

Long Close School

Year 9

OPTIONS 2021-2023



Contents

Welcome

General Information

Making Decisions

Frequently Asked Questions

Breakdown of Controlled Assessment and Exam Percentages

Changes to GCSE Assessment

The English Baccalaureate

Entry Requirements to popular VIth Form Destinations

What will the work be like at GCSE?

Options Form

Core Subjects

English Language & Literature

Mathematics

Science

Option Subjects

Art

Business Studies

Computer Science

Design Technology

Geography

History

Modern Foreign Language: Spanish

Music

Religious Studies

Welcome

Welcome to the 2021 Options process for Year 9.

It is at this time of year our pupils need to be considering their subject choices for next year, when they enter Year 10. This is both an exciting and important time for pupils as they start to think about the subjects they wish to study for the next two years.

Each year we review the Options that are available to our pupils to ensure we offer the best choice possible. As you go through the booklet you will find information about the core subjects and each option subject.

Our aim is to enable our pupils to follow a programme of study which develops their talents, aptitudes and interests so that by the age of sixteen they will feel confident and ready to make the next step forward.

We are fully committed to supporting all of our pupils and parents in this options process. The purpose of this booklet is to ensure that every pupil is given the best chance of success and is able to make an informed choice.

There is lots of information to digest in this booklet but if you would like to know more or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards



Mrs L Fragoso
Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator

Dates for your information

Year 9 Options Evening : 11th March 2021

Deadline for submission of Options Forms : 26th March 2021

General Information

The Core Curriculum

Your courses will involve you studying the following **compulsory subjects**

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Biology
Chemistry
Physics

Option Choices

You will have the opportunity to study **four** further subjects to be chosen from:

Art, Business, Studies, Computer Science, Design Technology, Geography, History, Music, Religious Studies and Spanish.

In making this choice you should aim to keep a good balance of subjects as well as using them to follow particular interests or strengths. Serious consideration should be given to the mix of knowledge, skills and understanding required by different combinations of subjects. It is also important to leave your options open for further study.

Continued study of a Modern Foreign Language

The study of a Modern Foreign Language is not compulsory at Key Stage 4. However, the Russell Group which represents 24 leading universities often look back at GCSE grades as the basis for making an offer. All pupils should therefore carefully consider the value of selecting a Modern Foreign Language to study. This will play a crucial role if you are planning to follow an academic route to study at a traditional university.

At LCS we believe that to be successful in the modern global economy our pupils will need to have a grasp of as many languages as possible. This will give pupils the flexibility that employers now demand in order to compete against job applicants from other countries; they will be able to cross linguistic and cultural boundaries, entertain clients, market goods and travel or relocate easily.

In summary, all pupils are encouraged to continue with the study of a language. We would encourage any pupil with an aptitude for languages to study that language at GCSE, but this is not compulsory.

Making Decisions

The decisions you make in Year 9 are important because they control the next two years of your school life and can have consequences for what you go on to do after your GCSEs. In Year 9 you will have to decide which subjects you want to focus on for the next two years. Some subjects are compulsory but others are for you to decide; your Options. Because you are studying fewer subjects, the ones you choose can be studied in greater depth.

Our expectation is that most Senior School pupils will leave LCS with a minimum of 9 GCSE's. Our highest priority therefore is to guide our pupils towards studying Option subjects where they can succeed. The guidance we will offer is based on a variety of indicators:

- Prior attainment
- MidYIS data
- Subject teacher recommendations and reports
- Attitude, behaviour, work ethic and homework record

The most important factors that will decide how well you do in a specific subject are your motivation, your resilience, your effort, your organisation and your determination to do well.

You need to ask your self some searching questions:

What are your passions?

The subjects you are best at are normally the ones that you are passionate about. Think about the subjects you enjoy studying and why. Do they bring out your creative side? Is it other languages or cultures that you love? Or maybe you are the sort of person who is inquisitive and are curious about fundamental scientific processes, whatever your thing, choose subjects that inspire and motivate you.

The future

Although the choices you make are very important do not worry too much about the future. Many people at your age are unsure about what they want to do as a career choice, so just remember to choose a balanced set of subjects you enjoy.

Totally confused?

If you are totally confused and you do not know where to start, why not speak to the people that will be teaching you? They will let you know what the lessons involve and you will be able to see if it is for you. Remember though, think about what is best for you.

Before you make your final decision ensure that you:

- ✓ Take into account prior levels of attainment
- ✓ Take into consideration the different types of assessment and examination for each subject
- ✓ Consider all the subjects that you enjoy and that you are interested in, you are more likely to succeed in these
- ✓ Read about the subjects in this booklet
- ✓ Discuss your choices with your parents
- ✓ Consult with subject teachers if you are not sure about the requirements of a subject
- ✓ Try to keep a broad range in the subjects you choose, so that you keep future career options open
- ✓ Be realistic about the subjects which suit you

You should also ask yourself these questions:

- ? Are they subjects that I will enjoy studying the most?
- ? Have I chosen a good variety of subjects?
- ? Can I cope with the subjects I have chosen to examination level?
- ? Are they a suitable preparation for the kind of career I would like?

Other considerations

- X Do not choose a subject because you think it is easy. The requirements for all subjects at GCSE change. All GCSEs are now more demanding and rigorous in their content
- X Do not choose a subject because your friends have chosen it. The groupings may change
- X Do not choose a subject because you like the teachers; they may change in Year 10 and Year 11

Changes to GCSEs

The government has introduced a number of changes to the GCSE qualifications including significant changes to the structure of most subjects. English and Mathematics started teaching new courses in September 2015. Geography, History, Science, Art and Music commenced the delivery of new courses in September 2016.

At the heart of the reforms is a change to the controlled assessment element and the change to numerical grades 9 – 1.

The new grades are being brought in to signal that GCSEs have been reformed and to better differentiate between pupils of different abilities. Therefore, not only will GCSE content be more challenging, fewer grade 9s will be awarded than A*s.

The table below shows how the new 9 to 1 grades will equate to the old A* to G grades.



