



Year 9

Options Information

February 2026

www.holcombegrammar.org.uk



Aspire & Achieve Together

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February 2026

Dear Year 9 student,

You are about to embark on the most significant stage of your education to date, your GCSE studies. The next two years will be a very exciting and important time for you at Holcombe Grammar School and it is vital that you choose your GCSEs carefully. Some of you will already have a clear idea about the sort of career that you would like to have, and some of you will take much longer to decide. Whatever the stage you have reached, it is a good idea to make your decisions about your GCSE courses based upon some of the following:

- Aim to have a breadth of study in your GCSEs by choosing a wide variety of subjects
- Know where your strengths are and select subjects you feel confident in studying
- Be as well informed about the courses as possible – make sure you consider the information here very carefully
- Think about what the subjects can lead to in the Sixth Form and beyond, even if you are not certain about your future career.

In other words, plan for five years from now, not just two!

Read this booklet very carefully. It contains important information about the subjects and how to make your choices. This booklet is addressed to you, the student, but discuss its contents with your parents and teachers in order to make a wise and informed choice considering the nature of each course, its assessment programme and value to your future aspirations.

Carefully study all the information that is available to you, follow the advice and take time to make a sensible and informed choice. The school will do its best to fulfil your requirements and to support you in gaining the best possible GCSE grades. The form to complete is linked to the bottom of this booklet.

Yours faithfully,

Miss A Tanti

Deputy Headteacher

Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to give you some information about the subjects you will be studying at Holcombe Grammar School during Years 10 & 11.

Until now you have had little say in the mix of subjects that you have studied. This ensured that you received a good grounding in a broad range of subjects.

Subjects that you must study in Years 10 and 11 are English Language and English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Core Religious Studies, Personal Development and Core Physical Education. All students must also study either Geography or History, and have already chosen French or Spanish to study.

When you begin your courses in September, you will study for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

Homework

English, Mathematics	3 x 60 minutes per fortnight
Optional Subjects	2 x 60 minutes per fortnight
Biology, Chemistry, Physics	1 x 60 minutes each per fortnight
All other subjects	1 x 60 minutes per fortnight

Non-Examined Assessment (NEA)

Some subjects will have a Non- Examined Assessment (NEA) component as part of the final examination. This means that throughout the two year course you will complete work which will form an important part of your final GCSE grade. The amount and type of Non-Examined Assessment required will vary according to the nature of each subject and you need to understand the importance of producing assignments on time. Failure to complete Non-Examined Assessments on time could mean that instead of entering the final examination knowing you have secured a good pass already, this will disadvantage you against your peers.

Choosing Subjects for GCSE

When choosing a programme of subjects for GCSE, what is right for you may not be suitable for someone else, but the following guidelines should apply to everyone:

1. It would be wise to select subjects in which you have a record of high attainment
2. Consider your attitude to the subject. We all tend to do better at the things we enjoy and you will be studying your chosen subject for 2 years
3. Try to keep a wide range of different subjects in your choices
4. It is still early days, but try to look forward to your 'A' levels as some subjects will require you to have studied the subject at GCSE level
5. Preparation for a career is an important factor in choosing a GCSE programme. However, you would be unwise to choose subjects solely with one career in mind since your intentions may change greatly by the end of the course.

Please note that whilst the information provided here is as accurate a picture as possible at the time of production of this booklet, there may be changes to the information provided in the next section.

Core Subjects (compulsory for everyone)

Core Physical Education (Mr A. Nanson)

All students will follow a course in PE to meet National Curriculum requirements. Students will have the opportunity to take part in a range of team and individual games including football, rugby, hockey, basketball, table tennis, and athletics. Students will also follow a fitness theme where they will be involved in a variety of health and sport related fitness activities, designed to increase their awareness of leading a healthy active lifestyle. The emphasis in core PE is on participation and enjoyment and students are expected to contribute fully to all lessons regardless of ability or experience.

Core Religious Studies (Miss H. Cook)

All students in Key Stage 4 follow a statutory, non-examined course in Religious Studies. This consists of a single fortnightly lesson. Units studied include inspirational people, spiritual aspects of life, the concept of Christ, medical ethics, and the key beliefs and practices of the major world religions. Students will also explore their own views on moral issues and ultimate questions. While this course is separate from the GCSE Religious Studies option it will assist GCSE Religious Studies candidates. The course helps prepare students who choose to study A level Religious Studies and other Humanities subjects in the Sixth Form. In addition, the skills and subject knowledge developed are useful across the curriculum and as such this course benefits all students.

Personal Development (Mr M. Stairs)

At Holcombe Grammar School, Personal Development plays a vital role in the development of our students' ability to understand themselves, each other and the world around them. The knowledge they gain contributes to their health, welfare and safety, increases their independence and enables them to become honest, caring and responsible members of society - to be active citizens. PSHE and Citizenship education underpin their future employability through the development of personal and social skills, encourages ambition and positive aspirations for the future. Our Personal Development programme promotes core values of honesty, integrity, kindness, perseverance and respect through a broad and balanced curriculum. An overarching citizenship theme is community; encouraging students to understand how they can positively impact their communities, both locally and globally.

Personal Development has been developed in line with the PSHE statutory guidelines and National Curriculum Sex and Relationships course of study. The curriculum builds on our Rights Respecting Schools Award and the Fundamental British Values. It supports and challenges students' Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development (SMSC) to enable them to become responsible, respectful and active members of society. Personal Development also includes Healthy Schools curriculum content, which relates to our school ethos by helping our students develop into successful, well-rounded, confident young people who are equipped to thrive in the modern world. We will build confidence and resilience through the foundation of character education in younger years, and extend teaching to include intimate relationships as age-appropriate. Students will also be taught about family relationships, friendships and develop social skills that are all an important part of becoming a successful and happy adult. Effective sex and relationship education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. It helps young people learn to respect themselves and others and move with confidence from childhood through adolescence into adulthood.

Throughout year 10 and 11 students will cover the following topics in Personal Development:

- Mental Health and our well-being - *Building how to coping with new challenges during GCSEs and how to support one's mental health and stress throughout*
- Addressing extremism and radicalisation - *Understanding examples of extremism in our modern work and how to prevent this*
- Exploring Influence - *Understanding what influences us in our life's, the dangers associated and ways to deal with this*
- Careers and Work Experience - *A focus on the world of work, developing skills and understanding to take into choices post 16.*
- Financial choices and management - *Developing money managing skills and understanding of budgeting in the real world.*
- Relationships and responsibility in life - *Developing our understanding of sexual health and well-being, healthy relationships and families.*
- Independent Life - *How the world will be on our own, dealing with AI and supporting others/managing a range of scenarios*
- Exam preparation and dealing with stress - *Developing methods of revision techniques and how to manage stress and workload in the lead up to exams.*

English Language (Mrs G. Dacey)

Course Title

GCSE English Language

Examination Board

AQA

Examination Details

English Language; 100% exam

20% of overall Language result is determined by spelling & grammar

Language Paper 1; 1 hour 45 mins. 80 marks. 50% of GCSE

Language Paper 2; 1 hour 45 mins. 80 marks. 50% of GCSE

Non-examination Assessment; Spoken Language

Course Outline

Paper 1; Explorations in Creative Reading & Writing.

