



The Castle School

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OPTIONS AND CURRICULUM GUIDE YEARS 10 & 11 2025-2027

Important Dates

Year 9 Curriculum Guide sent home	Thursday 19 th December 2024
Options Assembly	Friday 10 January 2025
GCSE Options Evening	Monday 13 January 2025
Options forms emailed home	Tuesday 14 January 2025
Options form returned by	Friday 7 th February 2025

CURRICULUM GUIDE

This booklet contains details of all the subjects available in Years 10 and 11, for the current Year 9 students. Some of the subjects are part of the compulsory Core Curriculum, others are Option subjects. This guide is designed to help you make choices about which subjects to study and should be read in conjunction with the advice and guidance available from teachers in lessons, and at the Year 9 Options Evening on 13 January.

Core Compulsory Curriculum:

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Options Subjects:

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GCSE Religion and Philosophy – Religious Studies	Page 47
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OR BTEC Sport	Page 46
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Adjacent shaded subjects should be seen as an either/or as there is significant overlap between course content in these courses.

Vocational qualifications are available in Child Development (Cambridge Nationals), ICT Technical Award, Engineering Design (Cambridge Nationals), Music (BTEC) and Sport (BTEC). These are equivalent to GCSEs, and are graded Distinction+, Distinction, Merit or Pass.

Choosing your Options Subjects:

The Options form is sent to families as a link on email on 14 January after the Options Evening. This is a link to a Microsoft form where students can make their choices – the form should be submitted by 7 February at the latest, earlier returns are appreciated.

Core Curriculum:

All students study the Core compulsory curriculum of English, Maths, Science, Core PE, World Views - Religious Studies short course and PSHE.

Guided Option:

Students are then required to choose one “Guided option” - these are key facilitating subjects and help ensure that all our students leave school with a balanced range of qualifications. Select from Geography, History, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin and Computer Science.

Open Choices:

Students then select a further two Open Choice options from the full range of subjects in the options list. They also select a 3rd “reserve” subject. Note that the Guided option subjects appear again in the Open section.

TIMETABLE MODEL YEAR 10 2025

The timetable below gives you an example of what the week **might** look like. This is an example only and shows how time on the core curriculum is balanced with options time.

	1	2	3	4	5
Monday	English	Open Option	Maths	Open Option	PE
Tuesday	World Views RE	Maths	English	Science	Guided Option
Wednesday	Guided Option	Guided Option	Science	Open Option	Maths
Thursday	Open Option	Open Option	English	Science	Science
Friday	English	Science	PE	Maths	Open Option

PSHE is taught on a rolling programme through the year.

Please note that if a subject does not attract a minimum number of students, we may not be able to run the subject. If this situation arises, the students will be informed and asked to make a new choice.

Advice:

There are basic, common-sense rules for students to follow when making their option choices. It is most unwise to choose a particular subject because a friend is doing so, or because of liking or disliking a particular teacher; groups will be made afresh for the year 10 timetable and there is no certainty at all that friends will be allocated to the same teaching group, nor that they will be with the teacher of their choice.

Options should be made according to these principles:

- interest in, and liking for the subject
- ability in the subject
- relevance of the subject to future career (if known);
- preferred assessment style (eg look at the balance between non-examined assessment (NEA) and terminal exams).

Perhaps most importantly, students should study a range of subjects they enjoy and are willing to work hard at. Some students will have definite career ambitions in mind as they make their choices while others will be open minded at this stage; it's important that all students study a balanced range of subjects which would ensure a good all-round education and flexibility for the future.

Students need to be proactive in finding out about courses, the starting point for this is the information in this guide, together with the advice and guidance they'll receive in lessons and at the study evening in January. Older friends and siblings who have studied the course previously can also give good insights into what it's like to study a subject. Tutors, Teaching Assistants and colleagues in the Learning Support department can also provide invaluable advice and support with making choices.