Grading new GCSEs

New grading structure	Former grading structure
9	A*
8	A
7	A
6	B
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
1	G
U	U

Details of all GCSE syllabuses can be found on the following websites:

www.aqa.org.uk

www.edexcel.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

Changes to GCSE Assessment

In addition to changes to the way in which GCSEs are graded, there have been a number of changes to the way in which examinations will be assessed. These include:

- Tiering will be used only for subjects 'where untiered papers will not allow students at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able'.
English Literature and English Language will be untiered.
Maths will be tiered with an 'improved overlapping tiers model', with a foundation tier covering grades 1–5 and a higher tier covering grades 4–9. This is the same with all three sciences.
- Linear GCSEs, with assessments to be taken at the end of the course in May and June.
- Re-sit opportunities in November for English Language and Maths only.
- Assessment by external exam only, except where non-exam assessment is the only way to provide valid assessment of the skills required.
- English Language to have a Speaking assessment that will be reported separately.
- Introduction of marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in some subjects.

Prior to the reforms to GCSEs, most courses involved some element of controlled assessment. However, the vast proportion of GCSEs will be assessed by written examination alone. Below is a chart with percentage figures for each subject, this is to help you when choosing your options.

Break down of non-examined assessment and written examination

OPTION SUBJECT	Percentage Exam	Percentage of non-examined assessment
Art	40%	60%
Business Studies	100%	-
Computer Science	100%	-
Design Technology	50%	50%
Geography	100%	-
History	100%	-
Music	40%	60%
Religious Studies	100%	-
Spanish	100%	-

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which subjects should I choose?

Choose the ones that you enjoy, do well in, that interest you or may be useful to you in a future career or further study. Remember however, that even if you think you know what you would like to do, you may change your mind. Try and ensure you aim for a balanced approach in your choices. Make choices that give you the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects and in doing so you will develop a wide range of skills. It is important to remember, however, that the material that you cover in a particular subject in Years 10 and 11 may well be quite different from that which you covered in Year 9. For this reason, it is very important that you do some research and reading into exactly what each GCSE entails.

2. Do I have to study a language?

Our Options choices encourage the continued study of a language (Spanish) at GCSE. Pupils considering future applications to the more competitive universities should certainly include a language as part of their final option choices.

3. Why do some do Combined/Separate Science and how is this decided?

Our system has been devised to help pupils achieve the best possible grades in science while still ensuring all pupils receive the educational benefit of the study of all three sciences. In Years 9 and 10 all pupils will follow the same syllabus (Separate Sciences). At the end of Year 10, after internal assessments, a decision will be made regarding which pupils have the aptitude to continue to study three separate sciences (leading to three GCSEs in Science). Pupils will need to demonstrate consistent performance across two years of study in order to be selected for Separate Sciences. Pupils that regularly achieve low attainment and pupils that are deemed unable to cope with the high content demand will be selected to continue their science studies on the Combined Science course (leading to two GCSEs in Science).

4. Are some subjects more valued than others?

All subjects are highly valued and a balanced profile which demonstrates creative, linguistic, scientific and mathematical skills will impress. It is unlikely that GCSE subject choices will preclude any pupil from any future courses but advice should be sought if in doubt.

5. What happens if too few pupils opt for one subject?

Unfortunately, in the event that a GCSE course is undersubscribed we reserve the right to withdraw the course for that academic year. This is dealt with on a one to one basis. Pupils and their parents will be kept informed at all times.

6. Do pupils have to follow a course at GCSE to be able to take it at A Level?

Pupils of suitable aptitude may be accepted for some A Level subjects in sixth forms even if they have not covered the GCSE course in Years 10 and 11.

7. What if I change my mind?

The timetable is planned well ahead and it is usually impossible to make changes once the curriculum has started, so it is very important that you choose carefully. We will try and reconsider the choices you make if we feel they are not in your best interests or if you change your mind. We do not consider changes in option groupings appropriate once the Key Stage 4 curriculum has commenced.

Frequently Asked Questions

8. Will I have a better chance of applying to the top Universities if I study additional GCSE subjects?

No. Universities are far more interested in the quality of qualifications achieved than the quantity. Grades at GCSE and A-level, rather than the number of subjects that pupils study, are seen as a more accurate predictor of ability to study a University course. The basic expectation nationally is that pupils study 8 GCSEs and the new government performance measures (Attainment 8 and Progress 8) are all based on the idea that this is the norm.

9. Do I need to study particular subjects if I wish to follow a particular career?

For entry to some professions, it is important to have the right academic qualifications. Those wishing to enter disciplines such as medicine or engineering, for example, would be strongly advised to opt for three sciences. However, for entry to many degree courses and professions, it is not a requirement to have studied any particular subjects.

Most pupils in Year 9 probably do not have clear ideas about the degree subject they would like to study, or the type of career they would like to pursue. You certainly should not worry if, at this stage, you have little idea about what you would eventually like to do – indeed, many of those who think they know at this stage what they want to do often change their minds (sometimes several times) before finally deciding what to study at university and which career to pursue.

The best advice, therefore, is probably to ensure that you make a sensible choice that does not rule out particular careers that you may be considering, but which leaves enough flexibility to allow you to change your mind later. Above all, you should ensure that you play to your strengths by selecting subjects which you enjoy and at which you are good. Remember that the most important thing for most pupils is to get good GCSE grades, rather than GCSEs in particular subjects.

The English Baccalaureate

What is the EBacc?

The English Baccalaureate is a performance measure which was introduced into school league tables in 2011. It is not a qualification in itself. The measure shows where pupils have achieved a grade 5 or better across a core of academic subjects: English, Mathematics, two Science subjects, a Modern Foreign Language and a Humanity, defined as being either History or Geography.

The Purpose of the EBacc

One purpose is to reverse a perceived trend in pupils taking non-academic qualifications which the government feel do not carry real weight for entry to higher education or for getting a job. Another purpose is to encourage more pupils to take core subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages, History, or Geography at Key Stage 4 as they are considered to be academic subjects.

The EBacc and LCS

The government wants the EBacc to become the default for pupils, with the exception of a small minority of pupils for whom it is not appropriate. There is no compulsion for pupils to take the full range of EBacc subjects at LCS although, of course, Mathematics, English and Science are compulsory. However, we do not know the future implications of the EBacc for places in Higher Education, Apprenticeships or other training opportunities and jobs. Universities may use it as a factor in allocating scarce places in the future and it is likely to be very popular with employers. If your subject teacher feels that you are capable of achieving a minimum grade 5 or above in the range of EBacc subjects we advise you to consider this route.

