



Queen Elizabeth's *School*

• Ambition • Community • Kindness •



Year 9 Options Booklet

2025



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Making Choices

The next stage in your education is probably the most important of all. Whatever you want to do in the rest of your life, it will be much easier if you make a success of these next two years.

There are certain subjects that are so central to everything we do, and are necessary for next steps in education or employment, that all students study them. We call these the core subjects. They are:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Science (combined/separate)
- GCSE French
- Humanities – GCSE Geography or GCSE History
- GCSE Religious Studies Short Course
- Physical Education (not examined)
- Personal Development (not examined)

We are proud of the range of subjects in our curriculum and that they are available to students of all abilities. The options process aims to help everyone to make the best choices to suit their interests and help all students to progress to what they want to do in the next phase of education and beyond.

Everyone will choose either History or Geography. Most students will continue with French as a core subject unless they have been specifically targeted to receive extra English and maths support instead. Some students will be considered to study separate sciences during the core science time. Students will be invited to study this course based on their academic performance, particularly in maths and science, discussion with their teachers and dedication to their studies in general. All courses are either GCSEs assessed mainly by examinations at the end of the two years, or high value Technical Awards. The Technical Awards involve applied learning and have up to 75% of the course assessed as you go along, therefore reducing the number of exams at the end of Year 11. All these courses are suitable for students of all abilities, have grades equivalent to GCSEs, and are of equal value.

This booklet is about helping you to make choices by giving you information about each course. This will enable you, with the help of your parents and teachers, to make up your mind about what you are going to do next. What is important is that you choose courses for the right reasons.

Young people leaving school now may well have three or four major career changes in their lives. This means that you will need a broad balance of knowledge, skills and interests. Do not focus too narrowly on particular subjects, they will all be useful to you at some time in your life. Maintaining a good balance in the subjects you choose is very important. Employers like students who have a broad spread of knowledge, skills and interests as well as good examination results.

When choosing courses, be aspirational! Stretch yourself and go for the combination that is going to equip you best for your next steps in education, which will take you from 16 to 18 and then on to Higher Education or work. Have the confidence to ask questions and use all the adults around you; teachers, parents, older students and careers staff. We all want to help you make good, balanced decisions which open doors for you. Think about what you would like that future to be and plan accordingly. We wish you every success over the next two years and beyond.

Whilst we will always do our best to create a timetable that meets the needs of the individual student, we strongly believe that the majority of students benefit from a rounded curriculum that builds on the entirety of their Key Stage 3 experience.



GCSE English Language

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs V Hopkins-Bond

What are the aims of this course?

In higher education, in the world of work and in our everyday lives, it has never been more essential to understand what we read, and recognise how writers employ language to shape the way we see the world around us. In addition to this, both universities and employers prize young people who can communicate effectively both in writing and verbally – those who can convey their ideas with clarity and persuade others of their point of view. The development of these skills are the main aims of the English Language GCSE course.

What does the course involve?

We study how authors use words to create fictional worlds, which fill us with delight, hope, horror or fear. In addition to this, we look at how non-fiction writers tackle diverse topics, from sport and education to colonialism and environmental disaster, and how the way they write influences our point of view.

Through creative writing, be it descriptions of Gothic castles or stories about time travel, our students are encouraged to develop their own distinctive voices. Through non-fiction writing, we teach our students how to organise their ideas clearly and express their options effectively when writing letters, articles and speeches, an unquestionably important life skill.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of Year 11 students will sit two examinations for English Language.

Paper 1 focuses on fiction reading and writing. 50% of this paper involves answering questions about an extract from a novel or short story; the other 50% requires you to complete a piece of descriptive or narrative writing.

Paper 2 focuses on non-fiction reading and writing. 50% of this paper involves answering questions about a piece of factual writing, such as a newspaper article or an extract from an autobiography; the other 50% requires you to complete a piece of non-fiction writing, such as a letter or a speech.

Finally, all students complete the Spoken Language Endorsement, speaking and answering questions about a topic of their choice.

Where could this course take me?

English Language GCSE is required by nearly all colleges, employers and universities and is designed in such a way to ensure students are equipped to understand how the written word is used every day. Careers directly linked to English include digital copywriter, editorial assistant, English as a foreign language teacher, journalist and publisher.



GCSE English Literature

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs V Hopkins-Bond

What are the aims of this course?

Within our English Literature curriculum, we aim to empower our students to be able to listen to, and truly appreciate and understand the stories of others.

What does the course involve?

We have selected a range of texts that all address the big questions of how human beings behave towards each other. Texts written many years apart, by diverse writers, continue to engage in this dialogue about how we should live together. These texts include 'An Inspector Calls', where we explore the ways in which Priestley communicates his urgent message of the need for collective social responsibility, particularly that of the rich caring for the poor. Students go on to study works from poets as varied as the social visionary William Blake writing in the Georgian period (1820s) to the current poet laureate, Simon Armitage. This then leads us into the study of Shakespeare's tragedy 'Macbeth', where the inability to handle a personal thirst for power turns a decorated war hero into a throne stealer and a child murderer. Our study of 'A Christmas Carol' then further explores ideas of social responsibility and the need for compassion and connection within society, as we study Scrooge's painful education in the correct use of financial and personal power.

How will I be assessed?

For Paper 1 you will answer one question about 'Macbeth' and one about 'A Christmas Carol'. You will write about an unseen extract from both of these texts before going on to discuss how it relates to the rest of the text.

In Paper 2 you will have the option of answering two questions on 'An Inspector Calls', in addition to comparing one specified poem from the anthology to another of your choice from the 'Power and Conflict' cluster. Finally, you will write about two unseen poems.

Where could this course take me?

The study of English Literature can lead to a degree in English, drama, media studies, law, classics, French and other modern languages, teacher training, history, history of art, politics and religious studies. Moreover, the skills developed through the study of English Literature are among the most transferable in the workplace, with English graduates going on to develop the widest range of careers — among the most popular are publishing, broadcasting, marketing and PR, journalism, law, teaching and politics.



