

# GCSE Options

2025 - 2027

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## Subject Choices

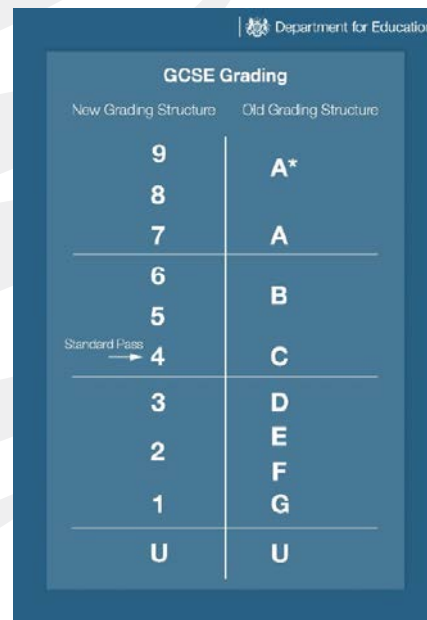
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This booklet is designed to assist Year 9 students in choosing their GCSE subject options. We offer a highly academic curriculum which is guided by, but certainly not dictated by, the requirements placed by the Department of Education on all maintained schools.

## Curriculum Reform

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Two main changes have been made to GCSEs since 2014. The first was that all GCSE specifications were re-written, with the main aim to make them more rigorous. One impact of this is that they reduced the element of coursework in many subjects. The other major change was a new grading scale of 9-1, with 9 being the top grade and with 4 being roughly equivalent to the former grade C. This change was made to allow greater differentiation between students at the higher grades and also to help distinguish the new GCSE from legacy versions. Under the old system a good pass was a C. Now the Department of Education has distinguished between a standard pass (Grade 4) and a strong pass (Grade 5).



The image shows a table titled 'GCSE Grading' from the Department for Education. It compares the 'New Grading Structure' (grades 9-1 and U) with the 'Old Grading Structure' (grades A\*-G and U). A horizontal line separates the top grades from the bottom ones. An arrow labeled 'Standard Pass' points to grade 4 in the new structure, which is equivalent to grade C in the old structure.

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	A*
7	A
6	A
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
1	G
U	U

## Compulsory Core

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All students are expected to follow courses in Mathematics, English Language and English Literature for the next two years. They will also study three Sciences at IGCSE.

## Choices

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Apart from these core subjects, students will choose four more subjects from the options on the next page. This must include at least one Language (from French, German, Spanish or Latin) and at least one Humanity (from Geography, History, Religious Studies or Classical Civilisation). We acknowledge and support the reality that every child at BMS has different strengths and aspirations. Some students may want to choose a more creative route and may choose two subjects from Art, Design Technology, Computer Science, Music, Drama and Physical Education. Others may choose more than one Language and/or Humanity.

## Notes

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We would suggest that students should think carefully before embarking on more than one coursework-heavy subject, which are marked in the list of option subjects with a #. For some students, pursuing 10 GCSE subjects may not be appropriate, and any parents who feel that they would like to discuss this option should contact [Mr Hewlett, Deputy Head Academic](#) directly.



# Option Subjects

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## Languages

(students must select at least one of these)

French

German

Spanish

Latin

## Humanities

(students must select at least one of these)

Classical Civilisation

Geography

History #

Religious Studies

## Other Subjects

Art & Design #

Computer Science

Design and Technology #

Drama #

Music #

Physical Education #

Leading to **four** choices in total





## Timeline

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Date	Event
w/c 11 November 2024	Assembly given by Mr Hewlett explaining the choices
November 2024	Provisional options choices letter sent to students with this booklet
02 December 2024	Completion of provisional GCSE options via PostModern
27 February 2025	Parents' Consultation Evening
07 March 2025	Final deadline for submission of confirmed GCSE options form
19-23 May 2025	End of year exams - may lead to route and subject changes

After explaining this process to students at the assembly, Mr Hewlett is available by email to speak to any parents who have any further questions. It is strongly advised that parents should encourage their children to speak to subject teachers and their tutors over the coming months to help them in making these important decisions.

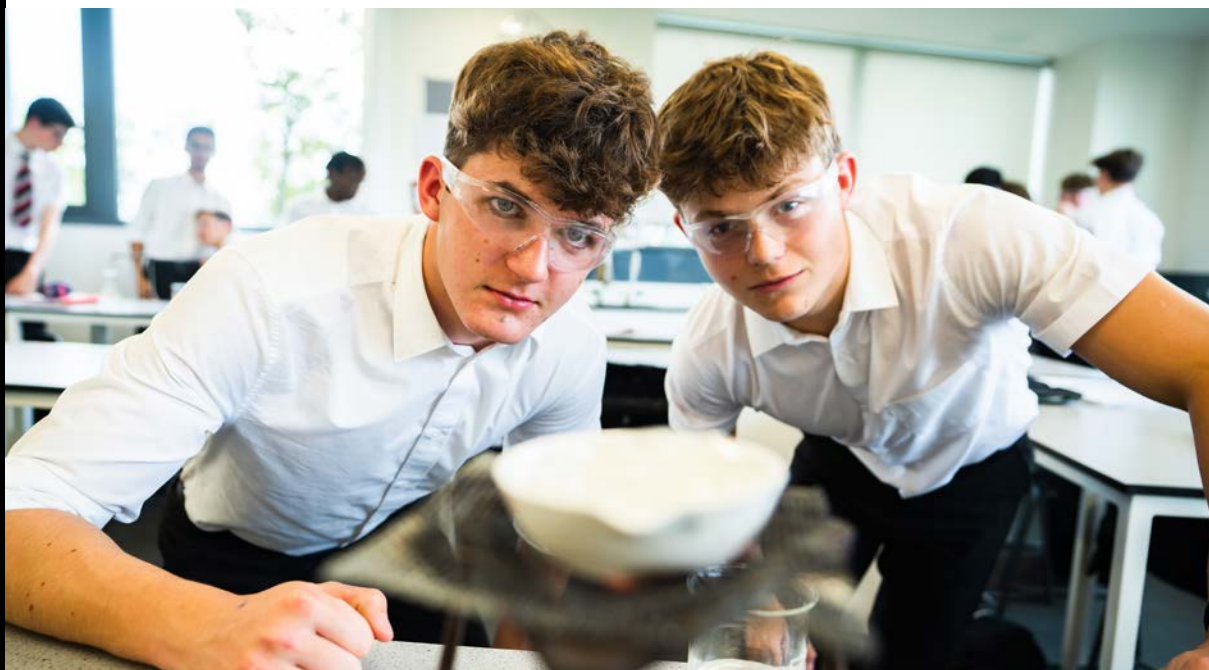
Students need to submit their provisional options by 02 December 2024. It is possible that as a school we may ask you to reconsider these choices in light of end of year exam results. The final confirmation of subject choices will happen on 07 March 2025.