Entry Requirements for popular Sixth Form Destinations

Whatever subjects pupils eventually choose, we encourage each individual to achieve his or her best. Academic excellence and high progression rates into either a grammar school or Sixth Form for further study continue to be our ultimate aim. Below are the minimum entry requirements for some of our popular destinations.

School/College	Minimum Entry Requirements
Herschel Grammar School	Minimum of 7 GCSEs grades 9 - 6
Langley Grammar School	Minimum of 7 GCSEs grades 9 - 6
St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School	Minimum of 7 GCSEs grades 9 - 6
The Langley Academy	Minimum of 6 GCSEs grades 9 - 5
Upton Court Grammar School	Minimum of 7 GCSEs grades 9 - 6
The Westgate School	Minimum of 6 GCSEs grades 9 - 5
Slough and Eton CofE Business and Enterprise College	Minimum of 6 GCSEs grades 9 - 5

Pupils should consider that most grammar schools **require a minimum grade 7** in the subjects to be continued with at A level.

In most instances for continued study of a science, pupils will be required to obtain **grade 7 or above**.

Pupils will be required to achieve **grade 6 or above** in English and Mathematics for entry.

What will the work be like at GCSE?

There is a strong emphasis on independent learning at GCSE. This means that you will have to work outside the classroom with less input from the teacher. You will be set homework for each subject every week for approximately one hour.

The workload will intensify and it is important therefore that you have developed good work habits, can meet deadlines and do not leave work to the last minute. You will continue to build upon the study skills that you have acquired over the first three years at LCS to enable you to achieve your full potential.

We expect you to:

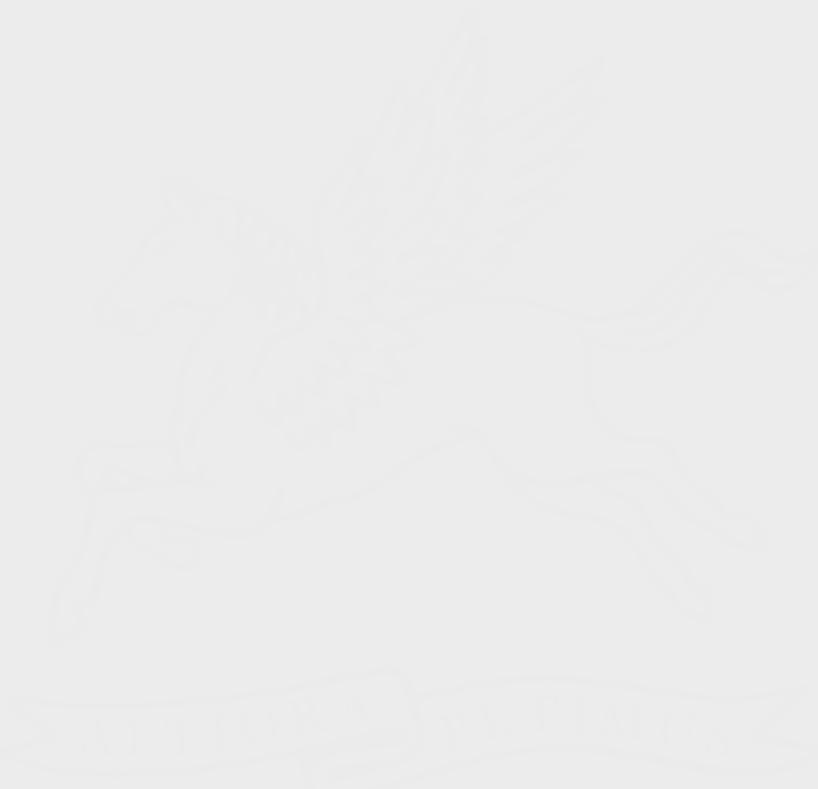
- Enjoy positive working relationships with your teachers and other pupils;
- Attend school and all lessons regularly, and be active in catching up on work missed when absent;
- Meet homework deadlines enabling subject teachers to assess your progress;
- Begin to use your personal time for researching topics more widely;
- Organise your time and resources effectively;
- Ensure you review your learning regularly and study independently.

Remember: Your courses are linear. This means that you will take all the external examinations at the end of the course (Summer 2023).

How important are GCSE grades?

GCSE grades are very important because they form part of your CV, which is with you for life. University admissions tutors and employers examine the grades and qualifications very closely before making any offers of courses or employment.

Core Subjects



English Language

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: English Language 1ENO

Course Description

English in Years 10 and 11 aims to enable students to use a wide variety of written and spoken language confidently and appropriately, and to read English Literature with enjoyment and appreciation. Students will be involved in an integrated programme combining reading, writing, talking and listening.

Students will draw upon a range of texts as reading stimulus and engage with creative as well as real and relevant contexts. Students will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes.

This specification will ensure that students can read fluently and write effectively. Students will be able to demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and write grammatically correct sentences, deploying figurative language and analysing texts.

For GCSE English Language students should:

- read fluently, and with good understanding, a wide range of texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as reviews and journalism
- read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts
- summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts
- use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken Standard English effectively.

GCSE English Language is designed on the basis that students should read and be assessed on high quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Each text studied must represent a substantial piece of writing, making significant demands on students in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. The texts, across a range of genres and types, should support students in developing their own writing by providing effective models. The texts must include literature and extended literary non-fiction, and other writing such as essays, reviews and journalism (both printed and online).

