



Bloxham School

A GUIDE TO GCSE SUBJECT CHOICE

For
THIRD FORM STUDENTS

SEPTEMBER 2025

CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

You are about to make some of the most exciting choices of your education so far, as you start to think about which subjects you want to take in the 4th and 5th Form. The choices you make now may well influence the rest of your academic education, and lead to opportunities later in your life. It is important that you appreciate from the start which options are available to you, and what is involved, so you can make thoughtful and informed choices.

The notes in this booklet are intended to be a general guide to help you to select the subjects you wish to study. You should also talk to your teachers about their subjects, and even the older students about the subjects they chose. The school careers advisor, your Tutor, Housemaster and Head of Year will also be a source of valuable information and advice over the next few weeks.

The lessons you have next year will be a mixture of core (compulsory) and optional subjects. Most students will take either 9 or 10 GCSEs in total. The curriculum has been developed to ensure all students have a spread of subject areas whilst retaining flexibility and choice in our options.

All students will take the following **core (compulsory) subjects:**

- English Language
- English Literature*
- Mathematics
- Science (Double GCSE Award) **
- French or Spanish ***
- Physical Education (non-examination)
- Games
- PSHE – a subject tackling Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural, Political and Economic topics, as well as research and study skills.

*a small number of students will take only English Language

**students in Set 1 will take separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It is the expectation that sets 2 to 5 will take Double Award Science

*** compulsory for all students currently in Set 1 Spanish and French Sets 1 and 2. Optional for other students who may choose the alternative provision option in Block 1. Those already on the ACE course in 3rd Form and those receiving EAL support in 3rd Form will continue with that in the 4th Form.

What is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)?

The Government has been promoting the study of a combination of GCSE subjects which they and the Russell Group of universities (at A-level) argue open more doors to more degrees and keep young people's options open for their future careers.

The EBacc consists of:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- geography or history
- a language

Thus, the latest Government league tables are based on the average point score across the six EBacc subjects compared with local and national average. Whilst Bloxham has the freedom to select its own curriculum students should note that future Further and Higher Education applications and job applications may well be against students that have followed all of these subjects (including a language).

Optional subjects:

There are four provisional option blocks. Students must study one subject from each block. All blocks are taught for five periods per two-week timetable cycle.

In block one we strongly recommend and encourage all students capable to study a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish). Not only does this fulfil the requirements of the EBacc but also teaches invaluable learning skills of resilience and effort which benefit across the curriculum. There is also a distinct competitive advantage when progressing on to Further and/or Higher Education and the global workplace.

Example Option Blocks

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
French			
Spanish			
ACE			
EAL			
Alternative provision			

ACE – Attainment, Communication and Engagement

EAL – English as an Additional Language

Alternative Provision – Final option will depend on student numbers and staffing. Likely to be from RPE / Art / PE

Block 2,3 & 4 subject choices:

Art	History
Business	Latin
Computer Science	Music
Design Technology	Physical Education
Drama	Religion, Philosophy and Ethics
Food	Textiles
Geography	

We strive to maximise student choices and will seek to optimise permutations of subjects.

However, occasionally certain subject combinations will not be possible. All subjects will require a viable number of students to run the course.

Scholars – Any student currently holding a subject specific scholarship is expected to study that subject at GCSE.

Procedure for choosing subjects

We are anxious to ensure that the decision to study a subject is taken after consultation and careful thought. The most important event in the process is the Third Form Parents' Meeting on Wednesday 12th February. This will begin at 17:45 with an "Options presentation". The remainder of the evening will provide the opportunity to talk and discuss your options with individual subject teachers as well as a normal parents' evening. If you feel that you need further discussions, then they can be arranged via your Tutor.

In preparation for the options talk and evening you should read through this booklet, talk through the matter with parents or guardians and, of course, your tutors. You may also wish to consult Mrs Bilotti - the school careers advisor to help your decision making. The subject choices form should be completed following the parents' evening. [Subject Choice Form](#)

Student choices must be submitted via the online form by Monday 24th February

Some words of wisdom...

- ▶ **Don't focus too much on what career you think you want when you are older** – you will probably change your mind many times before you get a job!
- ▶ **Try to achieve a good balance of subjects** – this will keep your future options open.
- ▶ **Think about the skills that each subject will teach you** – a good balance between the arts, humanities and sciences will lead to a more rounded student. We would strongly recommend you consider continuing the study of at least one practical subject to GCSE level.
- ▶ **Discuss your choices with lots of people** - this will help you come to the right decision

Some questions you may have...

