

# Year 9 Options Booklet

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2026-2028



**Great Park  
Academy**

*Creating Futures*

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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet, along with our Year 9 Options Evening on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2026, is to give you all the information and support you need to make the best possible choices as you move into Key Stage 4 in September 2026.

This is an exciting time in your education. Moving from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 means you'll have the opportunity to select subjects that interest you most and will help guide you towards your future academic and career goals. We want you to feel inspired by these choices and confident in your ability to make decisions that will set you up for success.

At Great Park Academy, we have high expectations for all our students and our aim is to help every student thrive, both academically and personally, throughout their time with us. We are committed to offering a curriculum that challenges you, removes barriers to learning, and helps you develop the skills and knowledge needed to embrace future opportunities. Our goal is for you to leave us well-prepared for life beyond school and ready to take on the next stage of your education or career.

We offer a broad and ambitious curriculum, designed to offer you both depth and choice. In addition to the core subjects of Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, Science, Religious Education and Personal Development, you'll select additional subjects that reflect your interests and aspirations.

This balanced approach ensures that after completing your GCSEs, you'll be able to continue studying a wide range of subjects at A Level in one of our Gosforth Group Sixth Form providers, whether that's in the sciences, languages, humanities, or creative and technical fields.

Choosing your GCSE subjects is an important step, and for the first time, you'll be making decisions that directly influence your next steps in education and beyond. It's important to think carefully about the subjects you choose, aiming for a balance between what excites you and what is useful to you as you make your next steps in your educational journey. When you choose subjects that inspire you, it's easier to stay motivated and focused, which will help you succeed.

This booklet is designed to guide you through the process. It outlines the subjects available, explains the structure of each course, and details how the courses are assessed. While we do everything we can to ensure you can study the subjects you want, please be aware that some subjects may not run if they have low uptake or if there are staffing challenges. Should this happen, we will inform you and support you in choosing alternatives.

Since GCSE subjects are offered based on demand, we advise pupils to reserve options, just in case their first-choice subjects are unavailable. This way, you'll have options lined up should your initial choices not be feasible.

We understand that making these decisions can feel daunting, but remember we are here to help and support you every step of the way. We want you to feel confident in your choices and excited about the opportunities ahead.

Read this booklet carefully and discuss the information at home so that your parents, carers, and your Form Tutor, can help you decide on the best combination of subjects.

Your Sincerely,  
Jon Hall  
Assistant Principal  
Great Park Academy

# GUIDANCE

## Who is available to help you?

- Miss Billingsley – Principal
- Mr Hall – Assistant Principal
- Your form tutors
- Teaching and Learning Leaders
- Your family

## Where do I start?

Many of us don't know what we wish to do when we are twelve or thirteen. This is perfectly normal, although a few of us may have very clear ideas. As a starting point watch this short video produced by the Department for Economy, which explains how to make informed decisions about your options:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_ssJV\\_XfjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_ssJV_XfjQ)

You might also take the time to look at some of the following websites that are useful when exploring initial career pathways:

<https://www.pearson.com/en-gb/schools/secondary/parents-learners.html>

<https://www.u-explore.com/page/home-page>

## Personal Development and Careers

During Spring Term 1, students will receive careers education and guidance within their Personal Development lessons as part of our ongoing commitment to providing students with the very best advice and platform to discuss their future careers. Our goal is to raise students' aspirations and achievements while supporting their engagement with exploring their future career pathways. We want our students to be fully equipped with the skills, knowledge and guidance needed, to make informed decisions about their future.

## How will the guided choices process run?

All pupils will study English Language, English Literature, Maths and science as these are compulsory subjects. In addition, pupils will continue to have a timetabled lesson of Personal Development, RE and core PE.

Students will then pick 3 additional subjects, to ensure their curriculum is broad and balanced, one of these must be History or Geography but pupils can take both subjects if they would like. It is recommended that students opt to study a Modern Foreign Language at GCSE although this is not a compulsory requirement.

## What are the key dates?

Your child's form tutor will issue them with the Choice of Subjects Form in March 2026, which they will need to use to make their selection. These will need to be returned to their form tutor later in the term. When making their choices, students should consider the following:

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask yourself which subjects I am most interested in.</li><li>• Think about which subjects you achieve the best results in.</li><li>• Consider if certain subjects are required for your particular career aspirations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose a subject just because you like the teacher. You may not get them next year.</li><li>• Choose a subject because your friends are. They could well be in different teaching groups.</li><li>• Reject a subject because it is new to you. Find out about it. It may be important to you or your career.</li></ul>

The final deadline for your choices will be Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026. You will complete this at home and then bring it into school and hand to your form tutor. We will always try to give you your first choice however this may not be possible for many reasons, so it is important to choose a reserve choice.

After you have made your decision, it will be unlikely that you can change subjects. This is because the staffing needs and timetable are organised around the demand for the subject. Once you start your courses it will not be possible to change, this is because you will have missed the specialist subject teaching, and it would be extremely difficult to catch up. This is why it is important to make the right choices now and find out as much information as possible about the subjects that you are interested in.

Key Dates	
October 2025	Introduction to Guided Choices by Miss Billingsley and Mr Hall.
November 2025 onwards	Subject specific information assemblies delivered
January 2026	An options information evening will take place at school for parents.
March 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2026	Parents and carers are invited to in-person consultation evening
March 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2026	The final guided choices form should be completed and returned to school.

# TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS

The government have introduced a major reform of GCSEs in order to make them **more challenging**. These new specifications have been phased in gradually over several years and these GCSEs taken by current Year 9 students in 2028 will all have the following features:

- A grading scale that uses the numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade.
- More challenging subject content and assessments.

