

-GCSE-

Course Guide

2026-2029

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GCSE options

Advice for students

In the first two years of your senior education at Pipers you have studied a wide range of subjects. You have had the opportunity to find out what different subjects entail and where some of your skills and strengths lie.

We are now asking you to start thinking about which subjects you wish to continue to study at GCSE level. This is a good point in your school career for you to focus more on what you want to learn and which subjects will be most useful to you as you build towards your chosen career area, by choosing to study some subjects in more depth. This means that in Year 9 you will learn study skills in what we call a pre-GCSE year. Although you won't start studying towards your GCSEs in most subjects, you will be taught the subject specific skills and learning habits that are needed to succeed when you do start your GCSE courses in Year 10.

You may already have an idea of the career you wish to follow or no idea at all. For this reason it is a very good idea to keep your options open at this stage and pick a broad range of subjects that allow you to take different routes at the end of Year 11.

As well as taking the core GCSEs of English, Mathematics and two Science subjects, you need to choose four optional subjects resulting in a total of nine GCSE. In addition, you will follow a non-examination programme in PE, Religion and Worldviews and Life Skills.

This booklet provides information about all the subjects on offer for the next three years to help you to make your choices.

Try to make sure that you:

- include any subject required for a career in which you already have a firm interest
- choose subjects which you enjoy and in which you have reached a good standard
- discuss possible choices with your family and your teachers

Remember that a broad range of subjects will give you a sound foundation for later study and provide greater choice and flexibility in the future. This is about your future and not about which subjects your friends are studying or which teachers you like. Even if you pick the same subjects as your friends you may not be in the same class and we cannot guarantee which teachers will take each class from year-to-year – you must have a real interest in the subject.

We strongly recommend that you consider taking a broad selection of option choices so that you do not reduce the options available to you at A Level and beyond. It is sensible to consider a Humanities and/or Social Science subject, and a language alongside the practical and creative subjects.



Core GCSEs, Options and Grades



Core subjects

taken by all students

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Two Sciences

Choose between Biology,
Chemistry and Physics

Option Subjects

Choose 4 from the list of subjects below

Art and Design Fine Art
Art and Design Textiles
Business
Dance
Design and Technology
Drama

Food Preparation and Nutrition
French
Geography
German
History
ICT

Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Spanish
Third Science

Grading structure

Grading 2017 onwards	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
Grading pre-2017	A*	A		B	C		D	E	F	G

Making the right choices

In order to help streamline the process of completing GCSE option choices, we use an online system. As well as reducing the possibility of paper options forms being mislaid between home and school, the choices that are made will feed straight into our timetabling software.

When making decisions, you should ask yourself questions such as:

What subjects do I enjoy?

What career do I want to follow?

What will I be studying?

How is the course assessed?

At this stage in your academic careers, you will need support and guidance. Following the GCSE Information Evening you will receive a link to the online booking system. We ask that you enter four choices of subject, in order of preference, that you would be happy to study.

Our aim is to tailor our option blocks so that all students' choices can be accommodated. It is very unusual for this not to be achieved; however, if there are any problems with your choices it will be discussed with you prior to the timetable being finalised.

The deadline for option choices
6 March 2026



Resources for families

If you would like more inspiration about different jobs and careers in order to help with decisions about Options choices, we recommend using the following information websites:

Parent Portal

More information about subject specification

Morrisby

Digital platform for careers education

Prospects

Graduate job search and career advice

BBC Bitesize Careers

Advice on the world of work from people who've found the right path for

Which University Guide

Career advice and information for your future

National Careers Service

Government website

Beyond the classroom

You will be continually supported throughout the GCSE curriculum, both in and out of lessons.

For those students who want to be challenged and stretched academically, super-curricular activities will be encouraged. These additional activities focus on your subject in more depth, enriching your knowledge and understanding beyond the assessed curriculum. Studying nine GCSEs affords you the time to engage in both extra-curricular and super-curricular activities which are becoming increasingly more valuable to university applications and employers, whilst also having a significant impact on your overall wellbeing and development as learners and thinkers.

If you find that you need some additional support in any of your subjects, we hold lunchtime surgeries and clinics for many GCSE subjects to help develop knowledge and confidence in the topics that we cover. Staff are always happy to discuss any worries or concerns you may have about your studies.

Information for parents

You will notice that within the subject information given in this booklet, we make reference to specification content, exam structures and examination boards. When students approach their Year 10 GCSE studies we will provide further, detailed information about the particular examination board and specifications that Departments have chosen.

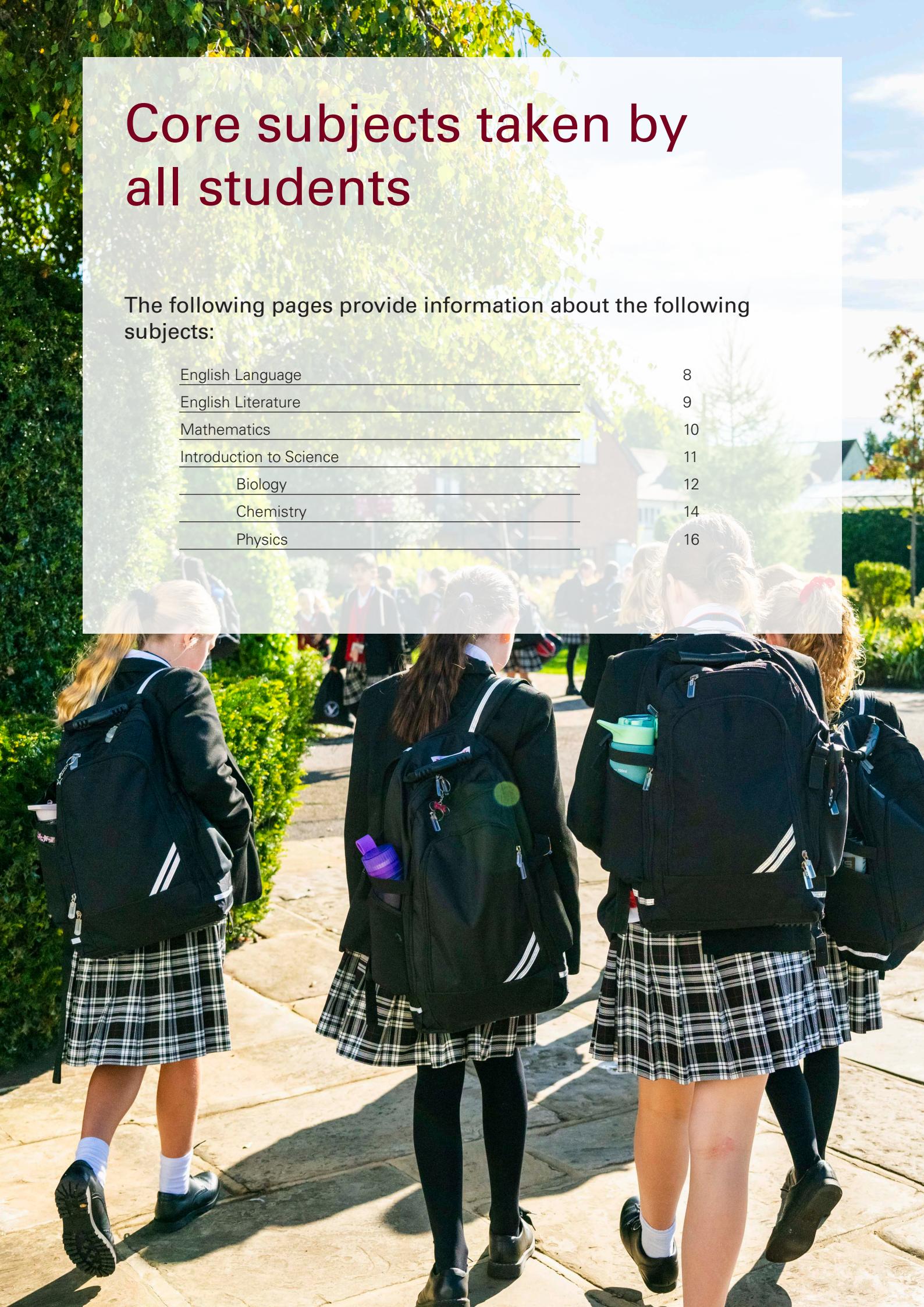
Therefore, at this stage, we would advise you to encourage your child to pick a programme of study that has depth and range and to ensure they choose a subject that they both enjoy and have shown an aptitude for.



Core subjects taken by all students

The following pages provide information about the following subjects:

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Chemistry	14
Physics	16



English Language

Edexcel IGCSE

(Specification A)

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

In English Language, we develop our powers of reading, to read closely, and writing, to achieve power for our words. In 2026, can there be anything more important?