Should I choose my subjects to fit in with one particular career?

It is unlikely at this stage that you will have made up your mind about what you would like to do in the future. Most Third Year students only have vague ideas, which are sure to change over time. It is perhaps most sensible to select a good balance of subjects in order to keep open as many future paths as possible.

Should I choose the subjects I am best at?

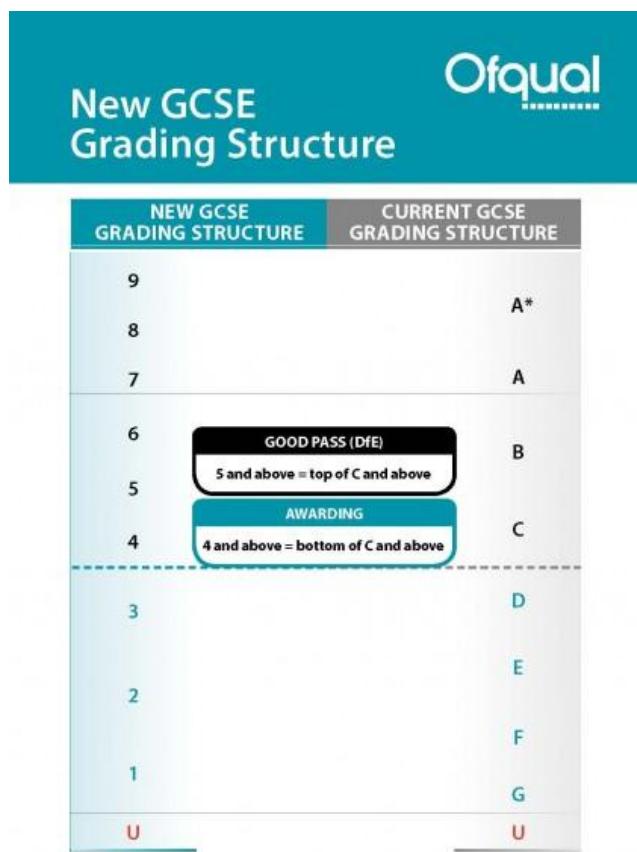
It is true that to gain entry into Higher Education and many careers you will need good grades in examinations. However, you should make sure you are genuinely interested in the subjects you choose, and that it's not just that you find some easier than others.

How do I work out if a subject is useful?

All the subjects we offer are meaningful and useful. The core curriculum (English, mathematics, Science and a Modern Foreign Language) covers the requirements of most universities and careers. Your option subjects all offer you knowledge, skills and understanding that can be applied to a range of situations and future contexts. Try to avoid asking yourself, what job will this lead to. Instead consider that the skills you will learn will be extremely valuable in your future career.

How will students be assessed?

At the end of the course, candidates' results will be on a numerical scale from 9 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest). These are in line with those awarded at each Assessment Grades Report cycle at Bloxham. In the main, assessment will be by external exam only, except where non-exam assessment is the only way to provide valid assessment of the skills required. Spelling and grammar will be assessed within English Language and Literature but also within Geography and History.



The above diagram indicates how the new numerical system will relate to the old letter style grades.

core subjects – examined

Board: Edexcel IGCSE

English Language: 40% coursework / 60% exam

English Literature: 40% coursework / 60% exam

All students at Bloxham in their Fifth Form year are entered for the Key Stage 4 IGCSE examination in English Language and the majority also take IGCSE English Literature. During the course, students extend their knowledge and skills through exploration of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, as well as developing confidence through participation in discussions, debates and presentations.

For English Language, assessment will be based on a terminal examination (60%) and coursework (40%). There will be one exam paper, covering the reading and production of non-fiction writing. One coursework task covers exploration of prose passages and poetry from the Edexcel IGCSE Anthology. The second task assesses candidates' ability to produce a creative writing response.

For English Literature, assessment will be based on a terminal examination (60%) and coursework (40%). There will be one exam paper, which will cover both unseen and anthology poetry, as well as modern prose (e.g. 'Of Mice and Men'). Students are required to write two coursework essays, one on a modern drama text (e.g. 'An Inspector Calls') and one on a Shakespeare play (e.g. 'Macbeth').

