

BEACONSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL'S



# GCSE OPTIONS GUIDE

2026 - 2027



Beaconsfield High School is a modern, diverse, inclusive and dynamic school, a centre of excellence in and out of the classroom, and a happy community. At the heart of everything we do is respect – for yourself, for others, for the environment and of course, for learning.

We are committed to every student's development and success. As you embark on the next chapter of your education, we will help you develop into a remarkable young adult; successful academically, a happy and confident contributor to society, with the skills of leadership, teamwork, empathy and initiative that will enable you to thrive in everything you do.

Choosing your GCSE options in Year 9 is an important and hugely exciting time and we're here to support you every step of the way. This guide will introduce you to our broad and balanced Key Stage 4 curriculum and help you make key decisions about which optional GCSE subjects you will take.

Treat this guide as the beginning of your decision-making process. Talk to our exceptional teaching staff who are all subject experts. Approach our subject prefects – they've already gone through this process and can give you an insight into what to expect. Also talk to your friends and family.

We know it's not an easy decision but, if you choose subjects based on what you enjoy, find interesting and feel will contribute to your future, you won't go wrong.

Let the adventure begin!

*Ms Tina Bond*

Headteacher





# Your GCSE Programme

The KS4 National Curriculum is a combination of academic, creative, physical and personal development education. Most students will study 10 GCSEs comprising of:

## *Your compulsory GCSEs:*

- English Language and English Literature (2 GCSEs)
- Mathematics (1 GCSE)
- Science - Biology, Chemistry and Physics (3 GCSEs)

## *You choose a preference from each of these:*

- One out of Geography or History (1 GCSE)
- Three open options (3 GCSEs)

## *Everyone studies these education-enhancing subjects:*

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education
- Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (core)
- Physical Education (core)

***Please note:*** The viability of all option courses is dependent upon demand.

# The four GCSEs you get to choose:

## 1. Geography or History (choose one):

<i>History</i>	<i>Geography</i>
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## 2. Open option (choose three plus one reserve):

<i>Art, Craft and Design</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Computer Science</i>	<i>Dance</i>
<i>Drama</i>	<i>Food Prep and Nutrition</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Geography</i>
<i>Graphic Communication</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Music</i>
<i>Religious Studies</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	

Your reserve subject will only be allocated if too few students have chosen a particular subject for it to run or it cannot be timetabled with your other subjects. However, we will always do what we can to give you your first preferences!

The GCSE Preferences Form will be online. You will be emailed a link to the form and will need to return it completed by **0900 on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2026**.

# How do I choose?

Firstly, you can be reassured that our options blocks ensure you choose a wide range of subjects, giving you more choices after GCSE. Secondly, you will want to consider future A-Level choices, so we have included our current A-Level requirements.

In most cases, you will need a GCSE in a subject if you want to study it at A-Level, simply because A- Level subjects normally build on GCSE work.

In exceptional cases, where work has been built up outside school and there is clear evidence of GCSE standards, the Head of Department may decide you can study a subject at A-Level that you didn't study at GCSE.

Some subjects do not require students to have taken the GCSE to take the A-Level. For example, Economics, Government and Politics, Media Studies, Psychology and Sociology are not offered at GCSE but are A-Level options.

These usually have entry requirements relating to core GCSE subjects. For example, to study A-Level Economics you are required to achieve a Grade 7 in Maths and Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject. Check our current A-Level requirements on page 6.



To be eligible for A-Level study, students must achieve a minimum of 46 points from their best eight GCSEs, including at least a Grade 5 in both English and Maths. In addition to these general requirements, subject-specific entry criteria must also be met, as outlined in the table below.

A-Level Course	Minimum GCSE Requirements
<b>Art, Craft and Design</b>	Grade 6 in Art or Textiles
<b>Biology</b>	Grade 7 in Biology <b>or</b> Grades 7-7 in Combined Science
<b>Business</b>	Grade 6 in Maths <b>and</b> Grade 6 in Business, English, or a Humanities subject
<b>Chemistry</b>	Grade 7 in Chemistry <b>or</b> Grades 7-7 in Combined Science
<b>Classical Civilisation</b>	Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject
<b>Computer Science</b>	Grade 6 in Computer Science <b>or</b> Grade 7 in Maths
<b>Dance</b>	Grade 6 in Dance <b>or</b> PE
<b>Drama and Theatre Studies</b>	Grade 6 in Drama <b>or</b> English
<b>Economics</b>	Grade 7 in Maths <b>and</b> Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject
<b>English Language &amp; Literature</b>	Grade 6 in English
<b>English Literature</b>	Grade 6 in English
<b>French</b>	Grade 6 in French
<b>French (AS-Level)</b>	Grade 7 in French
<b>Further Mathematics</b>	Grade 8 in Maths
<b>Geography</b>	Grade 6 in Geography
<b>Graphic Communication</b>	Grade 6 in Graphics, Art or Design Technology
<b>History</b>	Grade 6 in History
<b>Latin</b>	Grade 6 in Latin
<b>Mathematics</b>	Grade 7 in Maths
<b>Media Studies</b>	Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject
<b>Music</b>	Grade 6 in Music <b>and</b> minimum Grade 6 on an instrument (ideally ABRSM or Trinity) Grade 5 Theory may be considered in lieu of GCSE Music
<b>Physical Education</b>	Grade 6 in PE <b>or</b> Grade 6 in a single science (Grades 6-6 in Combined Science) <b>and</b> participation in one sport to club level
<b>Physics</b>	Grade 7 in Physics <b>or</b> Grades 7-7 in Combined Science
<b>Politics</b>	Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject
<b>Psychology</b>	Grade 6 in Maths or Biology (Grades 6-6 in Combined Science) <b>and</b> Grade 6 in English or a Humanities subject
<b>Religious Studies</b>	Grade 6 in a Humanities subject or English
<b>Sociology</b>	Grade 6 in a Humanities subject or English
<b>Spanish</b>	Grade 6 in Spanish
<b>Spanish (AS-Level)</b>	Grade 7 in Spanish

**Note:**

- **Humanities subjects** include Geography, History, and Religious Studies.
- **Further Mathematics** must be studied as a fourth subject, alongside Mathematics.
- **AS-Level French or Spanish** may only be taken as a fourth subject.

