

Longridge  
Towers School



CARPE DIEM



**GCSE**

**2023 to 2025**

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## Introduction for Parents and Pupils

This booklet is designed to be used in conjunction with my PowerPoint slides, the information that you will be given by subject specialists at the Form 3 GCSE Information Evening and ongoing dialogue that pupils may have with their teachers.

I hope that this will allow for informed and appropriate decisions to be made about the optional subjects that pupils wish to study to GCSE level.

The booklet starts with some general information about the structure of the Key Stage 4 (GCSE) curriculum at Longridge Towers School. The breakdown of compulsory and optional subjects is detailed. Some subject areas are recommended in an effort to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is studied up to GCSE, before pupils specialise in the Sixth Form.

Individual departments then give more detail about the provision that they offer at GCSE level. All compulsory and optional subjects are included. Each discipline is described in terms of its basic contents, required skills, teaching styles and delivery, assessment structure and its relevance to future study and careers.

I hope that, by the end of the GCSE Information Evening, pupils will be clearer about the subjects that they would like to study. If they are not, however, and any further information is required, do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to help.

After the Information Evening, I will send out a Google form, which will allow you to enter the option choices for your son or daughter. I would be grateful if this could be completed by Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

Good luck!



***P J Whitcombe***  
***Deputy Head***  
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## Structure of the GCSE Curriculum

As previously mentioned, the curriculum is designed to give pupils a broad foundation from which they can make sensible choices about the next stage of their education.

This goes hand in hand with the fact that it ensures that pupils are limiting their career choices as little as possible.

Finally, the curriculum gives the pupils opportunities to achieve and develop personally in areas that are outside the scope of the statutory national curriculum.

All subjects are assessed by means of formal examinations at the end of Form 5.

## The Core Curriculum

In Forms 4 and 5 (National Curriculum Years 10 and 11) the core curriculum consists of English, Mathematics, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Science and Sport.

### **English:**

All pupils study English and the course leads to two GCSE qualifications: English Language and English Literature.

### **Mathematics:**

Mathematics is studied by all pupils throughout Forms 4 and 5. Some pupils may also have the opportunity to study Statistics.

### **Sciences:**

Pupils study all three science subjects. This can lead to an award of two GCSEs in Combined Science, or three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. More detail is given in the Science section later.

### **Games and PE:**

Games and PE are designed to supplement the academic curriculum and are not examined.

### **PSHE/Careers:**

PSHE/Careers allows pupils to consider wider social issues and focus on their personal development, enabling them to make informed choices and decisions. Included here is careers education and guidance. As well as following a planned programme of careers education, pupils have access to impartial careers guidance when required. They will also have the opportunity for work experience in Form 4.

## The Optional Curriculum

We recommend pupils to consider a number of relevant factors when choosing their options. They should enjoy the subjects they select, they should play to their strengths and they should aim to achieve a balance of subjects to ensure future career choices are not limited.

With this in mind, in addition to their English, Mathematics and Science, we recommend that in most cases at least one Modern Foreign Language is selected, along with either Geography or History, or both, and a practical/creative subject.

The optional subjects include:

Art\*  
Computer Science  
Drama  
French  
Geography  
German  
History  
Music  
Design Technology  
Spanish  
Sports Studies

*\*There is a possibility that we may offer Photography GCSE in addition to Art, depending on demand and timetabling constraints. Pupils will not be able to take both subjects. Information about Photography GCSE will be provided separately to pupils by Mr Jones.*

Pupils normally choose four optional subjects for GCSE. Any change to this must be discussed and agreed with Mrs Barber/Mr Whitcombe.

## The procedure for choosing options

From the eleven optional subjects listed above, pupils are asked to choose their four preferred options, with one reserve subject. We will endeavour to construct option bands that permit as many pupils as possible to study their first choices. Occasionally, some combinations prove difficult to accommodate; pupils will be contacted if this is the case and possibly asked to consider an alternative choice. There may also be certain constraints on choices to allow for appropriate timetabling of subjects. However, we have been successful in recent years in accommodating the vast majority of choices.

Once all selections have been confirmed, pupils and parents will be informed of the final option bands.

