

Year 9 Options Booklet

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Welcome

The next few weeks represent an exciting time in your child's education. It is the first opportunity for them to start making choices about the subjects they will study at Key Stage Four.

This booklet provides you with further information about each subject that your child will study at GCSE and some of the optional subjects that they can choose to study.

Our aim is to provide all the information to help you and your child to make an informed choice enabling them to achieve the best possible outcomes and to access their future study and career aspirations.

There are also links to the exam boards that we study here at Verulam where you can find out more information about each GCSE or BTEC course. These links will provide you with the most current information about each course.







Key Stage 4 Overview

All students at Verulam School study a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes the following compulsory examination subjects for all students:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Science - Combined or Separate

In addition to these subjects, students also undertake compulsory study in the following subjects, but are not examined in them:

- Physical Education
- Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE)

Students must select 4 options from the list below, in addition to 2 reserve choices. Choices must be ranked in order of preference.

Subjects to choose from

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| GCSE Art & Design | GCSE Geography |
| GCSE Business | GCSE History |
| GCSE Computer Science | GCSE Media Studies |
| GCSE Design & Technology - Resistant Materials or Systems | GCSE Physical Education |
| GCSE Drama | GCSE Religious Studies |
| GCSE Economics | GCSE Spanish |
| GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition | BTEC Enterprise |
| GCSE French | BTEC Music |
| | BTEC Sport |

GCSE English Language (Core)

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Taught jointly with English Literature, English Language seeks to ensure students can read fluently and write effectively. They work towards demonstrating a confident control of Standard English and the ability to write grammatically correct sentences, deploying figurative language and analysing texts by studying the following areas:

Reading

Students study one literature fiction text based on extracts from 20th or 21st Century novels.

Writing

Students will develop descriptive and narrative writing skills.

Writer's viewpoints and perspectives:
Students will study a non-fiction and literary non-fiction text taken from a variety of sources including letters, diaries, reports, autobiographies.

Throughout the course students will practise presenting and responding to questions orally to develop their spoken language skills.

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Reading – one single text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 20 marks) <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy) | 1 hour 45 minute exam 80 marks 50% of GCSE |
| 2 | <p>Section A: Reading - one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 16 marks) <p>Section B: Writing - writing to present a viewpoint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy). | 2 hour 15 minute exam 96 marks 50% of GCSE |
| 3 | <p>Spoken Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting responding to questions and feedback use of Standard English | Assessed and marked by the classroom teacher. Separate endorsement (0% weighting of GCSE) |

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

GCSE English Literature (Core)

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Taught jointly with English Language. Through literature, students develop their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking.

Shakespeare and the 19th-Century Novel

Section A: Students will study one Shakespeare play from a list of six set texts. Students will study the whole text.

Section B: Students will study one 19th Century novel from a list of seven set texts. Students will study the whole text.

Modern Texts and Poetry

Section A: Students study one from a choice of 12 set texts, which include post-14 prose fiction and drama.

Section B: Students will study one cluster of poems taken from the AQA poetry anthology, Poems Past and Present. There is a choice of three clusters, each containing 15 poems. The poems in each cluster are thematically linked and were written between 1789 and the present day.

The titles of the three clusters are:

- Love and Relationships
- Power and Conflict
- Worlds and Lives

Students should study all 15 poems in their chosen cluster and be prepared to write about any of them in the examination.

Section C: Students practise comparing and contrasting unseen poetry. In preparing for the unseen poetry section of the examination students will experience a wide range of poetry in order to develop their ability to closely analyse unseen poems. They will learn to analyse and compare key features such as their content, theme, structure and use of language.

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Section A Shakespeare: students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.</p> <p>Section B The 19th-century novel: students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.</p> | 1 hour 45 minute exam 64 marks 40% of GCSE |
| 2 | <p>Section A Modern texts: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.</p> <p>Section B Poetry: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.</p> <p>Section C Unseen poetry: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.</p> | 2 hour 15 minute exam 96 marks 60% of GCSE |

For further information:

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702

GCSE Mathematics (Core)

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

The aims of the mathematics course are to enable students to develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts and to acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems. Students also learn to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions whilst comprehending, interpreting and communicating mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Students study 6 key areas of mathematics, all of which are examined in three papers (one non-calculator and two calculator papers) at the end of the course.