Harvey Hewlett  
**Deputy Head Academic**  
[hhewlett@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:hhewlett@bedmod.co.uk)

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**Section A** outlines the compulsory or core subjects. All students take English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science. They all participate in Games and non-curricular PE sessions as well as one tutorial period per cycle.

**Section B** outlines the specification content for the options subjects on offer. The expectation is that students will all study at least one Language, and at least one of the Humanities subjects.





# Section A

## GCSE Compulsory Subjects

**English Language**

**English Literature**

**Mathematics**

**Science**

- **Biology**
- **Chemistry**
- **Physics**

*Click on a subject to be directed to the relevant page.*



# English Language

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**Exam board:** **Edexcel IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Faculty:** Dr T Foster

## Course Content

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All candidates pursue a course leading to the award of an IGCSE 9-1 qualification at the end of Year 11. Students have one piece of English Language homework per week. This may involve reading and note-making as well as drafting and polishing written assignments.

The qualification comprises one exam worth 60% and two pieces of coursework worth 20% each (see below). There is also a Spoken Language assessment which is conducted internally and subject to external moderation.

### Overview

- **Paper One** (non-fiction reading and transactional writing) - 60%
- **Paper Two** (poetry and prose reading and imaginative writing) - 40%
- **Spoken Language Assessment**
- There is no coursework element to this course.

### Paper One: Non-fiction texts and transactional writing - 2h 15 mins

**Section A (30%)** – Reading: short and long questions on an unseen text and one of the ten texts studied from the Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Language anthology

**Section B (30%)** – Writing: a choice of two transactional writing tasks – students might be asked to produce an article, a speech, a letter or a guide, for example.

### Paper Two: Poetry and prose texts and imaginative writing - 1h 30 mins

**Section A (20%)** – Reading - one 30-mark essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Language anthology

**Section B (20%)** – Imaginative Writing - one 30-mark imaginative writing task from a choice of three.

### Skills tested include:

- Comprehension, inference and comparison
- Language analysis and appreciation
- Ability to identify bias
- Writing with appropriate tone, structure and style for different genres and audiences.

### Candidates must:

- Use language and register appropriate to audience and context
- Make accurate and effective use of paragraphs, grammatical structures and sentences
- Punctuate and spell accurately
- Structure whole texts effectively.

### Spoken Language Assessment

Candidates present formally on a topic of their choice before listening and responding to questions designed to elicit developed responses which demonstrate the ability to discuss ideas. The presentation is conducted and assessed internally with external moderation of a recorded sample. The result is reported separately to the numerical grade for English Language. The awards for Spoken Language are Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified.

# English Literature

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**Exam board:** **Eduqas** (click for further information)

**Head of Faculty:** **Dr T Foster**

## Course Content

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All candidates pursue a course of English Literature leading to the award of a GCSE 9-1 qualification at the end of Year 11. Students have one piece of English Literature homework per week. This may involve reading and note-making as well as drafting and polishing written assignments.

The qualification involves two exams (worth 40% and 60% respectively). Students study a play by Shakespeare, an anthology of poetry, a text from the 19th century, a 1914 text and some unseen poetry.

### **Component One: Shakespeare and Prepared Poetry - closed book, 2h**

**Shakespeare** - one extract question and one essay question (20%)

**Prepared Poetry** - one question on one poem and one question requiring selection of another poem for comparison (20%).

### **Component Two: Post-1914 Drama/Prose\*; 19th century Prose; Unseen 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century Poetry - closed book, 2h 30 mins**

**Post-1914 Drama/Prose\*** - one essay question with an extract to prompt writing (20%)

**19th century Prose** - one essay question with an extract to prompt writing (20%)

**Unseen Poetry** - two questions on unseen poems, one requiring comparison (20%).

The questions are mostly essay-style and all are designed to test personal response, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of literary technique. In particular candidates must:

- Maintain a critical style
- Use textual reference to support interpretations
- Analyse language, form and structure used by writers to create meaning
- Use literary terminology where appropriate
- Show understanding of the relationship between texts and contexts (for Prepared Poetry and 19th century Prose)
- Write accurately - a few marks are available for spelling, punctuation and sentence structures in certain questions.

\*There are both drama and prose options on the syllabus for Post-1914 texts, but all teachers in the department are currently opting for a drama text.



