

OPTIONS

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The Radclyffe School
“Working Together for Excellence”



Introduction to Year 9 Options

The spring term of Year 9 is the time in your child's education when some important choices have to be made about their Key Stage 4 courses. The National Curriculum requires students to do a broad range of subjects which are compulsory. These are:

MATHEMATICS

ENGLISH

SCIENCE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students are then able to choose four optional subjects.

It is very important that you talk to your child about their option choices and ensure that they have looked at as much information as possible so that they can make fully informed decisions. It is important that students do not complete the options form on their own but do this with your support.

However, it is important that these choices should be based on the subjects that your child enjoys and in which they have the greatest chance of success.

Students will be studying these subjects for five hours per fortnight, for the rest of their time at school, and once subjects have been chosen, apart from in very exceptional circumstances, **they cannot be changed**, so it is vital that they take these decisions seriously and make their choices carefully.

We will always try to give your child their first preference choices but very occasionally, this is not possible. If this is the case, we will have a meeting with your child to discuss their reserve options.

How do I make my options choices?

Students should consider:

- Do I enjoy this subject?
- Am I doing well in this subject at the moment?
- Can I be successful in this subject?

Students must not:

- Choose subjects because your friends are picking the same: there is no guarantee you would be in the same class if you did.
- Choose subjects because you like the teacher: there is no guarantee you would get that teacher.

If there are more students wanting to take a subject than we have places for:

- We will prioritise those who have completed their choices on or before the deadline.
- We will look at students' ATLe grades and prioritise those who are being most successful in that subject.

We may choose to not run a subject if there are not sufficient numbers who opt for it.

How do I choose my options?

Students will choose their options through an online form. We will send a link to each student's email address on **Thursday 19th March 2026**. This email will contain a link to the Student Portal where they will select their option choices.

Options forms must be completed online by **Sunday 12th April 2026**.

Parents will be able to see their child's choices in the **MCAS app**.

MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) is a FREE app that enables parents to view their child's performance at school in real time. The MCAS app is available for both Android and Apple devices.

Please visit the school website for more information.

Reminder: The deadline for completing your KS4 Options Form is **Sunday 12th April 2026**.



Scan the QR code below to download the MCAS app.



Who can I speak to if I have questions?

We do appreciate that making decisions and filling in the online forms can be a difficult and time-consuming task. If you need any help or have any concerns about subjects offered to your child, please do get in touch.

You can do this either through the Year 9 Year Manager, Mrs Ford, or the Deputy Headteacher Quality of Education, Miss Catlow, who oversees the options process.



The Key Stage 4 Curriculum Offer

All students must study **English, Mathematics, Science, Core Physical Education and Personal Development.**

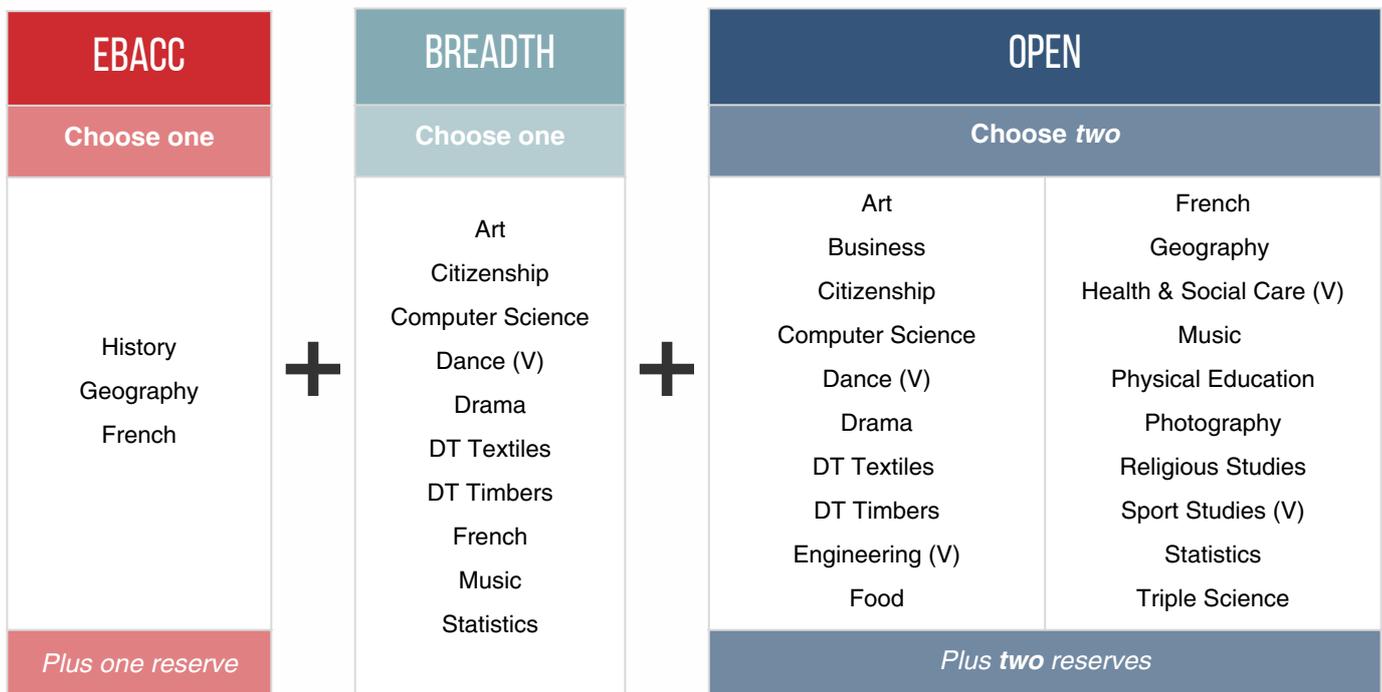
Students will then choose four option subjects:

- **One** from the EBacc block
- **One** from the Breadth block
- **Two** from the Open block

In addition, we ask that students choose **three reserve subjects**: one from the EBacc block and two from the Open block. These may be used in the event that a subject is oversubscribed, so it is important that these are subjects that the student would be happy to study.

