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Y9

Options Booklet 2018



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Making your choices

You are about to embark on an exciting phase of your time at Stroud High School. You will be making choices about the subjects you wish to study for GCSE, and therefore designing your own curriculum. You will have opportunity to build on your enthusiasms and strengths, and also plan for your future. Your GCSE qualifications will play an important part in accessing your future pathway: Further Education, Higher Education, Apprenticeships/School Leaver programmes or employment.

Making your choices may be challenging, and therefore support will be available for you in this important decision making process. Firstly this booklet should give you lots of information about the GCSE subjects you are considering, alongside this your subject teachers will give you an insight into studying their subject. Secondly the Key Stage 4 Options Fair, on Thursday 25 January 2018, is an opportunity for you and your parents/carers to discuss specific questions with subject teachers. Your parents/carers and tutors will play a key role in helping you ensure that you are able to make the best choices for you. Your most recent report will also be useful in identifying your strengths, as will the feedback you received at Year 9 Parents' Evening on Thursday 4 or 11 January 2018. Finally you will receive careers guidance in groups from the Schools' Careers Service on either 4 or 11 January, and they will also be available to give individual careers support at the Key Stage 4 Options Fair.

There are four important factors to consider when making your choices:

1. **Enthusiasm** – choose subjects you enjoy, you will be studying them for two years and enjoyment usually leads to success!
2. **Strengths** – consider your strengths based on your last report. A secure foundation in a subject at the end of Year 9 will provide a good basis for success at GCSE.
3. **Breadth** – give yourself the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills, they will support you in the future.
4. **Future** – research which subjects are most useful for the pathway you wish to follow in the future. This may seem early, but even if you are considering a few different pathways it is best to make sure your GCSE decisions will support you. There is comprehensive information available in the [Careers and Futures](#) section of the Stroud High website. If you are considering Higher Education research subjects on the UCAS website www.ucas.co.uk. The Sixth Form prospectus will also give useful information about preparation for choosing A Level subjects, and their entry requirements

English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The government announced a proposal in June 2015 that all students starting Year 7 from September 2015 onwards would need to study the EBacc subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- History or Geography
- Sciences (including Computer Science)
- A Language

It is **not compulsory** for students choosing their options this academic year to study all of the EBacc subjects and it is not a requirement for Higher Education. The majority of our students, as a result of making their own choices, do study all of the EBacc subjects. The advice at SHS is to consider the four important factors above first and foremost.

What subjects will I be studying?

There are a number of subjects all students will study. We provide a core curriculum upon which to build your subject choices. The subjects are examined at GCSE:

- English
- Mathematics
- Combined science

There are also a number of non-examined courses :

- Core Ethics
- Physical Education
- Personal Development
- Citizenship

What are my Option Choices?

You are fortunate at Stroud High that we construct our options blocks around your choices, and we will endeavour to ensure that all students have their preferred choices. We cannot guarantee that all students will be able to study their preferred options, and for this reason it is important that you provide a carefully considered reserve choice. The option form will be emailed to you, and it is important that you follow the instructions carefully and complete it correctly.

All students will choose **4** option subjects, and one reserve choice from the following:

Art and Design - Fine Art or Graphics
Art and Design - Photography
Business Studies
Computer Science
Design Technology
Drama
Food Preparation and Nutrition
French
Geography
German
History
Music
Philosophy and Ethics
Physical Education
Separate Sciences
Spanish
Textile design

Core Curriculum – Examined Subjects



English Language and English Literature

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Paper 1: Exploration of Creative Reading and Writing	Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel
Section A: Reading 40 marks 25% You will answer 4 questions about an extract from a piece of prose literature : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 short form question (4 marks) • 2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks) • 1 extended question (20 marks) 	Section A: Shakespeare 30 marks [+4 for AO4] 20% You will answer 1 question about Much Ado About Nothing . You will be required to write in detail about an extract, and to write about the play as a whole
Section B: Writing 40 marks 25% You will answer 1 extended writing question, choosing between writing to describe or narrate (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)	Section B: The 19th-century novel 30 marks 20% You will answer one question about Jane Eyre . You will be required to write in detail about an extract, and to write about the novel as a whole
Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives Exam 50% 80 marks 1 hour 45 minutes	Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry Exam 60% 96 marks 2 hours 15 minutes
Section A: Reading 40 marks 25% You will answer 4 questions about 2 linked non-fiction texts : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 short form question (4 marks) • 2 longer form questions (2 x 12 marks) • 1 extended question (16 marks) 	Section A: Modern texts 30 marks [+4 for AO4] 21% You will answer 1 essay question from a choice of two about Lord of the Flies
Section B: Writing 40 marks 25% You will answer 1 extended writing question, writing to present a viewpoint (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)	Section B: Poetry 30 marks 19% You will answer one comparative question on 1 named poem (this will be printed on the paper) and 1 other poem chosen from the Power and Conflict section of the anthology
Non-Examination Assessment: Spoken Language You will give a formal presentation and respond to questioning. This will be assessed at some point through the course by your teacher. This is a separate endorsement, which does not contribute to your GCSE grade	Section C: Unseen Poetry 32 marks 20% You will answer 1 question on 1 unseen poem (24 marks) and 1 question comparing this poem with a 2nd unseen poem (8 marks)

Future pathways

English underpins all aspects of academic studies and is essential in all aspects of work. Students who have studied English in the past have gone on to study the Law, Media, Politics, Journalism and Creative Writing, but this is not a full list of possibilities.

