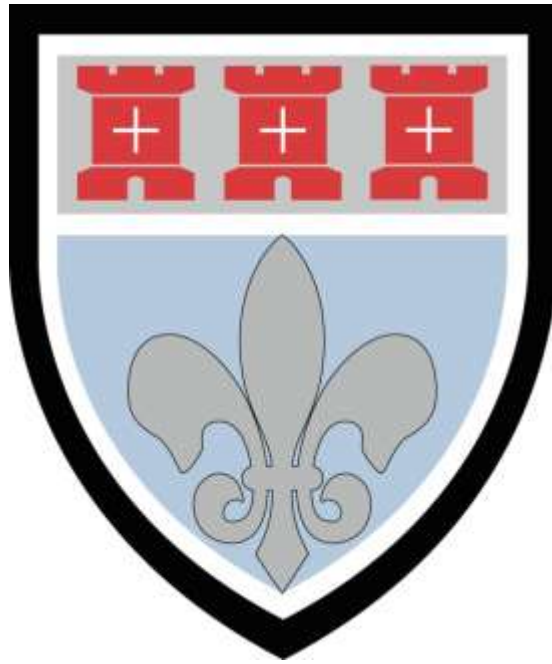


ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL



YEAR 9 CURRICULUM CHOICE BOOKLET

COURSE INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2022

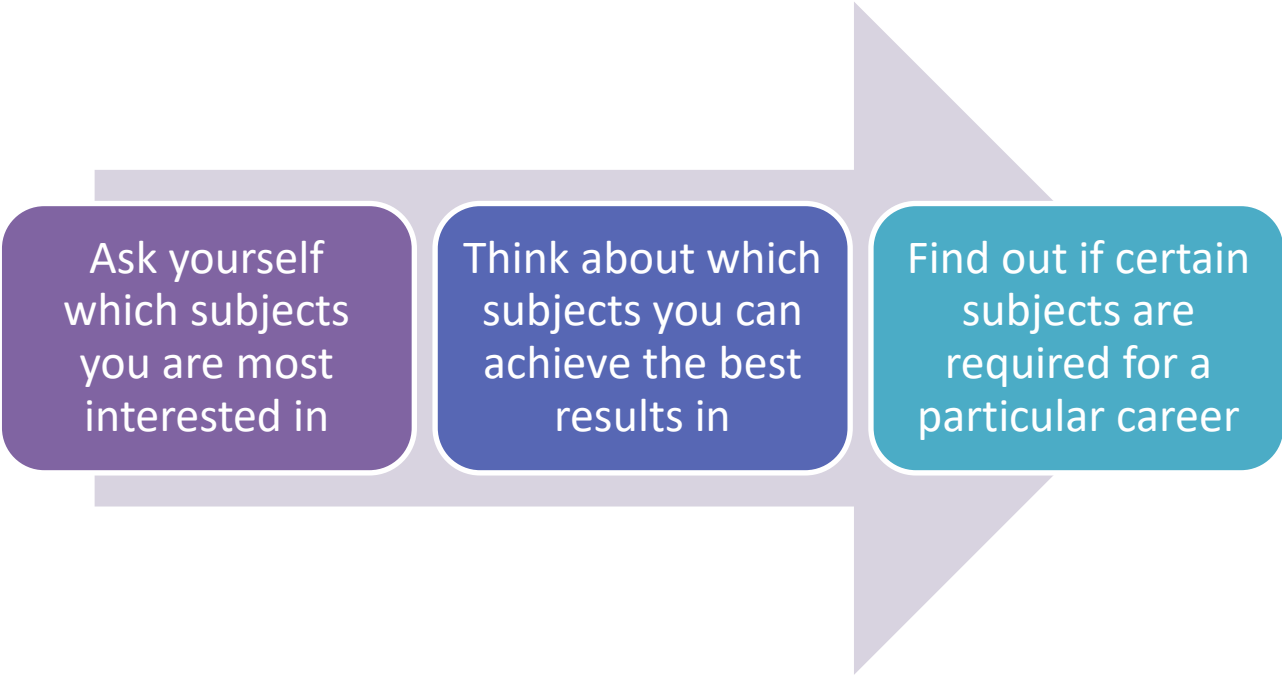
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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to inform you about all of the courses you may be starting in September.

