



Key Stage 4

Curriculum and Course Guide 2026



Respect

Respect for ourselves and others, accepting the value and existence of alternative opinions and viewpoints whilst understanding the parameters in which a successful school community has to operate.



Responsibility

All members of the community will be aware of the consequences of their actions and words and understand that the choices they make can have a long-term impact on others and the environment.



Kindness

Fundamentally linked to respect and responsibility. For us this means that students will be kind not just in what they do and think about others but also about themselves.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Key Stage Four Curriculum and Course Guide.

This booklet is designed to provide you with all the key information on the course options available as you enter Year 10. At Watling Academy, we believe that all students should have access to a balanced and ambitious curriculum across a broad range of subjects. The Key Stage Four curriculum has been structured to be academically ambitious, whilst maintaining a level of choice and flexibility for students to study courses which are best for them as individual learners.

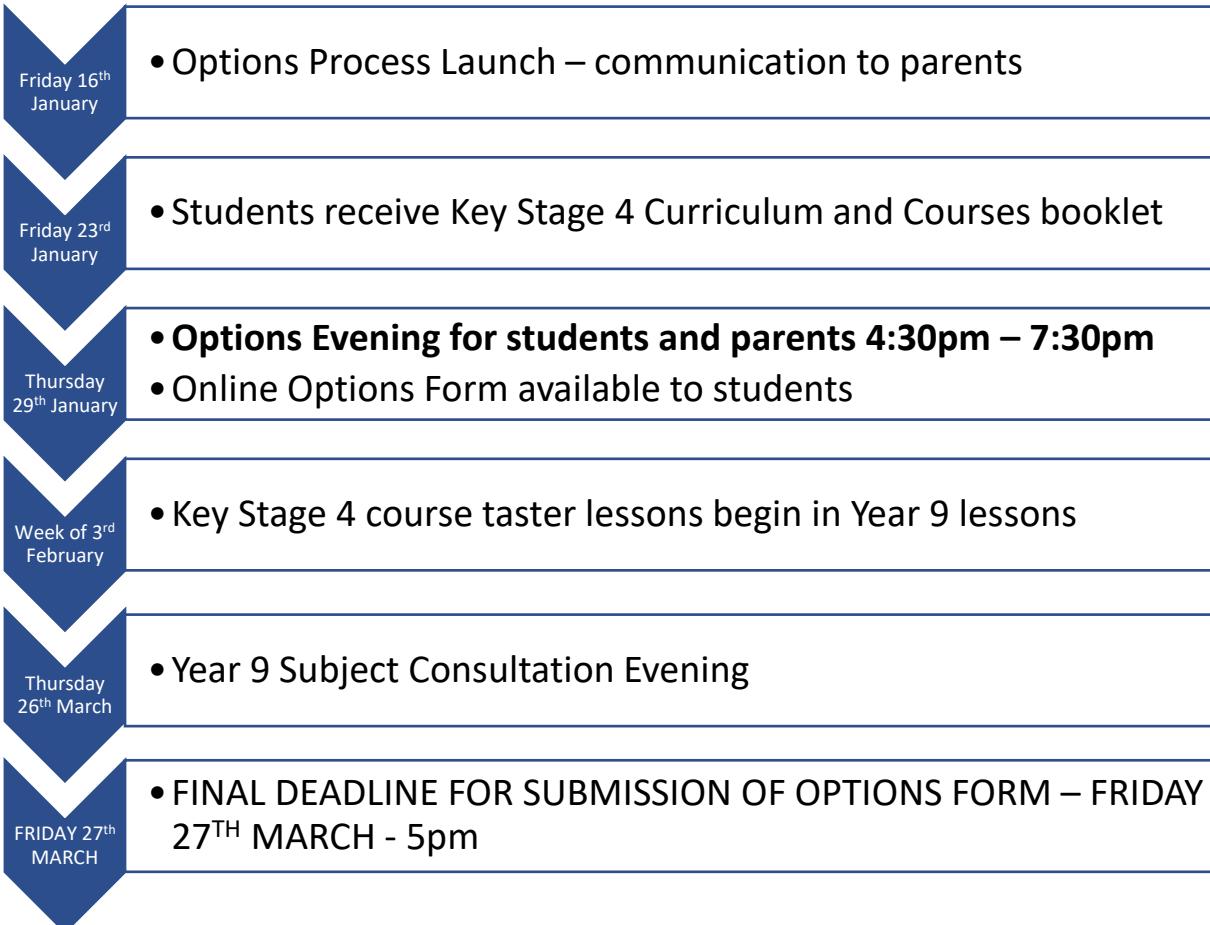
This is an exciting time, and you will have some important decisions to make. Before finalising your choices, you must:

- Read (and make certain that you understand) the information within this booklet.
- In particular, make certain that you understand the subject information and the different routes that you can take.
- Look at your progress report which will highlight the subjects you are doing well in.
- Talk to your parents/carers about the course and your suitability for them.
- Talk to your teachers about what the course involves.
- Ask questions that will help you to make the right decisions.
- Consider all of the courses carefully and ensure that you have made the right decision for you.
- Consider how your choices may affect your opportunities after Year 11, in terms of further education and your career pathway.
- Talk to our careers advisor if you are unsure about career pathways.

We hope this booklet will support you in making your choices and prepare you for the next step in your educational journey at Watling Academy.



Options Timeline



Curriculum Structure

The Key Stage Four curriculum is structured as shown below. This allows all students to access a broad and ambitious curriculum with a good amount of choice for individuals to study courses which are best for them. Note: Watling operates a two-week timetable, so 2.5 lessons per week equates to 5 one-hour lessons per fortnight.

Subject	Lesson Allocation per week
English (Language and Literature)	4.5
Mathematics	3.5
Combined Science	5
EBacc 1 – Modern Foreign Language	2.5
EBacc 2 – History or Geography	2.5
Option 1 – Student Preference	2.5
Option 2 – Student Preference	2.5
Physical Education	1
Wellbeing	1
Tutorial	5 x 30-minute sessions

Core Subjects – All students will study GCSE English Language, GCSE English Literature, GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Combined Science (unless they opt for Triple Science). See page 4 for further details.