Section A: Reading. one literature fiction text

Section B: Writing descriptive or narrative writing

In section A, students will study and analyse an unseen literature fiction text in order to consider how established writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to capture the interest of readers. Whilst in section B, students will be expected to write their own creative text, inspired by the topic that they have responded to in section A to demonstrate their narrative and descriptive skills in response to a written prompt, scenario or visual image.

Paper 2; Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

Section A: Reading. One non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text

Section B: Writing. Writing to present a viewpoint

Writers

In section A, students will read and respond to, two linked sources from different time periods and genres in order to consider how each presents a perspective or viewpoint to influence the reader.

Whilst in section B, producing a written text to a specified audience, purpose and form in which they give their own perspective on the theme that has been introduced to them in section A.

Cross-Curricular Links

English Language has clear links to very subject in the curriculum. A good command of spoken and written English is essential for progress in every academic, vocational and extra-curricular walk of life.

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

Success in English Language GCSE is essential if a student wishes to pursue further and higher education, or to follow a worthwhile career. It is the foundation for the study of all subjects in the sixth form as all subjects are taught exclusively or partly in the English language. Grade 7 for English Language is the minimum requirement for a student to be accepted for the A Level English Literature course as it is a demanding academic subject.

English Literature (Mrs G. Dacey)

Course Title

GCSE English Literature

Examination Board

AQA

Examination Details

External Examination – 100% of the total GCSE mark

Paper 1. Shakespeare and 19th century novel. 1 hour 45 mins. 64 marks. 40% GCSE.

Paper 2. Modern texts & poetry. 2 hours 15 mins. 96 marks. 60% of GCSE

Course Outline

Paper 1. Shakespeare and 19th century novel.

Section A; Shakespeare: students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.

Section B; The 19th-century novel: students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.

Paper 2. Modern texts and poetry.

Section A Modern texts: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.

Section B Poetry: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.

Section C Unseen poetry: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

Cross-Curricular Links

There is an obvious link to English Language but also to other subjects that involve the appreciation and interpretation of writing. Media Studies, History and Modern Foreign Languages are examples.

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

Students are strongly encouraged to achieve as a bare minimum a grade 7 in English Literature at GCSE before doing A Level English Literature. Those with a grade 6 are warned they will need to work very hard and make significant progress if they are to make a success of English Literature A Level.

Mathematics (Mrs F. Williamson)

Course Title

GCSE Mathematics

Examination Board

EDEXCEL

Examination and Coursework Details

This course is a linear specification and will be assessed with three terminal examination papers at the end of Year 11.

The three papers are worth 80 marks each, with total examination time of 4.5 hours. Within this, both non-calculator and calculator work will be assessed. There will be more emphasis on the skills of problem-solving, communication, proof and interpretation.

Course Outline

The main topics are:

- Number;
- Algebra;
- Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change;
- Geometry;
- Probability;
- Statistics.

The course assessment objectives will focus on fluency, reasoning and problem solving.

Students will be entered for Higher, or Foundation tier examination papers. Setting at Key Stage 4 is based on internal examinations and teacher assessments. Some students, making very good progress in GCSE (9-1) Mathematics, may be able to study towards additional qualifications in mathematics: GCSE (9-1) Statistics and/or Certificate in Further Mathematics.

Cross-Curricular Links

Mathematics has strong links with most other subjects and especially Science.

Qualifications in mathematics lead to a wide range of employment opportunities.

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

After achieving a high grade in GCSE Mathematics, students may choose to progress to study Advanced Level Mathematics, or Advanced Level Further Mathematics. All students are advised to have a very good understanding of algebra and trigonometry, to secure success at this level.

Many organisations employ people with mathematical skills and there are many more than listed here: Accountancy; Aerospace; Automotive; Biosciences; Business support services; Chemicals; Construction; Consultancies; Education; Engineering; Environment; Exploration Geophysics; Financial Services; Food and drink; Government; Healthcare; Insurance; IT and Computing; Manufacturing; Media; Metals and Minerals; Operational Research; Pharmaceuticals; Recruitment; Academic research in Mathematics; Science; Telecoms; Transport/Travel and Utilities.

Science (Miss P. Wilson)	
Course Title	Examination Board
Combined Science – two GCSEs Or Triple Science – three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics	AQA
Examination and Coursework Details Each GCSE will have a terminal examination worth 100% of the overall mark.	
Course Outline All students will study for a minimum of two science GCSEs (Combined Science covers all three Science subjects -Biology, Chemistry and Physics and is worth two GCSEs). Students may choose 'Triple Science' as an additional option and will study each Science in greater depth. In all three Sciences, the specifications place an emphasis on 'working scientifically', teaching science through contemporary issues and communication of scientific ideas. 'Working scientifically' involves students looking at how scientific developments progress, the need to use data to support or disprove ideas and why data may not be reliable. The aim is to give the students the ability to analyse complex problems and to decide for themselves what solutions are appropriate using the available data.	
The Biology course offers students the opportunity to examine how the body responds to the environment, keeping healthy, drugs and their implications, the body's responses to infectious disease, factors affecting a species distribution and genetic inheritance, endangered species and how humans affect the environment, the effect of enzymes, micro-organisms and internal body systems and control.	
The Chemistry course allows students to understand atomic structure, structure and bonding, calculations, chemical reactions, electrolysis, energy in reactions, rates of reaction, carbon compounds, the atmosphere and the use of resources.	
The Physics course allows students to investigate thermal changes, efficiency of energy transfer and loss, electrical devices and circuits, generation of electricity using alternative sources, radiation and its uses and dangers, origins of the universe, how objects speed up or slow down, static electricity, current electricity, turning effects, mirrors and lenses as well as transformers.	
Cross-Curricular Links Students will develop their mathematical skills in practical situations. They will have the opportunity to discuss scientific ideas and controversies and present information using a range of technologies.	
Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Both Combined Science and Triple Science provide a firm foundation for students who intend to study an A-level science. It develops critical thinking as well as problem solving skills allowing students to make informed evaluations of current scientific developments. Providing for jobs in health care, pharmaceuticals and bio-chemistry sectors as well as bio-medical research, engineering and construction.	