Student's view

"English is a very creative subject and fun whilst refining our skills. We loved the competitive elements and studying quality literature in depth. We have even been introduced to some A Level approaches in some lessons."

Mathematics

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Non Calculator	33%
Paper 2	Calculator	33%
Paper 3	Calculator	33%

Course content

The aims of the course are to enable students to:

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions
- Comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context

The assessments of these aims will cover the following broad content headings:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and measures
- Probability
- Statistics

Future pathways

The purpose of the qualification is to provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment, to give students the appropriate mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to help them progress to a full range of courses in further and higher education. This includes A Level Mathematics courses as well as A Level and undergraduate courses in other disciplines such as Biology, Geography and Psychology, where the understanding and application of mathematics is crucial.

Student's view

"Maths at KS4 is fun and the teachers are really supportive. The optional Additional Maths qualification is for you if you find maths easy or if you want a challenge."

Combined Science

All students study Science to GCSE level. Students can choose to study Combined Science (previously known as 'Double Award'), which is part of the Core Curriculum and counts as two GCSEs. Alternatively students can choose to study the sciences separately (three GCSEs) as part of their option choices. The students studying the separate sciences will be allocated additional time for Science, in comparison to those studying Combined Science.

Examination board: AQA

Assessment:

All examinations take place at the end of the course. There is no controlled assessment but there are 17 core practical tasks (to be carried out in normal lessons) that will be examined in the final exams.

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Biology 1	17%
Paper 2	Biology 2	17%
Paper 3	Chemistry 1	17%
Paper 4	Chemistry 2	17%
Paper 5	Physics 1	17%
Paper 6	Physics 2	17%
Practical Assessment There are 17 compulsory experiments that are carried out in normal lessons. These are assessed in the final exams	Core Practical tasks	15% of the exam questions will test students' practical skills and knowledge

Course content

Biology: Cells and control, genetics, natural selection and genetic modification, ecosystems and material cycles, structures and their functions, animal coordination, control and homeostasis, exchange and transport in animals, health, disease and the development of medicines.

Chemistry: Formulae, equations and hazards, atomic structure, the periodic table, ionic bonding, covalent bonding, types of substance, calculations involving masses, states of matter, methods of separating and purifying substances, acids, obtaining and using metals, electrolytic processes, reversible reactions and equilibria, rates of reaction, fuels, heat energy changes in chemical reactions, earth and atmospheric science.

Physics: Motion, forces and conservation of energy, waves, light and the electromagnetic spectrum, particle model, radioactivity, space physics, energy - forces doing work, forces and their effects, electricity and circuits, magnetism and the motor effect, forces and matter.

Future pathways

You will learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem solving skills in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments. The analytical and critical thinking skills developed through a compulsory science education will benefit students who wish to go on and study other disciplines such as Humanities, the Law or Psychology, alongside those in the Sciences.

Student's view

"The Science staff are very supportive and prepare interesting and exciting lessons. I have found the Learning Community really helpful with my revision."

Option Subjects



Art and Design - Fine Art or Graphics

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Portfolio of work	Including more than one project. The themes are set by the teacher, but students are encouraged to make a personal response.	60%
Exam	Externally set tasks culminating in a 10 hour exam, during which students produce a final piece of work.	40%

Course Content

Both courses are taught alongside each other and students can select either Fine Art or Graphics on commencing the course.

Fine Art GCSE gives you the opportunity to develop your technical and creative skills in a number of disciplines within the subject area. You will be taught how to improve your drawing and painting skills, as well as explore a variety of processes including printmaking, textiles, photography, three dimensional work, mixed media, sculpture and opportunities for digital imaging.

Graphics GCSE enables students to gain a broad skills base including design, creative ICT applications, Photoshop and use of mixed media which equips students to go on to Graphics courses as well as Design courses. The course will involve working to a design brief, identifying and exploring problem, planning courses of action, using appropriate equipment and materials, designing and working in a variety of media including computer graphics. Students will be introduced to, and required to work in, one or more area(s) of Graphic Design, such as advertising, illustration, computer aided design, packaging and typography. From this experience students can select one or more areas to develop as they produce the range of work needed to fulfil this subject's GCSE requirements. Students may also explore overlapping areas and combinations of areas.