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio and Proportion
- Geometry
- Probability
- Statistics

There are two tiers of entry: Foundation tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher tier (grades 4 to 9).

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | No calculator allowed | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 33.3% of GCSE |
| 2 | Calculator allowed | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 33.3% of GCSE |
| 3 | Calculator allowed | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 33.3% of GCSE |

In addition to sitting GCSE maths, all students are invited to sit an Edexcel Award in Algebra or Number and Measure in January of Year 11. We expect the majority of students in sets 1 and 2 to sit the Algebra awards and in other sets to sit the Number and Measure Award.

Our rationale for this is for students to secure a strong foundation in either their algebra or number and measure skills before sitting their GCSE, as much of the higher content relies on excellent algebraic knowledge

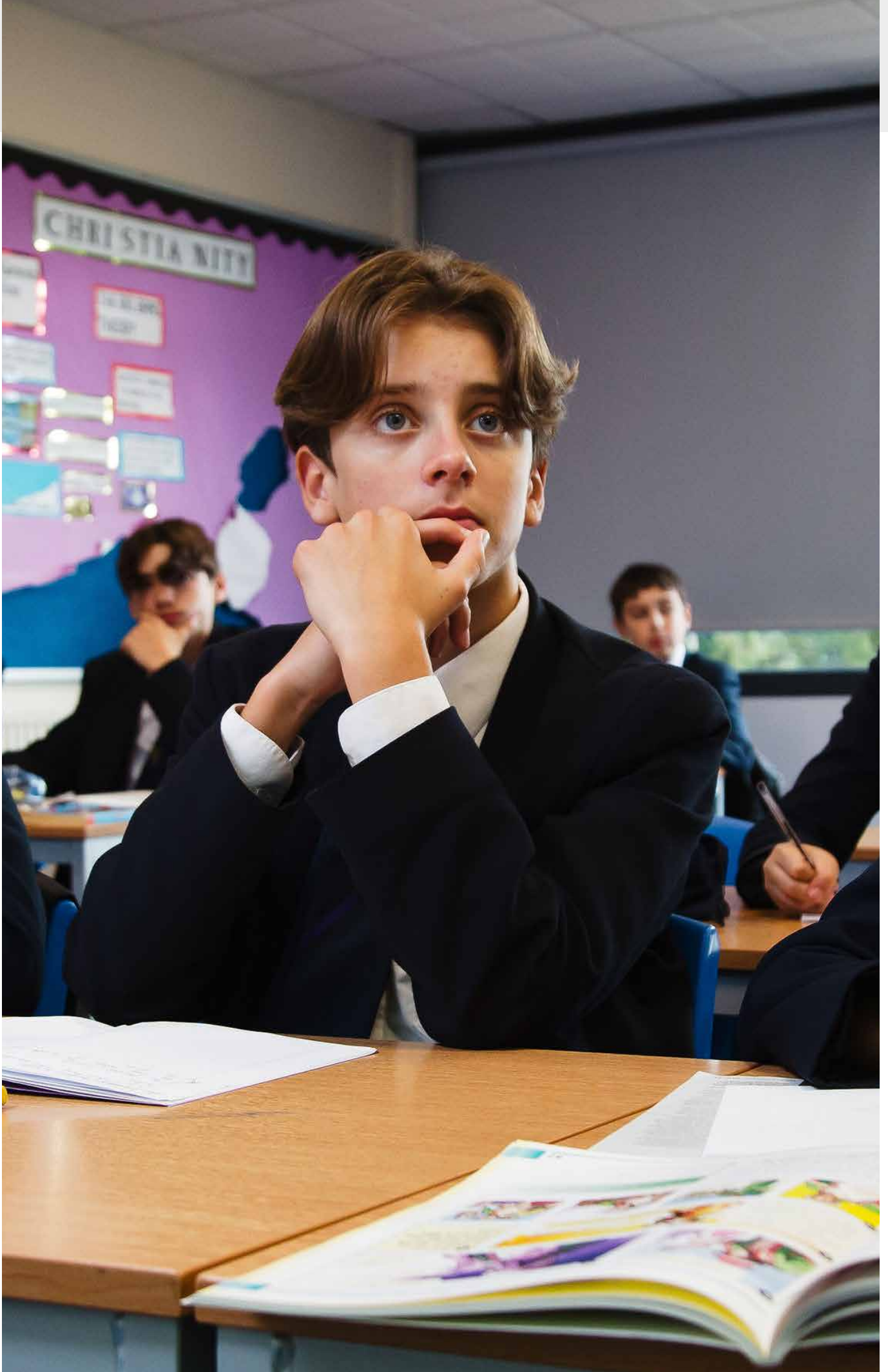
and the foundation paper on number and measure techniques.