Candidates will be required to explore and practise the use of language in a variety of contexts and for a range of purposes, to interpret different kinds of writing (both fiction and non-fiction), and to study works of prose, poetry and drama, both from their own time and from earlier centuries. Students are encouraged to read beyond the specifications' set texts to broaden their understanding of the subject and to enable them to extend their vocabulary.

Both English Language and English Literature are single-tier courses and, as a result, students can obtain grades from 9-1, irrespective of their set.

English

core subjects – examined

Board: AQA

No Coursework

Mathematics is one of the core subjects at GCSE, and is designed to develop investigational and practical skills, as well as the traditional computational and manipulative processes, logical thought and abstract reasoning.

GCSE Mathematics covers the topic areas of Number, Algebra, Ratio, Proportion, Rates of change, Geometry, Measures, Statistics and Probability. The assessment of GCSE Mathematics is by terminal examination.

We follow the AQA GCSE linear syllabus. The three terminal examinations (one non-calculator), each of which count for a third of the final GCSE, seek to give the candidates plenty of opportunity to show what they understand.

Those entering the Fourth Form in 2025 will be placed into one of five sets according to their ability. In 2027, candidates will be entered for the tier which enables them to achieve the highest grade of which they are capable.

Students in sets 1, 2,3, and 4 will be entered at the highest tier which allows the most able to aim for grades 7 to 9. Students in set 5 will be considered for entry at the Foundation tier where a grade 5 is the maximum.

Students in set 1 who are on track to achieve a grade 8 or 9 in their GCSE may be given the opportunity to sit the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics; this is an extension to the GCSE course designed to stretch the most able students, resulting in a second mathematics qualification alongside the GCSE grade. This course is highly beneficial for any students considering A-level mathematics.

Mathematics

core subjects – examined

Board: AQA

Students at Bloxham School are taught Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate subjects. The expectation is that students in set 1 science will take separate science GCSEs and those in sets 2 to 5 will be entered for double award science. The year group is streamed by ability and is taught by subject specialists. The first part of the course has been covered in the Third Form.

The course aims to encourage students to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of science
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science
- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on science through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

All assessment is by way of written exam papers taken at the end of the Fifth Form. There is no internal assessment or coursework.

Assessment:

Separate Science:

Biology	2 x 1 hour 45 minute written exams
Chemistry	2 x 1 hour 45 minute written exams
Physics	2 x 1 hour 45 minute written exams

Double award Science:

Biology	2 x 1 hour 15 minute written exams
Chemistry	2 x 1 hour 15 minute written exams
Physics	2 x 1 hour 15 minute written exams

The papers are tiered. Higher tier covers grades 9-4 and foundation tier covers grades 5-1. In double award the grades are from 9-9 to 1-1.

Written exams are comprised of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

After the trial exams in the Fifth Form a decision will be made as to whether the double award candidates should sit the Higher or Foundation papers.

The Sciences

blocked subjects

Board: OCR

Coursework (100%)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

- Fine Art is defined here as the practice of creating work that is primarily for aesthetic, intellectual or purely conceptual purposes, rather than purposes that have a necessarily practical function.
- Students will explore, acquire and develop skills, knowledge and understanding through the application of techniques and processes.
- Students will explore practical and relevant critical and contextual sources such as the work of historical and contemporary fine artists and the different purposes, intentions and functions of fine art as appropriate to their own work.
- Students will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding through area(s) of study relevant to Fine Art exploring one or more of the following: Drawing • Installation • Lens-/Light-based Media • Mixed-media • Land art • Printing • Painting • Sculpture

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

- Developing essential creative, imaginative and problem-solving skills
- Visually communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings
- Investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative skills
- Understanding and the context of art in different cultures
- Improving practical skills, using a variety of artistic materials and media

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 Portfolio - 60% of total marks

After a period of teacher-led training, students produce a portfolio of practical work showing their personal response to a set starting point. Students must provide evidence that they have met all four assessment objectives of Develop, Refine, Record and Present.

Component 2 Externally Set Task – 8 weeks preparation, 10hrs exam - 40% of total marks

Students respond to one starting point from a choice of five set by OCR. Eight weeks preparatory period and 10 hours of supervised time. Set by OCR, centre-assessed and moderated by OCR.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

For the intellectually curious, creative and practically inclined students and those who are interested in exploring their imagination and experimenting with ideas through visual means and a broad range of media (Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, 3-D, Digital Art and Photography). Great value is placed on independent thought and the refinement of skills. Coursework is contained within lessons and prep times and backed up in holidays to gather sufficient resources/ first hand imagery.