In both Fine Art and Graphics, the course is prescriptive at the start of Year 10 and includes drawing activities exploring the formal elements. This is followed by a series of workshops, teaching a number of different processes and skills. You are then given the opportunity to develop a theme in your own individual creative way. Later, projects will give you even more freedom in the direction that you take your theme and the type of art that you create. In Year 11 you will complete your coursework projects before choosing from a number of themes to investigate in an individual and creative way in preparation for a final piece of work which is completed in a 10 hour exam. Investigating the work of significant and contemporary artists and craftspeople is an integral part of the course and plays a large part in aiding you with the development of your own work.

You will be expected to be highly motivated and push yourself towards ambitious, creative work of a high standard. It is not just about being "good" at drawing or painting it is about having an interest in all things visual and wanting to learn more.

Future pathways

Art and Design GCSE can lead to an A Level in Art and Design or equivalent. There are a vast number of courses at university under the umbrella of Art and Design including fashion

design, graphic design, fine art, illustration and photography. Some possible careers in Art and Design are advertising designer, animator, art therapist, fashion illustrator, fashion stylist, interior designer, silversmith/jeweller, teacher, theatre designer and typographer. This course is also ideal for students wishing to embark on a career in architecture, advertising or as a supplement to other subjects to develop lateral, creative thinking and problem solving skills.

Student's view

"Art GCSE is really fun and the lessons are inspiring! My favourite part so far is when we produce case studies on particular artists, we get to experiment and explore the artists' techniques."

Art and Design - Photography

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Portfolio of work	Including more than one project. The themes are set by the teacher, but students are encouraged to make a personal response.	60%
Exam	Externally set tasks culminating in a 10 hour exam, during which students produce a final piece of work.	40%

Course content

In Photography GCSE, you will be taught how to improve your skills in using a digital camera and other lens-based media and computer software to complete a series of creative projects. The course will involve researching the different genres of photography from documentary/photo-journalism to commercial and fine art photography. The main emphasis will be on experimentation and development of ideas towards personal outcomes that shows a strong visual and conceptual understanding. You will develop a portfolio that will be used as the platform for documenting your preparatory studies/developmental work.

The course is prescriptive at the start of Year 10 and includes Photoshop techniques and exploring the formal elements. This is followed by a series of workshops, teaching a number of different processes and skills. You are then given the opportunity to develop a theme in your own individual creative way. Later, projects will give you even more freedom in the direction that you take your theme and the type of Photography that you create. In Year 11 you will complete your coursework projects before choosing from a number of themes to investigate in an individual and creative way in preparation for a final piece of work which is completed in a 10 hour exam. Investigating the work of significant and contemporary photographers and artists is an integral part of the course and plays a large part in aiding you with the development of your own work. You will be expected to be highly motivated and push yourself towards ambitious, creative work of a high standard.

Future pathways

Photography develops one's ability to think creatively, through a rhythm of research, development of ideas, practical experimental and formulaic processes, reflection, critical review and analysis and evaluation. It will develop skills to solve problems effectively, which is important in any area of study where critical thinking is essential. Photography could lead to academic or vocational degrees relating to press or fashion photography, photojournalism, fine art, editing, styling, the film industry, forensic science or curating.

Student's view

"Photography is an interesting and enjoyable subject. We have had the opportunity to choose from a range of titles to focus on. I've learnt so many Photography and Photoshop skills. An inspiring course to choose!"

Business Studies

Examination board – OCR

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Business activity, marketing and people	50%
Paper 2	Operations, Finance and influences on Business	50%

Course content

Business Studies uses a variety of real business contexts to consider issues and challenges facing entrepreneurs and commercial organisations. Students have the opportunity to develop as enterprising individuals with a practical set of key skills, including problem solving and decision-making, interpreting and analysing data and more.

The course is essentially split into ‘functions of a business’. You will start by learning how businesses are set up, organised and owned. The departments within a typical business – marketing, human resource management (people management), accounting and finance and operations management (organising and managing production) – are then studied. You will also learn about the external environment in which a business operates including how the economy, law, competition and society affect the way in which businesses operate.

Future pathways

Business Studies is a varied and interesting course that will give you an excellent introduction to a broad range of topics relevant to the working world. You will gain knowledge and skills that will be useful in whatever you do in the future whether it is creating a small local business, working in a multi-million pound organisation, following professional career as a surgeon or – importantly – managing your own personal finances. Studying Business Studies GCSE will provide both the knowledge and understanding of how the business world operates and our own role in it.

Student’s view

“I really enjoy Business Studies and want to continue this subject at A Level as I find it’s a lesson which I love to participate in because I feel the topics we study are relevant and exciting. My knowledge about business has developed and I have learnt some really important skills which help me to understand current issues, but also ones I will face later on in life with regards to my job and possibly opening a business.”

Computer Science

Examination board – OCR

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Project	Programming Project completed in class totalling 20 hours work	20%
Exam	Computer Systems – 90 mins	40%
	Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming – 90 mins	40%

Course content

The GCSE Computer Science course is very student-centred and hands-on, and students will lead their own learning, facilitated and supported by their teacher. This means that most of each lesson will be spent 'doing' rather than listening.