# Where to go for advice



Do your research and keep an open mind. Talk to subject teachers, your form tutor, heads of learning, the careers lead, parents and other students. There are regular careers updates via the Careers Newsletter and Student Bulletin, the library also has a range of resources.

Some higher education courses will require or prefer specific subjects at A-Level. If in doubt, consult the [careers section](#) of our website, the [National Careers Service](#), [UCAS](#) or by contacting universities directly. [Apprenticeships](#) may be another option you wish to consider too.

[Bucks Skills Hub](#) also provide invaluable career related information, activities and events.

You can also access [E-clips](#), a comprehensive website containing 500+ leaflets on careers, lifestyles and choosing GCSE options.

We believe strongly in our happy and high-achieving school vision, and we want to support you in your decision making, ensuring your well-being is a priority. Remember that we have a strong pastoral network including your form tutor, your head of learning and our student welfare team. Click [here](#) for the school well-being page.

A group of students are gathered around a table, working on a crossword puzzle spread out on the surface. One student in a green t-shirt is writing in the grid, while others look on. A blue banner at the bottom of the image features the text 'compulsory GCSEs' in a white, stylized font.

compulsory GCSEs

# *GCSE English Language and English Literature*

Students will obtain two GCSEs, one in Literature and one in Language. The new specifications have been designed to teach students skills which they can apply to their wider studies as well as to real life situations.

## *Aims of the course*

- English Language – to develop and extend the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills acquired in Key Stage 3.
- English Literature – to provide experience of a wide range of texts, develop critical skills and encourage an appreciation and enjoyment of literature.

**Examination Board:** AQA 8702 (Literature) and 8700 (Language).

## *Course content and assessment*

English Literature GCSE encourages students to read a greater range of high quality, challenging literature and non-fiction texts from a range of genres and types, for example the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Reading and writing is equally weighted in English Language GCSE. Students are expected to write clearly and accurately, using Standard English, and there is an increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the use of ambitious vocabulary.

Speaking and listening is assessed through endorsement, and we teach students to become more confident in formal speaking.

Written work ranges from creative writing to reports, articles, letters, analytical essays and debating speeches, using a wide variety of reading material from different genres as stimulus, such as newspaper and magazine articles, literary texts, travel writing and biography. Students' work must reflect skills in information retrieval and knowledge about language.

There are two examinations for English Language and two for English Literature.

The specifications and question papers cover the full range of abilities and there are no longer tiers in the examination syllabuses.

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

Correct, effective and articulate use of English, in both speech and writing, is fundamental to every subject studied. The study of English is considered to be a discipline fostering the analytical, creative and communication skills needed for most careers and not just those of a journalist or teacher.

# GCSE Mathematics

## Aims of the course

- To develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts.
- To acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems.
- To reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions.
- To comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.
- To enjoy mathematics, to appreciate its relevance to young people's future and to achieve their full potential.

GCSE Mathematics encourages students to develop confidence in and a positive attitude towards mathematics and to recognise the importance of mathematics in their own lives and to society. The course will also provide a strong mathematical foundation for students who go on to study mathematics at a higher level post-16.

Accessing the higher levels of learning will give students an insight into areas of mathematics that will inspire them to continue studying it at A-Level, Further Mathematics level and beyond.

**Examination Board:** Edexcel (1MA1).

## Course content and assessment

**Number:** including fractions, decimals, percentages, indices, surds, and standard form.

**Algebra:** including understanding mathematical arguments, linear, quadratic and trigonometric relationships, graphs, sequences, functions, and algebraic fractions.

**Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change:** including ratio problems and growth and decay.

**Geometry and Measures:** including trigonometry, circle theorems and vectors.

**Probability:** including relative frequency, conditional probability, and tree diagrams.

**Statistics:** including measures of spread and average, and extrapolating trends.

There are three papers in the final examination which are equally weighted and each is 90 minutes in length. Content from any part of the specification may be assessed and there is a mix of question styles from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

Mathematics is universally recognised as a key qualification providing evidence of a student's ability to process information logically, demonstrate skills in problem solving, and to work creatively. It is a subject which combines extremely well with Science, Languages or Art A-Levels. Studying mathematics beyond GCSE will open doors to a plethora of career opportunities, from banking and investment to science, engineering, computing, and statistics.

# GCSE Sciences

*"Science helps you to understand the world in which we live, so remember that the most important thing is to never stop questioning."*

At GCSE we follow the AQA 9-1 Sciences suite, which culminates in three separate GCSEs that are fully accepted at all UK universities. There is no coursework, but practical work will be monitored throughout the course and an understanding of practical skills will be tested in the written examinations.

## *Aims of the course*

- To stimulate students' curiosity in and understanding of both the natural and the technological world in which we live.
- To stimulate wonder and excitement in scientific discovery.
- To encourage informed decision-making about scientific developments in our society.
- To prepare students for studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics at A-Level.

**Examination Board:** AQA GCSE (9-1): Biology A (specification 8461), Chemistry A (specification 8462) and Physics A (specification 8463).

## *Course content and assessment*

Biology, Chemistry and Physics are taught separately, but ideas learned in one subject will be used and applied in the others where appropriate.

Biology is the life science. It is the study of the living organisms, how they function and interact with each other and the environment.

Chemistry involves the study of materials, their properties and the interaction between them. It is also about extracting raw materials from the world around us and turning them into useful products.

Physics is the study of the fundamental interactions between matter and energy in our Universe. It helps us make sense of the world around us on every scale from the sub-atomic to the intergalactic.

In all three areas of science, a significant amount of practical work will be completed to help reinforce learning and to develop scientific skills in the laboratory. Instead of coursework, a greater variety of practical exercises will be carried out with the emphasis on building key skills, such as planning, observation, analysis and evaluation. Practical skills will be examined in the written papers.

Assessment will take place at the end of Year 11 and for each subject will comprise of two written papers. Each paper is 1h 45mins in duration and each paper accounts for 50% of the final grade.

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

We hope that many of our students consider a career in science beyond GCSE. For this they will need to do further study of science, typically at A-Level and beyond at university. This further study could lead to a career as a doctor, an environmental scientist, a civil engineer, a pharmacist or a biochemist, to name just a few possibilities. If the sciences are not a key part of a future career being considered, the analytical skills learned in the sciences are still highly applicable in many other areas of work and help to develop critical skills that can lead to future success.

