



Key Stage 4 and GCSE subject information

For students sitting examinations in 2022

As a student in Year 9 you will be making important decisions about which subjects to study for the two years leading up to GCSE examinations in 2022. The following information outlines the courses available and the process to support you in making these choices.

The programme for these two years provides a broad core of courses which ensures a balanced and challenging curriculum, together with additional courses which will allow students to follow subjects which they enjoy, are good at, or need for their future career plans.

These are the CORE subjects which are compulsory for all students to study in Key Stage 4:

- Mathematics (GCSE)
- English Language (GCSE)
- English Literature (GCSE)
- Science: Biology, Chemistry and Physics (GCSE)
- Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

In addition, all students should choose 3 further GCSE subjects; 1 humanity; 1 language and one further GCSE from these outlined below.

Art & Design: Fine Art	Geography
Chinese (spoken Mandarin)	German
Computer Science	History
Design and Technology	Music
Drama	Religious Studies
French	Spanish

Progression from GCSE

It is important that choices are made thoughtfully in order to enable each individual to aim high and do their very best at GCSE and beyond. Most sixth forms and academic departments in further education colleges have entry requirements similar to ours at Queen Mary's High School. Our entry requirements to sixth form are currently 7 GCSE passes at Grades 9 to 6 including English and Mathematics, with at least a 6 grade in the subjects a student wishes to study at A' Level. In the case of Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, German or Spanish at least a Grade 7 is preferred. Where a student chooses a new subject e.g. Psychology or Economics, they should achieve at least a 6 grade average across their GCSE subjects.

We aim to cater for the majority of needs in our broad, yet balanced curriculum but this is not always possible. Students whose choices cannot be accommodated within the options structure will be spoken to individually and asked to choose an alternative subject.

It is important that the choices made are as well informed as possible. To support pupils with this the following information, advice and guidance is provided.

W/B January 13th And January 21st	1-1 interview with a career advisor to offer bespoke advice and guidance
Monday 27th January	Year group assembly Outline of the options procedure and provide initial advice and guidance on decision making
W/B 27th January	Key stage 4 and GCSE information, advice and guidance booklet issued to students and discussed with form tutors
W/B 27th January and W/B 3rd February	GCSE option subject taster lessons Your teachers will share course information with you and answer questions you may have about course content or assessment
W/B 3rd February and W/B 10th February	Form tutor advice and guidance discussions with pupils about making suitable choices Career guidance and support using START profile and 'Me and my future' booklet
Tuesday February 4th	Year 9 Parents' evening for F and G Groups Subject staff appointments available to discuss progress in subjects, and suitability for courses
Tuesday February 11th	Year 9 Parents' Evening for SP and M groups Subject staff appointments available to discuss progress in subjects, and suitability for courses
Monday 24th February	Final Deadline for return of completed option choices form.
Additional guidance For students: Unifrog https://icould.com/stories/choosing-your-gcse-options/ https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/choosing-gcse-options-19-questions-ask/ For parents: http://www.parentalguidance.org.uk/ https://www.careersadviceforparents.org/	

Parental Information, Advice and Guidance

It may be that your child has no idea what they would ultimately like to do and it is therefore important that the choices made do not preclude the opportunity to study the majority of A' Level courses following GCSEs, or from making applications for particular career pathways. These are some questions which are most commonly asked by students and parents:

I haven't a clue what I want to do as a career, so how can I choose GCSE courses?

The GCSE courses are intended to provide a broad and balanced education and provided that your child chooses sensibly as advised by staff they will not limit future career choices.

Do I need to choose option subjects based on what I want to do when I leave school?

No, the core subjects give the variety and breadth required. A career choice made now may alter as your child matures and has different experiences of life. The option subject will further broaden your child's education.

What if I don't like the subject after I have been doing it for a few weeks?

It goes without saying that the choice was an informed one based on the information in the booklet, your experience of the subject at key stage 3, listening to staff talks and speaking personally with staff. However, your child will not necessarily enjoy everything in a particular subject. It may be that the course has begun with an area of work they find uninteresting but there will be others who find it the opposite. As the course progresses there will be areas of learning that your child relates to and enjoys. Challenges in all courses must overcome with a positive attitude and approach.