Preparing for Key Stage 4 is really only the first step in preparing for something much bigger. You are likely to stay in some form of education until you start your career. This may happen when you are 16 years old, 18 years old or 21 years old. So, when planning your options for Key Stage 4, keep in mind that you want to choose some subjects that you might want to develop further in the Sixth Form, and some subjects that you are interested in or at which you excel.



Ask yourself
which subjects
you are most
interested in

Think about which
subjects you can
achieve the best
results in

Find out if certain
subjects are
required for a
particular career

What Do I Need To Think About?

When you're deciding what to do, remember:

- You may need to study certain subjects or qualifications for specific careers. Ask yourself what sorts of careers and jobs interest you. If you already have an idea, we would encourage you to find out if you need any particular subjects or qualifications to get into that area of work.
- Think about picking the subjects or qualifications that you might need when you go on to further or higher education.
- To study some subjects at A-Level (e.g. History), you will need to have a GCSE in the same subject. If you have an idea about what you want to go on to study after Year 11, talk to your subject teacher to see if you're making the right subject choices.
- If you don't know what you want to do later on, choose a broad range of subjects that will help you to keep your options open. Even if you do know what job you want to do in the future, it's OK to change your mind over the next few years.

The subjects you pick don't have to relate to a specific job — it's fine to choose some simply because you enjoy them or are good at them.

Advice about Choosing Your Options

The English Baccalaureate

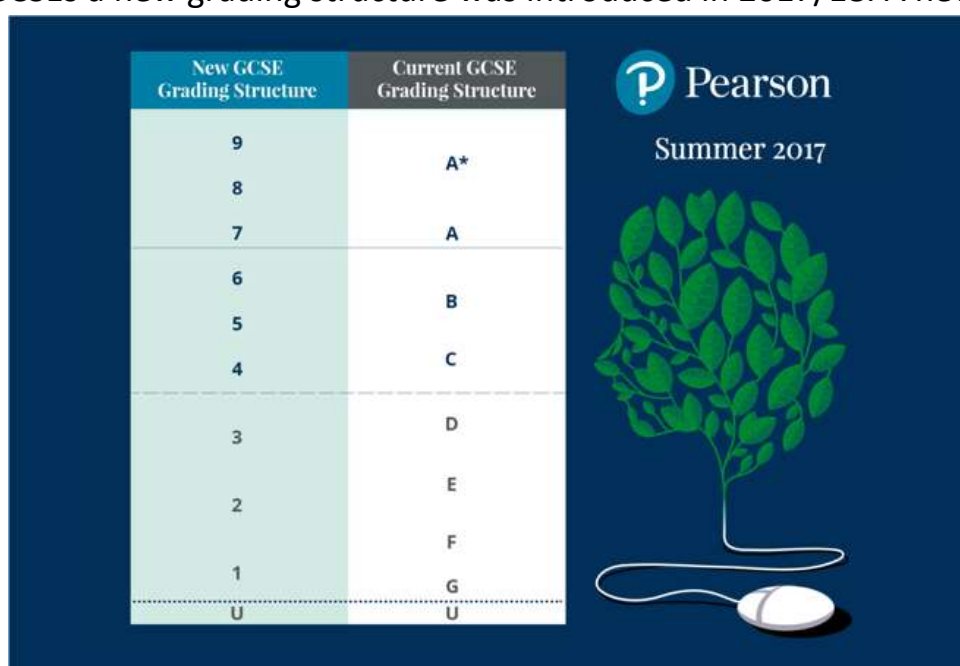
The English Baccalaureate was introduced as a performance measure for schools in England in the 2010 performance tables. It is not a qualification. The measure recognises where pupils have achieved a 4 grade or better at GCSE in English, Mathematics, History or Geography, two sciences (including Computer Science) and a modern or ancient language. The English Baccalaureate includes academic subjects highly valued by universities, but it is not currently required for entry to any university.

