WHAT OPTIONS DO I HAVE FOR MY KEY STAGE 4 EDUCATION?

For students going into Year 10 in September 2026

Options Information Booklet

Key Stage 4 is the name given for the two years (Years 10 and 11) during which the majority of courses are studied that lead to the final external qualifications that your child will leave us with

There are some elements of Key Stage 4 which are compulsory and others which are optional. This booklet will outline some of the key details, including which courses will be on offer in the coming two years.

Contents

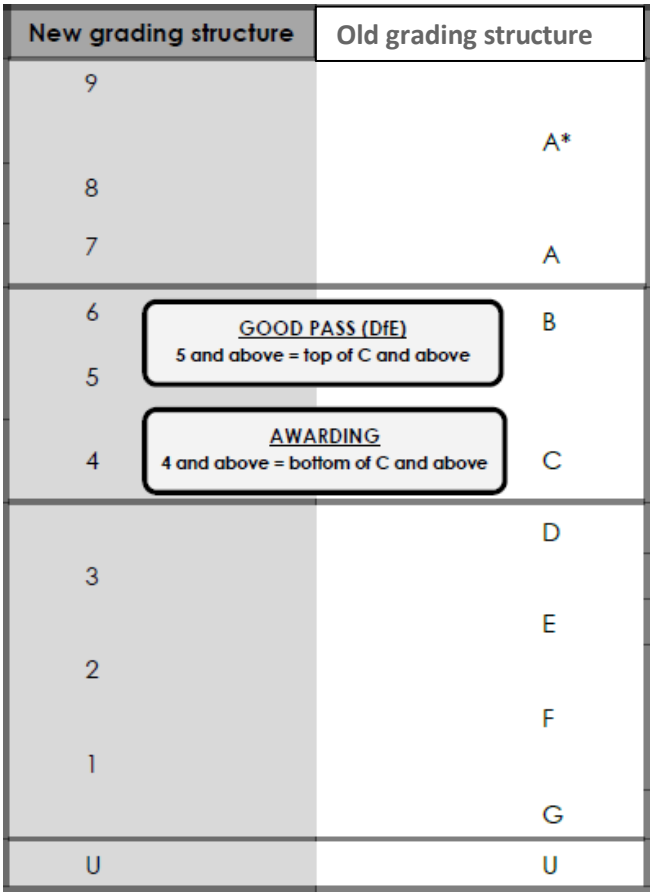
The Introduction of Reformed GCSEs

A Change in the Grading System for GCSEs

In 2013 the Government announced an overhaul of the grading system for the GCSE examination.

For this year group, who sit their GCSE exams, these changes mean that they will have all of their GCSE's graded on a system of 9-1 with 9 being the highest grade.

This diagram shows you how the new grading structure works:



The reformed GCSEs:

- Are more demanding.
- Have been designed for a two-year period of study.
- Will be linear, so students will take all of their exams at the end of the course.
- Will have non-exam assessment removed or reduced in the majority of GCSEs.
- Will have a new grading scale from 9 to 1 (with 9 being the highest).

Important Dates in the Options Process

Date	Event
Monday 9 March	Start of Options Fortnight - Subject taster sessions - Extended Options assembly workshop - Mentor meetings with staff for key groups
Thursday 19 March	Parents and Students Options Fayre
Friday 20 March	Straw Poll taken
Thursday 26 March (TBC)	Built Option Blocks shared – students to choose options and back up choices
Monday 13 April	Further mentor meetings for key groups
Summer Term date TBC	Option choices confirmed

The Compulsory Element

The compulsory element is made up of:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education
- PSHCE - Personal, Social, Health and Careers Education

There are different pathways within some of these subjects and these are explained later in the booklet.



GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

All students will study both English Language and English Literature, leading to two separate GCSE qualifications.

Why study English Language?

Although English Language is a compulsory subject, it is important that students appreciate the breadth of skills which are nurtured within English lessons and are applicable across all other subjects. Whilst studying English Language, students will practice reading with efficiency and detail, learn to express themselves clearly both orally and within their academic writing, as well as learning to articulate complex ideas and form convincing, developed arguments. These are valuable, transferable skills in the workplace and beyond.

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Exam Board: AQA

The English Language GCSE will be 100% exam assessed.

Examinations are in one tier only and students will be awarded the new grading of 9 to 1 (9 being the highest grade awarded).

The content of the course requires learners to:

- Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.
- Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
- Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
- Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
- Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.
- Write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately.
- Use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately.
- Acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Listen to and understand spoken language, and use spoken Standard English effectively.

Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

- **Section A (25%)** Students will answer four reading comprehension questions on a fictional prose extract from the either the 19th century, 20th Century or 21st century.
- **Section B (25%)** Prose writing – Students will complete a piece of creative writing inspired by a given image or title.

Paper 2: Writer's view points and perspectives

- **Section A (25%)** Students will answer four reading comprehension questions on two non-fiction texts. The texts will be from two different eras (19th century, 20th Century or 21st century) and two of the questions will be comparative.
- **Section B (25%)** Students will complete a piece of transactional writing (for example: a letter, speech, a leaflet, an essay or article).

NEA: Spoken Language (non-examined assessment)

- Students will present a speech to the class upon a relevant topic of interest and will respond to questions relating to this.

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Exam Board: Eduqas

Why study English Literature?

It is important to be aware that all of our students study English Literature as a GCSE. As you will see from looking at the specification outlined below, students are exposed to an incredibly diverse repertoire of Literature spanning from the pre 19th Century to more modern texts. As well as fostering creativity and imagination, the English Literature course also aims to broaden students' worldly view through exposure to texts which often challenge current thinking and ideas.

The English Literature GCSE is 100% exam assessed.

Examinations are in one tier only and students will be awarded the new grading of 9 to 1 (9 being the highest grade awarded).