# Mathematics

**Exam board:** **Edexcel IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mrs K Adams

## Course Content

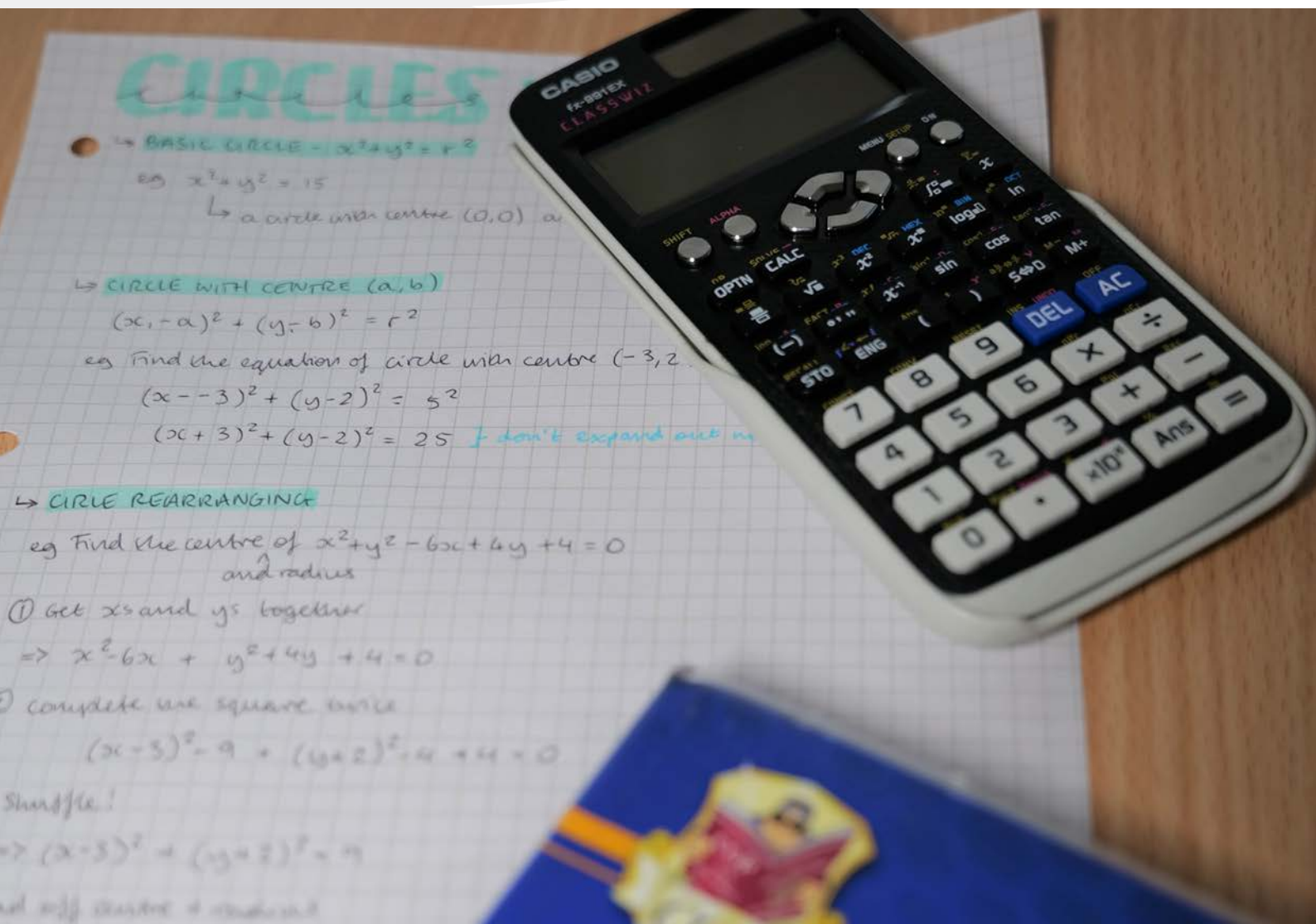
We follow Edexcel's International GCSE Mathematics (Specification A, 4MA1) in Years 10 and 11, continuing the course started in Year 9. In May/June of Year 11 students take two written papers; the use of a calculator is permitted in both papers. There is no coursework element.

Mathematics is allocated seven periods per cycle. Students are taught in sets across the whole year group, working at a pace appropriate to their ability; students moving up from Year 9 may find that they have been placed into a different set at the start of the year, if our review of their work shows that to be appropriate. Students new to the School will be placed as carefully as possible at the start of the year. There are regular tests.

It would be realistic to say that the majority of students are likely to remain in the same set for the remainder of the IGCSE course, although we will always look at individual cases carefully.

All students follow the same scheme of work, and we expect almost all to sit the two Higher Tier exams (papers 1H and 2H).

More able students are stretched through the use of additional, more demanding activities, including entry for the appropriate level of the National Mathematics Challenge competitions. Top set students will be given the opportunity to study the AQA Level 2 qualification in Further Mathematics in Year 11, and to sit the exam in the summer of Year 11. This additional qualification is not an option, it is only available to those in Set 1. Because of the additional demand of the new specification IGCSE, we no longer enter students early for it.





# Science

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## Head of Faculty: Mr D Honnor

### Course Content

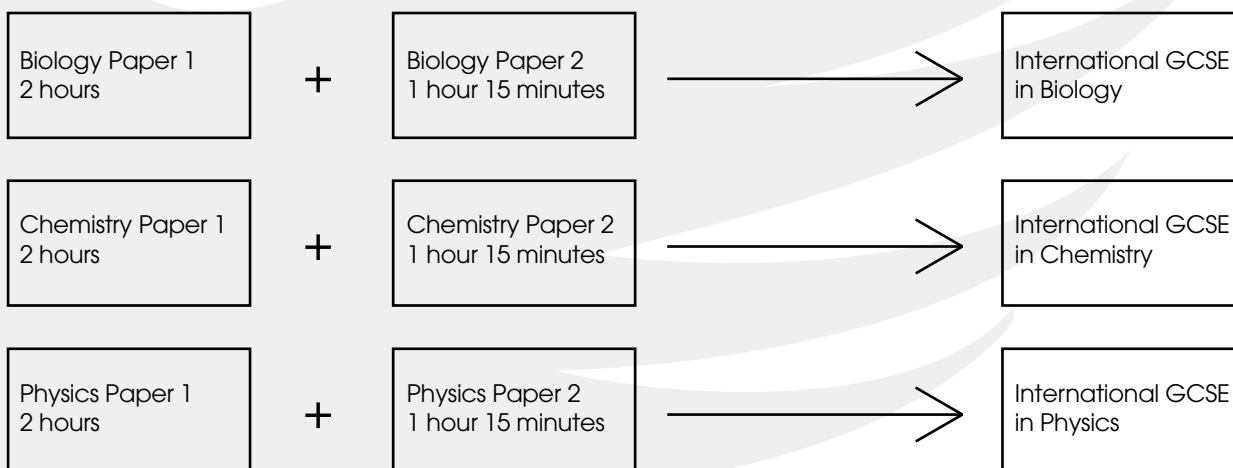
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Students will all take three separate sciences leading to the award of three International GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Please note that these courses are three years and as such the material covered in Year 9 should be regarded as the first year of this course.