How can I help my child when I know little about today's courses and careers?

You know your child better than anyone and so are still in the best position to advise, even if you aren't familiar with the rapidly changing world of education. We provide students with careers guidance and advice to support this in school.

What do you mean by Core subjects?

These subjects are National Curriculum subjects which the government has laid down as a compulsory part of your child's education in Years 10 and 11.

Which are the easiest option choices?

All subjects offer grades 9 to 1, and therefore, there will be challenges in all areas to ensure that they are of equal rigour in the eyes of examination boards, teachers and employers alike. The examination boards standardise the contents of all courses. The differences in the subject will lie in the subject content, the nature of the assessment, and the percentage for the terminal examination.

From whom can we seek advice?

Your child's form tutor and subject teachers are well equipped to advise you, or your child's Head of Year, Miss Ayres.

Why is my child asked to put down an alternative choice on the option form?

We try very hard to match your child's choice. Sometimes option subjects are under or over-subscribed. It is at these times we need to use the second choice subject to direct you appropriately. However, should a course be oversubscribed it may be necessary to direct you into other options on the basis of the professional judgement of the teaching staff.

What if we are still in doubt about the choice of options as the deadline for the return of the form approaches?

It is imperative that the completed form is not late, if you have problems you are advised to see your form tutor or Miss Ayres as a matter of urgency.

Encourage your child to:

- Read this information booklet fully
- Research fully what each subject involves. There is a temptation for students to say they know what is involved in a subject because they have studied it in Key Stage 3. Subject content and approach may change at Key Stage 4.
- Ask subject teachers for advice as necessary
- Obtain as much information as possible from their subject teachers and form tutors
- Think things through by asking questions, such as the ones in the previous section
- Understand where her skills, interests and abilities lie
- Think carefully about an alternative choice subject. In the event of a first choice being unavailable a student must accept the alternative choice and may not be able to alter her options after groups have been finalised
- Aim high but be realistic. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and part of becoming an adult is recognising these in ourselves
- Realise her potential by being organised and working hard
- Choose a subject for the CORRECT reasons. Wanting to be with friends, or a favourite teacher, is unwise; as is believing a particular subject is an 'easy option'.



Student advice and guidance

MAKING THE CHOICE

You need to employ two important skills if you are to make the best decision:

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT

Knowledge of yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, interests and abilities

2. DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Find out the facts and where to obtain advice,
know how to use the information you have.

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ASK the experts:

Subject Staff
Heads of Department
Careers Staff
Form Tutors
Miss Ayres
Mrs Steed
Parents
Students in Years 10 and 11

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Choose a subject that is suitable for you, **not** what a friend chooses

Consider all the consequences of a choice

Aim high

Remember – You will be expected to choose a balanced programme from which you will benefit.

**The next section provides you with
further information about the
compulsory GCSE subjects you will
study**

**English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics**

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE (AQA)
and
GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE (AQA)

These are compulsory core GCSE subjects.

All students will sit GCSE examinations in both English Language and English Literature and they will therefore be awarded two GCSEs. We follow the AQA specifications for our courses in Key Stage 4 with all of the examinations being taken at the end of Year 11.

COURSE AIMS

Both GCSEs develop and examine the skills needed to read, understand and analyse a wide range of different texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. They also teach and test the ability to write clearly, coherently and accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures. The skills developed across both GCSEs are transferable and offer excellent preparation for A' Level English, as well as equipping students with essential life-skills and the best route to future employment.

GCSE English Language

A range of reading and writing skills are developed in this course:

- critical reading and comprehension of a wide range of texts
- the ability to summarise and synthesise information
- evaluating a writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features
- comparison
- producing clear, accurate and coherent texts
- writing for impact.

ASSESSMENT

There are two examination papers, each of which tests aspects of Reading and Writing and each of which is worth 50% of the GCSE. A separate spoken language mark will be given on the certificate for the ability to present information and ideas in a formal context and respond to questions and feedback; this is assessed internally during the course.

GCSE English Literature

The Literature course is skills-oriented and based on the exploration of texts from the established English literary canon. It involves developing a line of argument supported by the analysis and comparison of the ways in which writers convey their ideas in their writing.