Further details of the specification can be found here:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/English%20Language/2015/specification-and-sample-assessment/GCSE-2015-EngLang-Iss4.pdf>

English Literature

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: Literature 1ETO

Course Description

For English Literature students should develop the following skills:

Reading comprehension and reading critically:

- literal and inferential comprehension: understanding a word, phrase or sentence in context; exploring aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings; distinguishing between what is stated explicitly and what is implied; explaining motivation, sequence of events, and the relationship between actions or events
- critical reading: identifying the theme and distinguishing between themes; supporting a point of view by referring to evidence in the text; recognising the possibility of and evaluating different responses to a text; using understanding of writers' social, historical and cultural contexts to inform evaluation; making an informed personal response that derives from analysis and evaluation of the text
- evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, grammatical and structural features: analysing and evaluating how language, structure, form and presentation contribute to quality and impact; using linguistic and literary terminology for such evaluation
- comparing texts: comparing and contrasting texts studied, referring where relevant to theme, characterisation, context (where known), style and literary quality; comparing two texts critically with respect to the above Written Response
- producing clear and coherent text: writing effectively about literature for a range of purposes such as: to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate; discussing and maintaining a point of view; selecting and emphasising key points; using relevant quotation and using detailed textual references
- accurate standard English: accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar

For the GCSE English Literature Examination all assessments are closed book and texts may not be taken in to the exam. Any stimulus materials required will be provided as part of the assessment. All assessments are compulsory.

In preparing for the unseen poetry section of the examination, students should experience a wide range of poetry in order to develop their ability to analyse unseen poems closely. They should be able to analyse and compare key features such as their content, theme, structure and use of language.

Students will be provided with new copies of the set literature texts '*A Christmas Carol*' (Charles Dickens), '*An Inspector Calls*' (J B Priestley) and '*Romeo and Juliet*' (William Shakespeare). The Cost of these will be added to the fees. The Poetry Anthology is provided free of charge by the exam board.

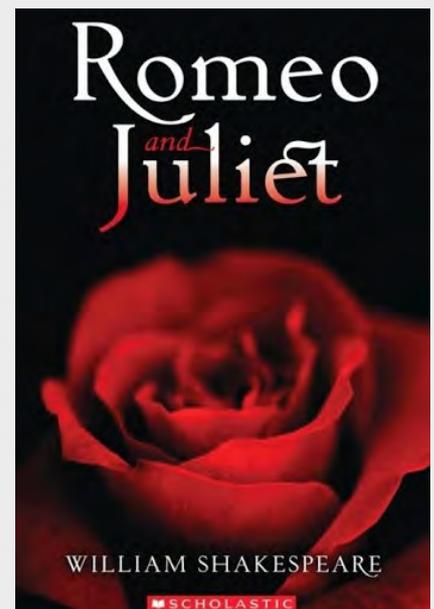
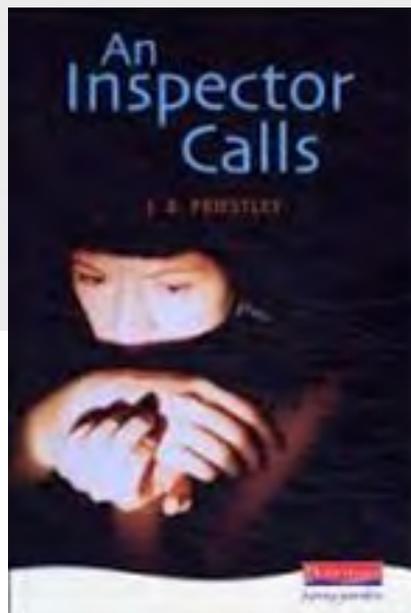
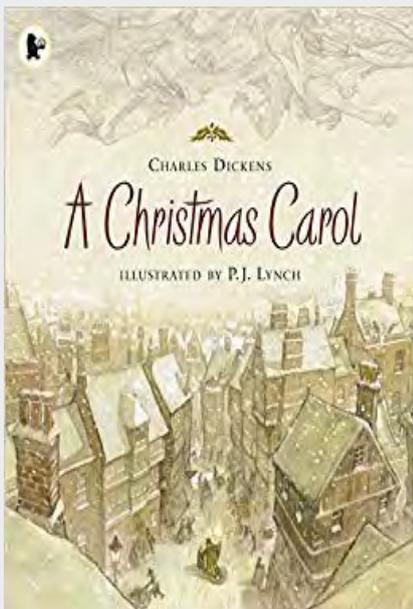
Further details of the specification can be found here:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/English%20Literature/2015/specification-and-sample-assesment/9781446914359_GCSE_2015_L12_Englit.pdf

Modes of assessment

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	
Paper 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing	External written examination: 1 hour 45 Minutes. • 40% of GCSE
Paper 2: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing	External written examination: 2 hours 05 Minutes. • 60% of GCSE
Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language	Set and marked by teacher • separate endorsement 0% weighting of GCSE

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE	
Paper 1: Shakespeare and Post 19th Century Literature	External written examination: 1 hour 45 Minutes. • 50% of GCSE
Paper 2: 19th Century Novel and Poetry since 1789	External written examination: 2 hours 15 Minutes. • 50% of GCSE



Mathematics

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: IMA1

Course Description

The current Mathematics GCSE syllabus was introduced in 2015. The qualification aims and objectives of the Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) in Mathematics are to enable students to:

- develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems
- reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions
- comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Modules to be studied

Tier	Topic area	Weighting
Foundation	Number	22-28%
	Algebra	17-23%
	Ratio, Proportion and Rates of change	22-28%
	Geometry and Measures	12-18%
	Statistics & Probability	12-18%
Higher	Number	12-18%
	Algebra	27-33%
	Ratio, Proportion and Rates of change	17-23%
	Geometry and Measures	17-23%
	Statistics & Probability	12-18%

The Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9 to 1) in Mathematics is a tiered qualification. There are two tiers:

- Foundation tier - grades 1 to 5 available
- Higher tier - grades 4 to 9 available (grade 3 allowed).

The assessment for each tier of entry consists of three externally-examined papers, all three must be from the same tier of entry.

Paper 1	No calculator	1 hour 30mins	33.3% of examination
Paper 2	Calculator	1 hour 30mins	33.3% of examination
Paper 3	Calculator	1 hour 30mins	33.3% of examination

Science

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8464/8461/8462/8463

Course Description

Separate Sciences: Biology (8461), Chemistry (8462) and Physics (8463)

In Years 9 and 10 all pupils will follow the same syllabus (Separate Sciences). At the end of Year 10, after internal assessments, a decision will be made regarding which pupils have the aptitude to continue to study three separate sciences (leading to three separate GCSEs in Science). Pupils will need to demonstrate consistent performance across two years of study in order to be selected for Separate Sciences. Pupils that regularly achieve low attainment and pupils that are deemed unable to cope with the high content demand will be selected to continue their science studies on the Combined Science course (8464), leading to two GCSEs in Science. Regardless of which science course a pupil undertakes, all pupils will cover the same topics in all three scientific disciplines.