# Geography and History



# GCSE Geography

*“Geography GCSE is a great subject to choose because it’s interesting, rewarding and it complements many of your other GCSEs from Maths and Science to History and English.”*

## Aims of the course

- To make learning about the world we live in both inspiring and enjoyable.
- To develop the various transferable soft skills that make geographers highly employable.
- To develop and extend knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes and gain understanding of the interactions between people and environments.
- To provide opportunities to enjoy learning outside the classroom through fieldwork.

**Examination Board:** AQA (8035)

## Course content and assessment

*Living with the Physical Environment* includes units of work on natural hazards, the physical landscapes of the UK and ecosystems – our Living World. *Challenges in the Human Environment* includes units on cities, globalisation and resource management.

There will be two exams of 1 hour 30 minutes each based on the Physical and Human Units above. There is a third 1 hour exam based on fieldwork and pre-released resources. All exam papers are taken at the end of Year 11. Our results are consistently some of the very best in the school – in recent years we have always achieved a 7-9 (A/A\*) pass rate of over 90%.

**Fieldwork:** There will be two separate days of fieldwork collecting primary data that will be used to support exam answers. The cost of the two days is approximately £40. There will be an opportunity to participate in an “awe and wonder” trip to the glaciers and geysers of Iceland during the course.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

At A-Level, geography makes an excellent combination with sciences, maths or other humanities subjects. Geography also offers an excellent background for a very wide variety of careers such as working in tourism, law, planning, environmental management, teaching, the Civil Service and banking. It is relevant to our everyday lives and includes important issues related to our future. Every day there is at least one item on the news that is relevant to geography. Your teacher will discuss career options with you in more detail if you are interested.

# GCSE History

*"History lessons are lively and challenging and will make students think about the world around them. It requires hard work; but the rewards, both in terms of academic merit and enjoyment, make it one of the most valuable GCSEs available!"*

## Aims of the course

- To develop an understanding of the historical background of the modern world.
- To acquire fundamental transferable skills – communication, structuring an argument, analysing and evaluating evidence, drawing independent and supported conclusions.
- To build an understanding of the key historical concepts such as change, continuity, significance, causation and consequence, as well as the language of politics: democracy, socialism, fascism and communism.

**Examination Board:** Modern World History – WJEC (Eduqas), C100QS.

## Course content and assessment

**Unit 1:** The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603.

**Unit 2:** USA: A Nation of Contrasts 1910-1929.

**Unit 3:** The Development of Germany 1919-91.

**Unit 4:** Changes in Health and Medicine in Britain c.500 to the present day.

Each unit is assessed by an individual written paper ranging from 45 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

History is a very popular option at Beaconsfield High. It is a challenging subject that employers and universities respect for its academic rigour and the key skills you develop. History has all that you need: identifying key pieces of information, constructing and presenting an argument verbally and in writing, evaluating evidence, working independently and expressing your ideas clearly as well as being organised with your time and work. With these skills, a vast range of careers are open to you. You can do further study, at college or university in pretty much any subject you choose: history, geography, RE, science, media, maths, politics, law, business, economics, English. You name it, history will help you!



*Open options*

# *GCSE Art, Craft and Design*

## *Aims of the course*

- Art, Craft and design promotes creativity and learning across a variety of experiences and through various processes, tools, techniques, materials and resources. Our specialist classrooms provide students with the opportunity to explore a wide range of exciting techniques and materials.
- In contrast to the other titles under Art and Design, Art, Craft and Design gives students an opportunity to work within a range of specialisms.
- Students will develop ideas through investigations informed by selecting and analysing sources, developing creative responses and understanding cultural arts.
- Drawing is an integral part of the course and will be evidenced both in their portfolio and externally set assignment.
- Portfolios will include written annotation – to record design processes, explain creative thinking, reflect critically upon their creative journey and its effectiveness, and explore the work of artists and designers.

## *Examination Board: AQA (8201/2)*

## *Course content and assessment*

The course will enable you to develop your creativity and practical skills through various processes, tools, techniques, materials and resources to generate different kinds of evidence of working and outcomes under your theme.

The students' knowledge and understanding of art-based, craft-based and design-based practice will be developed to support their practical projects. They will produce work based in at least two specialisms but may show evidence of more than two. Art, Craft and Design covers the following specialisms - fine art, graphic communication, textile design, 3-dimensional design and photography.

The first term is dedicated to practical workshops where students will be introduced to a range of new techniques and materials whilst also revisiting and developing skills they have gained at KS3. By the second term they will begin to personalise their work and start exploring their own ideas within the overarching theme. At GCSE students don't work in sketchbooks, instead they will create a portfolio that consists of A2 boards.

### **The GCSE is split into two components: Component 1 – Non-exam assessment**

- This carries a 60% weighting and is marked by the centre and moderated by AQA. In effect this is their coursework portfolio based on the chosen theme.
- This runs from the start of Year 10 until Christmas of Year 11.

### **Component 2 – Externally set Assignment.**

- This carries a 40% weighting and includes a 10-hour exam. The exam is supervised time in which students will create a final piece that realises their intentions following their preparatory period. This is marked by the centre and then moderated by AQA. Students will create a mini portfolio and produce a personal response to their chosen theme. AQA release 7 exam titles or themes as starting points for the students to choose from.
- Students begin the exam in January and usually conclude in April/May.

# GCSE Business

*"The course was enjoyable and many aspects of it can be related to everyday life. Even if you don't plan on studying it at A-level, the skills you gain will be valuable to you and future employers in your future career."*

## Aims of the course

- Know and understand business concepts, business terminology, business objectives and the impact of business on individuals and wider society.
- Apply knowledge and understanding to contemporary business issues and to different types and sizes of businesses in local, national and global contexts.
- Develop as enterprising individuals with the ability to think commercially and creatively and draw on evidence to make informed business decisions and solve business problems.
- Use an enquiring, critical approach to make informed judgements.
- Investigate and analyse real business opportunities and threats to construct well-argued, well-evidenced, balanced and structured arguments, demonstrating a depth and breadth of understanding of business.
- Develop and apply quantitative skills relevant to business, including using and interpreting data.