Assessment:

The curriculum guide contains information about how each course is assessed. Some subjects contain an element of "NEA" non-examined assessment, while others are assessed exclusively by exam. NEA is the new terminology for what we used to refer to as "coursework". Each NEA will have a different time-frame and level of supervision placed upon it depending on the demands of the subject; some NEAs feel more like exams with students working individually and in silence, while others are supervised work periods taking place across lesson time and with teacher support. The benefit of NEAs is they allow students to spread the assessment window, while exams concentrate assessments, usually into the final months of the course when students know most.

Reserve Choices:

It is useful if we have a reserve choice as a start point for conversations with students should we struggle to make their options work in the timetable, or in the instance of being unable to run a subject. We will always talk to students and families if we are thinking of using a student's reserve.

Changes to Options:

Because we build our timetable and our classes around students' choices it's important to note that there is limited flexibility to change options later. This makes getting good information and advice now essential. Please contact the school should you need further support with the options process.

Core Curriculum - COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

GCSE English Language

Exam Board: AQA

The English Department is committed to helping each student reach his or her academic potential. Within this commitment there are broader aims:

- to develop a capacity and an enthusiasm for spoken and written English through debate, discussion, role play and drama;
- to foster a lifelong interest in, and passion for, literature by introducing students to a wide range of diverse novels, poems and plays;
- to encourage students to reflect on and explore the meanings and social contexts of literature texts;
- to nurture creativity in students' writing;
- to study and analyse writers' choice of presentation and language print media.

All Year 10 and Year 11 students will study for two GCSEs - English Language and English Literature.

AQA English Language Syllabus

English Language exams at the end of Year 11 - 100%

All texts in the examination will be unseen. This means that the exam board will choose extracts from various sources (fiction for Language Paper 1 and non-fiction for Language Paper 2). These extracts will **not** have been seen by the students. They will be expected to apply the skills acquired in lessons to respond to the questions around these extracts.

Paper 1 exam: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE

What's assessed?

Section A: Reading (40 marks) 25% - one literature fiction text

Questions:

- 1 short form question (4 marks)
- 2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks)
- 1 extended question (20 marks)

Section B: Creative Writing (40 marks) 25%— descriptive or narrative writing

1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for accuracy)

Paper 2 exam: Writer's Viewpoints and Perspectives

1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE

What's assessed?

Section A: Reading (40 marks) 25% - two linked texts - one non-fiction and one literary non-fiction.

- 1 short form question (4 marks)
- 2 longer form questions (1x8 and 1x12 marks)
- 1 extended question (1x16 marks)

Section B: Writing for purpose (40 marks) 25% - writing to present a viewpoint

- 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for accuracy)

Spoken Language:

This will be assessed and marked by teachers throughout the course – it will be reported separately but does not count towards the % GCSE marks.

GCSE English Literature

Exam Board: AQA

English Literature – 100% exam at the end of Year 11

All assessments are closed book: any stimulus materials required will be provided as part of the assessment. Closed book means that students will have studied a range of books and poems but will not have access to these in the exams. They will have to recall quotes for each of the main characters in the text, as well as being able to discuss the impact of context. Students will also have to remember, and apply, techniques (subject terminology).

Paper 1 exam: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel

1 hour 45 minutes - 40% of GCSE

What's assessed?

Section A: Shakespeare plays

Students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole. Students will study Macbeth.

Section B: The 19th century novel

Students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole. Students will study either The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde or A Christmas Carol.

Paper 2 exam: Modern texts and poetry

2 hours 15 minutes - 60% of GCSE

What's assessed?

Section A: Modern texts

Students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text. Students will study either Lord of the Flies or An Inspector Calls.

Section B: Poetry

Students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and the other poem from their chosen anthology cluster. Students will study the conflict section of the anthology.

Section C: Unseen poetry

Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

GCSE Mathematics - Compulsory Subject

Exam Board: AQA

Every student will follow a two-year course in mathematics. Students will continue to be taught in sets according to their ability, with the decision on placements in sets being made on their performance to date, together with teachers' assessments. The courses in mathematics are arranged so that the complete ability range is catered for. Content is taught and assessed in two tiers.

Foundation level Grades 1-5

Higher level Grades 3-9

Content:

Students will study the following areas of mathematics:

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

In each area they will be taught how to:

- Use and apply standard mathematical techniques
- Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically
- Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts.