Assessment is by written examination only. All examinations are untiered and are taken at the end of the course with a summary shown below:

#### Core Content

#### Extension Content



Students will have five periods per subject, per academic cycle during Years 10 and 11. This equates to a total of 15 periods of Science per academic cycle, with each subject being taught by a specialist teacher.

Please see the following subject pages for further details of the course content.



# Biology

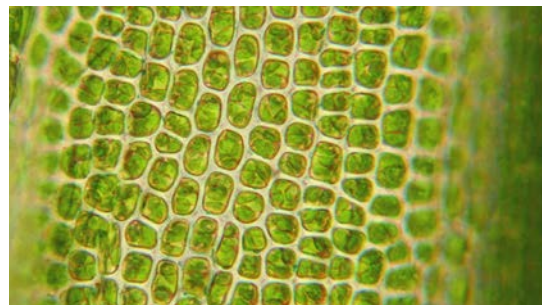
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**Exam board:** **Edexcel IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr R J Brand

## Course Content

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Key features and benefits of the specification are:

- It includes aspects of Biology appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Straightforward linear assessment in a single tier
- Assessment of experimental skills through the examination paper with no coursework or controlled assessment
- It provides a sound foundation for progression to GCE Advanced Level qualifications.

### Core Paper Content (2 hour paper)

- The characteristics and variety of living organisms
- Structures and functions in living organisms including; levels of organisation, cell structure, biological molecules, movement of substances into and out of cells, nutrition, respiration, gas exchange, transport, excretion and coordination and response
- Reproduction, inheritance and gene expression
- Ecology and the environment, feeding relationships, cycles within ecosystems and human influences on the environment
- Use of biological resources including food production, selective breeding, genetic modification and cloning.

### Extension Paper Content (1 hour 15 minutes paper)

The extension paper covers **all core** content but has specific additions within the content listed above:

- The relationship between enzyme function and pH
- Support in plants
- Energy content of foods, balanced diet and energy requirements
- Respiration in plants and transport of nutrients
- How vaccinations work and the role of blood-clotting in the immune system
- The function of the eye
- Homeostasis
- Seed germination in plants and human embryo development
- Causes of genetic mutation
- The nitrogen cycle
- Biological consequences of water pollution
- Food production using bacteria
- Transgenic and cloned species.

# Chemistry

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**Exam board:** **Edexcel IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr J P Fitton



## Course Content

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Key features and benefits of the specification are:

- It includes aspects of Chemistry appropriate for the 21st century
- Straightforward linear assessment in a single tier
- Assessment of experimental skills through the examination paper with no coursework or controlled assessment
- It provides a sound foundation for progression to GCE Advanced Level qualifications.

### Core Paper Content (2 hour paper)

- Principles of Chemistry: states of matter, atomic structure, relative formula masses and molar gas volumes, chemical formulae and equations, ionic compounds, covalent substances, metallic crystals and electrolysis
- Chemistry of the Elements: the Periodic Table, the elements of groups 1 and 7, oxygen and oxides, hydrogen and water, the reactivity series and tests for ions and gases
- Organic Chemistry: alkanes, alkenes and ethanol
- Physical Chemistry: acids, alkalis, salts, energetics, rates of reaction and equilibria
- Chemistry in Industry: extraction and uses of metals, crude oil, synthetic polymers and the industrial manufacture of chemicals.

### Extension Paper Content (1 hour 15 minutes paper)

The extension paper covers **all core** content but has specific additions within the content listed above:

- Calculations involving the Avogadro number
- Percentage yield
- Detailed relationship between physical properties and ionic structure
- Properties of diamond and graphite
- Experimental and quantitative electrolysis
- Explaining the pattern of reactivity in groups of elements
- Evaluation of different methods of producing ethanol based on the intended use
- Calculations of energy changes which accompany reactions
- Comparison of condensation and addition polymers
- Extended Organic Chemistry: carboxylic acids and esters.





**Exam board:** **Edexcel IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr T P Mullan

## Course Content

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Key features and benefits of the specification are:

- It includes aspects of Physics appropriate for the 21st century
- Straightforward linear assessment in a single tier
- Assessment of experimental skills through the examination paper with no coursework or controlled assessment
- It provides a sound foundation for progression to GCE Advanced Level qualifications.

### Core Paper Content (2 hour paper)

- Forces and motion: movement and position, forces, movement, shape and momentum
- Electricity: mains electricity, energy and voltage in circuits, electric charge
- Waves: properties of waves, the electromagnetic spectrum, light and sound
- Energy resources and energy transfers: energy transfers, work and power
- Solids, liquids and gases: density and pressure, ideal gas molecules
- Magnetism and electromagnetism: magnetism, electromagnetism, electromagnetic induction
- Radioactivity and particles: radioactivity, fission and fusion
- Astrophysics: motion in the universe, stellar evolution.

### Extension Paper Content (1 hour 15 minutes paper)

The extension paper covers **all core** content but has specific additions within the content listed above:

- Momentum, Newton's third law and moments
- Electric charge and applications of electrostatics
- Sound and the use of oscilloscopes
- Energy resources and electricity generation
- Changes of state and specific heat capacity
- The construction of electromagnets
- The effect of magnetic fields on electrically charged particles
- Transformers
- The Hertzsprung-Russell diagram and cosmology.

# Section B

## GCSE Option Subjects

**At least one from:**

- French
- German
- Spanish
- Latin

**At least one from:**

- Classical Civilisation
- Geography
- History #
- Religious Studies

**Free choice from:**

- Art #
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology #
- Drama #
- Music #
- Physical Education #

*Click on a subject to be directed to the relevant page.*



# French

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**Exam board:** **AQA** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mlle G Amoros

## Course Content

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The GCSE French content is engaging and relevant. It is designed to develop your language skills, build on your cultural knowledge and give you confidence to use French both in and outside the classroom.