## GCSEs

GCSEs are mostly assessed through exams, although some subjects may include coursework, practical tasks, or oral assessments, which are carried out during Years 10 and 11. The majority of GCSEs require written exams at the end of Year 11. Students should choose courses that match their abilities and preferences. Opting for subjects with practical or coursework elements can help distribute the workload more evenly throughout the two years, easing the pressure of end-of-course exams.

## The English Baccalaureate (EBACC)

We believe that every student can benefit from engaging with a challenging, academic curriculum. The EBacc has become an important measure of student performance at the end of Year 11, with students required to achieve a 'good pass' (grade 5 or above) in a broad range of core academic subjects. More and more, colleges and employers are using EBacc achievement as a key indicator of student success. All students will choose four option subjects. One of these must be a Humanities and for a significant proportion of the cohort one of these will likely be a language although this is not compulsory. To achieve the EBacc, students must earn a grade 5 or higher in the following subjects:

English (Language or Literature)
Maths
Science
Geography or History
Spanish

## BTEC Vocational Qualifications

Vocational courses consist of various units, each of which is assessed throughout the course. These qualifications typically involve fewer exams compared to GCSEs. While there is an exam element, it occurs during the course rather than at the end, and the exam results contribute a smaller proportion of the final grade. Students can achieve different levels of success, such as Pass, Merit, Distinction, or Distinction\*. Vocational qualifications also provide opportunities for progression, whether that's continuing to further study in the sixth form, pursuing an apprenticeship, or other forms of training.

Passes in our Level 2 vocational courses are equivalent to a "standard pass" at GCSE. Final grades depend largely on the quality of work completed throughout Key Stage 4.

Coursework is designed to help students produce their best work, and it's essential that they complete it to the best of their ability as part of their regular study. While coursework suits many students and boosts achievement, it can be challenging if students fall behind, as there may be limited opportunities to revise past work.

### What grades will students achieve?

Students will receive grades in all the subjects they are entered for. In a GCSE subject, students will be awarded grades 9 – 1, with 9 being the highest grade. In a vocational subject, students will achieve a Level 2 Distinction\*, Distinction, Merit or Pass which are all equal to a GCSE grade. Passes in our Level 2 vocational courses equate to a standard pass or above at GCSE.

Old GCSE style grades	GCSE Grades	Level 1 or 2 Vocational Grades
A*	9	L2 Distinction* (D2*)
	8	
A	7	L2 Distinction (D2)
B	6	L2 Merit (M2)
C	5 (Strong Pass)	
	4 (Standard Pass)	L2 Pass (P2)
D	3	L1 Distinction (D1)
E	2	L1 Merit (M1)
F/G	1	L1 Pass (P1)
U	U	Fail

# **CORE & COMPULSORY SUBJECTS**

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science courses

Core Physical Education

Personal Development

# **ENGLISH BACCALAURETE (EBACC) SUBJECTS**

History

Geography

Spanish

Computer Science

# **OPTIONS SUBJECTS**

Art and Design

Creative I-Media (BTEC VOCATIONAL)

Dance

Design and Technology

Drama

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Health and Social Care (BTEC VOCATIONAL)

Music

Physical Education

Religious Studies



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE

## Why study English Language?

In English Language, you will read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. We are aiming to increase fluency, understanding and your ability to make connections in meaning and language. You will build upon your exploration of challenging texts at KS3 and develop analytical and evaluative skills across a range of unseen texts.

You will use knowledge gained from your wider reading to inform and improve your own writing and learn how to adapt language to suit different purposes and audiences, with a focus on using Standard English appropriately. You will continue to learn how to write coherently, clearly and accurately.

You will acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of key grammatical terminology.

## What will I study?

We will be following the AQA GCSE English Language Curriculum.

**Paper 1:** Responses to an unseen fiction text and a creative written response.

**Paper 2:** Response to two unseen non-fiction texts and a creative written response.

## How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 - Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 80 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Paper 2 – Writers Perspectives and Viewpoints

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 80 marks
- 50% of GCSE

## What skills will I develop?

**Critical Thinking Skills:** It helps you develop the ability to analyse and interpret texts, which is a valuable skill in both education and employment.

**Cultural Awareness:** You'll explore a range of texts from different periods and cultures, gaining insights into historical and social contexts.

**Communication Skills:** Analysing literature improves your ability to articulate thoughts and arguments clearly and effectively.

**Appreciation of Literature:** You'll get to study great works of literature, which is both inspiring and enjoyable.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

GCSE English Language leads onto A Level English Language and subsequently to degree level study. As a student of English, you may consider a career in journalism, film-making, publishing, advertising or teaching. A mastery of written and spoken English and an ability to read well is a vital foundation for all jobs.



# ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE

## Why study English Literature?

In English Literature, you will read a wide range of fiction texts. We are aiming to increase fluency, understanding and your ability to make connections in meaning and language, but also to the context, writer's ideas and wider societal issues.

You will study two plays, a novel and a selection of poetry, all from different periods of the English Literary canon, which build upon your exploration of challenging texts at KS3. These texts will involve consideration, analysis and evaluation of concepts and ideas which underpin human nature, our role within society and how stories shape our world.

You will use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve your own writing and continue to learn how to write coherently, clearly and accurately. You will acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of key grammatical terminology.

## What will I study?

We will be following the AQA GCSE English Literature Curriculum.

**Paper 1:** Shakespeare and the nineteenth century novel

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by R.L. Stevenson

**Paper 2:** Modern Texts and Poetry

*An Inspector Calls* by J. B. Priestley

Power and Conflict Poetry

Unseen poetry

## How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 64 marks Page 17
- 40% of GCSE

Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry

- Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes
- 96 marks
- 60% of GCSE

## What skills will I develop?

**Critical Thinking Skills:** It helps you develop the ability to analyse and interpret texts, which is a valuable skill in both education and employment.