GCSE Mathematics

Examination Board	EDEXCEL
Lead Teacher	Dr M Wallace

What are the aims of this course?

To encourage students to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards mathematics, and to recognise the importance of mathematics in their own lives and to society.

Students studying this course will:

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions
- Comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context

What does the course involve?

Students will study the EDEXCEL GCSE Mathematics syllabus. The course focuses on six key areas of mathematics:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and measures
- Probability
- Statistics

Further details of the syllabus can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/mathematics-2015.html>

How will I be assessed?

The exam has two tiers, Foundation (grades 1 to 5) and Higher (grades 3 to 9). Students' tier of entry will be determined by their performance at KS3 and regularly reviewed in KS4.

Students will sit three exam papers of 90 minutes each. Paper one is a non-calculator exam, whereas Papers two and three are calculator exams. Students must take all three question papers at the same tier.

Where could this course take me?

Many successful Mathematics students go on to study A-Level mathematics, sciences, electronics, psychology, environmental studies or the International Baccalaureate.

Every career you can think of will involve maths at some level. Careers where maths is used regularly include: financial management services; medicine; construction and engineering; scientific research and design.



GCSE Combined Science

Examination Board	EDEXCEL
Lead Teacher	Mrs K Simons

What are the aims of this course?

All students in Year 9 are studying transition units linked to the combined science course. It enables students to have a wide breadth of knowledge to continue to study Science at our Sixth Form or College, be that A-Level or BTEC courses.

Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific theories and also how to apply that knowledge to analyse and evaluate information in practical and everyday scenarios. Some of the materials studied are traditional, although there is a great emphasis on applying concepts and skills.

What does the course involve?

The GCSE in Combined Science will enable students to develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics. The areas that are covered and explored are:

- Chemistry: Includes Key concepts in chemistry, States of matter and mixtures, Chemical changes, Extracting metals and equilibria, Groups in the periodic table, Rates of reaction and energy changes, Fuels and Earth science.
- Biology: Includes Key concepts in biology, Cells and control, Genetics, Natural selection and genetic modification, Health, disease and the development of medicines, Plant structures and their functions, Animal coordination, control and homeostasis, Exchange and transport in animals, Ecosystems and material cycles.
- Physics: Includes Key concepts of physics, Motion and forces, Conservation of energy, Waves, Light and the electromagnetic spectrum, Radioactivity, Energy - Forces doing work, Forces and their effects, Electricity and circuits, Magnetism and the motor effect, Electromagnetic induction, Particle model, Forces and matter.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment will be through six 70-minute exam papers sat in the Summer of Year 11. You will sit two papers each for Biology, Chemistry and Physics with the marks being combined to give you two Combined Science grades.

Throughout the course you will carry out practical work, 16 of which will be core practicals that will be recorded and included in exam papers.

Where could this course take me?

Any science qualification at GCSE will provide skills that are essential for further study across the subject areas. It also forms the basis of many careers in medicine, healthcare, engineering, teaching, forensic science, human biology, environmental studies or animal care. University STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) courses include biochemistry, molecular biology, ocean sciences, veterinary science or zoology.



GCSE Separate Sciences

Examination Board	EDEXCEL
Lead Teacher	Mrs K Simons

What are the aims of this course?

This course starts in Year 10 and is aimed at students who aspire to continue studying science at A-level. The course prepares students to study for three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This course is fast-paced to ensure that all the specified content is covered before the final exams in Year 11. To be considered for this course students need to be performing strongly in mathematics as well as their Sciences. Students are invited to study this course based on their academic performance, discussion with their teacher and dedication to their studies. Students may be advised to take exams for combined science in Year 10 or Year 11, if this is felt to be a more secure route to achieve a higher grade.

What does the course involve?

This course features many of the major theories of the Sciences in a way that will encourage you to appreciate their importance to everyday life. You will also explore how scientific information is obtained, how reliable it is, what its limitations are, and how this information helps society to make important decisions. You investigate subject content in greater depth and have greater opportunity to develop practical skills.

- Biology: Includes Microbes, photosynthesis and the food chain; Cells; Respiration; Internal conditions in humans; Enzymes.
- Chemistry: Includes Atoms and compounds; Structures of compounds; Controlling reactions; Energy of reactions; Ions; Chemical analysis.
- Physics: Includes Linear movement; Circular movement; Static and current electricity; Electrical devices; Radioactivity; Light and sound.

How will I be assessed?

You will sit six 105-minute papers, two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics and receive a separate grade for each subject.

Throughout the course you will carry out practical work, eight of which per subject will be core practicals that will be recorded and included in the exam papers.

Where could this course take me?

Students who have studied the Separate Sciences GCSE tend to go on to study A levels in the sciences. It is designed for those whose careers will be in the STEM areas such as medicine, engineering, forensic science, sport science, marine science, further maths or ecology.



GCSE French

Examination Board	Eduqas
Lead Teacher	Mrs J Cherrett

What are the aims of this course?

To enhance transferable skills such as confidence, communication, problem solving and creativity. These are all skills that are increasingly sought after by employers. This course is suited to all students, particularly those who have an interest in other cultures and broadening their horizons.

What does the course involve?

Over the two-year course, you will continue to develop your French language skills within three main areas:

- People and lifestyle: Looking at your relationships with others, living a healthy lifestyle and education and work.
- Popular culture: Where you will look into customs, festivals and celebrations, free-time activities and celebrity culture.
- Communication and the world around us: Looking into travel and tourism including places of interest, media and technology and the environment in which we live.

You will continue to develop your speaking, reading and writing skills in French and understand spoken French in a variety of situations. You will also develop your knowledge of French grammar.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE exam is split into four equal parts; speaking, reading, listening and writing, and students will either take the Foundation (grades 1-5) or the Higher (grades 3-9) tier.