The Edexcel awards in mathematics consist of one written exam:

Edexcel Award in Algebra Level 3 - 2 hours
Edexcel Award in Algebra level 2 - 1 hour 30 minutes
Edexcel Award in Number and Measure level 2 - 1 hour 30 minutes

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/mathematics/2015/specification-and-sample-assessment/gcse-maths-2015-specification.pdf>



GCSE Science (Core) Combined or Separate

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics across both years of their course. Students can study either Combined Science or Separate Science.

If students are studying Separate Science they cover each topic covered in Combined Science in more detail, and the additional Physics topic of Space. Students studying Combined Science achieve two GCSE grades in science. Students studying Separate Science achieve separate GCSE grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Year 10 Students study:

Biology: Cell, Organisation, Infection & Response, Bioenergetics
Chemistry: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table,

Bonding, Chemical Changes, Energy Changes
Physics: Energy, Electricity, Particle Model of Matter, Atomic Structure

Year 11 Students study:

Biology: Homeostasis, Inheritance, and Ecology
Chemistry: Rates & Extent of Chemical Changes, Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere, and Using Resources
Physics: Forces, Waves, Magnetism and Electromagnetism, Space (Separate Science only)

There are two tiers of entry: Foundation tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher tier (grades 4 to 9).

Combined Science Assessment Structure:

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------------|---|--|
| Biology 1 | Cell Biology, Organisation, Infection & Response, and Bioenergetics | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 16.7% of GCSE |
| Biology 2 | Homeostasis & Response, Inheritance, and Ecology | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 16.7% of GCSE |
| Chemistry 1 | Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table, Bonding, Quantitative Chemistry, Chemical Changes, and Energy Changes | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 16.7% of GCSE |
| Chemistry 2 | Rate & Extent of Chemical Reactions, Organic Chemistry, Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere, and Using Resources | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 16.7% of GCSE |
| Physics 1 | Energy, Electricity, Particle Model of Matter, and Atomic Structure | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 16.7% of GCSE |
| Physics 2 | Forces, Waves, and Magnetism & Electromagnetism | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 16.7% of GCSE |

Separate Science Assessment Structure:

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------------|---|---|
| Biology 1 | Cell Biology, Organisation, Infection & Response, and Bioenergetics | 1 hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Biology GCSE |
| Biology 2 | Homeostasis & Response, Inheritance, and Ecology | 1 hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Biology GCSE |
| Chemistry 1 | Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table, Bonding, Quantitative Chemistry, Chemical Changes, and Energy Changes | 1 hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Chemistry GCSE |
| Chemistry 2 | Rate & Extent of Chemical Reactions, Organic Chemistry, Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere, and Using Resources | 1 hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Chemistry GCSE |
| Physics 1 | Energy, Electricity, Particle Model of Matter, and Atomic Structure | 1 hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Physics GCSE |
| Physics 2 | Forces, Waves, Magnetism & Electromagnetism, and Space | hour 45 minute exam 100 marks 50% of Physics GCSE |

Student Quote:

“Science teaches me about the wider world and how it works; It explains what I see and how to link it together. During the past two years I have enjoyed my lessons in Science because they are challenging, informative, and develop my understanding of the world. Throughout I have developed an understanding of how to work scientifically and am excited to continue pursuing this subject because it can save the world and humanity.”

For further information:

Combined Science:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-trilogy-8464>

Biology:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/biology-8461>

Chemistry:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry-8462>

Physics:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/physics-8463>

GCSE Art & Design

Fine Art

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students are provided with the opportunity to explore and develop their skills in fine art and to express ideas by working through two or three projects throughout Year 10 and 11.