Modules to be studied

BIOLOGY	CHEMISTRY	PHYSICS
Cell biology	Atomic structure and the periodic table	Forces
Organisation	Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter	Energy
Infection and response	Quantitative chemistry	Waves
Bioenergetics	Chemical changes	Electricity
Homeostasis and response	Energy changes	Magnetism and electromagnetism
Inheritance, variation and evolution	The rate and extent of chemical change	Particle model of matter
Ecology	Organic chemistry	Atomic structure
	Chemical analysis	Space Physics
	Chemistry of the atmosphere	
	Using resources	

Assessment for Combined Science award

There are six written papers of 1hr 15 minutes each: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers is worth 16.7% of the final grade and will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas. Written papers are offered at both Higher tier (4-9) and Foundation tier (1-5).

Assessment for separate sciences

There are six written papers of 1hr 45 minutes each: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers is worth 50% of the final grade and will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas. Written papers are offered at both Higher tier (4-9) and Foundation tier (1-5).

Option Subjects



Art and Design

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1FAO Fine Art

Course Description

Art and Design equips students with the skills to enjoy, produce and engage with the visual arts throughout their lives, and it has immense value as a GCSE subject.

GCSE Art and Design provides the opportunity for students to:

- explore both contemporary and historical sources of art, craft and design first hand through
- take an individual approach to their art, craft and design making
- develop the skill of selecting their best and most appropriate work for presentation

Content and assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Art and Design consists of two internally assessed and externally moderated components.

Component 1: Personal Portfolio (internally set) 60% of the qualification

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment 40% of the qualification

Component 1 consists of a personal portfolio students create in response to two separate themes. Students develop and explore their ideas, research primary and secondary sources, experiment with different mediums and the aim is to produce a final outcome at the end of each project. Students are assessed on four Assessment Objectives (AO).

Component 2 consists of a 10 hour exam that will be completed in the summer term of Year 11. The externally set assignment (ESA) is released on 2nd January each year and students spend the time between this and their exam responding to the theme and following the same assessment objectives (AO) as their previous projects. During the 10-hour period of sustained focus under examination conditions, students will work unaided to produce personal response, with reference to their preparatory studies, in response to the ESA set theme. All work is internally marked, and then externally moderated at the end of Year 11.

Assessment Objectives

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

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

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

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

There are many skills, techniques, materials, processes and concepts that are essential to all areas of study in Fine Art. In addition to any specialist requirements listed under the chosen area(s) of study, students should develop a practical knowledge and understanding of:

- The use of formal elements and visual communication through a variety of approaches
- The use of observational skills to record from sources and communicate ideas
- Characteristics of media and materials such as wet and dry, malleable, resistant and digital
- Properties of colour and light such as hue, tint, saturation and tone
- The effects and creative potential of combining and manipulating different two dimensional and three-dimensional materials and media
- The use of digital and/or non-digital applications.



Business Studies

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J204

Course Description

GCSE Business equips learners with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect business decisions. It is a well-rounded introduction to the subject. The qualification will encourage learners to make informed choices about a wide range of further learning opportunities and career pathways as well as develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware. The course is divided into topics, each covering key concepts of business. Through studying GCSE Business, pupils' gain business knowledge, understanding and skills. They begin to understand current events in local, national and global contexts. They learn how to use relevant terms, concepts and methods effectively to describe business and economic behaviour. Pupils also consider business ethics and the impact of business on the environment.

Modules to be studied

The units include the following topics:

- Business activity
- Marketing
- People
- Operations
- Finance
- Influences on business
- The interdependent nature of business

The syllabus is designed to enable pupils' to develop:

1. An interest in business and entrepreneurial skills.
2. Connections between theory and practice so that learners are able to apply their understanding of business to real organisations.
3. An informed approach that will help learners to evaluate choices and decisions about their own future working lives.
4. Confidence in using both qualitative and quantitative data to make business decisions.

"The true entrepreneur is a doer, not a dreamer"

– Nolan Bushnell

Modes of assessment

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
Business activity Marketing People	Business 1: business activity, marketing and people (01) 80 Marks 1 Hour 30 Minutes paper	50% of total GCSE
Operations Finance Influences on business The interdependent nature of business	Business 2: operations, finance and influences on business (02) 80 Marks 1 Hour 30 Minutes paper	50% of total GCSE

Why consider GCSE Business?

A GCSE in Business demonstrates that you have an understanding of the world of work and of different types of businesses. You will gain skills that are essential to your future employment and life long learning in our increasingly technological world, whichever career you choose. OCR Business uses a variety of real business contexts to consider issues and challenges facing entrepreneurs and commercial organisations. Pupils' have the opportunity to develop as enterprising individuals with a practical set of key skills, including problem solving and decision-making, interpreting and analysing data, and more.

Studying business instils the character of teamwork in a pupil since all business concepts require coordination of people to achieve the desired purpose. This enhances communication skills of the pupil through creating business documents and presenting business ideas to the class. Lastly, studying business enables the learner to understand how countries and economies function which is critical to being an informed citizen.

“Success in business requires training, discipline and hard work.”

- David Rockefeller

Computer Science

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1CP2

Course Description

Computer Science opens doors to your future. The course is designed to give you an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on behind the screens.

The Computer Science qualification has a straightforward structure with six comprehensive topic areas, assessed through two externally-examined papers. One of these is a written paper focused on computational thinking, data, computers, networks, and issues and impact of computing in the world today. The other is a practical onscreen assessment, which focuses on the ability to analyse and solve problems by designing, writing, testing and refining programs.

Modules to be studied

- Paper 1: Principles of Computer Science
- Paper 2: Application of Computational Thinking

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation
- analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs
- think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- understand the components that make up digital systems and how they communicate with one another and with other systems
- understand the impact of digital technology on wider society, including issues of privacy and cybersecurity
- apply mathematical skills relevant to computer science.

“Everybody in this country should learn how to program a computer because it teaches you how to think.”

- Steve Jobs

Modes of Assessment

Paper 1
Principles of Computer Science
Paper code: 1CP2/01

✓ 75 marks ⌚ Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
⚖️ 50% of the qualification

Content overview
This paper will assess Topics 1 to 5.