Class time will be split to cover both theory material (working towards the written examinations) and practical project-work; ensuring lessons are interesting, engaging and fast-paced.

There are two theory modules each worth 40% of the final marks and assessed through written examination:

- **Computer Systems** covering hardware, structure, storage, security and ethical/legal concerns
- **Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming** covering computational logic, languages and programming techniques

The practical programming project is worth 20% of the final mark and is internally marked and externally moderated. The programming language we will use is Python, and the practical unit covers the whole range of skills required to develop a project from scratch including programming techniques, analysis, design, development, testing and evaluation/conclusions.

Future pathways

Computer Science allows you to enter a wide range of jobs within the IT/Computing sector for example:

- Database administrator
- Games developer
- Information systems manager
- IT consultant
- Multimedia programmer
- Network engineer
- Systems analyst
- Systems developer
- Web designer/developer

The skills you develop from studying this subject are transferable skills and can be used and applied in many other subjects.

Design Technology

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Written examination; 2 hours; 100 marks	50%
NEA (Coursework)	Design and Make; 30–35 hours; prototype and a portfolio of 20 pages	50%

Course content

For both exam and coursework content:

- Core technical principles
- Specialist technical principles
- Designing and making principles

Non-exam assessment (NEA – coursework) is a substantial design and make task taking 30–35 hours approximately. Students will produce a working prototype and a portfolio of evidence (max 20 pages) including investigating, designing, making, analysing and evaluating. Students will use their creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values.

The Design and Technology GCSE is modern and relevant, so students can learn about contemporary technologies, materials and processes, as well as established practices. Imaginative practical work is at its heart. Students will gain a broad understanding of technical, designing and making principles. There are no restrictions on materials when making prototypes so outcomes can be developed into a three dimensional product using a resistant material (i.e. wood, metal and plastics); for example jewellery boxes, children's toys and clocks or for the more graphically inclined the project may result in a card-based promotional item such as wedding stationary, point of sale display or board game. Students will choose a brief that inspires them and will spend approximately 35 hours producing a design folder fulfilling the brief that they have chosen. This folder will follow the traditional format of research, designs, developments, modelling, testing, making and evaluating. Communication and presentation of this folder is down to the student's preference and is limited to 20 A3 pages. To support this folder and to prepare for the exam, students will study the theory behind the subject they have chosen.

Students will learn skills in:

- Design presentation skills including CAD
- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Systems approach to designing
- Mechanical devices
- Materials and their working properties
- How products are designed, made and packaged
- Studying existing 3 dimensional products for different market
- Construction techniques for a variety of materials

Future pathways

The UK creative industries as a whole contribute £76.9 billion a year and the creative sector as a whole is growing at three times the rate of the wider UK. The creative industries are outperforming the UK economy as a whole, and design is a key engine within this sector. Jobs include; engineering, architecture, model maker, set and stage designer, garden designer, furniture designer, product designer, graphic designer, web designer, teacher, lecturer, sculptor, entrepreneur or artist.

Student's view

"Product Design has enabled me to express my creativity and to communicate my ideas effectively. I have thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of exploring materials, tools/equipment and new technologies in a lively and inspiring environment. I now feel confident to develop innovative products for the future and have developed the problem solving skill that employers are looking for."

Drama

Examination board – Eduqas

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Devising Theatre	Assessment involving creating devised drama alongside a portfolio of supporting evidence	40%
Performing from a Text	Assessment by a visiting examiner of the performance of extracts from a set text	20%
Interpreting Theatre	1 hour 30 minute written paper concerning the study of a second set text and a live theatre performance	40%

Course content

The course offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form. In the practical components students may specialise in performing, lighting design, sound design, set design or costume design (including hair, makeup). Whilst there is a fundamental emphasis on the practical elements, assessment also takes the form of written portfolios and a written exam worth 40% of the final result.

- Students will research and explore the work of influential practitioners and genres, working collaboratively to create their own devised drama in response to a stimulus
- Students develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design by presenting a showcase of extracts from a performance text
- Students will explore practically a performance text to demonstrate their theoretical knowledge and understanding of drama
- Students will analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance

Future pathways

Drama offers students the opportunity to explore a range of creative as well as critical thinking skills while engaging and encouraging them to become imaginative and confident performers and designers. It implements and instils key transferable skills applicable to a variety of careers. Students will learn to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, think analytically and evaluate effectively.

Drama students go on to pursue careers in performing arts, the entertainment industry, media, politics, teaching, events management etc. while universities view Drama A Level in conjunction with other appropriate subjects as acceptable for study in Medicine and the Law.