All work the students complete will be presented in an A3 sketchbook and will take the form of both home and class tasks.

Project 1 - Skills in printmaking

Project 2 - Still life and painting skills

Project 3 - Open choice focusing on a range of different artists and natural life

Within each project the following will be achieved:

- 5 observational drawings completed in a range of media
- An in depth study into the works of one or two artists
- A series of experiments and designs allowing the students to demonstrate their creativity and skill in the use of materials
- A final outcome demonstrating the best of the skills and drawings they have developed in the style of their chosen artist(s)

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------------|---|---|
| Coursework | Personal Portfolio in Art and Design | 96 marks 60% of GCSE |
| Examination | Externally Set Assignment in Art and Design | Preparatory period followed by 10 hours of supervised time 96 marks 40% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“GCSE art and design allows me to exercise my creative freedom. I really enjoy my art lessons. The practical work allows me to use different materials and I particularly enjoy the painting tasks.”

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206>

GCSE Business

Exam Board: OCR

Subject Overview

GCSE Business enables students to develop an interest in business and entrepreneurial skills and builds confidence in using both qualitative and quantitative data to make business decisions to support them in making decisions about their own future working lives.

Business 1

Business Activity, Marketing and People:
Students are introduced to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. They explore the purpose and role of a business from spotting an opportunity through to the growth of an established business. They also look at the role of marketing and human resources.

Business 2

Operations, Finance and Influences on Business:
Students take a closer look at the role of operations and finance in business activity. Operations include production processes, quality of goods and services, customer service and working with suppliers. Finance covers its role within a business, its sources, costs, profit and loss, cash and cash flow. They also explore how business responds to external influences such as ethical and environmental considerations, the economic climate, globalisation and the interdependent nature of business.

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Assessment |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Business Activity, Marketing and People | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 50% of GCSE |
| 2 | Operations, Finance and Influences on Business | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 50% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“Business is one of my favourite subjects as we learn about real world business topics and skills that I find interesting, relevant and will be useful to me in my future career”.

For further information:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/business-j204-from-2017/>

GCSE Computer Science

Exam Board: OCR

Subject Overview

A GCSE in Computer Science encourages students to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in computer science. Students also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs.

Component 1: Computer systems

Introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.

Component 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in Component 1. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.

Practical programming

Students are given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s) during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular Component 2.

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Assessment |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Computer systems | 1 hour 30 minute exam 50% of GCSE Non-Calculator |
| 2 | Computational thinking, algorithms and programming | 1 hour 30 minute exam 50% of GCSE Non-Calculator |

Student Quote:

"I chose Computer Science GCSE because it is an area that I am interested in and wanted to learn more about. I wanted to find out how computers actually work so that I am able to control them rather than them controlling me! I also like programming and wanted to develop my programming skills to create computer programs and games. I also know that the subject has excellent job opportunities that pay very high salaries."

For further information:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/computer-science-j277-from-2020/>

GCSE Design & Technology

Resistant Materials or Systems

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students who choose GCSE Design and Technology opt to work in either Resistant Materials or Systems specialism.

Throughout the course students work on a series of projects to develop their practical skills and subject knowledge.

If they choose the Resistant Materials course, they commence with designing and making a mechanical sweet dispenser, followed by a highly detailed wooden

puzzle game and finally a laser cut clock in the theme of the De Stijl design movement.

If they choose the Systems course, they commence designing and making a flash in the dark circuit including the casing, followed by a more complex 'ProBox' project involving further electrical components.

Running alongside both specialisms, examination and non examination assessment skills are taught and developed.

Assessment Structure

| Paper/NEA | Content | Assessment |
|---------------|--|---|
| NEA | <p>Students complete a substantial design and make task which focuses on the following assessment criteria: Identifying and investigating design possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing a design brief and specification Generating design ideas Developing design ideas Realising design ideas Analysing & evaluating <p>The exam board release the contextual challenges in June of Year 10. Students produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence.</p> | <p>Approximately 35 hours 100 marks 50% of GCSE</p> |
| Written paper | <p>Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks) A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks) Several short answer questions and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.</p> <p>Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks) A mixture of short answer and extended response questions which focus on pupil's knowledge of designing and making.</p> | <p>2 hour exam 100 marks 50% of GCSE</p> |

Student Quote:

"I chose technology because I like to understand how objects are designed, made and used. I see Technology as an integral part to helping resolve the issues we have in society and can help shape a better world and I want to be a part of this."