Computational thinking - understanding of what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work; ability to follow, amend and write algorithms; ability to construct truth tables.

Data - understanding of binary, data representation, data storage and compression.

Computers - understanding of hardware and software components of computer systems and characteristics of programming languages.

Networks - understanding of computer networks and network security.

Issues and impact - awareness of emerging trends in computing technologies, and the impact of computing on individuals, society and the environment, including ethical, legal and ownership issues.

Assessment overview
This paper consists of five compulsory questions, each one focused on one of the topic areas. The questions consist of multiple-choice, short-, medium- and extended-open-response, tabular and diagrammatic items.

Paper 2
Application of Computational Thinking
Paper code: 1CP2/02

✓ 75 marks ⌚ Practical onscreen examination: 2 hours
⚖️ 50% of the qualification

Content overview
This paper will assess Topic 6: Problem solving with programming.

The main focus of this paper is:

- ✓ understanding what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work in relation to creating programs
- ✓ understanding how to decompose and analyse problems
- ✓ ability to read, write, refine and evaluate programs.

Assessment overview
This paper is practical in nature and requires students to design, write, test and refine programs in order to solve problems. Students will complete this assessment onscreen using their Integrated Development Environment (IDE) of choice. They will be provided with:

- ✓ coding files
- ✓ Assessment Reference Language (ARL) – as an insert in the question paper and an electronic version.

Students should then answer the six compulsory questions onscreen using Python 3.

Essential Requirements

Due to the course content it is expected that pupils will have obtained a **minimum 9 Embedded** at the end of year 9 to cope with the demands of this course.

Why consider GCSE Computer Science?

You have grown up in a world where technology is evolving rapidly and changing the way people work in every area from medicine and fashion to engineering and economics. It's no exaggeration to say the world runs on computers.

GCSE Computer Science explores the principles of digital technology and the way of working that's called 'computational thinking', with coding as a core of the course. You've got to be able to think logically, solve puzzles and be tenacious when the going gets tough. But it is also really creative and you'll get a real buzz out of getting something to work yourself, especially when programming.

Pupils have the opportunity to bring innovation and creativity to their learning, and build their knowledge of existing and future technological developments, where skills can be transferred into further education.

"There's a good part of Computer Science that's like magic".

- Hal Abelson

Design Technology

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1DT0

Overview

The GCSE in Design and Technology enables students to understand and apply iterative design processes through which they explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes. The qualification enables students to use creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes (together with evidence of modelling to develop and prove product concept and function) that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. It gives students opportunities to apply knowledge from other disciplines, including mathematics, science, art and design, computing and the humanities.

Students will acquire subject knowledge in design and technology that builds on Key Stage 3, incorporating knowledge and understanding of different materials and manufacturing processes in order to design and make, prototypes in response to issues, needs, problems and opportunities. Students study theory content in Year 10, then spend the summer term creating a mini-project based on a previous contextual challenge in preparation for their coursework in Year 11. Students focus on their coursework in Year 11 and produce a portfolio in response to their chosen contextual challenge. The portfolio is very much student-led with limited input from the teacher. Students need to be able to problem solve and work independently.

Students should develop an awareness of practices from the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Through the critique of the outcomes of design and technology activity, both historic and present day, students should develop an understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world and understand that high-quality design and technology is important to the creativity, culture, sustainability, wealth and wellbeing of the nation and the global community.

Aims

- Demonstrate their understanding that all design and technological activity takes place in contexts that influence the outcomes of design practice
- Develop realistic design proposals as a result of the exploration of design opportunities and users' needs, wants and values
- Use imagination, experimentation and combine ideas when designing
- Develop the skills to critique and refine their own ideas while designing and making
- Communicate their design ideas and decisions using different media and techniques, as appropriate for different audiences at key points in their designing
- Develop decision-making skills, including the planning and organisation of time and resources when managing their own project work
- Develop a broad knowledge of materials, components and technologies and practical skills
- To develop high-quality, imaginative and functional prototypes
- Be ambitious and open to explore and take design risks in order to stretch the development of design proposals, avoiding clichéd or stereotypical responses
- Consider the costs, commercial viability and marketing of products

Scheme of Assessment

Students are assessed in two components:

Component 1: is a written exam paper. This is comprised of a core content section (**section A**) where your child will be expected to learn general knowledge about all aspects of design technology. This is worth 40 marks. The second section of the exam paper, (section B) is a materials specialism. Your child will be expected to specifically learn '**Papers and Boards**' for this materials specialism section. This section of the exam paper is worth 60 marks.

Component 2: is a coursework project where your child will choose a contextual challenge question set by the exam board. They will need to investigate (16 marks), design (42 marks), make (36 marks) and evaluate (6 marks) their product. Their product will need to be made from the material specialism of '**Papers and Boards**'.

Each component is 50% of the overall GCSE grade.

Suitability

The students who have enjoyed Design and Technology lower down the school and have an aptitude for making things will thrive on this course. Students who are considering Design Technology need to be able to sketch and generate design ideas, so an interest in drawing is beneficial. Please note, there is a focus on studying theory-based content for the component 1 exam, which has a focus on mathematics. It is expected that pupils will have obtained a **minimum 9 Embedded** at the end of Year 9 to cope with the demands of this course.

Geography

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8039

"Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future"
- Michael Palin

Course Description

This exciting and relevant course studies geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them. Pupils will travel the world from the classroom, exploring case studies in High Income Countries (HICs) such as the UK, Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) such as India and Lower Income Countries (LICs) such as Haiti. Topics of study include Climate Change, Poverty, Deprivation, Global Shifts in Economic Power and the Challenge of Sustainable Resource Use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

Modules to be studied

Living with the physical environment	The Challenge of Natural Hazards (Tectonics, Weather) Physical Landscapes in the UK (Rivers/Coasts) The Living World (Rainforests/Deserts)
Challenges in the human environment	Urban Issues and Challenges The Changing Economic World The Challenge of Resource Management (Food/ Water/ Energy).
Geographical applications	Issue evaluation and two fieldwork enquiries. One trip to Amersham and one trip to the Olympic Park in London.
Geographical Skills	Cartographic skills, graphical skills, numerical skills, statistical skills, use of qualitative and quantitative data, formulate enquiries and argument and literacy.