The content of the course requires learners to:

- Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
- Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
- Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
- Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation

Summary of assessment

Component 1: Shakespeare and Poetry

- Section A (20%) Shakespeare. Students will answer both an extract-based question and an essay-style question on their set text 'Macbeth'. Students will not have a copy of the play in the exam.
- Section B (20%) Poetry from 1789 to present day. There are two questions based on a taught anthology of poems, one is a comparison question and the other, a single poem analysis question.

Component 2: Post-1914 Prose/Drama, Poetry anthology and Unseen Poetry

- Section A (20%) Post-1914 drama. Students will answer a source-based question on 'A Christmas Carol. Students will not have a copy of the play in the exam.
- Section B (20%) 19th century prose. Students will answer a source-based question on 'A Christmas Carol'. Students will not have a copy of the novel in the exam.
- Section C (20%) Unseen poetry from 20th/21st Century. There are two questions on unseen poetry, one requiring students to compare poems, and the other is a single-poem analysis question.

GCSE Mathematics

Exam Board: OCR

All students will study Mathematics.

The course offered leads to G.C.S.E. Mathematics Award.

This course is intended to help students become fluent in the fundamentals of Mathematics, ensure that students can reason mathematically and develop competence in solving sophisticated problems. Students will build on their learning from key stage 3.

Assessment objectives ensure that each paper will assess students' ability to recall, select and apply their knowledge of mathematics, to reason, interpret and communicate mathematically and to solve non-routine problems. The content will cover number, algebra, ratio, proportion and rates of change, geometry and measures, probability and statistics.

The course will be examined in three equally weighted written examination papers at the end of Year 11. The examination has two entry tiers which will allow entry for students at a level that best suits their abilities and ensures a Grade 4 and 5 are accessible to all.

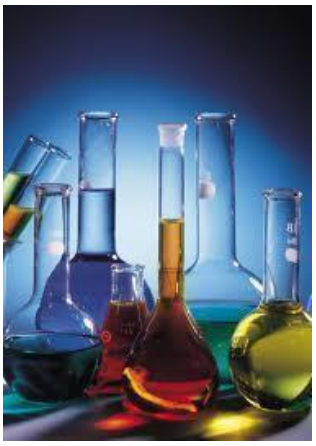
FOUNDATION TIER (Edexcel): Grade 1 – 5

HIGHER TIER (OCR): Grades 4 – 9

The qualification will be graded and certified on a nine grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total mark scored across all three papers where 9 is the highest grade. Individual papers are not graded.

There is no Controlled Assessment or coursework element.

GCSE: SCIENCE



Exam Board: AQA

How is the course structured?

In Year 9, students are taught Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately by specialist teachers in these subjects. This is to prepare students for continuing with all three Science subjects in year 10. The vast majority of students will follow the Combined Science route. Students who have consistently demonstrated a deep and accurate understanding of the key stage three science curriculum, may choose to follow the Separate Sciences route. This will take place during the options process.

Combined Science

The Combined Science course follows the AQA Combined Science: Trilogy syllabus. The course develops strong scientific knowledge alongside practical skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It provides an excellent foundation for post 16 pathways, including separate Science A-Levels, vocational courses and apprenticeships, while helping students understand the science that underpins everyday life and the modern world. Students will continue to be taught by specialist teachers, and upon completion, they will receive a "double award," meaning they receive two Science GCSEs.

Separate Sciences

We offer Separate Sciences as part of the Options Choices. The Triple GCSE Science AQA course, also known as Separate Sciences, allows students to study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics as three individual GCSEs. This means learners cover more content per topic and explore scientific ideas in greater depth compared to the Combined Science course. Each subject is assessed separately and awards its own GCSE grade, so students will receive three separate grades.

Studying Separate Sciences offers a strong foundation for further study in science-related subjects such as A-level Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. It is highly beneficial as it encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving — skills that are valuable across many careers. The additional depth of study not only strengthens students' understanding of how the world works, but also supports future ambitions in fields like medicine, engineering, research, and technology.

Those who have shown enthusiasm and strong performance in Year 9 science lessons will be well suited to the challenges of Separate Sciences and will likely find it both engaging and rewarding. The course is designed for students who have a passion for science, enjoy challenging themselves, and can demonstrate a solid understanding of scientific concepts. It suits hardworking, focused students who will need to consistently complete homework and take an active interest in learning both in lessons and independently at home. Those opting to study the course need to have a good grasp of the scientific concepts studied in year 9, and we will look at end of topic test scores and how students have performed on mid and end of year assessments to check that they have grasped the basics needed to study Science as three separate GCSEs.

Tiered Papers

All of the Science examinations have two tiers of entry. This allows students to be examined at a level that best suits their ability and ensures Grade 4 and 5 are accessible to all. Combined Science students must sit the same tiered exams for all three Science subjects.

FOUNDATION TIER: Grades 1 – 5

HIGHER TIER: Grades 4 – 9

Required Practicals

Coursework and Controlled Assessment are no longer part of the Science GCSE courses. In order that the emphasis on practical work is not reduced, the exam boards will examine students on aspects of some key investigations that they will undertake over the three years in lessons. In the final exams, 15% of the marks will be based around the scientific investigations from the topics listed below.

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
1. Microscopy 2. Osmosis 3. Enzymes 4. Food tests 5. Photosynthesis 6. Reaction time 7. Food investigations 8. Plant responses (separates only) 9. Decay (separates only) 10. Microbiology (separates only)	1. Making salts 2. Temperature changes 3. Rates of reaction 4. Chromatography 5. Water purification 6. Electrolysis 7. Neutralisation (separates only) 8. Identifying ions (separates only)	1. Specific heat capacity 2. Resistance 3. I-V characteristics 4. Density 5. Force and extension 6. Acceleration 7. Waves 8. Radiation and absorption 9. Thermal insulation (separates only) 10. Light (separates only)

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH CITIZENSHIP & ECONOMIC EDUCATION

PSHCE stands for Personal, Social, Health Citizenship & Economic Education. Within PSHCE, the topics of Sex and Relationships Education, Drugs Education, Citizenship, Personal Finance and Careers Education are taught.