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology>

GCSE Drama

Exam Board: OCR

Subject Overview

GCSE Drama provides opportunities for students to understand and create drama as a practical art form. Students develop a range of theatrical skills and work collaboratively to generate and communicate ideas and meanings through informed artistic choices. This course also looks at technical aspects behind the scenes, such as lighting and sound responsibilities.

Components 1 and 2 - Devising Drama

Students will research and explore a stimulus, work collaboratively and create their own devised drama.

Component 3 - Presenting and performing texts

Students develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design by presenting a showcase of two extracts from a performance text.

Component 4 - Performance and response

Students will explore practically a performance text to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama. Students will analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance.

Assessment Structure

| Component | Content | Assessment |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 and 2 | Devising Drama | Non-Exam Assessment 60 marks, 30% of GCSE |
| 3 | Presenting and Performing Texts | Non-Exam Assessment (Visiting examination) 60 marks 30% of GCSE |
| 4 | Performance and Response | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 40% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

"I have really enjoyed learning about the technical side of drama particularly the lighting and sound. Seeing professional performances, I can appreciate the hard work that goes on behind the scenes."

For further information:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/images/242630-specification-accredited-gcse-drama-j316.pdf>

GCSE Economics

Exam Board: OCR

Subject Overview

GCSE Economics helps students to develop a sound understanding of the main economic concepts and appreciation for how economic issues affect our lives.

Unit 1: Introduction to Economics

Students are introduced to fundamental economic terms and concepts and apply them to explain how markets work in contemporary and historical economic contexts.

They study the roles of the main economic agents and how they interact and the importance of financial markets. Students are encouraged to evaluate the moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise from economic activity from a microeconomic perspective.

Unit 2: National and International Economics

Students develop their understanding of how governments aim to achieve national economic objectives and the effects of economic policies on markets and the wider economy as well as the importance and impact of international trade and globalisation. Students are encouraged to evaluate the moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise from economic activity from a macroeconomic perspective.

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Assessment |
|------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Economics | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 50% of GCSE |
| 2 | National and International Economics | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 50% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

"I love the fact that I don't have to wait until A Level to study Economics at Verulam and I can start learning essential skills about how the Economy works from Year 10".

For further information:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/economics-j205-from-2017/>

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students study the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. Students study how ingredients affect our bodies and what health conditions are associated to diet. There is a strong link to science where edible experiments are completed to investigate the way ingredients work and why. Students learn about current food issues and how we can promote food provenance, for example, reducing food

waste and shopping locally. Students build on KS3 knowledge in food safety, learning about hygiene and food poisoning. Coursework allows students to be independent and creative with the dishes they can choose to make, based around a theme, for example, design three dishes that celebrate a festival from around the world.

Assessment Structure

| Paper/NEA | Content | Assessment |
|---------------|--|---|
| Written paper | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food, nutrition and health 2. Food science 3. Food safety 4. Food choice 5. Food provenance | 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE |
| NEA 1 | Food investigation | Completed during lessons 30 marks 15% of GCSE |
| NEA 2 | Food preparation assessment | Completed during lessons 70 marks 35% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“During our time in Food lessons, we have learned to plan, cook and present food to a high level. If we understand how to follow recipes we can begin to experiment with flavours and combinations to create our own dishes.”

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-8585>

GCSE French

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students follow a 2 year GCSE course, and cover language contexts which are organised into the following three broad themes:

- Identity and culture
- Local, national, international and global areas of interest
- Current and future study and employment

Students will learn to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language, as appropriate, to note down key points, express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, in order to interest, inform or convince.

There are two tiers of entry: Foundation tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher tier (grades 4 to 9).

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Foundation Tier | Higher Tier |
|---------|---|---|---|
| Paper 1 | Listening: Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language | 35 minute written exam 40 marks 25% of GCSE | 45 minute written exam 50 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 2 | Speaking: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes | Non-exam assessment. 7-9 minutes plus preparation time. 60 marks 25% of GCSE | Non-exam assessment. 10-12 minutes plus preparation time. 60 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 3 | Reading: Understanding and responding to different types of written language | 45 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE | 60 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 4 | Writing: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes | 60 minute written exam 50 marks 25% of GCSE | 1 hour 15 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“French is good because the lessons are fun and the Paris trip is great. It is very useful for future jobs to be able to speak a foreign language and you can get your English Baccalaureate.”