Modes of Assessment

Paper 1- Living with the physical environment	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes	35%
Paper 2- Challenges in the human environment	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes	35%
Paper 3- Geographical applications	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes	30%

Why consider Geography for GCSE?

- Universities and employers consider Geography to be an academic subject. It is highly valued by the Russell Group of universities which include Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Bristol.
- You will be taught using a variety of styles including ICT, kinaesthetic learning, role play and debates.
- Geography is an entry point to many careers, for example: town and transport planning, chartered surveying, land and water management, sustainability, environmental consultancy, development, tourism, conservation, demography, housing and social welfare, administration and management, tourism, finance, marketing, research, and industry and manufacturing .
- The majority of geographers choose careers which make use of their transferable skills. These include information technology, numeracy, statistics, data analysis, written and verbal communication skills.
- Geography combines well with a wide variety of other subjects.
- Geography is a current living subject, taught through up to date case studies and examining world issues.
- GCSE Geography includes two fieldwork opportunities.



History

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: GCSE History (9-1)

Course Description

The aims of the course are to develop pupils' interest in and appreciation of the past going beyond the simple learning of dates. GCSE History aims to inspire pupils and help them gain an insight into events and ideologies which have shaped the world we live in today. History is an enquiry into why people in the past have acted in the way they have done and the consequences and significance of these actions.

Modules to be studied

Medicine Through Time 1200-1990
Anglo-Saxon and Norman England
The Cold War
Weimar and Nazi Germany

Medicine Through Time: Paper 1

In studying the content of the course students should understand how key features in the development of medicine were linked with the key features of society in Britain Between 1200 and 1990.

They should develop an understanding of the nature and process of change. This will involve understanding patterns of change, trends and turning points, and the influence of factors inhibiting or encouraging change within periods and across the theme. The key factors are: individuals and institutions (Church and government); science and technology; and attitudes in society.

They should also understand how factors worked together to bring about particular developments at particular times.

Anglo-Saxon and Norman England: Paper 2

Key topic 1: Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest, 1060–66

Key topic 2: William I in power: securing the kingdom, 1066–87

Key topic 3: Norman England, 1066–88

The Cold War: Paper 2

Key topic 1: The origins of the Cold War, 1941–58

Key topic 2: Cold War crises, 1958–70

Key topic 3: The end of the Cold War, 1970–91

Weimar and Nazi Germany: Paper 3

Key topic 1: The Weimar Republic 1918–29

Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

Key topic 3: Nazi control and dictatorship, 1933–39

Key topic 4: Life in Nazi Germany, 1933–39

Modes of assessment

Paper 1	Medicine Through Time	Written examination	1 hour 15 mins	30% of examination
Paper 2	Anglo-Saxon and Norman England	Written examination	1 hour 45 mins	40% of examination
Paper 3	Weimar and Nazi Germany	Written examination	1 hour 20 mins	30% of examination

Essential Requirements

The ability to organise and communicate historical knowledge and understanding and reach substantiated judgments is an essential requirement of this course. The new specification places a greater emphasis on understanding and evaluating different historical interpretations. Pupils are also expected to show they are able to analyse and critically evaluate contemporary source material.

Due to the emphasis on written work it is expected that pupils will have reached **Year 9 Embedded + as a minimum** requirement to cope with the demands of this course.

Why consider History for GCSE?

History is highly regarded as an academic subject.

It will teach you how to read critically and think independently.

You will learn how to analyse and assess a wide variety of viewpoints and complex situations.

It encourages you to construct logical, well-supported arguments which are vital skills.



Spanish

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8698

Course Description:

The aim of the course is to develop and promote effective understanding of, and communication in, the foreign language, as well as an appreciation for and understanding of the cultures in which the language is spoken. The syllabus encourages an understanding of key grammar and syntax, as well as the exploration and enjoyment of new cultures.

Modules to be studied:

Theme	Topics
Identity and culture	Me, my family and friend
	Technology in everyday life
	Free-time activities
	Customs and festivals in Spanish speaking countries/communities
Local, national, international and global areas of interest	Home, town, neighbourhood and region
	Social issues
	Global issues
	Travel and tourism
Current and future study and employment	My studies
	Life at school/college
	Education post-16
	Jobs, career choices and ambitions

GCSE Spanish has a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four

Skill	Assessment Overview		
Listening	Written exam: 35 minutes (Foundation Tier) 45 minutes (Higher Tier)	40 marks (Foundation Tier) 50 marks (Higher Tier)	25% of GCSE
Speaking	Non-exam assessment	60 marks (for each of Foundation Tier and Higher Tier)	25% of GCSE
Reading	Written exam: 45 minutes (Foundation Tier) 1 hour (Higher Tier)	60 marks (for each of Foundation Tier and Higher Tier)	25% of GCSE
Writing	Written exam: 1 hour (Foundation Tier) 1 hour 15 minutes (Higher Tier)	50 marks (Foundation Tier) 60 marks at Higher Tier	25% of GCSE

There is an emphasis on our students mastering the course content in order to become proficient linguists. So that our students can achieve this, they are also taught how to become effective language learners. Students will also be given an opportunity to develop their creative skills through role play. All of our pupils are encouraged to respect different cultures by learning more about them.

Our students will be expected to develop an independent learning approach in order to learn a language. A very wide range of vocabulary and structures must be committed to memory.

Why Choose a Language?

- In order to attain the English Baccalaureate standard, students need to achieve a grade '5' or higher in a Modern Foreign Language.
- Languages complement a wide range of subjects. At University, the study of a foreign language can be paired with engineering, the sciences, film and media, drama, law, politics, marketing – the possibilities are endless!
- There are many other careers where a language can be successfully combined with another skill, apart from careers such as interpreting, teaching and translating.
- In an ever increasingly multi-cultural society, the number of people in the job market who speak more than one language is continuing to rise. By committing to learning a modern foreign language at school, our students are ensuring that they can compete on a more equal footing.
- Human resources managers of 2,700 companies across 10 industries were questioned about their perception of language skills. More than half (54 per cent) said they were more likely to employ a person who speaks more than one language and, more significantly, pay them more. The languages most needed were French, Spanish, German and Italian. (The Independent)
- Hotels and restaurants take about 4 per cent of language graduates, but business services take about 27 per cent.
- The universities admission service lists more than 7,000 language degree courses on its website.
- Employers say qualities they value in language learners include problem-solving, team working and presentation skills.
- Look no further than the local job market to see the demand for languages in today's workplace.
- Travel abroad can be much more interesting when you can speak the language of the country you are visiting.