As Malala Yousafzai often says, words are our most powerful tools. They are, also, if necessary, weapons. They move, inspire, persuade, console, transcend, articulate more than shards of bombs and only gather power through the centuries. They allow time travel. They allow us to sit at a table with the greatest thinkers and artists and protestors, and join in the discussion. Appreciating words will allow you to be heard in the House of Commons, from a podium, at the mic in Trafalgar Square... in a letter. Words and English class are the answer to "I know what I mean... I just can't say it" and "I just don't think my ideas are good enough" or, worse, "I haven't got anything to say".

Through the English Language IGCSE we look at writing across the genres of fiction and non-fiction and across the ages, gender and opinion and from different continents. We look at how writers shape language and its effects. We look at the artistry and purpose behind the writing which may not always be obvious. We train to be critical thinkers. We practise writing for genre, audience and purpose, looking at the artistry and how to write for greatest effect whether it be expository, creative or persuasive. We practise using language skills in our speaking to be able to enrich our expression and articulation, to convey our ideas powerfully. We work on enriching our understanding of current events, themes and questions which arrive in our world from different perspectives. There is no single story.

In the pre-IGCSE year (Year 9), we practise the skills in each area of reading, writing and speaking in the form students will take in the IGCSEs using the same marking criteria as the IGCSEs. Each English Language class will be different. You will be exploring language with your teacher as a guide, someone who loves the journey and sharing it with you. The course includes a separate Certificate in Spoken Language which is generally completed in Year 9. This Award does not affect the IGCSE score, and is awarded on a Pass, Merit, Distinction basis. Skills in Spoken Language are, of course, highly-prized in Higher Education and career settings and we work to have our students achieve the highest grades in this vital skill.

Year 9 is a continuing introduction to GCSE level literary texts, such as The Crucible, or Wilfred Owen, and GCSE levels of thinking and writing.

English Literature

Edexcel IGCSE

Coursework ← → Examination



Subject
Specifications

Why do we read? What makes something literature? What do you think about your thinking about other people's thinking? From the pre-IGCSE year of Year 9, we begin to move towards understandings of these questions.

Why is this piece of writing held as part of the world's heritage and one of the most valuable of creations by a human being? Why might another piece of writing be judged of less value globally and historically? Judged by whom? We look at poems, plays and prose writing that are held up as being of great value, some of which are seen as world changing. We work to a greater appreciation and understanding of the power and artistry of great writing from past centuries, different continents and cultures and our world today. We question our and others' thinking? What might different perspectives be? How can we do as Atticus says, and walk in others' shoes? We work to demonstrate the intellectual power and enjoyment of studying and experiencing the literature people have created. We aim to write powerfully and with convincing thinking about the literature we study. Through this we show that we can articulate our thoughts through fine appreciation of imagery and structure, the paintings we paint with words: precision, authority and flair. We read to know we are not alone.

Through literature, we discuss the pains and joys of being human, and increase our empathy of issues in the world and history. English is one of those classes where there can be moments of dead silence. Connections are made. And a great deal of hilarity floating through the classroom doors.

People often comment that English Literature, and as an A Level, are "only good if you want to be an English teacher". I have it on the authority of decades of talking to parents in all academic and professional spheres, who value English Literature highly, even in Oxbridge science courses, that they value students and employees who can think, read and write critically at A Level, and who have such a range of empathetic experiences and cultural references. It is a heavyweight, "enabling" subject for any career.

English class is perhaps the ultimate dinner party, where the most powerful voices in human history are invited to sit around the classroom table, your student with them, learning how to listen, think and articulate their voices with the best of them.

Mathematics

Pearson Edexcel 4MA1F/4MA1H

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

Through studying Mathematics, you will develop knowledge, skills and understanding of methods and concepts including number, algebra, geometry, measures, probability and statistics.

You will all continue to study Mathematics for the next three years, moving onto the IGCSE course at the start of Year 9. The Mathematics you study will be a continuation and extension of what you are already doing in Year 8. Some of the work you do will strengthen the foundations of your mathematical knowledge, whilst some of the highest level work will teach you the valuable techniques to prepare you for further study in Mathematics and Science at A Level.

The examination will be graded using the 9-1 scale, where 9 is the top mark (there is no coursework for Mathematics). There are two tiers of entry, Higher and Foundation, and you may enter for one tier only. Foundation tier candidates can obtain grades 1-5, whilst Higher tier candidates can obtain grades 3-9.

In addition, more-able students will have the opportunity to study Further Mathematics. This is a Level 2 qualification and is particularly valuable to those students wishing to continue studying Mathematics at A Level.



Introduction to Science

Science is about understanding the world—how things work, how they're made, and how they interconnect. It underpins everything we do, from solving global challenges like climate change to developing life-saving medicines."

All three sciences are linked. Biology utilises Chemistry to explain molecules, Chemistry uses Physics to understand atoms, and physics draws from Biology in fields like health and technology. Together, they provide tools to address the world's challenges and improve lives. Taking all three science disciplines at GCSE keeps your options open and provides more opportunities to explore science further in the future.

Encouraging students to pursue science brings diverse perspectives to engineering and innovation, fostering inclusive approaches to global problems. Their contributions are both a moral imperative and essential for driving progress in science and technology.

Studying science also develops critical skills like scientific literacy, problem-solving and analytical thinking. These skills help you understand global issues like climate change and healthcare, evaluate evidence and make informed decisions. Practical skills gained through experiments teach creativity in solving problems, while logical reasoning helps navigate the complexities of modern society. These abilities are invaluable in any career and everyday life.

Science isn't just about facts; it's about exploration and discovering how the world works through experiments.



Key Information

You have to pick a minimum of two sciences (You cannot follow the subject at A Level if you have not chosen it at GCSE).

We recommend three if you wish to pursue a science-focused career as taking only two could limit your future choices. Taking all three sciences takes up one of your option choices.

We would encourage young aspiring scientists to talk to their teacher or the Head of Careers if you need advice.

Biology

AQA 8461

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

By studying Biology you are learning about a fascinating and ever-changing field. The breakthroughs that are being made in areas such as genetics and medicine make Biology one of the most exciting industries to work in.

GCSE Biology provides you with an understanding of the core principles that allow life to exist. You will become familiar with the workings of individual cells and how they are assembled to form tissues and organs. You will learn about infectious disease and how it can be controlled and you will also examine how energy is transformed by cells through photosynthesis and respiration. As the course progresses you will learn how we inherit our characteristics in set patterns and how we control our bodies through hormones and our nervous system, as well as studying the interactions between species and the steps that we can take to conserve them.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9 we cover the following topics:

Cells, tissues and organs, Transport in and out of cells, Enzymes, food and digestion, the circulatory system and breathing, transport in plants, non-communicable disease and communicable disease.



What type of student would Biology suit?

GCSE Biology is perfect for students who are curious about the natural world and how living organisms function. If you are fascinated by life processes, from how cells work to how ecosystems interact, this subject will ignite your interest further. Ideal students are those who enjoy scientific inquiry, asking questions, and exploring concepts like genetics, evolution, and human health. A strong student for GCSE Biology is someone who enjoys practical experiments, problem-solving, and analysing data to understand how life works. It is a great choice for students who are methodical and keen to pursue a career in fields like medicine, environmental science, research, or biotechnology. With its blend of theory and hands-on learning, GCSE Biology suits students who love to connect the science they learn with the world around them.

What are the key skills required?

The subject will help you to develop a range of transferable skills. These include mathematical and presentational skills as well as ability in written communication. Biology will also help to develop your analytical and organisational skills.

- **Practical skills** | Conducting experiments, using lab equipment and following scientific methods
- **Data analysis** | Interpreting data from experiments, creating graphs and drawing conclusions
- **Attention to detail** | Observing and recording precise measurements and results in experiments
- **Problem-solving** | Applying knowledge to solve biological problems or explain observations
- **Scientific writing** | Communicating findings and explanations clearly
- **Memory and recall** | Remembering key biological terms, processes and systems
- **Time management** | Organising study and revision effectively to cover all topics
- **Teamwork** | Collaborating with others during practical activities or group discussions
- **Critical thinking** | Ability to analyse biological information, make connections and evaluate evidence



Where can GCSE Biology take you?

GCSE Biology opens the door to a host of exciting opportunities and many of our students go on to study A Level. There are a wide variety of careers in which you can make use of your biological knowledge. You could study crime scenes as a Forensic Scientist, discover the next vaccine or explore the oceans as a Marine Biologist. Jobs such as Physiotherapy, Professional Athletes and Personal Training typically require a knowledge of Biology.