Progress 8

The Progress 8 measure is designed to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4, and to reward schools for the teaching of all their pupils. The measure is based on students' progress measured across eight subjects: English; Mathematics; three other English Baccalaureate subjects (the sciences, Computer Science, Geography, History and languages); and three further subjects. Progress 8 was introduced for all schools in 2016.

Changes to the Grading Structure

Following the reforms to GCSEs a new grading structure was introduced in 2017/18. A new scale was introduced and GCSEs are now graded with a scale from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. The grades were brought in to signal that GCSEs have been reformed and to better differentiate between students of different abilities. You can see how the 9 to 1 grades compare with the A* to G scale in the infographic on the right.



Requirements for specific subjects

The summary below gives an idea of some of the GCSE requirements that you might come across for certain degree courses. Remember that these are only examples and we don't yet know how they will change following the move to number grades.

- Applicants to study Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science are usually required to have very good GCSE results in Maths, Science and English.
- Applicants for Teacher Training are required to have minimum grade 4/5 in GCSE Maths, Science and English.
- For a degree in English, universities often look for applicants to have a GCSE in a modern language.
- For a Business degree, sometimes a grade 7, or more often at least a grade 6, in GCSE Maths is required.
- A grade 6 in Maths is often required for a degree in Psychology, and a grade 6 in a science subject may sometimes be required.
- To study a science subject at university (including Biology, Chemistry or Physics) applicants who are not offering Maths at A-Level will often need to have achieved a minimum of grade 4/5 in Maths at GCSE.

If you do well in external examinations, more traditional GCSE subjects may well be for you



Vocational subjects focus on school-based assessments with reduced external examinations and they lead to employment, training or further study at a higher level



When thinking about your choices consider the best combination of subjects to help you to fulfil your potential

Core Curriculum

All students study the following subjects during Key Stage 4:

English

- All students will study GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

Mathematics

- All students will study GCSE Mathematics

Science

- Students will study one of the following:
- GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- GCSEs in Core and Additional Science