Student's view

"Drama is, most importantly, fun and exciting! It builds up your confidence. It inspires not only artistic skills but also life skills like being able to speak articulately and improving your memory by learning lines! You feel comfortable in lessons as everyone is so friendly and enthusiastic, so the class becomes a family. We enjoy Drama because we can choose whether we want to act or design, giving us a lot of freedom to personalise our learning. Everything is taught in an enjoyable way – no Drama lesson is ever boring!"

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Examination board – WJEC

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Written Examination	Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition	50%
Controlled Assessment: Food Preparation and Nutrition in Action	Assessment 1: Food Investigation	15%
	Assessment 2: Food Preparation	35%

Course content

During the course students will study the following topics:

- **Food commodities:** The working characteristics of each food commodity, experiment with the commodity to explore physical and chemical changes that occur as a result of given actions the working characteristics of each commodity, with reference to the skill group and techniques
- **Principles of nutrition:** The definitions and role of macro nutrients and micro nutrients in relation to human nutrition
- **Diet and good health:** Energy requirements of individuals, plan balanced diets, calculate energy and nutritional values of recipes, meals and diets
- **The science of food:** The effect of cooking on food, this is where Heston's food science is applied and you learn to develop, adapt and modify recipes in search of perfection. You will also study food spoilage
- **Where food comes from:** Learning about food provenance and food manufacturing
- **Cooking and food preparation:** Factors affecting food choice, food preparation and cooking techniques. Students are given a choice of titles to research for the Controlled Assessment. Both tasks are designed to encourage creativity and enable candidates to plan and carry out investigations, apply skills and knowledge and make a series of dishes. Students use ICT with specific software designed to analyse the nutritional content of their dishes and evaluate the results

Future pathways

Food Preparation and Nutrition teaches you about nutrition, health, lifestyle and high level technical skills in food preparation and cooking. This qualification will prepare you for a variety of career paths, not just those people who want to be a chef, some other potential careers are food product development, nutritionist or dietician, freelance chef, food safety officer, trading standards, TV researcher or producer, home economist (media), journalist, farming/animal welfare, food production or teacher.

Student's view

"Food is amazing because we get to make lots of different dishes. It teaches us useful skills that we can use later in life. It is really interesting and one of my favourite subjects."

French

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Listening	25%
Paper 2	Speaking	25%
Paper 3	Reading	25%
Paper 4	Writing	25%

Course content

The specification covers three distinct themes:

- **Identity and culture:** Me, my family and friends (relationships with family and friends, marriage/partnership); Technology in everyday life (social media, mobile technology); Free-time activities (music, cinema and TV, food and eating out, sport); Customs and festivals in French-speaking countries/communities
- **Local, national, international and global areas of interest:** Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues (charity/voluntary work, healthy/unhealthy living); Global issues (the environment, poverty/homelessness); Travel and tourism
- **Current and future study and employment:** My studies; Life at school/college; Education post-16; Jobs, career choices and ambitions

These themes apply to all four question papers. Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where French is spoken.

GCSE French is all about communication, whether that be by speaking or writing, listening or reading. By the end of the course not only will students have gained a working and useable knowledge of the French language but they will have considered how to communicate clearly using all skills and tools available to them which is vital in our modern world.

Future pathways

The study of a modern foreign language is not only a pathway to a career in languages themselves but it is also of enormous benefit as an additional skill alongside another area of interest or study. Most university courses offer a year of study abroad for those who are equipped to deal with this and a qualification in a language is often used as a deciding factor when selecting students for over-subscribed courses.

Student's view

"Studying French is about learning a lifelong skill. The skills I have learnt in French are useful, I am now teaching myself Russian."

Geography

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Living with the Physical Environment	35%
Paper 2	Challenges in the Human Environment	35%
Paper 3	Geographical Applications	30%

Course content

“Geography is a subject which holds the key to our future” – Michael Palin

Geography is all around us, everywhere. It is everything that naturally occurs on our planet (the study of the physical world, or natural sciences) and everything that humans do to affect our planet (the study of human geography, or the social sciences). It is about people and places – how humans live and interact with their environment. It bridges the gap between the two disciplines. Geographers ask questions and seek to understand the world, to question whether our current way of living is sustainable, and if it's not, to make the right decisions on how to change it. Geographers have a curiosity about the world which makes our planet an exciting place to be.

During the course you will cover the following areas of study:

- Natural Hazards (volcanoes, earthquakes, tropical storms, extreme weather in the UK, climate change)
- Physical Landscapes (Coastal and river)
- The Living World (Ecosystems, tropical rainforests, cold environments)
- Urban Issues and Challenges
- The Changing Economic World
- The Challenge of Resource Management
- Evaluation of a Geographical Issue, including fieldwork (physical and human) and geographical skills

Future pathways

Geography is one of the most dynamic subjects to study. In addition to the varied content, you also learn a range of skills from numeracy and literacy to cartographic, statistical and graphical. You will learn how to formulate fieldwork and interpret your data collection. Geography can therefore take you in any direction you wish to take. It will complement across the curriculum and prepare you for career choices from the environment and sustainability, physical systems, settlement, development, global issues, society and business to using geographical techniques and beyond.