EBacc Subjects – Students will be expected to continue to study a language, GCSE Spanish or GCSE Mandarin, and at least one from GCSE Geography or GCSE History. See page 9 for an explanation of the EBacc and the expectations around these subjects

Option Subjects – Students will be able to rank their top four preferences to complete their choice of courses. There is a wide range of GCSE and vocational courses available, and students can select from any of these, with some restrictions around combinations. See page 14 for further details.

Other Subjects – Students will continue to have Physical Education lessons, Wellbeing lessons and Tutorial sessions to support their wider development.

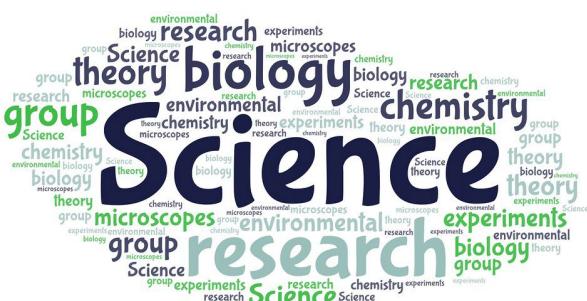
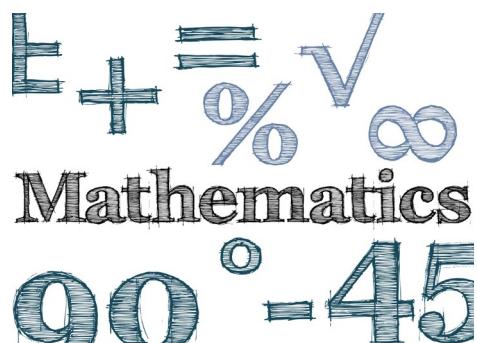
Core Subjects

All students must study the core subjects at GCSE level. They form the basis of the Key Stage Four curriculum, and future pathways, such as college courses, A levels, apprenticeships and employment will require qualifications in the core subjects.

The core subjects account for five GCSE qualifications:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Science* (equivalent to 2 GCSEs)

*Students who choose to study Triple Science as one of their option preferences will study the three separate Science courses, GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics instead of the GCSE Combined Science course.



English Language

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE English Language

Course code: 8700

Why study this course?

All students study English Language. The course develops your essential reading and writing skills. Studying English Language allows students to tackle both reading analysis of a range of modern and historic texts and develop their creative writing.

What do students learn during this course?

How to retrieve information from a range of different texts.

How to analyse a writer's use of language.

How to comment on the overall structure of a text.

How to compare the content of two different texts.

Written accuracy through spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

How to structure your writing through planning, paragraphs, and varying types of sentences.

How to use a wide breadth of vocabulary and language techniques for effect.

How will students be assessed?

Two examinations:

Paper 1 (1 hr 45 mins, 50% of total grade) asks you to read and comment on an extract of fiction and write a piece of descriptive or narrative writing.

Paper 2 (1 hr 45 mins, 50% of total grade) asks you to read and comment on two non-fiction texts (one modern and one historical) and write to present your viewpoint on a topic.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

English Language is an essential GCSE for any further course of study. English Language is also taught widely at university including leading institutes. Careers are varied such as journalism, law, publishing, or creative industries.

English Literature

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE English Literature

Course code: 8702

Why study this course?

All students study English Literature. The course allows students to study a wide range of challenging texts from the literary canon. The texts also deal with topical issues such as conflict, politics, and class.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will study a 19th century novel, a Shakespeare play, a modern play, and a range of poetry. Through this they will develop their comprehension ability and critical reading skills, understanding what we learn about characters and themes and how these can be interpreted in different ways. Students will develop their analytical skills, exploring how language techniques create complex meanings. Students will build their contextual knowledge, exploring how the writer's life, time and other works affect our understanding of the text.

How will students be assessed?

Two examinations:

Paper 1: Shakespeare (Macbeth) and 19th Century novel (A Christmas Carol). (1 hr 45 mins, 40 % of total grade).

Paper 2: Modern Text (An Inspector Calls), Poetry (Conflict) and Unseen Poetry. (2 hrs 15 mins, 60 % of total grade)

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Students need a pass in either GCSE Language or Literature for entry into college, 6th form and apprenticeships. English Literature is taught widely at university including leading institutes. Careers are varied such as academia, journalism, law, publishing, or creative industries.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Mathematics

Course code: 8300

Why study this course?

Maths is for everyone. It is diverse, engaging, and essential in equipping students with the right skills to reach their future destination, whatever that may be.

What do students learn during this course?

The Maths curriculum will enable students to reason mathematically, make deductions and communicate mathematical information effectively. The GCSE curriculum builds upon content learnt at KS3 and focuses on 6 key areas. The 6 key areas are: number, algebra, ratio and proportion, geometry, probability, and statistics.

How will students be assessed?

This course is 100% examination.

Paper 1 is non-calculator (1 hour 30 minutes)

Paper 2 is calculator (1 hour 30 minutes)

Paper 3 is calculator (1 hour 30 minutes)

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Mathematics supports the study of other GCSEs such as: Design Technology, Geography, Engineering, Sociology, Computer Science, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Students will develop key employability skills such as, problem-solving, logical reasoning, communication, and resilience.

This course is excellent preparation for a wide range of A-level courses.

Combined Science

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy)

Course code: 8464

Why study this course?

Combined Science is a core subject that all students must take. It will equip students with the skills essential to begin to understand the world around them, developing curiosity and questioning skills.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will cover a range of topics in all three sciences including foundational concepts such as cells, atomic structure and bonding, chemical calculations, forces, and energy. In Biology, they will also cover content on infection and response, variation, homeostasis, evolution, and inheritance. In Chemistry, they will learn about chemical and energy changes, organic chemistry, and the Earth's resources. Students will also learn about electricity, matter, waves, and radioactivity in Physics. An overarching theme of all three sciences is a focus on environmental sustainability. There are numerous required practicals, where students learn procedural knowledge, such as how to use equipment, collect data and evaluate conclusions.

How will students be assessed?

Students will sit 6 examinations at the end of Year 11. This will comprise of 2 biology, 2 physics and 2 chemistry exams. These papers are 75 minutes long, and are out of 70 marks. The exams will be formed from questions based on knowledge and application of knowledge to unfamiliar situations, as well as calculations and practical based questions.