Assessment:

The total time for the examinations will be 4.5 hours. All exams will be sat at the end of Year 11. There are 3, 1.5 hour exams, one without the use of a calculator. They are all equally weighted towards the final grade award.

GCSE Science – Compulsory Subject

Exam Board: Edexcel

Students at The Castle School will follow the **Edexcel** specifications in Science. All assessment will be via terminal examinations in Year 11. A final grade of 1-9 will be achieved.

There are two pathways offered in Science by the school:

- 1. GCSE Combined Science (double award).** This course will see students achieving two identical GCSE grades (1-9) by studying, and taking six examinations over the three Sciences (2 x Biology, 2 x Chemistry, 2 x Physics), each 1 hour and 10 minutes long. This route will be taken by the majority of students.
- 2. Separate Sciences: GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics.** These courses will require the coverage of significant additional content in the same curriculum time and each examination will be 35 minutes longer to reflect this. Three qualifications will be gained, one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics with two examinations for each. The separate route is suitable for the most able students, or those who are committed to a future in Science at A-level or beyond. Suitability for this course will be decided based on performance in school exams and lessons, it is highly likely to be limited to those in the top set only.

Further information about the course will be given at the Key Stage 4 launch evening along with an opportunity to purchase revision materials.

Physical Education and Games - Compulsory Curriculum

Students in Years 10 and 11 will receive two, one-hour lessons of PE a week. Students will follow a specific ability-based learning programme. They will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities during the year. These activities include: Rugby, Football, Hockey, Basketball, Handball, Badminton, Table Tennis, Trampolining, Cricket, Softball, Tennis, Athletics, Rounders and Health and Wellbeing activities such as Spinning, Body Pump and Boxercise.

Students will be given the opportunity to participate in frequent physical activity conducive to a healthy lifestyle. House matches regularly take place at lunchtime in over 20 sports activities as well as after school fixtures at a local, county, regional and national level.

Full details of the Level 2 GCSE PE and BTEC Tech Qualification can be found in the options information later in the booklet.

World Views – Religious Studies Short Course – Compulsory Subject

Exam Board: AQA – Religious Studies A - short course

A Summary of the Course:

You will be studying the beliefs and practices of two religions, Christianity and Buddhism. You will also be covering two ethics topics where you will get to demonstrate the understanding of how these two religions put their faith into practice.

During the ethics topics you will be given the opportunity to discuss and share your ideas, reflecting on your interpretation of current issues and affairs in contemporary Britain.

What's assessed?

Section A: The study of religions: beliefs and teachings of two religions:

- Christianity
- Buddhism

Section B: Thematic studies: religious, philosophical and ethical studies:

- Theme A: Relationships and families.
- Theme B: Religion, peace and conflict.

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

You have already visited the places of worship in Exeter and Taunton in Year 7 and 8, including optional trips to London and Rome.

Subject-specific information:

In Short Course Religious Studies you will have the opportunity to:

- develop your knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs
- develop your knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, and sources of wisdom and authority, through your reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions you are studying
- construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating your depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
- engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life
- reflect on and develop your own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what you have learnt and contribute to your preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community.

Assessment:

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 96 marks (plus 5 marks for spelling, grammar and specialist terminology)
- 100% of GCSE Short course

Progression:

The course is well recognised by all institutions and will contribute towards your college entry. It will help in any career working with people because of the development of empathy and people skills. This can support careers in law, social services, public services, teaching, politics and medicine.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Compulsory Curriculum

The Year 10 and 11 PSHE curriculum continues to explore aspects of the 17 strands that are delivered in KS3. In KS4 however we add depth and breadth to our exploration of the subject matter, allowing students to form their own viewpoints of the content and encouraging them to challenge the viewpoints of others and those that are presented so they are active participants in forming their own views. The 17 strands are:

- Careers and progression
- Consent
- Diversity
- Drugs and alcohol
- Extremism
- Fundamental British Values
- FGM
- Financial awareness
- First Aid
- Loss and bereavement
- Mental health
- Online safety and digital resilience
- Physical health and exercise
- Pornography
- Relationships
- Risk
- Sex education
- Sexual harassment and violence