All assessment takes place in the summer term of Year 11. The speaking element is assessed through a 7–12-minute speaking test involving a role-play, a description of a picture and a short conversation in French. Reading, listening and writing are assessed through three separate papers, which are between 35 and 75 minutes long.

Where could this course take me?

In our ever-changing world, it is more important than ever to learn a foreign language. From being a ski instructor to working in marketing, languages are everywhere and recognised as being extremely useful, and employers are always keen to have someone with knowledge of French working with them. France is one of our most important trading partners in Europe, and many British firms have branches in France, just as there are as many French companies investing in Britain. We cannot walk down the main street of any British town today without seeing French brand names such as Peugeot, Renault, Dior, Louis Vuitton, L'Oréal, Chanel, Michelin, Citroën, Evian, Yves Saint Laurent and many more.



GCSE Geography

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs N Manwaring

What are the aims of this course?

In GCSE Geography you will study the relationship between people and the environment they live in. Geography is a lively, topical and relevant subject that will provide you with the skills and understanding necessary to be a knowledgeable citizen in the modern world. Climate change, the global population explosion, natural disasters, food miles, 'sweatshops' in South East Asia, the internet revolution, extreme tourism, Fair Trade, our future energy sources, catastrophic flooding - geography studies all this and more. We will use a variety of modern textbooks, audio-visual lessons, computer aided learning, fieldwork, problem solving, computer-based maps and photographs during the course. If you are interested in the world you live in then this is the course for you.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: Living with the Physical Environment. This covers the challenges of natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis and tropical cyclones; coastal and river management in the UK including flooding, global warming and sea level rise; the living world including tropical rainforest management and biodiversity loss.
- Unit 2: Challenges in the Human Environment. This covers urban issues and challenges including megacities and urban environmental problems; the changing economic world including globalisation, TNCs, the rise of China and fair trade; the challenge of resource management including water, climate change and energy resources for the future.
- Unit 3 Geographical Applications. This covers geographical skills including fieldwork primary data collection and analysis, maps, photos, satellite images and graphs. It also includes problem solving/decision making skills of real geographical issues.

How will I be assessed?

- Unit 1: 90-minute exam in June Year 11 (35% of grade)
- Unit 2: 90-minute exam in June Year 11 (35% of grade)
- Unit 3: 60-minute exam in June Year 11 (30% of grade)
Pre-release material for the decision-making exercise will be released to students from March 15th in Year 11.
- Fieldwork: We will do at least three days of fieldwork visits during the course to prepare for the Unit 3 exam.

Where could this course take me?

Geography provides a wide range of skills demanded for higher education and work. Geography can be taken as an art or science at university. Geographers are some of the most employable graduates as they are numerate, can communicate, problem solve, are ICT literate and write reports. They enter a huge range of careers related to the environment, retail, law, meteorology, earth science, international development, engineering, marketing, the travel industry, research, business management and more.



GCSE History

Examination Board	Edexcel
Lead Teacher	Mrs N Manwaring

What are the aims of this course?

History GCSE is an exciting course that aims to give students an understanding of key historical moments that have truly shaped and influenced the world we live in today. In addition, it aims to develop key transferable skills such as analysis, communication, and questioning.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: Medicine in Britain, 1250-Present and The British Sector of the Western Front, 1914-1918: injuries, treatment, and the trenches
This thematic unit allows students to understand how medicine has evolved and changed from Medieval England to the Present Day and the changes that have occurred to make medicine safer and more effective.
- Unit 2a: British Depth Study: Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588
This unit explores religious challenge, scandals, plots, rebellions, wars, and life for different groups of people.
- Unit 2b: Period Study: Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1945-1991
Studying the Cold War has huge benefits to our students in understanding the political complexities of the world around them today. Students will study wars, nuclear threats, economic dominance, and geopolitical rivalries.
- Unit 3: Modern Depth Study: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1939
Students will begin by studying the political and economic ramifications of World War One on Germany, then to the progress and decline of the 1920s and end with Hitler's rise to power and how he created the Nazi dictatorship.

How will I be assessed?

Students will have three exams:

- Unit 1: 75-minutes
- Unit 2: 105-minutes
- Unit 3: 80-minutes

We will develop key skills such as explanation, analysis and forming a judgement. In addition to this we study primary sources and historical interpretations.

Where could this course take me?

History is an extremely valuable qualification due to the transferrable skills it enables students to develop, for example the ability to process information, to analyse it to reach a judgement and to interpret a wide variety of sources. It is sought after by employers for careers such as marketing, research, journalism and education.



Core Physical Education

Examination Board	<i>This course is not examined</i>
Lead Teacher	Mr C Skinner

What are the aims of this course?

All students are required to follow a programme of Physical Education throughout their school career. All students will have one hour of core PE per week. PE allows students to express themselves physically, challenging themselves and others in a wide range of activities. At QE, we utilise PE as a powerful tool to develop our students not only physically, but significantly contributing to your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the course involve?

Core PE involves educating students' awareness of many aspects of sport and fitness and its importance to our overall well-being. The activities offered allow you to experience a wider range of sporting activities, aiming to improve your lifelong participation in sport. You will complete units of work in a wide variety of sports and activities. We look to improve your confidence, understanding and skills across a number of areas. These sports may include:

Fitness Weight Training	Volleyball	Tag American Flag Football
Fitness Class Activities	Badminton	Climbing
Table Tennis	Basketball	Rugby
Crown Bowls	Tennis	Football
Rounders	5-a-side Football	Netball
Softball	Frisbee	

How will I be assessed?

This course is not examined at the end of Year 11.

Where could this course take me?

We hope that your varied experiences in core PE will inspire you to have a lifelong involvement in sport and keeping fit.



GCSE Religious Studies (Short Course)

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs R Lee

What are the aims of this course?