**Examination Board:** Edexcel (1BS0)

## Course content and assessment

### Year 10 - Theme 1: Investigating Small Businesses

Enterprise and entrepreneurship	Making the business effective
Spotting a business opportunity	Understanding external influences on business
Putting a business idea into practice	

### Year 11 - Theme 2: Building a Business

Growing the business	Making financial decisions
Making marketing decisions	Making human resource decision
Making operational decisions	

Each theme is assessed in separate 1 hour 45 min papers which are equally weighted.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

Business opens doors to many different career opportunities. The skills you will learn are applicable to real life. You will be able to utilise EVERY skill you learn in this subject in the world of work. Students with business qualifications can go on to become accountants, marketing managers, human resource managers or set up their own businesses.

# GCSE Computer Science

## Aims of the course

- To understand and apply the fundamental principles of computer science.
- To engage with practical computational activities including designing, writing and debugging programs.
- To think creatively, innovatively and analytically about how computer systems work and how they impact on individuals and society.
- To gain insight into how computer science relates to the fields you will pursue at university and in the world of work.

## Examination Board: OCR (J277)

## Course content and assessment

### Computer Systems

Builds on learning from Year 9 relating to the functions of and relationships between physical components of computers and networks including the Central Processing Unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. Students will become familiar with the impact of Computer Science in a global context through the study of the ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with Computer Science.

### Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Students will be challenged to apply their knowledge and understanding of computer systems using computational thinking. They will be introduced to algorithms and programming techniques, how to produce robust programs, computational logic, translators and facilities of computing languages and data representation. Students will become familiar with computing related mathematics.

### Programming Project

Students will undertake a programming task which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using Python (a high-level programming language). Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular Examination 2 (Section B).

### Examination 1: Computer systems - 90 Minutes

### Examination 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming - 90 Minutes

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

While universities do not require computer science to apply for computer science or a related field, the OCR GCSE course will provide students with sufficient skill and practical techniques to take their interest in computing to a new level. It will give them a broad understanding of the principles of computer science and the opportunity to participate in a practical programming activity, where they will undertake a substantial coding project in Python. The course also represents an excellent opportunity for students to start building a compelling computer science portfolio.

# GCSE Dance

## Aims of the course

- To develop the creative, imaginative, physical, emotional and intellectual capacities of students.
- To recognise and acknowledge the important role that dance plays in young people's lives and aspects of the repertoire of dance for theatre that can be seen in the UK today.

## Examination Board: AQA (8236)

## Course content and assessment

**Performance** - Students will demonstrate their increasing physical competence and effectiveness as a performer through the following: the physical, technical and mental skills necessary for effective performance / the expressive skills necessary for effective performance / understanding how to achieve high quality performance.

**Choreography** - Students will demonstrate their increasing effectiveness as a choreographer through exploring and synthesising ideas, thoughts and meaning through movement / the use and selection of actions, dynamics, space and relationships to convey artistic intention / the use of choreographic principles to shape dances.

**Critical Appreciation** - Students will demonstrate their ability to appreciate and critique dance through: developing critical, perceptual, evaluative and reflective skills in response to their own work and the work of others / developing knowledge and understanding of the work of different choreographers and professional dance works / appreciating the relationship between choreography, performance and production and how these enhance understanding of time, place, character, mood and meaning / knowledge and understanding of the physical, cultural, aesthetic and artistic contexts in which dance is created and performed.

## Assessment:

Component 1: Performance and Choreography – internally assessed/externally moderated (60%)

Component 2: Dance Appreciation – written examination, externally assessed (40%)

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

The course provides an ideal steppingstone for A-Level Dance offered in the sixth form and is a valuable foundation for many other subjects. Possible careers include performing, teaching, choreography, community dance, dance therapy, and arts administration/management. There are also many other types of jobs related to dance in areas such as technical aspects of theatre, costume, make-up artistry and set design, journalism, marketing, events management, sports science and fitness.

Aside from a career in dance, this course equips students with many transferable skills such as: problem solving, teamwork, resilience, self-discipline, communication, planning, adaptability, and inter-personal skills.

# GCSE Drama

## Aims of the course

- To learn about professional theatre practice – playwrights, theatre skills, creating/devising theatre, performing play scripts and analysing/evaluating live theatre.
- To consider how lighting, sound, costumes and set design can all contribute to the creation of theatre.
- To create devised performance work in a group. Learn and perform from established theatre texts.
- Developing teamwork/group working skills and communication/Oracy skills.

Students are also encouraged to see lots of live theatre to inspire their own work and develop knowledge of performance. To enable pupils to complete the written exam at least two theatre trips are organised over the course.

**Examination Board:** Edexcel GCSE 9-1 (1DR0).

## Course content and assessment

### Component 1: Devising Drama – Practical / Written (40% of total GCSE)

- Process of creating and performing a devised piece of drama. Students can choose either performer or designer specialism.
- Analysis and evaluation of own work through assessed written portfolio.
- This component begins in Year 10 and is completed by the Christmas holidays in Year 11. It is NEA assessed by teachers/moderated by exam board.

### Component 2: Performance from Text – Practical Exam (20% of total GCSE)

- Performance or Design (depending on specialism chosen) of two extracts from one play.
- Free choice of play that is externally assessed by a visiting examiner.
- This component takes place from September-March in Year 11.

### Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice – Written Exam (40% of total GCSE)

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre with the study of one set play called “DNA”. Students are asked questions about how they would approach the play as an actor, director and designer.
- Analysis and evaluation of live theatre. This includes at least two theatre visits and exploring other theatre productions through Digital Theatre/National Theatre online.
- This component takes place in May of Year 11 alongside other written examinations.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

Many students choose to extend their studies by continuing with A-Level Drama and Theatre Studies in the sixth form/continuing the subject post-18. Universities and employers value a rounded education and the invaluable transferable skills drama will give you namely; communication/oracy skills, decision making, creativity, presentation, teamwork and confidence.

# *GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition*

## *Aims of the course*

- To give students the opportunities to develop practical abilities and the confidence to design, make and modify products and systems for identified purposes, selecting and using resources appropriately.
- To develop students' critical and aesthetic abilities, enabling them to evaluate food and nutrition activities including their own.
- To encourage students to consider the effects and implications of technological activity
- To give students the opportunity to apply skills, knowledge and understanding from other subjects.

**Examination Board:** AQA (8585)

## *Course content and assessment*

The GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of ingredients. At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition.

Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics: Food, Nutrition and Health, Food Science, Food Safety, Food Choice, and Food Provenance (an understanding of where food comes from).

## **Assessment:**

### **Two pieces of non-examination assessment 50%:**

- Task 1: Food Investigation (15%)
- Task 2: Food Preparation (35%)

Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients will be assessed through an investigation set by the examination board.

Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food, and application of nutrition will be assessed through a chosen task.

Students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours, planning in advance how this will be achieved.

**Final examination 50%** - 1 hour 45 minute single written paper, which will assess subject content specific to the subject area.

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

Food Preparation and Nutrition will prepare students for courses in the field and provide them with some of the social, economic, practical and intellectual skills they will need for life. It can also enhance their career prospects in medicine, food development, research, food science, and the work of a dietician or home economist.

# GCSE French

*“As a Language GCSE student, you learn to not only converse in a different language but to understand that language’s culture and traditions.”*

A well-established school trip abroad is offered to enable plenty of practice and exposure to the culture.

## *Aims of the course*

- To develop the appropriate language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.
- To be fully immersed in the language and culture of France through cultural visits.

**Examination Board:** Edexcel (1FR1).

## *Course content and assessment*

Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about the themes below relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where French is spoken.

- **My personal world**
- **Lifestyle and wellbeing**
- **My neighborhood**
- **Media and technology**
- **Studying and my future**
- **Travel and tourism**

Students will sit all their exams at the end of the course. Each skill is worth 25% of the GCSE.

There are three (higher tier) written exams – listening (1 hour), reading (1 hour) and writing (1 hour 20 minutes) – and one (higher tier) spoken non-exam assessment (10-12 minutes plus preparation time).

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

If you like travelling, literature, films or music from other countries, learning a language will help your appreciation and understanding of these. Having a language on your Personal Statement for university shows a student who can converse, work in a team and deal with spontaneity. Later, it can also give you an advantage in your career if you work for an international firm or a company with international customers or contacts. Many linguists move on to careers in translation, research, interpretation, teaching, analysis and more.

# GCSE Graphic Communication

## Aims of the course

- Knowledge and Understanding – Students will be introduced to a variety of learning experiences and skills through use of appropriate media, materials, processes, techniques and technologies relevant to their chosen topic and graphics. The course covers topics such as typography, branding, 3D design, packaging and prototyping.
- Research and Analysis – Students will engage with the work of existing designers as well as other contextual sources to realise intentions and produce final design outcomes.
- Skills – Students will develop their ideas through sustained creative investigations. Students will use Adobe Creative Cloud programmes to produce digital design work but will also be encouraged to incorporate other materials and techniques into their work where relevant. Students will develop a good understanding of the key codes and principles of design.
- Recording – Students must record their creative journey through clearly documented sketchbook pages. Pages will visually show exploration and related development and refinement of work. Annotations will provide additional information such as critical reflection, intentions going forward and other practical considerations.

**Examination Board:** AQA (8203)

## Course content and assessment

The course will enable students to develop their creativity and practical skills through various processes, digital tools, techniques, materials and resources to generate different kinds of evidence of working and outcomes under their chosen theme.

Student's knowledge and understanding of design-based practice will be developed to support their practical projects. Students will produce designs based on the work of two existing designers, culminating in the creation of a graphic product.

In the first half term, students will undertake an introductory project, which aims to enhance and cement the basic skills needed to excel within the course. After the first half term, students will begin work on their Sustained Investigation, focusing on a topic and contextual source of their choosing. In the second year of the course, students will complete their Externally Set Assignment, which will use much of the knowledge and skills that students will now be confident in.

Assessment comprises:

**Portfolio piece of non-examination assessment 60%** - Marked by us and moderated by AQA. The portfolio consists of at least one extended collection of work which demonstrates that students can sustain work from initial starting points to the realisation of intentions.

**Externally set assignment 40%** - Includes 10 hours of supervised time (exam) following a preparatory period. Marked by us as a school and moderated by AQA. Students are required to produce a personal response and will be given a choice of seven different starting points. They must select and respond to one starting point from their chosen title and show evidence of all four assessment objectives. Students will have from the start of January in Year 11 to prepare for the external practical examination in April/May in which they will be required to produce a personal response to the initial starting point.

# GCSE Latin

## Aims of the course

- To develop a good level of competence in comprehending and translating Latin
- To enable students to read and appreciate Latin literature in the original and to understand its literary and historical significance and value

## Examination Board: OCR (J282)

## Course content and assessment

We consolidate and develop understanding of Latin grammar and vocabulary, and of the translation and comprehension skills learnt at KS3.

We study Latin Verse Literature: an extract from Virgil's epic poem the Aeneid, in which Juno, queen of the gods, becomes angry at the Trojan hero Aeneas, and persuades the King of the Winds to unleash a storm upon Aeneas' refugee fleet, driving them towards the rocky coast of Africa.

For the Latin Prose Literature paper, we read the sardonic Roman historian Tacitus' vivid account of the fall of Messalina, third wife of the Emperor Claudius, as well as Pliny's account of a day in the life of his polymath uncle, who was both a successful politician and Rome's greatest natural historian.

All papers are externally assessed at the end of the two-year course:

**Paper 1:** Language: 1 hour 30 minutes (50% of GCSE)

**Paper 2:** Prose Literature: 1 hour (25% of GCSE)

**Paper 3:** Verse Literature: 1 hour (25% of GCSE)

We regularly offer a trip to Rome and the Bay of Naples area for Year 11 Latin GCSE students, visiting the Colosseum, the Roman Forum and the Pantheon, as well as Ostia Antica, Pompeii, Herculaneum and Mount Vesuvius.

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

By studying Latin, you will develop analytical skills, logic, literary appreciation, a deeper understanding of grammar and vocabulary, and a facility for learning other languages (especially European). Latin combines well with all other subjects, both at GCSE and at A-Level. It has links with French and Spanish, shares logical skills with maths, enhances the study of English Literature, ties in with humanities, and is an excellent complement to sciences.

A Latin qualification marks you out as an academic candidate with proven abilities in language and logic. It is great for your CV and your university application! A-Level Latin students have gone on to study medicine, and subjects such as languages, natural sciences, maths, computer science, English and history. BHS Latin students have gone on to study classics (Latin and Ancient Greek language and civilisation) at Oxford, King's College London, Bristol and Durham.