French (Ms H. Ortega- Izquierdo)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE French	AQA
<p>Examination Details: 100% external assessment- all papers to be set and marked by AQA.</p> <p>Listening: 25% of overall mark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally. • Section B – dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list. <p>Speaking: 25% of overall mark. Speaking will comprise of these components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-play • Reading aloud task and short unprepared conversation on one of the themes studied. • Photo card discussion- response to the content of the photos on the card and unprepared conversation on one of the themes studied. <p>Reading: 25% of overall mark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally. • Section B – translation from French into English. <p>Writing: 25% of overall mark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be expected to complete a variety of tasks including a 90-word essay and 1 translation (English-French) which will be in sentences. <p>In order to achieve a grade 5-9 at GCSE, students must be able to use a variety of grammatical structures including the past, present and future tenses and be able to express and justify opinions.</p> <p>Course Outline The course covers a variety of contexts linked to themes that relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1: People and lifestyle • Theme 2: Popular culture • Theme 3: Communication and the world around us • There will be an emphasis on the culture and identities of the French speaking countries and communities. • There will be a focus on independent and spontaneous use of French. <p>An understanding of French-speaking life and culture forms an integral part of this course and it is hoped that students will visit a French speaking country either on holiday or on a school journey. In the last couple of years, we have been to Paris and Normandy.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Links The French course will appeal to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to develop his critical skills • Have an interest in the French language • Are interested in finding out about another culture • Have a sense of adventure by taking part in visits • Are considering working in an international company and/or a French speaking country <p>The course encourages a greater appreciation of the French language and Francophone culture, as well as a better understanding of language in general. It would therefore be of great benefit to English Language and Literature students. There are also strong cross curricular links with a wide range of other subjects including Citizenship, Geography, History, Religious Studies and Sociology.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Students with a grade 6 or above will have achieved a firm foundation to study French at KS5. The acquisition of a good A Level grade would allow you to pursue French and possibly other languages at university and would be a considerable advantage in the world of employment. Please do not overlook the possibility of studying abroad too!</p>	

Spanish (Ms H. Ortega- Izquierdo)

Course Title
GCSE Spanish

Examination Board
AQA

Examination Details:

100% external assessment- all papers to be set and marked by AQA.

Listening: 25% of overall mark

- Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B – dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list.

Speaking: 25% of overall mark. Speaking will comprise of these components:

- Role-play
- Reading aloud task and short unprepared conversation on one of the themes studied.
- Photo card discussion- response to the content of the photos on the card and unprepared conversation on one of the themes studied.

Reading: 25% of overall mark.

- Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B – translation from Spanish into English.

Writing: 25% of overall mark

- Students will be expected to complete a variety of tasks including a 90-word essay and 1 translation (English-Spanish) which will be in sentences.
- In order to achieve a grade 5-9 at GCSE, students must be able to use a variety of grammatical structures including the past, present and future tenses and be able to express and justify opinions.

Course Outline

The course covers a variety of contexts linked to themes that relate to:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular culture
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us
- There will be an emphasis on the culture and identities of the Spanish speaking countries and communities.
- There will be a focus on independent and spontaneous use of Spanish.

An understanding of Spanish-speaking life and culture forms an integral part of this course and it is hoped that students will visit a Spanish speaking country either on holiday or on a school journey. We organise school trips to support the language.

Cross-Curricular Links

The Spanish course will appeal to students who:

Want to develop his critical skills

- Have an interest in the Spanish language
- Are interested in finding out about another culture
- Have a sense of adventure by taking part in visits
- Are considering working in an international company and/or a Spanish speaking country

The course encourages a greater appreciation of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture, as well as a better understanding of language in general. It would therefore be of great benefit to English Language and Literature students. There are also strong cross curricular links with a wide range of other subjects including Citizenship, Geography, History, Religious Studies and Sociology.

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

Students with a grade 6 or above will have achieved a firm foundation to study Spanish at KS5.

The acquisition of a good A Level grade would allow you to pursue Spanish and possibly other languages at university and would be a considerable advantage in the world of employment. Please do not overlook the possibility of studying abroad too!

Optional Subjects

Art and Design (Mrs R. Mourino)	
Course Title Fine Art GCSE Art and Design	Examination Board AQA
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <p>Coursework – 60% - Based on a portfolio of 2 projects. Component 1 Examination – 40% - Based on a 10 hour examination (taken over two days) and preparation period leading up to this examination. Component 2</p> <p>Course Outline</p> <p>Fine Art means that we can experiment with virtually any area of Art that is suitable to the unit titles. Students will undertake two units of coursework, component 1, during GCSE Art and Design, and one externally set exam, component 2. You will explore a number of projects, materials, starting points and artists to develop artwork for your portfolio. Your portfolio is a collection of work that holistically covers the 4 assessment criteria. We will investigate drawing, painting, 3D, ceramics and photography. You will get the opportunity to develop your drawing, painting, 3D and photography skills during workshop sessions. These will be recorded creatively and thoroughly in your sketchbook. You will develop your analytical and research skills using subject specific language making connections to your practical outcomes. Annotations are an important aspect which demonstrates a student's thought process and journey</p> <p>At the beginning of Term 3 in year 11 you will receive your exam paper, this is component 2. The paper will have 7 starting points with suggested sources. Again you will develop your ideas in a sketchbook</p> <p>Who should consider the course?</p> <p>A good GCSE candidate for Art and Design would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be creative and willing to experiment • Be good at organising their time • Be willing to respond to advice • Be independent with their ideas <p>How is my work marked?</p> <p>Your work is marked using the four Assessment Objectives: In short, these objectives look for quality in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing written and visual work through contextual sources. • Exploring and refining • Recording skills in both written and visual outcomes • Realising intentions making connections with the work of others. <p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>You will apply skills from many subject areas in Art and Design however; a good standard of English is required. History is another subject area where there is a number of cross over skills. You will also develop skills in problem solving, creativity, working in groups, managing your time and being independent throughout the course.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>Art is a very useful subject for a number of careers including Architecture, Graphic Design, Motion Design, Commercial Photography, Games Design, Fashion Design, Textile Design, Set and Film Design, Product Design, Animation, Ceramics and 3D and the list goes on. Art teaches you how to analyse and solve problems creatively and with ingenuity; this is a valuable skill for any future career and complements your learning in other subject areas too. Students who take GCSE Art often go on to study A level Art and Design. Some of these students have chosen to continue into careers in the creative industries where their broad skills and knowledge of Art has made them stand out from the crowd.</p>	