Elements of compulsory RE will also be delivered within PSHCE but will not overlap with the RE GCSE. This is not an examined subject.

Careers

Careers Education at Burscough Priory Academy is delivered to Years 10 and 11 through PSHCE. Activities are varied and engaging in delivering Careers Education.

We have strong connections with external agencies, colleges and sixth forms, who regularly visit lessons and assemblies to deliver expert advice and guidance on careers. Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to attend Taster Days at Colleges and Sixth Form Centres around Lancashire and we have regular visits from their representatives, who are available for students to talk to during careers drop in sessions at lunch time and at all Key Stage 4 Parents Evenings.

OPTION CHOICES

HOW TO CHOOSE

Students are required to choose 3 option subjects. They will study these subjects for 6 hours a fortnight.

Students **must choose** at least one of either ***History, Geography, Computer Science, French*** or ***Spanish***.

Please read the next section carefully. It describes the content and assessment requirements of every subject.

Ask yourself these questions

- Am I interested in the subject?
- How can I get balance in my choices?
- Could dropping a subject disadvantage me in the future? What about subjects that will make up the English Baccalaureate?
- Is the subject necessary for my future career?
- What if my idea of a career changes?

Find out the facts

- What are my strengths?
- What are my weaknesses?
- What subject skills do I need?

Who is available to help me with my decisions?

- Parents – who know you best of all.
- Subject teachers – who know your ability in their subject
- Form Tutor - who see you every day and are available to talk to about any issues.
- Progress Leaders - who want the best for you as an individual and may follow up on your conversations with your tutor.
- Senior Leadership from staff – who may follow up with you if there are any issues with your options.

Please note

In some practical subjects such as Art and Design and Food Preparation and Nutrition, class sizes will be limited due to health and safety requirements.

We will do our best to provide the choices that you have selected but we cannot guarantee that this will be achieved in every case. A course cannot run if insufficient students have opted for it, whilst other courses may be oversubscribed. As with other parts of the timetable, the provision of any subject depends on the resources and staffing available.

GCSE ART AND DESIGN

Exam Board: AQA

Why should I study Art & Design?

Studying Art and Design at GCSE is the first step for students to take should they be interested in a career within the creative industries. The UK's creative industries are world leading and the sector is continually growing, covering a huge range of professions and activities, it's always evolving to include new artforms and technologies. It certainly is an exciting sector to work in. The main industry areas include Visual arts, architecture, photography, illustration, fashion, graphic, design, media, TV and advertising. The opportunities within this field are endless.

How is the course examined?

The Assessment consists of **60% Component 1**: Coursework Portfolio, **40% Component 2**: Externally Set Task (EXAM)

The Coursework Portfolio is made up of two themed projects from which students' select and present work that exemplifies their skills. The externally set task consists of a selection of projects set by the exam board from which students choose one. They make drawings, designs and experiment with a range of materials to prepare for a final piece. The final piece is then completed in 10 hours of supervised time under exam conditions.

What will I study?

This is a broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and new media and technologies. Candidates can create work using a wide range of art, craft and design materials and processes. This may include drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, illustration and mixed media.

What can this course offer me?

Throughout the GCSE course students have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. Students will observe and record their ideas and experiences through drawing of all different forms and to research and analyse visually the work of other artists, craftspeople and designers. They learn to experiment with a wide range of materials and to develop their own original ideas. In addition to practical skills, imaginative ideas and creative thinking, students develop self confidence, responsibility and organisation. This course will develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding of Art and Design, whilst giving them an excellent foundation should they choose to study Art or any form of design at Post 16 or take an employment route into the creative industries.

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE

Exam Board: OCR

What is GCSE Computer Science?

Computers are widely used in all aspects of business, industry, government, education, leisure and the home. In this technological age, a study of computer science, and particularly how computers are used in the solution of a variety of problems, is essential to learners.

Computer Science integrates well with subjects across the curriculum. It demands both logical discipline and imaginative creativity in the selection and design of algorithms and the writing, testing and debugging of programs; it relies on an understanding of the rules of language at a fundamental level; it encourages an awareness of the management and organisation of computer systems; it extends learners' horizons beyond the school or college environment in the appreciation of the effects of computer science on society and individuals.

The OCR Computer Science GCSE is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It 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.

What will I study?

There are two units of study which cover the following areas:

J277/01: Computer Systems

This component will assess:

- 1.1 Systems architecture
- 1.2 Memory and storage
- 1.3 Computer networks, connections and protocols
- 1.4 Network security
- 1.5 Systems software
- 1.6 Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology

J277/02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

This component will assess:

- 2.1 Algorithms
- 2.2 Programming fundamentals
- 2.3 Producing robust programs
- 2.4 Boolean logic
- 2.5 Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments

What are the benefits of GCSE Computer Science?

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Computer Science will encourage students to:

- Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation.
- Analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs.
- Think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically.
- understand the components that make up digital systems, and how they communicate with one Another and with other systems.
- Understand the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society.
- Apply mathematical skills relevant to Computer Science.

How is the course examined?

The full GCSE is assessed as follows:

J277/01: Computer Systems

- Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes 50% of total GCSE

J277/02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

- Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes 50% of total GCSE

Practical Programming

- All students must be given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s), either to a specification or to solve a problem (or problems), during their course of study. Students may draw on some of the content in both components when engaged in Practical Programming.

Creative iMedia

Exam board: OCR Cambridge Nationals

This is a subject introduced to our students at Key Stage 4.

What will I study?

Digital Media is a key part of many areas of our everyday lives and vital to the UK economy. Production of digital media products is a requirement of almost every business so there is huge demand for a skilled and digitally literate workforce. This course will provide you with the skills for further study in subjects such as media, journalism, design or business.

Students will be awarded a grade from a Pass at level 1 through to Distinction * at level 2, students need to complete all three units to be awarded their grade.

Why should you study Creative iMedia?

Huge demand for a skilled and digitally literate workforce

Digital media products are used in almost every business

A key part of many areas of our everyday lives

Vital to the UK economy that the workforce is equipped with creative people

How is the course examined?