The range of job opportunities available to classicists is very broad and includes law, civil service, journalism, museum curating, marketing, advertising and teaching.

# GCSE Music

## About the course

GCSE Music is about performing, composing and analysing music. It covers these elements in a wide variety of musical styles – popular music, world music and western classical music. If you are passionate about music, then this course is for you!

**Examination Board:** eduqas (C660QS).

## Course content and assessment

During the course you will:

- Perform, both solo and in an ensemble (30%)
- Listen to and learn about a wide range of musical styles from different periods (40%)
- Compose music (30%)

### Assessment:

**Appraising (40%)** - Learning about the musical elements is taught through the context of four areas of study as well as two set works. These will be analysed during the two-year course. The examination will be taken in the summer of the second year and will include questions based on both familiar and unfamiliar music. Extracts covered include repertoire from instrumental music, vocal music, jazz, film music as well as popular music.

**Performing (30%)** - You will perform two pieces of music with a combined duration of 4 minutes. One piece will be a solo performance. The other piece will be with other students or with your teacher. All performances will be recorded in school.

**Composing/Arranging (30%)** - You will compose two pieces of music. One piece will be composed according to a brief set by EDUQAS, and one can be determined by you. These can be in a wide range of styles, including 12-bar blues, pop song, African drumming, variations and rondo.

### Course requirements:

- For the performing aspect of the course, you should be having weekly instrumental/vocal lessons and be at least Grade 3 standard at the start of Year 10 – you will only be assessed on one instrument
- You will find it useful to have some basic knowledge of music theory and you need to be able to read music by the start of the course
- For the composition element of the course, basic KS3 keyboard skills are useful

## Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities

Music is an excellent preparation for further musical study and a solid foundation for A-Level Music. You may wish to take GCSE Music for its own sake, perhaps to form the basis of a future interest. There are many transferable skills in music that will help you in various job roles. Alternatively, you may wish to go into a job where it is useful to have had experience of music or where you will need to use some of the life skills developed during this course. Previous students have gone on to pursue careers in media, pop groups, music production as well as law, medicine and veterinary science.

# *GCSE Physical Education*

## *Aims of the course*

To develop knowledge and understanding of a wide range of theoretical content which will be assessed by two exam papers, coursework, and a practical element.

**Examination Board:** AQA (8582), full course.

## *Course content and assessment*

**Paper 1:** The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.

30% of total marks (1 hour 15 mins written paper).

The theoretical content looks at the human body and focuses on the structure and functions of the musculoskeletal system and cardio-respiratory system in relation to movement in physical activity and sport. Students will also develop their understanding of basic biomechanics looking at movement analysis incorporating the use of lever systems, planes and axes of movement. The theoretical content also focuses on aspects of training looking at anaerobic and aerobic exercise and the sport and effects of exercise on the body. Further aspects of physical training are considered focusing on the various components of fitness for sport.

**Paper 2:** Psychological and Socio-Cultural Influences in physical activity and sport.

30% of total marks (1 hour 15 minutes).

Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the psychological factors that can affect performers in physical activity and sport, developing their understanding of basic information processing models, and how guidance and feedback can have an impact on performance. Students will also develop their knowledge and understanding of the socio-cultural factors that impact on physical activity and sport, and the impact of sport on society. Students will focus on the engagement patterns of different social groups in physical activity and sport and will look at the commercialisation of physical activity and sport including media, sponsorship and technology in sport. The ethical and socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport will also be identified focusing on the use of performance enhancing drugs and incidents of hooliganism. Students will also consider the physical, emotional and social health, fitness and well-being of performers.

**Practical Content** - 40% of total marks, assessed by teachers and moderated by AQA. Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity). Students will also complete an analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

The course provides an ideal stepping stone for the A-Level Physical Education course offered in the sixth form and is a valuable foundation for many other subjects. Possible future careers include sports psychology, physiotherapy, sports journalism, sports technology, sports science, bio-mechanics, sport and law, sports coaching and teaching.

# *GCSE Religious Studies*

*"It's taught me about different points of view and how others may feel about ethical debates in the world right now."*

## *Aims of the course*

- You will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling you to develop your own attitudes towards religious issues.
- RS will challenge the way you think about, and respond to, key ethical issues and controversies in the world today through two of the six world faiths.

You will also:

- develop knowledge and understanding of religious responses to moral issues
- investigate and respond to the fundamental questions of life including questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- develop evaluation skills and the ability to form a logically developed argument
- develop effective communication skills
- develop an understanding of key philosophical and religious concepts.

## *Examination Board: AQA (8062)*

## *Course content and assessment*

The syllabus is divided in two parts:

**Part 1:** The Study of Religions (Year 10 Christianity/Y11 Judaism):

Beliefs and teachings (Nature of God, Incarnation) and Practices (Pilgrimage, Festivals).

**Part 2:** Thematic Studies:

The themes section of the paper is a chance to explore how faith can influence our actions and opinions on topical issues. Throughout the course, we explore what it means to be religious today and the impact on family, society and international relationships.

We will study and discuss the following themes: origin of the universe, origin of human life, pollution, abortion, sexual relationships before and outside marriage, family, divorce, war and terrorism.

There will be regular tests in lessons to consolidate learning and assess progress. The final assessment is by written examination at the end of Year 11.

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

An understanding of religion and ethics in such a multi-faith world is hugely beneficial in many careers and can help make you a more well-rounded and empathetic individual. This is particularly relevant to roles in the public sector, such as social care, teaching and the police but also in corporate settings requiring people management skills, such as human resources. The Aspects of the Thematic Studies unit are pertinent to medical ethics discussed and applied in the medical and research field.

# GCSE Spanish

*“As a Language GCSE student, you learn to not only converse in a different language but to understand that language’s culture and traditions.”*

A well-established school trip abroad is offered to enable plenty of practice and exposure to the culture.

## *Aims of the course*

- To develop the appropriate language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.
- To be fully immersed in the language and culture of Spain through cultural visits.

**Examination Board:** Edexcel (1SP1).

## *Course content and assessment*

Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about the themes below relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where Spanish is spoken.