Student's view

“Geography gives you more awareness of the world, whether they are local issues that affect you directly or issues that affect the whole world. I like the fact you get to learn how things work, particularly in the physical world looking at rivers and volcanoes – it's truly amazing. You also get to think about the influence that people have on the earth and what needs to change for the future.”

German

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Listening	25%
Paper 2	Speaking	25%
Paper 3	Reading	25%
Paper 4	Writing	25%

Course content

The specification covers three distinct themes:

- **Identity and culture:** Me, my family and friends (relationships with family and friends, marriage/partnership); Technology in everyday life (social media, mobile technology); Free-time activities (music, cinema and TV, food and eating out, sport); Customs and festivals in German-speaking countries/communities
- **Local, national, international and global areas of interest:** Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues (charity/voluntary work, healthy/unhealthy living); Global issues (the environment, poverty/homelessness); Travel and tourism
- **Current and future study and employment:** My studies; Life at school/college; Education post-16; Jobs, career choices and ambitions

These themes apply to all four question papers. Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where German is spoken.

During the course you will expand your cultural knowledge of German-speaking countries as well as coming away with a fantastic skill for life; communicating in a foreign language, helpful in your career and personal life. You will be able to understand written and spoken German and how to express your ideas and your opinions confidently.

Future pathways

The ability to speak modern foreign languages such as German is a highly sought after and highly regarded skill for university entry and for working in any size of business, from small enterprises to multi-national companies. The ability to express yourself in the language of the country you are in opens up so many possibilities in all areas of work, including medicine, science, engineering, and manufacturing, and further study.

Student's view

"Being able to communicate German opens up so many new doors in industry medicine and business and is a sought-after skill for life."

History

Examination board – Edexcel

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Thematic Study and Historic Environment	30%
Paper 2	Period Study and British Depth Study	40%
Paper 3	Modern Depth Study	30%

Course content

Paper 1	Crime and Punishment Britain (c1000-present) and Whitechapel (c1870-c1900) – crime policing and the inner city
Paper 2	Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588 Superpower Relations and the Cold War (1941-1991)
Paper 3	Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918-1939)

You will learn how to identify similarities and differences, changes and continuities and turning points (significance) in history. You will develop your analytical and evaluative skills together with learning how to explain why things happened and the effects of events. Some work will require you to hone your source skills and assess historian's views of events.

Besides these history-specific skills, this course also provides you with access to transferable skills. These include thinking skills, the ability to work effectively with other people and work well on your own. All these skills are exactly what higher education institutions and future employers are looking for in future undergraduates and employees. GCSE History provides you with the opportunities to show these skills.

Future pathways

Studying GCSE History provides you with the range of transferable skills that employers and higher education institutions want to see. GCSE History supports you applying for careers in professions such as the law, journalism, teaching and business as well as History-specific degree courses and indeed any course that requires the skills outlined earlier. In effect, GCSE History, and more specifically the skills it teaches you, makes you an ideal candidate, whatever career pathway you decide to take!

Student's view

"I find GCSE history very interesting because it gives me a greater understanding on how the past has affected the way we live today. It opens your eyes to different countries' histories and makes you eager to learn more."

Music

Examination board – WJEC Eduqas

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Component 1	Performing	30%
Component 2	Composing	30%
Component 3	Appraising	40%

Course content

This course provides students with a foundation for skills in performing, composing and appraising; covering a range of musical elements, contexts and language. Students will learn how to develop their performing skills individually and in groups, learning to perform with fluency and control. They will develop their understanding and the skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians. In addition, they will develop their composition skills and learn how to organise musical ideas using a variety of resources. Students will also learn to identify contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music including jazz, musical theatre, classical music, popular music and film music.

Students will be required to perform two contrasting pieces of music, one of which must be an ensemble performance of at least one minute duration. The other pieces may be either solo or ensemble with a total performance duration of 4–6 minutes. They will also be expected to compose two contrasting compositions, one of which will be in response to a given brief set by the exam board. The second composition will be a free composition. Finally students will have a listening examination based on both prepared and unprepared musical extracts under each of the areas of study undertaken during the course: musical forms and devices, music for ensemble, film music, popular music.

Future pathways

Not everyone who studies music ends up as a musician or a performer; there are lots of other career choices to explore. Studying music can give you a great mix of social, technical and business skills, which can all help in acquiring skills for employability. You can choose to study music at degree level at either a university or conservatoire. A Music GCSE or A Level can be a good foundation for vocational courses in music technology and jobs in sound recording, audio engineering, studio facilities or music production. There are also opportunities to become a performer, teacher, administrator, songwriter, conductor, composer, recording engineer, manager, promoter, or music publisher. In business-related areas there are opportunities to work in areas such as: careers in digital marketing, social media, PR, technology, ticketing and merchandising. It is common to find music graduates in consultancy, finance, banking, music therapy and legal jobs.