Students are required to study the following themes:

### Theme 1: People, Lifestyle and the World Around Us

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

### Theme 2: Popular Culture

- Topic 4: Free time activities
- Topic 5: Customs, Festivals and Celebrations
- Topic 6: Celebrity culture

### Theme 3: Communication

- Topic 7: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 8: Media and technology
- Topic 9: The environment and where people live

### Assessment:

**Paper 1:** Listening: Examination 25% - Foundation (35 mins) Higher (45 mins)

**Paper 2:** Speaking: Examination 25% - Foundation (7-9 mins) Higher (10-12 mins)

**Paper 3:** Reading: Examination 25% - Foundation (45 mins) Higher (1 hour)

**Paper 4:** Writing: Examination 25% - Foundation (1 hour) Higher (1 hour 15 mins)

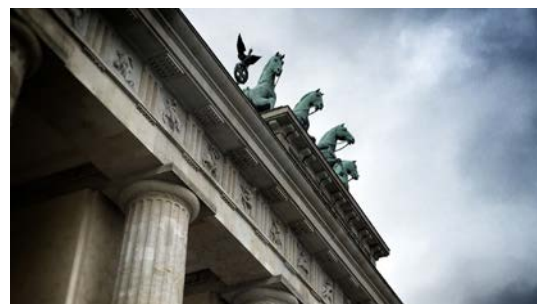
Assessment takes place in all four skills at the end of Year 11. Students will be entered for either all Foundation tier exams (Grades 1-5) or all Higher tier exams (Grades 4-9). This decision will be taken in consultation with parents following Year 11 trial exams in January.





**Exam board:** **AQA** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr A Robinson



## Course Content

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The GCSE German content is engaging and relevant. It is designed to develop your language skills, build on your cultural knowledge and give you confidence to use German both in and outside the classroom.

Students are required to study the following themes:

### **Theme 1: People, Lifestyle and the World Around Us**

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

### **Theme 2: Popular Culture**

- Topic 4: Free time activities
- Topic 5: Customs, Festivals and Celebrations
- Topic 6: Celebrity culture

### **Theme 3: Communication**

- Topic 7: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 8: Media and technology
- Topic 9: The environment and where people live

### **Assessment:**

**Paper 1:** Listening: Examination 25% - Foundation (35 mins) Higher (45 mins)

**Paper 2:** Speaking: Examination 25% - Foundation (7-9 mins) Higher (10-12 mins)

**Paper 3:** Reading: Examination 25% - Foundation (45 mins) Higher (1 hour)

**Paper 4:** Writing: Examination 25% - Foundation (1 hour) Higher (1 hour 15 mins)

Assessment takes place in all four skills at the end of Year 11. Students will be entered for either all Foundation tier exams (Grades 1-5) or all Higher tier exams (Grades 4-9). This decision will be taken in consultation with parents following Year 11 trial exams in January.



**Exam board:** **AQA** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Ms S Sobrado



## Course Content

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The GCSE Spanish content is engaging and relevant. It is designed to develop your language skills, build on your cultural knowledge and give you confidence to use German both in and outside the classroom.

Students are required to study the following themes:

### **Theme 1: People, Lifestyle and the World Around Us**

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

### **Theme 2: Popular Culture**

- Topic 4: Free time activities
- Topic 5: Customs, Festivals and Celebrations
- Topic 6: Celebrity culture

### **Theme 3: Communication**

- Topic 7: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 8: Media and technology
- Topic 9: The environment and where people live

### **Assessment:**

**Paper 1:** Listening: Examination 25% - Foundation (35 mins) Higher (45 mins)

**Paper 2:** Speaking: Examination 25% - Foundation (7-9 mins) Higher (10-12 mins)

**Paper 3:** Reading: Examination 25% - Foundation (45 mins) Higher (1 hour)

**Paper 4:** Writing: Examination 25% - Foundation (1 hour) Higher (1 hour 15 mins)

Assessment takes place in all four skills at the end of Year 11. Students will be entered for either all Foundation tier exams (Grades 1-5) or all Higher tier exams (Grades 4-9). This decision will be taken in consultation with parents following Year 11 trial exams in January.





**Exam board:** **Eduqas** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Ms E Swallow

## Course Content

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In Years 10 and 11, students follow the Eduqas examination board specification, endorsed by the Cambridge Latin Course. The course consists of three units:

**Latin Language** – students will read Latin stories detailing episodes of Roman history or mythology, practising answering comprehension questions, grammar questions and translation sections of text into English. This component is worth 50% of the overall mark, and consists of a 1h30 mins examination. Students will need to know approximately 450 Latin words and a selection of grammar features taught in Years 8-11 Latin using Books 1-4 of the Cambridge Latin Course.

**Latin Literature and Sources** – in this unit, students will study a selection of extracts in Latin and images from the Roman world based on the theme of 'Love and Marriage'. In the examination, students will be expected to answer short questions on the content of the stories and comment on the style of the authors. This unit is worth 30% of the overall mark and consists of a 1h 15 mins examination.

**Latin Literature: Narratives** – in this unit, students will study an extract from Vergil's epic poem, the Aeneid, detailing the hero Hercules' defeat of the fire-breathing monster Cacus. In the examination, students will be expected to answer short questions on the content of the text and comment on the style of the author. This unit is worth 20% of the overall mark, and consists of a 1h examination.

There is no coursework in this specification.