**Cultural Awareness:** You'll explore a range of texts from different periods and cultures, gaining insights into historical and social contexts.

**Communication Skills:** Analysing literature improves your ability to articulate thoughts and arguments clearly and effectively.

**Appreciation of Literature:** You'll get to study great works of literature, which is both inspiring and enjoyable.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

GCSE English Literature leads onto A Level English Literature and subsequently to degree level study. As a student of English, you may consider a career in journalism, film-making, publishing, advertising or teaching.



# MATHS GCSE

## Why study Mathematics?

GCSE Maths provides both practical skills and academic benefits that are vital for personal and professional development. Studying mathematics enables students to develop skills that are essential for everyday life. Students develop reasoning skills, financial capability and can break down complex problems into smaller steps. GCSE mathematics is essential for careers in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as finance, economics, and medicine.

## What will I study?

The GCSE curriculum is studied over two years and split into six strands:

Number

Algebra

Ratio and proportion

Geometry and measures

Probability

Statistics

Students are required to recall key facts, solve problems, interpret and communicate information accurately.

## How will I be assessed?

At the end of Year 11 students will sit three GCSE mathematic papers.

Each paper is one and a half hours long and contains a mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. There are two tiers of entry, foundation and higher, class teachers will determine the correct tier of entry for each student using a variety of assessment data.

## What skills will I develop?

Maths teaches you problem-solving, logical thinking, and analytical skills; these are crucial in almost every aspect of life.

Maths helps in managing finances, calculating discounts, understanding interest rates, measuring for home projects, and planning for future expenses. These practical applications of Maths are useful in everyday tasks.

Maths encourages logical thinking and the ability to break down complex problems into manageable parts. This type of thinking can be applied in other areas of life, from making decisions to approaching challenges creatively.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Success in GCSE Maths is a key stepping stone for many academic and career paths, providing a solid foundation for future success. A strong mathematical background opens doors to a wider range of careers, including those in finance, technology, healthcare, and more. A solid grasp of Maths is often necessary for advanced studies, including A-levels and vocational courses. Degree courses also require a strong GCSE pass in mathematics.



# SCIENCE GCSE (COMBINED)

## Why study Combined Sciences?

It is mandatory for everyone to study science qualifications at GCSE level. Ultimately the school wants you to be successful and achieve the highest grade possible. You will be guided to the option which we feel is best suited to you as an individual. GCSE Combined sciences has less content and shorter exams than separate sciences. Studying 'combined' science will result in two GCSE grades across biology, chemistry and physics.

## What will I study?

Combined sciences biology	Combined sciences chemistry	Combined sciences physics
Cell biology	Atomic structure & the Periodic Table	Energy
Organisation	Bonding, structure, and properties of matter	Electricity
Infection & response	Quantitative chemistry	Particle model of matter
Bioenergetics	Chemical changes	Atomic structure
Homeostasis & response	Energy changes	Forces
Inheritance, variation & evolution	The rate and extent of chemical change	Waves
Ecology	Organic chemistry	Magnetism and electromagnetism
	Chemical analysis	
	Chemistry of the atmosphere	
	Using resources	

## How will I be assessed?

Six exam papers at the end of year 11.

- 2 x biology papers (75 mins each).
- 2 x chemistry papers (75 mins each).
- 2 x physics papers (75 mins each).

## What skills will I develop?

The ability to understand and remember complex information. Applying knowledge in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Using scientific models. Communication of scientific ideas. Scientific calculations. An understanding of the scientific method: planning experiments, analysing and evaluating data. An appreciation of using evidence as a basis for ideas.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Sixth form/college: A Level biology, A Level Chemistry, A Level physics. A variety of scientific vocational qualifications.

University/careers: Lots of careers require a strong scientific background...

- |                       |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| - Medicine (Doctor)   | - Engineer            | - Vet                   |
| - Pharmacist          | - Academic researcher | - Nurse                 |
| - Astrophysicist      | - Geologist           | - Forensics             |
| - Computer programmer | - Lawyer              | - Accountant            |
| - Writer              | - Data analyst        | - Management consultant |



# SCIENCE GCSE (SEPARATE)

## Why study Separate Sciences?

It is mandatory for everyone to study science qualifications at GCSE level. Ultimately the school wants you to be successful and achieve the highest grade possible. You will be guided to the option which we feel is best suited to you as an individual. GCSE Separate sciences have more content and longer exams than combined sciences. Studying 'separate' sciences will result in three GCSE grades in biology, chemistry and physics.

## What will I study?

GCSE Biology	GCSE Chemistry	GCSE Physics
Cell biology	Atomic structure & the Periodic Table	Energy
Organisation	Bonding, structure, and properties of matter	Electricity
Infection & response	Quantitative chemistry	Particle model of matter
Bioenergetics	Chemical changes	Atomic structure
Homeostasis & response	Energy changes	Forces
Inheritance, variation & evolution	The rate and extent of chemical change	Waves
Ecology	Organic chemistry	Magnetism and electromagnetism
	Chemical analysis	Space physics
	Chemistry of the atmosphere	
	Using resources	

## How will I be assessed?

**Six exam papers** at the end of year 11.

- 2 x biology papers (105 mins each).
- 2 x chemistry papers (105 mins each).
- 2 x physics papers (105 mins each).

## What skills will I develop?

The ability to understand and remember complex information. Applying knowledge in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Using scientific models. Communication of scientific ideas. Scientific calculations. An understanding of the scientific method: planning experiments, analysing and evaluating data. An appreciation of using evidence as a basis for ideas.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Sixth form/college: A Level biology, A Level Chemistry, A Level physics. A variety of scientific vocational qualifications.

University/careers: Lots of careers require a strong scientific background...