Student's view

"Music is really fun and I thoroughly enjoy it. Taking music for GCSE has really improved my confidence as I have had a lot of opportunities to practise my performing skills. Also my composition work has improved because I have learnt a lot of new composition skills which have really helped me to make progress."

Philosophy and Ethics

Examination board – Edexcel

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Religion and Ethics	50%
Paper 2	Religion, Peace and Conflict	50%

Course content

You will study the following:

- Belief in God
- Marriage and the Family
- Living the Religious Life
- Matters of Life and Death
- Crime and Punishment
- Peace and Conflict

All of the above will be explored using both Buddhism and Christianity.

Future Pathways

This subject develops a number of skills that are cross-curricular and applicable beyond academic life. These include analysis, interpretation, independence of thought, comparison, reflection, depth of explanation, evaluation and application of your understanding and knowledge.

The skills learnt in this course are applicable to any career or course that requires the ability to think independently, to be objective about a variety of sources, points of view and material, plus an understanding of human nature and belief. This means careers such as Journalism, the Law, Medicine, Psychology, Sociology, Science, Theology and many more.

Student's view

"I love the class discussions, the different tasks we do, the ways in which I have to think outside of the box. I am always being challenged, either in my personal beliefs and ethics or my understanding of humanity and belief. The written work requires a level of knowledge and understanding that is much higher than I was expecting and I get a real sense of achievement when I do well."

Physical Education

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	The human body and movement in physical activity and sport	30%
Paper 2	Socio- Cultural Influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport	30%
Practical Element	Practical Performance in physical activity and sport	40%

Course content

The exam board has worked closely with teachers and the Youth Sport Trust to develop a new GCSE Physical Education specification that will inspire learning. Each paper includes the following topics:

- **Paper One:** The human body and movement in physical activity and sport will include; applied anatomy and physiology, the structure and functions of the cardio-respiratory system, anaerobic and aerobic exercise, short and long term effects of exercise, movement analysis, lever systems, examples of their use in activity and the mechanical advantage they provide in movement, planes and axes of movement, physical training, the relationship between health and fitness and the role that exercise plays in both, the components of fitness, benefits for sport and how fitness is measured and improved, the principles of training and their application to personal exercise/training programmes, how to optimise training and prevent injury, effective use of warm up and cool down
- **Paper Two:** Sports psychology, classification of skills (basic/complex, open/closed), the use of goal setting and SMART targets to improve and/or optimise performance, basic information processing, guidance and feedback on performance, mental preparation for performance, engagement patterns of different social groups in physical activity and sport, commercialisation of physical activity and sport, ethical and socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport, health, fitness and well-being, physical, emotional and social health, fitness and well-being, the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, energy use, diet, nutrition and hydration,

By studying GCSE Physical Education you will develop knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain your performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness and well-being.

Future Pathways

Studying Physical Education will prepare you for a wide range of fields such as physiotherapy, coaching, sports science, education, marketing and business, sports development, or sport specific pathways.

Student's view

"GCSE PE is both enjoyable and challenging. I really enjoyed taking part in so much sport and it gave me huge opportunities for leadership. I hope to go onto study to be a PE teacher and this course has given me the foundation skills to do that."

Separate Sciences

Examination board – AQA

All students study science to GCSE level. Students can choose to study Combined Science (previously known as 'Double Award'), which is part of the Core Curriculum and counts as two GCSEs. Alternatively students can choose to study the sciences separately (three GCSEs) as part of their option choices. The students studying the separate sciences will be allocated additional time for science, in comparison to those studying Combined Science.

If you're already thinking about university and careers and are interested in science-based degrees and jobs then it is definitely worth considering taking separate science GCSEs.

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Biology 1	Paper 1	50%
Biology 2	Paper 2	50%
Chemistry 1	Paper 1	50%
Chemistry 2	Paper 2	50%
Physics 1	Paper 1	50%
Physics 2	Paper 2	50%
Practical Assessment: Practical skills are examined in the final exams	Each science has 8 core practical tasks that take place in normal lesson time	15% of the exam questions will test students' practical skills and knowledge. The questions will be set in the context of the core practical tasks carried out in lessons

Course content

Working Scientifically	Biology	Chemistry	Physics
<p>Paper 1: Understand how scientific methods and theories develop over time</p> <p>Appreciate the power and limitations of science and consider any ethical issues which may arise</p> <p>Plan and conduct safe experiments to make observations, produce or characterise a substance, test hypotheses, check data or explore phenomena</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell biology • Organisation • Infection and response • Bioenergetics • Homeostasis and response • Inheritance, variation and evolution • Ecology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atomic structure and the periodic table • Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter • Quantitative chemistry • Chemical changes • Energy changes • The rate and extent of chemical change • Organic chemistry • Chemical analysis • Chemistry of the atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces • Energy • Waves • Electricity • Magnetism and electromagnetism • Particle model of matter • Atomic structure • Space physics

Future pathways

Possible career paths include: medicine, veterinary science, clinical sciences, engineering, analytical chemistry, dentistry, pharmacy, psychology, biotechnology, horticulture, forensic science, teaching..... to name but a few!