# Classical Civilisation

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**Exam board:** **OCR** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Ms E Swallow

## Course Content

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The course consists of two components:

### **Component 1: Thematic Study – Myth and religion**

In this component, students study a range of topics, including:

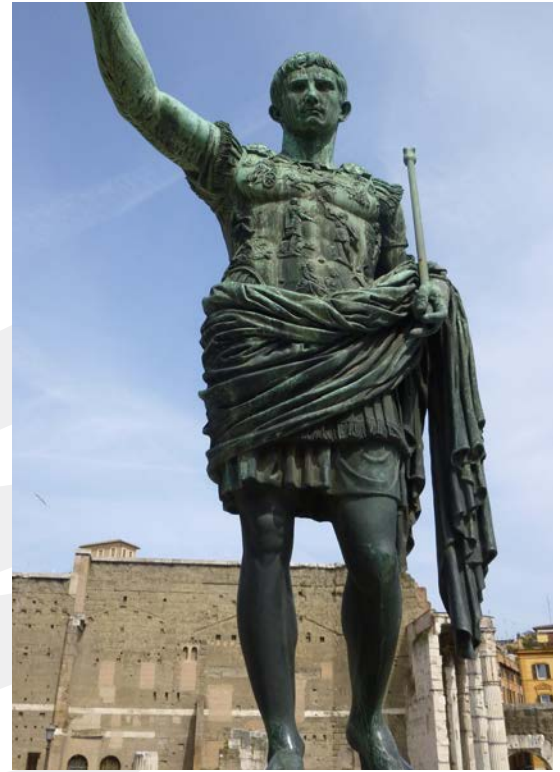
- The gods of Greece and Rome
- The hero Hercules
- Myths connected with the founding of Rome and Athens
- Religious festivals and temples
- Beliefs about the afterlife.

### **Component 2: Literature and Culture – The Homeric World**

In this component, we look in depth at the historical period in which the famous epic, Homer's *Odyssey*, was set. This will involve reading part of the *Odyssey* in English translation, including the episode recounting Odysseus' adventure with the monstrous one-eyed Cyclops. We also look at:

- The archaeological sites connected with Odysseus and other Greek heroes of myth
- Jewellery, art and other decorative objects found at those sites
- What life would have been like for the people who originally inhabited those sites.

Each component is worth 50% of the overall mark and is assessed in a 1 hour 30 mins examination at the end of the course. Examination questions range from those that are purely factual ('Who was the king of the Greek gods?') to the more analytical ('What do you think were the advantages and disadvantages of worshipping more than one god?'). There is no coursework element in this specification.





**Exam board:** **OCR** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr B W Day

## Course Content

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The new 9-1 GCSE contains three units: Our Natural World, People and Society, and Geographical Skills and Decision Making, e.g. maps, GIS, data collection and interpretation. Therefore, there is no coursework or controlled assessment but there will be fieldwork required for the skills paper. Assessment of all three units will take place in June of Year 11.

### Unit 1 - Our Natural World (35%)

Topics:

- Global Hazards
- Changing Climate
- Distinctive Landscapes
- Sustaining Ecosystems

This paper includes fieldwork and Geographical skills.

**Style of Assessment:** 1 hour 15 mins examination

Both shorter answers are worth 1-4 marks and longer answers are worth 6-10 marks.

### Unit 2 - People and Society (35%)

Topics:

- Urban Futures
- Dynamic Development
- The UK
- Resource Resilience

This paper includes fieldwork and Geographical skills.

**Style of Assessment:** 1 hour 15 mins examination

Both shorter answers are worth 1-4 marks and longer answers are worth 6-10 marks.

### Unit 3 - Geographical Skills (30%)

This unit is based around Geographical skills and a decision making exercise.

**Style of Assessment:** 1 hour 15 mins examination

Both shorter answers are worth 1-4 marks and longer answers are worth up to 12 marks.



# History

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**Exam board:** **Cambridge IGCSE** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Ms C Webb

## Course Content

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### Component 1:

Written Paper – 2 hours (externally marked)

- Students answer two questions from Section A (Core Content) and one question from Section B (Depth Study)
- All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b), and (c).
- Percentage of total grade: 40% (60 marks)
- Content:
  - International Relations since 1919 (Core Content)
  - Germany 1918-45 (Depth Study).

### Component 2:

Written Paper – 1 hour 45 mins (externally marked)

- Students answer five questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content
- There is a range of source material relating to each topic
- Percentage of total grade: 30% (40 marks)
- Content:
  - The topic prescribed by the exam board is taken from the Core Content and changes annually.

### Component 3:

Coursework

- Students produce one piece of extended writing of up to 2000 words based on a task devised by the school
- Percentage of total grade: 30% (40 marks)
- Questions are marked internally and externally moderated by CAIE
- Marks are submitted at the end of Year 11 but the tasks will be completed during the course of Year 11.





# Religious Studies

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**Exam board:** **Eduqas** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr J L Hooper

## Course Content

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The Eduqas GCSE in Religious Studies is comprised of three examined components. They incorporate a general study of philosophy and ethics as well as an in depth look at Christianity and Islam. Students at BMS will study:

### **Component 1: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world**

**Theme 1:** Issues of Relationships – Equality, relationships and sexual ethics

**Theme 2:** Issues of Life and Death – Science, creation, life after death and life and death issues

**Theme 3:** Issues of Good and Evil – Crime and punishment, suffering and forgiveness

**Theme 4:** Issues of Human Rights – Social justice, prejudice, discrimination, wealth and poverty.

### **Component 2: A study of Christianity**

**Theme 1:** Beliefs and teachings of Christianity – The nature of God and the foundations of faith

**Theme 2:** Practices of Christianity – Worship, celebration and community.

### **Component 3: A study of Islam**

**Theme 1:** Beliefs and teachings of Islam – The nature of God and the foundations of faith

**Theme 2:** Practices of Islam – Worship, celebration and community.

The course is assessed entirely by external examinations. Component 1 is assessed through a 2 hour examination worth 50% of the qualification and components 2 and 3 are each assessed through a 1 hour examination, each of which is worth 25% of the qualification. Each theme above will be reflected in one question comprising four parts, with each part increasing in difficulty.