Art

blocked subjects

Board: Edexcel

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Business Studies will be new to all students. Consequently, no prior knowledge is assumed or required. What is important is that you have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in finding out about business and finance and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively. A good standard of literacy and numeracy is an advantage.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

Business Studies is a subject that can help students to acquire the understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to the changing world of work. The course aims to develop a critical understanding of all aspects of business and how it operates, addressing questions such as:

- how are businesses owned, organised and controlled?
- what are, or should be, the aims and objectives of business?
- how can people in business best be managed, developed and motivated?
- how can products be made most efficiently and sold most effectively?
- what are the essential components of successful financial management?
- how can products be successfully marketed and sold to consumers?

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed through two 1 hour 45 minute written examinations, a mixture of extended writing and short answer questions requiring contextual analytical and evaluation skills. 20% of the assessment is Business Maths.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

This course will appeal to you if you:

- like doing a subject which is real, relevant and often practical
- enjoy following the news with what's going on in the world of business and finance
- appreciate the importance of being a responsible consumer, citizen and employee
- wish to develop your skills of communication, numeracy, analysis and evaluation.
- want to broaden your options, choosing a subject which can lead on to Sixth Form study or stand alone as a useful qualification for the future

Business

blocked subjects

Board: Cambridge International Examinations (iGCSE)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

“We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, in order to solve problems, we don’t even know are problems yet.” - Richard Riley. The most important aspect to consider is do you have the desire to understand how computers work, not just how to use them in a practical sense. Through this exploration you will gain a greater understanding of how they impact our daily lives and the “reach” that technology has. You will also need to be able to think logically to tackle the programming aspect of the course – think about whether you enjoy solving puzzles or logic-based questions.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

You will: -

- develop understanding of current and emerging technologies, an understanding of how they work and apply this knowledge to a range of contexts.
- acquire and apply knowledge, technical skills and an understanding of the use of algorithms in computer programs to solve programming problems.
- gain an understanding of computer technology to make informed decisions about its use and have awareness of the implications of different technologies.
- develop computer programs to solve problems and the skills to work collaboratively.
- evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs/solutions and the impact of and issues related to the use of computer technology in society.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed through two written examination papers, each worth 75 marks. Paper one covers the theoretical aspects of the course (Unit 1-7) and Paper 2 covers programming concepts and practical application. NB: no knowledge of programming is required, however, working understanding of Python or other high level programming language is advantageous.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

You will enjoy this course if you:

- want to prepare yourself for the upcoming developments in artificial intelligence and machine learning which will impact all jobs and everyone’s daily lives
- are someone who enjoys using technology and wants to know more about how it works
- want to become an expert user of computer systems
- wish to develop your creative, problem solving and teamwork skills

Computer Science

blocked subjects

Board: Cambridge IGCSE DT: Resistant Materials

NEA (50%), Examination (50%)

What do I need to know and be able to do before taking this course?

You should enjoy making things and be keen to learn how to design using the design process. To enjoy and succeed in the DT GCSE you need to be practical, good at problem solving, adaptable, creative, and willing to experiment.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

- Product Design/ the Design Process
 - Identification, Research, Design, Develop, Manufacture & Evaluation.
- Resistant Materials
 - Woods, Metals, Polymers, Composites, Smart & Modern Materials
 - Preparation, Marking, Shaping, Joining, Assembling & Finishing of Materials.

The course will be both practical and theoretical and will require you to:

- identify opportunities for problem solving through design/ manufacture.
- recognise the needs of potential users of the products you design and make.
- use a variety of research techniques and different strategies to develop ideas.
- present your design ideas through various communication techniques, including using computer aided design packages and sketching.
- make decisions, consider sustainability and combine skills with knowledge and understanding.
- plan practical projects, including the use of CAM processes and machinery where applicable.
- manufacture your ideas in a variety of materials using a variety of joining methods.
- test and evaluate your work.
- use a wide variety of tools and equipment appropriate to the materials you are working with.
- understand industrial processes and applications.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed on your ability to acquire and apply knowledge, skill and understanding

- The course compromises a coursework project and two exams at the end of the 5th Form.