- |                       |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| - Medicine (Doctor)   | - Engineer            | - Vet                   |
| - Pharmacist          | - Academic researcher | - Nurse                 |
| - Astrophysicist      | - Geologist           | - Forensics             |
| - Computer programmer | - Lawyer              | - Accountant            |
| - Writer              | - Data analyst        | - Management consultant |



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (CORE)

### Why study Core PE?

Core Physical Education (PE) is compulsory and physical activity is known to improve physical health, enhance mental well-being, build resilience, boost academic performance, and foster lifelong active habits. All Key Stage 4 students will participate in our core PE practical program.

### What will I study?

Students will engage in complex and challenging physical activities, participating in a variety of exercises that enhance personal fitness and promote a healthy, active lifestyle. Additionally, students will take part in outdoor and adventurous activities across diverse environments, facing intellectual and physical challenges that encourage effective teamwork.

### How will I be assessed?

Please note that core PE is a non-examined subject.

### What skills will I develop?

They will develop and apply various tactics to overcome opponents in both team and individual sports.

### What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Studying Core PE opens up a range of exciting opportunities beyond GCSE. Students can pursue further education in sports science, physical education, or coaching. There are also vocational courses available in fitness training, sports therapy, and outdoor education. Additionally, skills developed in Core PE, such as teamwork, leadership, and resilience, are highly valued in various professions in both sports-related and other career paths.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (CORE)

### Why study Core Personal Development?

Personal Development (PD) helps pupils to develop qualities and attributes that will help them to thrive as individual members of society. All Key Stage 4 students will participate in our core PD program.

### What will I study?

You will learn about Fundamental British Values, Relationships and Sex, Health and Wellbeing, Careers, Economic and Financial Wellbeing, Citizenship and Drugs.

### How will I be assessed?

Please note that core PD is a non-examined subject.

### What skills will I develop?

The study of PD develops and promotes: Independence and responsibility, improved employability skills, improved health and wellbeing and opportunities to play an active and fulfilled role in society.

### What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Studying Personal Development opens pathways to further education and careers in psychology, sociology, human resources, counselling, social work, and community services, equipping students with essential life skills valued in many professions.



# HISTORY GCSE

## Why study History?

History helps you to make sense of the world by understanding key events, movements and decisions that shaped our society, politics and culture. History develops students critical thinking through evaluating sources, analysing evidence and assessing different interpretations. Students will develop analytical skills through making reasoned arguments, debating issues and making informed and well supported judgements.

It is a valued academic GCSE and offers several benefits that extend beyond academic achievement. It develops student's cultural awareness and fosters a better understanding of global issues and other peoples' perspectives. It creates informed citizens who can engage in current debates and contribute meaningfully to debate and discussion.

It is a facilitating subject that will help develop transferable skills such as written and oral communication, reading, sifting and processing information and analytical skills. History GCSE is a valued qualification which can open doors to various fields such as law, archaeology, journalism, education and academic research due to its transferable skills.

## What will I study?

### Paper 1:

- Conflict and tension 1918-39 - Treaty of Versailles, League of Nations and Hitler's foreign policy
- Germany 1890-1945 – Kaiserreich, Weimar Germany, Rise of the Nazi party, the impact of living in Nazi Germany

### Paper 2:

- Power and the People in Britain: 1170 - present day – Magna carta, peasants' revolt, campaign for the vote for all, development of Parliament, Suffragettes and Suffragists, fight for equality – immigration, race relations act
- Elizabethan England 1568-1603 – Elizabeth's government, succession, poverty, Armada, historic environment study.

## How will I be assessed?

At GCSE there are two exams – Paper 1 and 2 are each worth 50% and last for 2 hours (1 hour for each topic).

The exams consist of short answer questions (minimum 8 marks) and longer, essay type questions (20 marks) and include source analysis questions (8 and 12 mark questions) and interpretation questions (4 and 8 mark questions). Each paper includes 4 marks for SPAG

## What skills will I develop?

Apart from studying a wide range of exciting historic periods, History is a facilitating subject and you will develop a range of handy transferable skills. These include:

- excellent communication and writing skills
- how to construct and support a clear argument
- investigation and problem-solving skills
- analytical and interpretation skills.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

GCSE History provides you with a broad set of transferable skills which are applicable to many different career paths including law, journalism, lecturing, teaching and many others. The academic rigor of the GCSE course and the analysis and essay skills students develop during the two years will support them to transition to any A-Level courses or higher education courses they chose.



# GEOGRAPHY GCSE

## Why study Geography?

Geography gives young people the knowledge necessary to understand society and the world around them. It provides key skills which are useful throughout their academic career and beyond. Important issues and themes are explored such as international relations, climate change and how the human and physical world interact with one another.

Studying geography at Key Stage 4 will cover both human and physical aspects of the subject, as well as providing the students with an opportunity to develop research skills that will be invaluable for ongoing studies in many other subject areas.

## What will I study?

### AQA GCSE Geography

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment – Natural hazards, tectonic hazards, weather hazards, climate change, ecosystems, tropical rainforests, cold environments, UK physical landscapes, coastal landscapes and river landscapes.

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment – urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world and the challenge of resource management.

Paper 3: Geographical applications – geographical skills and fieldwork

## How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 -Written exam: 1 hour 30 min, 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG) (35%)

Paper 2 - Written exam: 1 hour 30 mins, 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG) (35%)

Paper 3 - Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes, 76 marks (including 6 marks for SPaG) (30%) (Pre-release resources booklet released 12 weeks before exam)

## What skills will I develop?

Students will develop knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales. Students will be able to demonstrate geographical understanding of: concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; the interrelationships between places, environments and processes. Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues to make judgements. Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

A GCSE in Geography can lead to careers in urban planning, environmental management, travel and tourism. Climatology, international development and even business sectors like logistics and marketing. Geography also combines elements of science, politics, economics and sociology, providing a well- rounded student that can link to many A-Level subjects and higher education courses.