Please note, students **cannot choose the same subject twice.** Students also **cannot choose** the following combinations of subjects:

- Design Technology & Engineering
- Design Technology Textiles & Design Technology Timbers
- Physical Education (PE) & Sport Studies



A broad and balanced curriculum

At The Radclyffe School, we are committed to ensuring all students experience a broad and balanced curriculum. This is supported by the government's curriculum review and its aim to "grasp the opportunity to ensure that more young people are able to choose qualifications that inspire them, reflect their strengths and support the directions they wish to take."¹

This is further supported by research from the Sutton Trust, which highlights that "attainment is the biggest driver of gaps in university progression", with important implications for young people's careers and opportunities for social mobility.² For this reason, they emphasise the importance of providing young people with access to "a modern and broad curriculum". We have reviewed the way our option subjects are structured in order to offer students a wide range of subjects with as few restrictions as possible.

EBacc Block - We continue to encourage as many students as possible to study an EBacc subject through our EBacc block. Research from the Sutton Trust suggests that studying EBacc subjects can help improve a young person's performance in English and Maths.

Breadth Block - Through our Breadth block, we are enabling wider access to creative and practical subjects. Research highlights that studying creative subjects is not only important for those interested in the creative industries, but also brings "numerous wider benefits, including improved engagement and wellbeing".² Creative subjects also provide valuable opportunities for students to develop wider life skills such as confidence, motivation, resilience and communication.

Open Block - Finally, through the Open block, students have free choice from almost the full range of subjects on offer, allowing them to create combinations that reflect their interests, strengths and future ambitions.

We believe students work hardest and achieve most highly in subjects they enjoy, and our options structure is designed to support them in making the right choices for their GCSE studies.

GCSE Courses

GCSEs are at the core of the Key Stage 4 curriculum in England and Wales. They are now linear qualifications, meaning exams take place at the end of Year 11, with limited coursework in most subjects. GCSEs are graded on a 9–1 scale, with 9 being the highest grade. The content and expectations of GCSE courses are now more demanding than in the past. However, the overall distribution of grades has not changed. For example, the proportion of students who previously achieved grades A/A* is now roughly equivalent to those achieving grades 7–9, while a grade 4 today broadly compares to the old grade C.

Achieving a grade 4 is an important benchmark and is often the minimum requirement for entry to many post-16 courses. However, many colleges and sixth forms look for a grade 5 (a 'strong pass'). While a grade 4 may allow entry onto some courses, these are often Level 2 courses (equivalent to GCSE level).

Many Level 3 courses require grade 5s or above, and students who do not achieve these grades may need to resit GCSEs in order to progress further. For this reason, students should aim to achieve at least grade 5s in as many subjects as possible, and higher where they are able.

While GCSE results help students move on to the next stage of education, they also remain important for future applications to college, apprenticeships, jobs and university. A strong set of GCSE results can help students stand out from other applicants. This is why choosing the right options is so important. Students should aim to select subjects they enjoy and feel motivated by, as well as subjects where they are already performing well, so that they can work hard and achieve the best possible results.

Vocational qualifications

These are an essential part of The Radclyffe School's curriculum. As part of the changes to the KS4 exam system, there have been changes to the scope and range of vocational qualifications to ensure that they are as challenging and rigorous as GCSEs, and that they provide students with the skills and knowledge they need for further progression.

We offer three types of vocational qualifications at The Radclyffe School:

- Pearson BTEC
- OCR Cambridge National/OCR Cambridge Technical
- NCFE Technical Award

The key difference with vocational subjects is that a greater proportion of the assessment is through coursework: the student's written and/or practical work forms a portfolio that will then be graded. This can help students organise their workload throughout Years 10 and 11 rather than being assessed only at the end of the course. However, it does mean that students have to meet specific deadlines throughout both Year 10 and 11 to submit their assignments. It also means that many of these courses, alongside a more practical element, do also have elements that expect a significant amount of extended written response.

Students achieve excellent results on vocational courses. All vocational courses are offered as a Level 2 qualification (this means that they are equivalent to a GCSE grade 4-9).

The grades awarded will be:

- Level 2 Distinction* = 8/9 (For BTEC and OCR Nationals)
- Level 2 Distinction = 7
- Level 2 Merit = 6
- Level 2 Pass = 4/5

The Level 1 vocational qualification is equivalent to a GCSE at grade 1-3. The grades at Level 1 are as follows:

Level 1 Distinction = 3

Level 1 Merit = 2

Level 1 Pass = 1

All vocational courses offered form a firm foundation for progression to college and work. Employers and colleges are familiar with the benefits of vocational awards and they show that students are capable of organising their own workload.

Both Oldham College and Oldham Sixth Form College offer a range of vocational qualifications at Levels 2 and 3. In the case of BTEC, this allows students to continue studying their subjects when they leave school. Studying a BTEC qualification at school will therefore allow students to become familiar with the college assessment process.

Universities accept BTEC Level 3 as an entry requirement for a number of degree level courses.

CORE SUBJECTS

These subjects are compulsory for all students

English Language	8
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Introduction

The English GCSE course aims to develop students' skills as communicators in the modern world; the English Language GCSE enables them to be effective readers, writers, speakers and listeners. At the same time, students study key texts from the rich cultural heritage of English literature including poetry, plays (both Shakespeare and modern drama) and novels. Students will study both English Language and English Literature to gain two GCSEs. The new GCSEs will be graded. Students will receive one of nine grades. The grades will be described using numbers (1-9) rather than letters. Grade 9 will represent the highest level of attainment.

Assessment

Assessment of the course is 100% examination-based. Students will sit two examination papers which test both reading and writing skills.

Reading

Students will study a wide range of texts including:

- 19th Century literary fiction
- 20th and 21st Century literary non-fiction
- 20th and 21st Century non-fiction

They will practise and develop a range of reading skills including:

- information retrieval
- deduction and inference
- understanding writers' viewpoints and ideas
- analysing writers' techniques
- comparing texts

Writing

Students will develop their ability to write with accuracy, fluency and at length. There will be a focus on building students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. They will also develop the skills to:

- write creatively using narrative and descriptive skills
- write to express a viewpoint persuasively and effectively
- write for different audiences and purposes
- use a range of forms e.g. letter, speech, article

Speaking and Listening

Students will be assessed on their ability to present their ideas effectively in a formal context, use Standard English and respond to questions. While this aspect of the course does not count towards the overall GCSE grade, it will be recorded on the exam certificate as a separate grade.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Introduction

The new GCSE in English Literature will encourage students to read, write and think critically, building upon the skills developed through studying English Language. Please note, texts are subject to change.