## ART and DESIGN (Fine Art)



### What is it?

The GCSE course based on this specification encourages candidates to:

- 1) Engage in the process of art and design in order to develop as independent learners and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;
- 2) Develop their creative skills and learn to use their imagination when creating images and artefacts that are original and of value. They will become confident in taking risks when exploring and experimenting with a broad range of media, materials, tools and techniques;
- 3) Gain cultural knowledge, understanding and application of art, craft, design, media and technologies in historical and contemporary contexts;
- 4) Develop personal attributes including self-confidence, resilience, perseverance, self-discipline and commitment;

Art & Design GCSE courses should further provide opportunities for candidates to gain:

- 1) A personal interest in why art and design matters and be inspired, moved and changed by studying a broad and worthwhile course of study;
- 2) Experience of the work practices of individuals, organizations, and creative industries;
- 3) Understanding of art, craft and design processes, associated equipment and safe working practices.

## **What skills and knowledge will I need?**

The course will suit any pupil with ability in art and a genuine appetite for the subject.

## **What is taught?**

Pupils will be encouraged to work in the Fine Art area in a wide range of two and three dimensional media including painting, drawing from observation, collage and printmaking. The small groups at Longridge Towers enable pupils to construct individually tailored coursework units in collaboration with their tutors. In this way the coursework projects reflect the interests and abilities of the pupils.

Pupils learn about artists from the past and present as their practical work progresses. Written work in the form of annotations in sketchbooks is required.

## **How is it structured?**

### **Component 1: Portfolio of Work (60% of total marks)**

Pupils produce artwork in class and at home, exploring different media, processes and techniques in two and three dimensions. The best work from the course is selected for the final portfolio presentation. This unit is internally assessed and moderated by the exam board.

### **Component 2: Externally Set Task (40% of total marks)**

The exam board issues question papers in early January. Pupils have unlimited preparation time to respond to their chosen starting point. This culminates in a 10 hour exam period when pupils produce a final piece informed by their preparatory studies.

The Externally Set task is also internally assessed and moderated by the exam board.

## **What will it lead to?**

The GCSE Art course is an excellent preparation for Art at A-level as the courses share similar aims and assessment objectives. Pupils moving on from GCSE to A-level will find the process a very natural one.

What makes Art so exciting is that it means so many things to different people and there is such a variety of career choice available.

Graphic designers, photographers, painters, muralists, jewellery designers, make up artists, cake designers, interior designers, book illustrators, art therapists, fashion designers, medical illustrators, video game designers, art historians, car designers, people who work for magazines, television, theatre costume or who dress shop windows all might have had an artistic background.

# COMPUTER SCIENCE



## What is it?

GCSE Computer science is an academic course that concentrates on the fundamental elements that all computers need to operate. As the use of computer technology is now ubiquitous and pervades all areas of social and working lives, the Department for Education is strongly encouraging the study of computer science as a GCSE option. It has officially stated its importance in the curriculum to being equal to that of the other core sciences. Pupils need to have a firm grounding in computing technology for their careers, for lifelong learning, and for recreation. The study of this course helps provide pupils with analytical, communication, problem solving and technical skills. These skills can then be applied to either further study in the subject itself, or to other subjects and career paths.

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

Pupils will need to enjoy learning new skills using computers. The ability to work on a problem and to overcome difficulties through perseverance and to be self motivated is essential. The ideal candidate would be someone who enjoys a challenge, is keen to explore the world of computer science and programming and has a creative nature.

## What is taught?

The procedures and processes necessary for the successful and productive operation of computer hardware and software. Algorithms, Logic, Binary and Programming Patterns all feature in the syllabus. Pupils opting to study computer science at GCSE level, carry out in-depth analysis of how software interlinks with hardware, learn about project management and team work, and develop skills in practical application of computer programming through a structured exam board set task. This will involve learning and extending skills in a range of software environments. Pupils are taught in small classes by specialist teachers.

## How is it structured?

The course consists of 3 units. Two of these are external examinations worth 50% each and one is a twenty hour project task which has to be submitted for the qualification to be obtained.

## What will it lead to?

Skills learned and knowledge gained during the course are transferable to other subjects and disciplines. Future career paths are enhanced by its rigorous attention to the fundamentals of technology. It is an ideal foundation for progression to A-level in the subject area. Careers in computer science and the related professions are plentiful and are wide ranging in nature.



# DESIGN TECHNOLOGY



## What is it?

This is a new and exciting course which looks into modern design and manufacturing technology.

*Do you enjoy making things?*

*Do you ever wonder how things work?*

*Do you ever look at products and think “I could do better than that”*

If you have answered “yes” to any of the questions above, then you should take a serious look at GCSE Product Design.

During this course you will be encouraged to:

Demonstrate your design and technology capability

Combine your skills with knowledge and understanding in order to design and make quality products in quantity

Apply your mathematics and scientific knowledge to real world applications

Objectively evaluate your work and the work of others

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

You will already have a good working knowledge of materials and tools from your studies in previous years. However, an open and enquiring mind and an enthusiasm for the subject are all that are required.