Students will achieve 2 GCSEs in combined science, averaging across the three science subjects studied.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

In Combined Science, students learn all essential skills and knowledge required for progression to study science subjects in post-16, be it A-Levels or more vocational courses. As well as this, the skills gained in following practical instructions, working collaboratively with other, analysis and evaluation are imperative skills for most apprenticeships.

EBacc Subjects

Students will be expected to have the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) as the foundation of their Key Stage Four curriculum. The Ebacc is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers. It includes the core subjects, with the addition of GCSE Geography or GCSE History, and a GCSE foreign language.

The EBacc is:

- GCSE English Language and Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- The sciences – at least 2 science GCSEs – this could be via Combined Science or Triple Science
- GCSE Geography or GCSE History
- A modern foreign language – GCSE Spanish or Mandarin Chinese.

Students will complete their suite of subjects with two additional courses from their own personal preference list.

Why these subjects?

A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a student will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and Maths. It is important to study a broad and balanced curriculum, these subjects are included to give students the opportunity to study a core of diverse subjects, ensuring that doors are not closed to them in terms of future progression.

The EBacc is made up of the subjects which the Russell Group says, at A-Level, open more doors to more degrees. A recognised group of leading UK Universities, The Russell Group has published a guide to post-16 subject choices. You can find it on their website at:

<https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5272/informedchoices-print.pdf>



Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Mandarin Chinese

Course code: 8673

Why study this course?

The objective is to enable students of all abilities to develop their Chinese (Mandarin) language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence. Students currently studying Mandarin Chinese are expected to continue with the language at GCSE.

What do students learn during this course?

At GCSE, students will build on their knowledge, skills and understanding acquired in Years 7-9 and will develop further their knowledge and understanding of the language and their cultural awareness. Dictionaries are not permitted in any of the four examinations, therefore learning vocabulary is an essential feature of the course and should be done regularly. In addition to the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, students will also improve their translation skills.

How will students be assessed?

The examination will be split into four components:

- Listening 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Speaking 25% (non-exam assessment conducted in school by the class teacher)
- Reading 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Writing 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)

Students can be entered for **either** the Foundation **or** Higher GCSE papers in listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

GCSE Mandarin will provide students with a good understanding of familiar topics and environments. Students can build on their learning by studying Mandarin in more depth in Sixth Form. They can then study Mandarin at University. This can be studied on its own or with another language as a new language that you may not have studied before. Languages can often be studied alongside almost any other degree including STEM subjects. A language is beneficial for a wide variety of careers, especially if you want to work abroad or for a multinational company here in the UK.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Pearson Edexcel

Name of course: GCSE Spanish

Course code: 8698

Why study this course?

The objective is to enable students of all abilities to develop their Spanish language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence. Students who have studied Spanish since Year 7, would be expected to continue to study Spanish at GCSE.

What do students learn during this course?

At GCSE, students will build on their knowledge, skills and understanding acquired in Years 7-9 and will further develop their knowledge and understanding of the language and their cultural awareness. Dictionaries are not permitted in any of the four examinations, therefore learning vocabulary is an essential feature of the course and should be done regularly. In addition to the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, students will also improve their translation skills.

How will students be assessed?

The examination will be split into four components:

- Listening 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Speaking 25% (non-exam assessment conducted in school by the class teacher)
- Reading 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)
- Writing 25% (exam paper at the end of the course)

Students can be entered for **either** the Foundation **or** Higher GCSE papers in listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

GCSE Spanish will provide students with a good understanding of familiar topics and environments. Students can build on their learning by studying Spanish more in depth at A-Level. They can then study Spanish or Hispanic Studies at University. This can be studied on its own or with another language that you may not have studied before. Languages can often be studied alongside almost any other degree including STEM subjects. A language is beneficial for a wide variety of careers, especially if you want to work abroad or for a multinational company here in the UK.

Geography

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Geography

Course code: 8035

Why study this course?

Do you like learning about the world around you? Do you enjoy learning outside a classroom setting? Do you want to keep your options open for the future? Do you want to understand global world issues such as how to be sustainable?

If you have answered yes to any of these, then Geography might be the subject for you. Make sure to speak to your parents and Geography teachers.

What do students learn during this course?

Physical Geography

- The challenge of natural hazards.
- The living world.
- Physical landscapes in the UK.

Human Geography

- Urban issues and challenges.
- The changing economic world.
- The challenge of resource management.

Geographical applications

- Issue evaluation.
- Geographical skills.
- Fieldwork.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment (35% of GCSE)

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes.
88 marks

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment (35% of GCSE)

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes.
88 marks

Paper 3: Geographical applications (30% of GCSE)

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes. 76 marks
Pre-release resources booklet made available 12 weeks before Paper 3.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

The Institute For The Future (IFTF) and a panel of 20 tech, business, and academic experts from around the world, predicts that 85 per cent of the jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't even been invented yet. Geography, as a subject, is a fantastic way to be able to future-proof your further progress in education and in the workplace. Geography is about looking into the future, giving you the skills needed to adapt to different situations that you may encounter, which makes you a more employable and desirable candidate.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Edexcel

Name of course: GCSE History

Course code: 1H10

Why study this course?

GCSE History gives you the opportunity to study a wide range of exciting and diverse topics. Through studying History at GCSE, you will develop an understanding of key events in both British and international history, which have shaped our world today. Choosing this course will equip you with vital skills such as analysis, evaluation, problem solving and the ability to make sustained judgements, all of which are sought after by employers. History offers exciting debate, discussion, and a new appreciation of the past.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will cover a range of topics, including:

Migrants in Britain, c800 – present and Notting Hill 1948 -1970: Who came to Britain and why?

Early Elizabethan England 1558 – 1588: How society was structured, and the threats Elizabeth faced.

Russia and the Soviet Union 1917 – 1941: The Bolshevik Revolution and the cult of Stalin.

Superpower relations and the Cold War 1941 – 1991: The post-war relationship between the USA and the USSR.

How will students be assessed?

The course is 100% exam based. Students will sit three papers.