Scheme of assessment

- Paper 1 – Design Paper: 25%
- Paper 3 – Resistant Materials Paper: 25%
- Component 2 - internally assessed design and make project started at the beginning of 4th form and completed by the end of the Michaelmas term in 5th Form - 50%

Design & Technology cont....

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

The Design and Technology: Resistant Materials course comprises a coursework project and two exams at the end of 5th Form. The DT syllabus enables students to identify, consider and solve problems through creative thinking, planning and design, and by working with different media, materials and tools. Students gain technical and design awareness as a result, and develop skills such as initiative, resourcefulness, enquiry and ingenuity. They also develop the communication skills central to design making and evaluation. Cambridge IGCSE Design and Technology provides an ideal basis for further study and prepares learners for their future within a rapidly changing technological society.

This course is appropriate for a wide range of students with a variety of interests and abilities. Those with artistic or creative talents will do well but this is certainly not essential. The students who are keen to learn and who can work hard over a sustained period during the continual assessment part of the course are always the most successful in this subject. If you have enjoyed design and technology in the past, it is likely that you will continue to do so at GCSE. If you are thinking you might suit a technical, creative or business career then this subject will give you a good grounding.

Design & Technology

blocked subjects

Board: EDUQAS

What do I need to know and be able to do before taking this course?

Drama lessons are not only for those who consider themselves to be confident actors as developing confidence is one important outcome of the course. Drama classes encourage transferable life skills such as public speaking, problem-solving and project management skills.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

In Drama we explore a variety of characters to develop empathy and creativity, and important social and communication skills. Team-work is an important element within all our drama classes and especially during devising original performances. We emphasise respect, trust, listening skills and problem solving. Script work (from traditional to contemporary theatre) is not only fun and interesting but, also, beneficial to reading, language and memory development. You will gain confidence in public speaking whilst developing presentation skills including diction, projection and eye-contact.

Careers using the skills we learn in Drama are wide ranging from those traditionally associated with theatre such as directors, producers, stage managers and agents to careers in politics, marketing and business. With design options also available we encourage everyone to involve themselves in school drama, whether through the GCSE or our extra-curricular activities.

How will I be assessed?

Components 1 and 2 have an exciting practical emphasis with 30% of the course assessed practically and another 30% assessed through written coursework. In the final written examination students express their opinions about a set text and live theatre, for which they are given close guidance and support to develop essay writing and critical analysis and evaluation skills. There will be several trips to see the best contemporary theatre. Recently there have been trips to the Warwick Arts Centre, the RSC in Stratford, the Oxford Playhouse and the National Theatre in London.

Component 1: Devising- 40%

Students create their very own production as an actor or designer based on a stimulus (15 marks) and record the creative process in a portfolio (30 marks) and evaluation (15 marks).

Component 2: Performance from text- 20%

Students will either perform in or design two key extracts from a performance text and this component is marked entirely on the performance alongside 400 words maximum of a Character Interpretation.

Component 3: Written Examination (1 ½ hours) - 40%

Students must practically consider the ways performers, directors and designers create impact and meaning through the elements of performance through a set-text and analysis and evaluation of a live theatre performance they have seen.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

This course is suitable for anyone who has an appreciation of theatre and who is driven by an ethos of creativity, energy, collaboration and fun.

Drama

blocked subjects

Board: OCR

Controlled Assessment: (35%)

Food preparation and planning task (15%)

Food investigation task (non-examined assessment) Examination (50%)

What do I need to know and be able to do before taking this course?

In this course students will learn an array of culinary techniques, as well as knowledge of nutrition, food traditions and kitchen safety. It will allow students to cook with confidence using ingredients from across the globe and to learn about career opportunities in the food industry.

What will I learn on this course?

- Food preparation and cooking
- Food Science
- Food safety
- Food choice
- Food provenance

The course will be both practical and theoretical, although most learning will take place in a practical applied manner:

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed on your ability to acquire and apply knowledge, skill understanding and ability to link information together.

There will be a number of practical tasks which form the non-examination assessment. These will require the student to both make and evaluate food.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

This course is appropriate for a wide range of students with a variety of interests and abilities. Those with creative talents will do well but this is certainly not essential it is more important to have a passion for food. The students who are keen to learn and who can work hard over a sustained period of time during the continual assessment part of the course, will be the most successful in this subject. If you have enjoyed Food in the past it is likely that you will continue to do so at GCSE. If you are thinking you might suit a career in food or catering then this subject will give you good grounding.