Religious Studies Short Course GCSE is an asset to any student's programme of study at Key Stage 4 because it empowers young people to understand the world we live in and to reflect on their own worldview. Students get to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live and understand the world. Students gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own worldview along the way.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: The study of religious beliefs and teachings (50% of grade)
We study Buddhism and Christianity and compare religious and non-religious worldviews on the many areas of study. Students will learn about the core concepts essential to the religion, learning to explain and critically discuss core beliefs.
- Unit 2: Thematic Studies (50% of grade)
Students consider two different ethical themes, 'relationships' and 'war and peace', and explore these with reference to contemporary case studies and a range of worldviews.

How will I be assessed?

Students are assessed in one written exam of 105-minutes. The questions will range from those requiring a short answer to ones needing longer evaluations and reference to a religious source of wisdom.

Where could this course take me?

Religious Studies develops students' skills and understanding in what motivates people to make the decisions they do. They learn to craft balanced arguments and to respectfully challenge different perspectives. These skills are beneficial for any chosen career path that requires mental flexibility, ethical decision-making capacities, analytical, organisational research and communication skills.

Religious Studies provides a solid foundation to seek careers in many fields such as law, the NHS, politics, public services (police, fire service, armed forces), education, tourism, journalism, health and social care, research, non-profit organisations and the media.



Option Choices

Art and Design

Business

Child Development

Computer Science

Dance

Design and Technology – Engineering*

Design and Technology – Product Design*

Drama

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Geography

History

Music

Photography

Physical Education*

Religious Studies

Sports Studies*

GCSE support

N.B Some courses cannot be taken alongside other similar courses. Please see course pages marked * for information.



GCSE Art and Design

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Ms J Morton

What are the aims of this course?

To develop personal creativity, increasing appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and learning practical skills in the creation of pieces of art.

You should choose this course if:

- You are creative and enjoy making things.
- You enjoy the subject and work hard in it.
- You are thinking of pursuing a career in Art and Design.

What does the course involve?

This is a practical course where you will be given the opportunity to explore ideas, materials and techniques to help you put together a strong Controlled Assessment Portfolio. A portfolio should include at least two projects. Themes may include:

- The Human Form
- Still Life
- The Environment

You will need to be enthusiastic and enjoy art generally. You must also be able to come up with your own ideas and work independently. You must be prepared to work independently between lessons.

How will I be assessed?

- Component 1: Portfolio (60% of grade)
Candidates will put together a portfolio of work responding to a personal theme. Your portfolio will be assessed formally by your teacher at the end of each project. Your Portfolio will be submitted for final assessment at the end of January in Year 11.
- Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of grade)
The ESA is the exam. Candidates will select one starting point from their exam paper, which they can start to research from January. Their final piece will be made in a ten-hour exam. Your Externally Set Assignment will usually take place before Easter during Year 11.

Where could this course take me?

There are many career paths that Art and Design GCSE may lead to, including architect, cartoonist, computer game designer, costume designer, display designer/visual merchandiser, product designer, exhibition designer, film and media, fine artist, footwear designer, goldsmith/silversmith, graphic designer, hat designer (milliner), illustrator, interior designer, medical illustrator, model maker, product designer, sculptor, fashion/clothing designer, set designer, teacher, textile designer, toymaker and wallpaper designer.



GCSE Business

Examination Board	EDEXCEL
Lead Teacher	Mr M Baptist

What are the aims of this course?

Business is relevant to the world of business and enterprise, which is all around us, and provides the future for many of our students. It is a subject that helps us understand employment and self-employment opportunities.

This course will develop the skills of analysis and evaluation, which are transferable and can be applied to most situations in everyday life. You will also get a good grounding in a range of decision making methods and techniques which are widely used in the world of work.

What does the course involve?

On this course we investigate:

- How businesses actually work - marketing, statistics, finance and accounts, production methods, the role of brand names etc.
- The importance of people - motivation, training, payment methods, trade unions
- Different types of businesses - from sole traders to multinational corporations
- The bigger picture - environmental conflicts, European Union, pressure groups, governmental help and hindrances

How will I be assessed?

The course is made up of two units:

- Theme 1: Investigating Small Business
- Theme 2: Building a Business.

These themes are assessed through examination in June of Year 11 in two separate papers of 90-minutes each

Where could this course take me?

Many students successful in this course have gone on to study A-Level Business, which can be taken as a full A Level in the Sixth Form. This course prepares you well for higher education and for the world of work, as you acquire a whole range of skills that different businesses are looking for, with degree courses including business management, business administration, accountancy, advertising, international business, finance, human resource management and marketing.



Level 1/2 Certificate in Child Development

Examination Board	OCR
Lead Teacher	Mr W Richer

What are the aims of this course?

Cambridge Nationals are vocationally related qualifications that take an engaging, practical and inspiring approach to learning and assessment. This qualification is for learners who wish to develop applied knowledge and practical skills in child development. It is designed with both practical and theoretical elements, which will prepare students for further qualifications in child care, health and social care, psychology, sociology and biology within their Post-16 education.

What does the course involve?

All students will study three mandatory topics as follows:

- Unit 1: Health and Well-being for Child Development. Students will learn about the importance of both pre-conception health and creating conditions in which a child can thrive, including the prevention and management of childhood illnesses and creating a safe environment.
- Unit 2: Create a Safe Environment and Understand the Nutritional Needs of Children from Birth to Five Years. Students will learn how to create a safe environment for children from birth to five years in childcare settings. They will investigate and choose equipment that is both suitable and safe for use and will learn about their nutrition and dietary needs.
- Unit 3: Understand the Development of a Child from One to Five Years. Students will learn the expected developmental norms for children from one to five years. They will use observation and research techniques and skills to investigate these development norms and explore their findings. They will also learn the importance of creating plans and providing different play activities to support children in their development.

How will I be assessed?

- R057 is assessed by an external written exam (75-minutes).
- R058 and R059 are both assessed through an externally set assignment, which is centre-assessed and externally moderated by OCR.

Where could this course take me?