Art and Design (Mrs R. Mourino)	
Course Title Photography GCSE Art and Design	Examination Board AQA
<p>Examination and Coursework Details Coursework – 60% - Based on a portfolio of 2 projects. Component 1 Examination – 40% - Based on a 10 hour examination (taken over two days) and preparation period leading up to this examination. Component 2</p> <p>Course Outline Photography – in this course you will be shown how to use digital cameras and their settings but will also have access to a darkroom. You will learn how to edit using different art programs. Students have also used film and moving images to explore their themes. Students will undertake two units of coursework, component 1, during GCSE Art and Design, and one externally set exam, component 2. You will get the opportunity to develop your technical skills during workshop sessions. These will be recorded creatively and thoroughly in your sketchbook. Annotations are an important aspect which demonstrates a students' thought process and journey You will develop you analytical and research skills using subject specific language making connections to your practical outcomes. At the beginning of Term 3 in year 11 you will receive your exam paper, this is component 2. The paper will have 7 starting points with suggested sources. Again you will develop your ideas in a sketchbook</p> <p>Who should consider the course? A good GCSE candidate for Art and Design (Photography) would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be creative and willing to experiment • Be good at organising their time • Be willing to respond to advice • Be independent with their ideas <p>How is my work marked? Your work is marked using the four Assessment Objectives: In short, these objectives look for quality in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing written and visual work through contextual sources. • Exploring and refining • Recording skills in both written and visual outcomes • Realising intentions making connections with the work of others. <p>Cross-Curricular Links You will apply skills from many subject areas in Art and Design however; a good standard of English is required. History is another subject area where the is a number of cross over skills You will also develop skills in problem solving, creativity, working in groups, managing your time and being independent throughout the course.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Art is a very useful subject for a number of careers including Graphic Design, Motion Design, Commercial Photography, Games Design, Film, and the list goes on. Art teaches you how to analyse and solve problems creatively and with ingenuity; this is a valuable skill for any future career and compliments your learning in other subject areas too. Students who take GCSE Art often go onto study A level Art and Design. Some of these students have chosen to continue into careers in the creative industries where their broad skills and knowledge of Art has made them stand out from the crowd.</p>	

Business Studies (Miss S. Lyons)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Business Studies	AQA
<p>Examination Details</p> <p>This course is 100% exam assessed, there are two papers, Paper 1 Influences of operations and HRM on business activity and Paper 2 Influences of Marketing and Finance on business activity: with a final exam in each of 1 hour 45 minutes. Each paper has a combination of multiple choice and data response questions using case study stimulus.</p> <p>Course Outline</p> <p>During the GCSE course Students apply their knowledge and understanding to different business contexts ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts. Students develop an understanding of how these contexts impact on business behaviour. Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to business decision making including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the interdependent nature of business activity, influences on business, business operations, finance, marketing and human resources, and how these interdependencies underpin business decision making • how different business contexts affect business decisions • the use and limitation of quantitative and qualitative data in making business decisions. <p>Students will draw on the knowledge and understanding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use business terminology to identify and explain business activity • apply business concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts • develop problem solving and decision making skills relevant to business • investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and issues • make justified decisions using both qualitative and quantitative data including its selection, interpretation, analysis and evaluation, and the application of appropriate quantitative skills. <p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>There are clear links to Mathematics and English, as well as to Geography and IT. Students will have the opportunity to develop their communication and IT skills as well as preparing students for the world of work and enterprise.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>A good result will allow students to follow the A level Economics or Business Studies courses. There are many business related degree courses and these are sometimes combined with modern languages, law etc. Career options are varied and include managerial, marketing and administrative work, accountancy, banking and insurance.</p>	

Computing (Mr M. Fielding)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Computing J277	OCR
<p>Why Choose Computer Science?</p> <p>In a world where technology drives innovation, Computer Science stands as one of the most exciting and essential subjects you can study. From creating apps to programming robots, this course offers you the opportunity to shape the future. The skills you'll develop—problem-solving, logical thinking, and creativity—are not only in high demand but also open doors to every industry imaginable.</p> <p>Computer Science is the backbone of modern society, underpinning advancements in medicine, engineering, entertainment, and beyond. By choosing this subject, you are embarking on a journey to become a digital innovator, capable of solving real-world problems and unlocking the potential of cutting-edge technology. Whether you dream of working in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, or game development, Computer Science is your gateway to success.</p> <p>Examination And Coursework Details</p> <p>Component 1: Computer Systems (50%): 1½ hour exam, external assessment</p> <p>Explore the physical and theoretical foundations of Computer Science, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems Architecture • Memory and Storage • Data Representation • Wired and Wireless Networks • Cybersecurity and Ethical Considerations <p>Component 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms, and Programming (50%): 1½ hour exam, external assessment</p> <p>Dive into the exciting world of algorithms and programming to develop robust, innovative solutions. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algorithms • Programming Techniques • Computational Logic • Translators and Programming Environments <p>Component 3: Programming Project: Controlled assessment (20 hours). This project develops essential practical skills, though it does not contribute to the final grade.</p> <p>Engage in creative problem-solving by designing, testing, and evaluating your own programs. You will apply practical skills in a hands-on environment, learning to think like a computer scientist.</p> <p>Why Computer Science is Essential</p> <p>Computer Science equips you with skills that go beyond the classroom. Logical thinking, problem analysis, and the ability to adapt to new challenges are valuable across all career paths. By learning to code, you're not just writing programs—you're developing a mindset to tackle global challenges, from climate change to space exploration.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Connections</p> <p>Your studies in Computer Science will complement subjects like Maths, Physics, and Design Technology, enhancing your ability to think critically and work collaboratively.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>A GCSE in Computer Science is the first step toward exciting opportunities in higher education and beyond. Whether you aim to become a software engineer, data analyst, or tech entrepreneur, the foundational skills you gain here will set you apart in a competitive job market. Industries like finance, healthcare, and creative arts are increasingly dependent on technology, making Computer Science one of the most versatile qualifications available.</p> <p>Be a Part of the Future</p> <p>Choose Computer Science, and join the pioneers building tomorrow. From smartphones to self-driving cars, every breakthrough starts with someone who understands the power of computing. Will you be the one to take it further?</p>	

