Nazi Germany 1918–1939.

GCSE History gives students the opportunity to use historical sources to make claims about the past. It will also require students to understand how the past has been interpreted differently and how to ask questions of sources to form a historical enquiry. It enables students to develop their ability to write analytically about the past by considering the key concepts of causation, consequence, change and continuity and significance.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessed in the exam papers on specified questions.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: Edexcel

Ebacc Options



French

Students will study the new French GCSE and develop their language acquisition in the four key skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing across three main themes:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Identity and relationships with others
- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

- Free time activities
- Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live"

The new course has a strong focus on grammar, spontaneity and fluency. Students will undertake translation activities from English into the target language and from the target language into English.

The students will be assessed in a final exam with each of the four skills accounting for 25% of the final grade.

A successful student of MFL will regularly revise and build a personal bank of vocabulary and will practice using French, applying their knowledge of grammar.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA

Ebacc Options



Spanish

Students will study the new Spanish GCSE and develop their language acquisition in the four key skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing across three main themes:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Identity and relationships with others
- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

- Free time activities
- Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live"

The new course has a strong focus on grammar, spontaneity and fluency. Students will undertake translation activities from English into the target language and from the target language into English.

The students will be assessed in a final exam with each of the four skills accounting for 25% of the final grade.

A successful student of MFL will regularly revise and build a personal bank of vocabulary and will practice using Spanish, applying their knowledge of grammar.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA



Computing

Students study a range of practical skills and theoretical concepts, developing knowledge regarding the operation and functionality of computing systems, tracing and designing algorithms and cyber security threats and preventative measures.

In addition, students will develop practical programming skills in a number of languages. For the majority of the course, students will study Python as their main programming language but will gain experience in SQL, PHP and HTML.

The qualification will be assessed through 2 examinations, Paper 1: Computational Thinking and Problem Solving (40%) and Paper 2: Written assessment – Theoretical Knowledge (40%) and a non-exam assessment (replacement for controlled assessment) (20%).

Assessment Method: 80% exam, 20% non-exam assessment

Exam Board: AQA

GCSE Options



Art

Students are encouraged to be experimental, to work from observation and imagination, and to develop their ideas from the beginning to the end. Year 9 will focus on equipping students with the skills and from Year 10 Students are encouraged to take their own creative journeys.

The discipline of independent study and thought is an extremely useful one to acquire. It is a subject which can give the student confidence and a real sense of achievement. Students achieving a good grade at GCSE can continue their studies at A level, which can lead to study at a Foundation Course in Art or and/or a degree in various areas of Art and Design, for example Architecture, Interior Design, Product Design, Fashion, Photography, Graphic Design and Fine Art.

Assessment Method: 60% coursework, 40% exam

Exam Board: Edexcel



Drama

Learners participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner, in response to a stimulus set by Eduqas, including a written evaluation of their work. Learners will also study two extracts from the same performance text, preparing a scripted performance of both extracts for a visiting examiner.

The written exam requires learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed through the study of a performance text and through responding to live theatre.

Assessment Method: 40% practical/ written internally assessed coursework, 20% practical exam, 40% written exam

Exam Board: Eduqas

GCSE Options



Music

Music is a highly practical and creative course, with 60% of the marks gained through coursework.

Throughout the course students develop their musical skills in performance, composition, listening and appraising. They develop knowledge and understanding of music and of music theory by exploring a range of styles, including classical music, rock and pop, film and world music.

Students are expected to take instrumental/vocal lessons which will prepare them to record two performances in Year 11, of which one must be part of an ensemble. Students will also compose two pieces: one in response to a brief, and one in a style of their choosing. Most students will work in our Mac suite and use Logic to finalise their compositions, but composition work is also done acoustically throughout the course.

Assessment Method: 40% listening and appraising exam; 30% performance; 30% composition

Exam Board: Eduqas



Photography

Photography jobs are as vast as the medium is visible in the world. This course will make you a great creative thinker and you will be able to construct your photographic images so that they contain high visual appeal. In this way you will be able to carve out your desired career in photography. We use Photoshop extensively to edit and manipulate images idea and desired skills for future graphic designers.

Careers in photography include Art careers, Advertising, Commercial work, Editorial, Fashion, Film, Food, Forensic, Industrial, Architectural, Aerial, Portraiture and Wedding photography, Sports and Travel etc.

Assessment Method: 60% coursework, 40% exam

Exam Board: Edexcel

GCSE Options



Design & Technology: Product Design

The Product Design course at GCSE level is an exciting and dynamic subject that equips students with both practical skills and theoretical knowledge. This course encourages creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Students will explore a wide range of materials and manufacturing processes while learning about contemporary design issues and sustainable solutions. The coursework is engaging and hands-on, allowing students to bring their ideas to life through projects that reflect real-world scenarios.

Choosing Design and Technology for GCSE offers numerous benefits. This subject fosters an innovative mindset and develops essential skills that are highly valued in various career paths, including engineering, product design, architecture, and more.