We look at knowledge, skills and attitudes in these areas. A significant amount of the PSHE Curriculum is delivered via the Enrichment Day programmes. The details of each Enrichment day are available to parents prior to delivery and can also be found on the school website. In addition to this, students will also have extended PSHE assemblies, time with their tutor and stand-alone lessons on a termly basis covering the above topics delivered by our specialist team. The school has also launched its #NotAtOurSchool campaign, adopting a zero-tolerance approach to prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour. We would welcome any comments on content and/or delivery to continue to improve the experience for current and future students.

Students also work on their CVs and Personal Statements. When they leave, these documents become the property of each student and can be used for job and further education interviews.

Enterprise Education is an element of the Year 10 curriculum and is part of the PSHE programme as is House Charities' work. Each form in Year 10 has its own 'enterprise scheme' to work on.

OPTIONS 2025 - 2027

GCSE Art and Design - Fine Art

Exam Board: AQA

This is a broad Art course leading to the AQA Fine Art GCSE. Fine Art builds on the work students have completed in art in the lower school, extending skills and the students' independence. Students can work in any media, from drawing, painting, to 3D art, textiles, graphic design, printmaking, photography and computer-based art.

A Summary of the Course:

At the start of each project, work is guided closely, the students develop new skills and are taught to explore media and to build on their individual strengths as artists. As the projects progress students develop their own ideas to make a personal response to the project theme.

There are three coursework projects, two in Year 10 and one in Year 11, which together are worth 60% of the GCSE. In the spring term of Year 11, students receive the exam question paper and prepare work based on the question they choose leading to a final piece that is made under exam conditions. The exam project is worth 40% of the final mark.

The assessment process includes:

- Developing ideas and inspiration including learning about the work of artists, designers and other appropriate sources.
- Observing and recording using drawing, mixed media and photography as key research tools.
- Exploring and refining through experimentation with different media, materials, techniques and processes.
- Presenting a personal response to a project theme showing independent working skills and ideas, practical art skills, and making connections with key artists studied.

Educational Visits:

Fine artists will embark on educational visits to galleries and/or museums to gather primary research as part of their projects. Past trips have included The Eden Project, Exeter Museum, Exeter Cathedral, V&A museum, Somerset Museum, The Natural History Museum Oxford, The Ashmolean and The Pitt Rivers Museum; for drawing, photography and first-hand investigation.

Progression:

Many of our students have gone on to study A Level Fine Art, Photography or Graphic Design at Richard Huish, BTEC Art and Design, Graphic Design or Photography at Bridgwater & Taunton College. Several of our former Fine Art students have gone on to Fine Art degree courses and employment.

GCSE Art and Design – Photography

Exam Board: AQA

This is primarily a digital photography course leading to the AQA Art Photography GCSE.

Photography will suit students who have an interest in and a commitment to working creatively, and who are looking for a course that mixes a practical approach with opportunities to explore ideas. Students learn to use digital SLR cameras, and to enhance and manipulate their images on the computer. Projects balance developing skills and techniques with thinking about the messages that photographs can communicate. Students work in a wide range of styles, from documentary and reportage to sports, studio photography, portraiture and fashion, animation, photo-collage and experimental photo installation art. Students should have their own digital camera or means of uploading photos from their phone for homework shoots.

A Summary of the Course:

Year 10 starts with an introduction to the basics of photography. There are a series of units in Year 10 and Year 11 focusing on further developing both their practical and creative photography skills. Students are given increasing freedom in their work, and they build on their skills to develop their work in directions that interest and motivate them. The Photography coursework is worth 60% of the GCSE. In the spring term of Year 11 students receive the AQA exam question paper and prepare work based on the exam question they choose leading to a final piece that is made under exam conditions. The exam project is worth 40% of the final mark.

The assessment process includes:

- Developing ideas and inspiration including learning about the work of photographers and other appropriate sources.
- Observing and recording through practical photography.
- Exploring and refining through experimentation with different media, materials, techniques and processes.
- Presenting a personal response to a project theme showing independent working skills and ideas and making connections with key photographers studied.

