

*A Warm Welcome to Year 9
Pupils and Parents*

GCSE Options Evening INFORMATION PRESENTATION 2026

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Please fill up seats from the front.

Refreshments are on sale.

Sixth form centre

***Y10 pupils are raising money for
SHOC – Slough Homeless.***



OFSTED May 2024

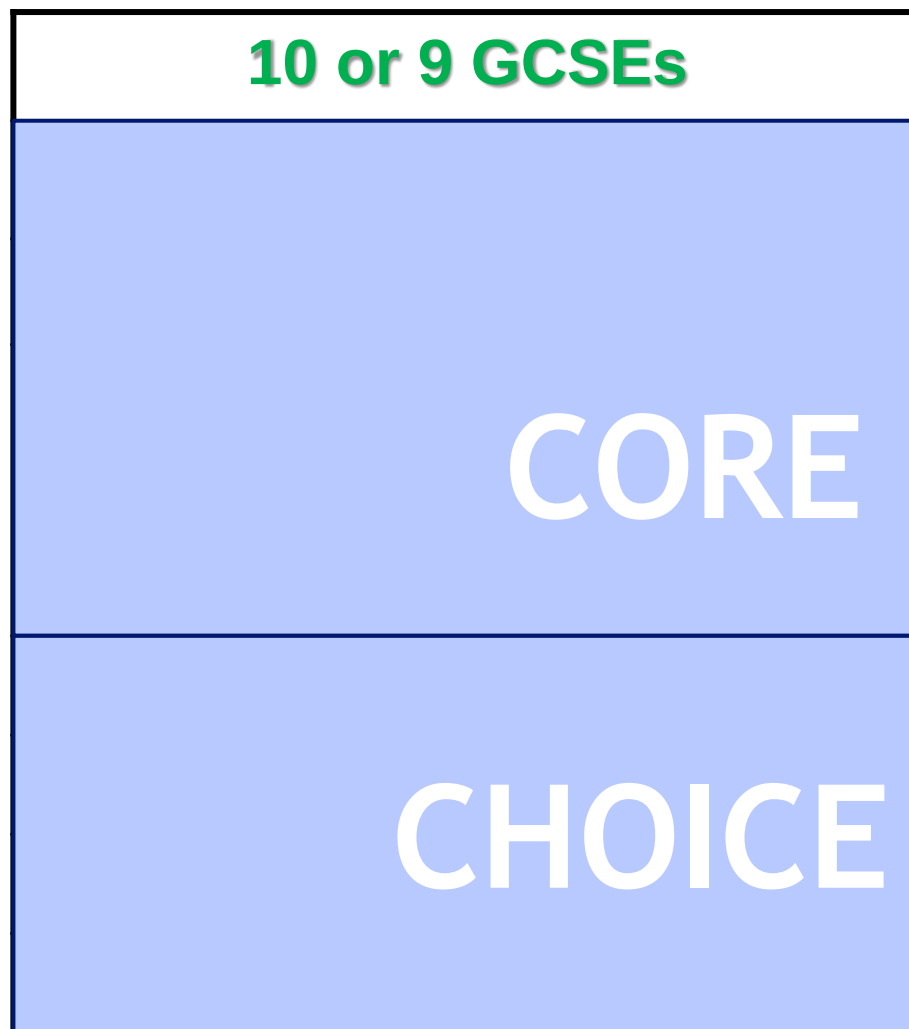
- ▶ The school has a highly ambitious curriculum which supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to do exceptionally well.
- ▶ Pupils develop a broad range of knowledge.
- ▶ The knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop have been carefully sequenced.
- ▶ A well-developed careers programme is also in place to support pupils in considering their options when they leave school.

The Curriculum at Herschel is Outstanding.



- ✓ The quality and caliber of assessment is consistently strong.
- ✓ Recognition of the importance of form tutors and the pastoral system.
- ✓ Extensive and wide range of extra and supercurricular opportunities on offer.
- ✓ Highly aspirational destinations for pupils.

ALL PUPILS WILL COMPLETE:



Main changes in reformed GCSEs from 2015

- + A new grading scale of **9 to 1** is used, with 9 being the top grade.
- + Assessment will be mainly by exam, **reduced** amounts of **non-examined assessment**.
- + There will be new, more demanding content.
- + Designed for two years of study – all tested at the end.