Course structure

Students will study the following texts:

- Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol
- Shakespeare's Macbeth
- AQA Poetry Anthology Power and Conflict Cluster
- JB Priestley's An Inspector Calls
- Unseen Poetry

Students will develop their skills in:

- Literal and inferential understanding of texts
- Critical reading
- Evaluation of writer's techniques
- Comparing texts

Assessment

The course is assessed solely by examination. Students will sit two papers in Key Stage 4.

The new GCSEs will be graded. Students will be awarded one of nine grades. The grades will be described using numbers (1-9) rather than letters. **Grade 9** will represent the highest level of attainment.

MATHEMATICS

Introduction

Mathematics is a creative and highly inter-connected discipline, developed over centuries providing the solution to some of history's most intriguing problems. It is essential to everyday life, critical to science, technology and engineering, and necessary for financial literacy and most employment. A high-quality mathematics education provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject.

Course structure

All students will study the core maths skills needed for foundation level GCSE, the more able students will also cover the additional topics needed for the higher tier GCSE mathematics. Final decisions about the tier of examination entry will be made as late as possible in Year 11.

The course covers:

Number	Ratio and Proportion
Algebra	Geometry and Measures
Probability	Statistics

Assessment

The GCSE examination consists of three papers lasting 90 minutes each. Paper 1 is non-calculator. Papers 2 and 3 are calculator papers. The exam board is Edexcel.

The content is broken down in the table.

At the Foundation level, students can achieve GCSE grades 1-5.

At the Higher level students can achieve grades 4-9.

Grade 9 is the highest grade achievable.

Grade 4 is a pass.

Grade 5 is considered a successful pass

	Foundation	Higher
Number	25%	15%
Algebra	20%	30%
Ratio and Proportion	25%	20%
Geometry and Measures	15%	20%
Probability & Statistics	15%	15%

COMBINED SCIENCE

Introduction

Recognising the important role that Science plays in everyday life, the National Curriculum requires that students must study at least two GCSEs in the subject. The course offers a substantial introduction into all three main areas of science, and will prepare students well for A levels. Students will be working towards a single qualification called Combined Science, for which they will be awarded two GCSEs. They will receive two GCSE grades, each ranging from 1 to 9.

Course structure

Students will divide their time between Biology, Chemistry and Physics during all three years. All of the content studied will be examined in the final exams in Year 11.

Assessment

Students are assessed at the end of Year 11. There will be a total of six exams (two each for Biology, Chemistry and Physics) each lasting 75 minutes. This qualification has no coursework component. Everything will be assessed in the exams at the end of the course.

Topics:

Biology

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics

- Forces
- Energy
- Waves
- Electricity
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (CORE PE)

Introduction

In Years 10 and 11, students will have Core PE for three hours a fortnight and will take part in a wide range of practical activities. Activities will include football, netball, rugby, basketball, hockey, badminton, fitness, cross country, rounders, table tennis, trampolining, dance, handball and volleyball.

Assessment

In Core PE, students are graded for Attitude to Learning only. No GCSEs are gained from this.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Personal Development lessons are timetabled for one hour per week in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Whilst this is not an examined lesson, it is still part of the core curriculum and lessons will cover topics included across the three areas, detailed below, designed to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Course Structure

Citizenship	Citizenship is compulsory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and teaches students about democracy, the role of Parliament, the justice system, human rights, media literacy, and how to take responsible action on issues that matter to them.
PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education)	PSHE more broadly develops knowledge of financial education, mental health, physical wellbeing, careers and economic understanding. This also includes aspects of religion and religious views, as agreed by the local council.
RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)	RSE is statutory in all secondary schools and ensures that students understand healthy relationships, consent, online safety, exploitation, sexual health and equality.

These subjects are reinforced by the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), which requires schools to safeguard pupils by teaching them how to recognise risks such as abuse, grooming, extremism, discrimination, misinformation, and how to seek support.

What is the benefit?

Together, this curriculum equips students with critical thinking skills, emotional literacy, political understanding and practical life knowledge that will benefit their future selves by enabling them to make informed decisions, manage relationships safely, participate confidently in democratic society and protect their own wellbeing. The government requires all students to learn this content because it supports safeguarding, promotes fundamental British values such as democracy and mutual respect, reduces vulnerability to harm, and prepares young people to contribute positively to society as informed, responsible citizens.

Independent Advice and Guidance (IAG)

IAG ensures students get the support they need to make well informed, realistic decisions about their future through careers education, information, advice and guidance. All students will receive a 1-1 meeting with a Level 6 Careers Adviser to discuss their skills, attributes and aspiration.

OPTION SUBJECTS

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View Options videos
by scanning here





GCSE ART AND DESIGN: FINE ART

Introduction

This broad and balanced course will allow you to explore a range of Fine Art media, techniques and processes, including both traditional and new technologies within the Art industry. You will cover practical work, along with a study of artists, allowing you to develop personal and creative work in a range of Fine Art media below, with at least 2 as a minimum:

- Drawing
- Mixed Media
- Painting
- Digital media
- Sculpture

Course Structure

As part of the course, you will produce a portfolio of Art work which will allow you to study particular themes in relation to the work of a range of past and contemporary artists, crafts persons and designers. You will demonstrate skills in composition and design, making appropriate use of colour, line, tone, texture, shape and form, in response to an idea, theme or brief. The use and development of a personal sketchbook will be a crucial part of the course. You will need to explain and critically review your work, through written annotations, as this will form a crucial part of the assessment.

Assessment

Component 1: Coursework 60%

This consists of a portfolio of selected work from a series of assignments.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment 40% (ESA)

You need to produce your own assignment in response to an externally set exam paper. You will have nine weeks preparatory time and 10 hours of supervised work, conducted under exam conditions. The Externally Set Assignment will form part of the exhibition which will be assessed both internally by school staff and by a moderator from the AQA board.

Is it for me?

An interest in the subject and a willingness to work hard are as important as any natural ability when choosing this subject. Home learning will be set every two to three weeks, and will be an important part of any course. Students will therefore need a sketch book, HB and 2B pencils, colour pencil crayons and an A3 folder or portfolio - all of which are available from the Art department as an Art Pack.

Future Pathways

Art can be used as a stepping stone to further courses and careers in Art and Design. Careers where Art and Design is important include Interior, 3D, Product and Graphic Design, Animation, Architecture, Children's Book Illustration, Textiles & Fashion Design, Gallery Education, Art Therapy, Set or Costume Design.