Drama (Mrs N. Miles)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Drama	Edexcel
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Devising Theatre Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 40% of qualification • Component 2: Performing from a Text Non-exam assessment: externally assessed by a visiting examiner 20% of qualification • Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice. Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes 40% of qualification <p>Course Outline</p> <p>The GCSE in Drama is an exciting, inspiring and practical course. The specification promotes involvement in and enjoyment of drama, as performers and/or designers. Additionally, it provides opportunities to attend live theatre performances and to develop skills as informed and thoughtful audience members.</p> <p>Learners will investigate a practitioner or genre of drama, work collaboratively to develop ideas to communicate meaning and experiment with dramatic conventions, forms and techniques to produce and realise a piece of original theatre. They will also have the opportunity to participate in the performance of an extract from a play text. Learners will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama, including their ability to interpret texts for performance, in a written examination. However, in preparation for this assessment, learners are encouraged to study their chosen text practically as a performer, designer and director.</p> <p>GCSE in Drama offers a broad and coherent course of study which enables learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply knowledge and understanding when making, performing and responding to drama • explore performance texts, understanding their social, cultural and historical context including the theatrical conventions of the period in which they were created • develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to create performances • work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas • develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective learners able to make informed choices in process and performance • contribute as an individual to a theatrical performance • reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others • develop an awareness and understanding of the roles and processes undertaken in contemporary professional theatre practice • adopt safe working practices. <p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>Drama provides students with an opportunity to develop skills that are transferable to all subject areas. The GCSE has cross-curricular links to most subjects offered at GCSE, but specifically English, DT, Art, Music and Humanities. Depending on the research required for chosen plays, then there could also be strong links to Psychology and Law.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>Drama provides students with transferable skills that are essential throughout adult life. Those skills will be useful in whatever career path the students decide to take. Studying drama at GCSE will enable students to progress onto further / higher education performing arts courses. As well as support those students who wish to work within the performance industry. Some possible drama career opportunities include: acting, directing, teaching, technical theatre, stage/set/costume design, drama therapy, events management, community projects, outreach, script writing, presenting, entertaining. Drama will also develop vital skills to support students wishing to progress on to any career path, including: law, business, psychology and the public sector.</p>	

Design and Technology (Mr H. Ackers)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Design and Technology	EDUQAS
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <p>Exam - Design & Technology in the 21st Century 2 Hours - 50%</p> <p>Coursework (NEA) - Design & Make Task 35 Hours - 50%</p> <p>Course Outline</p> <p><u>Year 10</u></p> <p>The course teaches students how to solve real world problems and be an all-round designer through them learning a tool kit of practical processes, machinery, materials, CAD software and CAM processes. This allows the students to tailor their creative journey by being able to identify the correct processes and materials to solve the problems they set out in their own design briefs. Students will learn about emerging technologies, modern and smart materials, composite materials and technical textiles, electronic systems and mechanical devices. The specification encourages learners to use creativity and to be confident to explore their own imagination. The course enables learners to identify market needs and opportunities for new products, initiate and develop design solutions and make and test prototypes.</p> <p><u>Year 11</u></p> <p>Students are offered a range of design contexts to explore before leading to a personalised design brief. The design brief allows students to take their own creative journey to solve identified problems. It promotes a truly creative path of CAD modelling, rapid prototyping and iterative mix media designing. This leads to a unique outcome that is project managed to a fully operational prototype stage and is supported by precise technical drawings and a progressive evaluation leading to suitable improvement possibilities. They will develop an awareness of practices from the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries.</p> <p>Key topics areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual Research • Iterative design • Model making • CAD (Photoshop, Illustrator, Sketchup, 2D design and On shape and CAM design (including laser cutting and 3D printing) • Rapid prototyping • Materials testing • Practical processes in Metals, Timbers and boards, Smart Textiles, Mechanisms and Electronics • Detailed Designing • Technical Drawings <p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>The study of design and technology seeks to prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world; and be aware of, and learn from, wider influences on design and technology, including historical, social/cultural, environmental, and economic factors. With a big emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) there are clear links to these subjects as well as art and design, computer science and humanities.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>Students that achieve a good grade at GCSE will have an excellent foundation for studying Design Technology at A level. The Department runs a very popular Product Design A level which is the natural next step before progressing onto University or Industry. University and Career opportunities exist in a wide range of areas, including electronic and mechanical engineering, product design, architecture, interior and graphic design.</p>	

Film Studies (Mrs E. Morris)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Film Studies	EDUQAS
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <p>Component 1: Key Developments in US Film. Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, 35% of qualification</p> <p>Component 2: Global Film: Narrative, Representation and Film Style. Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, 35% of qualification</p> <p>Component 3: Production Non-exam assessment, Film Extract (video) or Film Extract Screenplay (with storyboard), Evaluative Analysis. 30% of qualification</p> <p>Course Outline</p> <p>Film is an important part of many people's lives. Those who choose to study it characteristically bring with them a huge enthusiasm and excitement for film which constantly motivates them in their studies. The WJEC Eduqas specification in GCSE Film Studies is designed to draw on learners' enthusiasm for film and introduce them to a wide variety of cinematic experiences through films which have been important in the development of film and film technology. Learners will develop their knowledge of US mainstream film by studying one film from the 1950s and one film from the later 70s and 80s, thus looking at two stages in Hollywood's development. In addition, they will be studying more recent films – a US independent film as well as films from Europe, including the UK, South Africa and Australia.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>The critical skills you develop through studying film will also be of use in GCSE English and modern foreign languages. The deepening historical and cultural perspectives you will develop will inform your work in history, geography, sociology and other humanities subjects. If you pursue the screenplay option, writing skills for GCSE English will be enhanced. The visual and design aspects of film production are linked to skills required of art students.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>The department offers media related courses at A Level. Attaining a good grade at GCSE Film provides you with a solid foundation on which to develop your skills at A level these subjects. There are numerous career opportunities that a qualification in Film can lead to including TV and film production, online video production, as well as wider careers linked to the contextual study of film. You will also develop technical skills that can improve your employability in a number of careers.</p>	

Geography (Mrs Z. Bailey)

Course Title
GCSE Geography

Examination Board
EDEXCEL B

Course Outline

Students study a wide range of topics including Natural Hazards; Physical landscapes in the UK – Coasts and Rivers; Resources and the biosphere as well as key Geographical skills. Students will also complete compulsory fieldwork for two days where students explore both urban and coastal landscapes, applying theoretical knowledge and practical geographical data collection skills.

In the specification content, students are required to study case studies and examples. Case studies are broader in context and require greater breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding. Examples are more focused on a specific event or situation, are smaller in scale and do not cover the same degree of content. Students will therefore need to have an appreciation of the world as it happens, watching the news, reading the papers and asking pertinent questions beyond themselves.

Assessment Overview: Three written exams each at 1hr 30 mins.

Paper 1: 37.5% of your final grade. Three sections looking at Hazardous Earth, Development Dynamics and Challenges of an Urbanising world. 94 marks in total.

Paper 2: 37.5% of your final grade. Four sections looking at UK Physical landscape, UK Human landscape and Fieldwork: Coasts and Urban. 94 marks in total.

Paper 3: 25% of your final grade. Three sections looking at People and the Biosphere, Forests under Threat and Consuming energy resources. This paper also includes DME question. 64 marks in total.