This qualification is a good foundation for all types of employment within the Health and Social Care sector, such as: early years childcare, nursing, social work, GP surgeries, hospitals, physiotherapy, dental practitioners, mental health, elderly care, social services, primary care trust advisors, care charities and organisations, and nutrition services.



GCSE Computer Science

Examination Board	Eduqas
Lead Teacher	Mr S Robbins

What are the aims of this course?

Our GCSE Computer Science course gets students working with real-world, practical programming techniques that give them a good understanding of what makes technology work. Our GCSE has built-in progression to further studies and is recognised as developing the skills that are valued by employers.

What does the course involve?

Paper One: Understanding Computer Science

- Hardware
- Logical operations
- Networking and cybersecurity
- Data representation
- Data organisation
- Operating systems
- Principles of programming
- Algorithms and constructs
- Software development
- Program construction
- Impacts of digital technology on wider society

Paper Two: Computer Programming

- Investigation
- Design
- Implementation
- Testing
- Refinement

How will I be assessed?

Two exams, examined at the end of Year 11

- Paper 1: Written examination (105-minutes, 100 marks)
- Paper 2: On-screen examination (120-minutes, 80 marks)

Questions include a mix of multiple choice, short and longer questions assessing knowledge of computing, as well as a practical problem-solving examination where students are required to demonstrate their programming skills.

Where could this course take me?

GCSE Computer Science is a potential gateway to any number of careers. Within the IT sector itself, students could go on to pursue careers in software engineering, website/app development, computer game design/development or cybersecurity. A background in programming is also advantageous in many other sectors, including financial services, automotive design, engineering, graphic design, scientific research and business.



GCSE Dance

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs V Evans

What are the aims of this course?

The study of dance as an art form contributes to students' aesthetic and social development. As a physical activity it promotes fitness and well-being. As performers, students develop confidence and self-esteem. They develop self and body awareness as well as sensitivity to others and team working skills. Effective performance requires physical effort and the determination to succeed and improve. Effective choreography requires imagination and the ability to mould a number of elements together to create a finished piece.

What does the course involve?

A student of GCSE Dance will study three areas in the subject:

- Performance, including good studio practice, the technical/expressive nature of dance skills and factors which influence the achievement of a high-quality dance performance.
- Choreography, including the process of creating choreography, choreographic structure and other features of a dance - music, costume, set etc.
- Appreciation, including analysis and interpretation of dances and the historical and social context of dances.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1: Performance and Choreography (60% of grade)

- Performance: This consists of a 1-minute solo performance set by the exam board and a 3½ minute duet/trio performance.
- Choreography: Solo (2 – 2 ½ minutes) or group choreography (3 – 3 ½ minutes). Based on externally set tasks by the exam board.

Component 2: Dance Appreciation (40% of grade)

- Written Exam: 90-minutes – including critical appreciation of your own work and professional works.

Where could this course take me?

GCSE Dance offers students a stepping-stone to further study in dance and other related art forms at A-level and degree.

As a creative art form GCSE Dance also develops valuable skills in communication, research, evaluation, analysis and self-confidence; all skills that are required now by employers in the world of work. Possible careers could include: dancer, choreographer, teacher, events planner, theatre manager, artistic director, dance critic, physical therapist, arts council advisor or marketing.



GCSE Design and Technology – Engineering*

Examination Board	Eduqas
Lead Teacher	Mr W Richer

What are the aims of this course?

Through studying GCSE Design and Technology, learners will be prepared to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. They will be aware of, and learn from, wider influences in design and technology, including historical, social/cultural, environmental and economic factors.

What does the course involve?

This course enables learners to work creatively when designing and making, and apply technical and practical expertise.

The subject content is presented under two headings: 'technical principles' and 'designing and making principles'. Within each area, the content is further divided into core knowledge and understanding and in-depth knowledge and understanding.

Core knowledge and understanding - learners are required to study all of the content in these five areas:

- Design and technology and our world
- Smart materials
- Electronic systems and programmable components
- Mechanical components and devices
- Materials

In-depth knowledge and understanding: Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

How will I be assessed?

The subject content for GCSE Design and Technology will be assessed in the written examination and non-exam assessment (NEA).

- Written examination: 120-minutes = 50% of grade
- NEA: approximately 35 hours = 50% of grade

Where could this course take me?

Students following this subject could use the course to gain entry to a number of different related engineering, design or creative careers or further education courses. Students may consider investigating further career paths in areas such as, architecture, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, electronic engineering, robotics, fashion design and a range of traditional skills-based careers.

*** This course cannot be taken alongside Product Design ***



GCSE Design and Technology – Product Design*

Examination Board	Eduqas
Lead Teacher	Mr W Richer

What are the aims of this course?

Through studying GCSE Design and Technology, learners will be prepared to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. They will be aware of, and learn from, wider influences in design and technology, including historical, social/cultural, environmental and economic factors.

What does the course involve?

The specification enables learners to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

The subject content is presented under two headings: 'technical principles' and 'designing and making principles'. Within each area, the content is further divided into core knowledge and understanding and in-depth knowledge and understanding.

Core knowledge and understanding - learners are required to study all of the content in these five areas:

- Design and technology and our world
- Smart materials
- Electronic systems and programmable components
- Mechanical components and devices
- Materials

In-depth knowledge and understanding: Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of natural and manufactured timber.

How will I be assessed?

The subject content for GCSE Design and Technology will be assessed in the written examination and non-exam assessment (NEA).

- Written examination: 120-minutes = 50% of grade
- NEA: approximately 35 hours = 50% of grade

Where could this course take me?

Students following this subject could use the course to gain entry to a number of different related engineering, design or creative careers or further education courses. Students may consider investigating further career paths in areas such as, architecture, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, electronic engineering, robotics, fashion design and a range of traditional skills based careers.

*** This course cannot be taken alongside Engineering ***



GCSE Drama

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs V Evans

What are the aims of this course?