## What is taught?

The course is divided into a number of topic areas. You will learn about the common resistant materials as well as more modern so-called smart materials and hi-tech composites. You will gain hands-on experience of the various processing techniques involved in modern manufacturing. You will gain an appreciation of what makes “good” and “bad” design. You will enhance your own designing skills both on paper and via Computer Aided Design (CAD) packages. We also look at the wider role of the design and the responsibilities of designers to society.

A typical class will have around ten other pupils so you will get as much one-to-one tuition as you need. Design Technology is a highly practical subject.

You will have lots of hands-on experience of tools and materials. You will often find that you “learn by doing”. All of the resources used in your lessons will be available for you, via Google Classroom, to review and use as you see fit. Additionally there will be online assessments in the form of quizzes or extended writing / design work. Where possible the course will be taught using the latest paperless systems. This will enable you to always have a full set of theory notes incorporating multimedia such as videos to help you gain a better understanding of the concepts.

## **How is it structured?**

The course is split into two parts:

### **Part 1 - Theory**

The theoretical aspects of the course will be examined via a written paper.

### **Part 2 - Practical work**

Your practical design and construction skills will be assessed via a Design Challenge. The challenge will be set by the exam board. However, the challenge will be quite broad in its scope to allow you to develop your own invention.

## **What will it lead to?**

If you really enjoy the course then you can continue your studies at A-level and there are several major universities who offer degrees in the subject.

Design is all around us, everything which has been manufactured has been designed by someone. You could be the next *James Dyson*, *Trevor Baylis* or *Jonathan Ive*.

# DRAMA



## What is it?

This is a very enjoyable practical and academic course, which is why it is popular! A significant part of the course involves exploring various plays and theatre conventions. Pupils will also have the opportunity to attend Live Theatre productions and partake in workshops. They will also develop their skills in performance, usually 'on stage' and possibly 'backstage' if their interests lie there.

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

Most pupils will have had Drama lessons, in Forms 1 to 3, and the GCSE course builds on that foundation. Those opting to take the subject should have a willingness to develop their skills in the subject, to produce successful practical and written work. There is the option to study some 'backstage' elements, for those with technical flair, though there will still be an expectation to partake in acting based activities during the course.

## What is taught?

GCSE Drama includes a wide range of both written and practical activities, which make it an ideal vehicle to assist pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding of advanced communication skills.

It provides particular opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. There is also a requirement to evaluate work in progress and identify strengths and weaknesses. Students build their skills in working as part of a team, acting on advice and feedback given, and meeting deadlines. Health and safety issues are also considered in the practical areas of the course.

Over the two years, pupils will be required to take part in theatre trips, organised by the school, to see a variety of shows. In the past this has included visits to theatres in Newcastle and Edinburgh, as well the local Berwick Maltings. Pupils are also encouraged to go to the theatre independently, to complement and expand upon their experience. Pupils will be able to partake in workshops, for example at the renowned theatre 'Northern Stage', or in school via visiting professionals. The productions seen at the theatre and covered in workshops, are always studied in class too.

The coursework options include devised thematic work, acting, theatre in education, improvisation, physical theatre, set design, costume design, make-up, properties, masks, puppets, lighting, sound and stage management.

## How is it structured?

The GCSE Drama course consists of three components –

**COMPONENT 1 (40%):** A written exam where pupils answer questions on the work of different theatre makers, and the set play they have studied.

**COMPONENT 2 (40%):** A practical unit in which students create their own, original devised drama work, either as a performer or a designer.

**COMPONENT 3 (20%):** A further practical unit in which students explore and then perform two extracts from a chosen play.

## What will it lead to?

Drama is offered as an A-level option in the Sixth Form and is an exciting subject to study. It is not exclusively for those considering a career in theatre or the media, though it would certainly be recommended to study if you were. It has many advantages in other areas, contributing positively to careers in law and politics, for example. There are few careers nowadays that do not require self-confidence and accomplished communication skills, which both the GCSE and A level courses in Drama facilitate. Many universities like to see that their potential students have benefitted from a curriculum including Drama.

It is important to know that all of the Drama courses offered at Longridge are considered academically rigorous by both employers and universities.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE and ENGLISH LITERATURE**



### **What is it?**

Over the two year course, pupils will work towards two separate GCSE qualifications.