ASSESSMENT

There are two closed-book examinations on texts studied during the course: the first is worth 40% of the overall GCSE and is on a play by Shakespeare and a nineteenth-century novel. Each question will be in two parts with the first part involving a response to an extract and the second demonstrating knowledge of the entire text.

The second examination is worth the remaining 60% and has three sections:

- an essay on a twentieth century play or novel
- a comparison of two poems from the studied anthology
- the exploration of an unseen poem and a comparison of this poem with a second unseen poem.

GCSE MATHEMATICS (Edexcel)

This is a compulsory core GCSE.

It is a linear qualification examined at the end of year 11. The course encourages students to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, mathematics and to recognise the importance of mathematics in their own lives and to society.

COURSE AIMS

The course requires students to:

- Develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, including:
 - Number
 - Algebra
 - Geometry
 - Ratio
 - Proof
 - Statistics
 - Probability
- Use their knowledge and understanding to make connections between mathematical concepts.
- Apply the functional elements of mathematics in everyday and real-life situations.

The course gives the students the opportunity to develop the ability to:

- Acquire and use problem-solving strategies
- Select and apply mathematical techniques and methods in mathematical, every day and real-world situations
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions
- Interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

As part of the Key Stage 4 mathematics course elements of rigour and algebraic skill will support students to go “beyond GCSE”. The rationale for this is to develop a mastery approach to the hardest GCSE content. This will prepare students to progress smoothly onto the A-level course and provide challenge that will further deepen understanding and passion for mathematics.

ASSESSMENT

Three examination papers, each of which is one hour and thirty minutes.

- Each paper contributes equally to a student’s final GCSE grade
- Paper 1: It is prohibited to use a calculator
- Paper 2 and 3 allow calculator use
- There are no strict rules as to which content appears in each paper

During the course, internal assessments will occur regularly in the specific topics that have recently been covered. Students are encouraged to reflect on their depth of understanding, revise, and if they have not done well, resit these. A better mark will replace their previous one. Each year (usually towards the end of the year) cumulative assessments will take a similar form to their actual GCSE papers.

SEPARATE SCIENCE GCSES: BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS (Edexcel)

These three subjects are part of the compulsory core curriculum. All students began their Biology, Chemistry and Physics GCSEs in Year 9.

Science stimulates and excites students' curiosity about events and phenomena in the world around them. It links direct practical experience with ideas and provides the knowledge to satisfy curiosity. Through science, students can understand how major scientific ideas contribute to technological change, developments in industry, business and medicine and improving quality of life.

Science is essential for any career in the health services

- Doctor
- Pharmacist
- Dentist
- Optometrist
- Physiotherapist

It is also essential for a career as a

- Structural engineer
- Civil engineer
- Aeronautical engineer

Many universities offer bursaries to students studying sciences and/or engineering. Universities and employers expect a minimum of two GCSE qualifications in Science. We are offering a route to three GCSE qualifications, which we feel is advantageous to your child in the future, particularly if they progress on to study at A Level.

	Biology	Chemistry	Physics
Year 9	B1: Key concepts in Biology B2: Cells and control	Principles of Chemistry: States of matter, methods of separating and analysing, atomic structure and the periodic table, chemical formulae and equations, structure and bonding	Overarching concepts of physics: motion, forces and conservation of energy, Forces and their effects
Year 10	B3: Genetics B4: Natural selection and Genetic modification B5: Health Disease and Development of medicines. B6: Plant structures and their functions	Acids and Bases, extracting and using metals, reversible reactions and equilibria, Calculations in chemistry, Groups in the periodic table, Rates of reaction and energy changes	Waves The electromagnetic spectrum Light and sound Particle model 1 Radioactivity Astronomy Electricity and circuits Static electricity

Year 11	B6: Continued B7: Animal Coordination, control and Homeostasis. B8: Exchange and Transport in Animals B9: Ecosystems and Material	Fuels and Earth science, organic chemistry: alkanes, alkenes, alcohols and organic acids, polymers, chemical tests and materials science	Electromagnetism and the motor effect Electromagnetic induction Particle model 2 Forces and matter
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ASSESSMENT

The courses are linear and will each be assessed by two written papers at the end of Year 11. The examinations contain a combination of multiple choice, short answer and extended response questions.