Cross-Curricular Links

Students will be able to present work in a variety of ways such as PowerPoint presentations, up-to-date news articles, geo-factsheets and podcasts. There are strong cross-curricular links with a wide range of subjects including but not limited to Science, History, English, Psychology and Modern Foreign Languages. Students find that skills and knowledge obtained in Geography is easily transferable in to other areas of study. Being such a versatile subject really enables students to develop, refine and extend their knowledge.

To be a successful Geography student you must:

- ✓ Link theory with real world case studies and situations
- ✓ Write structured evaluations, assessments and judgements
- ✓ Evaluate information
- ✓ Select appropriate facts and figures to support your answers
- ✓ Conduct fieldwork using a range of Geographical skills

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

Students with a good GCSE grade will have achieved a firm foundation to study Geography at A level. GCSE Geography is also a good foundation for the study of a wide range of A Level subjects as we use your written English skills along with mathematical knowledge and practical application.

Geographers are highly respected in all aspects of the workplace and this GCSE course can open up a huge range of opportunities beyond your secondary school studies from Meteorology to Risk Assessment; Town Planning to Highways Work; International charity work and so much more.

History (Mr J. Wrigley)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE History	Edexcel
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <p>100% external assessment, with all examinations taken at the end of the course.</p> <p>Four exam topics over 3 examinations.</p> <p>Four papers over 3 examinations.</p> <p>Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment: Exam 1 hour 20 minutes Medicine Through Time, c1000–present and Surgery on the Western-Front. (30% of total grade) Students will be required to consider the changes to medical developments such as ideas about the causes of disease, how and why surgery developed and the impact of public health on the lives of ordinary people. In addition, a detailed study of wartime surgery during the First World War is studied, looking in depth at how modern warfare affected the ability of surgeons to treat battlefield wounds.</p> <p>Paper 2: Period study and British depth study: Exam 1 hour 50 minutes. <u>Part A: Superpower relations: The Cold War 1945-1990</u> (20% of total grade) Students will consider the developments, events and personalities which have shaped the recent history of world affairs. They will look at a wide range of topics including the causes of the breakdown in relationship between the USA and USSR after WW2, key events in the Cold War such as the Berlin airlift, Korean War, development of the nuclear arms race and space race, Cuban missile Crisis, the impact of the Berlin Wall and the reasons for the collapse of communism in the 1980's and 90's.</p> <p><u>Part B: The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1588</u> (20% of total grade) Students will consider the major influences on political and social life during the period as well as the issue of religious controversy. They will look at the workings of Elizabethan government, the Catholic and Puritan threats to the throne and the lifestyles of the rich and the poor.</p> <p>Paper 3: Modern depth study: 1 hour 30 minutes. <u>Germany, 1919-39</u> (30% of total grade) Students will consider the impact of the First World War on Germany. They will look at the Weimar Republic and the impact of the Nazi regime on the lives of the German people. They will also consider Nazi use of terror and persuasion and look at Hitler's policy towards Jews and minority groups in the years preceding World War Two.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Links There are strong cross curricular links with a wide range of subjects including Citizenship, English, Modern Foreign Languages and Religious Studies. To be a successful history student you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse sources Evaluate information Construct arguments. <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Students with a good GCSE grade will have achieved a firm foundation to study History at A level. GCSE History is also a good foundation for the study of a wide range of A Level subjects including Government and Politics, English, Geography and Sociology. History opens-up pathways to some excellent and exciting careers such as Law, Journalism, Public Relations, advising on historical film and TV programmes, this is due to the critical thinking, analysis and evidence skills it develops.</p>	

Media Studies (Mrs E. Morris)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Media Studies	EDUQAS
<p>Component 1: Exploring the Media. Written examination: 1-hour 30mins, 40% of qualification</p> <p>Component 2: Understanding Media Forms and Products. Written examination: 1-hour 30mins, 30% of qualification</p> <p>Component 3: Creating Media Products. Non-exam assessment: Media Production, 30% of qualification</p>	
<p>Course Outline</p> <p>As a GCSE Media Studies student, you will analyse how media products like TV programmes and music videos use images, sounds, language, and representations to create meaning. You will learn about the media industry and how the industry affects how media products are made. You will investigate media audiences, exploring who are the people who watch, read and consume the products, and considering how different people might be affected by media products differently, and why and become critically aware of the media products that you consume on a day to day basis. You will study lots of different media forms, such as:</p> <p>Television, Online Media, Advertising and Marketing, Film Marketing, Magazines, Newspapers, Social and Participatory Media, Music Videos, Radio and Video Games.</p> <p>There's also a significant amount of practical work where you might create music videos, magazines, television programmes, advertisements and more.</p>	
<p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>Media Studies draws upon a wide range of skills and has close ties with English, Art and IT. We promote and develop your IT skills, your creative skills and your written skills. We like students who want to debate and discuss issues, but who are also happy to write about their ideas. You will also work in teams and develop your time management skills. In Media we encourage you to become independent learners and to take responsibility for your learning and the work you produce.</p>	
<p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>During the GCSE Media course you'll develop and practise a range of skills which will equip you for progression to A Level study. They will also help you hugely in other areas such as Film, English, Humanities and Social Sciences. Looking further ahead, over one hundred universities offer courses in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies in the UK. An A Level qualification in Media Studies, informed by study at GCSE level, helps you to move towards these courses, as well as to those in a range of other areas. If university isn't for you, there is a huge array of career opportunities in the media, and it's an industry that is growing very quickly. If you are interested in the idea of a career in TV and film production, advertising, journalism, interactive media, and digital marketing, technical production, special effects, web design and post-production, then studying Media at GCSE level is a great place to start.</p>	

Music (Mr J. Zwanzig)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Music	EDUQAS
<p>Examination and Coursework Details Examination – 40% of overall mark (1 listening exam) Coursework – 2 Compositions and 2 Performances – 60% of overall mark</p> <p>Course Outline The course is divided into 3 sections.</p> <p>Listening Exam: This component offers you a chance to study a variety of songs from different musical eras and styles. You will be asked to analyze 2 influential pieces of music:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices Set Work: Badinerie by J.S.Bach for Flute and String Orchestra and music from 1650-1910 • Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble You will be learning about music written for different ensembles including Jazz, Blues, chamber and Musical Theatre. • Area of study 3: Film Music You will be learning to analyse music from different films • Area of study 4: Popular Music. Set Work: Africa: Toto. You will be learning about different styles of Popular Music including Rock, Pop, Bhangra and Fusion. <p>Performing: You will be required to perform 2 pieces of music, one as a soloist and one as a member of a band. Your performances will be recorded and submitted.</p> <p>Composing: During the course, you will learn how to compose and arrange music using traditional instruments and music technology. At the end of the course you will have completed two pieces; one free composition, and one set to a chosen composition brief. Your work will be recorded and submitted.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Links Music draws upon a vast range of practical and interpersonal skills applicable throughout all aspects of school life. The course will particularly suit students who have a natural ability and interest with composition and performance, with 60% of the GCSE (the coursework) being practical. You will also learn to consider the context and historical significance of different eras of music and the impact they had on the world.</p> <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities This course provides you with a firm foundation to study Music or Music Technology at A-Level or BTEC. There are many different career opportunities that a qualification in GCSE Music can lead to including musician, session musician, conductor/ musical director, actor, instrumental teacher, teacher, DJ, composer, game and film composer, songwriter, producer, music arranger, live sound technician, recording engineer, TV or film sound technician, broadcast engineer, artist manager, instrumental teacher, teacher, A&R coordinator, music journalist, tour manager, concert promoter, booking agent, music publicist, and record producer.</p> <p>Not only is this course a doorway into the music industry, it can also help you to develop your skills further giving you the confidence and the ability to perform in a group or as a soloist. The skills you will learn will enable you to perform as a solo artist and as a member of a band in the future, this subject can give you many different ideas and techniques that will enable you to be creative in designing your own songs going forward.</p>	