You would specifically need Biology A Level for degree courses in Medicine, Biology, Biomedical Sciences, Dentistry, Dietetics and Veterinary Sciences. Biology is usually required or recommended for courses in Environmental Science, Biochemistry, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Pharmacy, Speech Therapy and Sports Science.

Chemistry

AQA 8462

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

Chemistry brings all aspects of the physical sciences together. Everything you see, hear, smell, taste and touch involves chemistry and chemicals (matter).

This broad and complex subject helps us to understand the world in which we live and opens up a range of science-based degree courses and careers. Chemical scientists lead research on the world's most pressing issues, including challenges around human health, climate change, space exploration and energy. All this and more... and no other subject offers more bubbles, bangs and changes of colour!

GCSE Chemistry can open up a world of opportunities allowing you to delve deeper into the workings of the world around you whilst building your observational, analytical and problem solving skills which greatly improve employability. Whether you dream of becoming a doctor, a chef, or an engineer, Chemistry equips you with valuable skills essential for success in any field.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

The chemistry GCSE content delivered in Year 9 typically covers a range of fundamental topics, laying the groundwork for more complex concepts in subsequent years. Key areas include Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table, Bonding, Structure, and the Properties of Matter, Quantitative Chemistry and Organic Chemistry.



What type of student would Chemistry suit?

Students who thrive in GCSE Chemistry often demonstrate a combination of these qualities:

Inquisitive Minds | A strong sense of curiosity about the world around them, a desire to understand how things work and a willingness to explore and ask questions.

Analytical and Problem-Solving Skills | The ability to break down complex concepts, identify patterns, and approach challenges with a logical and systematic mindset.

Mathematical Aptitude | A solid foundation in mathematics is beneficial for understanding chemical equations, calculations, and interpreting data.

Practical Skills and Observation | Enjoying hands-on experiments, demonstrating care and attention to detail in lab work, and the ability to follow instructions accurately.

Effective Learning Strategies | Developing strong memory and recall skills, and finding effective ways to learn and retain information.

Clear Communication | The ability to explain ideas and concepts clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing.

It is important to remember that these are general traits, and everyone learns differently. With dedication, a supportive learning environment, and effective study habits, any student can succeed at GCSE level.



Where can GCSE Chemistry take you?

Scientific degrees will usually require at least two Science subjects at GCSE and A Level – often the same subject as the degree plus at least one other Science subject. If you intend to study anything with a medical background at degree level, you must study Chemistry at GCSE and A Level. Careers such as Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Biomedical Science and Physiotherapy all require Chemistry. A Level Chemistry is also essential if you want to study Biochemistry or Chemical Engineering - many universities may require it in order for you to study Biology.

Physics

AQA 8463

Coursework

Examination



Subject
Specifications

Physics is an ever-evolving and dynamic subject that offers thrilling opportunities to learn about and contribute to the understanding of our universe.

By studying GCSE Physics, you will delve into topics such as energy, electricity, forces, waves, and space physics. These topics will not only broaden your scientific knowledge but also allow you to apply scientific reasoning to real-world problems. The course emphasises experimentation, enabling you to explore concepts practically and gain hands-on experience.

Whether you aspire to be a scientist, an engineer, or simply wish to develop a deeper understanding of the world, Physics provides a solid foundation. It opens doors to exciting career paths and equips you with skills that are highly-valued in many professions. Join us on a journey to uncover the mysteries of the universe and transform your understanding of how it all works.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Year 9 provides an essential foundation for the GCSE course. You will explore fundamental scientific concepts such as energy transfers, basic forces, and simple electric circuits. You will also build your practical skills by conducting experiments, recording data and interpreting results. These activities ensure you are well-prepared to engage with the more complex topics in the GCSE curriculum.



What type of student would Physics suit?

This subject is ideal for curious and analytical students who enjoy understanding how things work, exploring scientific phenomena and solving real-world problems. If you have a keen interest in experimentation, mathematical applications, and discovering the principles that govern the natural world, Physics will suit you well.



What will I get out of studying Physics?

By studying Physics, you will gain a deeper understanding of the physical principles that underpin everyday life and cutting-edge technology. You will develop critical thinking, problem-solving and practical laboratory skills. These transferable skills will prepare you for a variety of academic and professional pathways.

What are the key skills required?

To succeed in Physics, you will need:

- Strong analytical and critical thinking skills.
- A solid foundation in mathematics.
- Curiosity and creativity in solving problems.
- Attention to detail and precision in experiments.
- The ability to connect theoretical concepts to practical applications.

Where can GCSE Physics take you?

GCSE Physics on its own will not lead you to qualify as a Physicist, however, you will have the solid foundations and knowledge of the core principles to support future study. You will develop important skills, such as problem-solving, that can be applied to a range of professions. If you decide that you wish to pursue a career in Physics and continue to study this subject, you could choose from a range of interesting career paths, such as: academic researcher, acoustic consultant, astronomer, clinical scientist, medical physicist, geophysicist, higher education lecturer, metallurgist, meteorologist, nano-technologist, radiation protection practitioner, research scientist (physical sciences), sound engineer or technical author.

Optional subjects

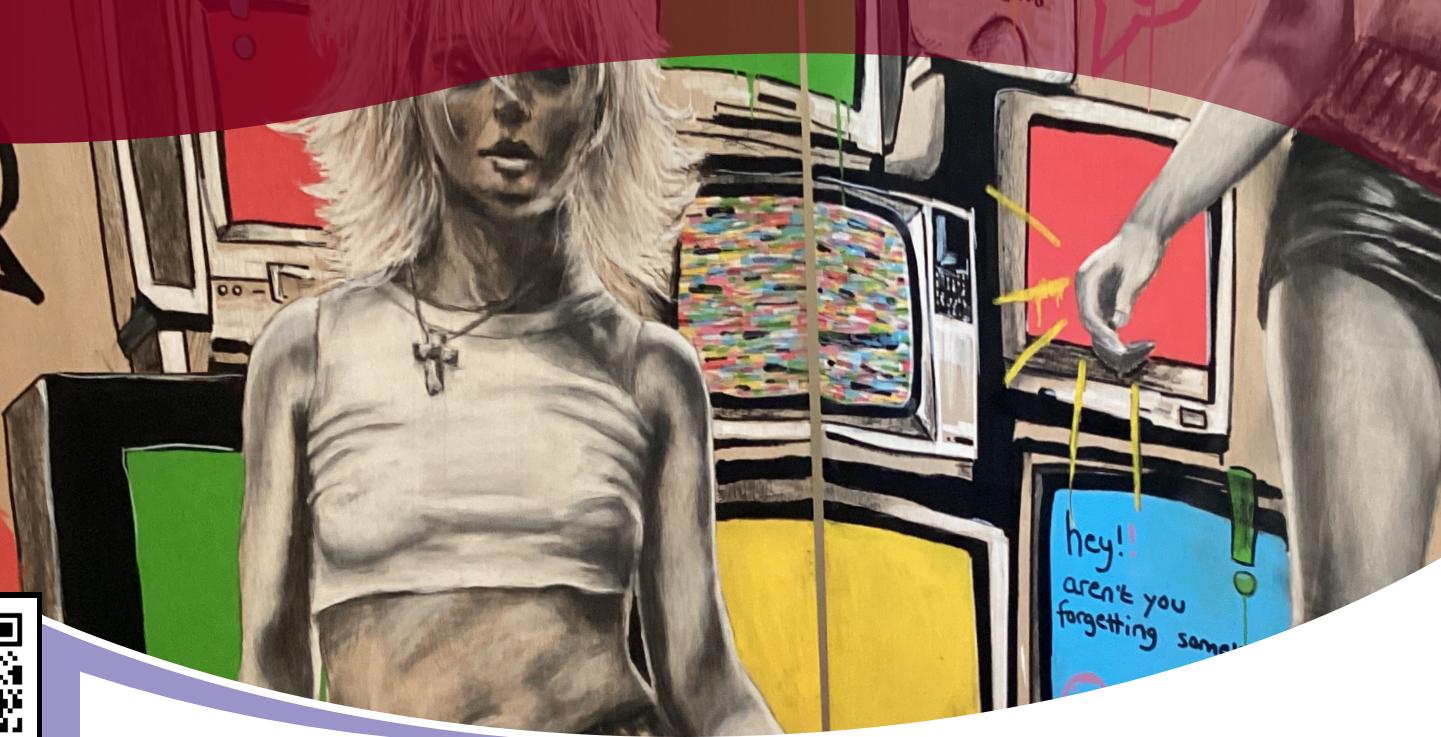
The following pages provide information about the following subjects which students can select to study:

Art and Design Fine Art	20
Art and Design Textiles	22
Business	24
Dance	26
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Drama	30
Food Preparation and Nutrition	32
Geography	34
History	36
Information and Communication Technology	38
Languages	40
Music	42
Physical Education	44
Religious Studies	46

It is important to note that if only a limited number of students choose an option subject it may be that the course will no longer be viable and the subject withdrawn.