# Art and Design

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**Exam board: Edexcel** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject: Mr J McGregor**

## Course Content

The Edexcel GCSE qualification in Art and Design Course structure is as follows:

### **Unit 1**

Personal Portfolio in Art and Design

60% of the qualification (72 marks: 18 marks for each of the four assessment objectives)

Unit 1 comprises approximately 45 hours of taught lessons plus additional homework in which students produce two units of coursework. For each unit the theme is decided by the class teacher. Students will be encouraged to develop work by undertaking the following activities:

- Developing their ideas and skills to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- Developing and refining ideas and proposals
- Understanding the purposes, intentions and functions of art, craft and design in a variety of contexts
- Gaining an understanding of art, craft and design in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures.

Students must produce work in these units from at least two medias, e.g. painting, printmaking, ceramics and three dimensional works. Visits are arranged by the Department to allow students to view work and gather primary research material through drawing and recording from life.

### **Unit 2**

Externally Set Assignment

40% of the qualification (72 marks: 18 marks for each of the four assessment objectives)

The exam paper with a broad theme will be published in January each year and may be given to students as soon as it is released. Unit 2 will culminate in 10 hours of sustained focus when students will work unaided to produce personal response(s) with reference to their preparatory studies, in response to the thematic starting point. Assessment will be in May/June of Year 11.





# Computer Science

**Exam board: OCR** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject: Mrs S Nazir**

## Course Content

This course will not just appeal to students who have an interest in programming, but also those with an interest in computational thinking and computing in general. It will develop practical skills in creating solutions to problems and will promote confidence and independent thinking. A range of different languages will be used, with the main one being Python.

We aim to produce confidence and digital literacy in all students during the timetabled lessons, and then to provide the opportunity for those who have developed a passion for some aspects of ICT to be supported to pursue that in co-curricular sessions.

GCSE Computer Science is a problem-solving subject where students embark upon an exciting journey through programming and computer systems with assignments involving students creating their own programs. Students learn the importance of computational thinking which underpins all computer systems as well as getting an appreciation for computer hardware.

Assessment for the GCSE qualification takes the form of two written papers worth 50% each:

**Paper 1:** The first paper focuses on the core principles of Computer Science.

**Paper 2:** The second paper is based on the application of Computational Thinking, where students will demonstrate their skills in coding and algorithm design. Students will also need to develop code in order to solve a given issue. Students will gain a lot of the understanding for this paper from the practical work that they will carry out over the two year course.

The course is taught in a combination of theory and practical coding activities. Students will find this course a creative and interesting experience. Students opting for the course will need to work on their programming skills at home and cannot simply rely on lesson time to hone their understanding of given programming languages.

Regular support sessions will run during lunchtimes and after school to support GCSE students.

```

    if (n) {
      if (a) {
        for (; o > i; i++)
          if (r = t.apply(e[i], n), r === !1) break
      } else
        for (i in e)
          if (r = t.apply(e[i], n), r === !1) break
    } else if (a) {
      for (; o > i; i++)
        if (r = t.call(e[i], i, e[i]), r === !1) break
    } else
      for (i in e)
        if (r = t.call(e[i], i, e[i]), r === !1) break;
    return e
  },
  trim: b && !b.call("\uffeff\u00a0") ? function(e) {
    return null == e ? "" : b.call(e)
  } : function(e) {
    return null == e ? "" : (e + "").replace(C, "")
  },
  makeArray: function(e, t) {
    var n = t || [];
    return null != e && (N(Object(e)) ? x.merge(n, "string" == typeof e ? [e] : e) : h.call(n, e)), n
  },
  isArray: function(n, t, a) {
    if (n == null) return !1;
    if (t < 0 || t > n.length) return !1;
    if (a < 0 || a > n.length) return !1;
    if (n instanceof Array) return !0;
    if (n.nodeType && n.length > 0) return !0;
    if (n.length && n[0] && n[n.length - 1]) return !0;
    return !1;
  }
};

```



# Design Technology



**Exam board:** **OCR** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mr A H Jones

## Course Content

Students will follow the OCR Design Technology J310 specification. This specification offers students the opportunity to apply their learning to real-life situations and to given design problems and scenarios. It aims to relate authentic real-world awareness of iterative design practices and strategies used by the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Students will be required to use critical thinking leading towards invention and design innovation to design and make prototypes that solve real problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values.

The course enables students to develop their Key Stage 3 learning in Design Technology, furthering their critical thinking and practical skills. The skillset from this course will serve students well in the future, with A Levels, higher education or into the workplace.

The qualification will give students an opportunity to engage with creativity and innovation, and enhance their skills by the application of knowledge from other subject areas across the curriculum such as Mathematics, Science, Art, Computer Science and Humanities, as well as the practical and technical knowledge and understanding they will learn from Design Technology.

## Course Structure

Assessment Overview		Content Overview
<b>Externally Assessed Examination:</b> <b>Principles of Design and Technology* (01)</b> 2 hours written paper	50% of total GCSE (9-1)	The exam will focus upon: 'Core' knowledge of Design and Technology principles 'In-depth' knowledge that focuses more directly on at least one main material category, Graphics, Product Design or Design engineering.
<b>Controlled Assessment Piece:</b> <b>Iterative Design Challenge (02)</b> (Internally marked and externally moderated)	50% of total GCSE (9-1)	As an outcome of their challenge, students will produce a chronological e-portfolio and one final prototype(s). Contextual challenges will be released on 01 June each year.

Students will carry out a main 'design and make' challenge, for which they will produce a prototype and e-portfolio showing the stages of design they went through to reach the final outcome(s).

The course will focus on designing and making products that are fit for a given user problem or scenario. The course will enable students to work with a range of materials which include woods, plastics and metals to create professional and marketable end products. Students will learn about specific materials and manufacturing processes in order to produce high quality products of their own.

The course strikes a good balance between hands-on practical skills and the use of modern technologies when designing new products and systems. There will be opportunities for students to use Computer Aided Design (CAD) packages in the form of SOLIDWORKS and TechSoft Design. The department is well-resourced with Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM) machinery available for students to then manufacture their final products and 3D prototypes. This includes the use of CNC milling machines, laser cutters and 3D printers.