RE

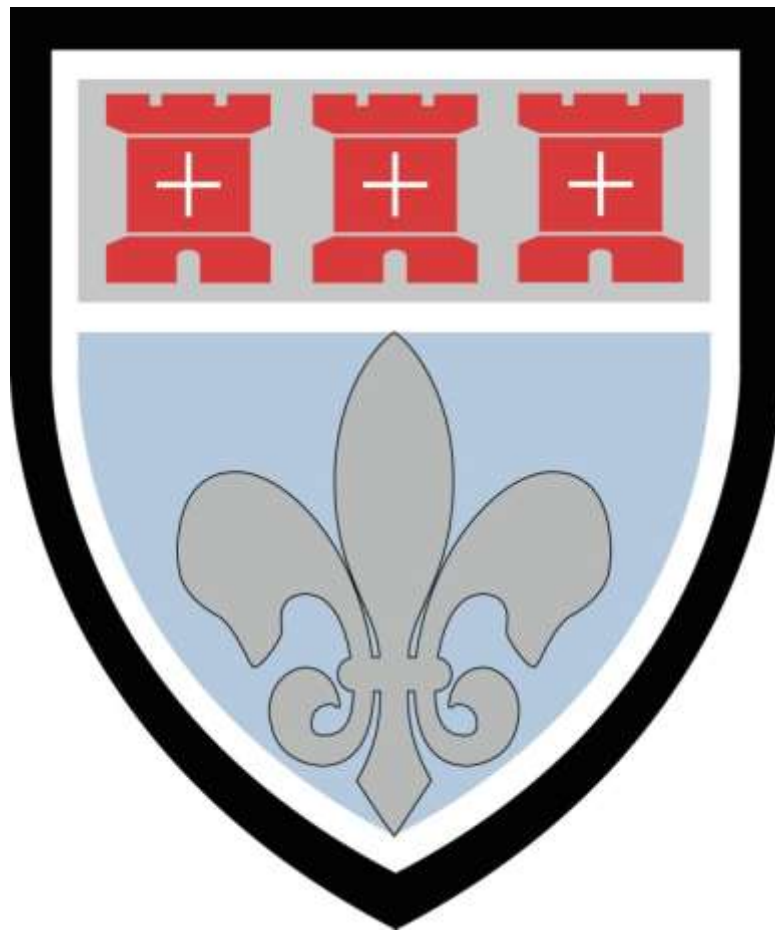
- All students will study GCSE RE

Physical Education

- All students follow a practical course in PE
- PE is also available as a GCSE qualification through the options blocks

All students study a minimum of 7 GCSE courses with the vast majority studying 9 qualifications.

Course Outlines



Art and Design



Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives

The course is structured in a way that encourages students to explore ideas, themes and issues using their own imagination and research. Students learn to be creative with art materials, media, and processes. They are encouraged to manipulate materials and tools to create their work. Lessons are energetic, with lots going on as students explore their chosen media and techniques. It is important for students to personalise their project; this is often done through their own photography and research.

Content (Outline of Course)

In Year 10, students will be set exciting starting points for research as part of their portfolio of work for Unit 1. Unit 2, which is assessed by an exam, will be covered in the Spring Term of Year 11.

The starting points for Unit 2 are outlined by the examination board. Students have a 10-week-long preparation period followed by a 10-hour-long exam.

Students produce a full range of preparatory work for Units 1 and 2. They will have the opportunity to explore a wide range of materials and techniques. The following areas are explored during the course:

- observational drawings using a variety of materials.
- printmaking.
- painting (watercolours, acrylics, and oils).
- composition and scale.
- mixed media and manipulation of materials.
- contemporary and modern artists.
- photography.
- sculpture (clay, wire and found objects).

Assessment

Unit 1: portfolio of work (worth 60% of the final grade)

Unit 2: externally set task (worth 40% of the final grade)

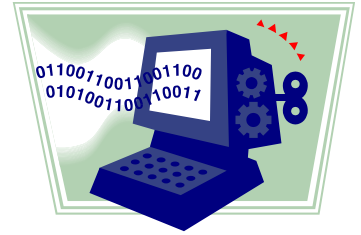
Each unit has four assessment objectives: to develop, to refine, to record ideas, and to present a personal and meaningful response to each starting point.

Careers Guidance

Art encourages the development of creative thinking, putting students in a valuable position as applicants to colleges, universities, and employers.

Students can go on to study A-Level Art and Design. This can be a path towards foundation and degree studies and can lead to many careers that are directly involved in the creative careers industry or which rely on developed creative skills.

Computer Science



Exam Board AQA

Qualification GCSE

Aims and Objectives

What is the difference between Computer Science and ICT? Whereas ICT teaches students to be skilled *users* of computer programs, Computer Science gives students the opportunity to be *creators* of such technology.

The course allows students to develop experience in a wide range of areas including web-based applications, mobile technologies, and more traditional applications of computer science.

Content (Outline of Course)

Students studying GCSE Computer Science will:

- learn how to create computer programs using traditional programming languages.
- gain an understanding of the fundamentals of how computers work.
- develop problem-solving skills.

Assessment

The course is assessed through two components:

Paper 1: Computational thinking and programming skills

An examination of 2 hours (50% of the marks)

Paper 2: Computing concepts

An examination of 1 hour and 45 minutes (50% of the marks)

Careers Guidance

A qualification in Computer Science allows students to develop practical skills that are very much in demand in the modern workplace. The UK, and in particular the Northeast, has a large IT industry and there are many opportunities available.

Students may go on to the Sixth Form to study Computer Science at A-Level. This will then allow them to choose to study a variety of university courses such as Computer Science or Information Technology. Alternatively, students may also decide to apply for apprenticeships, with many available from large local employers such as Accenture, Sage and DXC.