To encourage students to work imaginatively and creatively in a collaborative context. Drama is an exciting, creative and challenging course and whilst studying this subject you will develop your ability to use voice and physicality to create clearly defined characters in performance. You will also learn new techniques that will enable you to direct and construct pieces of drama from scratch and bring written scripts to life. You will also develop your skills as a confident communicator, creative thinker and team worker as well as your ability to work independently to research your work and create intelligent and thought-provoking pieces of theatre.

What does the course involve?

Over the course of the two years, you will be examined on two practical pieces of work - one devised (40%) and one scripted (20%). The final assessment includes a written exam on the analysis of a set play and a critique of live theatre production, which accounts for the remaining 40% of the total grade.

During the course, most lessons will be practical in nature with an exploration of different styles of theatre from Brechtian techniques to physical theatre. The study of the set play will be through practical workshops, leading to an understanding of how performers, directors and designers work to communicate meaning to an audience.

How will I be assessed?

- Component 1: Understanding Drama (40% of grade) Written Exam: 105-minutes Knowledge and understanding of Drama and Theatre Study of one set play, and analysis and evaluation of live theatre performances.
- Component 2: Devising Drama (40% of grade) Practical: Working in small groups, between three and five people, to devise and create your own performance based on a stimulus. Students are marked on their final performance, where they can contribute as either performer or designer, and also in the analysis and evaluation of their work.
- Component 3: Texts in Practice (20% of grade) Practical: A performance of two extracts from a scripted play. Students can contribute as either performer or designer.

Where could this course take me?

It is widely recognised that Drama can make an enormous contribution to your personal development. In today's world, employers are looking for mature, creative people who can communicate effectively - precisely the skills that Drama develops. Drama will help develop your ability to work in a team. It gives you the opportunity to understand different points of view, create your own opinions, listen purposefully and develop important language skills. Possible careers could include; actor, director, producer, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer, stage manager, theatre manager, theatre critic, events planner, set builder, media, film and TV, advertising, marketing, journalism, politics, teaching and many more.



GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Examination Board	Eduqas
Lead Teacher	Mr W Richer/ Mrs R Kinge-Whiteley

What are the aims of this course?

Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure that you develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing your practical cookery skills to give you a strong understanding of nutrition. The lessons are fast paced and challenging and will put your theoretical understanding of food into practice.

What does the course involve?

Students will learn a range of nutrition based knowledge and study the complexities of combining ingredients according to their characteristics and properties. They will conduct practical experiments to ascertain how the various ingredients interact and the outcomes they produce.

Healthy eating is a key component of the course and students will design dishes and cook them to demonstrate their ability in dish design and practical skills. There will be opportunity to prepare and cook a range of dishes that meet different criteria set by the exam board each year.

How will I be assessed?

- Task 1 (15% of grade): You will carry out a food investigation where your understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients will be put to the test.
- Task 2 (35% of grade): Is a food preparation assessment. Your cookery skills and understanding of ingredients and nutrition will be on show as you plan, prepare, cook and present food to a chosen task.
- Written exam: 105-minutes (50% of grade): Theoretical knowledge of food preparation and nutrition from the five core topics listed above.

Where could this course take me?

This course could lead to numerous careers within the food industry. Food and Nutrition could be studied in further education or a more practical approach could be to consider Level 3 cooking/ chef qualifications. Food and nutrition can be studied in a range of different university degree courses, leading to well-paid careers within the food industry.



GCSE Geography

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs N Manwaring

What are the aims of this course?

In GCSE Geography you will study the relationship between people and the environment they live in. Geography is a lively, topical and relevant subject that will provide you with the skills and understanding necessary to be a knowledgeable citizen in the modern world. Climate change, the global population explosion, natural disasters, food miles, 'sweatshops' in South East Asia, the internet revolution, extreme tourism, Fair Trade, our future energy sources, catastrophic flooding - geography studies all this and more. We will use a variety of modern textbooks, audio-visual lessons, computer aided learning, fieldwork, problem solving, computer-based maps and photographs during the course. If you are interested in the world you live in then this is the course for you.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: Living with the Physical Environment. This covers the challenges of natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis and tropical cyclones; coastal and river management in the UK including flooding, global warming and sea level rise; the living world including tropical rainforest management and biodiversity loss.
- Unit 2: Challenges in the Human Environment. This covers urban issues and challenges including megacities and urban environmental problems; the changing economic world including globalisation, TNCs, the rise of China and fair trade; the challenge of resource management including water, climate change and energy resources for the future.
- Unit 3 Geographical Applications. This covers geographical skills including fieldwork primary data collection and analysis, maps, photos, satellite images and graphs. It also includes problem solving/decision making skills of real geographical issues.

How will I be assessed?

- Unit 1: 90-minute exam in June Year 11 (35% of grade)
- Unit 2: 90-minute exam in June Year 11 (35% of grade)
- Unit 3: 60-minute exam in June Year 11 (30% of grade)
Pre-release material for the decision-making exercise will be released to students from March 15th in Year 11.
- Fieldwork: We will do at least three days of fieldwork visits during the course to prepare for the Unit 3 exam.

Where could this course take me?

Geography provides a wide range of skills demanded for higher education and work. Geography can be taken as an art or science at university. Geographers are some of the most employable graduates as they are numerate, can communicate, problem solve, are ICT literate and write reports. They enter a huge range of careers related to the environment, retail, law, meteorology, earth science, international development, engineering, marketing, the travel industry, research, business management and more.



GCSE History

Examination Board	Edexcel
Lead Teacher	Mrs N Manwaring

What are the aims of this course?