Units	Assessment method	Weighting
Mandatory Units		
Creative i-Media in the media industry	Written paper 1hr 15mins	40%
Visual identity and digital graphics	Coursework	25%
A choice of one optional unit		
Interactive digital media	Coursework	35%

What jobs could Creative iMedia lead to?

Web designer

Animator

Photo editor

Social Media Manager

GCSE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

Exam Board: **AQA**

Why should I study Design & Technology?

Studying Design & Technology at GCSE is the first step for students to take should they be interested in a career within the creative industries. The UK's creative industries are world leading and the sector is continually growing, covering a huge range of professions and activities, it's always evolving to include new technologies. It certainly is an exciting sector to work in. The main industry areas include Engineering, Design, Architecture, Graphic Design, and the Construction Industry. The opportunities within these fields are endless.

How is the course examined?

The Assessment consists of:

50% Component 1: Non-Exam Assessment.

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for this specification is made up of a single design and make task.

50% Component 2: Exam.

The subject content for the exam has been split into three sections as follows:

- Core technical principles.
- Specialist technical principles.
- Designing and making principles.

The exam and non-exam assessment will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Identify, investigate and outline design possibilities to address needs and wants.
- AO2: Design and make prototypes that are fit for purpose.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate: Design decisions and outcomes, including for prototypes made by themselves and others, plus wider issues in Design and Technology.
- AO4: Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of: Technical principles plus designing and making principles.

What will I study?

The course encourages students to:

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

What can this course offer me?

Throughout the GCSE course students have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. Students will observe and record their ideas and experiences through drawings of all different forms and to research and analyse products. They learn to experiment with a wide range of materials and to develop their own original ideas. In addition to practical skills, imaginative ideas and creative thinking, students develop self-confidence, responsibility and organisation. This course will develop student's knowledge, skills and understanding of Design & Technology, whilst giving them an excellent foundation should they choose to study any form of design at Post 16 or take an employment route into the creative industries.

GCSE DRAMA

Exam Board: AQA

Why should I study Drama?

If you love to be on the stage performing and devising your own work or behind the scenes creating lighting, set, costume or make up designs then this is the course for you. You will be working alongside students who have the same interest and passion to succeed and further their acting and design abilities. This course also offers you the ability to develop your teamwork communication and leadership skills all of which employers are looking for in their employees.

What will I study?

The Drama course focuses on students developing an understanding of acting, lighting, sound, make up, costume and set design. You will develop Drama techniques and have the opportunity to use them to develop character and storyline. Students will explore a wide range of genres and be given different stimuli to devise a performance from for assessment.

You will also start to study the GCSE set text, Blood Brothers, through reading the play, research and acting out scenes. You will design set, costume, make up and lighting. Students will develop responses to questions to prepare them for the written part of the GCSE exam.

Students will evaluate their own work and that of others to support their development towards the live theatre written exam. This leads to visits from local colleges touring with their work, which allows our students to learn how to evaluate performances. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the arts industry and working as a professional.

There will also be the opportunity to devise your own performance from a stimulus and perform in and out of lesson time.

What can this course offer me?

- Development of Drama techniques and an opportunity to use them to develop characters and storylines.
- Understanding of a wide range of genres with opportunity to implement them in performance.
- The opportunity to perform in and out of lessons, to explore a set text in detail and devise your own performance from a stimulus.
- You are able to experiment with a wide range of plays and develop a deeper understanding of the arts industry and working as a professional.
- You also have the opportunity to develop ‘life skills’ such as: confidence, teamwork, communication skills, listening skills, time management, working as a professional, creating and sticking to agendas as well as chairing meetings.

What will this course prepare me for?

This course will provide you with a solid foundation to progress to A-level or BTEC courses in Drama, theatre design, make-up and musical theatre based courses as well as preparing you for a professional career in the Arts industry.

How is the course examined?

GCSE Drama is divided into three components.

Component 1: Understanding drama

For this you will develop your understanding of Drama and theatre, study the play Blood Brothers and learn how to analyse and evaluate a piece of live theatre. At the end of the course you will complete a written exam for this component worth 40% of your final grade

Component 2: Devising drama (practical)

For this you will devise your own performance, or design for a performance and showcase it to an audience. This is worth 10%. You will write a diary of the process called a devising log and you will evaluate your final performance or designs. This is worth 30%. Component 2 in total is worth 40% of your final grade. This component is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

Component 3: Texts in practice (practical)

For this you will perform two extracts from one play (students may contribute as performer or designer). You have free choice of the play but it must contrast with the set play (Blood Brothers) chosen for Component 1. Each extract is worth 10% meaning component 3 is worth 20% of your final grade. This component is marked by an AQA examiner.

GCSE FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

Exam Board: Eduqas /WJEC

Why should I study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to dive then a strong understanding of nutrition.

What will I study?

Food Preparation Skills

Students will be required to use general practical skills and knife skills to prepare and produce a wide range of food products. This will include preparing fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and a variety of carbohydrate foods. Students will have to show that they can use all food technology equipment proficiently while using all cooking methods to prepare, combine and shape food. Students will learn many skills including, sauce making, making and shaping dough with the use of raising agents and how to set mixtures using a variety of different ingredients and processes.

Food, Nutrition and Health

In this unit of work, students will learn about macro and micro nutrients. They will learn the function in the body, the main sources and the effects of deficiency or excess. Students will learn about how to make informed choices of food for a varied and balanced diet whilst learning about technological developments associated with better health.

Food Science

Students will research why food is cooked. They will explore different cooking methods such as the use of an oven for baking, roasting, braising or the use of a hob for poaching, shallow frying, boiling. This unit of work also examines the functional and chemical properties of food. Food science experiments, will feature in this unit of work. This will be to understand the scientific terms used, such as, gelatinisation, coagulation, and denaturation.

Food Safety

Students will research food spoilage and contamination whilst discussing the positive use of microorganisms in food production. Students will explore how food should be stored and apply their knowledge of food safety when preparing and cooking food.