- **My personal world**
- **Lifestyle and wellbeing**
- **My neighborhood**
- **Media and technology**
- **Studying and my future**
- **Travel and tourism**

Students will sit all their exams at the end of the course. Each skill is worth 25% of the GCSE.

There are three (higher tier) written exams – listening (1 hour), reading (1 hour) and writing (1 hour 20 minutes) – and one (higher tier) spoken non-exam assessment (10-12 minutes plus preparation time).

## *Beyond GCSE and future careers opportunities*

If you like travelling, literature, films or music from other countries, learning a language will help your appreciation and understanding of these. Having a language on your Personal Statement for university shows a student who can converse, work in a team and deal with spontaneity. Later, it can also give you an advantage in your career if you work for an international firm or a company with international customers or contacts. Many linguists move on to careers in translation, research, interpretation, teaching, analysis and more.

A photograph of two female students in blue blazers and white shirts looking at a computer screen. The student on the left is in profile, looking towards the right. The student on the right is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Life enhancing subjects

# *Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) education*

## *Aims of the course*

The school uses the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum to promote students' personal, social, emotional and physical health and economic development. All students will be taught to celebrate diversity and interrogate social norms and challenge stereotypes. Our curriculum(s) will help our students to be tolerant and show respect to others; our students will be taught how to be good citizens with qualities and attributes they need to thrive as healthy, independent and responsible members of society. The aims of the PSHE curriculum are as follows:

- Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Promote difference and acceptance.
- Allow students to learn about topics of a sensitive nature without fear of judgement, stigma or embarrassment.
- Help develop the qualities and attributes needed to thrive as individuals, family members and members of both the school and wider society, including taking responsibility for their own behaviour and showing initiative.
- Provide the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to manage lives now and in the future.
- To support students in staying safe from exploitation and abuse.
- Allow all students to contribute and benefit from learning and discussions.
- Help students to support one another and themselves as they grow and learn.

## *Course content and assessment*

- A careers education programme which supports the options process and introduces students to possible career choices.
- Study skills.
- Debating and discussion forums.
- Relationships and sex education (including FGM, STIs, and issues around internet safety).
- Drugs and alcohol education.
- Financial awareness (personal finances , including credit and debt).
- Talks and workshops.
- Mindfulness.

Progress is assessed informally through the development of the 'whole person' within the context of PSHE lessons.

# *Religious, Philosophy and Ethics (core)*

## *Aims of the course*

- To allow students to express their personal responses and informed insights on fundamental questions and issues in our world.
- To develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding of ethical, philosophical and religious and issues in the world.
- To encourage discussion about philosophical and religious responses to moral issues.
- To promote critical analysis and evaluation of student's own and other's beliefs and practices.

## *Course content and assessment*

This course will be covered throughout Year 7 – 11 and covers the following topics which aim to complement personal development as well as other subjects covered in the curriculum. A range of belief systems will be looked at so as to be inclusive and relevant for all.

Religious and Philosophical attitudes toward:

- Abortion
- War and terrorism
- Nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction
- AI
- Identity
- IVF
- Organ donation
- Plato's Cave and conspiracy theories.
- Euthanasia
- Life after death

Lessons will involve plenty of discussion, exchanging views and experiences as appropriate, and looking at different philosophical and religious sources to understand both similarity and diversity across theories and religions. RPE requires students to listen to and evaluate some provocative and opposing viewpoints.

This course will enhance and develop students' comprehension and critical analysis of key issues affecting our lives as individuals and a society at national and international level. It therefore builds key skills and knowledge needed in a wide range of subjects and careers. This course delivers aspects of spiritual and moral education as well as contributing to personal and social education. It also gives students an understanding of other cultures and beliefs in the contemporary world.

# Physical Education (core)

## Aims of the course

The national curriculum for physical education aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities
- are physically active for sustained periods of time
- engage in competitive sports and activities.

## Course content and assessment

Year 10 - 11: Students have two, one-hour lessons of PE per week during which they are provided with opportunities to tackle complex and demanding physical activities. They should get involved in a range of activities that develop personal fitness and promote an active, healthy lifestyle. Students are offered a choice of three pathways, each of which focuses on a particular area of the national curriculum.

The aesthetics route focuses on students developing their technique and improve their performance in competitive sports, e.g., athletics and gymnastics, or other physical activities for example, dance. The games route affords students the opportunity to use and develop a variety of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in team and individual games for example, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders, rugby and tennis. The third group focuses on a combination of activities from the above. In addition, all students are encouraged to continue to take part regularly in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs.

