



# **Key Stage 4 and GCSE subject information**

The programme for Key Stage 4 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 including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

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

<b>Art &amp; Design: Fine Art</b>	<b>Geography</b>
<b>Chinese (spoken Mandarin)</b>	<b>German</b>
<b>Computer Science</b>	<b>History</b>
<b>Design and Technology</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>Drama</b>	<b>Religious Studies</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>Spanish</b>

### **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.

*This is the course followed by Year 11 students in 2021 -2022*

**GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE (OCR)  
and  
GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE (OCR)**

**These are compulsory core GCSE subjects.**

All students will undertake the completion of GCSE examinations in both English Language and English Literature, and this will lead to the award of two GCSEs. We follow the OCR specifications for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature, and all of the examinations are undertaken at the end of Year Eleven.

As part of the course design, we teach the GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature courses in an integrated manner meaning that across the two years of study, students experience a rich and wide ranging experience of both courses.

### **COURSES AIMS**

Both GCSEs aim to stimulate and challenge students, whilst also deepening their appreciation of both non-fiction and fiction texts. Each course is underpinned by students being exposed to a range of 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century texts, and as part of each course, diversity underpinned by them. Another key characteristic of the courses is that students are taught to develop a range of writing tasks so that they can become coherent and critical writers that utilise a range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Ultimately, the skills that students develop across both courses are highly transferable within the wider world, as well as equipping them with the essential foundations required for A' Level English. Employers are always keen to appoint those that can communicate effectively and have excellent command of written and spoken language and the OCR GCSE English courses offered within our department enables all students to achieve this.

### **GCSE English Language**

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

- o critical reading and comprehension of a wide range of texts including non-fiction and fiction.
- o the ability to summarise and synthesise information
- o evaluating a writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features
- o comparing texts and considering how different viewpoints and linguistic strategies are used to achieve this
- o producing clear, accurate and coherent texts
- o writing for impact.

### **ASSESSMENT**

In terms of assessment within the GCSE English Language, students will undertake the following:

- Paper One: Communicating information and Ideas and is worth 50% of the GCSE qualification.
- Paper Two: Exploring effects and Impact and is worth 50% of the GCSE qualification.

An integral part of the course is the completion of a Spoken Language assessment. This is awarded separately to the rest of the GCSE qualification. Students will be awarded a pass, merit or distinction on the basis of how they present information and ideas within a formal context, as well as their responses to questions and feedback. The Spoken Language component is internally assessed and then moderated externally by OCR.

### **GCSE English Literature**

The GCSE English Literature course offers a skills-orientated approach to the exploration of texts from different periods, traditions and cultures. Students are encouraged to offer their own argument and personal response to the texts that are studied in class, whilst simultaneously analysing and comparing how writers convey their ideas through their texts.

### **ASSESSMENT**

The GCSE English Literature is a closed-book examination. The course is assessed through two examinations and is structured as follows:

- Paper One: Exploring Modern and Literary Heritage Texts is worth 50% of the GCSE English Literature course. In this paper, students will study Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Winsome Pinnock's *Leave Taking*.
- Paper Two: Exploring poetry and Shakespeare is worth 50% of the GCSE English Literature course. In this paper, students will study fifteen poems from the Love and Relationships cluster, alongside unseen poems, and Shakespeare's tragedy play, *Macbeth*.

All of the exam questions require students to respond to a given extract, whilst drawing upon their wider knowledge of the set texts.

*This is the course followed by year 10 students in 2021 2022*

**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:

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

- o an essay on a twentieth century play or novel
- o a comparison of two poems from the studied anthology
- o 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.

A wide range of resources are available to the students. These include:

- Past papers and mark schemes
- Questions by topic
- Key notes and help sheets

In addition, pupils can find useful material on the “My Maths” website. Students should be equipped with a scientific calculator, a ruler, a protractor and a pair of compasses.

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
- Prepare students to progress smoothly onto the A-level course
- Provide challenges that will further deepen understanding and passion for mathematics.

## 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
<b>Year 9</b>	B1: Key concepts in Biology B2: Cells and control	<b>Principles of Chemistry:</b> States of matter, Atomic structure and the Periodic Table, Chemical formulae and equations, Structure and bonding, Methods of separating and analysing	<b>Overarching concepts of physics:</b> motion, forces and conservation of energy, Forces and their effects
<b>Year 10</b>	B3: Genetics B4: Natural selection and Genetic modification B5: Health Disease and Development of medicines. B6: Plant structures and their functions	Chemical changes (acids and salts) Rates of reaction Fuels and Earth Science <b>Organic chemistry:</b> Alkanes, Alkenes, Ethanol and Organic acids, Polymers	Waves The electromagnetic spectrum Light and sound Particle model 1 Radioactivity Astronomy Electricity and circuits Static electricity



<b>Year 11</b>	B6: Continued B7: Animal Coordination, control and Homeostasis. B8: Exchange and Transport in Animals B9: Ecosystems and Material	Groups in the periodic table Calculations in Chemistry Energy Extracting and using metals Equilibria Electrolysis	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 progresses, 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.

## **Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education (PSHCEE)**

### **This is a compulsory curriculum that is not examined**

PSHCEE is taught mainly in Year 10 as a weekly timetabled lesson. Both Year 10 and 11 also have Form Time activities and external workshops that enrich their PSHCEE curriculum. All of the PSHCEE content in lessons and in workshops is carefully planned to meet the needs of our students and inform them of important topics in an age appropriate way.

The specific workshops differ slightly every year due to internal staffing and external workshop providers. The planned content is reviewed each year and adjusted to meet school aims as well as government guidance. Below is the current planned content:

### **Year 10**

Liberties and freedoms including human rights and discrimination.

Mental Health awareness, including coping strategies, the importance of a healthy lifestyle and types of disorders.

Economic wellbeing, saving vs borrowing, payslips, tax and government spending and gambling.

Gangs, knife crime, county lines, youth crime and sentencing.

Period poverty and stigma.

Healthy lifestyles including nutrition, exercise and sleep.

Looking after your own health, cancer awareness and the importance of screening, self examination and vaccinations.

Healthy and unhealthy relationships with a specific focus on recognising the signs of grooming within a relationship and how to get help for yourself or someone you know.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and grooming, focusing on recognising the signs and where to get help.

Different types of marriage including same sex, arranged and forced marriage.

Abuse and harassment.

Pregnancy choices including abortion, adoption and teenage parenting.

Types of Contraception.

Fertility, miscarriage and the menopause.

Types of Government.

### **Year 11**

Local and national governance.

Global issues and how individuals can make a difference.

Mental Health including self-esteem and exam stress.

Extremism and Radicalisation.

**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 subject choice from:**

Art & Design: Fine Art  
Computer Science  
Design and Technology  
Drama  
Geography  
History  
Music  
Religious Studies

*We advise our students to strongly consider studying subjects which provide them with the **English Baccalaureate qualification**. (EBacc) The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers.*

*The EBacc consists of:*

- ❖ *English Language*
- ❖ *English Literature*
- ❖ *mathematics*
- ❖ *the sciences*
- ❖ *geography or history*
- ❖ *a language*

Further information about this qualification is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc>

## **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 of their ability to develop the programming learnt so far to a higher level.

### 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)

### 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.

### 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 Exam 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 stimuli 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 **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

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.

## 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 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 on 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 exam

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

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.

***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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 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