# SPANISH GCSE

## Why study Spanish?

Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, opening doors to exciting travel, cultural experiences, and global opportunities. Learning Spanish also enhances communication skills, boosts confidence, and improves memory and problem-solving abilities. It's highly valued by employers in fields such as business, healthcare, and tourism, giving students a competitive edge in the job market. Studying Spanish also deepens understanding of diverse cultures and promotes global citizenship. Choosing Spanish in Year 9 is an investment in your future—broadening horizons and allowing students to develop the skills to learn any other language they might need in the future.

## What will I study?

You will learn the essential Spanish grammar rules and vocabulary necessary to allow you to communicate effectively in spoken and written form. You will also develop your listening and speaking skills through a variety of activities, such as through dialogues, role-plays, and read-aloud texts. Finally, you will learn to read and understand a range of Spanish texts used for various purposes such as newspaper and magazine articles, short literary texts and advertisements.

You will study a wide variety of topic areas which are split into three themes:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle (Identity and relationship with others, Healthy living and lifestyle, Education and work)
- Theme 2: Popular culture (Free-time activities, Customs, festivals and celebrations and Celebrity culture)
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us (Travel and Tourism including places of interest, Media and technology, The environment and where people live)

## How will I be assessed?

Throughout the GCSE course, you will have regular vocabulary tests and core assessments in line with the AQA GCSE Spanish specification. You will be examined on the four linguistic skills through four papers worth 25% each.

- Paper 1 – Listening (includes a dictation task, transcribing short passages in Spanish)
- Paper 2 – Speaking (role-play, reading aloud and talking about visual stimuli)
- Paper 3 – Reading (includes translation into English)
- Paper 4 – Writing (includes translation into Spanish)

## What skills will I develop?

You will gain a deep understanding of Hispanic culture and be able to interact confidently with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Learning a foreign language can enhance your problem-solving and critical thinking skills. You will also become more confident and independent as you learn to navigate a new language and culture.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

If you enjoy learning Spanish, you can continue your studies at A-level, deepening your understanding of the language and culture. An A-level in Spanish can further enhance your career prospects and open-up new opportunities for higher education and international study.

Additionally, you will have a valuable skill, highly rated by employers and institutions of further education. Spanish language skills are highly sought after in various industries, including fashion, the culinary arts, journalism, business, tourism, diplomacy, and education. Finally, you will be able to communicate with the 600 million people who speak Spanish globally, including the thousands of Spanish speakers in the UK whether it be for meeting new people or for travel.



# COMPUTER SCIENCE GCSE

## Why study Computer Science?

Almost every aspect of our lives is affected by computers, from how we travel to school and manage our social lives to vast networks that control global communication, trade, finance and transportation. In fact, using computers has become so integral to our daily lives it would be difficult to imagine life without them. Understanding how Computer Science shapes our world and learning the skills necessary to be a part of the digital revolution is vital for everyone.

You will develop your understanding of how the key components of a computer work, how networks work, how data is stored, networks and ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impact for Paper 1.

You will develop your understanding of computational thinking, algorithmic design, searching and sorting algorithms, programming and testing for Paper 2.

## What will I study?

Computer Science involves both theory and practical content. Students are supported in developing understanding with visual examples, instructions, and explanations. Links to real world examples will help students to understand concepts and apply relevance to problem solving.

In the first component teaching will be based on development of knowledge of computer systems. Lessons involve looking at topics that are frequently in the news.

In component 2 you will be given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s), either to a specification or to solve a problem (or problems).

## How will I be assessed?

Paper 1: 50% of the total grade 90 minutes Computer Systems	Paper 2: 50% of the total grade 90 minutes Computational thinking, algorithms and programming
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## What skills will I develop?

Computer Science encourages students to understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation. You will analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs and think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically.

You will learn the components that make up digital systems, and how they communicate with one another and with other systems as well as the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society. Computer Science has clear cross curricular links to mathematics and having a strong knowledge base in Maths will be an advantage in this subject.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

A GCSE Computer Science qualification can lead to a very diverse range of courses and ultimately vocations and professions. It might lead to an apprenticeship in IT, A Levels or a level 3 vocational qualification in IT, Computer Science, Game Design etc. Vocations and professions include IT technicians, engineers, game designers, programmers etc.



# ART & DESIGN GCSE

## Why study Art & Design?

Building upon skills developed in KS3, this course promotes learning across a variety of experiences and through various processes, tools, techniques, materials and resources to generate different kinds of evidence of working and outcomes. Vibrant and dynamic, this course intends to give students the freedom to study GCSE Art and Design in ways that inspire and bring out the best in them, whilst equipping them with the skills to continue the subject with confidence at AS, A-level and beyond. The qualification features a wide range of titles including Art, craft and design, Fine art, Graphic communication, Textile design, Three-dimensional design and Photography.

## What will I study?

The endorsement they will study is Fine Art. This covers many areas of Art and Design including drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking and mixed media. The course has been designed to allow students to develop knowledge and understanding through a variety of learning experiences and approaches, including engagement with sources. This will allow them to develop the skills to explore, create and communicate their own ideas. Primarily students will study drawing and painting, but they will be encouraged to progressively develop their own strengths and interests in the subject and, increasingly, follow their own lines of inquiry. Students must develop their knowledge and understanding through sustained practical application of skills to realise personal intentions.

## How will I be assessed?

### Assessment:

**Component 1:** A portfolio that in total shows explicit coverage of the four assessment objectives. It must include a sustained project evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions and a selection of further work undertaken during the student's course of study. Component 1 will be studied in Year 10 and Year 11 building skills and developing a range of preparatory work and outcomes.

**Component 2:** This is the exam element and students will be provided with time to design, create and develop a final piece under exam conditions.