Compulsory Subjects Which Are Not Examined

- Physical Education (timetabled lessons)
- Cross-Curricular ICT delivered via subjects
- Careers Learning, Business & Enterprise
- Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education
- Religious Studies (unless taken as a GCSE)

Very Recent changes

A NEW ERA OF CHOICE AND CREATIVITY

- ▶ Department for Education has announced that the EBacc will no longer be used as a key measure of school performance.
- ▶ Pupils will no longer be required to take a fixed set of subjects such as **languages** and **humanities**.
- ▶ There will be no pathways or restrictions on subject combinations
- ▶ Shape a curriculum that reflects individual talents and passions



Option Choices

Pupils have the freedom to
Choose **four** additional GCSEs.

10 or 9 GCSEs
English X 2
Maths
Triple Science X 3 Or Combined Science X 2
Option Choice1
Option Choice 2
Option Choice 3
Option Choice 4



Are languages and humanities still Important?

- ▶ Absolutely! But all subjects are now equal.
- ▶ These subjects remain valuable and useful.
- ▶ French or Spanish supports many other subjects, and helps with grammar.
- ▶ Humanities (Geography, History and RS) demonstrate key skills in critical thinking, communication and analysis.
- ▶ The government believes that education should not be limited to a narrow set of subjects.
- ▶ Pupils have a **genuine** choice to study a **broad, balanced, and creative curriculum**.

Option Choices

How do I choose?



Food Preparation
Physical Education
French
Computing
Media Studies
Art
Music
Geography
Business
History
Design
Technology
Drama
Spanish
Religious Studies

Make sure



Your choices give you:

- Breadth and balance.
- Subjects you will enjoy.
- Subjects you will work hard at and do well in.
- Gives access to specific A level/level 3 courses.
 - (A sixth form or college prospectus will help).
- Have an open mind.
- Think about how you will be assessed.

What is “non examined assessment”?

- ▶ Work produced by the student, often in school, **under controlled conditions**, which counts **towards** their **GCSE grade**
- ▶ Worth 25%; 40% or 60% of the final GCSE grade depending on the subject
- ▶ Limited amounts of work can be produced at home
- ▶ Tests different and additional skills from examinations
- ▶ Success depends on consistent effort throughout - cannot make up lost time at end.
- ▶ Strict rules and deadlines, which teachers will explain.
- ▶ You only get **one shot**

How much is non-examined assessment worth?



Subject	NEA	EXAM
Art and Design	60%	40%
Computing	0% programming project.	100%
Design Technology	50%	50%
Drama	60%	40%
Food Preparation and Nutrition	50%	50%
Media Studies	30%	70%
MFL (French & Spanish speaking)	25%	75%
Music	60%	40%
PE	40%	60%

Herschel Grammar Sixth Form Subject Entry Criteria

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/sh22-herschel-slough-sch-uk/media/downloads/subjectentrycriteriaentry2026nov2025.pdf>

A Level Subject	Minimum Entry Requirements at GCSE
Biology	Grade 7 in Biology or grades 8-7 in Combined Science, and at least a Grade 6 in Maths
Business	Grade 6 in Maths and English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Business Studies or Economics if taken.*
Chemistry	Grade 7 in Chemistry or grades 8-7 in Combined Science. A Grade 6 or above in Maths is also desirable
Computer Science	Grade 7 in Maths and 6 in English or Literature and 7 in Computer Science if taken
D&T: Product Design	Grade 6 in GCSE Design & Technology. Strong candidates who have not studied DT GCSE and who can show a portfolio of relevant work may be considered
Drama & Theatre Studies	Grade 6 in Drama. If Drama not taken at GCSE a Grade 6 in English Language or Literature
Economics	Grade 6 in Maths and English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Business Studies or Economics if taken.*
English Literature	Grade 6 in both English Language and Literature.
Geography	Grade 6 in Geography (NB. Requirement for residential fieldwork).
Government & Politics	Grade 6 in English Language or Literature, and Grade 6 in a humanities subject (Geography, History or RS).
History	Grade 6 in History if taken. Strong candidates who have not studied GCSE History may be considered.
Mathematics	Grade 7 in Maths (Higher Tier).
Further Maths	Grade 8 in Maths (Higher Tier). Also see below**.
Media Studies	Grade 6 in English Language or Literature, plus Grade 6 in Media Studies if taken.
Physical Education	Grade 6 in PE if take or Grade 6 in Biology or 6-6 in Combined Science. Participation in a competitive sport inside or outside school
Physics	Grade 7 in Physics or Grades 8-7 in Combined Science, and at least Grade 7 in Maths. Studying A Level Maths is also highly recommended.
Psychology	Grade 6 in Maths and English Language or Literature, and Grade 6 in Biology/ 6-6 in Combined Science

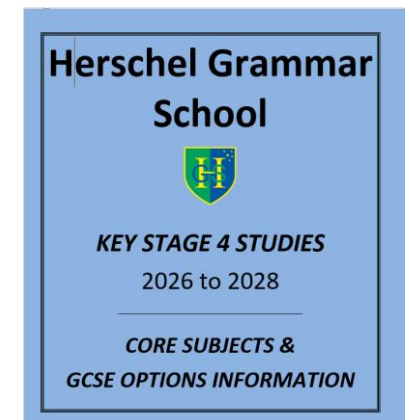
Help is at Hand!