Food Provenance

Students will discuss the factors affecting food choices related to religion, culture, ethical and medical conditions. They will study traditional British food and International cuisine. In this term students will learn sensory testing methods and how to test the sensory qualities of a wide range of foods. Students must learn the fast changing laws of food labelling and how it can affect consumer choice. They will research the meaning of current food labelling in accordance with the Food Standards Agency.

Pattern of Assessment:

- End of Year 11 Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Year 11

Non-Exam Assessment: Food Investigation - Task 1 (Task issued from exam board in September)

Understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Practical investigations are a compulsory element of this Non Examination Assessment task.

Non-Exam Assessment: Food preparation assessment - Task 2 (Task issued from exam board in November)

Knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.

Controlled Assessment Deadline:

- ➢ Task 1: December of Year 11
- ➢ Task 2: April of Year 11

Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study, or embark on an apprenticeship or full time career in a wide range of food and health related industries.

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

Exam Board: AQA

Why should I study Geography?

Geography is all about understanding why the world is the way it is. The world in which we live is likely to change more in the next 50 years than it has ever done before. Geography explains why this is and helps to prepare you for those changes.

What will I study?

Unit 1 – Living with the Physical Environment

Topic A – The Challenge of Natural Hazards – tectonic hazards, weather hazards and climate change.
Topic B – The Living World - the tropical rainforest, and cold environments, focusing on Svalbard
Topic C – Physical Landscapes in the UK – coastal and river landscapes.

Unit 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment

Topic A – Urban Issues and Challenges - different issues and challenges in Rio de Janeiro and Liverpool.

Topic B – The changing economic world - differences in the UK's and Nigeria's economic development and why this happens.
Topic C – The challenge of resource management – resource and food availability and the challenges this creates in the UK.

Unit 3 – Geographical applications

Topic A – Issue evaluation - investigation of a pre-released booklet
Topic B – Fieldwork – two fieldwork activities that investigate both human and physical environments. Both field trips will take place out of the school grounds. The physical fieldwork is at Formby beach, exploring sand dune formation. The human fieldwork is in Liverpool city centre, investigating the impact of urban regeneration.
Topic C – Geographical skills – This will be assessed throughout the course and will be assessed across all units. These skills include OS map reading, graphical skills, numerical skills, statistical skills, the use of qualitative and quantitative data, and of course literacy skills.

How is the course examined?

Students will sit three exams at the end of Year 11 that will make up 100% of their final grade. The controlled assessment element no longer exists; however, students will still be examined on skills they have learnt in the field after completing trips covering both the physical and human aspects of the course content that is shown above.

- **Paper 1** – Living with the physical environment. An exam lasting 1 hour 30 minutes that makes up 35% of the final grade.
- **Paper 2** – Challenges in the human environment. An exam lasting 1 hour 30 minutes that makes up 35% of the final grade.
- **Paper 3** – Geographical applications. An exam lasting 1 hour 30 minutes that makes up 30% of the final grade.

Types of questions: multiple choice, short answer, level of response, and extended prose.

What can this course offer me?

Students follow a syllabus where the work that the students will do covers a range of transferable skills which will equip students for working life. These include being spatially aware, socially and environmentally aware, problem solvers, good team players, computer literate and flexible thinkers.

What will this course prepare me for?

Statistics show that, compared to other subjects, Geography graduates are among the most employable. This is because they possess the skills that employers look for. In part this is because the subject is a combination of the facts of science and the understanding of the arts.

GCSE HISTORY

Exam Board: Edexcel

Why should I study History?

How did one scientist's carelessness save millions of lives? Were American stock market speculators to blame for the rise of Hitler? Was a change in wind direction all it took to conquer England?

Only through the study of History can people truly understand the world in which we live today. Our aim is to provide students with the opportunity to study history but to also develop a life-long passion and interest in the past.

History is a unique discipline as it provides an essential opportunity for students to become successful learners. Our aim is to assist and develop students, through the study of history, who are literate, numerate, enquiring and creative, who can communicate clearly, and who can work both independently and collaboratively. History relies on careful and rigorous enquiry, on weighing and evaluating evidence, and uses this to draw conclusions. It involves a balance between logic and imagination and a development of moral sensitivity and reasoning.

Building on the skills learned at Key Stage 3, GCSE History encourages debate, discussion and questioning helping to develop these vital skills for later life.

What will I study?

Unit 1: Thematic Study and historic environment (written exam, 1hr 15 minutes, 30% of the qualification).
Medicine in Britain, c1250 – present and The British Sector of the Western Front, 1914-18: injuries, treatment and the trenches.

Medicine in Medieval England including supernatural and religious explanations for the cause of disease and a case study on the Black Death 1348-49.

The Medical Renaissance in England including the development of scientific answers to medical problems and the work of key individuals like William Harvey.

Early Modern Medicine in Britain including Pasteur and the development of germ theory and a cholera epidemic in London.

Medicine in Britain including the creation and impact of the NHS and the work of Fleming, Florey and Chain in the discovery of penicillin.

This section will also include the historic environment of the Western Front, looking at the context of trench warfare and the impact and developments in medicine that happened as a result.

Unit 2: Period Study and British Depth Study (written exam, 1 hour 45 minutes, 40% of the qualification)

British Depth Study: Option B1**: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88**

Key topic 1: Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest, 1060–66. Including: Anglo Saxon Society; The last years of Edward the Confessor and the succession crisis; The rivals and Claimants for the Throne; The Norman Invasion.

Key topic 2: William I in power: securing the kingdom, 1066–87. Including: Establishing Control; The cause and outcome of Anglo-Saxon resistance 1068-71; The legacy of resistance to 1087; the revolt of the Earls, 1075.

Key topic 3: Norman England, 1066–88. Including: The feudal system and the Church; Norman government; The Norman aristocracy; William I and his sons.

and Period Study: **Spain and the 'New World' c1490 - c1555**

Key Topic 1: Spain reaches the 'New World' with the sponsorship of the Spanish monarchy. Columbus' claim on the land and the impact on the indigenous 'Indian' people with Spanish desire for land and gold and the impact of western diseases such as smallpox on the indigenous people.