Both English Language and English Literature GCSEs involve an analytical response to drama, poetry, prose and non-fiction material. Our pupils are given access to works that will stimulate and engage their growing understanding of their own lives, by studying Shakespeare, major poets and modern playwrights. Their appreciation of how to respond constructively to others' experiences and how to convey their own, will not only enable them to perform well in their exams, but will give them vital functional skills for adult life.

### **What skills and knowledge will I need?**

Our pupils will have developed the abilities to communicate in a variety of forms, for a range of purposes, over their first three years of education in the Senior School; these are now challenged and extended, to gain the best possible grades. Pupils learn to adapt their knowledge for examination purposes and to be further prepared for the enjoyable opportunities ahead.

### **What is taught?**

Pupils will develop their skills of oral and written communication, responding to the ideas of others as well as articulating their own creative, persuasive and discursive opinions. In addition, they will continue to learn to react to media and film in a positive and active manner.

A variety of teaching styles are used to draw out the best of our pupils' abilities. The advantage of our class sizes is that we know our pupil's individual needs: we aim to fulfil and extend their potential by setting high standards whilst supporting and aiding them individually in their learning.

A combination of direct teaching, paired activities and group work enables the learning process to be collaborative, ensuring pupils continue to be respected as independent learners whilst gaining from the knowledge, experience and expertise of teachers.

## **How is it structured?**

In the current GCSE curriculum, all assessment is by written examination at the end of the course. Pupils will sit two papers in each of English Language and English Literature (i.e. four papers in total), covering a range of different text types, analytical responses and written skills. Pupils will be awarded two separate GCSE certificates, and a reported level for Spoken Language skills.

## **What will it lead to?**

The study of English at GCSE level prepares our pupils for Sixth Form, whilst at the same time focusing them on achieving the best possible GCSE outcomes. Core functional and communication skills are developed as part of the English course, enabling access to all other curriculum areas at post-16 level. It should be noted that the majority of UK Universities now require a Grade 4 or above in English for access to any degree course, regardless of discipline; for more competitive disciplines, such as education and law, some institutions may require a higher grade as a minimum.

Many pupils choose to continue English Literature at A-level, having enjoyed their learning at GCSE level and gained pleasing grades. We hope they also feel enriched by the access to poetry, prose and drama, which has helped them to gain a critical understanding of the human experience we share, at a crucial time in their own personal and academic development.

# GEOGRAPHY



## What is it?

Geography is unique in its study of human and physical patterns and the interaction of people and their environment in shaping the landscape. It also makes a wider contribution to the curriculum in the skills and personal development it fosters and examines a wide range of contemporary issues affecting people and the world.

Geography is a topical subject, which is accessible for all pupils. Geography is everywhere, without us realising it. From the source of our morning coffee to the transport we use to get home after school...it is all Geography!

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

Geography requires pupils to be able to interpret a variety of figures such as maps, graphs, photographs, statistics and explain the geographic information within them. These skills are taught throughout the GCSE course and are applied through exam practice during lessons. Map-skills are also key and are taught throughout Form 1/2 and will be reinforced throughout Form 4/5. Map skills will assist pupils in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

At GCSE, many of the areas of study will have been touched on slightly during their junior or Key Stage 3 years, whereas some of the topics will be new to all pupils.

## What is taught?

The small class sizes at Longridge do allow pupils to develop an interest in specific Geographical areas.

During the course, all Geographers will have the opportunity to go on a **residential field trip**. In the past this has been to the **Lake District** or the **Isle of Arran**. This will provide the pupils with an opportunity to witness first hand many of the Geographical features and processes they will have studied in the classroom. This field trip also will fulfil the criteria required for the fieldwork element of the new GCSE course.

## How is it structured?

The Syllabus followed at GCSE will be the AQA syllabus A. The topics covered should be:

### **Paper 1 - Living with the physical environment**

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

Section B: The living world

Section C: Physical landscapes in the UK

### **Paper 2 - Challenges in the human environment**

Section A: Urban issues and challenges

Section B: The changing economic world

Section C: The challenge of resource management

### **Paper 3 – Geographical applications.**

This is a replacement for controlled assessment/coursework. It is done as a 75 minute exam.

Pupils need to undertake **two geographical enquiries**, each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. Fieldwork **must** take place outside the classroom and school grounds on at least **two** occasions. Pupils' understanding of the enquiry process will be assessed in the following two ways:

1. Questions based on the use of fieldwork materials from an unfamiliar context.
2. Questions based on pupils' individual enquiry work.

The question style for all papers is multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response and extended prose.