What Language options are available for me in Slough after Long Close?

All the grammar high schools in the Berkshire area offer A 'Levels Spanish. In addition, some high schools and Strode's and Windsor colleges are a great place to study and prepare for your next step into university, employment or further study.

Music

Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas

Specification: WJEC Eduqas Music

Course Description

The WJEC Eduqas specification encourages an integrated approach to the three distinct disciplines of performing, composing and appraising through four interrelated areas of study:

1. Musical Forms and Devices
2. Music for Ensemble
3. Film Music
4. Popular Music

Component 1: Performance - 30% of the total marks

Students are required to perform a minimum of **two** pieces of which have a total playing time of between 4-6 minutes. At least one of these performances must be as part of an ensemble performance lasting at least one minute. The other piece(s) may be performed either solo and/or as part of an ensemble. One piece must be linked to one of the four areas of study. The use of music technology and improvisation is accepted within both solo and ensemble performances.

Component 2: Composition - 30% of the total marks

Students must submit **two** compositions with a total playing time of between 3-6 minutes.

1. A composition which responds to a brief set by WJEC. The brief will be released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. Students select one from a choice of four briefs, each related to a different area of study
2. A free composition. Students will compose a piece of music in a style of their own choice, having set their own brief for this composition. The brief itself is not assessed; however, students are assessed on their musical response to the brief.

Component 3: Written Examination - 40% of the total marks

The appraising examination will consist of eight questions, two on each area of study. Of the eight questions, **six** will be on unprepared musical extracts and **two** on extracts set by WJEC which relate to **two** areas of study. The unprepared extracts played in the examination will be from the genres, styles or periods specified within each area of study. The majority of questions in the examination will be either multiple choice or short answer questions. However, there will be one question which requires students to write a longer response to a piece of music.

Prior Requirements

- You should be able to play a musical instrument or sing. Ideally, you should already have lessons on your instrument. You can aim to start an instrument in Year 10, but you'll have to work hard.
- The ability to read music well is not essential before you start the course as we will look at this in some detail at various points.

Why consider Music for GCSE?

GCSE Music will help students:

- Develop performing skills individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control of the resources used.
- Broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity.
- Develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians.
- Develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds.
- Engage with and appreciate the diverse heritage of music, in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.
- Develops team-working skills through performing with others.

Music demands:

- Physical and mental skill
- Nerve
- Memory recall
- VERY good listening skills
- Musical ability
- The ability to read some sort of notation (tab for guitarists)
- Groupwork ability (as a core part is group work and if you can't work with a group you simply will not pass)
- Practising time and dedication.

Religious Studies

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1RB0

Content and Assessment Overview

This qualification is linear, which means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics (*Paper code: 1RB0/1A – 1G)

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes
50% of the qualification
102 marks

Content overview

Students must study all four content sections based upon their chosen religion.

- Beliefs
- Marriage and the Family
- Living the Religious Life
- Matters of Life and Death

Assessment overview

Students must select one religion from a choice of seven (Catholic Christianity, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism). The studied religion must be different for each Area of Study chose:

- Students must answer all questions.
- The assessment consists of four questions.
- The paper may include short open, open response and extended writing questions.
- The paper will assess spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) and use of specialist terminology and these will contribute a minimum of 5% of marks towards the overall weighting for this paper.

Students must select a different religion for each Area of Study that they follow. Students who select Catholic Christianity for an Area of Study are not permitted to select Christianity for their second Area of Study and vice versa.

Students must complete all assessment in May/June in any single year.

Area of Study 1 – Christianity

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world, and its beliefs and teachings on life, specifically within families, and with regard to matters of life and death.

There are four sections: Christian Beliefs, Marriage and the Family, Living the Christian Life and Matters of Life and Death.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs, issues and practices to Christians today should be explored throughout the sections. This should include reference to how the Bible informs a Christian's understanding of the topics and how approaches to the issues are underpinned by philosophical arguments and ethical theory as applicable.

Students will be expected to study Christianity within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian. Students should recognise that Christianity is one of the many religions and world views in Great Britain, which include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and non-religious views such as Humanism and atheism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content.

Students should compare and contrast two areas of belief and practice within Christianity with one of either Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, or Sikhism:

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance
- The practice and significance of worship

Area of Study 2 – Islam

Overview

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Islam as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world, and its beliefs and teachings on life, specifically about the issues of peace and conflict, and crime and punishment.

There are four sections: Islamic Beliefs, Crime and Punishment, Living the Muslim Life and Peace and Conflict.

The significance and importance of the various beliefs, issues and practices to Muslims today should be explored throughout the sections. This should include reference to how the Qur'an informs a Muslim's understanding of the topics and how approaches to the issues are underpinned by philosophical arguments and ethical theory as applicable.

Students will be expected to study Islam within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian. Students should compare and contrast the areas of belief and practice within Islam with Christianity as outlined in the content below.

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance
- The practice and significance of worship

Options Form

GCSE OPTIONS CHOICE FORM

NAME:	FORM:
-------	-------

The core subjects English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics must be studied by all pupils.

From the subject list below indicate which options you would ideally like to continue to study:

Art Business Computer Science Design Technology
Geography History Music Religious Studies Spanish

Enter your first choice and two reserves in the table below

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
FIRST CHOICE				
RESERVE 1				
RESERVE 2				

Although we do our very best to offer a wide range of option choices for all our pupils we **cannot guarantee** their availability. The most likely reason for this includes that one of their choices has not recruited enough people for the course to run. Certain choice combinations may cause subject clashes which cannot be timetabled for a particular individual. Pupils reserve choices will be taken into consideration.

Once the timetable blocks have been designed pupils will be asked to make their final choices.

Signed (Parent) Date:

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR FORM TUTOR BY FRIDAY 26th MARCH 2021