The areas of study selected for Component 1 can be the same as, or different from, those selected for Component 2.

## What skills will I develop?

Students will explore, through a range of two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional processes and media, practical application of skills and relevant critical and contextual sources such as the work of contemporary artists, craftspeople and designers and the different purposes, intentions and functions of art, craft and design as appropriate to their own work. Students must develop and apply the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Subject content within the context of their selected title(s) and area(s) of study.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

GCSE Art provides a strong foundation for further study at AS and A-level as well as vocational pathways. To support this progression, the assessment objectives, structure and titles are very similar to those detailed in the AS and A-level Art and Design specification.



## CREATIVE I-MEDIA (BTEC)

### Why study Creative I Media?

Creative iMedia will equip students with a range of digital skills and provide opportunities to develop, in context, desirable, transferable skills such as research, planning, and review, working with others and communicating creative concepts effectively. Through the use of these skills, learners will ultimately be creating fit-for-purpose creative media products. Creative iMedia will also challenge all learners, by introducing them to demanding material and techniques; encouraging independence and creativity and providing tasks that engage with the most taxing aspects of the National Curriculum.

### What will I study?

Creative iMedia will be taught using a variety of teaching methods and softwares. Due to the creative nature of the course, modelling is an essential tool for learning, putting topics and tasks into context for students working towards a bigger picture. The use of exemplar models and analogies to demonstrate different techniques in using new concepts and software.

### How will I be assessed?

2 internally assessed controlled assessments:

Year 10 you will complete R094 (Visual Identity) and commence R097 (Interactive Digital Media).

Year 11 you will complete R097 and sit one externally assessed exam in June (R093)

### What skills will I develop?

Creative iMedia involves both theory and practical content. Two internal units are digitally based, where skills will be developed in digital design and website design.

The final component is a paper based exam which will cover the skills you have developed through your practical units.

Creative iMedia is for anyone as it links to the digital era that we now live in, considering how technology works and impacts on our lives.

Learning Creative iMedia develops your ability to think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically - all transferable skills for any vocation or profession.

### What opportunities are there after GCSE?

An OCR Creative iMedia qualification can lead to a very diverse range of courses and ultimately vocations and professions.

It might lead to A Level Media Studies, Level 3 Information Technology and Digital Media Level 3.

T Levels in Digital Production and Media Broadcast.

Vocations and professions include IT technicians, engineers, game designers, web designers etc.



# DANCE GCSE

## Why study GCSE Drama?

**Creative expression:** This course lets you explore performance, choreography, and critical appreciation across a wide range of dance styles and aesthetic ideas.

**Holistic development:** It engages physical, emotional, intellectual, and expressive capacities – perfect for both experienced and new dancers.

**Accessible and motivational:** Lessons are designed to inspire and built to support progression toward A-level and beyond.

## What will I study?

Students engage in three interconnected strands:

- 1. Performance**
  - Solo set phrases (~1 minute) and a 3-minute duet/trio.
  - Develop physical (balance, coordination, flexibility), technical (pathways, dynamics, timing), expressive and mental skills (confidence, commitment).
- 2. Choreography**
  - Create either a solo (2–2.5 min) or group (3–3.5 min for 2–5 dancers) piece in response to an external stimulus.
  - Students use choreographic processes and structure, aural selection, and expressive intent.
- 3. Dance appreciation (theory)**
  - Study six professional works (the anthology).
  - Learn choreographic processes, performing skills, and critically evaluate both professional and personal work.

## How will I be assessed?

### Component 1: Performance & Choreography (NEA) – 60% total

- **Performance** (30% / 40 marks): Solo set phrases + duet/trio dance.
- **Choreography** (30% / 40 marks): Solo or group choreography based on the external stimulus.

### Component 2: Dance Appreciation (Written Exam) – 40% / 80 marks

- **Duration:** 1 hr 30 min.
- Covers choreographic/performance THEORY and analysis of anthology works and their own choreography/performance.

## What skills will I develop?

GCSE Dance helps you develop a wide range of transferable skills that will benefit you in many areas of life. Through practical and theoretical work, you'll strengthen your communication and leadership abilities while learning how to collaborate effectively as part of a team. You'll also refine your spatial awareness and musicality, develop critical reflection, and grow in confidence. Dance nurtures self-expression and discipline, giving you the tools to perform with assurance and approach challenges with creativity and resilience.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

**Further study:** AQA A-Level Dance, performing arts, vocational qualifications, university dance degrees.

**Career paths:** Professional dancer, choreographer, dance teacher, fitness instructor, dance therapist, artistic roles in TV/film/theatre.

**Cross-disciplinary appeal:** Skills honed are applicable in teaching, health, business, psychology, media and more.



# DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY GCSE

## Why study Design and Technology?

Design and Technology is a subject that allows you to be creative, problem-solve, and apply your knowledge and skills to real-world situations. It's a practical subject that combines design, technology, and engineering to create innovative solutions to problems. If you enjoy making things, experimenting, and learning about how things work, then Design and Technology is the perfect subject for you.

## What will I study?

In Design and Technology, you will study a range of topics, including:

- **Design process:** This involves understanding the stages of design, from research and ideation to prototyping and evaluation.
- **Materials and processes:** You will learn about different materials and manufacturing techniques used in design and technology.
- **CAD/CAM:** You will use computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) software to create and produce designs.
- **Sustainability:** You will explore the importance of sustainable design and how to minimize the environmental impact of products.

**Product analysis:** You will learn how to analyze existing products to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and potential for improvement.

## How will I be assessed?

Design and Technology is assessed through a combination of coursework and an exam. The coursework will involve designing, making, and evaluating a product based on a given brief. The exam will test your knowledge and understanding of the subject content.