For more information on future pathways, you visit Careers Pilot or the National Careers Service online.

GCSE BUSINESS

Introduction

Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Lord Sugar have all run successful businesses. In GCSE Business you will learn the skills they use. Candidates will work towards gaining an understanding of the issues facing UK businesses in the 21st century.

The content of the GCSE will be delivered using examples of business activity and behaviour from local, national and international contexts.

Course Structure

The areas of business that this covers are:

- The Business Framework
- Businesses and their Customers
- Producing Goods and Services
- Human Resource Planning
- The External Environment
- Business Finance and Control

You will also develop skills in presentation, communication, problem solving and leadership.

Assessment

Written paper 1: 90 marks (50%)

Compulsory short answer questions and compulsory questions based on stimulus material. Some of these questions will require extended writing and will assess the quality of written communication.

Written paper 2: 90 marks (50%)

This paper will be a data driven paper, where students are provided with information on a particular business, such as a supermarket, and have to use this information to answer questions.

Future Pathways

GCSE Business can lead to A-Levels in Accounting, Business Studies, Economics and Finance.

GCSE Business can be useful for absolutely every job. Business is particularly relevant if you want to work in Human Resources, Marketing or Finance, in either a small or large business. It is also relevant if you would like to work as an accountant, stockbroker, recruitment consultant or be an entrepreneur and set up your own business.

GCSE CITIZENSHIP

Introduction

Edexcel Citizenship Studies provides a curriculum that empowers students to develop into informed, active global citizens who understand their own voice and the power they hold within society. By studying issues that directly affect their lives, students are encouraged to form and express informed opinions, appreciate views different from their own, and engage thoughtfully in democratic processes.

To be successful

Skills: You need to be analytical, good at decision making, but also have good listening and empathy skills.

Abilities: You will need good evaluation skills, and you will have to be able to work as part of a team, being continuously respectful of the opinions and viewpoints of others. You will also need to be articulate and able to complete structured pieces of writing, as part of the exam is essay based.

Interests: Current affairs, having a passion to make a difference in your community, understanding politics and having an interest in knowing what your rights are. Caring about the community, equality and knowing the power of your own (and others) voice will also help.

Course Structure

<p>A: Living together in the UK Communities, identity, human rights, discrimination, community cohesion, population, immigration, responsibilities, local council, trade unions</p>	<p>B: Democracy at work Voting systems, how laws are made, parliament, government, UK spending, how to increase voter engagement, the Monarch's role in the UK today</p>	<p>E: Taking Citizenship Action Students will apply their Citizenship skills to try and make a difference or create a change within their community – you can choose to do this on whichever theme you like</p>
<p>C: Law and Justice Criminal vs. civil courts, youth courts, crime, perverting the course of justice, UK Justice System, sorting civil disputes, how crime can be reduced</p>	<p>D: Power and influence International organisation (WHO, NATO, UN), power of the media, propaganda, should there be free press, taking democratic action (petitions, strikes, protests)</p>	<p>Assessment</p> <p>There are two exams at the end of the course: Paper 1: 1h 45m 50% - Examining Themes A-C Paper 2: 1h 45m 50% - Examining Themes D-E PLUS one question linking to content in one of Themes A-C</p>

Future Pathways

Citizenship will help you in any career path you choose to follow. The skills you develop during the GCSE (teamwork, evaluative and research skills) will help you in any future job role and in your future education. The topics we cover in Citizenship will help you in any political job, business work, and it will also support anyone wishing to go into the law and the police or fire services. Employers may feel that a Citizenship qualification shows you can respect people from all backgrounds, have an interest in your society and show that you want to help people.

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE

Introduction

Computers are an integral part of modern society with technology touching all aspects of life including commerce, healthcare, industry, communication and recreation. The pace of change and innovation is rapid. Many companies have an urgent need for people who understand this technology, how to create it and how to make effective use of it. This course has real relevance in our modern world. While learners will no doubt already have some knowledge of computers and related areas, the course will give them an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on “behind the scenes”.

Course Structure

Studying Computer Science will include:

- Network security, including viruses, malware and hacking
- Computer networks and connections
- Memory and storage
- Systems software
- Algorithms and flowcharts
- Programming

The GCSE in Computer Science is made up of two units both assessed through external examinations. Students can achieve grades 9 -1 on this course.

Assessment

Unit 1: Computer Systems - Candidates answer all questions that include a mixture of short and long answers based on Computer Systems (50%, written examination)

Unit 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming - Candidates will be required to create algorithms, explain different programming techniques and write program code (50%, written examination)

Is it for me?

Computing gives learners a real, in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. It provides excellent preparation for higher study and jobs in the field of computer science, and develops critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills through the study of computer programming.

Future Pathways

The number of jobs in computing occupations is growing much faster than average, making computer science one of the most viable degree options. It opens the door to highly paid careers: Computer science graduates earn some of the highest starting salaries of any degree.



BTEC PERFORMING ARTS: DANCE

Introduction

BTEC Performing Arts Dance helps students develop technical and expressive skills as well as knowledge and understanding of dance through performance, choreography and critical appreciation of dance. This exciting specification enables students to:

- increase their confidence and self-esteem
- employ the skills of problem solving and creativity
- make knowledgeable decisions about dances
- understanding effectiveness of working in teams to develop ideas, rehearsals and performances
- develop performance disciplines and styles of dance

Course Structure

The course is made up of three components which all students will complete.

Component 1 (30%): Exploring the Performing Arts. You will develop and understand the requirements of being a dancer across a range of performance disciplines and performance styles. You will study professional practitioner's choreography.

Component 2 (30%): Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts. You will develop dance skills and techniques. You will take part in workshops to develop technical and expressive dance skills.

Component 3 (40%): Performing to a Brief. You will work as part of a team to create a dance performance in response to a given brief.

Assessment

Assignments and units will be assessed using the grading system of Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Pass.

Future Pathways

With further study or training, students can go on to take various pathways into a variety of future careers: A Level in Dance or A Level in Performing Arts, Dance Teacher, Leisure and Sports Industry, Professional Dancer, Further Level 3 courses in Dance and Performing Arts.

GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Design and Technology prepares students to participate in today's rapidly changing technologies. They learn to think and intervene creatively to improve quality of life.