Physical Education (Mr A. Nanson)	
Course Title GCSE Physical Education	Examination Board AQA
<p>Examination and Coursework Details Examination – 60% of overall mark Coursework/ Practical performance – 40% of overall mark</p> <p>Course Outline The course covers a number of topics and themes, allowing students to study a diverse range of ideas related to Physical Education. Lessons will be divided between classroom based theoretical lessons and practical lessons.</p> <p>Unit 1: The human body & movement in physical education & sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of overall mark. • 75 minute written examination marked out of 78. • Topics covered include applied anatomy & physiology, movement analysis and physical training. <p>Unit 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of overall mark. • 75 minute written examination marked out of 78. • Topics covered include sports psychology, socio-cultural influences and health, fitness & well-being. <p>Unit 3: Non Exam Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Assessment (30% of overall mark) – students are assessed in THREE activities as a player/performer. One assessment must be in a team activity, one assessment must be in an individual activity, and the third can be from either an individual or a team activity. • Performance Analysis (10% of overall mark) – Students analyse and evaluate their own performance in one chosen activity identifying strengths & weaknesses and considering how these impact their performance. <p>Who should study GCSE PE? The GCSE Physical Education course will appeal to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a keen interest in sport and always look forward to PE lessons • Take part in sport / physical activity outside of class time • Want to know more about the benefits of sport and exercise • Want to improve their own performance in a range of sporting activities • Are proficient (minimum school-team standard) in at least three practical activities • Are considering a sports-related career or an A-Level / Higher Education Course • Are keen to contribute both verbally and practically to lessons • <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Students with a good GCSE grade will have achieved a firm foundation to study Physical Education at KS5. Students who have not studied this subject at GCSE can progress to this level provided they have achieved strong GCSE grades in other subjects and have the physical competency to tackle the practical aspects of the course. The study of GCSE PE lends itself effectively to career development in a range of fields including sports coaching/ teaching, psychology, physiotherapy, medicine, sociology and personal training.</p>	

Examination and Coursework Details

100% external assessment, with all examinations taken at the end of the course.

Two examinations: One hour and thirty minutes each.

Component One – Studies and Applications in Psychology 1** (50% of qualification)

- **Criminal Psychology** – Why do individuals commit crimes? How do these crimes differ? Does punishment deter future re-offending?
- **Development** – The process of cognitive development, how is intelligence measured?
- **Psychological Problems** – What is “ideal mental health”? What are the effects of health problems on the individual and society? How can schizophrenia and clinical depression, be treated effectively?
- **The Brain and Neuropsychology** – What are the structures and functions of the brain, including cerebrum, cerebellum and brainstem?
- **Research Methods** - background, method design, sampling, materials, procedure, results, conclusions and criticisms

Component Two – Studies and Applications in Psychology 2** (50% of qualification)

- **Social Influence** – Why do individuals and social groups conform and obey? Are individuals innately an authoritarian personality, or is this learnt?
- **Memory** – To what extent are the structure and function of the brain responsible for our memories and why we forget?
- **Sleep and Dreaming** – The functions and features of sleep and dreaming? Why do we dream? What is the relationship between insomnia and the role of the nervous system?
- **The Brain and Neuropsychology** – the brain processes in context to memory and psychological problems
- **Research Methods** – background, method design, sampling, materials, procedure, results, conclusions and criticisms

****Each element of the components will cover the content relating to:**

1. Key concepts
2. Theories and explanations
3. Research Studies
4. Applications
5. Five core areas of psychology (Biological, Cognitive, Developmental, Social and Individual Differences)
6. Key debates within psychology including the nature/nurture debate
7. How psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behavior
8. The contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
9. Planning, doing and analysing research

Cross-Curricular Links

There are strong cross curricular links with a wide range of subjects including Biology, Philosophy, Sociology, Mathematics, Physical Education, History and Religious Studies. To be a successful psychology student you must:

- be organized and pro-active in time management and studying
- an independent learner who is self-aware and determined to improve
- a reflective and enthusiastic learner
- develop your psychological literacy to enable you to apply your knowledge and skills in your everyday lives, to make informed decisions about your behavior and choices, in school and out of school

Sixth Form and Career Opportunities

Students with a good GCSE grade will have achieved a firm foundation to study Psychology at A level or Criminology. This qualification empowers students with applications to the real world, increasing their understanding of human behaviour. This challenging subject is valued by employers and universities alike, demonstrating a critical understanding of research methods and scientific lines of inquiry for practical applications.