History GCSE is an exciting course that aims to give students an understanding of key historical moments that have truly shaped and influenced the world we live in today. In addition, it aims to develop key transferable skills such as analysis, communication, and questioning.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: Medicine in Britain, 1250-Present and The British Sector of the Western Front, 1914-1918: injuries, treatment, and the trenches
This thematic unit allows students to understand how medicine has evolved and changed from Medieval England to the Present Day and the changes that have occurred to make medicine safer and more effective.
- Unit 2a: British Depth Study: Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588
This unit explores religious challenge, scandals, plots, rebellions, wars, and life for different groups of people.
- Unit 2b: Period Study: Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1945-1991
Studying the Cold War has huge benefits to our students in understanding the political complexities of the world around them today. Students will study wars, nuclear threats, economic dominance, and geopolitical rivalries.
- Unit 3: Modern Depth Study: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1939
Students will begin by studying the political and economic ramifications of World War One on Germany, then to the progress and decline of the 1920s and end with Hitler's rise to power and how he created the Nazi dictatorship.

How will I be assessed?

Students will have three exams:

- Unit 1: 75-minutes
- Unit 2: 105-minutes
- Unit 3: 80-minutes

We will develop key skills such as explanation, analysis and forming a judgement. In addition to this we study primary sources and historical interpretations.

Where could this course take me?

History is an extremely valuable qualification due to the transferrable skills it enables students to develop, for example the ability to process information, to analyse it to reach a judgement and to interpret a wide variety of sources. It is sought after by employers for careers such as marketing, research, journalism and education.



GCSE Music

Examination Board	EDEXCEL
Lead Teacher	Miss L Welsman

What are the aims of this course?

This two-year course provides opportunities for you to develop your performing, composing and listening/appraising skills and to increase your musical knowledge and understanding by exploring four Areas of Study: musical forms and devices, music for ensemble, film music and popular music.

What does the course involve?

- **Component 1: Performing (30% of grade, 4–6-minute performance)**
You must perform a minimum of two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance of at least one-minute duration. The other piece(s) may be either solo and/or ensemble. One of the pieces performed must link to an area of study of your choice.
- **Component 2: Composing (30% of grade, 3–6-minute composition)**
Throughout the course you will develop your understanding and skills in response to a variety of tasks based on each area of study. ICT may be used for the composing process and/or preparing the recording and score.
Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief set by the exam board. You will choose one brief from a choice of four, each one linked to a different area of study. The briefs will be released during the first week of September in the second year of the course. The second composition is a free composition for which you will set your own brief.
- **Component 3: Appraising (40% of grade, 75-minute written examination)**
You will study a variety of styles and genres connected with the four Areas of Study listed above. Each area will focus on identifying musical elements and features, applying subject specific vocabulary and placing the music in its context. There are two set works that you will need to know in detail. At the end of the course you will sit a 75-minute written examination.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed through a combination of performing and composing coursework (assessed by your music teacher) and the listening/appraising examination (as above).

Where could this course take me?

Music is a subject that is highly prized amongst universities and employers alike due to the reputations that musicians have as good team players, the ability to persevere at something, high academic achievement, multitasking and incredible attention to detail. Music industry careers include songwriter, performer, music producer, sound engineer, orchestrator, composer, film scorer/composer, jingle writer, copyist, conductor, music journalism and music teacher.



GCSE Photography

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Ms C Hall

What are the aims of this course?

Developing personal creativity, increasing appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and learning practical skills in developing work using lens based media. You should choose this course if:

- You have a strong interest in the subject and are prepared to work hard in it.
- You are thinking of pursuing a career in photography, and creative industries.

What does the course involve?

This is a practical course where you will be given the opportunity to explore ideas, materials and techniques to help you put together a strong Controlled Assessment Portfolio. A portfolio should include at least two projects. Themes may include:

- Portraiture
- Documentary style
- Fashion

You will need to be enthusiastic and prepared to take shoots in your own time. You must also be able to organise yourself and pursue an idea to its logical conclusion. You must be prepared to work independently between lessons.

How will I be assessed?

- Component 1: Portfolio (60% of grade)
Candidates will put together a portfolio of work responding to a personal theme. Your portfolio will be assessed formally by your teacher at the end of each project. Your Portfolio will be submitted for final assessment at the end of January in Year 11.
- Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of grade)
The ESA is the exam. Candidates will select one starting point from their exam paper, which they can start to research from January. Their final piece will be made in a ten-hour exam. Your Externally Set Assignment will usually take place before Easter during Year 11.

Where could this course take me?

Career Paths include aerial photography, animation, architecture, commercial sports, curator, digital artist, editorial photographer, film maker, fine artist, forensic photography, nature/medical photography, photo journalism, portrait and wedding photography, sports, stock agent, special effects, teacher, travel, photo researcher and wildlife photographer.



GCSE Physical Education*

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs P Tearle

What are the aims of this course?

To develop students' understanding and awareness of all aspects of sport and health. It enables students to expand their knowledge of a wide range of health and fitness issues, alongside improving their practical skills in a number of sporting activities. Aspects of the course also enable candidates to develop their leadership and communication skills by developing their officiating and coaching skills.

What does the course involve?

You must have an interest in all aspects of sport, and be prepared for both theory and practical lessons. Practical ability accounts for 40% of the course so it helps to be regularly playing competitive sport, but it is not essential.

Course Content:

- Paper 1: The Human Body and Movement in Physical Activity and Sport - Applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, use of data.
- Paper 2: Socio-cultural Influences and Well-being in Physical Activity and Sport - Sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness and well-being, use of data.
- Non-exam assessment (NEA): Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity). Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

How will I be assessed?

- Paper 1 - written exam: 75-minutes, 78 marks, 30% of grade. A mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.
- Paper 2 - written exam: 75-minutes, 78 marks, 30% of grade. A mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.
- The NEA is assessed by teachers and moderated by AQA, 100 marks, 40% of grade. For each of their three activities, students will be assessed in skills in progressive drills (10 marks per activity) and in the full context (15 marks per activity). Students will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

Where could this course take me?

The knowledge gained during the two years will prepare students for a wide range of career paths in both the sporting and health professions. Professions include; sports coach, nutritionist, teacher, elite performer, nurse, physiotherapist.

*** This course cannot be combined with Sports Studies ***



GCSE Religious Studies (Full Course)

Examination Board	AQA
Lead Teacher	Mrs R Lee

What are the aims of the course?