Practical work is an integral part of science and will be built into the lesson content as the course progresses. In addition, the students will complete a total of eight core practicals in each discipline, from which the knowledge and skills gained will then be tested within the body of the exam papers. This integration should also provide our students with better practical skills that will aid them in any further studies in the Sciences.

As the course progress, students will be assessed internally against examination board criteria. Any students who are not deemed to be making suitable progress towards the award of three separate science GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics may be transferred to the assessment route leading to 2 GCSEs in Science graded 9 to 4.

The next section provides you with further information about the subjects that you can choose from for GCSE study

All students must choose one humanity subject from:

Geography

History

Religious Studies

All students must choose one language from:

Chinese (spoken Mandarin)

French

German

Spanish

All students make one further choice from:

Art & Design: Fine Art

Computer Science

Design and Technology

Drama

French

Geography

German

History

Music

Religious Studies

Spanish

GCSE ART AND DESIGN: FINE ART (OCR)

The GCSE specification builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills established at Key Stage 3, in line with the Secondary Curriculum guidelines. The syllabus has been devised to combine a breadth and depth of study with the freedom of choice to accommodate a range of interests and abilities.

COURSE AIMS

- Development of visual perception and understanding.
- Development of visual literacy and appreciation of cultural heritage.
- Development of individuals' special aptitudes and interests.
- Encourage confidence, enthusiasm and a sense of achievement.

COURSE CONTENT

Component 1: Portfolio worth 60% of the final grade

The portfolio of work will consist of a sustained project, theme or course of study. This will include preparatory studies, image collection, experimentation with different materials and techniques, development ideas, critical studies and a final outcome which realises intentions.

Students should demonstrate an expressive and personal response in their work and will cover the majority of the following areas; drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, construction and sculpture. To support the project, students will produce an illustrated research piece that encourages independent investigation and appreciation.

Component 2: OCR-set Task worth 40% of the final grade

The OCR-set Task is taken in Year 11. This task will give students a choice of questions in the form of written and or visual starting points. Students select one question for which they will generate a personal response and will be given preparatory time in which to research, plan and develop their ideas. Ten hours are allocated for the independent realisation of an outcome which is taken under formal examination conditions.

ASSESSMENT

Students will provide evidence of all the assessment objectives (AOs) through careful selection and presentation of their work. All work is internally assessed by the Art Department and moderated by the OCR Examination Board.

AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE (OCR)

COURSE AIMS

GCSE Computer Science has both theoretical and practical components. It is designed to give learners an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills. Students will be required to learn programming using Python. Successful computer scientists will be able to demonstrate excellent problem solving skills and resilience. They should have a logical mind and the determination that learning to program requires.

Students have been introduced to Computer Science during key stage 3. Students opting for this course should be confident in their ability to develop the programming learnt so far to a higher level.

COURSE CONTENT

Component 1: Computer Systems

This introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.

Component 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 01. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques such as variables, sequencing, selection, iteration, loops, string manipulation, arrays and functions, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.

Component 3: Practical Programming Project.

Students are to be given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s) during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular component 02 (section B).

ASSESSMENT

Unit 1: Computer systems

Written exam paper of 1 hour 30, worth 50% of the qualification

Unit 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Written exam paper of 1 hour 30, worth 50% of the qualification

GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (AQA)

COURSE AIMS

This course provides students with the opportunity to build upon their Key Stage Three Design & Technology skills and use their Science and Maths skills to Design and Make products, and to solve problems. In addition, it will provide opportunities for students to be creative and innovative.

This course will suit creative pupils who like a challenge, or students who wish to develop their creativity. As well as design and manufacturing skills, transferable skills such as project management, time management and working with others are key features of this course. Universities and employers value the project focus and team working aspects of this subject, and this course would be of particular value to students considering future careers in Designing, the Textiles Industry, Marketing, and Engineering.

COURSE CONTENT

Non Examined Assessment (formerly known as Controlled Assessment or Coursework) is a fundamental element of the course and therefore it is important that pupils choosing to study Design and Technology have the ability to organise their own work and meet deadlines.