- Subject staff will be able to advise suitability – **Tonight** and at **Subject Evening – 11 February.**
- Careers Advisors can give help and guidance.
- Head of Year and Form Tutors
- The Options booklet
- **School careers website**

www.herschel.slough.sch.uk/For-Students/Careers/Year-9-Options

- Y12 & 13 students
- Members of the leadership team
- Subject Videos during tutor time.

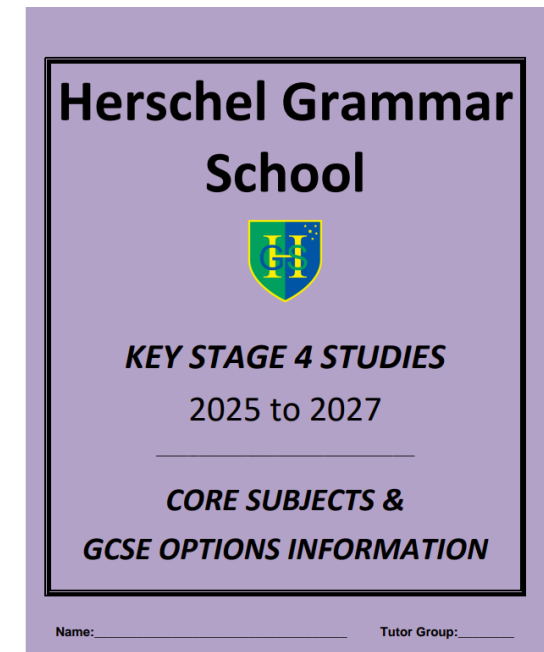


Optional Choices

(pages 20 – 32 of the Options Booklet)

GCSE *Art*
GCSE *Business*
GCSE *Computing*
GCSE *Design & Technology*
GCSE *Drama*
GCSE *Food Preparation and Nutrition*
GCSE *French*
GCSE *Geography*
GCSE *History*
GCSE *Media*
GCSE *Music*
GCSE *Physical Education*
GCSE *Religious Studies.*
GCSE *Spanish*

Responsibility Success Care



What Else?

- Think carefully about subjects requiring specific skills – do you have those skills.
- You can only choose the Technology subject you are currently studying.
- You can only choose the Language you are currently studying.
- Your **reserve** subject must be one you will be happy studying.

Key Stage 4 Option Form

The digital option form Opens on
12 February (it will be added to the Year 9 Team)
and needs to be completed by:

27th February

The Options Choice Form

Year 10 GCSE Option Choices 2026 to 2028

NAME: _____ TUTOR GROUP: _____

Selecting Optional Subjects

You will study 4 additional subjects, although you will need to specify a fifth subject as a reserve. Your reserve choice should be a subject you are happy to study if you are not allocated one of your other preferences.

GCSE Art
GCSE Business
GCSE Computer Science
GCSE Design & Technology*
GCSE Drama
GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition*
GCSE French
GCSE Geography
GCSE History
GCSE Media Studies
GCSE Music
GCSE Physical Education
GCSE Religious Studies
GCSE Spanish

IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR 4
SUBJECT PREFERENCES BELOW:

	INSERT YOUR CHOICE
Preference 1	
Preference 2	
Preference 3	
Preference 4	
Reserve Choice	

Please note:

- *You can only choose the technology subject you are currently studying
- **You can only choose the Language you are currently studying
- Courses will only be run subject to pupil demand and staffing resources.
- You are advised to ensure your choices give you a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Every effort will be made to allow you to study the subjects of your choice within the constraints of curriculum and staffing available.

*Remember to select
4 subjects in
order of preference
Form opens after
subject evening
12 February*

**I've
changed
my
mind!**



**FINAL FINAL DEADLINE for
changes is 26 September 2026**

Responsibility Success Care



Tonight

Visit the subject stands and ask the Head of Department questions.

Chat to the careers advisor

Coming weeks

Read through the options booklet.

If confused, request a Careers appointment .
See Mr Abdar.

Early February

Make appointments for the Subject Evening on **11 February**

Mid February

Review the progress Report issued on **9th February.**
Think about suitability for courses

Mid to late February

Make sure the Options Form is completed between **12 – 27 February.**

Confirmation of subject choices will be in May/June 2026

KEY STAGE 4 OPTIONS 2026

Thankyou and good luck

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