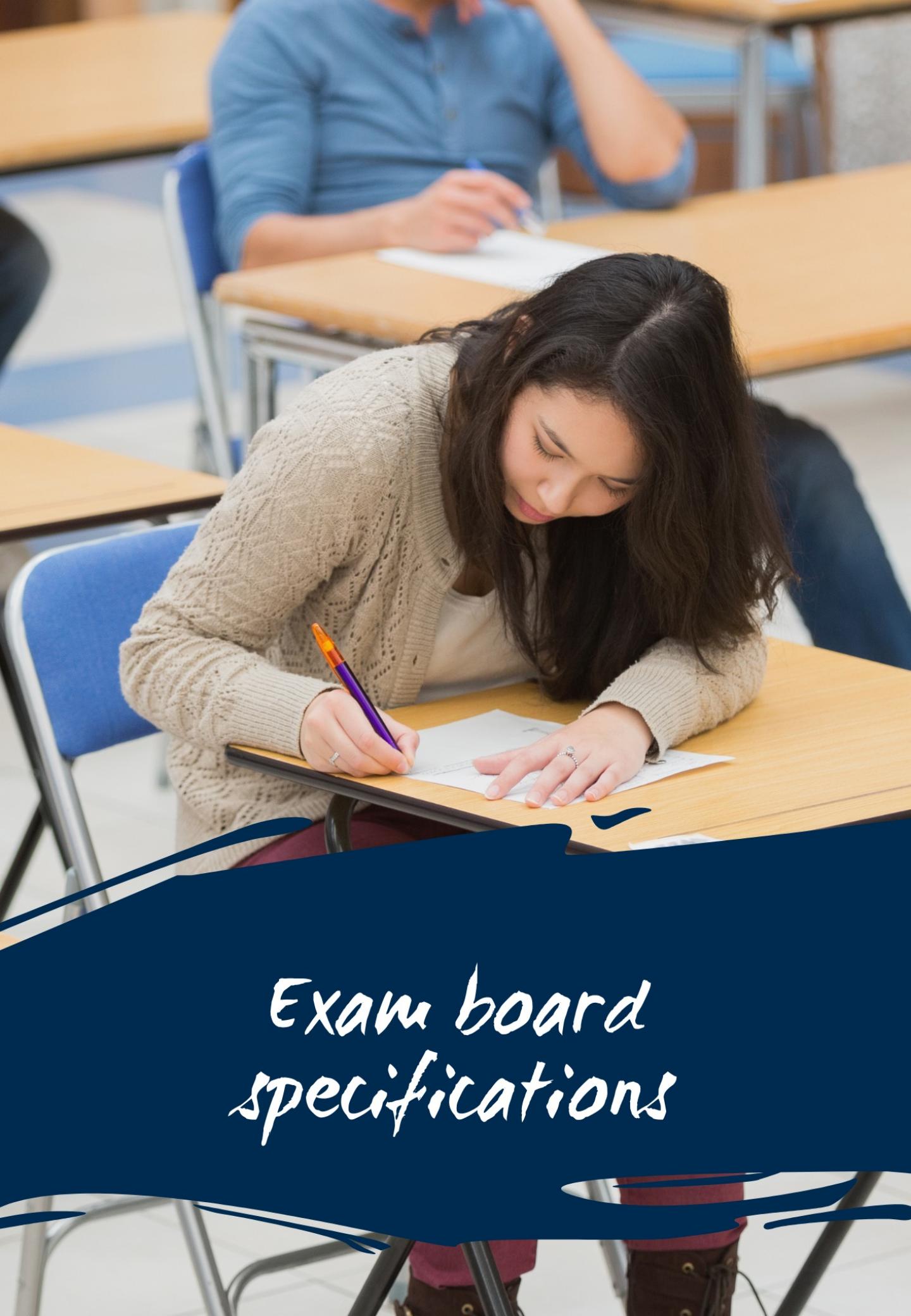
In Years 10– 11, we try to broaden students' horizons further by offering different options to those available in Years 7 - 9. These options include yoga, fitness gym, badminton, *zumba*, *veraflow*, body balance, rugby, table tennis, team building, indoor games, rounders and volleyball. If there is enough interest, we will also bring in specialist instructors or make use of local facilities for activities such as self-defence and squash, which incur a small charge.

Year 11 students can also participate in the Level 2 Sports Leaders course and gain the qualification. Students are encouraged to participate in at least one activity in addition to lesson time, for example, by attending clubs and practices at school or by using local sports and recreational facilities in their own personal leisure time.

Students are assessed by direct continual observation, supported by recorded marks or comments for performance and participation in clubs and teams.

## Beyond Year 11

In Year 12, Wednesday afternoon is dedicated to PE and games, with students able to participate in a range of activities including badminton, volleyball, fitness gym, yoga, body balance, rounders, tennis and the Level 3 Sports Leaders Course. Hockey and netball teams and fixtures are also run during this time. Students are permitted to use the on-site fitness gym during non-contact teaching time. If you are particularly interested in sport, we offer A-Level Physical Education. The course covers anatomy, physiology, psychology of sport, sociology of sport and the history of sport. We also offer A-Level Dance.

A photograph of students in a classroom taking an exam. In the foreground, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a cable-knit beige sweater, is leaning over a wooden desk, writing on a white exam paper with a purple pen. In the background, another student in a blue shirt is also writing. The desks are arranged in rows. A large, dark blue graphic shape is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text.

# Exam board specifications

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Specification Number</i>	<i>Exam Board</i>
Art, Craft and Design	8201/2	AQA
Biology	8461	AQA
Business	1BS0	Edexcel
Chemistry	8462	AQA
Computer Science	J277	OCR
Dance	8236	AQA
Drama	1DR0	Edexcel
English Language	8700	AQA
English Literature	8702	AQA
Food Prep and Nutrition	8585	AQA
French	1FR1	Edexcel
Geography	8035	AQA
Graphic Communication	8203	AQA
History	C100QS	Eduqas
Latin	J282	OCR
Mathematics	1MA1	Edexcel
Music	C660QS	Eduqas
PE	8582	AQA
Physics	8463	AQA
Religious Studies	8062	AQA
Spanish	1SP1	Edexcel

A photograph of three schoolgirls in blue blazers walking outdoors. They are wearing blue blazers over patterned shirts and dark skirts. The girl in the center has a red and white crest on her blazer. They are carrying backpacks and smiling. The background shows a modern building with a grey roof.

Your questions

## *How many GCSEs will students take?*

Most students will take 10 GCSEs during Year 10 and 11.

## *Will students still do PE each week if they do not choose to do GCSE PE?*

Yes, students will be timetabled to take core (non-GCSE) PE.

## *Will students do PSHE in Year 10?*

Yes, students will continue to do PSHE – there is not a GCSE for this subject.

## *Can students sit their GCSE exams in Year 10?*

No. We do not offer early entry for any of our subjects (i.e. Year 10 exams) in-keeping with national changes and the increased rigor of the new GCSEs.

## *What is the deadline for submitting GCSE preferences?*

The deadline for returning the online form is 0900 on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2026. Students should take their time to think about choices. Options are not allocated on a first come first served basis so there is no rush to submit forms early.

## *How likely is it that students will be given their 'reserve' subject from their open choice?*

We ask all students to choose one reserve subject in case their combination of subjects is not possible for some reason. Rest assured we will always do what we can to give students their first choice wherever possible.

## *Who should make the final decision regarding GCSE preferences? Parents or the student?*

We strongly advise that students should lead the process as much as possible. The greater the ownership and control students feel in choosing their options, the more likely they are to fulfil their potential at GCSE.

## *Is it possible to study A-level Business without studying Business Studies for GCSE?*

Yes. Any student who wishes to study A-Level Business does not have to have studied GCSE Business. However, a Grade 6 in GCSE Maths and a Grade 6 in GCSE Business/ English/ a humanities subject is required.

## *If I am unhappy with one of my option subjects once I have started the course, can I change to another option?*

It is very difficult to change courses due to operational restrictions, e.g. timetables, group size and content already covered; hence the importance of making well informed choices before making a final decision.