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/french-8658>

GCSE Geography

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students cover both the physical and human world in detail and will also gain core skills in fieldwork.

Paper 1 - Physical environment:

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards – natural hazards and climate change

Section B: The living world - ecosystems and tropical rainforests and cold environments

Section C: Physical landscapes of the UK – coasts and rivers

Paper 2 – Human environment:

Section A: Urban issues and challenges – urban change in the world and UK, sustainable cities

Section B: The changing economic world – changing UK economy, Nigeria and the development gap

Section C: The challenge of resource management – resource use, water

Paper 3 – Fieldwork is studied across the two years and involves off site trips to allow students to gain valuable knowledge relevant to their studies.

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | Physical environment | 1 hour 30 minute exam 88 marks 35% of GCSE |
| 2 | Human environment | 1 hour 30 minute exam 88 marks 35% of GCS |
| 3 | Geographical applications | 1 hour 30 minute exam 76 marks 30% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“To understand the world we live in, we need to know about the world we live in. Geography enables us to do this – if we can understand the world we live in we can help the world both now and in the future. This is why we should study geography.”

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035>

GCSE History

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

GCSE History engages students in a broad and diverse study of the history of Britain and the wider world.

There are four units studied:

Unit 1 - Warfare through time: A study of the change across time, analysing changing trends in warfare over the past 800 years. These include changes in the nature of warfare such as weaponry and tactics through to the experience of warfare such as recruitment and the impact on civilians.

Unit 2 - Anglo Saxon and Norman England 1060 - 1088:

An in-depth study focused on change and continuity. The unit starts with a study of Anglo Saxon England then analyses the impact of the Norman invasion in 1066 and the effect of the society, culture and governance of England.

Unit 3 - Russia and the Soviet Union 1917- 41: This unit focuses on the communist revolution of 1917 and the impact of the Bolshevik party on Russia. Key events such as the civil war and purges are used to establish conflicting interpretations of history which the students learn to analyse and evaluate.

Unit 4 - Superpower Relations and the Cold War

1941-91: A study of relations between the USA and USSR after World War Two. Students study the causes of the Cold War, key crises and how it came to an end. There is a particular focus on the significance of key developments and how they shaped the Cold War.

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|---|--|
| 1 | Warfare through time 1250-present day | 1 hour 15 minute exam 52 marks 30% of GCSE |
| 2 | Superpower Relations and the Cold War 1941-91 and Anglo Saxon England 1060-1088 | 1 hour 45 minute exam 64 marks 40% of GCSE |
| 3 | Russia and the Soviet Union 1917-41 | 1 hour 20 minute exam 52 marks 30% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

"History has helped me understand the world around me and learn how to think for myself. The teachers helped me achieve more than I ever thought I was capable of."

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/history-2016.html>

Subject Overview

GCSE Media Studies helps students develop a wider understanding and appreciation of the media, both historical and contemporary, and their role in society, culture and politics. Students apply their academic knowledge in the creation of their own media production.

Component 1: Television and promoting media

In this component students cover contemporary and historic television products. They also study media products from the same global conglomerate producer illustrating the media forms of film, advertising and marketing, and video games.

Component 2: Music and news

This component focuses on magazines, together with music videos and radio. They also study media online, social and participatory media and newspapers.

Component 3 or 4: Creating media

Students create media products of their own to express and communicate meaning to an intended audience by applying knowledge and understanding of media language and media representations.

Assessment Structure

| Component | Content | Assessment |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Television and promoting media | 1 hour 45 minute exam (including 30 minutes viewing time) 70 marks 35% of GCSE |
| 2 | Music and news | 1 hour 15 minute exam 70 marks 35% of GCSE |
| 3 or 4 | Creating media | Non examination assessment 35 marks 30% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

“Media Studies widens your view on how you see the world and the amount that the Media influences our decisions and free-time.”