Educational Visits & Opportunities:

We often work outside of the classroom, on the school site and in the local area. Interested photographers have the opportunity to photograph school sporting and live events, the school play and the variety show. Photographers have also contributed to school publications. Students will also get the opportunity to visit The Eden Project in Year 10.

Progression:

Our students have gone on to study A Level Photography at Richard Huish, or the BTEC Diploma courses at Bridgwater & Taunton College. Several of our former photography students have gone on to photography and media degree courses and employment.

GCSE Art and Design - Textile Design

Exam Board: AQA

This course leads to the AQA Textile Design GCSE. Textile Design is a practical course with a focus on decorative techniques, textile art and garment/product construction. This course enables students to work from a variety of themes and art movements, artists' work and techniques to inspire their own personal creations in textiles. If you have an interest in textiles art, fashion or costume, enjoy experimenting with new media and would like to explore, develop and refine your skills in textile-based techniques; and if you want to design and make really exciting artistic textiles creations, then this is the course for you.

A Summary of the Course:

Students will study two projects in Year 10 and one coursework project in Year 11, developing technical skills alongside creativity. Together they are worth 60% of the final GCSE mark. In the spring term of Year 11, students receive an exam question paper and prepare work based on the exam question they choose, leading to a final piece that is made under exam conditions. The exam project is worth 40% of the final mark

The assessment process includes:

- Developing ideas and inspiration including learning about the work of key designers and artists and other appropriate sources.
- Observing and recording using drawing, photography and textile techniques to record images and ideas.
- Exploring and refining through experimentation with different decorative techniques.
- Presenting a personal response to a project theme showing making/decorative skills and making connections with artists, designers and the theme you have studied.

The work will include studying decorative techniques such as machine embroidery, applique, dyeing fabrics, printmaking techniques, using alternative materials and many more. There is also the opportunity to develop skills in garment construction, using patterns and technical elements such as seams, zips and fastenings.

Educational Visits:

The Textile department values the importance of educational visits to enrich and enhance student learning. Past trips have included the Tate Britain, V&A museum in London, Bath Fashion Museum, The Eden Project, The Ashmolean and The Pitt Rivers museum.

Progression:

This can lead to an A level or BTEC at college, then students could progress onto a Foundation Diploma, and onto a degree in a wide range of Textiles subjects including Fashion and Textiles, Costume Design, Surface Design, Textiles Design, Textiles Interior Design and many more. Alternatively, students may enter training and/or careers in fashion and textile art-related vocations. We have historically had students go on to take Textiles at BTC or Exeter College.

Child Development – Cambridge Nationals Level 1/Level 2

Exam Board: OCR

This qualification would suit learners who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding of child development. Students who already have an interest in looking after or working with young children in the future will relish the opportunity to learn about all aspects of ensuring a child's development, health and well-being.

A Summary of the Course:

The course is made up of three modules:

1. **Health and well-being for child development (RO57).** This component underpins all of the other learning in this qualification. Students will develop the essential knowledge and understanding in child development, covering contraception, reproduction, antenatal care, birth, postnatal checks, postnatal provision, developmental needs of young children, childhood illnesses and child safety.
2. **OCR-set Assignment (RO58) - Create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years.** In the second component of study, students will plan for a fictional childcare setting, focusing on specific aspects released by OCR in May /June of each year. They will learn how to create a safe environment for children from birth to five years in a childcare setting, investigate and choose equipment that is both suitable and safe for use and learn about their nutrition and dietary needs.
3. **OCR-set Assignment (RO59) – Understand the development of a child from one to five years.** In the third component of study, students will learn the expected developmental norms for children from one to five years. They will observe and research techniques and skills to investigate these developmental norms and explore their findings. They will learn about the importance of creating plans and providing different play activities to support children in their development.

Assessment:

The course has two internally assessed **NEAs** (Non-Exam Assessments); these are externally moderated and worth 30% each of a student's final grade (60% in total). There is one written exam accounting for the remaining 40%.