The course will consist of the following elements:

1. **Core technical principles** – In order to make effective design choices students need to be equipped with technical knowledge including, new and emerging technologies, energy storage, smart materials, designing, and materials and their properties.
2. **Specialist technical principles** – In addition the core principles students will need an in depth knowledge of one material area which will be textiles based.
3. **Designing and making principles** – Pupils will use knowledge and skills to demonstrate that they can design and make textile products.

In Year 10 students will engage in a series of mini projects in which they will work predominantly with textiles, this is in preparation for the Non Examined Assessment Project which will be carried out in Year 11.

ASSESSMENT

Written Examination (2hrs) 50%

Section A – Core technical principles

Section B - Specialist technical principles

Section C – Designing and making principles

Non- Exam Assessment (NEA) (30 - 35 Hours) 50%

This is assessed by their teachers and moderated by the examination board. Tasks are released annually on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of the NEA. Students have some flexibility to choose their project from the context set by the exam board.

This is a substantial Design and Make project which will involve:

- Identifying and investigating design possibilities
- Generating design ideas
- Developing design ideas
- Realising design ideas
- Analysing and evaluation

GCSE DRAMA (AQA)

COURSE AIMS

The Drama GCSE course aims to develop the students' **creativity, self-confidence, concentration, self-discipline and communication**. It should encourage a development of self and group awareness, together with the ability to appreciate and evaluate the work of others including the ways playwrights achieve their effects.

To achieve the highest grades, it is necessary for you to be capable of expressing yourself clearly both **'on stage'** and **'on page'**

COURSE CONTENT

Understanding Drama: This unit prepares students for their written examination and covers three areas of study:

- Conventions of theatre
- Set text
- Live review

Students will learn about characteristics of Drama such as; genre, style and period, social, historical and cultural context, stage types, roles and responsibilities within the theatre and how meaning is communicated. They will practically explore a set text from a technical, directorial and actor perspective in order to write confidently in their exam. Currently our set text is 'Blood Brothers' however there are opportunities for us to study further plays throughout the two years. Students will see a variety of live performances which are not only used as inspiration for future work but help to develop their understanding of performance work in order to successfully respond to the live review section of their written exam.

Devising Drama: Students build on prior knowledge and learn new techniques of Frantic Assembly, Kneehigh and Artaud during Year 10 and are given regular opportunities to devise original material before they begin their final devised performance in the summer of year 10 through to year 11. From a range of stimulus such as news articles, songs, film clips and images pupils develop a performance piece and document their process from start to end. This unit is challenging, exciting and we push our students to use imagination, creativity and take risks, questioning what theatre is and what it can be.

Texts in practice: In the final term the students will prepare and perform two extracts from a script. This really brings together all they have learned over the two years and pushes our students to apply their knowledge to script work. We work hard as a department to match scripts to the students we have and find that our students relish this aspect of the course and prove to be very successful in this unit.

ASSESSMENT

The examinations will assess the candidates:

- Ability in **practical drama skills**, necessary for the realisation of a presentation to an audience.
- **Knowledge and understanding** of plays and other types of performance from a performance perspective
- Ability to **analyse** the effectiveness of their own and others' work with sensitivity.

The **practical** examination: **Worth 60%** of GCSE. This is externally moderated and is based on two components for performance:

- Devised thematic work; with an accompanying devising log.
- Text in Practice: scripted work, the study of two scripts and performance of two extracts.

The **written** examination: **Worth 40% of GCSE**. This is externally set and marked

It includes:

- Multiple choice section based on knowledge and understanding of Drama
- A play studied and workshopped in class
- Responses to live productions seen during the course

GCSE GEOGRAPHY (AQA)

*Do world events interest you? Do you like discovering new places?
Do you care about our planet?*

COURSE AIMS

Throughout the GCSE course we encourage students to ask questions about our planet. Students extend their knowledge of places, locations and environments at different scales in wide ranging social, political and cultural contexts. They gain an understanding of the interactions between people and the environment, supporting their development as a responsible citizen who can apply geographical skills and understanding to real world contexts, situations and issues.