## What will it lead to?

As a non-vocational subject Geography does not close any career doors. It can be classified as a Science, an Art or as a Social Science. There is much cross-curricular activity within Geography and it complements many subjects, including Physics, Chemistry and Economics. Careers directly relating to Geography include tourism; transport, town planning, meteorology and many environmental based careers.



# HISTORY



## What is it?

From medieval surgeons hacking off limbs, to pupils resisting the Nazis in war-torn Munich, via sailors fighting off the Spanish Armada and world leaders reacting to the atomic age, GCSE History will put you in the shoes of the people who lived through some of the most fascinating events of the last thousand years. Building on the skills and learning developed in Forms 1, 2, and 3, the GCSE course will look at new areas of the past that pupils have not previously studied. The onus will be on maximising pupil engagement and enjoyment, via a knowledge-rich and skills-based curriculum, covering British and world history.

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

There is no prior knowledge required for those who wish to study GCSE History. There are many skills that are useful for study at this level. The most important is the ability to question events and to construct a logical and well considered argument. An inquisitive mind and an enjoyment of a story are also good qualities to have. We would welcome pupils who are enthusiastic and have enjoyed their History lessons in Form 3. Reading and writing skills are important, and will be developed as the course progresses. Pupils of all attainment levels will be supported to achieve their full potential on the course, provided they approach their learning with a positive attitude.

## How is it taught?

History is largely a discussion topic and this is one of the main lines of teaching. Pupils collaboratively discuss amongst themselves and with their teacher events and individuals and their importance to the period of study. They work in groups to develop cooperation and an understanding of other people's ideas. Activities will aim to bring historical events to life, whether that is recreating a nineteenth century surgical operation or having pupils design Elizabethan era warships using playdough.

Critical analysis and writing skills also form a core part of learning at GCSE in History. Pupils will be encouraged to think for themselves, and to learn and reflect independently. Candidates will also have the opportunity to improve their revision skills. At Longridge we are fortunate to have small class sizes and this therefore allows for time to be spent with the pupils to develop a wide range of skills with the needs of individuals in mind.

## How is it structured?

There are two main areas of study, which are taught consecutively. These are listed below. These are assessed by means of terminal examination papers sat at the end of the course. Homework will be set every week, in the form of preparatory reading which will allow the pupils to make regular progress.

### **Paper 1: International Relations: Conflict and Peace in the Twentieth Century (50%)**

Germany 1890-1945 - *The Kaiser's Germany, the First World War, democracy in the 1920s, society, culture, and gender in the Weimar period, the rise of the Nazis, Nazi Germany and the Second World War*

Conflict and Tension between East and West, 1945 - 1972 - *The origins of the Cold War, the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, events in Asia, the arms and space races, the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Prague Spring*

### **Paper 2: Thematic Studies (50%)**

Britain: Health and the people c1100 to the present day - *Medieval treatments and beliefs about disease, improvements in the Renaissance, the history of surgery, public health and epidemic diseases, scientific breakthroughs, the birth of the NHS*

Elizabethan England c1568-1603 - *Politics in Elizabethan England, rebellions, religious conflict, Mary, Queen of Scots, life for the rich and poor, the theatre, explorers and pirates, war with Spain, defeating the Spanish Armada*

## What will it lead to?

GCSE History provides a sound academic base for further study of all subjects. Candidates are exposed to reading, writing, spelling and learning at a high level. Studying History at A-level is a natural progression for candidates. Moreover, analytical techniques, constructing arguments and organising data in a logical and well thought out manner are transferable skills that employers seek. History graduates can be found at the highest levels of business, law, journalism, broadcasting, literature, diplomacy, and politics. Four Prime Ministers in the last hundred years have been History graduates, including the great social reformer Clement Attlee and Coldstream's own Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

# MATHEMATICS



## What is it?

Maths is the exploration of all things numerical. It is an exercise in logical and disciplined thinking. Can you follow rules? Can you follow patterns? Can you see your way through a problem?

We follow the Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (IGCSE) - Specification A (9-1). This course develops all the mathematical ideas which have been encountered up to Form 3 and introduces some new ones too. It should provide pupils who wish to pursue the study of mathematics into the Sixth Form and beyond with a strong background in all the essential algebra, as well as covering and reinforcing topics needed for study subjects.

Pupils will continue to be taught in sets, arranged by ability, as they are in Form 3. There is scope for movement between the sets in the light of work this year, influenced by the quality of homework and by performance in tests and in the summer examination. We aim to cover all the material judged to be of grade 8 or 9 standard with the higher sets. Other pupils will spend longer on fundamental ideas, but will cover such additional topics as time allows. Currently, all pupils are entered for Higher Tier papers for the mock exam, and then a decision taken if Foundation Tier is more suitable for the pupil.