Course Structure

Students combine practical skills with an understanding of aesthetics, social and environmental issues, functions and industrial practices. As they do, they reflect on and evaluate present and past design and technology, its uses and effects. Through design and technology, students can progress to be discriminating and informed users of products, and become innovators of the future.

Students study Design and Technology in Years 7 to 9 through a rotation model of Product Design and Textile Design. They then choose their GCSE option to follow in Year 10.

The Faculty currently offers a single GCSE option at KS4 although students are able to decide between timbers and textiles for their material specialism.

Assessment

This option provides students with core knowledge relating to all materials areas whilst giving them the opportunity to specialise on one particular area. The course is underpinned by the iterative process which is introduced at KS3.

It is design based and each student will have to complete a Non-Examination Assessment which is 50% of the final grade. This includes producing a design folder as well as manufacturing a product to a given design problem. The design folder will include evidence of investigating the design task, developing design proposals, planning the manufacture of a chosen design and also the final product evaluation.

There will be one final examination which is 50% of the final grade. It is where students will be tested on their design skills and their individual knowledge of materials, tools, processes and industrial production methods including CAD (Computer Aided Design) and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing).

Future Pathways

This subject can lead to careers in the design industry, including Product Design, Graphic Design, Web Design, Fashion Design, Manufacturing, Engineering, Architecture, and Mechanical Engineering.



GCSE DRAMA

Introduction

Students will build upon their knowledge and skills gained during KS3 Drama in order to succeed in GCSE Drama as well as widen their creative experiences in different performance styles.

Students will develop their creating, rehearsal and performance skills to a much higher level at KS4, working towards both devised and scripted performances to an audience. An in depth knowledge of acting, theatre design and the performing arts industry will be gained as well as the development of practical performance skills.

Students will also analyse plays through practical techniques, theoretical approaches and through live theatre visits; investigating the different ways of bringing a script to life on stage. This is a challenging, exciting and creative GCSE course which develops key transferable life skills including:

- Oracy and communication skills
- Group work and team building
- Problem solving and organisation
- Creative thinking and practical application
- Development of analysis and evaluation literacy
- Developing empathy and understanding the world in which we live.

Course Structure and assessment

The GCSE Drama content is divided into three components:

Component 1: Devising Theatre – Students will work in a group to research, create, develop and then perform a play they have devised themselves in response to a stimulus set by the exam board. They must complete a devising log and an analysis and evaluation of their performance. (*Practical and Written Assessment - 40% of GCSE*)

Component 2: Performing from a Text - Students will rehearse and perform two extracts from one play. This is a completely practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to apply acting skills to accurately convey character, plot, style and atmosphere. (*Practical Performance - 20% of GCSE*)

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre – Students will answer a series of questions for their written exam. For section A, students will study a complete play text and consider how the play would be brought to life in a theatrical setting. Knowledge and understanding of acting, directing and design will be taught in a practical way. For section B, students will analyse and evaluate a live theatre production they have seen during the GCSE course. (*Written Examination - 20% of GCSE*)

Future Pathways

The course provides clear progression to any Level 3 course in Performing Arts such as A-level Drama and Theatre Studies or BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts. The skills developed in GCSE Drama are useful to those aiming for a career in some of the following occupational fields: acting, theatre design, digital content creation, film, television and media, marketing and public relations, law, politics, event management, tourism and hospitality, and teaching and education.



NCFE ENGINEERING

Introduction

The Level 1/2 Technical Award in Engineering is designed to provide learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding of the applied study of good engineering practices and an understanding of working in the sector.

Course Structure

Throughout this qualification, learners will gain valuable knowledge of:

- engineering disciplines
- applied science and mathematics in engineering
- reading engineering drawings
- properties, characteristics and selection of engineering materials
- engineering tools, equipment and machines
- hand drawn engineering drawings
- computer-aided design (CAD) engineering drawings
- production planning techniques
- applied processing skills and techniques

Learners are required to complete 2 mandatory units:

- Non-exam assessment (NEA) 60%, internally assessed
- Examined assessment (EA) 40%, externally assessed

They must also achieve a minimum of a Level 1 pass in the internal and external assessments.

Assessment

The first part of the qualification comprises a written exam of 90 minutes, a mix of multiple choice, short answer and extended response questions, marked out of 80. The assessment is set and marked externally. This represents 40% of the technical award. The second part is assessed through a synoptic project which students undertake when all the teaching content has been delivered. It is set by NCFE and graded internally. This part represents 60% of the technical award.

Future Pathways

Learners with this qualification might progress to A Level in Design Technology or Physics, Level 2 and 3 qualifications in Engineering or apprenticeships in varied fields such as Aerospace Engineer, or Electrical/Electronic Engineering.



GCSE FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

Introduction

Food Preparation and Nutrition focuses on both the practical and theory side of food. Students will learn about effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking a variety of dishes whilst using different techniques and equipment.

Course Structure

Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food as well as a sound knowledge of the nutritional content of food and drinks.

A heavy focus will be placed on understanding the relationship between diet, nutrition and health, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health.

Students will learn about nutritional and sensory qualities of food and microbiological food safety considerations. They will understand and explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international) to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

Assessment

Students will be assessed through non-exam assessment and exam assessment.

Non-exam assessment 50%

This is broken down into two parts:

- Task 1: Food Investigation (15%) - students will investigate the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients and produce a written report.
- Task 2: Food Preparation Assessment (35%) - students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within three hours.

Exam assessment 50%

There will be one final examination, which is 50% of the final grade.

Future Pathways

This provides a good foundation for courses or employment which involve food preparation, cooking or food manufacture. This GCSE also assists students with an interest in sports careers such as coaching or personal training, health care/medicine and child care due to the nutrition aspect of the course.

GCSE FRENCH

Introduction

94% of the world does not speak English as their first language, and 75% does not speak English at all.

Course Structure

Language lessons will offer a variety of activities aiming to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, including pair and group work, listening to and making recordings of both audio and video as well as using ICT to communicate with native speakers or practise language skills.

Contexts and topics covered are:

Identity and Culture: healthy and unhealthy lifestyles, relationships, future plans, family celebrations, cultural traditions

International dimension: free time and the media, new technology, social issues and equality, global environmental problems

Local area, holiday and travel: home and local area, tourism, holiday plans and experiences, local environmental issues

School and future aspirations: school, college and future plans, looking for and getting a job, advantages and inconveniences of different jobs.

Assessment

The four language skills will be assessed: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students will be assessed against the new GCSE criteria, which will involve equally weighted exams at the end of the course, with lots of support and practice beforehand.