COURSE CONTENT

GCSE Geography is a fascinating and engaging course which covers significant global issues and debates such as climate change and the challenges associated with sustainable resource use, poverty, deprivation, and global shifts in economic power. Throughout the course pupils will develop essential geographical skills such as problem solving, decision making, synthesising ideas, identifying issues and communicating findings. This will be achieved through the undertaking of fieldwork investigations, in addition to varied activities within the classroom environment.

Unit 1: Living with the physical environment

Students develop their understanding of tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes and features in a range of different environments. We explore the need for management strategies governed by sustainability and examine the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere.

We study these topic areas:

- **The challenge of natural hazards:** Tectonic hazards, weather hazards and climate change
- **The living world** – Ecosystems, Tropical rainforests and hot deserts
- **Physical landscapes in the UK:** Coastal and river landscapes and how we can manage them in the UK

Unit 2: Challenges in the human environment.

This unit explores how humans interact with the planet, how this changes spatially and temporally, and how it is impacted by factors such as poverty, globalisation and human exploitation. Students investigate the need for sustainable management and the future challenges and opportunities that this presents for us and our planet.

We study the following topics:

- **Urban issues and challenges:** challenge and opportunities in UK cities, water and energy conservation and sustainability in urban areas,
- **The changing economic world:** global inequalities, economic growth in low income countries, the UK economic landscape and future developments
- **The challenge of resource management:** The fundamental importance of food, water and energy resources in the UK and managing the demand for resources globally

Unit 3: Geographical Applications

This unit draws together the knowledge, understanding and skills from unit 1 and 2. Students develop their breadth of understanding and evaluate the interrelationships between different aspects of their geographical study through critical thinking, problem solving and investigative fieldwork.

Issue evaluation: this is based on a pre-release resource provided by the exam board. Students will draw on their learning from unit 1 and unit 2 to analyse a geographical issue a range of scales, they will consider possible solutions to the issue and make decisions with evidence based justifications. Pupils will prepare for this through research and analysis supported by their class teacher.

Fieldwork: Pupils will undertake two geographical enquiries, each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. The two enquiries will be carried out in contrasting environments to develop an understanding of both physical and human geography as well as their interactions.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment

Written examination 1 hour 30 minutes

35% of GCSE

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment

Written examination 1 hour 30 minutes

35% of GCSE

Paper 3: Geographical applications

Written examination 1 hour 15 minutes

30% of GCSE

Pre-release booklet available 12 weeks before Paper 3 exam

This paper covers an issue evaluation, fieldwork investigation and geographical skills.

GCSE HISTORY (AQA)

The GCSE History course is a detailed study of some of the most dramatic and troubled periods of history: in particular, we focus upon the Twentieth Century.

COURSE AIMS

History combines the excitement of exploration with the sense of reward earned by successfully confronting and making sense of complex and challenging problems. It is about human behaviour; real people dealing with real situations. Whether we study the actions and impact of Martin Luther King or Adolf Hitler, we try to get to grips with what makes people tick.

The History Department aims to enable all students to become **successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve their potential. We encourage students to become confident individuals and **responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society. The course tackles many of the important issues facing the **contemporary world** and encourages students to develop into thoughtful young adults with critical and balanced views on world events.

Studying History at GCSE will enable students to:

- Understand the world today in the context of past events
- Argue a case and draw conclusions
- Develop confidence in their ability to discuss, debate and speculate on challenging issues and dilemmas.
- Think critically and evaluate the causes and consequences of events which have shaped the modern world
- Analyse and explain the actions and motivations of different groups of people and governments
- Evaluate evidence and use historical sources to understand the past and interpretations of the past

COURSE CONTENT

Conflict and tension 1894 – 1918: Including the First World War.

Germany 1890 – 1945: democracy and dictatorship: Including a focus on Nazi Germany.

Power and the people c1170 to the present day: The development of the relationship between the citizen and the state in Britain; the causes, scale, nature and consequences of protest; the journey from feudalism to democracy and equality.