Subject
Specifications

If you love creating whilst at the same time having fun and learning, then Art is for you.

No revision, minimal writing and being able to assure yourself a high grade by building a portfolio of work showing off your best skills have to be up there as some of the top benefits of choosing our exciting subject. Our unforgettable trips to places like Florence and Venice in Italy will blow you away.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9 you will learn a wide range of new artistic skills, techniques and processes using a variety on different media. You will research artists and artwork from cave art to contemporary art. This knowledge gained and the skills acquired will then be used by you in Years 10 and 11 to create your own independently designed final outcomes in two and three dimensions. You will have the chance to work using a variety of processes including painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture and photography.



What type of student would Art and Design suit?

Art is suitable for students who enjoy exploring their creativity, have an interest in visual arts, and are willing to dedicate time and effort to developing their artistic skills. If you enjoy being creative, want to produce some wonderful pieces of artwork that you are proud of and to inspire others then Art GCSE is a great choice. Do not worry if your artistic skills are not the best yet because the course is designed for students of varying levels of ability and experience.



What will I get out of studying Art?

In GCSE Art you will use lots of different media, techniques and materials. You will explore, experiment and create different pieces of work that reflect your interests and ideas. You will produce pieces of work that you will be proud of and as you move from Year 9 through Year 10 and into Year 11 you will see how well your skills have developed. You will also learn lots about artists not least by taking part in the Art Department's organised national and international trips. GCSE Art also develops transferable skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and time management, so it may also appeal to students looking to enhance their overall skill-set, even if they're not pursuing a career in Art.

What are the key skills required?

The GCSE builds on skills students have been developing throughout Key Stage 3 Art. Art is the right subject for you if you are a creative and independent learner. The skills you will be developing for success in Art and Design are not just drawing and painting because we use a range of artistic skills including printing, sculpture and photography. You need to be committed to putting in the time to develop and create work.

Where can GCSE Art and Design take you?

Taking GCSE Art will enable you to acquire the skills to confidently choose a creative subject at AS and A Level. Beyond School, our students are highly sort after when applying for a Foundation Course or a Degree in the Visual Arts. So many students from Pipers who started off choosing GCSE Art years ago are now doing really well in a creativity-based career in the Arts. Professional artists, craftspeople and designers all start somewhere, and our GCSE Art course provides endless opportunities to develop student interests which can also follow into university degrees, industries and businesses. The creative industries are the fastest growing and add more than £75 billion to our economy every year. Creative career options include architecture, fashion design, advertising, product design, photographic and film jobs, interior design and graphic design.

Additional costs

Coursework portfolio and sketchbooks in total cost £40. Students will also need some of their own art materials at home. National day trips approximately £30 per student (subject to gallery visited and number of students going). International trips (when organised) are around £900 per student (subject to country visited, date, duration of trip, itinerary and number of students going).



Subject
Specifications

The diverse, inclusive and varied projects in Textiles are designed to nurture students' creativity and develop their practical and critical thinking skills.

Exposure to a wide range of textile processes and innovative construction techniques create an inspiring environment where students develop their own unique style. Textiles provides creative, exciting, and memorable opportunities to explore a variety of textile media, techniques and processes. The well-resourced department gives students access to a wide variety of equipment and materials in order to realise their practical outcomes. These can range from interior items, sculpture, garments or art responses, students are given the freedom to experiment and decide.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Project 1 | Autumn – Spring | Garment outcome.

The current theme is 'The Four Elements'. This is a GCSE style project that covers all four GCSE Assessment Objectives. This is done by completing key tasks such as, researching artists and designers, analysing their work and your own; both verbally and in written form, drawing from life and in response to photos and inspiration images, design drawings, sample testing, learning new fabric manipulation and printing techniques, creating a unique outcome and reviewing your own progress and suggesting improvements.

Project 2 | Spring – Summer | Interior outcome.

The current project theme is 'Identity'. This is a GCSE style project, which covers the same type of tasks as above with a new focus.



What type of student would Textiles suit?

Textiles would suit someone who is independent and proactive, taking the initiative to explore new ideas and techniques. They should be creative, with a passion for designing and problem-solving, and organised and consistent in managing their time and materials. A committed student who will stay dedicated to the process, through trial and error, while a practical mindset ensures they can bring their ideas to life. Lastly, a flexible thinker is an asset, able to adapt to new challenges and embrace innovation within the subject.



What will I get out of studying Textiles?

Studying Textiles at GCSE Level provides students with a range of valuable skills that extend beyond the subject itself. They will develop critical and analytical thinking skills as they evaluate different materials, techniques, and design solutions. Creative thinking is nurtured through the process of designing and developing unique projects, allowing students to express their individuality. The practical garment-making skills learned provide hands-on experience, while planning and time management skills are honed as students balance multiple tasks and deadlines. Throughout the course, students build resilience, learning to overcome challenges and refine their work. Moreover, many of the skills acquired, such as problem-solving, attention to detail and collaboration, are transferable to a variety of careers and further academic pursuits.

What are the key skills required?

To study Textiles, students should have a range of key skills that will help them excel in the subject.

- An open-minded and positive attitude toward drawing and mark making allows students to experiment with different styles and techniques.
- The ability to use the sewing machine confidently and safely is crucial for bringing these ideas to life, a skill that can be harnessed through the course.
- Developing confidence in colour and composition is recommended for producing creative and aesthetically appealing work.
- An inquisitive mind helps to explore new materials and processes.
- A genuine interest in textiles, art, fashion, and their surroundings further fuels creativity and inspires students to push the boundaries of their work.

Where can GCSE Textiles take you?

Students can continue to study Textiles at AS and A Level. It can also be an excellent route onto an Art and Design Foundation course, or directly onto a degree. Examples include Fashion Design, Costume Design, Interior design, Graphic Design or Fashion Marketing and Communication/Management courses. These open up a whole range of career opportunities linked to the huge creative industry. The transferable skills acquired during the course are also relevant to many other further education avenues or career choices.

Additional costs

Materials and equipment | £30 added to invoice annually in Years 9-11. Students will also need some of their own art materials and specific fabrics if needed. Day trips to see exhibitions or workshops each year, approximately £35-40. Biennial International Residential Trip (optional and not all students will be able to attend) £1500-£2000.

Business

Pearson Edexcel 1BSO

Coursework

Examination



Subject
Specifications

Explore the world of small businesses through the lens of an entrepreneur. How and why do business ideas come about? What makes a successful business? You'll learn how to develop an idea, spot an opportunity and turn it into a successful business.

You will understand how to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us affects small businesses and all the people involved. Then you'll move on to investigating business growth. How does a business develop beyond the start-up phase? You'll learn about key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business. You'll learn about meeting customer needs, making marketing, operational, financial and human resourcing decisions and you'll explore how the wider world impacts the business as it grows.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Year 9 offers an exciting opportunity to immerse yourself in the world of Business and gain an introduction to key topics that will be explored in the GCSE course. The year is project-based, allowing you to learn new concepts and apply them in real-world scenarios. For example, after studying what makes an 'ideal' entrepreneur, you will conduct research and deliver a presentation on an entrepreneur of your choice. You will also learn about the essential steps small businesses take, from developing an initial idea to launching their venture. Finally, you will put your learning into action by forming your own small enterprise, culminating in selling your products at the annual Pipers Christmas Fair.



What type of student would Business suit?

A student who enjoys GCSE Business is likely someone who has an interest in how companies operate and a curiosity about the world of commerce, finance and entrepreneurship. This course appeals to students who enjoy problem-solving, working on real-life projects, and applying theoretical knowledge in practical situations. It is ideal for those who are analytical, creative, and enjoy thinking strategically. Students who are eager to develop skills in communication, teamwork, and decision-making, as well as those who like following current events and understanding how businesses respond to real-world challenges, will find this subject engaging and rewarding.



What will I get out of studying Business?

Studying GCSE Business provides students with a solid understanding of how businesses operate and interact with the wider economy. Students learn key concepts such as marketing, finance, operations, and human resource management. It helps develop practical skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making, which are valuable in both further education and future careers. Additionally, students gain insights into entrepreneurship, business ethics, and the importance of innovation, preparing them for roles in business or for starting their own ventures. Overall, it equips learners with knowledge and skills relevant to the modern workplace and everyday life.