Key Topic 2: Conquistadors and Spain establishing its empire with Balboa's claim to the lands of the Pacific and Cuba, Cortes and the conquest of Aztec Mexico and the impact on the Aztecs under Cortes' rule.

Key Topic 3: The Spanish Empire and the conquest of the Inca's. Spanish demand for gold and silver and the impacts on the people of Peru. Changes and management of the 'New World' and links to the transatlantic slave trade.

Unit 3 – Modern Depth Study (written exam, 1 hour 20 minutes, 30% of the qualification)

Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918 – 1939

The Weimar Republic 1918 – 1929: the origins of the Republic; early challenges from Left and Right; recovery of the Republic and changes in society.

Hitler's Rise to power, 1919 – 1933: the Nazi Party in the early years; the Munich Putsch; increasing support for the Nazis; how Hitler became Chancellor.

Nazi control and dictatorship: the police state; controlling attitudes; opposition and resistance.

Life in Nazi Germany: policies towards women; policies towards the young; employment and living standards; the persecution of minorities.

The course will be assessed through three external exam papers at the end of the course in Year 11.

Focus of assessments include:

- knowledge and understanding;
- explaining and analysing events and periods
- using sources
- understanding interpretations

What will this course prepare me for?

History is a respected GCSE and is useful for many different careers such as law, journalism, architecture, teaching, politics, business and tourism. But the fact is that a History qualification opens far more doors than it closes!

Careers that history is recognised for	**History related careers**	**Employment skills**
architecture, financial and banking, law and legal services, civil service, journalism and the media, market research, sales and marketing, personnel management and training, police force, social services, retail and hospitality management.	museum and archive work and research, archaeology, conservation and teaching.	Independent Thinkers Open-minded Disciplined Problem solving skills Independent learners Analytical skills

GCSE MUSIC

Exam Board: WJEC EDUQAS

Why should I study Music?

If you have a passion for Music, enjoy playing a musical instrument and/or singing and creating your own music, this subject is a wise choice for you. You will find yourself in a group of other 'like-minded' students who are motivated to succeed and keen to further their ability in music. There is just one examination at the end of the course, with an emphasis on coursework. Choosing this subject may provide the necessary balance in your option choices, which will mainly be assessed by written examinations. Increasingly employers and universities see creative subjects as assets and are looking for young people who have skills learned through creative subjects: creative thinking, emotional intelligence, adaptability, communication and tenacity to name just a few. These will all be developed if you choose to study this subject.

What will I study?

Component 1: Performing Music - 30% of the total qualification

Controlled Assessment: Internally assessed and externally moderated. Students offer at least two performances (traditional or technology based), between 4-6 minutes in total. These can be ensemble performances, or a mixture of solo and ensemble. The performances are recorded during the second year of the course.

The course is available to all but is best suited to those students who have reached a reasonable level of keyboard, voice or instrumental skill and a willingness to further their skills during the course.

Component 2: Composing Music

30% of the total qualification

Controlled Assessment: Internally assessed and externally moderated.
Students compose two compositions of at least three minutes combined.

- One composition to a brief set by the exam board in Year 11.
- One 'free' composition chosen by the student.

An interest in creating their own music and exploring a range of other musical styles is essential.

The department is equipped with Apple Mac computers, running Logic & Sibelius music software to allow students to record and refine their ideas in various ways.

Component 3: Listening and Appraising Music 40% of the total qualification

Written listening exam: externally assessed
Students study four areas of study throughout the course:

AOS 1 – Musical Forms and Devices

AOS 2 – Music for Ensemble

AOS 3 – Film Music

AOS 4 – Popular Music

Students answer eight questions in total: two on each area of study.

Two set works are also studied, 'Africa' by Toto and Bach's 'Badinerie''. There is one question on each set work.

Students will develop their understanding of music theory during the course. Those who have studied this previously, will find the course easier.

What can this course offer me?

In addition to helping students acquire subject knowledge, this course:

- provides students with the opportunity to gain self-confidence and self-esteem through performing
- develops team-working skills through performing with others
- extends students' creative, self-expression and thinking skills through composing music
- encourages the understanding of the importance of continuous evaluation and refinement in any process
- develops independent learning: having to be disciplined about practising on an instrument or voice
- develops presentation skills which are useful for any job career

What will this course prepare me for?

This course will provide you with a solid foundation for progression to music related courses, including A-level music, BTEC music and music technology, as well as a career in music professions.

GCSE Music is highly regarded as an academic subject and so could complement other studies leading to a professional career.

GCSE PE

Exam Board: OCR

Studying GCSE Physical Education gives students the opportunity to explore the world of sports performance both practically and academically. The course is predominantly focused on developing a strong understanding of the theory behind physical activity and sport (70%). Students also perform in three different sports as part of the non-exam assessment (30%). The course combines practical performance with academic study, helping students understand how and why performance can be improved.

GCSE PE explores the physical factors that affect performance in sport such as the components of fitness, principles of training, biology and physics related topics such as the musculoskeletal and cardiorespiratory systems and biomechanics of movement within sport. GCSE PE also explores the impact of sport on everyday life, including why people participate, why some individuals outperform others physically and mentally, and the effects of lifestyle choices. Students also examine ethical issues such as the use of performance-enhancing drugs and the consequences of inactivity and poor diet.

Why should I study GCSE Physical Education?

A balance of practical and theory
Students are assessed in three practical activities, while also studying the science and psychology behind performance. It suits those who enjoy being active but also want an academic challenge.

Understand how the body works
The course covers anatomy, physiology and training principles, helping students understand how to improve performance safely and effectively which is useful for sport and everyday health.

Learn what influences performance
Students explore sports psychology, motivation, goal setting and socio-cultural influences, gaining insight into why some people succeed and how mindset affects outcomes.