Religious Studies (Miss H. Cook)	
Course Title	Examination Board
GCSE Religious Studies	OCR
<p>Examination and Coursework Details</p> <p>The course comprises of three units, each of which will be externally assessed through an examination at the end of the three years. Two of the exams are one hour in length and the third is two hours. There is no coursework or controlled assessment.</p>	
<p>Course Outline</p> <p>Students do not need to be religious to succeed in and enjoy Religious Studies at GCSE, but should enjoy examining their own views and those of others; analysing and interpreting religious beliefs and practices and evaluating different philosophical and ethical arguments. The course includes visits to local places of worship to further develop understanding of religion as it is practiced, and where available external speakers are utilised to give students first-hand experience of faith in the modern world.</p>	
<p>Unit J625/01: Beliefs and Teachings & Practices: Christianity (25% of GCSE)</p> <p>Students examine a number of the core beliefs held by Christians including those about the nature of God; the person of Jesus; creation; salvation; and the problem of evil. They will explore the impact these beliefs have on Christians through exploring practices such as worship; pilgrimage and celebrations and the role of the Church in the modern world.</p>	
<p>Unit J625/02: Beliefs and Teachings & Practices: Islam (25% of GCSE)</p> <p>In this unit students will have the opportunity to study key concepts within Islam in order to develop knowledge and understanding of the basis of Muslim teachings, beliefs and practices. Topics considered will include beliefs about the nature of Allah; prophethood; books; angels and life after death. The five pillars of Islam, Muslim festivals and public and private acts of worship will also be explored.</p>	
<p>Unit J625/07: Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World from a Christian Perspective (50% of GCSE)</p> <p>In this component, students will utilise their understanding of Christianity through the application of teachings to four overarching themes. Philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world will be a key element of this unit.</p> <p>The four themes are: 1) Relationships and families; 2) The existence of God; 3) Religion, peace and conflict; 4) Dialogues between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes.</p> <p>Within their exploration of these topics, students will consider questions concerning gender equality, family relationships, philosophical arguments for God's existence, miracles, terrorism, pacifism, social justice, the place of religion in modern society, non-religious views including atheism and Humanism, medical ethics (abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering), and much more</p>	
<p>Cross-Curricular Links</p> <p>Transferable skills developed through GCSE Religious Studies include the ability to evaluate different viewpoints and to express and justify opinions effectively. Religious Studies complements a broad spectrum of subjects extremely well including English, Humanities, Social Sciences and the Science subjects.</p>	
<p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities</p> <p>In Years 12-13 students have the opportunity to follow the A Level Philosophy, Ethics & Theology (Religious Studies) course which focuses on the Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought. With a qualification in Religious Studies students could go on to Higher Education, at college or university. Skills developed in this subject including interpersonal skills, communication and evaluation, are valuable in a wide variety of careers including law, education, social work, politics, medicine, administration, public services, the media and many more!</p>	

Sociology (Mrs K. Jhaj)	
Course Title: GCSE Sociology	Examination Board: AQA
<p>Examination and Coursework Details 100% external assessment, with all examinations taken at the end of the course. Two examinations: One hour and 45 minutes each.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A in each examination has two multiple questions followed by a range of short and extended responses • Section B in each examination has two multiple questions followed by a range of short and extended responses <p>Paper 1 – The Sociology of Families and Education (50% of qualification)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sociology of families – describe, compare and contrast the different types and functions of families from a global perspective. Examining issues such as “Are the rising rates of divorce undermining the institution of “marriage”?” • The sociology of education – describe, compare and contrast the different types of schooling and their effectiveness from a global perspective. Examining issues such as “Does the educational system effectively serve the needs of the economy, facilitating social mobility and fostering social cohesion?” • Relevant areas of social theory and methodology <p>Paper 2 - The Sociology of Crime and Deviance and Social Stratification (50% of qualification)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sociology of crime and deviance – describe, compare and evaluate issues surrounding the social construction of crime, social control, criminal behaviour and data on crime. Examining issues such as “Why are there increasing fears of becoming a victim of violent crime when crime rates are at a record low?” • The sociology of social stratification – analyse the different theories of social stratification. Views of socio-economic class, factors effecting life chances, poverty as a social issue, the role of power and authority and power relationships. Examining issues such as “Is the modern United Kingdom a classless society?” • Relevant areas of social theory and methodology <p>In the course students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw upon information and evidence from different sources and demonstrate the ability to synthesize - Analyse and evaluate different research methods used in sociological investigations and assess, critically the appropriateness of their use - Analyse and evaluate information and evidence presented in different written, visual, numerical forms - Apply their understanding to explore and debate the current sociological issues and debates (conflict and consensus) outlined in each of the topic areas - Use sociological theories and evidence to compare and contrast social issues, construct reasoned arguments and debates, make substantiated judgments and draw conclusions - Draw connections between the different topic areas studied - Learn to use key sociological terms and concepts concerned with social structures, social processes and social issues and the explanation of social phenomena including: society, socialisation, norms, values, roles, labelling, discrimination, power and authority. <p>Cross-Curricular Links There are strong cross curricular links with a wide range of subjects including History, Geography, Religious Studies, Politics, Law and Languages. To be a successful Sociology student you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be organized and pro-active in time management and studying • an independent learner who is self-aware and determined to improve their academic skills • a reflective and enthusiastic learner, curious about the world (so watching the news daily is a must) • develop your sociological imagination to enable you to apply knowledge and skills in your everyday lives, to make informed decisions about your behavior and choices, in school and out of school <p>Sixth Form and Career Opportunities Students with a good GCSE grade will have achieved a firm foundation to study Sociology and Criminology at A level. This qualification empowers students with critical insights and applications to the real world, increasing their understanding of the wider world on a local, national and international level.</p>	

What Next?

Now you have a good idea of the subjects on offer, please do discuss the subjects you would like to take with your parents and teachers.

Options Evening this year is on **Thursday 5th March 2026**. You will be able to attend on this evening with your parents/carers to discuss your options with our Heads of Department.

Having looked at the subjects on offer in this booklet and discussed with your teachers at the options evening, please ensure that you also take some time and look on our school website for presentations and information provided by the Heads of Department running these courses.

These will be available online from **Monday 23rd February 2026 at the latest**.

The link for the options form is included at the bottom of this page. Please ensure that you know what subjects you are intending to take before you log on to complete the form.

The options form must be completed online using the link below where the password will be sent to your son's school email address on Thursday 5th March 2026 (Your son has been reminded to check his school email address to ensure that he can access it, however if this doesn't show please ask him to check in his spam folder, failing that please ask him to speak to Mr Hayes.) We will also have printout of the webcode on the evening.

You need to make 3 choices:

1. You need to choose to study either Geography or History.
2. You have already chosen whether or not you are studying French or Spanish.
3. You then have 2 free options from the full list of subjects available. Please note that
 - a. If you have chosen Geography in option 1 above, then you could choose History as one of your free options, or vice versa.
 - b. If you wish to study Triple Science you can choose this as one of your free options providing you have been recommended for this subject.

The below combinations are not possible as the subjects are too similar:

- Students cannot choose Art & Design and Photography
- Students cannot choose Media Studies and Film Studies

All options should be submitted online by the deadline of Monday 16th March 2026 which will then be considered as we draw up the Option Blocks for next year and start to plan timetables. If there is very little demand for a GCSE subject, then it may not run. Please do ensure that the reserve subject that you choose is one that you would be prepared to study.

You may alter your GCSE option choices on the online form as many times as you wish prior to 16th March, after this date you will not be able to access the form online to make changes. Please click on the link provided and use your son's webcode to access this site. my.edval.education



This link will also take you to the site for you to log you option choices.

If you have any other questions or concerns please speak to your Form Tutor or your Head of Year, or the relevant Head of Department as soon as possible.

Good luck, and please do ask if you need any help at all.