Food Preparation & Nutrition

blocked subjects

Board: Edexcel

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

You need to have studied French before in Key Stage Three. You need to be enthusiastic, hard-working and willing to learn.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

You will be learning a real-life skill and will develop the ability to use language effectively for practical communication, and to use language imaginatively and creatively. You will also develop further awareness of the nature of language and language learning, whilst acquiring the skills and attitudes which will form a sound basis for further study, work and leisure. You will learn to speak, listen and understand, read and write in French. You will also gain insights into the culture and traditions of the French-speaking world.

How will I be assessed?

You will have four examinations at the end of Fifth Form, each worth 25% of the GCSE grade. The examinations assess the following skills:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

You will need to be hard-working, resilient and interested in languages and other cultures (ie. the Francophone world).

French

blocked subjects

Board: Edexcel (IGCSE)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Geography GCSE is a three-year course, starting in the Third Form. Students new to the school may struggle with the amount of work needed to catch up.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

Physical Geography:

- *Hazardous Environments* includes such phenomena as volcanoes, earthquakes and tropical storms. Montserrat, Haiti, Christchurch and Katrina are amongst the case studies covered.
- *River Environments* looks at how water moves through the landscape, the landforms that rivers create and how people and industries use and manage water.
- Fieldwork-related questions on river environments (based on the skills and knowledge developed during a field trip to a local river).

Human Geography:

- *Rural Environments* examines global ecosystems, together with detailed case studies of farming and settlement in Oxfordshire and contrasted with such systems in lower income countries.
- *Urban Environments* investigates the growth of urbanisation over the globe before targeting detailed studies of Birmingham and a contrasting city such as Lima, São Paulo or Mumbai.
- Fieldwork-related questions on urban environments (based on the skills and knowledge developed during a field trip to an urban area).
- *Fragile Environments* looks at global issues such as desertification, deforestation and climate change.

Students are encouraged to supplement classwork with observations from home and holidays. They should also monitor places and events in the newspapers and on television, ideally as part of a family effort.

How will I be assessed?

The course followed is Edexcel (IGCSE) with 2 formal exams (no coursework):

Paper 1: Physical Geography, 1 hour 10 minutes, 40%

Paper 2: Human Geography, 1 hour 45 minutes, 60%

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

The course demands a mixture of factual knowledge, the understanding of processes and evaluation of contemporary issues related to geographical phenomena. Few students fail to master these requirements and interest is regarded as the key in selection of the subject. In return for hard work, geography candidates will gain a life-long interest and a variety of essential skills for deployment in all walks of life.

Geography

blocked subjects

Board: EDEXCEL (IGCSE)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

The GCSE course builds on some of the foundations covered in the Third Form, although much of the content taught at GCSE will be new to you.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

The course covers a mixture of World, European and British History from the year 1848, allowing you to gain a broader understanding of the events which have shaped the world in which we live.

Germany: Development of Dictatorship, 1918–45

- The Weimar Republic and its early problems, including the Kapp Putsch and the Spartacist uprising, the French occupation of the Ruhr and the causes and effects of hyperinflation..
 - The recovery of Germany, 1924–29. The rise of Hitler and the Nazis. The impact of the Great Depression, Nazi methods to win support including propaganda, violence and the SA.
 - Nazi Germany 1933–39. Setting up the Nazi dictatorship including the methods of Nazi control and their levels of success. Nazi racial policies and increasing persecution of Jews

Superpower Relations 1943-72

- Early developments in the Cold War, including Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe, the Berlin Crisis and the creation of NATO. The Korean War and the Warsaw Pact.
 - Reasons for the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the significance of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

East Germany 1958- 90

- The Berlin Wall crisis, 1958–63 The origins of the Wall – the refugee problem and its impact on the GDR. The impact of the Wall on East Berliners, security and escapes.
 - Stabilisation and control: The nature of state control, including the role of the Stasi, the extent of control of the young, religion and the church.
 - Life in the GDR –Daily life, including the provision of employment, housing, education and welfare. The changing role of women. Honecker and the development of a GDR identity; mass media; the importance of sport

Changes in Medicine c1848-1948

- Medical progress in the 19th Century; Nightingale, Chadwick, Snow. Dangers in surgery including pain, infection and bleeding; the impact of Simpson and chloroform.
 - Improvements in public health, including the cholera threat and the work of Snow.
 - Improvements in surgery science and medicine: blood transfusions, magic bullets. The impact of the First World War on improvements in medical treatment.