Paper 1: Migrants in Britain (800 – Present) and Notting Hill: 1 Hour 15 Minutes

Paper 2: Early Elizabethan England and International Superpower Relations in the Cold War: 1 Hour 45 Minutes

Paper 3: Russia and the Soviet Union: 1 Hour 20 Minutes.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Choosing GCSE History will open the door to studying History at A-Level and beyond. People who have studied GCSE History have gone onto a wide range of successful careers including: Lawyer, Politician, Journalist, Civil Servant, Media and Film, Librarian, Publisher, Business, Museum Curator, Archivist, Lecturer, Editor, Military, Archaeologist, Teacher, and many more exciting careers.

Option Subjects

Students will study two option subjects, which will make up the remainder of their Key Stage Four curriculum. Students select four preferences from the courses in this section, ranking them 1-4 in priority. Every effort will be made to ensure students can study their top priority subjects; however, this is not always possible for all students. Therefore, it is important that students have considered all their four choices fully and are ready to study any of their selected courses.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, students are strongly advised not to select the following subject combinations as preferences 1 & 2:

GCSE Design Technology and Cambridge National Engineering Design

GCSE Business Studies and Cambridge National Enterprise and Marketing

If students wish to select these combinations as preferences 1 & 2, or they wish to study both GCSE Computer Science and ICT Vocational Award, they must discuss this with Mr Brown before submitting their option preferences form.

Students who are interested in studying a sport qualification should select the GCSE Physical Education/Cambridge National Sports Studies option. The PE department will determine which course is most suitable for the student on an individual basis.

GCSE Art and Design has two pathways – Fine Art or Textiles (Fashion Textiles). Students can only follow one pathway.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Edexcel

Name of course: GCSE Art and Design: Fine Art

Course code: 1FA0

Why study this course?

GCSE Art and Design is the right subject for you if you enjoy:

- Developing your visual skills and engaging with the creative process of art, craft, and design.
- Developing and refining work based on your own choices and ideas.
- Visits to galleries, museums, workshops, and studios.
- Experimenting and taking risks with your work and learning from your experiences.
- Working with a range of Art media.

What do students learn during this course?

You will develop your visual skills and build a portfolio of work by completing a wide range of activities and in-depth assignments. Throughout the course, you will:

- Develop and explore ideas.
- Select and experiment with appropriate media, materials, techniques, and processes.
- Record your ideas, observations, and insights.

How will students be assessed?

Component 1 Personal Portfolio 60%: Students complete 2 sketchbook projects of a term and a half each and 2 final outcomes during 5-hour mock exams and additional lesson time. Themes will be 'Contrast' and 'Identity'.

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment 40%: The exam board sets a project title. Students have 10 weeks to complete a sketchbook in response to this stimuli and finish with a 10-hour exam in which they will create a final outcome to summarise the project. The Exam takes place in the first 2 weeks after the Easter break.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

If you wish to study Art and Design beyond GCSE, you could do a Level 3 course, such as AS or A-level Art and Design or BTEC Nationals in Art and Design. Careers that benefit from the creative visual skills you will develop include but are not limited to: design (set, graphic, fashion, costume, jewellery, interior, product, etc.), architecture, marketing, advertising, social media content creator, business owner, landscaper, animator, cartoonist/illustrator, artist, crafter, baker, photographer, art therapist, teacher, tutor, art director, gallery curator or director, and many more!!!

Art and Design: Textiles

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Edexcel

Name of course: GCSE Art and Design: Textiles

Course code: 1FA0

Why study this course?

GCSE Art and Design is the right subject for you if you enjoy:

- Developing your visual skills and engaging with the creative process of art, craft, and design.
- Developing and refining work based on your own choices and ideas.
- Visits to galleries, museums, workshops, and studios.
- Experimenting and taking risks with your work and learning from your experiences.
- Working with a range of Art media.

What do students learn during this course?

The main topics you will study are: using visual elements such as colour, texture, pattern and shape; drawing from observation to develop ideas; understanding natural and synthetic materials and their sustainability; exploring colour, texture and light in textile outcomes; experimenting with fabrics and construction techniques; and using digital and traditional methods to design and create textile pieces.

How will students be assessed?

Component 1 Personal Portfolio 60%: Students complete 2 sketchbook projects of a term and a half each and 2 final outcomes during 5-hour mock exams and additional lesson time. Themes will be 'Contrast' and 'Identity'.

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment 40%: The exam board sets a project title. Students have 10 weeks to complete a sketchbook in response to this stimuli and finish with a 10-hour exam in which they will create a final outcome to summarise the project. The Exam takes place in the first 2 weeks after the Easter break.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

If you wish to study Art and Design beyond GCSE, you could do a Level 3 course, such as AS or A-level Art and Design or BTEC Nationals in Art and Design. Careers that benefit from the creative visual skills you will develop include but are not limited to: design (set, graphic, fashion, costume, jewellery, interior, product, etc.), architecture, marketing, advertising, social media content creator, business owner, landscaper, animator, cartoonist/illustrator, artist, crafter, baker, photographer, art therapist, teacher, tutor, art director, gallery curator or director, and many more!!!

Business Studies

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: GCSE Business Studies

Course code: J204

Why study this course?

The OCR Business Studies GCSE course is designed to provide students with a foundational understanding of key business concepts, principles, and skills. Business Studies GCSE offers a practical and real-world understanding of the business environment. The course helps students develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and teamwork. The course also provides insights into starting and running a business, understanding market dynamics, and making informed business decisions.

What do students learn during this course?

Business Environment: Understanding the different types of businesses, their objectives, and the factors that influence them. Marketing: market research, product development, branding, and promotion. Operations and Finance: business operations, production processes, financial management, and the importance of efficient resource allocation. Human Resources: the role of human resources in a business, including recruitment, training, and motivation of employees. Ethical and Environmental Considerations.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1 - Business activity, Marketing, People - 80 marks, 90 minutes 50% of the grade.

Paper 2 – Operations, Finance, Influences on Business, The Interdependent Nature of Business - 80 marks, 90 minutes 50% of the grade.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Business Studies GCSE serves as a solid foundation for further studies in business-related subjects at the A-levels or beyond. Successful completion of the GCSE in Business Studies can lead to A-level studies in business-related subjects, such as Business Studies, Economics, Accounting, or Management. The course provides a foundation for various careers, including roles in business management, marketing, finance, human resources, and entrepreneurship.