Drama



Exam Board	AQA
Qualification	GCSE
Aims and Objectives	<p>GCSE Drama encourages students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a personal interest in why drama matters, and be inspired, moved, and changed by studying a broad, coherent, satisfying, and worthwhile course of study. • work imaginatively and creatively in collaborative contexts, generating, developing and communicating ideas. • consider and explore the impact of social, historical, and cultural influences on drama texts and activities. • Develop cultural capital in all students; through stimulus and topics, students are thinking and talking about a wide range of experiences that prepare them for what comes next • reflect on and evaluate both their own work and the work of others. • develop and demonstrate competence in a range of practical, creative and performance skills. • develop a basis for their future role as active citizens in employment and society in general, as well as for the possible further study of drama. • engage actively in the process of dramatic study in order to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.
Content (Outline of Course)	<p>Component 1: Understanding Drama (40% of the GCSE – 80 marks) A written exam paper of 1 hour and 45 minutes will be completed. This includes the practical exploration of one performance text (Blood Brothers by Willy Russell) with extended responses where students write in the role of performers, designers, and directors. The second part of the exam consists of students seeing a live performance and evaluating and analysing what they saw in one extended response.</p> <p>Component 2: Devising Drama NEA (Non-Exam Assessment) (40% of the GCSE – 60 marks) Students create, develop, and perform a devised piece from a stimulus. They also produce a written portfolio in which they analyse and evaluate the devising process and performance. Performer and designer options are available.</p> <p>Component 3: Texts in practice (20% of the GCSE – 40 marks) Students will either perform in or design for two key extracts from a performance text. A visiting examiner will examine this component.</p>
Assessment	<p>Component 1: Written exam paper (externally examined) Component 2: Non examined assessment (internally marked) Component 3: Practical exam (externally examined)</p>
Careers Guidance	<p>Drama allows students to develop skills for life. Although they may not want to pursue a career within the performing arts, the skills that students develop in the drama classroom will be priceless. They will become confident speakers who are able to interact with many different people in varying group sizes, be aware of how to present themselves well in interviews, presentations or auditions, and know how to analyse and evaluate situations and information. Career opportunities for students who study GCSE Drama include the following areas: arts/theatre administration, teaching, journalism, directing, acting, designing, stage/theatre management, technical support, broadcasting, media presenting, drama therapy and scriptwriting.</p>

Design and Technology



Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain an awareness of – and learn from – wider influences on design and technology, including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. They will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making products, and will apply technical and practical expertise. Students will study core technical theory, designing and making principles, and will use a broad range of design processes, materials techniques, and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

Content (Outline of Course)

In Year 10, students will study a wide range of theoretical aspects through a variety of projects. These will include practical experimental work and theoretical briefs that are designed to encourage students to design challenging, innovative and creative products whilst applying a knowledge and understanding of a wide range of materials and processes. At the end of Year 10, students will be given a list of design contexts that are set by the exam board. They will then develop, design, and create a portfolio that specialises in one material.

Assessment

Paper 1: externally set exam (50% of the GCSE)
Non-exam assessment (NEA): a design and make task of approx. 30–35 hours (50% of GCSE)

Careers Guidance

Those students who wish to continue their studies beyond GCSE will be able to follow the A-Level Product Design or Art and Design Fashion/Textiles courses. These can lead on to an art and design-related foundation qualification or degree. Some universities specify an art-based foundation qualification as a requirement for admission and so students do need to check entry requirements as soon as possible. Students will develop a robust design portfolio to help them to gain entry to these competitive courses.

French

Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the department is to develop students' ability to communicate in French. In addition, we aim to:

- help students to understand the way people from other countries live
- give students the means to continue learning beyond the classroom
- improve students' understanding of language
- enhance the employment possibilities available to students

Content (Outline of Course)

The language studied – French – covers three main themes: identity and culture; local, national, international, and global areas of interest; and current and future study and employment. These themes and their sub-topics provide students with the tools to develop language and key skills that are required in higher level studies.

Assessment

The French GCSE is divided between the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of these four skills make up 25% of the final mark and all will be assessed in a final examination at the end of the two-year-long course. These examinations will be externally set and marked by AQA.