Develop transferable skills
GCSE PE builds analysis and evaluation skills through the NEA Performance Analysis coursework. Teamwork and communication are built through practical lessons. These skills support success in other GCSEs and future studies.

Supports future pathways
It provides a strong foundation for A Level PE, BTEC Sport, coaching, sports science, physiotherapy, the armed forces, teaching, and other sport and health-related careers.

Promotes lifelong health
Students learn about the consequences of inactivity, poor diet and performance-enhancing drugs, encouraging informed and healthy lifestyle choices.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

Paper 1: Physical factors affecting performance (60 Marks: 1 hour: 30%)

The aim of paper 1 is to give students a solid understanding of **how the body functions in sport and exercise**, and how **training and preparation** improve performance and reduce injury.

There are two topics:

Applied anatomy and physiology:

- **Skeletal and muscular systems** – bones, joints, major muscles, how they allow movement.
- **Movement analysis** – how levers, planes and axes help explain movement.
- **Cardiovascular and respiratory systems** – how the heart, lungs and blood support exercise.
- **Effects of exercise** – short and long-term changes in the body from physical activity

Physical training:

- **Components of fitness** – e.g., strength, speed, endurance and how they are tested
- **Principles of training** – how to apply overload, specificity, progression, etc
- **Training methods** – different ways to train e.g., continuous, interval
- **Injury prevention** – how warm-ups, cool-downs and safety measures help reduce risk

Paper 2: Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology (60 Marks: 1 hour: 30%)

The aim of paper 2 is to build an understanding of how society, psychology and lifestyle influence participation and performance in physical activity and sport, and to apply this knowledge to real life and sporting contexts

There are three topics:

Socio-cultural influences:

- Patterns of participation in sport e.g., age, gender, access
- Commercialisation- How the media and sponsorship shape sport
- Ethics- including socio-cultural issues like sportsmanship, drugs in sport and behaviour in sport

Sports Psychology

- Characteristics- of skilled movement and how skills are classified
- Goal setting- e.g., SMART targets and mental preparation
- Guidance and feedback- how they help improve performance

Health, Fitness and Well-being

- Physical, emotional and social benefits of being active
- Risks of inactivity e.g., obesity, heart disease
- Nutrition, balanced diet and hydration's role in performance and health

Analysing and Evaluating Performance (AEP) Coursework (10%)

The AEP allows students to apply theoretical knowledge from both exam papers to a real sporting context. It develops analytical skills, understanding performance improvement, and the ability to make justified recommendations.

In this component, students:

- Analyse their own/a peer's performance in one practical activity
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in their performance
- Explain why a weakness occurs using GCSE PE theory

- Analyse sports movements and classify skills
- Create and justify an action plan to improve the weakness

Practical Performance in Physical Education (30%)

Students are assessed within school across a range of sports in their practical lesson which typically includes; football, netball, table tennis, handball, dance, gymnastics, basketball and athletics. Students are required to demonstrate effective performance, the use of tactics or techniques and the ability to observe the rules and conventions under applied conditions. Students are able to be assessed across a range of sports that they may participate in outside of school, some require footage to be obtained to be sent off to the moderator. Most commonly these sports include; swimming, skiing, golf, equestrian and rock climbing. A full list of sports that are included on the specification can be found here; https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/234827-gcse-guide-to-non-exam-assessment-final-assessment-2026.pdf (from page 16 onwards)
Although not essential, we do advise that students are participating regularly within at least one sport outside of school as this will help transfer theory skills into practical examples from students' own sport. Dedication to sport outside of school will also help students to achieve higher marks in their practical scores and demonstrate a clear commitment and interest in the subject- vital attributes for undertaking GCSE PE as it is a challenging yet rewarding option.

NCFE Technical Award in Health and Fitness

Exam Board: **NCFE**

Whilst studying a technical award in Health and Fitness, pupils will contextualise theoretical, physiological, and psychological knowledge that affects physical activity and sport. They will apply their knowledge to a range of sporting contexts, evaluating/making reasoned judgements about their impact on health, fitness and performance. In addition, pupils will develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve personal performance, whilst developing a multitude of skills, including numeracy and communication. Furthermore, pupils will develop their understanding of practical performances, and have a detailed knowledge of factors that underpin physical activity and sports performance. Pupils will develop a training programme as part of their synoptic project**.**

This course is ideal for students who enjoy practical learning and have an interest in sport, exercise and healthy lifestyles. It combines theory with applied coursework, allowing learners to understand how the body works and then use that knowledge in real-life fitness scenarios

Why should I study NCFE Health and Fitness?

A balance of theory, coursework and practical learning

More varied assessment

Develops key skills

Supports future pathways

More accessible for students who may not participate in sport outside of school

How will I be assessed?

The qualification has two assessments externally set by NCFE: one non-exam assessment and one written examined assessment. Only one attempt at each assessment is permitted.

Written Examination (40%)
Tests learners' understanding of theory on body systems, fitness and training including;
Structure and Function of Body Systems; Skeletal system, muscular system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system and how these systems respond to exercise (short-term and long-term effects)
Health and fitness; Components of fitness (e.g. muscular endurance, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance), principles of training (e.g. overload, progression, specificity), methods of training, fitness testing and interpreting results

Health and lifestyle factors; the impact of diet and nutrition, effects of a sedentary lifestyle, barriers to participation in physical activity and setting SMART goals for improvement

Synoptic Project (Coursework Based Non-Exam Assessment) (60%):

Students act like a fitness instructor or coach, using their knowledge of the body, training and health to design and justify a personalised fitness programme. It assesses planning, application, analysis and evaluation skills, not just recall of theory and involves;

Lifestyle Analysis

- Analysing a client's current lifestyle
- Identifying strengths and areas for improvement
- Understanding barriers to participation

Health Screening & Goal Setting

- Using health and fitness information to assess needs
- Setting SMART goals
- Justifying targets based on individual needs

Components of Fitness

- Identifying relevant fitness components
- Explaining why certain components are important for the client

Principles and Methods of Training

- Applying principles such as overload, progression and specificity
- Selecting appropriate training methods
- Designing a safe and effective fitness programme

Structure of a Training Programme

- Warm-up and cool-down
- Session planning
- Monitoring progress

Evaluation

- Reviewing the effectiveness of the programme
- Suggesting improvements
- Reflecting on outcomes

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Exam Board: WJEC EDUQAS

Why should I study Philosophy, Religion and Culture?