Citizenship

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Citizenship Studies

Course code: 8100

Why study this course?

Citizenship Studies empowers you to become informed, thoughtful and active members of society. It helps you explore and understand democracy, rights, responsibilities, and how laws and political systems operate. This course builds skills in critical thinking, analysing evidence, debating issues and taking citizenship action — all essential for future study, employment and everyday life.

What do students learn during this course?

The main topics you will study are: Citizenship skills, processes and methods, including forming arguments and evaluating evidence; Life in modern Britain, covering identity, the media and the UK's global role; Rights and responsibilities, including the legal system, human rights and criminal justice; Politics and participation, exploring democracy, elections, Parliament and political power; and Active citizenship, involving investigation, research and taking informed action to address real issues.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 minutes – 50% of qualification

Section A: Active citizenship (40 marks) - Section B: Politics and participation (40 marks)

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 minutes – 50% of qualification

Section A: Life in modern Britain (40 marks) - Section B: Rights and responsibilities (40 marks)

Both papers include multiple-choice, short-answer, source-based and extended-response questions.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

You can progress to A-Level subjects such as Politics, Law, Sociology, History and Criminology. The course also supports careers in public services, law, policing, journalism, social work, local government, education, community work and roles involving public engagement, advocacy or policy.

Construction

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Pearson (BTEC)

Name of course: BTEC Tech Award in Construction and the Built Environment

Course code: 7051

Why study this course?

Construction is one of the largest and most important industries in the UK, offering a vast range of practical, technical and professional career pathways. This course is ideal for students who enjoy hands-on learning and want to understand how buildings are designed, planned and constructed. Students learn industry-relevant skills, gain an insight into real construction processes, and experience a qualification that prepares them for further study or apprenticeships in the construction sector.

What do students learn during this course?

The main topics you will study are Construction Technology, including the methods and materials used in low-rise buildings; Practical Construction Skills, demonstrated through producing a timber-framed product set by the exam board; and Construction Design, where you will respond to a client brief through technical drawings, sketches and written design proposals.

How will students be assessed?

Component 1: Construction Technology – Written Examination – 90 minutes – External assessment

Assesses understanding of construction methods, materials and building technology.

Component 2: Construction in Practice – Practical Assessment – Internal assessment

Students complete a timber-framed product set by the exam board over two workshop days.

Component 3: Construction and Design – Drawing/Written Assessment – Internal assessment

Students complete a design brief task set by the exam board, producing drawings and written design work.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

You can continue to progress to Level 3 Construction courses, the T Level in Design, Surveying and Planning, or a range of construction apprenticeships. The course also supports pathways into careers such as carpentry, joinery, site operations, architectural or civil engineering technician roles, surveying support and construction design.

Computer Science

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Edexcel

Name of course: GCSE Computer Science

Course code: 1CP2

Why study this course?

Computers are an integral part of modern society with technology touching all aspects of life. Studying GCSE Computer Science is a key pathway for young people to secure their role in a rapidly evolving job market that already demands high levels of computing and literacy skills. GCSE Computer Science gives you a real, in-depth understanding of how computer technology works, and it develops critical thinking, analysis, and the ability to problem-solve through the study of computer programming.

What do students learn during this course?

The main topics you will study are: Computational Thinking, Data Representation, Understanding of Hardware & Software Components, Understanding of Networks & Network Security, Awareness of Emerging Trends in Computing Technologies, Impact on Individuals, Society, and the Environment, Problem Solving with Python Programming.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: Principles of Computer Science – Written Examination – 1 hour and 30 minutes – 50% of qualification
5 compulsory questions which consist of multiple-choice, short-, medium- and extended-open-response, tabular and diagrammatic items.

Paper 2: Application of Computational Thinking – Onscreen Examination – 2 hours – 50% of qualification
6 compulsory questions which requires students to design, write, test, and refine programs in order to solve problems.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Further Study:

A-Level Computer Science

Careers:

Software Engineering, Computer Games Design, Mobile Apps Developer, Information Systems, Data Scientist, Cybersecurity Consultant.

Design Technology

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Design Technology

Course code: 8552

Why study this course?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

What do students learn during this course?

Generate creative solutions to benefit people and the planet. Communicate and develop ideas through sketches, models and computer aided design. Learn how products are manufactured in industry. Manipulate materials and use tools to create your ideas. Work with leading edge technology and manufacturing techniques such as 3D printing and other computer aided design and manufacturing skills.

How will students be assessed?

50% written exam, 50% Non-Examination Assessment (coursework).

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Engineering, Robotics, Set design, Architecture, Industrial Design, Fashion, Electronics, Graphics, Product Design, Gaming Design, Eco Design, Programming.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Drama

Course code: 8261

Why study this course?

Students of GCSE Drama emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills, applicable both in further studies and in the workplace.

Overcome the fear of making mistakes in a fun, creative and supportive environment; build teamwork - no other performing art is more collaborative; learn communication skills; sharpen creative skills; refine your critical thinking skills; develop your public speaking skills and boost your self-confidence.

What do students learn during this course?

During the course Drama students will cover: Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre; study of one set play from a choice of nine; analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers; the process of creating devised drama; performance of devised drama (students may contribute as a performer or designer); analysis and evaluation of own work; performance of two extracts from one play (students may contribute as a performer or designer).

How will students be assessed?

Component 1: Written exam:
1 hour and 45 minutes
80 marks
Open Book
40% of GCSE

Component 2: Devising Drama:
80 marks in total
Devising log (60 marks)
Devising performance (20 marks)
40% of GCSE

Component 3: Texts in practice:
40 marks in total
Performance Extract 1 (20 marks)
Performance Extract 2 (20 marks)
20% of GCSE

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

The skills developed through the study of Drama are integral to roles across the creative industry. Students could enter a range of industries: Teaching (Primary and secondary), Scriptwriting, Drama School, TV/Film/Theatre production, Psychology & Drama Therapy, Music, Sales/Marketing, Entertainment representative, Journalism, Gaming, and Advertising.