What are the key skills required?

The key skills required to study GCSE Business include:

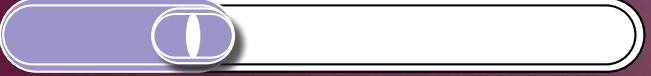
- **Analytical Skills** | Ability to analyse data, identify trends and evaluate business performance
- **Critical Thinking** | Being able to assess business scenarios, make informed decisions and solve problems logically
- **Numeracy Skills** | Understanding and interpreting financial data, calculating profits, costs and other business-related figures
- **Communication Skills** | Explaining ideas clearly in written and verbal formats, useful for case studies and presentations
- **Decision-Making** | Assessing different options and choosing the most appropriate course of action in various business contexts
- **Time Management** | Managing study time effectively, especially when working collaboratively or preparing for examinations
- **Teamwork** | Collaborating with others during group projects and discussions
- **Understanding of Current Affairs** | Keeping up with real-world business news to connect theory to practice

Where can GCSE Business take you?

The subject can be a valuable foundation for a wide range of future careers in industries such as finance, marketing, management and entrepreneurship. It is particularly useful for students interested in becoming business owners, financial analysts, accountants, marketing specialists, or project managers. Careers in retail management, human resources, consulting, and operations also benefit from the skills learned in this course. Additionally, those pursuing roles in the public sector or non-profit organisations can apply business knowledge to improve efficiency and drive impact. Overall, GCSE Business equips students with transferable skills that are highly-relevant in many career paths.

Dance

AQA 8236

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

We aim to inspire and motivate all our dancers to be able to express themselves and develop their creative, physical, emotional and intellectual capacity, whatever their previous experience in the subject. If you enjoy dance and are keen to study a range of dance styles and style fusions this subject is for you!

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9 students will learn the key dance vocabulary needed for GCSE and begin to explore how to appreciate dance for the written paper. They will develop their physical, technical and expressive skills through a range of different dance genres and activities.



What type of student would Dance suit?

A student that is passionate about dance and enjoys performing within a group and on their own. An individual who enjoys choreographing and performing in different styles of dance. Someone that is interested in all types of dances, who likes watching and analysing dance and writing about performances.



What will I get out of studying Dance?

You will gain confidence, team work, creative and critical thinking skills, self-motivation and perseverance, adaptability and discipline. All of these transferrable skills are gained alongside physical and expressive skills for performance.

What are the key skills required?

Students need to have some physical dance ability in any genre. A passion for creating and performing dance is essential. Students need to be able to work as part of a team, but be equally adaptable to work as a soloist. Students should enjoy expressing themselves and appreciating dance across different genres.

Where can GCSE Dance take you?

Dance GCSE provides an excellent route to A Level Dance, as well as to further and higher education in the performing arts, teaching and choreography. It is also a brilliant foundation for vocational and professional training.

Additional costs

Theatre trips and workshops are essential to the course and every effort is made to keep costs to a minimum. Approximately £75 per year.

Design and Technology

AQA 8035

Coursework

Examination



Subject
Specifications

How do designers generate ideas? Where do ideas come from? A finished product is a combination of understanding form, function and material.

In this GCSE course, you'll be encouraged to look for ways of arriving at new possibilities. With an emphasis on the creative process and self-direction, it will take you from an initial brief through to your own product design and presentation

This subject will give you a taster of what practising design technology involves. Although there will be some soft model making, this is a studio-based, rather than just a workshop-based class or subject. The focus will be on the generation of ideas and design thinking

You'll explore how to represent design concepts through drawing exercises and how to document ideas through sketches and photographs. You will also be introduced to a number of processes and vocabulary employed in 3D design.

There will be tutor briefs and presentations, but students can expect to spend a considerable amount of class time developing their own design ideas.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Students are exposed to the national curriculum requirements and should be applied whenever children are designing and making products. The six principles are user, purpose, functionality, design decisions, innovation and authenticity.



What type of student would Design and Technology suit?

A student with a willingness to develop their drawing skills. A willingness to develop their practical skills. Has a keen interest in Design & Technology. A Problem solver – through questioning and experimenting.



What will I get out of studying Design and Technology?

Design and Technology is a practical and valuable subject. It enables children and young people to actively contribute to the creativity, culture, wealth and wellbeing of themselves, their community and the country.

What are the key skills required?

Understand and use mechanical systems in their products e.g. gears, pulleys, cams, levers and linkages. Understand and use electrical systems in their products e.g. series circuits incorporating switches, bulbs, buzzers and motors. Timber base materials and making, design and communication skills. Apply their understanding of computing to program, monitor and control their products.

Where can GCSE Design and Technology take you?

You can continue your studies at A Level in the Sixth Form. The study of Design and Technology provides an ideal foundation for a variety of university degree programmes including architecture, engineering, graphics, product and interior design. It can also provide evidence of practical ability, teamwork and problem-solving which are highly regarded by university admissions in other disciplines as a complement to other subjects.

Additional costs

- Materials | Approximately £30 added to invoice annually.
- Students may also need some of their own materials and specific fixings if needed. Day trips to see exhibitions or workshops each year, approximately £35-40.
- STEM Technology focused competitions £30-40.
- Biennial International Residential Trip (Optional, limited spaces) £1500-£2000.



Subject
Specifications

Do you want to take a subject that's creative, exciting and full of opportunities to express yourself?

GCSE Drama is more than just acting - it's about exploring your imagination, working with others, and developing skills that will help you succeed in whatever you choose to do next.

Drama lets you step into someone else's shoes and explore different characters, emotions, and stories. You'll get to perform, create your own pieces, and experiment with ideas in ways that feel exciting and rewarding. Whether you're performing on stage or presenting your ideas, Drama helps you develop the confidence to express yourself in front of others. So, if you're looking for a subject that's fun, challenging, and prepares you for life, Drama is the perfect choice. Step into the spotlight - you might surprise yourself!

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9 students will study the practitioners that form the core of the GCSE course including:

Artaud

Brecht

Frantic Assembly



What type of student would Drama suit?

GCSE Drama suits students who are creative, collaborative, and enjoy exploring ideas through performance, evaluation and analysis. Specifically, it is ideal for students who enjoy creative expression, namely those who love acting, storytelling, or performing in front of an audience and have an appreciation for theatre, film and the performing arts. Drama also suits those who thrive in collaborative settings, enjoy teamwork and are open to sharing ideas, giving and receiving feedback, and contributing when in a group. A Drama student will also have good communication skills, be confident speakers who offer ideas when in a group situation and are willing to step outside of their comfort zone and take the lead.



What will I get out of studying Drama?

Studying GCSE Drama equips students with a wide range of transferable skills that are valuable in both academic and professional settings. These include public speaking and the ability to confidently present ideas to an audience, the ability to cooperate with others, share responsibilities, and achieve common goals. GCSE Drama trains students to be quick thinkers who are adaptable under pressure and resilient when faced with challenges.

What are the key skills required?

GCSE Drama combines practical performance with analytical and theoretical study. Students need a mix of academic and creative skills to succeed including the ability to analyse and critique live performances, writing structured and detailed responses in essays, documenting creative processes, justifying choices, and evaluating outcomes. A combination of these academic skills, along with creativity and enthusiasm for the subject, will help students excel in this subject.

Where can GCSE Drama take you?

GCSE Drama provides a strong foundation for a wide range of careers, both within the performing arts and in fields that value creativity, communication, and teamwork. Here are some career paths where Drama is particularly useful: Actor, Director, Playwright, Stage Manager, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Lighting or Sound Technician, Makeup Artist, Producer, production assistant, Media and Journalism, Drama Teacher, Public Relations, Marketing and Advertising, Sales and Customer Service, Lawyer and Drama Therapist.

Additional costs

Theatre trips and workshops are essential to the course and every effort is made to keep costs to a minimum, approximately £50 per student.



Students learn to prepare a wide variety of sweet and savoury dishes. Which include but are not limited to cakes, pastry (choux, puff and shortcrust), fish filleting, chicken butchery, pasta, bread and sauces.

You will learn about how ingredients grow and how they are farmed, including the environmental impact of our food choices. You will learn how nutrients are structured and what they do in our bodies. Explore the science of how ingredients work, for example how do cakes rise? Is that the same as how bread rises? Dietary needs are explained, where there are choices based on religion or preference, or due to medical conditions, along with how to avoid cross-contamination and how to prepare suitable dishes for those with dietary needs. You will be offered opportunities to taste foods perhaps you never would anywhere else, in an environment where we talk about sensory properties, rather than opinions. Learn how to be an active part of our Food Department team, understanding your own responsibilities within the kitchen and to each other.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

We cover the core skills of cake making, pastry making and we begin to explore the science behind each recipe. We look at food choice and the nutritional elements developed at GCSE Level.