Is it for me?

Studying French will help students to be more employable, and to develop useful transferable skills. The subject will teach students more about Francophone communities - you will learn about cultural aspects of French-speaking communities around the world. French will help you to get into university - several courses including Medicine and Law ask for a Modern Foreign Language to be considered for a place. Students will have fun - lessons are interactive with an emphasis on group work, problem solving and independent learning.

Future Pathways

Languages are an asset in jobs as diverse as accountancy, the travel industry, computer game design, engineering, journalism or law. Employers highly regard foreign language skills.

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

Introduction

From powerful volcanoes and extreme weather to global cities, climate change, and the future of our planet, Geography explores the big issues shaping your life right now. It's a dynamic subject where science meets real-world problem-solving: you'll analyse data, explore global case studies, and head out on fieldwork to investigate landscapes for yourself. Geography also keeps your options open, supporting careers from environmental science and urban planning to business and international development. If you're curious about the world, care about its future, and want a subject that's relevant, respected, and genuinely interesting, GCSE Geography is the perfect choice!

Course Structure

Students will follow the AQA syllabus, which is a rigorous and challenging course divided into three sections:

Living with the physical environment - Students will study how people live with and respond to the challenges of natural hazards, including earthquakes, volcanoes, tropical storms and floods, and climate change. They will discover aspects of global ecosystems including tropical rainforests and hot deserts. They will find out how the physical processes shape the world that we live in by studying coastal landforms and rivers.

Challenges in the human environment - Students will study the changing economic world, urban issues, the challenges of living in Manchester and Rio de Janeiro, and the challenges of resource management including energy, food and water.

Geographical applications - Here students will participate in two field studies. One to study Human Geography in East Manchester and the Etihad to evaluate the regeneration project, and one to study Physical Geography on a river study in Uppermill.

They will also evaluate an issue based on information which the examiners release 12 weeks before the final exam. You will develop skills that employers and universities look for.

Assessment

There will be three examination papers:

Paper 1 - Living with the physical environment (written, 90 mins, 37.5%)

Paper 2 - Challenges in the human environment (written, 90 mins, 37.5%)

Paper 3 - Issues evaluation, fieldwork and skills (written, 90 mins, 25%)

Future Pathways

The Russell Group of universities calls Geography a 'facilitating' subject because of the skills and knowledge it gives students, enabling access to a wide range of futures. Geography can lead you to many careers: tourism, finance, law, journalism and accountancy build on the skills used in Geography or into specific careers such as weather/climate careers, environmental consultancy or development work.

OCR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Introduction

About 3 million people in the UK work in health and social care. In healthcare, this includes jobs such as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, healthcare assistants and administrators, while social care roles include care assistants, social workers, occupational therapists and counsellors. Demand for both health and social care is likely to continue to rise, so it is sure to continue to play a key role in UK society, and the demand for people to fill these vital jobs will increase.

Students apply learning to real life scenarios, develop practical transferable skills. Components build on each other to help students grow in confidence, and gain a taste of the Health and Social Care sector.

Course Structure

The course is made up of three components: two internally assessed and one that is externally assessed. In theory lessons students will build confidence and knowledge ready to complete assignments in each block.

RO32 External Exam: Assessment to be sat at the end of Year 11

RO33 Supporting Individuals through life events Internal assessment: Coursework completed in Year 10

RO35 Health Promotion Campaign: Coursework completed in Year 11

Assessment

Assignments and units will be assessed using the grading system Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Pass

Future Pathways

OCR Cambridge National Health and Social Care opens up a wide range of opportunities to our students. Students can go on to study A-Levels and Level 3 Vocational Qualifications in Health and Social Care. The list of potential careers is endless within health care professions - Physiotherapists, Social services, Homecare and Community services, Midwifery, Nursing And Pharmacy.



GCSE HISTORY

Introduction

The study of History is an important part of an all-round education, and offers a range of career opportunities. Students develop transferable skills including decision making, research, communication, ICT and social skills, organising evidence and information. History bridges the gap between art and science and enables students to keep up to date with issues concerning Britain and the World today. It develops confidence and enables students to take part in lively debates. Teaching and learning is achieved through a variety of different methods, including individual work, class teaching, group work, debate and note taking. In addition to this, regular testing, exam questions and essay writing are important parts of the course.

Course structure

Paper 1: Thematic study and historical environment (30%)

Medicine in Britain c 1200-present day

The British Sector of the Western Front 1914-1918: injuries, treatments and trenches

Paper 2: Period study and depth study (40%)

Early Elizabethan England 1558 - 1588

Superpower relations and the Cold War 1941 - 1991

Paper 3: Modern depth study (30%)

Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918 - 1939

Assessment

The GCSE will be 100% external examination. This will involve three written papers covering all aspects of the course. Students will be awarded a grade 9-1.

Is it for me?

History aims to prepare young people for life, the world of work and further study. The school follows the Edexcel GCSE. Students acquire a range of study and work related skills, as well as learning about the past and modern world.

The course aims to build on skills and knowledge students have learned in Key Stage 3. Historical skills will be applied to new and interesting topics. If you enjoy investigating the past, writing essays, making notes, reading, analysing evidence and presenting your own ideas and opinions, History is the subject for you.



MIXING DESK

is a electronic device for processing, controlling and monitoring a low-amplitude audio signal to produce a final mix. It is used for multitrack recording and mixing as well as for live mixing in a live performance.

INPUTS

Inputs are the channels that feed into the mixer. They can be from microphones, instruments, or other mixers. Each input has a gain knob to control the level of the signal.

EQ

EQ stands for equalization. It allows you to boost or cut the frequency of a signal. This is used to make the mix sound better and to separate the different instruments.

COMPRESSION

Compression is used to control the dynamic range of a signal. It makes the quiet parts louder and the loud parts softer, making the sound more consistent.

REVERB

Reverb is used to create a sense of space and depth in the mix. It makes the sound seem like it's coming from a room or a hall.

STEREO

Stereo is used to create a wide sound field. It allows you to place the instruments in a virtual space, making the mix more immersive.

AMPLIFIERS

Amplifiers are used to increase the volume of a signal. They are essential for live performance and recording. There are many types of amplifiers, including guitar amplifiers, PA amplifiers, and preamplifiers.



synthesizers

Synthesizers are electronic instruments that generate sounds electronically. They can be used to create a wide variety of sounds, from realistic instruments to abstract, futuristic sounds.