## What skills will I develop?

By studying Design and Technology, you will develop a range of valuable skills, including:

- **Creativity:** You will learn to think creatively and come up with innovative solutions to problems.
- **Problem-solving:** You will develop problem-solving skills as you work through design challenges.
- **Technical skills:** You will acquire technical skills, such as CAD, CAM, and manufacturing techniques.
- **Communication:** You will learn to communicate your ideas effectively, both verbally and visually.

**Teamwork:** You will have opportunities to work collaboratively with others on design projects.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Design and Technology is a versatile subject that can lead to a wide range of opportunities after GCSE. You could:

- **Continue studying Design and Technology at A-level:** This will allow you to specialize in the subject and prepare for further study or a career in design, technology, or engineering.
- **Study other subjects related to design and technology:** You could consider subjects such as product design, engineering, or architecture.
- **Enter the workforce:** Design and Technology graduates are sought after by many industries, including manufacturing, construction, and product design.

Design and Technology offers a rewarding and challenging learning experience that can equip you with valuable skills for your future.



# DRAMA GCSE

## Why study GCSE Drama?

GCSE Drama is an engaging, interesting and diverse subject which allows you to develop and explore your own creativity as well as improving some of the most important skills you will need for the future. It will increase your self-esteem and confidence, help express your creativity in a variety of ways, teach you how to work effectively as part of a team and offers opportunities to see live theatre.

## What will I study?

During Year 10 you will focus on styles and practitioners of Theatre such as: Naturalism, Non-Naturalism, Physical Theatre, Musical Theatre and Theatre in Education.

In Year 11, you'll study a set play from Eduqas (WJEC), preparing for the written exam. You'll also focus on Devising Theatre, create a performance based on stimuli, and complete a Portfolio and Evaluation. In Spring, Text in Performance involves selecting two play extracts to perform in your chosen style for a visiting examiner. Finally, in Summer, you'll be assessed in a written exam analyzing design skills, acting, and directing through creative writing.

## How will I be assessed?

During the course there will be several internal assessments exploring styles and practitioners within class.

### **Autumn Term: Devising Theatre; Component 1 (40%)**

You will be assessed on either acting or design and will participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by WJEC. Students will produce:

- a realisation of their piece of devised theatre
- a portfolio of supporting evidence
- an evaluation of the final performance or design (60 marks)

### **Spring Term: Performing from a Text; Component 2 (20%)**

Students will be assessed on either acting or design. Students study two extracts from the same performance text. Students will then participate in one performance using sections of text from both extracts. (60 marks)

### **Summer Term: Interpreting Theatre; Component 3 (40%)**

Section A: Set Text for assessment. A series of questions on one set text from a choice from WJEC. (45 marks) look from an actor, director and designers point of view.

Section B: Live Theatre Review. One question, from a choice of two, requiring analysis and evaluation of a given aspect of a live theatre production seen during the course and analyse from an audiences perspective. (15 marks)

## What skills will I develop?

Drama develops an array of skills, many of which are transferable, such as: communication, leadership and analytical skills, extended writing, creativity, team-work, problem solving, building confidence and self-esteem, reflective practice, public speaking and many more.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Drama is an incredibly diverse qualification which can be useful and appealing for any walks of life. This is an ideal qualification for students wanting to perform, direct, take part in production roles, work in Theatre/TV/Film, teach, but many students also go onto studying Business, Law, Drama, English, Sociology, Psychology and working in Costume Design, Politics, Nursing, plus much more.



# FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION GCSE

## Why study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

This course aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of nutritional requirements and equip them with the skills to produce healthy, balanced and appetising meals for themselves and their families. Students should develop as well informed and discerning consumers with a clear understanding of human nutritional needs in a diverse society.

## What will I study?

This 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 food materials. You will develop your practical cookery skills and gain a strong understanding of nutrition. You will cover five key topics throughout the course:

- Food, nutrition and health
- Food science
- Food safety
- Food choice
- Food provenance.

## How will I be assessed?

Unit 1 is externally assessed with a written examination lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. This will cover all topics of the unit 1 syllabus and is worth 50% of the total GCSE.

Unit 2 consists of two NEA tasks. These two pieces of coursework will be completed within school, are internally assessed and are worth 50% of the total GCSE.

## What skills will I develop?

Skills in developing recipes and producing food will be developed through various projects and practical tasks. During the early part of the course students will study food hygiene and safety and be assessed to gain a Level 2 Certificate in Food Safety. Students may select their individual investigation and food preparation task title from a list set by the exam board.

A sound knowledge and understanding of science, particularly biology and chemistry, are required in order to access some of the theoretical elements of this course.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

The food industry is a huge and rapidly developing economic sector and as the population increases the need to meet the nutritional demands of all will require ever-increasing numbers of knowledgeable and skilled personnel in careers with the food service industry and beyond, including: dietician, home economist, product development, product research and environmental health officer.



# HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE (BTEC)

## Why study Health and Social?

About 3 million people in the UK work in health and social care, that is equivalent to 1 in every 10 people. Demand for both health and social care is likely to continue to rise due to the ageing population, so it is sure to continue to play a key role in UK society. The demand for people to fill these vital jobs will continue to increase.

## What will I study?

The course gives learners the opportunity to develop sector-specific skills in a practical learning environment. The main focus is on four areas of equal importance which cover:

- Assessing individual health
- Improving an individual's health and wellbeing
- Considering core care values
- Factors that affect people's health and wellbeing

## How will I be assessed?

BTECs are vocational so you do more practical work so you really learn about how health care works rather than just theory. Students are assessed continually throughout the course.

60% of the marks are for practical tasks that you will complete from October to December of year 10 and February to May of Year 10.

One exam at the end of year 11.