What type of student would Food suit?

Food students are curious and active learners. They like to ask questions and then try and find out the answers. They don't have to be asking these questions out loud, but of themselves. Students who take Food will have an interest in food ingredients and how they work. Wondering how their chemistry and functions they perform work together to create and affect the final products. At GCSE, students spend half of their lesson time preparing and cooking, so they enjoy the freedom that moving around the kitchen gives them. Students will learn to organise their spaces and equipment, so being naturally organised is of huge benefit, but everyone improves at this as the course goes on. Our Food course suits all students who enjoy cooking (not just baking) and enjoying eating and trying different foods. We love to have students who are adventurous and willing to try new things to eat. We also encourage our more timid eaters to expand their taste buds too!



What will I get out of studying Food?

Students who study Food gain a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials, it focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition, cooking & preparation techniques. They cook dishes from around the world that they are both familiar and unfamiliar with. Students get a solid understanding of how the body uses the food we eat and what nutrients the body needs to work at its best. Students understand how different people may choose food, how their lifestyle and age can change the quantities needed of various nutrients. Aside from the food related learning, students gain many interpersonal skills from this course. They learn to be independent but also build team working skills. Students have to problem solve, as not everything will go the right way the first time, or sometimes even the second time too! Students will learn good communication skills, both written and verbal through creating and presenting reports, requesting ingredients, carrying out nutritional analysis, speaking to staff and peers during lessons. You will develop your numerical skills through weighing, measuring, costing and working out nutritional needs.

What are the key skills required?

A can-do attitude is the most important skill required before starting this course! You may not understand how the body works, how to butcher a chicken or make choux pastry and understand why it failed. You need to be willing to persevere, try and try again, even when tasks are difficult.

Where can GCSE Food take you?

There are no limitations in the direction your life can take with or without this qualification. So many of the skills learned in this course are related to getting on with people, working as a team and problem solving. If you do study Food you can become a lawyer, doctor or engineer, along with the more obvious career choices; chefs, nutritionist, dietician, product development and hospitality.

Additional costs

Standard annual charge for materials at £30 per annum. All students will be required to wear a chef's jacket and mid-length apron. The School can provide these items at a cost between £15-£20. Day trips to see exhibitions or workshops each year, approximately £30-£40.

Geography

AQA 8035

Coursework \longleftrightarrow Examination



Subject
Specifications

Choosing Geography offers students a fantastic opportunity to explore the world in an engaging and thought-provoking way.

With links to many other subject areas, Geography is a truly cross-curricular subject and therefore there is something in the course for everyone. This course inspires students to critically analyse pressing global issues as well as developing an understanding of their role within our ever changing world, at a local scale too. With hands-on residential fieldwork, exciting case studies, and the development of key skills such as data analysis and problem-solving, students will be well-prepared for the challenges of the future. Geography nurtures a global perspective and a sense of responsibility, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in further education and indeed a wide range of careers. This course is not just about learning—it's also about empowering our students to make a real difference in the world.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9 Geography, we embark on an in-depth exploration of Antarctica, the final continent in our Key Stage 3 'journey around the world,' delving into its fascinating physical and human geography. We then shift our focus to the Middle East, examining the region's development opportunities and challenges. Following this, students engage in a dynamic fieldwork unit, conducting a small-scale investigation that brings geography to life beyond the classroom and highlights the subject's real-world relevance. As we move into the Spring Term, students revisit and refine their cartographical and statistical skills before delving into 'Our Risky World,' an exciting study of tectonic and weather hazards. The year culminates with a comprehensive unit on climate change, synthesising the knowledge and skills acquired throughout Key Stage 3. This robust programme ensures that Year 9 serves as a strong foundation, preparing students confidently for the next stage of their GCSE journey.



What type of student would Geography suit?

The course is perfect for curious students who are eager to uncover the complexities of our world. It is designed for students who are passionate about exploring natural environments, human societies and the dynamic connections between them. For those students who enjoy critical thinking, problem-solving and tackling current global issues, this course will be incredibly rewarding. From physical landscapes to urban development, and many areas in between, the diverse range of topics offers plenty of opportunities for independent research, teamwork, and honing valuable skills such data analysis and spatial awareness. Geography is ideal for those who want to understand the world and contribute to a sustainable future.



What will I get out of studying Geography?

Students who take the course will gain a deep understanding of both physical and human geography, equipping them with the knowledge to interpret and analyse the world around them. They will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by examining real-world issues such as climate change, urbanisation, and resource management. The course also enhances students' abilities in research, data collection, and analysis through fieldwork and case studies. Additionally, students will improve their communication skills by presenting their findings and engaging in discussions. These skills not only prepare them for further education but also for a wide range of careers. The subject fosters a global perspective and a sense of responsibility towards sustainable living which will be so important in all our lives in the future.

What are the key skills required?

Current Year 8 Geography students will already possess many key skills to help them succeed in Year 9 and the GCSE course, including a basic ability to analyse information and spot patterns which will be essential for developing critical thinking. An innate curiosity about the world and a natural desire to ask questions will keep students engaged and eager to learn. Experience of gathering and organising information will support students' research efforts, while comfort with basic mathematical skills will make interpreting data and understanding graphs much easier. Clear communication skills, both written and spoken, are important for sharing ideas and findings. Enjoying teamwork will be beneficial during group work and fieldwork, and of course good time management is essential.

Where can GCSE Geography take you?

You could go on to take an A Level in Geography in the Sixth Form. The knowledge gained from studying the subject, paired with your essential curiosity, will give you the sought-after transferable skills for success in further education and the workplace. Future career choices could include town planner, surveyor, architect, conservationist, environmental engineer and teacher – to name but a few. The versatility in the skills gained in this subject means that geographers are in high demand and are highly employable.

Additional costs

There will be a two-night residential fieldwork trip, to a location within the UK, usually in the Summer Term of Year 10. The cost of the trip will depend upon the destination, cost of transport and the number of students in attendance, but is likely to be in the region of £250.

History

Pearson Edexcel 4HI1

Coursework \longleftrightarrow Examination



Subject
Specifications

Studying History will equip you with a wide range of skills that can be applied to many professions while also helping you understand key moments that shaped our world today.

An overview of the course:

Germany 1918-45 | This unit covers the key events in Germany, including the aftermath of World War I, the rise of Adolf Hitler, and the consequences of Nazi rule, focusing on political, social, and economic changes during this period.

Changes in Medicine 1848-1948 | This unit explores the major advancements in medicine over the 19th and 20th centuries, from the development of new treatments and technologies to changes in public health and the role of women in medicine..

Conflict in Vietnam 1945-74 | The course examines the Vietnam War, focusing on its causes, the involvement of major powers, and the impact of the war on both Vietnam and the global political landscape.

Civil Rights in the USA 1945-74 | Students explore the fight for civil rights in the United States, looking at key figures, events, and movements that helped bring about significant changes in American society.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

In Year 9, students typically begin with an introduction to historical themes, such as understanding the causes of war, revolutions, and the impact of key historical figures. They explore 19th and 20th century history at a broad level, which provides a foundation for the more detailed study of specific periods (like Germany 1918-45) during the GCSE years. The focus will be on developing research and analysis skills while exploring a variety of historical themes, like conflict and change.



What type of student would History suit?

This subject suits students who have an interest in understanding how historical events shaped the modern world. It appeals to those who enjoy exploring complex topics, connecting past events to current affairs, and analysing various perspectives. Students who are analytical, curious, and enjoy learning about human behaviour, political movements, and social change will find this course engaging.



What will I get out of studying History?

By studying History, you will gain a deep understanding of key historical events that shaped the 20th century. You will also develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to construct well-supported arguments. The course will enable you to appreciate the impact of historical decisions and how they influence current global issues, giving you the ability to approach problems from a historical perspective.

What are the key skills required?

Analytical Skills | The ability to analyse historical sources, data, and events critically.

Essay Writing | Being able to construct coherent and well-supported arguments in essays.

Research Skills | Investigating historical events using a variety of sources.

Where can GCSE History take you?

If you want to understand the causes and consequences of significant historical events, like the World Wars, the Civil Rights Movement, or the Vietnam War, or, if you're considering a future in history, law, journalism, or political science, this course is highly relevant. This course is also perfect if you want to strengthen your critical thinking and analytical abilities, skills that are valuable in any field. Potential careers can include Lawyer or Politician (understanding history helps you grasp political and legal systems), Journalist (especially in areas like war correspondence or political reporting, knowledge of historical events is crucial), Museum Curator/Archivist (working in historical preservation or curation requires in-depth historical knowledge) or Researcher/Analyst (Many research and think tank roles in politics or history demand skills in analysing historical data).