The grades for the assessments are Pass, Merit or Distinction at Level 1 or Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* at Level 2.

1. The written paper will be on the topic of "Health and well-being for child development," RO57. It is a single exam paper, 1 hour 15 minutes and taken in the summer of Year 11, at the end of the course.
2. NEA 1 (RO58) – The first assessed task is "Create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years". Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to show how needs are met to promote the well-being and development of the child. This will be done in lesson time towards the end of Year 10.
3. NEA 2 (RO59) – "Understand the development of a child from one to five years". Learners will develop an understanding of the impact of play on the developmental norms. On completion of this

unit, learners will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding to show how play affects the development of individual children. This will be done mainly in lesson time in the second year but involves a small amount of work outside of school time. *Ideally, students will need a child aged between 2 and 5 years old to work with on two occasions, a couple of weeks apart.*

Progression:

Cambridge Nationals Level 1/Level 2 will prepare students for further qualifications in childcare, health and social care, education, psychology, sociology and biology as well as PSHE. Students will also learn vital information on safety, nutrition and supporting children in their care.

ICT Technical Award

Exam Board: Eduqas

Summary of the Course

The Vocational Award in ICT has been designed to support learners in schools who want to learn about Information Technology and the potential it can offer them for their careers or further study.

Equivalent to 1 GCSE

Content of the Course

Unit 1

ICT in Society

Allows learners to explore the wide range of uses of hardware, application and specialist software in society. Learners will investigate how information technology is used in a range of contexts, including business and organisations, education and home use of information technology.

Unit 2

ICT in Context

Introduces learners to a broad working knowledge of databases, spreadsheets, mail merge documents and images and enables learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems in vocational settings. Software currently used: Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Teams, Photoshop and Inkscape. Each year the exam board releases a Controlled Assessment scenario and students work independently to produce documents to help the business in the scenario. The Controlled Assessment is 40 hours of lesson time.

Assessment

Unit 1 ICT in Society Exam 40% (*This is an onscreen examination*)

Unit 2 ICT in Context Controlled Assessment 60% (*The controlled assessment is 40 hours within lesson time*)

Subject Specific Information

Who might study IT?

Students with an interest in Computing, IT or Business. Students have an opportunity to show practical ability in IT by completing a large Controlled Assessment.

Progression

This course progresses onto many vocational courses in Business and IT at college and also directly into the workplace.

In the workplace, ICT is vital for the smooth running of many everyday tasks as well as enabling organisations to operate in a more efficient manner. There are a number of key skills that employers look for which centre around having an understanding of, and the practical ability to use, a range of computer software and other applications all of which will be covered in this course.

Unit 1 allows learners to explore the wide range of uses of hardware, application and specialist software in society. Learners will investigate how information technology is used in a range of contexts, including business and organisations, education and home use of information technology.

Unit 2 introduces learners to a broad working knowledge of databases, spreadsheets, automated documents and images and enables learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems in vocational settings

GCSE Computer Science

To fully access this course you must currently be in one of the top two sets of Maths. If you do not fit into this but are committed to taking Computer Science please talk to your Computing teacher.

Exam Board: OCR

A Summary of the Course:

GCSE Computer Science will consist of two exam papers:

Computer systems

- Systems architecture
- Memory and storage
- Computer networks, connections and protocols
- Network security
- Systems software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology

1 hour and 30 minutes

Written paper

(no calculators allowed)

50% of total GCSE

Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

- Algorithms
- Programming fundamentals
- Producing robust programs
- Boolean logic
- Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments

1 hour and 30 minutes

Written paper

(no calculators allowed)

50% of total GCSE

Content of the course:

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

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

All GCSE Computing students in Year 10 take part in the National Competition Bebras designed by the University of Oxford to test Computational thinking. All students taking part receive a certificate and many receive a Merit or Distinction.

We also enjoy visits from Computing employers and colleges departments.

Subject Specific Information:

Who might study Computing?

A more specialist qualification for those wishing to pursue specific jobs involving Computing. The qualification suits students who enjoy and excel in both Maths and Science. It is also for students would who like to learn a programming language.