Engineering Design

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: Cambridge National Engineering Design Level 1/2

Course code: J831, J842

Why study this course?

Cambridge National in Engineering Design helps students to understand the processes of engineering design and how market requirements inform client briefs. Through practical activities they develop skills in computer modelling and model making and how to communicate design ideas effectively.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will learn about: the design cycle and the relationship between design briefs and design specifications; the requirements of design specifications for the development of a new product; how commercial production methods, quality and legislation impact on the design of products and components; how to generate design proposals using a range of techniques; how to develop designs using engineering drawing techniques and annotation; using Computer Aided Design (CAD) software and techniques to produce design proposals.

How will students be assessed?

25% written exam - Design briefs, design specifications and user requirements.

25% Centre assessed task - Product analysis and research.

25% Centre assessed task – Developing and presenting engineering designs.

25% Centre assessed task – 3D design realisation.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Apprenticeship e.g., Design and Development technician. Engineering Level 3, A Level Design and Technology, T level Design Development for Engineering and Manufacturing.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing

Course code: J837

Why study this course?

The course is designed to provide students with practical knowledge and skills relevant to the world of enterprise and marketing, preparing them for real-world scenarios. For students interested in entrepreneurship or starting their own business, this course offers insights into the principles of enterprise and marketing. The course emphasizes the development of key employability skills, including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking, all of which are highly valued in the business world. Content is tailored to reflect current industry practices and trends, meaning students are up to date with the latest developments in the field of enterprise and marketing.

What do students learn during this course?

Enterprise Concepts: Understanding the fundamental concepts of entrepreneurship, including business planning, identifying opportunities, and managing resources. Marketing Principles: Exploring core marketing principles, such as market research, promotion, branding, and understanding customer needs and behaviours. Financial Management: Developing an understanding of basic financial management, budgeting, and financial planning. Digital Marketing: Learning about the role of digital media including social media strategies, online advertising, and e-commerce.

How will students be assessed?

Examination - R064: Enterprise and marketing concepts - Marks 80 (1 hour 30 mins)

NEA - R065: Design a business proposal - Marks 60 (15-20 hours) Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated.

NEA - R066: Market and pitch a business proposal – Marks 60 (12-15 hours) Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Successful completion of the Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing can lead to further studies in business-related subjects at the A-levels or vocational qualifications. Students can explore apprenticeship opportunities in areas such as marketing, digital marketing, or business administration, gaining practical experience while continuing their education. The course prepares students for a variety of entry-level roles in business and marketing, such as marketing assistant, business development executive, sales coordinator, or roles in small business management.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Course code: 8585

Why study this course?

Within Food Preparation and Nutrition, you will: Develop high level food skills that will help you to progress in the subject and learn about different multicultural, ethical, environmental, and other issues concerning food preparation and food choice. You will cook a variety of interesting and diverse dishes both savoury and sweet. You will also learn to manage your time effectively and work safely when working independently. The course also develops your ability to work under pressure, work with others, solve problems whilst building resilience.

What do students learn during this course?

At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition. Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics:

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

How will students be assessed?

Theory Paper 1: Food preparation and nutrition • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

Non exam assessment (NEA) Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks) Written or electronic report (1,500–2,000 words) including photographic evidence of the practical investigation.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks) Written or electronic portfolio including photographic evidence. Photographic evidence of the three final dishes must be included.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study or embark on an apprenticeship or full-time career in the catering or food industries. Milton Keynes has a huge range of employment opportunities within the Food and Nutrition sector. The course also supports development of those required characteristics as identified in the MK employability skills framework through the Non-Examined Assessment element of the qualification – through each of the emotional, social, cognitive, and reflective lenses.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: Level 2 Further Mathematics

Course code: 8365

Why study this course?

This course gives our higher attaining students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. It helps to inform decisions about whether to do A-Level and adds greater depth to the existing KS4 Maths curriculum. It is an enriching option which raises the bar for our higher achievers and provides them with an insight into mathematical thinking beyond GCSE. The course provides the perfect platform towards achieving a high grade in GCSE mathematics and will smooth the transition between GCSE and A-Level maths, as well as A-Level Further Maths.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of GCSE Mathematics, particularly in the field of Algebra, and learn new concepts. These new concepts comprise of Calculus and Matrices.

How will students be assessed?

This course is 100% examination.

Paper 1 is non-calculator (1 hour 45 minutes).

Paper 2 is calculator (1 hour 45 minutes).

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Mathematics and Further Mathematics support the study of other GCSEs such as: Design Technology, Geography, Engineering, Sociology, Computer Science, Chemistry, Physics, Biology. Students will develop key employability skills such as problem-solving, logical reasoning, communication, and resilience. This course is excellent preparation for a wide range of A-level courses.

Health and Social Care

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: Cambridge National In Health and Social Care

Course code: J801

Why study this course?

The Cambridge National in Health and Social Care introduces students to the specialist knowledge and skills needed to work in various Health and Care settings. It is designed specifically to give students the knowledge, understanding and skills to begin a career in the Health and Social Care sector. It contains both practical and theoretical elements based upon real-life experiences. Throughout the course, students can develop their presentation and writing skills in longer, independent projects.

What do students learn during this course?

As part of the Cambridge National, students will cover topics such as the principles of care, helping individuals find the support they need, follow life events, planning and delivering creative and therapeutic activities, and health promotion and campaigns. Students will develop a range of skills to be successful in this qualification including effective verbal communication, presentation skills, problem solving, research and planning. Students are expected to be organised as they will be responsible for large pieces of work which are completed independently in lessons.

How will students be assessed?

Students will complete three units during this course. One compulsory exam is sat in Year 11 and is worth 40% of the final grade. Students also complete two Non-Exam Assessments (NEA), which are written projects that are set by the exam board assessed by teachers and then checked by the exam board. Each NEA includes approximately 12 hours of independent student work, which is completed in school. During the course, your teacher will assess you through exam questions, practice exams and progress towards your own NEA tasks.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

The Cambridge National course is designed to prepare students for a career in the Health and Social Care sector. It relates to various careers within the sector such as, Nursing, Midwifery, Health and Social Care Assistance, Paramedics, Social Work, Childcare assistance, Nursery nursing, Health support work and Occupational Therapy.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: WJEC

Name of course: Vocational Award in ICT

Course code: 5539

Why study this course?