A robust religious education is essential for understanding our multi-faith and multi-cultural world. It allows our students to develop curiosity, enhance their critical thinking and acquire the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. Religious Studies GCSE provokes heartfelt commitment, expression, action, and intense debate. For everyone who wants to be informed about the world around them, religion is an intensely curious phenomenon that calls out for better understanding.

Students get to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live and understand the world. They will learn to express their views in a challenging, critical and empathetic way. Religious Studies GCSE allows students to explore religion, ethics and philosophy in greater depth than the short course.

What does the course involve?

- Unit 1: The study of religious beliefs and teachings (50% of grade)
We study Buddhism and Christianity and compare religious and non-religious worldviews on the many areas of study. Students will learn the beliefs, teachings and practices of these religions and their influences on individuals, communities and societies.
- Unit 2: Thematic studies (50% of grade)
Students consider four different ethical themes, 'Religion and Life', 'Religion, Peace and Conflict', 'Religion, Crime and Punishment' and 'Religion and Relationships'

How will I be assessed?

Students are assessed in two written exams of 105-minutes. The questions will range from those requiring a short answer to ones needing longer evaluations and reference to a religious source of wisdom.

Where could this course take me?

Religious Studies develops students' skills and understanding in what motivates people to make the decisions they do. They learn to craft balanced arguments and to respectfully challenge different perspectives. These skills are beneficial for any chosen career path that require mental flexibility, ethical decision-making capacities, analytical, organisational research and communication skills.

Religious Studies provides a solid foundation to seek careers in many fields such as law, the NHS, politics, public services (police, fire service, armed forces), education, tourism, journalism, health and social care, research, non-profit organisations and the media.



Cambridge Nationals Certificate in Sports Studies*

Examination Board	OCR
Lead Teacher	Mr B Woodgate

What are the aims of this course?

To provide an alternative to GCSE PE offering alternative assessment methods. Sports Studies requires students to have two sports included in the assessment (whereas three are required for GCSE PE) and also has a higher proportion of non-examined assessment. The course offers students an overview of sport and outdoor activities and an opportunity to develop practical technical and leadership skills.

What does the course involve?

Unit 1: Contemporary Issues in Sports

- User groups, barriers to participation and solutions to barriers.
- Values in sport.
- Hosting major sporting events.
- National governing bodies in sport.
- Technology in sport.

Unit 2: Performance and Leadership in Sport:

- Development and assessment of practical skills in two sports.
- Review of performance in chosen sport and development plan produced/implemented.
- Practical leadership planning and delivery.
- Reviewing leadership planning and delivery.

Unit 3: Increasing awareness of outdoor and adventurous activities (OAA):

- Provision of OAA in the UK.
- Clothing, equipment, safety, technology and the environment.
- Planning and participating in OAA.
- Reviewing performance and benefits gained from OAA.

How will I be assessed?

- Unit 1: Written exam (40% of grade)
- Unit 2: Written coursework and practical performance (40% of grade)
- Unit 3: Written coursework and 1 day participating in an OAA (20% of grade)

Where could this course take me?

Sports Studies can lead to Post-16 PE and sport courses at Level 3, and on to university to study in a wide-range of sport and outdoor courses. Examples of careers include PE teacher, outdoor adventure instructor, personal trainer and outdoor centre manager.

*** This course cannot be combined with GCSE Physical Education ***



Next ... What happens now?

Find out as much as you can:

If you've read this far, hopefully you know a bit more about all the courses on offer for you in Year 10. You can find out even more by:

- Talking to your teachers/tutor
- Talking to older students
- Talking to the Careers staff
- Accessing careers websites

When filling in the Options Form (sent to you 27th January 2025), make sure that:

- You have filled in all the sections of the form
- You have made ALL choices, including a reserve

You must return the Options Form by: Friday 7th February 2025

Your Year Team Leader, Directors, Subject Leaders or another member of staff will ask to see you if your option choices appear unsuitable or cannot be timetabled.

Please note - we cannot promise that we can meet everyone's preferences, and for some courses we may have to change the exact specification from those written here.

If too many students choose a course that can only take a limited number of students, we will go to the reserve options that you have put on your form, so it is important to think carefully about what these other choices will be. If too few students choose a subject, we will explain the problem to all the students concerned and help them to choose alternatives. Once students have begun their courses in September it is unlikely that requests for change can be granted. **That is why it is so important to read all the information carefully and think seriously about your choices NOW.**

When all the subjects have been finalised you will be sent a confirmation letter in May/June 2025 to tell you what your courses will be for Year 10 and 11.



The Slightly More Distant Future

What will you be doing in three years' time? The subjects and activities that you choose now are not just for Years 10 and 11 - they also lead on to study opportunities and careers in the years following Year 11.

People keep on learning and it is usual to continue doing some form of study from 16-18. You will have to stay in education or training until you are 18. There are lots of different options, however, of different types of study: A-levels, vocational courses, apprenticeships and many others.

Queen Elizabeth's has an exceptional Sixth Form, which provides excellent opportunities for students to gain qualifications that can lead on to Higher Education or employment. We have strong teaching expertise, varied activities to do outside class and supportive tutors to guide you through the Sixth Form experience.

Below, you can see the courses currently on offer in the Sixth Form at Queen Elizabeth's. We hope that whatever you choose to do in Years 10 and 11 will lead on to useful and enjoyable experiences in the Sixth Form here at QE.

A Levels and BTECs Currently on Offer at QE in Sixth Form

Art	English Literature	Music
Biology	Extended Project	Music (BTEC)
Business	French	Outdoor Ed (BTEC)
Chemistry	Geography	Philosophy and Ethics
Computer Science	Health and Social Care (BTEC)	PE
Dance	History	Photography
Design Technology	Law	Physics
Drama and Theatre Studies	Mathematics	Psychology
English Language	Further Mathematics	Sociology