Additional costs

There may be educational trips associated with the course. The cost of these trips varies depending on location, duration and logistics. In the past we have visited the Battlefields in Year 9 (c.£450) and Germany in Year 11 (approximately £850).

Information and Communication Technology

Cambridge 0417

Coursework  Examination



Subject
Specifications

Do you enjoy editing that photo until it is just perfect? Always fixing the family gadgets? Feel lost without your tech? If so, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the ideal course for you.

In an era where technology is integral to every aspect of our lives, our IGCSE course is designed to equip students with the essential skills and knowledge to thrive in a digital world.

Create websites, develop an understanding of when, and when not to use AI in your tasks, take your photo editing to the next level. These are all things that you will learn in the course. The course is structured to cover a diverse range of topics, ensuring that students develop a well-rounded understanding of the key concepts in IT.

It is designed to encourage creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. With access to relevant software, online resources, and industry-standard tools, from Adobe and Microsoft we ensure that students are well-prepared for the demands of the digital age.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Students will undertake a project to create a solution to a real-world problem. This includes all the steps of the system development lifecycle.

Students will become familiar with the skills needed for GCSE including Adobe suite and HTML/CSS.



What type of student would ICT suit?

Students who love using technology in their everyday life—whether it's gaming, exploring social media, or working on creative projects—are likely to thrive in ICT. The subject is all about troubleshooting and solving tech problems, so those who enjoy a good challenge, are curious about new gadgets and software, and have a logical mindset will do well. ICT also requires a keen eye for detail, especially when using software or coding. Students who are patient and able to spot even the tiniest mistakes or inconsistencies will find themselves excelling. If you're someone who enjoys figuring out how things work and staying up-to-date with the latest tech, ICT is the perfect fit!



What will I get out of studying ICT?

Studying ICT equips you with essential technical skills, including understanding IT systems, software, and troubleshooting, while also developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities. It enhances communication and collaboration through digital tools and teamwork, preparing you for further studies or careers in IT-related fields such as software development, cybersecurity, and data analysis. With the growing demand for digital literacy in almost every industry, ICT boosts job prospects and helps you work efficiently with technology, offering transferable skills like organisation, adaptability, and technical proficiency that are valuable in any career.

What are the key skills required?

No specific skills are required but an enjoyment of puzzles or problem solving will be very useful.

Where can GCSE ICT take you?

Upon completion of the ICT programme, students will be well-prepared for further studies in Computer Science, Information Technology, or related fields, including AAQ Computing in our Sixth Form. The skills acquired will also be valuable in various professions where digital literacy is essential.

Languages AQA

French 8652

German 8662

Spanish 8692



Modern Foreign Languages are more than just grammar rules and vocabulary lists. It's an exciting adventure where you have the opportunity to unlock the secrets of three vibrant European languages.

Explore the rich nuances of French, German or Spanish. Gain the confidence to communicate and learn to express yourself fluently, both written and spoken, and connect with people from around the globe. Expand your horizons and prepare for a global future with valuable language skills that open doors to exciting travel and career opportunities.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

Languages

German

An exciting opportunity to explore the rich nuances of German, from its elegant grammar to its expressive vocabulary, immerse yourself in the world of German culture, from classic literature and timeless music to cutting-edge technology and modern art, prepare for a global future with valuable language skills that open doors to exciting travel and career opportunities.

French

You'll acquire the ability to communicate in Francophone countries, delve into the vibrant tapestry of French culture, and cultivate valuable skills that will serve you well throughout your life. You'll engage in interactive exercises, listen to genuine French music, watch authentic French films, and even have the chance to travel to France!

Spanish

You will build a strong foundation in Spanish grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

You will also have many opportunities to broaden and develop your vocabulary base and range of syntax. Engage in simple conversations on familiar topics like family, hobbies, and daily routines. You will develop your Spanish accent and regularly practise your pronunciation and intonation.

Discover the fascinating cultures of Spanish-speaking countries through authentic materials, songs, stories, and interactive activities.

What type of student would Languages suit?

Modern Foreign Languages would be a great fit for students who:

- **Enjoy learning about different cultures** | Students with an interest in French, German or Spanish-speaking countries, their history, music, and traditions will likely find the cultural aspect engaging.
- **Are curious and communicative** | Students who are naturally inquisitive and enjoy interacting with others will thrive in the communicative aspects of language learning.
- **Have a good work ethic and are self-motivated** | Consistent effort and independent study are crucial for success in language learning.
- **Are interested in travel and global perspectives** | Students who are interested in travel and experiencing different cultures and customs will find speaking additional languages a valuable asset.
- **Enjoy challenges and problem-solving** | Learning a language requires problem-solving skills and the ability to overcome challenges.
- **Have good memory and attention to detail** | A good memory and attention to detail are helpful for learning vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

While not everyone needs to fit every single point perfectly, students with these characteristics are likely to find the GCSE Languages rewarding and enriching.

What will I get out of studying Languages?

Immerse yourself in vibrant cultures, communicate with millions worldwide, and enhance your critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Increase your employability in a globalised world and make yourself a more competitive university applicant.

What are the key skills required?

Dedication and Regular Practice | Consistent effort is key to language learning success.

Curiosity and a Desire to Learn | Embrace the challenges and rewards of exploring a new language.

Effective Communication and Collaboration | Actively participate in class discussions, paired and small group activities and role-play scenarios.

Where can GCSE Languages take you?

Pursue a career in a globalised world | Many industries value bilingualism, from tourism and business to healthcare and education.

Study at university | Learning a language demonstrates valuable skills and qualities that enhance your university applications.

Experience the world | Travel with confidence and connect with people from diverse cultures.

Careers can include International Business (Translator, Interpreter, International Marketing) Tourism and Hospitality (Tour Guide, Hotel Manager, Travel Agent), Education (Foreign Language Teacher, International Development) Healthcare (Medical Interpreter, Healthcare Professional in Multicultural Settings) Diplomacy and International Relations (Diplomat, Foreign Service Officer)

Additional costs

The Languages Department organises at least one yearly cultural trip to Year 9 and 10 students to a French, German or Spanish-speaking country (approximate cost £850). This is not compulsory but highly recommended. There is also the possibility of Spanish and German exchanges.

Music

Pearson Edexcel 1MU0

Coursework  Examination



Music is an excellent GCSE choice if you have a love for the subject. The course involves listening to music, performing music, creating your own music and extending your understanding of different styles and genres. If you like to create music of your own, composing will give you the opportunity to do so.

We try out instruments, learn a lot of technical terms, listen to and learn about a range of musical styles to broaden musical experience, cover the fundamentals of music notation and rhythm and try to work out what it is we like about the music we enjoy so that we can compose music like it. We perform and present research projects to one another regularly and grow in confidence so we are ready to tackle the GCSE.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

With 60% coursework, this is a very practical GCSE. At the end of the course, you will need to record two performances, one solo and one ensemble, in an informal setting at School. With regular performance opportunities in School, this can be a most enjoyable part of the course to prepare for. There are also eight Set Works to study and these, along with the extended listening, are hugely varied and you will get to find out a lot about different styles and periods of music. Group work is always popular when we start each new topic or kickstart compositions, and you will find that your skills base grows quickly during the course.



What type of student would Music suit?

Music is an excellent GCSE choice for any student with a love and an aptitude for the subject. If you enjoy performing on an instrument or singing and want to develop your repertoire, skills and experience, Music will give you opportunities to do this. It will help to build your confidence in performing and composing in a range of styles and you will have access to composition software like Sibelius and Logic Pro to do this. Being open to a range of styles of music will be helpful as the music we study encompasses Baroque, Wicked, Queen, Star Wars, Beethoven and Fusion. If you like a practical subject where you often learn through making sounds, this could be the subject for you.



What will I get out of studying Music?

You will grow in confidence and creativity as you work with others and whatever your ability and background, you will find it stretches you. Music is a subject that is respected because of the challenges it presents - the discipline of performance, the creativity of composition, the aural skills to hear accurately and the analytical skill to respond to what you listen to.

What are the key skills required?

You will need to be able to play an instrument, which includes the voice, and be willing to work steadily to improve over the course. It is beneficial if you can perform Grade 5 pieces by the end of Year 11; however, how well and expressively you play or sing is rewarded more highly than the difficulty of the piece so you can consider GCSE Music as an option if you are currently Grade 2 on an instrument. You will also need to be able to take musical risks when trying out composition ideas, willing to try out music software and enjoy working alongside others on practical projects.