There are two levels of assessment for all four skills: Foundation Tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher Tier (grades 4 to 9). Students will be entered for either Foundation or Higher in all four skills. Entries are carefully considered to ensure the most appropriate level for each student.

Students are prepared for all four areas of the examination and regularly tested in all four skills throughout the course. All assessments are formal, use examination-style questions and begin as early as the end of the first term.

Homework is set on a regular basis and may take the form of written exercises, independent learning, listening work, speaking practice or a combination of these. It is also monitored through the marking and recording of the work completed.

Careers Guidance

Beyond GCSE, students can follow A-Level French in the Sixth Form. A GCSE in at least one modern foreign language is one of the desired and facilitating subjects for university entry. It also improves employability prospects. UK businesses need people who know languages from basic to native speaker ability to be able to function and compete in a global setting. Many employers, especially some of the biggest employers, prefer language students because, in addition to their linguistic skills, they tend to have better oral and written communication skills. Furthermore, research shows that speaking another language helps to increase a person's potential earnings.

Students must have studied French in Year 9 to continue to GCSE

Geography



Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives

Geography is a fantastic subject to study because it involves exploring the processes and patterns that shape our world. The study of geography will help you to understand better why our world is the way that it is. Recent high-profile events such as the Australian wildfires, the student strikes against climate change and flooding across the UK show us how interconnected the world is and just how globalised many aspects of our world have become.

This course aims to:

- ◆ build on the skills gained in Year 9, with students expected to offer and discuss opinions, analyse data, and gather information from many sources
- ◆ encourage students to question and appreciate physical and human environments on local and global scales
- ◆ encourage students to cultivate a greater understanding of the world in which we live and to tackle the problems that we face
- ◆ broaden the range of skills that the students will need to succeed
- ◆ stimulate students' interest in and understanding of other places at a global and local level.

Content (Outline of Course)

Unit 1: Physical geography

Challenge of natural hazards: the work of volcanoes and earthquakes, hazards in the UK and global warming

Physical landscapes in the UK: the work of rivers in creating distinct landscapes and flooding and how the sea shapes our coastline

The living world: tropical rainforests and deserts

Unit 2: Human geography

Urban issues and challenges in both low- and high-income cities, with reference to Lagos and Newcastle upon Tyne

Changing economic world: the interrelationships between rich and poor nations

Challenge of resource management: the impacts and sustainability of food, water, and energy

Unit 3: Geographic skills and issue evaluation

This exam paper is based upon skills, a fieldwork investigation, and a pre-release issue evaluation.

Assessment

Units 1 and 2 are both assessed by examinations that each last 1 hour and 30 minutes and which are respectively worth 35% of the final mark.

Unit 3 is worth 30% of the final mark and is assessed by a 1 hour and 15 minute-long examination.

Careers Guidance

Geography is an extremely popular subject amongst employers of all kinds and is a rigorous GCSE. It develops communication, analytical and practical skills, as well as an extensive knowledge of many of the issues facing our planet today. Geography is offered at AS/A2-Level in the Sixth Form and thus provides long-term progression. Careers in health, education, finance, retail, the media, business, the armed forces, environmentalism, industry, travel, commerce, and the public sector have all been pursued by geographers.

Students must have studied Geography in Year 9 to continue to GCSE

History



Exam Board AQA

Qualification GCSE

Aims and Objectives

The study of GCSE History helps students to develop a sense of identity through learning about the development of Britain, Europe, and the World. It assists students in understanding and interpreting the past and contributes to students' knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures. The subject also helps to train their minds through disciplined study and prepares them for adult life.

Content (Outline of Course)

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world
Germany, 1890–1945: democracy and dictatorship
Conflict and tension, 1918–1939
Paper 2: Shaping the nation
Britain: power and the people, 1170 to the present day
Elizabethan England, c.1568–1603

Assessment

100% of GCSE History is assessed by examination.
There are no tiered papers in GCSE History. All students will receive the same unit paper examinations.