For further information:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/media-studies-j200-from-2023/>

GCSE Physical Education

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

Physical Education GCSE aims to equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values they need to be able to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities. Students will also gain understanding of how physical activities benefit health, fitness and wellbeing.

Component 1: Fitness and Body Systems

Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology

Topic 2: Movement analysis

Topic 3: Physical training

Topic 4: Use of data

Component 2: Health and Performance

Topic 1: Health, fitness and wellbeing

Topic 2: Sport psychology

Topic 3: Socio-cultural influences

Topic 4: Use of data

Component 3: Practical Performance

Skills during individual and team activities - Students complete three physical activities from a set list. One must be a team activity. One must be an individual activity. The final activity can be a free choice.

Component 4: Personal Exercise Programme

Planning, carrying out, monitoring and evaluating a Personal Exercise Programme.

Assessment Structure

| Component | Content | Assessment |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Fitness and Body Systems | 1 hour 30 minute exam 80 marks 36% of GCSE |
| 2 | Health and Performance | 1 hour 15 minute exam 60 marks 24% of GCSE |
| 3 | Practical Performance | Non-Exam assessment 105 marks 30% of GCSE |
| 4 | Personal Exercise Programme | Non-Exam assessment 20 marks 10% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

"I chose GCSE PE as I enjoyed PE and played sports outside of school to a high level. This allowed me to score highly on my practical grades in 2 team sports (Football, Cricket) and an individual sport (Golf)"

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Physical%20Education/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/GCSE-physical-education-2016-specification.pdf>

GCSE Religious Studies

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students consider different beliefs and attitudes to religious and non-religious issues in contemporary British society. They will gain an understanding of the traditions, beliefs, teachings and practices of Great Britain and understand the diversity, including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

Component 1 - The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices. The course leader will choose two from the following:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Catholic Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism

Christianity and Catholic Christianity is a prohibited combination.

Component 2 - Thematic studies applies the religious knowledge and content studied for Component 1 to the four thematic religious, philosophical and ethical areas of study:

- Religion and life
- The existence of God and revelation
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 | The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices | 1 hour 45 minute exam 102 marks 50% of final grade |
| 2 | Thematic Studies | 1 hour 45 minute exam 99 marks 50% of final grade |

Student Quote:

“Studying RE has helped me to understand more about our world and consider why people do the things they do. I like debating the big issues of the modern world, like the death penalty and euthanasia, and having the freedom and opportunity to express my opinions.”

For further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062>

GCSE Spanish

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Overview

Students follow a 2 year GCSE course, and cover language contexts which are organised into the following three broad themes:

- Identity and culture
- Local, national, international and global areas of interest
- Current and future study and employment

Students will learn to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language, as appropriate, to note down key points, express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, in order to interest, inform or convince.

There are two tiers of entry: Foundation tier (grades 1 to 5) and Higher tier (grades 4 to 9).

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Foundation Tier | Higher Tier |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Paper 1 | Listening: Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language | 35 minute written exam 40 marks 25% of GCSE | 45 minute written exam 50 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 2 | Speaking: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes | Non-exam assessment. 7-9 minutes plus preparation time. 60 marks 25% of GCSE | Non-exam assessment. 10-12 minutes plus preparation time. 60 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 3 | Reading: Understanding and responding to different types of written language | 45 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE | 60 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE |
| Paper 4 | Writing: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes | 60 minutes written exam 50 marks 25% of GCSE | 1 hour 15 minute written exam 60 marks 25% of GCSE |

Student Quote:

'I love Spanish at GCSE because I love learning the language as I feel the subject is extremely important for my future career ambitions, and for one day living abroad! I can't wait to go on the Spanish trip with my friends this year.'

For further information:

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/spanish-8698

BTEC Enterprise

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

The BTEC Enterprise qualification provides students with the opportunity to develop broad knowledge and understanding of the enterprise sector, and relevant transferable skills such as research, planning, problem solving and communication.

Component 1: Exploring Enterprises: Students will explore different enterprises to develop their knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of enterprises and the skills needed by entrepreneurs to be successful. Students will explore how enterprises use market research to find out about their customer needs and competitor behaviour and how internal and external factors may affect enterprises.