How will I be assessed?

There are 2 examination papers which include a mixture of short and longer response questions (the longest being 2 X 16 mark questions) some of which will require the assessment of sources.

Paper 1: Germany: Development of Dictatorship, Superpower Relations (1 hr 30 mins, 50%)
Paper 2: East Germanyn1958-90, Changes in Medicine (1 hr 30 mins, 50%)

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

You need to be interested in the past and willing to improve your ability to argue logically. You will need a reasonably efficient memory for facts, but no more than for most other subjects.

History

blocked subjects

Board: OCR (J281)

No Coursework

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Students will have studied Latin for approximately three years and reached a good level of proficiency. They should also have an interest in finding out about the ancient world.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

The study of Latin at GCSE level will provide candidates with an opportunity to study the language and literature of ancient Rome, and elements of the culture, language, social and political life of the Roman civilisation.

Areas of study include:

The Latin language

Latin texts in their original language

Students gain an overview of Roman history and civilisation, largely within the context of studying Latin texts, both original and adapted.

How will I be assessed?

Language: Candidates must sit one written language paper of 1 hour 30 minutes which is worth 50% of the total GCSE.

Learners will be expected to understand in detail and translate two pieces of unseen Latin text, one based around mythology or domestic life in ancient Rome and the other on a Roman historical subject. Candidates will also have to translate simple English sentences into Latin and identify the derivation of certain English words from the Latin.

Literature: Candidates must also sit two literature papers (prose and verse) each of 1 hour and each worth 25% of the total GCSE.

The verse component will usually be approximately 120 lines from Virgil's epic poem on the beginnings of the Roman Empire, the Aeneid. Sections from a variety of works may be studied for the prose element, for example Caesar's Gallic Wars, the Annals of Tacitus or works by Pliny the Elder or Younger. Learners will study the Latin texts and answer questions in English on aspects of content and analyse, evaluate and respond to the ancient literature they have studied.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

The course is suitable for students who are interested in languages and the ancient world. A knowledge of Latin will be particularly useful for those who pursue their study of a romance language (French or Spanish) or English to a high level.

Latin

blocked subjects

Board: AQA

Coursework (60%)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Who doesn't love music? Music is so powerful and means something to everyone. By studying GCSE Music, you join like-minded, passionate and hardworking students who love music as much as you do. You will broaden your own musical horizons by study a vast array of styles and genres, whilst developing new skills of composition and performance so you can express yourself and learn how music has changed over time. Students who have already reached about ABRSM Grade 3 and can read music will be at an advantage but Music lessons are available with specialist staff for those students who need get started – it is never too late.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

You will continue to build on the solid foundation of music in the Third Form through composing in styles that interest you, performing music you love and, most importantly, learning why you like it through exploring lots of different types of music. These skills can be applied to any piece of music you hear and you will enjoy the measurable and meaningful progress you make throughout the course.

Current set works studied in extra detail are amazing works from Queen including Bohemian Rhapsody, Seven Seas of Rhye and Love of my Life and the beautiful first movement from Beethoven's First Symphony.

You will learn in a very active way, with the opportunity to explore the music that interests you through listening, appraising, composing and performing. Ther are also regular trips to hear the wonders of live music too.

How will I be assessed?

60% Coursework which is marked in school, moderated by the exam board) and 40% exam.

Skills in composing, performing and understanding music are assessed in three ways:

Component 1: Exam - Understanding Music (40%)

This will take the form of a 90 minute exam asking you to describe previously unheard music using terminology learnt throughout the course as well as demonstrate your knowledge of one of your chosen areas of study from Popular Music, Modern Folk and Western Classical.

Component 2: Coursework - Performing (30%)

In this unit you will record one solo and one ensemble performance lasting a minimum of 4 minutes. This can be recorded at any point throughout the two year course. It is then internally marked and externally moderated.

Component 3: Coursework - Composing (30%)

You will need to submit two compositions for this unit. One inspired by a given brief from the exam board and another which is your own choice. These are then internally marked and externally moderated.

Music

blocked subjects

Board: OCR

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Students should have a keen interest in sport and be of a competent playing standard.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

Physical Education GCSE is an exciting and wide-ranging course that provides students with an engaging option through a variety of assessment methods. The course is split between 60% exam-based assessment and 40% practical and controlled assessment. Paper one focuses on anatomy and physiology and physical training, with paper two looking into socio-cultural issues and sports psychology. Students will then be required to be assessed in three practical sports in the form of two individual and one team sport or two team and one individual. Finally, students will be asked to conduct a written analysis of a performance.