Elizabethan England c1568 – 1603: Focusing on the major events of Elizabeth I's reign: economic, religious, political, social and cultural.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world
50% of GCSE, 2 hour examination

Paper 2: Shaping the nation
50% of GCSE, 2 hour examination

At Key Stage 4 students enjoy many different opportunities to develop their enthusiasm for, and understanding of, their studies. These include interesting lectures by eminent historians, national competitions, extra-curricular trips to incredible historical sites and activity days at schools and colleges across the Midlands. Students take part in a rewarding visit to the National Holocaust Centre, where they get to meet a Holocaust survivor and learn from their personal testimony. We visit the People's Museum in Manchester which tells the story of the development of democracy in Britain, helping students to learn about how, and why, so many people throughout our history have fought for equality, social justice and a fair world for all. We also organise a theatre trip to see a dramatic performance entitled 'Hitler on Trial' as part of our Year 11 revision programme.

Historians develop the skills to become our future, lawyers, politicians, accountants, doctors, managing directors and scientists. Above all, our students develop an open and inquisitive mind; they become critical thinkers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES **GCSE FRENCH or GERMAN or SPANISH (AQA)**

COURSE AIMS

The courses aim to develop students' ability to use foreign languages in practical, everyday situations. The linguistic skills which students develop at GCSE prepare them, should they choose, for further study at A' level in the Sixth Form. There are regular opportunities to practise speaking skills with native speakers and to access a range of ICT resources through specialist websites and the Digital Language Laboratory.

COURSE CONTENT

This is the subject content for French, Spanish and German, these themes apply to all four question papers.

- Theme 1: Identity and culture
- Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest
- Theme 3: Current and future study and employment

ASSESSMENT

- The GCSE qualifications are linear; this means students sit all their examinations at the end of the course.
- GCSE Languages have a Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4-9).
- Students must enter all four skills at the same tier. Grammar and vocabulary requirements are specific to the individual language.
- Each paper (Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing) counts for 25% of the overall marks.

Note: Students who have been following the Mandarin Excellence programme in years 7-9 will take GCSE Chinese. This specification information is on the following page.

GCSE CHINESE (SPOKEN MANDARIN) (AQA)

COURSE AIMS

The courses aim to develop students' ability to use Chinese in practical, everyday situations. Mandarin is increasingly used as a global language of communication in business, industry and foreign relations.

COURSE CONTENT

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

Theme 1: Identity and culture:

Me, my family and friends - Relationships with family and friends/Marriage/partnership
Technology in everyday life - Social media/Mobile technology
Free-time activities - Music /Cinema and TV /Food and eating out /Sport
Customs and festivals in Chinese-speaking countries/communities

Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest:

Home, town, neighbourhood and region
Social issues - Charity/voluntary work /Healthy/unhealthy living
Global issues -The environment /Poverty/homelessness
Travel and tourism

Theme 3: Current and future study and employment:

My studies
Life at school/college
Education post-16
Jobs, career choices and ambitions

ASSESSMENT

The qualification is linear; students sit all their examinations at the end of the course.

Paper 1: Listening: Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language

Written exam: 45 minutes

25% of GCSE

Paper 2: Speaking: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes

Non-exam assessment

Consists of three parts: role play, describing a photo card and general conversation

10–12 minutes + supervised preparation time

25% of GCSE

Paper 3: Reading: Understanding and responding to different types of written language written exam: 1 hour

25% of GCSE

Paper 4: Writing: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes

Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes

25% of GCSE

GCSE MUSIC (Edexcel)

COURSE AIMS

This GCSE Music course provides students a creative opportunity to develop performance and compositional skills and to organise their musical ideas. Students have a wealth of opportunities to broaden their musical experience, and foster their creativity and imagination through diverse social and cultural musical experiences. Students use music technologies to create and present music and have wide ranging opportunities to develop as independent and evaluative learners.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1: Performing

Solo performance, ensemble performance and approaches to performing

Unit 2: Composing

Developing musical ideas, compositional techniques and strategies using Sibelius, ensuring technical control and coherence, methods of notating composition scores

Unit 3:

Involves an in depth study of 8 set works, covering the history of music from the 18th Century to the present day.