## What skills will I develop?

- Development of key skills that prove your aptitude in health and social care such as interpreting data to assess an individual's health.
- Process that underpins effective ways of working in health and social care, such as designing a plan to improve an individual's health and wellbeing.
- Attitudes that are considered most important in health and social care, including the care values that are vitally important in the sector, and the opportunity to practise applying them.
- Knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, process and attitudes in the sector such as human growth and development, health and social care services, and factors affecting people's health and wellbeing.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

This course would be ideal preparation for progression to BTEC Level 3 Health & Social Care course or work and training (apprenticeships) in a specialised area within Health, Social Care and Early Years. This course can be used as a steppingstone into exciting careers in areas such as Nursing, Midwifery, Social Care and many other allied health care professions.



# MUSIC GCSE

## Why study GCSE Music?

GCSE Music is an expressive and interesting subject providing students with a well-rounded education. It can boost self-esteem and help students make more competitive applications to universities and higher education institutions. Music GCSE can help students gain transferable skills, from independent learning to performance and presentation skills, which are highly-prized in almost any career. GCSE Music values all music styles, skills and instruments.

## What will I study?

During the course you will begin to learn and develop your listening, composition and performance skills, engage actively in the process of music study, develop performing skills individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control of the resources used and develop composing skills to organise musical ideas and make use of appropriate resources.

In Year 11 you will complete three components broken into three categories such as: Understanding, Performing and Composing Music through various styles of Music and Instruments (this can include singing).

## How will I be assessed?

Throughout the course there will be several internal assessments exploring listening, composing and performing Music.

### During Year 11:

- **Component 1: Understanding Music (40%)**  
Section A: Listening – unfamiliar music (68 marks)  
Section B: Study pieces (28 marks)  
The exam is 1 hour and 30 minutes.
  
- **Component 2: Performing Music (30%)**  
As an instrumentalist and/or vocalist and/or via technology:  
Performance 1: Solo performance (36 marks)  
Performance 2: Ensemble performance (36 marks)
  
- **Component 3: Composing Music (30%)**  
Composition 1: Composition to a brief (36 marks)  
Composition 2: Free composition (36 marks)

## What skills will I develop?

Studying GCSE Music offers many skills during the course such as: analytical skills, observational skills, independence, teamwork, resilience, as well as being creative and open minded.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

Music offers many opportunities beyond GCSE, such as: Music therapy, sound engineering, theatre, film and television, musician, teaching, performing, law, science and much more.



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION GCSE

## Why study GCSE PE?

GCSE PE is an excellent option for those that are genuinely passionate about sport. It brings together and transfers knowledge from across the curriculum, from subjects such as Science, Maths, History and Personal Development, applying this knowledge in a sporting context. Students are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with sporting developments across a wide range of sports and sporting events.

GCSE PE also has a substantial assessed practical element, which means a proportion of allocated lesson time involves developing and enhancing students' knowledge, skills and tactics at the highest performance level, in several sport and activities.

## What will I study?

**Unit 1** - Introduces students to content relating to the human body including movement analysis, physical training, and applied anatomy and physiology.

**Unit 2** - Gives students an understanding of the socio-cultural influences, theoretical application of sports psychology, as well as the impact and benefits of health, fitness, and well-being.

**Unit 3** - Focuses on the practical performance of students, in which students will be assessed in 3 activities, which are performed at the highest possible level.

## How will I be assessed?

Unit	Method	Credit
Unit 1	<u>Written examination</u> 1 hour 15 minutes – 78 marks. Assessed through a mixture of multiple choice/ objective test questions, short and extended answer questions.	30%
Unit 2	<u>Written Examination</u> 1 hour 15 minutes – 78 marks. Assessed through a mixture of multiple choice/ objective test questions, short and extended answer questions.	30%
Unit 3	<u>Practical Moderation and Controlled Assessment</u> Students are assessed through their practical performance in three different sporting activities. Students also analyse and evaluate a performance to bring about improvement in one sporting activity.	40%

## What skills will I develop?

Correct application and impact of:

**Unit 1** – various key anatomical and physiological components, movement and performance analysis, training principles, fitness testing, interpretation of data.

**Unit 2** – classification of skills, information processing, mental preparation, engagement patterns, ethical issues in sport, health and fitness, as well as diet and nutrition.

**Unit 3** - developing and enhancing students' knowledge, skills and tactics at the highest performance level, in several sport and activities.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

This course provides a secure knowledge and skills base for students going on to study Level 3 courses, particularly A Level PE and BTEC/CTEC Sport. Future careers opportunities are vast, including sports coach, physiotherapist, dietitian/ nutritionist, teacher, performance analyst and sports administrator.



# RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE

## Why study Religious Studies?

Students will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Students will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study and future careers.

## What will I study?

**Component 1:** The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices in two world religions: **Christianity and Islam**

**Component 2:** Thematic studies: Relationships and families, Religion and life, peace and conflict and crime and punishment.

## How will I be assessed?

- Component 1: Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes - 96 marks, plus 6 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)
- Component 2: Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes - 96 marks, plus 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

## What skills will I develop?

Students who study GCSE Religious studies develop clear and transferrable skills such as clear & logical thinking, being able to critically evaluate, develop good use of literacy & expression, and develop problem solving skills.

Students will gain a much deeper understanding of human behaviour and will be encouraged to debate, research, question, challenge and think critically. These skills are relevant to any further study and lots of different career paths. Students will be encouraged to be independent thinkers and will develop a broader understanding of the world around them and the different beliefs that shape it.

## What opportunities are there after GCSE?

GCSE Religious studies opens up opportunities for further study and diverse career paths through developing valuable skills like critical thinking, cultural literacy and ethical understanding. This can lead to further study in philosophy and ethics, religious studies and other humanities subjects and can lead to future careers in social work, charity development and management and international development, diplomacy and international relations.