The course prepares students to study PE on our A-level or BTEC courses in the sixth form.

How will I be assessed?

40% = Practical Performance in three different activities including One Performance Analysis Task

60% = Two written examinations - each lasting one hour

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

The course is suitable for students who are interested in sport and are practically competent in three sports. Students who enjoy playing sport or have an interest in any aspect of sport, generally prosper on this course.

Physical Education

blocked subjects

Board: AQA

No Coursework

Fourth and Fifth form students will be prepared for the AQA full course GCSE in Religious Studies. This course was examined for the first time in summer 2018. Students will sit two 1hr 45 minute papers, one on the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam, and the other on Themes in Philosophy, Ethics and Textual Studies. There is no coursework element.

Religious Studies introduces students to many skills and ways of thinking that underpin work they will do in other subjects, at A level and beyond. Critical thinking, study of ideas and texts, analysis and evaluation of views and beliefs, and the application of knowledge and ideas to real situations and people, all help to prepare students for more mature and adult ways of looking at the world they live in, the sources that influence human thinking, and the people around them in a multicultural society. We call the subject “Theology” in school because we focus on academic aspects of the subject rather than religious or confessional teaching.

The main areas of study are:

Section A: Christianity & Islam

- Beliefs and teachings of Christianity
- Practices of Christianity
- Beliefs and teachings of Islam
- Practices of Islam

Section B: Thematic Studies

- Religion and life
- The existence of God and revelation
- Religion, Peace and conflict
- Religion, Crime and Punishment
- Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice

Religion, Philosophy, Ethics

blocked subjects

Board: Edexcel

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

You need to have studied Spanish before in Key Stage Three. You need to be enthusiastic, hard-working and willing to learn.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

You will be learning a real-life skill and will develop the ability to use language effectively for practical communication, and to use language imaginatively and creatively. You will also develop further awareness of the nature of language and language learning, whilst acquiring the skills and attitudes which will form a sound basis for further study, work and leisure. You will learn to speak, listen and understand, read and write in Spanish. You will also gain insights into the culture and traditions of the Spanish-speaking world.

How will I be assessed?

You will have four examinations at the end of Fifth Form, each worth 25% of the GCSE grade. The examinations assess the following skills:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

You will need to be hard-working, resilient and interested in languages and other cultures (ie. the Hispanic world).

Spanish

blocked subjects

Board: OCR

Coursework (100%)

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

- Textile Design is defined as the creation of designs and products for woven, knitted, stitched/printed fabrics and involves an understanding of fibres, yarns and fabrics.
- Students will explore, acquire and develop skills, knowledge and understanding through the application of techniques and processes specific to their chosen area(s) of study of Textile Design.
- Students will explore practical and relevant critical and contextual sources such as the work of historical and contemporary textile designers and the different purposes, intentions and functions of textile design as appropriate to their own work.
- Students will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding through area(s) of study relevant to Textile Design.

What will I learn on this GCSE course?

- Developing essential creative, imaginative and problem-solving skills
- Visually communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings
- Investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative skills
- Understanding and the context of art in different cultures
- Improving practical skills, using a variety of artistic materials and media working in one or more of the following:
 - Constructed textiles
 - Digital textiles
 - Dyed fabrics
 - Printed fabrics
 - Fashion design
 - Installed textiles
 - Soft furnishings
 - Stitched and/or embellished textiles

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 Portfolio - 60% of total marks

After a period of teacher-led training, students produce a portfolio of practical work showing their personal response to a set starting point. Students must provide evidence that they have met all four assessment objectives of Develop, Refine, Record and Present.

Component 2 Externally Set Task – 8 weeks preparation, 10hrs exam - 40% of total marks

Students respond to one starting point from a choice of five set by OCR. Eight weeks preparatory period and 10 hours of supervised time. Set by OCR, centre-assessed and moderated by OCR.

For what kind of student is this course suitable?

For the intellectually curious, creative and practically inclined students and those who are interested in exploring their imagination and experimenting with ideas through visual means and a broad range of media. Great value is placed on independent thought and refinement of skills. Coursework is contained within lessons and prep times and backed up in holidays to gather sufficient resources/first hand imagery.

Textiles