GCSE MUSIC

Introduction

The department offers Eduqas GCSE Music as an option at KS4. .

Course Structure

The course has three core components; Understanding Music, Performing Music, and Composing Music. You will explore music from around the world including popular music, music of different cultures and classical music.

Assessment

Understanding Music includes a written examination (75 minutes, 40% of grade) - testing on elements of music as well as set works studied in depth during the course. These include Badinerie by Bach, and Africa by Toto

Performing Music - You will perform two pieces; one as a solo, the other in an ensemble. These performances must last for a total of at least four minutes.

Composing Music - You must create two pieces of music that you have composed yourself. One of these pieces is completely free choice, in any style you like. The second piece is set to a brief that comes from the exam board. To complete this you will be working with our Music Technology suite and alongside professional composers to support your work.

Is it for me?

There are opportunities to perform in professional venues with professional musicians, dramatists and technicians from across the UK. The course offers opportunities to attend performances at BBC Studios, Manchester theatres and the University of Manchester. Music students are “happy” and feel supported by staff. The courses are challenging and stretch students. The learning is different to other subjects and is really enjoyable! We often run collaborative projects alongside Drama and the other SPA subjects and students have described these as “fantastic opportunities.”

Future Pathways

GCSE Music is accepted at all colleges and is an excellent qualification to have if you want to study performing arts at college and beyond. It is also one of the most sought after GCSEs by Universities to study degrees in Medicine and Law! Over 2 million people worked in the creative industries in 2014, this figure has risen each year since 2000, one of the largest sectors in the UK.

MUSIC VOCATIONAL

Introduction

The department offers Eduqas Vocational Award Level 2 Performing Arts (Music) as an option at KS4. This is a fantastic vocational course with a focus on providing students an understanding of practical use of Arts skills in a variety of careers.

Course Structure

To complete this course you must successfully complete three units of study.

- Unit 1: Performing
- Unit 2: Creating
- Unit 3: Performing Arts in Practice (Externally Assessed)

In these units, you will learn all about the equipment that we use in the Music Industry to record and produce the music we listen to. You will learn the skills and knowledge required to work within the creative industry (nearly 20% of the UK workforce) In each unit, you will build up a portfolio of tracks that you have created and performed. At the end of the course you will have a portfolio of your own music. This can support you in your further study or gaining employment within the music industry later in your career.

You will also have an understanding of how funding works within the creative industry and have the opportunity to learn business skills and bid for some funding to run a live Music event.

Assessment

Eduqas Technical Awards are equivalent to one GCSE and include elements of written internal/external assessment and practical internal/external assessment. These courses are accepted by colleges and universities as routes to further study. The structure of this course allows students to select and personalise their learning to focus on music and areas of creativity that they find interesting. Students get to contribute to the design of their overall learning journey.

Is it for me?

- Are you interested in Dance, Hip-Hop or Pop Music?
- Are you interested in the business aspect of the Music Industry?
- Do you enjoy making 'beats'?
- Do you want to design your own course of study and select your own topics?

Future Pathways

Students who complete the Eduqas Music Vocational course can go on to further study at A Level Music or Music Technology, Level 3 Diploma in Radio Production, Level 3 Diploma in Creative Media, or Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative Media.

Introduction

Students will need an excellent attitude to learning, good ability in English and an interest in PE and sport that extends to participating competitively outside school. You will also need a willingness to work hard in the classroom and in practical lessons, where full PE kit every lesson is also essential.

Course Structure

You will study a range of sports. You will be assessed in Athletics, Table Tennis, Basketball, Football, Badminton, Volleyball, Dance, Cricket, Netball and Trampolining. The course involves five one-hour lessons per fortnight, plus home learning. If there is another sport that you take part in outside school to a high level, it may be possible to use video evidence to assess you in this area.

Assessment

Exam paper 1: The Human Body and Movement (60 minutes, 30% of overall grade)
Applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, use of data.

Exam paper 2: Sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness & well-being, use of data. (60 minutes, 30% of overall grade)

Non examined material: Practical sport unit (40% of overall grade)

Teacher-assessed, moderated by OCR, 100 marks. Practical performance in three physical activities in the role of player/performer worth 10% for each sport - one team activity, one individual, one in either team or individual sport. 10% of NEA is coursework based on training methods that improve performance in a particular sport.

Is it for me?

Students need to have an interest in sport and a high level of commitment and motivation. 40% of the course is assessed on practical ability, you need to be able to perform at a good level in a range of sporting areas and be prepared to work hard during practical lessons. Playing sports outside school is an advantage. Do not expect this course to be completely practical. A large amount of time will be spent learning the course content in preparation for the exams.

Students choosing GCSE PE should have an ATL of A or B in PE and also an assessment grade of Secure or Mastering in PE.

Future Pathways

GCSE PE can lead to further academic courses such as A Level Physical Education and Level 3 Cambridge National/Technical Sport Studies. The sports industry is a multi million pound business today and with further study and training, students could find employment in many different areas of sport, including PE teaching, leisure industry, sports coaching, sport and industry, sport and technology, and personal training.

GCSE ART AND DESIGN: PHOTOGRAPHY

Introduction

Students produce a portfolio of work to study particular themes relating to the work of a range of past and contemporary artists and photographers. Developing ideas through digital techniques and media, and using programmes such as Photoshop, form a major part of each assignment. Students will explore various approaches, demonstrating skills in composition, viewpoint and depth of field making appropriate use of colour, line, tone, texture, shape and form, in response to an idea, theme or brief. Students will need to explain and critically review their work, through written annotations, as this will form a crucial part of the assessment.

Course Structure

During the course, students will cover a range of different areas below, with at least 2 as a minimum:

- Architecture photography (working from the built or natural environment)
- Portraiture
- Still Life photography, (working from natural or manufactured objects)
- Documentary photography, photo journalism, narrative photography, reportage
- Fine Art photography, photographic installation
- New media practice such as computer manipulated photography and photographic projections

Assessment

Component 1: Coursework 60%

This consists of a portfolio of selected work from a series of assignments

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment 40% (ESA)

You need to produce your own assignment in response to an externally set exam paper. You will have nine weeks preparatory time and 10 hours supervised work under examination conditions. The Externally Set Assignment will form part of the exhibition, which is assessed both internally and by a moderator from the AQA board.