Where can GCSE Music take you?

You could go on to take an A Level in Music in the Sixth Form and be a performer, teacher, producer or actor. The musical and performance skills that you start to develop are invaluable to anyone wishing to go into the Performing Arts. The skills you will learn will be useful for future careers in many sectors and it is a respected qualification. For any career in music production, performance, composition or musicology, a GCSE in Music will cover central skills and knowledge. It will also help develop skills of analysis, reasoning, comprehension of a range of cultures and contexts, and develop confidence in presenting through performance work and creativity in composition. These are transferable skills which are beneficial to further study and the workplace.

Additional costs

We attend concerts that are relevant to the curriculum where possible and encourage students to attend events like Proms over the summer holidays. A Music Tour may be planned every few years.

Physical Education

AQA 8582

The NEA (40%) is made up of 30% practical and 10% coursework. With the theory then 60%.

Theory ← → Practical



Subject
Specifications

A broad look into the psychological, physiological and social reasons why people get involved with sport either as a performer, coach, umpire or spectator.

This GCSE includes study in applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, use of data, sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, as well as reviewing health and fitness.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

You will learn the fitness components and the different methods of training in your sport. Gain a greater understanding of a range of sports. You will commence your filming for your GCSE in the School sports.



What type of student would Physical Education suit?

A student who enjoys sport and physical activity and is a committed and active performer who is playing regularly out of school at club level in at least one of their sports, and/or for the A and B team School teams. In addition they need to be keen to learn about how the body works, how it can be trained and what can effect performance.



What will I get out of studying Physical Education?

Gain knowledge of all aspects of what makes a great athlete, to help develop their own sporting performances, and to develop an understanding of why people should remain in physical activity for life. To become an analytical thinker with regard to their own performances and others.

What are the key skills required?

Hard work, attending weekly lunchtime clubs and playing fixtures in your chosen sports or sports out of school. Recording your skills and competitive game play and be able to organise these. To be motivated and committed to learn the extensive content.

Where can GCSE Physical Education take you?

You could go on to take an A Level in PE in the Sixth Form. There are many obvious sports-related careers which taking a GCSE in Physical Education would lead into such as being sports coach/instructor, sports development officer, sports psychologist or PE teacher. However, other areas include youth work, outdoor pursuits instructing, physiotherapy, personal fitness training, fire service, police, armed forces and sports event management.

Additional costs

Possible additional costs if a student selects one of the below as one of their three sports:

- Rockclimbing | Approximately £50 (prior experience is necessary)
- Skiing at The Hemel Hempstead Snow Dome, part 2- competition only | Approximately £150 (students are required to be competent skiers) NB. Part 1- skills must be filmed on a family holiday



Subject
Specifications

In an increasingly connected world, understanding different religions and worldviews is more important than ever.

This course provides an opportunity to explore the fascinating beliefs and practices of two major world religions while addressing some of today's most pressing ethical issues, including crime and punishment, medical ethics, human rights, and environmental concerns.

By studying Religious Studies, you will develop valuable skills applicable in any career, such as critical thinking, persuasive argumentation, and an appreciation for diverse perspectives. Whether you aim to work in law, education, healthcare, or business, this course will give you a solid foundation.

Brief summary of what happens in Year 9 (Non-GCSE course content)

The Year 9 pre-GCSE course offers a stimulating introduction to key topics and skills, providing the groundwork for success in your GCSE studies. This carefully designed scheme of work will prepare you for GCSE studies by developing your understanding of important concepts and critical thinking abilities.

- **Introduction to Buddhism** | Discover the key teachings and practices of Buddhism, including the life of the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path. Learn how this ancient tradition addresses questions about suffering, mindfulness and the pursuit of enlightenment.
- **Philosophy and Ethics** | Tackle some of life's biggest questions, such as whether God exists, and examine how moral decisions are made in modern contexts, including issues like artificial intelligence and medical ethics.
- **Religion and Life** | Explore topics like the origins of the universe, the sanctity of life, and how religion shapes our understanding of the world around us.
- **Relationships and Families** | Gain insight into how religions approach important issues such as relationships, marriage, gender roles and family life in today's society.



What type of student would Religious Studies suit?

This subject is ideal for students who enjoy examining ethical issues, religious beliefs, and philosophical questions about human existence. It suits those who are curious about how religion influences personal lives, society, and global events. If you like debating moral dilemmas, analysing different viewpoints, and considering the impact of religion on issues such as peace, justice, and the environment Religious Studies will appeal to you. The course is particularly suited to students who enjoy structured writing, critical thinking and exploring contemporary issues.



What are the key skills required?

- Analytical Thinking | Evaluating religious teachings and their relevance to modern life
- Essay Writing | Communicating your ideas effectively in well-structured arguments
- Critical Evaluation | Assessing different perspectives and forming balanced conclusions
- Empathy | Understanding and appreciating diverse religious and ethical viewpoints
- Interest in Current Issues | Engaging with contemporary debates about morality, justice, and society
- Attention to Detail | Remembering key teachings, scripture references, and case studies

Where can GCSE Religious Studies take you?

You could go on to take an A Level in Religious Studies in the Sixth Form. You will learn the essential skills of both written and verbal argument. Religious Studies graduates have gone on to study the subject at university and moved into careers as diverse as law, criminology and fashion.

Non-examination subjects

All students will study the following subjects alongside the core subjects and their GCSE options. These subjects are designed to enhance your physical and emotional Well-Being, whilst broadening your social and political awareness.

Core Physical Education

Core PE lessons will consist of a range of activities including Pickleball, Fitness Suite, Wellbeing walks and Handball. You will take an active role in playing, organising and leading activities and develop an appreciation of the importance of regular participation in physical activity. The varied range of activities hopes to promote lifelong participation in physical activity following your own interests, abilities and ambitions.

SPIRAL

The core SPIRAL curriculum is structured as part of a four-week rotation, incorporating RAW (Religion and Worldviews) and Life Skills.

Religion and Worldviews

In Year 9, you will study topics such as Prejudice and Discrimination, and Poverty. In Year 10, the focus shifts to Peace and Conflict, New Religious Movements, and the impact of Government Policies. By Year 11, the course delves into more advanced topics, such as Medical Ethics, including debates on euthanasia, designer babies, and cloning.

Across all year groups, you will have the opportunity to explore and address profound ethical and philosophical questions. Although there is no formal examination at the end of the course, active participation, curiosity, critical thinking, and wider reading are highly encouraged in every lesson. The SPIRAL curriculum offers a rich and thought-provoking journey, building skills and knowledge to navigate complex issues in the modern world.

Life Skills | Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Citizenship

The main aim of Life Skills teaching and learning is to provide you with the knowledge, skills and understanding you need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens.

You will be encouraged to reflect on your own experiences and in doing so recognise your own worth, helping you to deal with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues you may face as you grow up and reach adulthood.

Life Skills will help you to understand and responsibly manage a wider range of relationships as you mature and show respect for the diversity of and differences between people, always aware of a common humanity.

Life Skills also aims to develop your wellbeing and self-esteem, encouraging belief in your ability to succeed and enabling you to take responsibility for your learning and future choices of courses and career.

Above all, our aim is to enable you to analyse, reflect, speculate, discuss and argue constructively about your understanding of issues.

Notes

For all subjects you are considering...

What do I feel excited about when I talk about this subject?

What are the coursework demands and how much time will this require above homework allocations?

What skills do I have that complement this subject?

What are my future aspirations and will this subject benefit this?

Subject

Subject

Subject

Subject

Subject

Subject

GCSE Options Choices | A-B

Year 8 students have already taken part in coaching sessions in the Autumn term using the A-B model, where they explored their values, motivations and future aspirations. As they are familiar with this approach, we now ask them to complete a new A-B task with a parent to help guide conversations about their GCSE options.

In this task:

- **Point A** represents where they are now - what matters to them in life, in school, and what they learned from the Morrisby careers task.
- **Point B** represents their future dream - this may be a specific career, a broad direction, or simply aiming for Sixth Form.
- **The middle section** helps them think about which subjects will support their journey and what more they need to find out.

Using the question prompts, students and families can reflect together and make informed, meaningful decisions about next steps.



What is my dream for the future?

9

What do I need for this route?

8

What do I need to secure my place
in Sixth Form?

B

7

What do I value the most?

The fourth optional choice is often the hardest.
Look at the different optional subjects and answer.

6

What more do I need to know?

5

What subjects are important to help me
achieve my goals?

3

What do I feel about these subjects?

4