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

*"Maths is a skill."* All Maths teachers will say this regularly. Anyone studying Maths will need to practise the skills taught in the lessons in order to become a competent mathematician. This can be done using the text book provided, by taking past papers, homework sheets or practice sheets, or by using some of the interactive tests installed as programs on the Maths section of the school's network. GCSEPod is also a useful tool for revision and practice.

## What is taught?

### **Number:**

Compound percentages, highest common factor and least common multiple, upper and lower bounds in calculation, recurring decimals and fractions, financial arithmetic, irrational numbers and surds.

### **Algebra:**

Negative & rational indices, reciprocal, expanding and factorising, quadratic equations, algebraic fractions, the difference method for sequences, direct and inverse proportion, quadratic inequalities, simultaneous equations (including the case where one is quadratic), functions.

**Calculus:** (The bit that is new to the IGCSE!)

Simple differentiation, equations of tangents, stationary points, application to motion in a straight line.

**Graphs:**

Equations of straight lines and curves, using graphs to solve equations, graphical representation of inequalities, travel graphs, gradients of tangents to curves.

**Shape & space:**

Constructions and loci, angle properties of circles, transformations, arcs and sectors of circles, surface area and volume of prisms, cones, pyramids and spheres, trigonometry, sine and cosine rules, area and volume in similar figures, vectors and vector geometry.

**Probability & statistics:**

Sets and Venn diagrams, cumulative frequency, medians and quartiles, relative frequency, tree diagrams, histograms.

## How is it structured?

The award of the IGCSE is made at the end of Form 5, along with all other subjects.

The format of the exams is:

- 2 exams, each 2 hours long
- Calculator is allowed in both exams
- Any topic can be assessed in either paper
- There is no coursework / controlled assessment. The award is solely on the exams.

Maths is to be taught in 3 streamed sets with the top set being dedicated to those opting to study Further Maths. Most pupils follow the Higher Tier course.

## What will it lead to?

A good GCSE in Maths will initially lead you to be inspired to continue and to follow Maths to A-level. Studying Maths at A-level will help you with Physics, Geography, Biology and Psychology as all of these subjects use techniques not taught at GCSE.

A-level Maths opens many doors at University. The most obvious is a degree in Maths. Maths A-level is also needed for and Engineering and pure science courses. You will also find it helpful for subjects such as Geography, Economics, Banking and Finance and Management to name but a few. It is also accepted as an appropriate entry qualification for a Law degree.

**GCSE Statistics** is an option for the best and keenest mathematicians. It is taught inside the normal Maths lessons alongside the IGCSE Maths, and is examined at the end of Form 5. It counts as an extra GCSE and is an excellent bridge into A-level Maths and Further Maths. If you are intending to continue with Maths after your GCSE's, this would be an excellent course to follow.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES



### What is it?

**French, German and Spanish** are on offer at GCSE and are all examined by the AQA Examination Board. One foreign language is strongly advised and it may be possible to take two in certain circumstances.

You will gain expertise in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing so you will be able to communicate in a foreign language. It could be of interest to prospective employers if you have a foreign language at GCSE and languages can frequently be combined with other subjects at university level within a degree course, often leading to a year spent abroad working in a university, school or work placement.

For each language the overall aims are to enable pupils to develop:

- An understanding of the language in a variety of contexts
- A knowledge of vocabulary, structures and transferable language skills
- The ability to communicate effectively in the foreign language
- An awareness and understanding of countries and communities where French/German/Spanish are spoken

### What skills and knowledge will I need?

You should ideally have at least one year's experience of the language(s) you wish to study before embarking on the GCSE course. If you wish to discuss this matter, please do so with your teacher in the first instance.

### What is taught?

You will build on the skills you have been practising already in language lessons so that, by the time you reach your GCSE examination, you will be able to sustain a conversation of several minutes and will be able to produce extended pieces of writing.

Each language will cover the following three themes:

Theme 1: Identity and culture which includes the family, free-time, technology, local customs and festivals in the target language countries.

Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest which includes home area and region, travel, and global issues such as the environment.

Theme 3: Current and future study and employment which includes your studies, school life, post 16 education, future careers and ambitions.