Is it for me?

This is a very popular course as the photographic and digital expertise you gain are transferrable to many different careers. An interest in the subject and the willingness to work hard are as important as any natural talent. No prior knowledge is needed. You will learn how to use Photoshop as well as how to use an SLR camera to create and develop your work. Having access to a digital camera phone for your home learning would be an advantage, but not essential as cameras are provided.

Future Pathways

There are many careers where a qualification in Photography is desirable. These include several arts-based and creative fields, involving working as a Freelance or Corporate Photographer, working in publishing or production as well as in the fashion or film industry.



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Introduction

GCSE Religious Studies is made up of two elements: the study of religion and the study of themes. The study of religion involves an in-depth look at two religious traditions: Christianity and Islam. The study of themes covers philosophical and moral concepts such as abortion and the death penalty. While exploring these themes, we consider beliefs within Christianity, Islam, and wider UK society.

Course Structure

We follow the AQA exam board specification A. During the course the focus will be on both the practical and ethical application of religious teaching in the modern world. You will have five lessons per fortnight in school with homework and additional reading as directed by your class teacher.

Assessment

The GCSE qualification consists of two written examination papers at the end of Year 11. Each paper lasts 1 hour 45 minutes.

Is it for me?

Religious Studies is all about people, religion, culture, morality (what is right and wrong) and philosophy (asking big questions). As well as learning facts and gaining knowledge about religious beliefs and practices, this course encourages students to develop skills of empathy, critical thinking and debate. To be successful in this GCSE, you will need to be able to discuss and evaluate key issues, including contemporary moral issues such as the death penalty. Religious Studies is a literacy based subject. Therefore, students also need to be competent in extended writing and be keen to learn new subject-specific terminology.

Future Pathways

Religious Studies GCSE is a valuable qualification for anyone wishing to work in sectors of the employment market where communication skills are important. Jobs in the caring professions such as nursing, nursery work, social work or teaching, require skills of empathy and tolerance that Religious Studies fosters in its students. People who study Religious Studies also go on to careers in politics, the civil service, journalism, the media and the charity sector.

As an academic subject, Religious Studies complements other Humanities subjects such as History, as well as social science subjects like Sociology and Psychology.

GCSE SEPARATE SCIENCES

Introduction

This is the highest level of science available in the school, and comprises three separate GCSEs. All students selected for this course will be given a comprehensive overview of physics, chemistry and biology. You will be extremely well placed to continue your studies in any chosen scientific discipline beyond GCSE level. This is a course that carries a lot of weight with further education providers, and will be respected as a sign of ability and intent for any future educational plans. There are **60** places available.

Course Structure

You will divide your time between biology, chemistry and physics during both years. You will study the same topics as the students completing the double award, but you will study each idea in more breadth and depth. There is one extra topic in the Physics GCSE about space physics. All of the content studied will be examined in the final exams in Year 11.

Assessment

You will be assessed at the end of Year 11. There will be a total of six exams (two per GCSE) each lasting 105 minutes. This qualification has no coursework component. Everything will be assessed in the exams at the end of the course. You will leave in Year 11 with three GCSEs: Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Is it for me?

You must enjoy science! If your future might involve further studies in science then this the best course you can go on, particularly if you are looking at oversubscribed degree courses such as medicine and dentistry.

Future Pathways

The study of three science subjects equips students for further study at A-level, leading to university study in the broad range of scientific subjects.



OCR SPORT STUDIES

Introduction

Students will need a good attitude to learning, good ability in English, an interest in PE and sport, and a willingness to work hard in the classroom and in practical lessons. This also includes bringing PE kit for all practical lessons.

Course Structure

You will study a range of sports. You will be assessed in Table Tennis, Athletics, Basketball, Football, Badminton, Climbing, Volleyball, Dance, Cricket, Netball and Trampolining. The course involves five one-hour lessons per fortnight, plus home learning. If there is another sport that you take part in outside school to a high level, it may be possible to use video evidence to assess you in this area.

Assessment

Students will study three units:

- Contemporary Issues in Sport (one hour exam)
- Performance and leadership in Sports Activities
- Sport and the Media

Is it for me?

Students need to have an interest in sport and have a high level of commitment and motivation. Over a third of the course is assessed on practical ability, you need to be able to perform at a good level in a range of sporting areas and be prepared to work hard during practical lessons. Do not expect this course to be completely practical. A large amount of time will be spent learning the course content in preparation for the exam.

Students choosing Sport Studies should have an ATL of A or B and also an assessment grade of Developing or above in PE.

Future Pathways

Sports Studies can lead to further academic courses such as A Level Physical Education and Level 3 Cambridge Nationals/Technical's Sport Studies.

The sports industry is a multi million pound business today and with further study and training, students could find employment in many different areas of sport, including PE teaching, leisure industry, sports coaching, sport and industry, sport and technology, and personal training.

GCSE STATISTICS

Introduction

Numbers are everywhere—from predicting the weather to understanding global trends and making key business decisions. GCSE Statistics brings data to life, helping students develop analytical and problem-solving skills useful in subjects like science, geography, and business studies.

The course follows the statistical enquiry cycle, teaching students how to collect, analyse, and interpret data effectively. Through real-world examples and case studies, students gain practical experience applying statistical techniques to a wide range of scenarios. This builds confidence in handling numbers both in school and beyond.

GCSE Statistics also reinforces key mathematical techniques and provides a strong foundation for further study, including A-level Mathematics and related subjects.

Assessment

- 100% examination-based
- Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) or Higher Tier (grades 4–9)
- Two equally weighted exam papers covering statistical methods and applications

Key topics:

- Data collection methods
- Representing and processing data
- Probability and risk
- Statistical analysis and interpretation

Future Pathways

Statistics is a rewarding and often exciting subject, offering valuable skills for many industries. Statisticians work with data in nearly every field, helping to analyse information and make informed decisions.

Whether you're interested in sports analytics, business, medicine, psychology, or other fields, statistical skills are essential. If you are forward-thinking, IT-savvy, and enjoy solving real-world problems, this could be the perfect subject for you.

By studying GCSE Statistics, you will develop problem-solving abilities, gain experience working with data, and discover patterns that shape the world. This course provides a strong foundation for further study, including A-level Mathematics, Psychology, and Business Studies. With statistical skills in high demand, this subject opens doors to a wide range of careers, making it a valuable choice for students looking to develop analytical and practical expertise.

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