This course will assess the application of IT skills through practical use. It will provide students with essential knowledge, transferable skills and tools to improve their learning in other subjects with the aims of enhancing their employability when they leave education, contributing to their personal development and future economic well-being. This course will encourage independence, creativity, and awareness of the IT sector.

Students will use a range of software throughout the course such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Adobe Photoshop.

What do students learn during this course?

- How IT can be used to fulfil the needs of organisations and individuals
- How data and information is used and transferred
- Legal, moral, ethical, cultural, and environmental impacts of IT and the need for cybersecurity
- Planning, creating, modifying, and using databases, spreadsheets, and automated documents.
- Planning, creating, manipulating, and storing images.

How will students be assessed?

Unit 1: ICT in Society – Written Examination – 1 hour and 20 minutes – 40% qualification

They will investigate how information technology is used in a range of contexts, including business and organisations, education, and home use.

Unit 2: ICT in Context – Controlled Assessment – 40 hours – 60% qualification

This unit enables learners to gain a broad working knowledge of databases, spreadsheets, automated documents, and images and to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems in vocational settings.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Further Study

Cambridge Technicals in Information Technology

Careers

Data Analyst, Digital Content Producer, Systems Engineer, and Web Marketing Manager

Media Studies

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: GCSE Media Studies

Course code: J200

Why study this course?

The media is the most dynamic and influential method of mass communication of modern times. Media Studies supports students in understanding the media's significance and its power. Students develop skills of analysis, inference and creativity, whilst thinking about the representations created through different media language and text types. Students will consider how different audiences are impacted by media and how industries have developed through history.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will learn about media language, audiences, representations, and industries through the study of a range of set texts. These texts include contemporary and historic television shows, advertising and marketing of film and video games, magazines, music videos, radio, and newspapers. Students will also look at media theory alongside these set texts.

How will students be assessed?

Students will sit two exams at the end of Year 11

Paper 1: Television and Promoting media – 1 hour 45 minutes (35%) - Paper 2: Music and News – 1 hour 15 minutes (35%) Students also complete a non-examination assessment (NEA) – (30%) Students respond to one of four set production briefs. They will also be required to submit research, planning, and production notes alongside their finished product.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Students who complete GCSE Media Studies can go on to study for A-Levels in Media Studies or Film Studies. Colleges also offer courses in Media Production which focus more on the practical elements of Media studies such as radio. GCSE Media Studies also prepares students for degrees in Media Studies, Journalism and English. This would support careers in working in journalism, radio, television or other media industries.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Eduqas

Name of course: GCSE Music

Course code: C660QS

Why study this course?

If you already like making your own music, play an instrument, sing, or enjoy listening to and learning about music, you can develop your skills and get a GCSE as well! If you don't already play an instrument or sing, you can take the opportunity to learn new skills which will stay with you for life. If you already enjoy writing your own music or songs, you can use this ability and experience towards your GCSE and become a more advanced composer/producer. If you are a creative person who wants to learn to make music, this course will give you that chance.

What do students learn during this course?

Your practical skills of composing music and performing will be refined and developed to demonstrate creativity, reflection, and resilience, as well as building confidence and presentation skills. You will learn how music from a range of styles and genres is created and performed, and will put this information into practise through performance, composition, and appraisal activities. Studying music will give you opportunities for higher order thinking, by considering ideas which go beyond language.

How will students be assessed?

Component 1: Performing (30%, Teacher Assessed): Performing a minimum of two pieces, lasting a total of 4-6 minutes. One group piece lasting at least one minute, one piece linked to an area of study.

Component 2: Composing (30%, Teacher Assessed): Composing two pieces, one in response to a brief set by WJEC from a choice of 4, and one free composition in any style of your choice.

Component 3: Appraising (40%, Externally assessed examination): Listening examination: 8 Questions, 2 on each Area of Study. AoS1: Musical Forms & Devices; AoS2: Music for Ensemble; AoS3: Film Music; AoS4: Popular Music.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Music will enable you to demonstrate many skills which employers, colleges and universities are looking for. Many students choose to continue to study Music or Music Technology at A-Level and beyond at Music College or University. Music would be directly suitable for someone looking at the following careers: Music producer; Music Therapist; Musician; Music tutor/teacher; Sound Designer; Sound Engineer; Sound Technician; Special Effects Technician, Arts administration, Choreographer; Events manager; Radio producer/broadcaster; Theatre stage manager and more.

Physical Education

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: GCSE Physical Education

Course code: J587

Why study this course?

The GCSE PE course is an additional course to the core PE lessons which all students will continue with.

GCSE PE offers students the opportunity to gain an understanding of sport from a theoretical perspective and improve their own practical ability. The course involves a mixture of focused practical sessions and interesting theoretical content that is applicable to students' own experiences within sport.

What do students learn during this course?

Physical factors affecting performance- topics such as the skeletal, muscular, respiratory, and cardiovascular systems. As well as learning about movement analysis and types of training.

Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology- factors that affect participation, the commercialisation of sport and the psychology of sport.

Practical performance – assessment in 3 sports and Analysis of Performance Coursework

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: Physical factors affecting performance (1 hour exam) - 30%

Paper 2: Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology (1 hour exam) - 30%

Practical performance (Internally assessed and externally moderated) - 40%

4. *Team sport* - 10%
5. *Individual sport* - 10%
6. *Team or individual sport* - 10%

Evaluation and analysis of performance (14 hour written coursework) - 10%

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

The GCSE Physical Education course includes content from the areas of biology, physics, maths, nutrition, psychology, and sociology. A wide range of content is covered within a sporting context, providing students with both skills and knowledge that could prove valuable regardless of which path you choose afterwards. GCSE PE is particularly valuable if you are considering a career in the sport, fitness, or nutrition industries or if you are planning to study PE, biology or psychology in further education.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: Edexcel specification B – Beliefs in Action

Name of course: GCSE Religious Studies

Course code: 1RB0 1B – Religion and Ethics and 1RB0 2C – Religion, Peace, and Conflict

Why study this course?