Component 2: Planning and Presenting a

Micro-Enterprise Idea: Students will generate two realistic ideas for a micro-enterprise and choose one of these to plan within budget. They will individually present their business plan for their idea and review the production and delivery of their presentation to make recommendations for improvements.

Component 3: Marketing and Finance for Enterprise:

Students will explore how marketing is used by enterprises and the factors that influence how enterprises identify and target their market. Learners will complete financial documents and statements and explore how to use them to monitor and improve the performance of an enterprise in order to make decisions and recommend strategies for success.

Assessment Structure

| Component | Content | Assessment |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | Exploring Enterprises | Non-Exam Assessment 60 marks 30% of qualification |
| 2 | Planning and Presenting a Micro-Enterprise Idea | Non-Exam Assessment 60 marks 30% of qualification |
| 3 | Marketing and Finance for Enterprise | 1 hour 30 minute exam 60 marks 40% of qualification |

Student Quote:

"I like the fact that we can learn about enterprise in a practical way and actually carry out and complete tasks that real businesses do".

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-tech-awards/enterprise-2022.html>

BTEC Music Practice

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

BTEC Music Practice qualification gives students the opportunity to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the music sector, and specialist skills such as applying musical knowledge to music performance, music creation and music production.

Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles
Students explore the techniques used in the creation of different musical products and investigate the key features of different musical styles and genres.

Component 2: Music Skills Development

Students develop two musical disciplines through engagement in practical tasks, while documenting their progress and planning for further improvement.

Component 3: Responding to a Music Brief

Students develop and present music in response to a given music brief.

Assessment Structure

| Paper | Content | Assessment |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Component 1 | Exploring Music Products and Styles | Non-Exam Assessment 60 marks 30% of qualification |
| Component 2 | Music Skills Development | Non-Exam Assessment 60 marks 30% of qualification |
| Component 3 | Responding to a Music Brief | Students will be given the set task 12 weeks before the supervised assessment period, in order to carry out the development of creative ideas and rehearsal for the final music product. The set task will be completed in 3 hours within the period timetabled by Pearson. 60 marks 40% of qualification |

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/btec-tec-awards/music-practice/2022/specification-and-sample-assessments/60370555-BTEC-Tech-Award-Music-Practice-2022-purpose-statement.pdf>

BTEC Sport Level 2 Tech Award

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Subject Overview

The BTEC SportTech Award gives students the opportunity to develop sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. Students will have the opportunity to develop applied knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- investigating provisions for sport including equipment and facilities to enhance sport
- planning and delivery of sport drills and sessions
- fitness for sport including fitness testing and methodology

Assessment Structure

| Unit | Content | Assessment |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Component 1 | Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity | Non-Exam Assessment 60 Marks 30% of Qualification |
| Component 2 | Taking Part and Improving Other Participants Sporting Performance | Non-Exam Assessment 60 Marks 30% of Qualification |
| Component 3 | Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants Performance in Sport and Physical Activity | 90 Minute Exam 60 Marks 40% of Qualification |

Student Quote:

"I enjoyed PE in KS3 and wanted to continue. I didn't play for any teams outside of school so the BTEC option was better for me as I could get good grades on my coursework, where I was writing about sport rather than graded on my performance. I also work better completing coursework than exams"

For further information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/btec-tec-awards/sport/2022/specification-and-sample-assessments/btec-tech-award-sport-spec.pdf>

Further Guidance

When you are deciding on your options subjects it is important to consider the following points:

How much do you enjoy the subject?

You will be studying this subject for at least 6 hours per fortnight over the next two years.

How well do you normally do in exams?

Some subjects have more exams than others and some have a more coursework based assessment.

What are your future career aspirations?

Which subjects best suit your future career or future study plans.

What is your current academic ability in that subject?

You may really enjoy a subject but not get the best grades, this could impact on your overall attainment and average point score for Sixth Form or other career plans.

What combination of subjects work well?

Some subjects are very similar so it is good to get a balance of different courses, some complement each other really well. It is important to not narrow all your options too soon.

There is no one size fits all approach to making options choices, it is about what is right for you as an individual. Once you have made your choices, we will do what we can to place you on the courses you have chosen, working within the limits of our timetable, staffing and other constraints.

If you need any further information about a subject please contact the relevant subject teacher.



VERULAM

SCHOOL

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