Careers Guidance

A GCSE History qualification can allow a student to progress on too many A-Level programmes. Many degree courses at university see it as a valuable qualification. It is highly recommended by employers in many companies as well as academic institutions. History qualifications demonstrate an ability to analyse and evaluate information in depth. The research skills that are developed can be used in a wide range of courses. Many GCSE History students go on to study A-Level History and then have careers in related jobs. Others continue to have careers in the areas of education, law, politics, sociology, psychology, journalism, anthropology, architecture, marketing, accountancy, and public relations.

Students must have studied History in Year 9 to continue to GCSE

Music



Exam Board

Edexcel

Qualification

GCSE

Aims and Objectives

GCSE Music should:

- encourage students to be inspired, moved, and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying, and worthwhile course of study
- develop broader life skills and attributes, including critical and creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional awareness, cultural understanding, self-discipline, self-confidence, and self-motivation
- enable students to engage actively in the study of music
- develop musical skills and interests, including the ability to make music individually and in groups
- enable students to understand and appreciate a range of diverse kinds of music

Content (Outline of Course)

Unit 1: Performing music (30% of the course)

- One solo performance on an instrument/voice of your choice
- One ensemble (group) performance on an instrument/voice of your choice

Unit 2: Composing music (30% of the course)

- Two compositions: One is a free choice, and one is completed to an exam board brief released at the beginning of Year 11.

Unit 3: Listening and appraising (40% of the course)

- Study and acquire knowledge of set works from Purcell to Queen, Wicked the Musical to Samba.

Assessment

Units 1 and 2: internally assessed and externally moderated
Unit 3: externally marked

Careers Guidance

There is a natural progression from GCSE Music to AS/A2-Level Music in the Sixth Form. Students develop study skills and other social skills (for example, the ability to work in a team) while studying GCSE Music. These transferable skills would benefit any student continuing with their education into and beyond the Sixth Form.

Physical Education



Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives	<p>GCSE PE will offer you the opportunity to develop your skills in a range of sports and activities and thereby help you to improve your own performance. You will learn about exercise and how the body works to help you exercise, and then, through training, how your performance can be improved.</p> <p>You will have already been taught a variety of different activities in your PE lessons. This course will help you to build on these basic skills. You will develop the analytical skills that are necessary for you to look at and to improve your own performance.</p> <p>This specification follows on from the Key Stage 3 Physical Education programme of study by providing students with exciting opportunities to lead a healthy and active lifestyle by choosing from a variety of roles and activities in which to participate.</p> <p>The content of the GCSE PE specification is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle, to provide a route to further study at A-Level or in higher education, and to open related career opportunities.</p>
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Content (Outline of Course)	<p>Unit 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport Theory lessons covered: applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, and the use of data.</p> <p>Unit 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport Theory lessons covered: sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness and wellbeing, and the use of data.</p> <p>Unit 3: Practical performance in physical activity and sport Practical coursework from a range of activities including football, badminton, basketball, cricket, dance, handball, hockey, netball, rowing, rugby, squash, tennis, table tennis, volleyball, athletics, cycling, rock climbing, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, and trampolining.</p>
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Assessment	<p>Unit 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport Paper 1: written examination (1 hour and 15 minutes – 78 marks – 30% of GCSE).</p> <p>Unit 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport Paper 2: written examination (1 hour and 15 minutes – 78 marks – 30% of GCSE).</p> <p>Unit 3: Practical performance in physical activity and sport Internal assessment by teachers that is moderated by AQA (100 marks – 25 marks per activity). Students must also submit a written piece of coursework involving an analysis and evaluation of their performance in one activity (25 marks – 40% of GCSE). Students must complete three assessments: two individual sports and one team sport <u>or</u> two team sports and one individual sport.</p>
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Careers Guidance	<p>The course can lead on to further education (for example, the A-Level PE or BTEC Vocational Sport courses) and sports-related careers in a range of disciplines. Health and exercise: fitness professional, health promotion officer, gym instructor, nutritionist, and personal trainer. Management: disability sports development officer, events manager, football manager, sports development manager and talent project coordinator. Media and marketing: broadcasting, journalism, marketing officer and photographer. Science: sports scientist, physiotherapist, sports massage therapist, and strength and conditioning coach. Teaching and coaching: PE teacher, children’s sports coach, outdoor adventures leader, ski instructor, performance analyst and competition manager.</p>
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Triple Award in Science