## **How is it structured?**

Throughout the course you will practise all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. You will sit tests in Listening and Reading Comprehension and in Writing at the very end of the course. Your Speaking Test will be conducted by your teacher at the start of the summer term in form 5. The Speaking Test is internally conducted but will be externally marked by the Board. For the written and reading components, you will need to be able to translate into the foreign language and from the language into English.

The pupils must sit all four exams entirely at either Foundation or Higher level. Each skill area is worth 25% of the total marks.

The Listening Exam is 35 or 45 minutes long depending on the level taken.

The Speaking Exam is 7-9 minutes or 10-12 minutes long.

The Reading Exam is 45 or 60 minutes long.

The Writing Exam is 60 or 75 minutes long.

## **What will it lead to?**

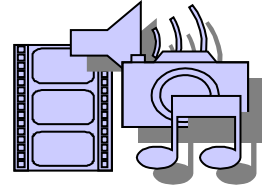
A GCSE language will be necessary if you intend to study the subject to A-level in the Sixth Form.

There are many exciting university courses for linguists. A foreign language gives you a qualification in a highly regarded subject, provides a wider range of GCSE options from which to choose A-level subjects and opens up greater opportunities in further education compared to pupils who have no modern foreign language qualification. Some of the more prestigious universities insist on a foreign language GCSE qualification to be allowed to do a course there in almost any subject.

You will be able to use your language learning skills to learn a new language like Chinese later on in life if your studies or your job require it.

The ability to be able to communicate effectively in a foreign language is growing in importance as Britain seeks to compete in European and world markets for trade and business. Sadly, it is estimated that lack of language competence loses the United Kingdom a vast amount of business and trade with other nations.

# MUSIC



## What is it?

GCSE Music builds upon and extends the knowledge and skills introduced at KS3 through the areas of Performing, Composing and Listening. It aims to encourage pupils to explore a diverse and dynamic variety of music, developing knowledge of theory through practical-based work and the use of music-based technology. There are 4 main Areas of Study – The Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910, Popular Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, Traditional Music and Western Classical Tradition since 1910. All areas are studied, but pupils are also expected to have an in depth knowledge of The Western Classical Tradition 1650 – 1910 and one other area. This will include carrying out detailed analysis of set works for those areas.

## What skills and knowledge will I need?

Pupils wishing to pursue GCSE Music would find it advantageous to have a foundation in music notation equivalent to Associated Board Grade 3 standard. They will be expected to take an active role in the school's musical life, for example, taking part in the school's musical groups and concerts. It is essential that pupils taking music at this level are receiving one-to-one tuition in their chosen performance instrument and by the start of the GCSE course should be at least of Associated Board Grade 3 standard. In order to access the top grades at GCSE a performance of Grade 5 level is required.

## What is taught?

Studying for GCSE Music takes a variety of forms including personal study, discussion and analysis in small groups and one-to-one tuition for the performing and composing areas. Plenty of practice will be given in answering the different types of questions for the Listening paper.

## How is it structured?

<b>Component</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Type of Assessment</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
1	Understanding Music	Written examination lasting one and a half hours, answering questions based on a mixture of unfamiliar listening extracts and familiar listening extracts chosen from the 4 strands of study – externally assessed.	40%
2	Performing Music	A minimum of two pieces must be performed, one ensemble and one solo piece with a minimum of 4 minutes performance in total.	30%
3	Composing Music	2 compositions, one to a brief set by the awarding body and one a free choice of the candidate.	30%

## What will it lead to?

GCSE Music is a good grounding for those wishing to pursue A-level music, which in turn can be useful for those considering careers in performing, broadcasting, journalism, music industry support work, music technology and musical instrument technology, music therapy, teaching, sound engineering and a variety of media and entertainment related careers.



## SCIENCE



Pupils will continue with a common programme of science studies in Form 4. This will lead eventually to either two or three GCSEs; Double Award Combined Science for lower sets, or Triple Award Biology, Chemistry and Physics for upper sets. Either alternative may support the study of science subjects at A-level, for pupils who perform well enough in their respective courses.

### What is it?

#### Combined Science

Combined Science aims to give pupils a solid foundation in each of the three sciences. It covers a range of scientific topics that will engage and stimulate pupils' interest in science, and provides an excellent grounding for further study. These topics include:

**Biology** • Cell biology • Organisation • Infection and response • Bioenergetics • Homeostasis and response • Inheritance, variation and evolution • Ecology

**Chemistry** • Atomic structure and the periodic table • Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter • Quantitative chemistry • Chemical changes • Energy changes • The rate and extent of chemical change • Organic chemistry • Chemical analysis • Chemistry of the atmosphere • Using resources

**Physics** • Forces • Energy • Waves • Electricity • Magnetism and electromagnetism • Particle model of matter • Atomic structure

#### Biology, Chemistry and Physics

All pupils should complete the above programme of study during their GCSE course. However, as time goes by, the upper sets will start to work more quickly through the material, to allow time for them to learn about the extra topics needed for the three separate sciences. Until the classes start to diverge, movement between sets will be permitted, so that pupils can be placed in the most appropriate position for them to achieve the best possible outcome at GCSE.