Instrumental Music 1700–1820

J S Bach: 3rd Movement from Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major

L Van Beethoven: 1st Movement from Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor 'Pathétique'

Vocal Music

H Purcell: Music for a While

Queen: Killer Queen (from the album 'Sheer Heart Attack')

Music for Stage and Screen

S Schwartz: Defying Gravity (from the album of the cast recording of Wicked)

J Williams: Main title/rebel blockade runner (from the soundtrack to Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope)

Fusions

Afro Celt Sound System: Release (from the album 'Volume 2: Release')

Esperanza Spalding: Samba Em Preludio (from the album 'Esperanza')

ASSESSMENT

Unit 1 – Performing (minimum standard AB grade 3)

30% of GCSE

Pupils perform 1 solo piece and 1 ensemble piece (both free choice).

Both are recorded, internally assessed and then sent to the board for moderation.

1 piece on a brief set by the exam board & 1 free choice.

Unit 2 - Composing

30% of GCSE

2 compositions with a combined duration of at least 3 minutes (1 piece on a brief set by the exam board and 1 piece free choice).

Unit 3: Listening & Appraising examination.

40% of GCSE

1 hr 45 minutes written paper

Section A:

6 questions based on short audio extracts from the 8 set works listed below.

One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.

One question on an unfamiliar piece with questions on its musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.

Section B

Extended response comparison between one of the set works and one unfamiliar piece.

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES: RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS (AQA)

This AQA GCSE course will give students the opportunity to explore and reflect on questions about Religion, Existence and Morality. Students will develop their thinking and analytical skills and evaluate their own and others' ideas on philosophical and moral issues.

COURSE AIMS

Students have opportunities to:

- Adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion.
- Explore religions and beliefs, reflect on fundamental questions, engage with them intellectually and respond personally.
- Enhance their personal, social and cultural development, their understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world and to contribute to social and community cohesion.
- Reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning.
- Consider religious and other responses to **moral issues**.
- Identify, investigate and respond to **fundamental questions of life** raised by religion and human experience, including questions about the **meaning and purpose of life**
- **Study two religions- Christianity and Buddhism**
- Develop transferable skills and those relevant to the study of religion.

COURSE CONTENT

The following topics will be covered:

Unit 1: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices of two religions - Christianity and Buddhism

Unit 2: The study of *four themes* from the following Religious, Philosophical and Ethical studies in the modern world:

Theme 1: Religion and Life (origins and value of the universe, use and abuse of the environment, animals, evolution, euthanasia, abortion, afterlife)

Theme 2: The existence of God and Revelation (arguments for the existence of God, miracles, evil and suffering)

Theme 3: Religion, Peace and Conflict (forgiveness, reconciliation, violence, terrorism, war)

Theme 4: Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice. (prejudice and discrimination, equality, exploitation, charity)

ASSESSMENT

Each unit is assessed by a written examination of 1 hour 45 minute.

Each exam is worth 50% of the GCSE each.

Use this space to make some notes about the subjects that you are considering as you find out about them.

Subject	Questions I have about the subject	Why I might choose or not choose this subject

Subject	Questions I have about the subject	Why I might choose or not choose this subject

YEAR 9 GCSE OPTION CHOICES.

Name: _____

Form: _____

Please complete this form and return to it to your Form Tutor by 24th February 2020.

Compulsory GCSE subjects are: **English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics.**

In order to satisfy the requirements of a broad and balanced curriculum you must choose 1 humanity subject, 1 modern foreign language and 1 other subject.

Every effort will be made to accommodate individual option choices but this is not always possible since the subject blocks are drawn up to suit the majority of pupils. There is also a limit placed on group size, especially in practical subjects and, if necessary, assessment results will be used to allocate places on an individual basis.

To indicate your choices of options:

1. Tick 1 of:

Geography	
History	
Religious Studies	

2. Tick 1 of:

Chinese	
French	
German	
Spanish	

3. Tick 1 option from:

Art	
Computer Science	
Design and Technology	
Drama	
French	
German	
Geography	
History	
Music	
Religious Studies	
Spanish	

Choose a subject from the above list which you might consider as an alternative to a subject you have ticked.

_____ instead of _____

I understand that it may not be possible for my child to study all their first choice options in which case she will be allocated her reserve choice.

Signed _____ (Parent/Carer)