The aim of the course is to inspire, challenge and develop students' understanding of the world we live in. They will do this through exploring religious, philosophical and ethical dilemmas in the modern world. Students will explore current issues through a variety of learning approaches such as the use of media, group work, student led debate and experiential RE. During the course students will explore religious and non-religious beliefs and challenge learners to reflect upon their own values and belief system.

What will I study?

The course investigates social and moral issues from both a secular and religious viewpoint which involves the study of Christianity and one other principal religion.

Component 1 | Religious, Philosophical and Ethical dilemmas in the modern World 50%

Theme 1 | Issues of relationships

Topics covered | gender discrimination, prejudice, equality, sexual relationships, family and marriage.

Theme 2 | Issues of life and death

Topics covered | Is there life after death? Do humans have value? Who created the world? Ideas about stewardship

Theme 3 | Issues of Good and Evil

Topics covered | What makes something wright/wrong? Should capital punishment be lawful in the UK? Would a God allow suffering?

Theme 4 | Issues of Human Rights

Topics covered | Social justice should all wealth be shared? Does a prisoner have rights? Should you follow the law or your religious belief?

Component 2 | Study of Christianity 25%

Christian Beliefs

Topics covered | The nature of God, the life of Jesus , salvation and atonement, life after death.

Christian Practices

Topics covered | Christian worship, sacraments, the role of the church, evangelism and reconciliation.

Component 3 | Study of a world faith 25%

Component three is the study of one optional religion. The focus of this component is on the beliefs, teachings and practices of the chosen world faith

How is the course examined?

There are three exam papers.

Component 1 is a 2 hour paper worth 50%

Component 2 is a 1 hour paper worth 25%

Component 3 is a 1 hour paper worth 25%

What can this course offer me?

This two year study would result in a GCSE in Religious Studies. It provides opportunities to develop skills to debate, analyse, interpret, evaluate and arrive at conclusions, all of which help to equip students with life skills. By the end of this course students will be able to write balanced and well informed arguments that would benefit them at any further education establishment.

What will this course prepare me for?

The skills you will develop during your Religious Studies GCSE will open the doors to studying numerous subjects at A Level. Related subjects include health and social care, geography, law, history, classical civilisation, sociology, philosophy, psychology, government and politics, communication and culture.

There are a range of vocational qualifications (such as BTECs, NVQ/SVQs and diplomas) linked to religious studies, including: travel and tourism, health and social care, childcare, uniformed public services, legal studies.

Religious studies students often go on to become lawyers, teachers, academics, civil servants, business analysts, politicians, social workers, charity workers, journalists and religious ministers, to name but a few career options.

GCSE Spanish

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Why should I study GCSE Spanish?

A second language not only gives you the means to communicate with people from different countries and cultures; it also develops a wide variety of skills that are transferable and useful in every area of life Learning a language encourages learners to be creative and take risks; it develops vital communication skills and, just as importantly, improves literacy in your own language. In addition, it promotes understanding and enjoyment of other cultures and traditions. Having even a basic knowledge of a foreign language will not only improve your employment prospects in any field of work but also widen your opportunities for further education post-GCSE. There is no doubt that employers and providers of further education recognise the tremendous importance and far-reaching value of language qualifications. Even if studying languages is not a path you plan to pursue post-GCSE, remember that many major companies from all fields send their employees to meetings abroad or on placements in other countries. We encourage everyone to build on the foundations they have set during KS3 and to take up the option of studying a foreign language at GCSE.

What will I study?

Spanish GCSE course consolidates work on topics covered throughout KS3 and covers the following important topics and includes all four language skills – speaking, reading, listening and writing:

- My personal world
- Travel and tourism
- Media and technology
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- Studying and my future
- My neighbourhood

How is the course examined?

Writing: 25% of the final GCSE mark is obtained from the written skill which is judged by a final exam.

Speaking: Pupils prepare and rehearse various sample conversation questions in advance of the final recorded speaking assessment which also comprises a read-aloud task, a photo card element and a role-play scenario. This exam counts towards a further 25% of the final GCSE mark. As with the writing component, pupils who prepare thoroughly in advance can score well in this component.

Reading and Understanding / Listening and Understanding: Each of these components is tested by exam and together they account for 50% of the overall mark.

Entry Level: Pupils are entered at the tier most suitable to their level of competence, be that Foundation (grades 1-5) or Higher tier (grades 4-9), depending on their aspirational target, performance in practice exams and regular classroom assessment.

Pupils who have a good, working understanding of the grammar and phonics covered so far at KS3 and who already have a good stock of vocabulary can be confident that they have the capacity to achieve well at GCSE. Much of the important grammar has already been mastered during early year study and perfectly complements GCSE consolidation. Students will be tested regularly on vocabulary to ensure they are learning what is required to be successful at GCSE.

What can this course offer me?

The course offers in-depth study of the Spanish language through various methods, including interactive, individual and group work. It will provide you with the ability to communicate clearly; confidence when speaking in public; problem-solving strategies and many other skills which are useful in a wide range of future careers. A language adds an international dimension to your choice of subjects which is something many employers look for. Speaking another language has also proved to lead to a deeper understanding of others and a higher level of interest, acceptance and empathy towards other people and cultures. It gives you a zest and passion for life that not many other subjects can offer.

What will this course prepare me for?

The course prepares you for a lifelong journey of learning and instils you with a love of languages. It prepares you for life as part of a “global community”. Now, more than ever, it is vital to study a language. The course also prepares you for Sixth Form College, where many of our former students have gone on to study A Levels in languages