Student's view

"Students who feel that they want to go down a scientific path should do it, without a doubt. I'd suggest it for students who aren't interested in STEM careers as well, as I'm inclined to believe that having the separate sciences as GCSEs shows a capability and willingness to tackle challenging subjects. "

Spanish

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Paper 1	Listening	25%
Paper 2	Speaking	25%
Paper 3	Reading	25%
Paper 4	Writing	25%

Course content

The specification covers three distinct themes:

- **Identity and culture:** Me, my family and friends (relationships with family and friends, marriage/partnership); Technology in everyday life (social media, mobile technology); Free-time activities (music, cinema and TV, food and eating out, sport); Customs and festivals in French-speaking countries/communities
- **Local, national, international and global areas of interest:** Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues (charity/voluntary work, healthy/unhealthy living); Global issues (the environment, poverty/homelessness); Travel and tourism
- **Current and future study and employment:** My studies; Life at school/college; Education post-16; Jobs, career choices and ambitions

These themes apply to all four question papers. Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where Spanish is spoken.

By studying Spanish GCSE you will expand your cultural knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries as well as coming away with a fantastic skill for life; communicating in a foreign language, helpful in your career and personal life. You will be able to understand written and spoken Spanish and how to express your ideas and your opinions confidently.

Future pathways

Spanish is the third most spoken language in the world after Mandarin and English. GCSE Spanish is all about communication and by the end of the course not only will students have gained a working and useable knowledge of the Spanish language, but they will have considered how to communicate clearly using all skills and tools available to them. The study of a modern foreign language is not only a pathway to a career in languages themselves, but it is also of enormous benefit as an additional skill alongside another area of interest or study. Most university courses offer a year of study abroad for those who are equipped to deal with this, and a qualification in a language is often used as a deciding factor when selecting students for over-subscribed courses.

Student's view

"We have really enjoyed our GCSE Spanish lessons. You use similar skills throughout the course, but developing your understanding and it includes lots of opportunities for independent learning and reflection to improve your Spanish skills."

Textile Design

Examination board – AQA

Assessment

Element	Details	Percentage of final result
Component 1	Portfolio and made outcome (sketch book, presentation boards and product)	50%
Component 2	Externally set assignment (sketch book, presentation boards and product)	50%

Course content

Textiles surround us and give our lives comfort, warmth, colour, pattern and expression. We wear them, sleep on them, sit on them, cover each corner of our house with them, the industry is huge and it needs creative designers to provide the fabric for our lives. Textile design encompasses the designs and creation of products for woven, knitted, stitched, printed or decorative textiles that might have a huge range of both functional and decorative purposes.

You will work in one or more area(s) of textile design and can explore overlapping and combinations of areas including fashion design and illustration, costume design, textiles for interiors, printed and dyed textiles, art textiles, constructed textiles, surface pattern, stitched and/or embellished textiles. You will produce sketch books and range of presentation boards which evidence the development of a final made outcome along with an examined unit comprising of a second sketch book and outcome made in the 10 hour school based practical exam. You will study the way sources inspire the development of ideas, relevant to textile design including: how sources relate to cultural, social, historical, contemporary, environmental and creative contexts. How ideas, feelings, forms, and purposes can generate responses that address a range of personal needs or meet external requirements, such as client expectations and commissioned work. Your textile designs can be communicated through a wide range of visual and tactile elements, through sampling, products and design. Within the context of textile design, you will use textile design techniques and processes, such as weaving, felting, stitching, appliqué, construction methods, printing as well as use of mixed media such as yarns, threads, fibres, fabrics, textile materials and digital imagery.

Future pathways

The U.K. Fashion and Textile industry is worth £26 billion to the economy and employs 797,000. The former Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: 'These figures are clear evidence of the hugely important contribution that fashion and textiles makes to our economy. It is a dynamic industry whose value is increasing thanks to the dazzling creativity of our designers, the brilliant colleges that bring up the next waves of talent and a fast moving retail sector, which covers the spectrum of great style from bespoke to high street. My office will continue to work with the British Fashion Council to ensure that London remains on the front row in the international fashion stakes.' Jobs include; Fashion Design, Interior Design, Millinery Design, Shoe Design, Textile and Surface Design, Theatre and Costume Design, Independent Artist, Journalism, Retail Management, Fashion and Interior Buying, Merchandising, Range Development, Trend Forecasting, Product Development, Fabric and Product Testing, Nano Textile Technology, Stylists, Fashion Photography, Teaching and Lecturing, Costume Conservation.

Student's view

"Textiles has allowed me to be creative and independent and is so different to my other subjects it has become an escape that I really enjoy- particularly now we are making our designs!"