Exam Board AQA

Qualification GCSE

Aims and Objectives

This course will:

- consolidate and further subject knowledge of the basic principles of science by looking at a wide variety of scientific principles and applications across the three science subjects (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- promote and encourage enthusiasm for sciences and the understanding of scientific methods
- embed the key principles of 'Working Scientifically' in students and understand how this is applied in many different situations throughout science

Content (Outline of Course)

Students studying the Triple Award GCSEs will:

- cover scientific concepts with a great depth and breadth
- cover a variety of applications of scientific principles
- carry out a variety of practical activities which will enhance and embed key scientific practical skills
- look at the ways in which to communicate scientific ideas
- review how to implement scientific methods in developing fundamental concepts
- be able to use mathematical formulae fluently to derive key scientific values.

Assessment

- Each science subject consists of two final examinations sat at the end of the course.
- Each examination is for 1 hour 45 minutes and consists of 100 marks.
- There is a foundation and higher tier for both examinations.
- Each examination is worth 50% of the GCSE qualification.
- Questions on the examinations can be multiple choice, structured, closed short answer or open response.
- Questions will examine key skills such as practical skills, mathematical skills, and the ability to provide an extended response.
- The examinations are linear and there is no coursework element to the course.
- The science subjects are independent of each other. For example, a student could achieve a grade 9 in Biology, grade 8 in Chemistry and a grade 8 in Physics. Students will receive three GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at the end of the course.

Careers Guidance

A qualification in the Triple Award in Science allows students to develop practical skills that are very much in demand in the modern workplace. The UK has a large STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) industry and there are many opportunities available in this rapidly expanding sector. Students often progress to the Sixth Form to study the various science subjects at A-Level. This will then allow them to choose to study a variety of university courses such as the Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medicine, and Dentistry. Alternatively, students may also decide to apply for apprenticeships, with many available from large local employers such as Nissan.

Spanish



Exam Board	AQA
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Qualification	GCSE
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Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the department is to develop students' ability to communicate in Spanish. In addition, we aim to:

- help students to understand the way in which people from other countries live
- give students the means to continue learning beyond the classroom
- improve students' understanding of language
- enhance the employment possibilities available to students

Content (Outline of Course)

The language studied – Spanish – covers three main themes: identity and culture; local, national, international, and global areas of interest; and current and future study and employment. These themes and their sub-topics provide students with the tools to develop language and key skills that are required in higher level studies.

Assessment

The Spanish GCSE is divided between the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of these four skills make up 25% of the final mark and all will be assessed in a final examination at the end of the two-year-long course. These examinations will be externally set and marked by AQA.

There are two levels of assessment for all four skills: Foundation Tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher Tier (grades 4 to 9). Students will be entered for either Foundation or Higher in all four skills. Entries are carefully considered to ensure the most appropriate level for each student.

Students are prepared for all four areas of the examination and regularly tested in all four skills throughout the course. All assessments are formal, use examination-style questions and begin as early as the end of the first term.

Homework is set on a regular basis and may take the form of written exercises, independent learning, listening work, speaking practice or a combination of these. It is also monitored through the marking and recording of the work completed.

Careers Guidance

Beyond GCSE, students can follow A-Level Spanish in the Sixth Form. A GCSE in at least one modern foreign language is one of the desired and facilitating subjects for university entry. It also improves employability prospects. UK businesses need people who know languages from basic to native speaker ability to be able to function and compete in a global setting. Many employers, especially some of the biggest employers, prefer language students because, in addition to their linguistic skills, they tend to have better oral and written communication skills. Furthermore, research shows that speaking another language helps to increase a person's potential earnings.

Students must have studied Spanish in Year 9 to continue to GCSE