The course is assessed through a combination of coursework and an examination. The coursework component, which makes up 50% of the final grade, involves a design and make project where students create a product that addresses a real-world problem.

The remaining 50% of the assessment is through a written examination, which tests students' understanding of core principles, including materials, manufacturing processes, and sustainability.

Assessment Method: 50% exam, 50% coursework

Exam Board: AQA



Design & Technology: Food and Nutrition

This is a course for students who are interested in cooking, learning about where our food comes from and its role in society, and the science behind how cooking and food manufacture works. We also begin to look at nutrition on a deeper level, to develop our understanding of how diet affects our bodies. Lessons are roughly 60% theory lessons and 40% practical lessons across the 2 year course.

This qualification is assessed in two components:

Component 1:

Two None Examined Assessments [NEA].

- A food investigation (15%), A food science investigation, how ingredients work to create a food product of your choice. 2.

- A controlled food preparation task (35%) – to plan, research and prepare a menu meeting certain criteria outlined by the exam board.

Component 2:

A written examination (50%).

Areas of study: Practical skills and techniques, nutrients, diet and health, dietary requirements, cooking methods, food choices, food provenance and food safety.

Assessment Method: 50% exam, 50% NEA – non examination assessments

Exam Board: Eduqas

GCSE Options



Sociology

Students study two units:

Unit 1: The sociology of families and education.

Unit 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification.

Sociology aims to broaden students' minds, helping them to see their world from different perspectives and in new and thought-provoking ways. Across these units, students explore social processes including socialisation, social control and social change. Students also explore social issues, including the causes and consequences of inequality, concepts of crime and deviance as well as relevant areas of social theory and methodology. The new Sociology GCSE covers broader and more challenging subject content than the previous GCSE. The qualification will be assessed through two examinations, each with a weighting of 50%.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA



Business Studies

Students will cover two units which include:

1. Investigating a small business
2. Building a business.

Each unit will have its own assessment worth 50% of their GCSE grade. Both exams will be tested at the end of Year 11.

Across these units, students develop knowledge and understanding of marketing, management, production, finance, the economy, ethics and enterprise. Students should expect to develop and apply their numeracy skills in this subject and show a keen interest in business to succeed.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: OCR

GCSE Options



Religious Studies

GCSE Religious Studies is made up of two elements: The study of religion and themes. The study of religion involves an in-depth study of two religious traditions.

We then go on to study themes which are made up of philosophical and moral concepts.

Religious Studies is all about people, religion, culture, morality (what is right and wrong) and philosophy (asking big questions). As well as learning facts and gaining knowledge about religious beliefs and practices, this course encourages students to develop skills of empathy, critical thinking and debate.

To be successful in this GCSE, you will need to be able to discuss and evaluate key issues, including contemporary moral issues such as the death penalty.

Assessment Method: 100% exam
Exam Board: AQA



Physical Education

Students will receive a well- rounded introduction to the world of PE, Sport and Sport Science through the combination of physical performance and academic challenges. A large section of the content is to be taught in a practical way, allowing theory to be understood through practice. The theory content will look at a range of topic areas including anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, sport psychology, socio-cultural influences and will require a firm scientific grounding.

In the new GCSE, there is an increased emphasis on the theoretical content which is now worth 60% of the qualification assessed through examination.

Assessment Method: 60% exam, 40% practical assessment
Exam Board: Edexcel

GCSE Options



Sport Studies Cambridge National Level 2 in Sports Studies

This course is designed to equip students with applied knowledge and practical skills which are desirable to employers in industry sectors. They focus on the acquisition of technical skills.

Sport, Health and Fitness is designed for learners with an interest in any of the health and fitness contexts such as exercise, lifestyles and diet.

The course has clear progression routes to Post-16 qualifications, training and employment routes as well as teaching important life skills and knowledge.

Assessment Method: Students are assessed on a Pass, Merit or Distinction basis (six units over the two years)

Exam Board: OCR



Engineering V Cert

The NCFE Level 1/2 technical award in engineering is a vocational certificate (V Cert) which is equivalent to one GCSE. It is designed for learners with an interest in engineering, and provides them with experience of using different tools and materials, and enables them to use these within further education or apprenticeships. It will give them a basic understanding of what engineering may involve.

Students will study the theoretical aspects of engineering and practical elements, such as engineering drawing and creating products using engineering materials. In particular students will study the following topics: Introduction to engineering, Introduction to engineering drawing, Tools and equipment for engineering and engineering materials and their properties.

Assessment Method: 60% portfolio and synoptic task, 40% written exam

Exam Board: NCFE



The Options Process 2025

Key Dates

W/B 27 January

Parents/students will receive Option Form. Journey booklets and subject information videos will be available to view on the HHS website.

Students will take part in the GCSE taster session and will start to be invited for a one-to-one careers interview.

5 March

Options Evening

25 March

Option Form deadline

4 June

Students will receive confirmation of their choices





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