# Drama

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**Exam board:** **Cambridge International** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Mrs E Marabese

## Course Content

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IGCSE Drama is a challenging and engaging academic qualification which is recognized by universities and employers throughout the world. It combines the practical exploration with theoretical study of Drama and Theatre. This qualification would be an ideal choice for students who wish to extend their knowledge of Drama through devising their own original work or performing repertoire.

It is an excellent choice for those who wish to develop their analysis or evaluative skills. IGCSE Drama would complement students' learning in a broad range of other curriculum subjects. It also develops key life skills such as confidence, presentation skills, teamwork and leadership qualities. The true purpose of Drama education is not necessarily to create more professional actors, designers or directors, it is to create more complete human beings who are critical thinkers, who have curious minds and who can lead productive lives.

All candidates take Paper 1 (Written Examination) and Paper 2 (Practical Coursework).

**Paper 1: Written examination** (2 hours 30 mins): Weighting 40%

Externally assessed

Candidates answer questions relating to a devised piece they have developed and performed to an audience and two pre-release play extracts.

- Section A (30 marks): Up to eight short answer and extended response questions on the extract from the first play. All questions are answered
- Section B (25 marks): Answer two extended response questions on the prerelease extract from the second play
- Section C (25 marks): Answer two extended response questions on the devised piece.

The pre-release material consists of two extracts, one from each of two published plays. Extracts will be selected from plays representing a range of genres, styles, countries, cultures and periods. All extracts will be in English and may include work in translation. Each extract will be of sufficient length and substance to enable candidates to demonstrate their understanding of practical approaches to performance as actor, director or designer.

**Paper 2: Coursework:** Weighting 60%

Internally assessed and externally moderated.

Component 2 is made up of three compulsory performances. All work must be staged in an appropriate performance space and intended for live performance to an audience. Candidates will be assessed individually for each performance. The coursework consists of:

- One individual piece (max 3 minutes) consisting of a performance of an extract from a published play
- Two group pieces (max 20 minutes each), one original devised piece and one performance of an extract from a published play.



# Music

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**Exam board:** **AQA** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Miss D Derry

## Course Content

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The GCSE in Music develops the three musical skills of Understanding Music, Performing and Composing.

### Component 1: Understanding Music

The course is based on the following Areas of Study:

- Western Classical Tradition (1650 – present day)
- Popular music (Gaming Music/Musical Theatre/Rock and Pop)
- Traditional Music (Blues/African/Caribbean/British Folk styles)

This part of the course is examined through a listening exam which is made up of two sections. Students apply their knowledge of musical elements and how this relates to both familiar and unfamiliar styles.

The exam structure is:

**Section A** – Areas of Study, Dictation, and Unfamiliar Pieces (68 marks)

**Section B** – Study Pieces (28 marks)

### Component 2: Performing (30%) Practical Assessment

Students are required to perform a solo and an ensemble for a combined total of four minutes. The performance can be in any style and students are encouraged to play to their strengths when choosing their pieces.

The ensemble performance must last over one minute. Performances are recorded during Year 11.

### Component 3: Composing (30%)

This non-examined assessment is completed in class time. Students learn how to develop their musical ideas through employing a range of compositional techniques that best reflect the skills, strengths and interests of the individuals.

Students need to ensure that their compositions demonstrate technical control and a range of musical elements. There are excellent facilities within the faculty, facilitating the ability for students to create their own musical scores or multi-tracked compositions.

Students complete two compositions. A composition to a set brief (36 marks) and a free composition (36 marks).





# Physical Education

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**Exam board:** **OCR** (click for further information)

**Head of Subject:** Miss H Gilbert



## Course Content

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GCSE Physical Education aims to prepare learners for the further study of PE and sport, sport science courses or for future work within the growing sports industry. The course develops an understanding of the factors which underpin physical activity and uses this knowledge to improve sports performance. With the new changes to the course, GCSE Physical Education now provides a clear pathway through to A Level PE and has enhanced its links with other subjects such as Biology and Psychology. The syllabus is made up of both theoretical (60%) and practical (40%) components. The theoretical element is made up of two 1 hour written examinations. The practical element consists of the student performing three practical activities and a performance analysis task. Each student must perform one individual sport, one team sport and the third can be either of these options. We expect students to be performing and representing the school in these sports where possible. Students who join the course need to be committed to these sports for the entirety of the course. With the recent reforms to GCSEs, it is now harder to achieve full marks on the practical activities; however this does not prevent the students accessing the higher marks by the end of the course.

### Syllabus Content

#### **Exam 1 - Physical Factors Affecting Performance (30%)**

##### **Applied Anatomy and Physiology and Physical Activity**

Within this exam, topics focus on the structure and function of the skeletal, muscular, respiratory and cardiovascular systems and the long term effects exercise has on the body. Students develop their understanding of movement analysis, including levers, planes and axes. In other topics, the students apply the principles of training and components of fitness in order to optimise performance and prevent injury.

#### **Exam 2 – Socio-Cultural Issues and Sports Psychology (30%)**

##### **Socio-Cultural Influences, Sports Psychology and Health, Fitness and Well-Being**

The topics for this exam are based around participation in physical activity and sport, looking at how the effects of commercialisation, the media and society impact on sport today. Students develop their understanding of the impact drugs have within sport and increase their knowledge of how psychological factors can influence performance. Topics also focus on how diet and nutrition affect the body and the effects of exercise on a person's health and well-being.

#### **Non-Exam Assessment (40%)**

##### **Practical Activity (30%)**

Students will be assessed in three practical activities, which must include a combination of team and individual sports with at least one being from either category. Students are required to demonstrate effective performance, the use of tactics or techniques, appropriate levels of physical fitness and the ability to observe the rules and conventions under applied conditions.

##### **Analysing and Evaluating Performing (AEP) (10%)**

Students analyse and evaluate aspects of their own performance in their chosen activity. They are required to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses and produce an action plan which aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the performance.

Although there is a practical element to the course, the majority of lessons are theory-based. Any practical work focuses on applying the learnt concepts to a sports setting.





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