GCSE RS is a critical investigation into the religious beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam, which will be taught with equal weighting. The aim is for students to reflect on some of the big questions surrounding our moral behaviour. The result should be an open-minded and enquiring approach to life, people, and moral issues. The lessons will involve plenty of discussion and students will be encouraged to appreciate others' views while developing their own opinions.

What do students learn during this course?

Over the 2-year course of study students will cover various perspectives, focusing on Christianity and Islam, based upon the following moral issues:

Religion and Ethics – Christianity: Belief in God, Marriage and the Family, Living the religious life, Matters of life and death.

Religion, Peace, and Conflict – Islam: Belief in God, Crime and punishment, Living the religious life, Peace and conflict.

How will students be assessed?

This course is externally assessed and is 100% examination based at the end of Year 11. There is no controlled assessment. Students will sit two examinations at the end of Year 11. Paper 1 will be focussed on Religion and Ethics – Christianity and paper 2 will be Religion, Peace, and Conflict – Islam. Each paper is worth 50% of the final grade and there are certain elements that a student must incorporate into their short, medium, and longer answers. There are two questions on each paper whereby SPaG is assessed on the 12-mark answers.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

GCSE Religious Studies is a deeply philosophical subject and can serve to improve the critical thinking skills necessary for A-level Philosophy and Ethics. Religious Studies complements other subjects like History, Psychology, and English and can be studied at degree level. Studying GCSE Religious Studies can support careers in Education, Law, Public services, Journalism, Media, Tourism, Health and Social Care and Medicine.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Sociology

Course code: 8192

Why study this course?

Sociology is a Social Science concerned with the study of society, human behaviour, and relationships. It uses research-based investigation and key theories to understand social order and problems, and changes within society. During GCSE Sociology, students will study a range of topics considering different institutions and their roles in society as well as the structure of society itself. The topics studied are relevant to our everyday lives and have links to a wide range of subjects such as History, Geography, Maths, Psychology and Politics.

What do students learn during this course?

The four main topics within the course are the Sociology of families, education, crime and deviance and social stratification (difference in society). Students will study each area in depth, outlining what society is like and theoretical explanations for why. There is a strong link to understanding research throughout the course. Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.

How will students be assessed?

100% examination assessment over two examinations. There are two exams, worth 50% of the overall grade each.

Paper 1: The sociology of families and education.

Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification.

Throughout the course, students will be assessed through exam-style questions, both short and extended responses.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Students who study Sociology have gone on to explore a range of subjects at university or higher education such as Law, Criminology and Politics. Possible careers include Secondary School teacher, Social worker, Police Officer, Newspaper journalist and many more.

Introduction to the course

Exam board: OCR

Name of course: Cambridge National Sport Studies Level 1/2

Course code: J829

Why study this course?

Cambridge National Sport Studies is a vocational qualification. Sport Studies offers students the opportunity to gain an understanding of sport from a theoretical perspective and improve their own practical ability. The course involves a mixture of focused practical sessions and interesting theoretical content that is applicable to students' own experiences within sport.

What do students learn during this course?

Students will study contemporary issues in sport – topics at the forefront of sport e.g., barriers to participation, drugs and violence in sport and hosting major sporting competitions. They will also study performance and leadership in sports activities where they will learn how to lead in sport. The final part of the course is a topic about sport and the media about the effects media has in the world of sport from commercialisation and Americanisation.

How will students be assessed?

Paper: Contemporary Issues in Sport (1 hour and 15min exam) - 40%

Practical and Leadership performance (Internally assessed and externally moderated) - 40%

Media in Sport coursework (Internally assessed and externally moderated)- 20%

Assessment is as follows: Level 2 Distinction* (equivalent approximately an 8 in GCSE grades) Level 2 Distinction (equivalent to a 7 in GCSE grades) Level 2 Merit (equivalent to approximately a 6 in GCSE grades) Level 2 Pass (equivalent to 4 in GCSE grades) Level 1 Pass/Merit/Distinction (equivalent to approximately 1/2/3 in GCSE grades)

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

This vocational course includes a wide range of content for a job in the sports industry. If you are interested in working in sport as a performer, sports journalist, PE teacher, sports coach, sports analyst, sports development, sports marketing, there are so many opportunities this course would help with. Students will also develop transferable skills, in particular communication, leadership skills and aspects of team working.

Triple Science

Introduction to the course

Exam board: AQA

Name of course: GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics

Course code: 8461/8462/8463

Why study this course?

Triple Science allows students who are passionate about the subject to extend their knowledge and understanding further by studying the concepts covered in Combined Science in greater depth. A keen interest in the subject is essential due to the increased curriculum time spent on the subject.

What do students learn during this course?

Students study the same range of content as in Combined Science. However, students who opt for Triple Science also learn extra content such as the brain and eye and biotechnologies in biology, polymerisation, flame tests and the Haber process in chemistry, and nuclear fission and fusion and space in physics. The students complete the same required practicals as Combined Science, with the additional practical work covering neutralisations, use of antibiotics on microbial growth and thermal insulation.

How will students be assessed?

Students will sit 6 examinations at the end of year 11, 2 in each of the sciences. These are 105 minutes long and marked out of 100. The examinations will be either higher or foundation tiers and will be formed from questions based on knowledge and the application of knowledge, as well as calculations and practical based questions. The students will achieve three separate GCSEs, one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

What opportunities are there for further study and careers in the subject?

Triple Science is very good preparation for students wishing to study science subjects at A-Level (although it's not essential). It demonstrates that a student can apply themselves in problem solving, practical skills and scientific writing; these skills are highly prized by employers and higher education institutes.

Notes

Tick the option subjects you are interested in. This will allow you to plan which subjects to visit and ask questions about on Options Evening.

Subject	Tick if interested	Subject	Tick if interested
Art and Design		Geography	
Business Studies		Health and Social Care	
Construction		History	
Citizenship Studies		ICT	
Computer Science		Media Studies	
Drama		Music	
Design Technology		Physical Education	
Engineering Design		Religious Studies	
Enterprise and Marketing		Sociology	
Food Preparation and Nutrition		Sports Studies	
Further Mathematics		Triple Science	

Use this space to make notes or write down any questions you would like to ask about the courses.

Respect / Responsibility / Kindness



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