### What is taught?

Science teachers use many diverse activities to make the lessons enjoyable. These include: pupil experiments (as often as possible), demonstrations, small group activities and class discussions, problem-solving and computer-based tasks. Pupils are encouraged to work with each other.

## **How are the sciences structured?**

The science courses are structured in a flexible way to allow the same components to make up Combined Science as well as the separate science qualifications.

There are regular assessments at the end of topic sections and internal exams at the end of Form 4. Mock exams take place in January of Form 5, with final papers in May/June 2025. There is no coursework/controlled assessment.

## **What will they lead to?**

Career paths directly related to the sciences include: medicine and veterinary science, dentistry, supplementary medical professions, e.g. physiotherapy, pharmacy, biomedical sciences and osteopathy; chemical engineering, fuel technology, forensic science, materials technology and engineering. The skills of numeracy, problem solving and communication are an integral part of the sciences and therefore an A-level could also lead to careers such as accountancy, banking, computing and law. Skills such as the ability to think logically and analytically, to work independently or in groups and to present ideas clearly orally and in writing are valued by employers.

## SPORTS STUDIES - PHYSICAL EDUCATION



### What is it?

The course is designed for pupils who have a passion for sport-both in practical and academic terms. This is far from a soft option. What other subject tests an individual's sporting prowess and their intellectual capacity? The expected standard of performance in the practical is very high and pupils must be able to perform in an individual sport as well as team events. It is essential that pupils have a high degree of practical ability, represent School teams, as well as engaging in sports at club level. The academic content for the new course is very demanding and pupils choosing this course must have the appropriate motivation and skills, particularly in Biology, Physics and Psychology.

### What skills and knowledge will I need?

This course acknowledges excellence in performance. Most pupils should ideally be capable of achieving County representation in at least one sport. Representing school and outside club teams is an essential requirement and forms an important part of the practical assessment. Pupils would be role models for their peer group and set excellent examples in and out of school. They will be ambassadors for the PE Department by wearing the correct kit and having a positive attitude at all times.

### What is taught?

The course will be delivered by the PE Department. Members of staff will take responsibility for different components of Theory work and Practical. Theory work in Paper 1 involves applied anatomy and physiology, mechanics of movement, theories of physical training and data analysis. Paper 2 requires the study of sports related psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness and well-being. The course work is very relevant to anyone taking part in sport e.g. how to construct training programmes, the issues of performance enhancing drugs, lifestyle and diet to name a few from a long list. Up to date videos of sporting current affairs and social issues will be studied. Past papers will also be used to reinforce work covered.

## How is it structured?

The Full Course comprises two components - Theory (60%) and Practical (40%).

### 1. There are two Exam Papers:

#### Paper 1

**The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.  
78 marks - 30% of GCSE (1 hr. 15 mins)**

#### Paper 2

**Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity.  
78 marks – 30% of GCSE (1 hr. 15 mins)**

Each paper has the same structure. Multiple choice questions, short answer questions followed by extended answer questions. All questions must be answered.

### 2. **Non-exam assessment: Practical performances in physical activity and sport. Worth 100 marks - 40% of the GCSE.**

## What's assessed?

Practical performance will be assessed in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in **either** a team or in an individual activity). The choice of sports has been reduced and it is important to appreciate the limited selection as part of your decision making process for your GCSE options. **N.B. An activity sheet, listing all the possible sports, will be available at the Sports Studies presentation table on the Option evening.**

For each of their three activities, pupils will be assessed in skills in progressive drills (10 marks per activity) and in the full context (15 marks per activity). This represents 25 marks x 3. Obtaining accurate video evidence will form an important part of this process.

Pupils will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in **one** activity. This represents 25 marks x 1. Obtaining accurate video evidence will form an important part of this process.

## What will it lead to?

In the short term, the P.E. Department would expect pupils to achieve the best possible grade at GCSE. The course is designed to enable pupils to enjoy and understand the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle. It also provides the opportunity to study Physical Education at A-level.

The Course would have an advantage for pupils wishing to study related topics at Higher Education as well as to related career opportunities.