Assessment:

There are two exams in the summer term at the end of the course, each worth 50%.

Progression:

This course can lead students onto study A Level Computer Science or Digital T levels at college, and further to this a degree in a Computing related field such a programming or networking.

GCSE Dance

Exam Board: AQA

Dance is an expressive and performance-based subject. Students studying GCSE Dance will learn through a mixture of practical and theoretical tasks to improve their knowledge and understanding of performance, appreciation and choreography. Students will have lots of opportunities to perform to each other and a wider audience. This is a great course for students who like to express themselves and are happy to choreograph and perform in dance pieces. Students will develop their performance skills in a range of dance styles, with the basis of the course focusing on contemporary dance. It is essential that students are able to collaborate with others, are enthusiastic, have creative flair and are dedicated to regular participation, which will play an essential role in their success.

The aim of the GCSE Dance syllabus is to develop each candidate's skills, knowledge and understanding of dance. Each element of the coursework will examine one of three key strands: performance, choreography and appreciation.

The Course Details:

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

Performance (30%) - A solo performance of two set phrases and a duet/trio performance. These dances are taught to the students by the dance teacher.

Choreography (30%) - A solo or a group dance for 2-5 dancers. This dance must be created by the candidate using a stimulus set by the exam board.

Component 2: Dance Appreciation (40% of GCSE)

A final written exam paper (1hour 30mins)

The key topics for study are:

Performance

Safe Dance Practice.

Technical, Physical, Expressive and Mental Skills.

Accuracy of Action, Space, Dynamics, Relationships.

Understanding how to achieve high quality performance.

Choreography

Creating motifs that link to a stimulus.

Understanding how to use choreographic devices and structuring devices.

Planning a choreography.

Appreciation

Critical appreciation of own work.

Critical appreciation of 6 professional Anthology Works.

Set design, costume, accompaniment, props and lighting.

Style, stimulus, dancers, action content, interpretation and choreographic process.

Why choose GCSE Dance?

- The study of dance as an art form contributes to students' aesthetic and social development. As a physical activity it promotes fitness, health and well-being. Dance supports learning across a range of subjects. As performers, students develop confidence and self-esteem.
- Life and employment: Students develop sensitivity to others, team working skills, leadership skills as well as inter-personal and communication skills.
- The course develops an understanding of physical effort and determination to succeed and improve. Students employ skills of problem solving and creativity.
- Literacy – reading meaning in signs, spatial design, gestures and body language.

Methods of Assessment

Coursework marked by teacher and moderated externally (60% practical). Written Paper set and marked externally (40% theory).

GCSE Design and Technology

Exam Board: AQA

Overview:

This GCSE would suit creative and innovative learners who have a passion for problem solving and designing and making things whilst using a range of materials and techniques. Students will develop an awareness as they learn about sustainable design and other influences such as social, moral, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Design and Technology is an ideal course for well-motivated creative students who enjoy turning their ideas into reality. A good level of Maths and Science knowledge is required for the course.

A Summary of the Course:

Students will cover the course content through a mixture of theory-based lessons, discussion, focused practical tasks and mini projects.

Content:

Core technical principles: new technologies, energy generation, developments in new materials, a systems' approach to designing, mechanical devices, materials and their physical and working properties.

Specialist Technical Principles content: students will study two material areas in more depth: selection of materials and components, forces and stresses on materials, ecological and social footprint, sources and origins, using and working with materials, stock forms, types and sizes, scales of production, specialist techniques and processes, surface treatments and finishes.

Designing and Making Principles content: investigation, primary and secondary data environmental, social and economic challenge, the work of others, design strategies, iterative design, communication of design ideas, product development, selection of materials and components, tolerances, material management, specialist tools and equipment, specialist techniques and processes, risk assessments and health and safety.

Subject Specific Information:

For this GCSE all students will need to purchase a D&T starter kit at the beginning of Year 10 which includes the necessary guide and workbooks as well as an A3 carry folder and folio.

All items produced as part of the practical courses within the Design and Technology Department are retained by students. To enable this to happen, parents are asked to contribute towards the cost of materials.

Assessment:

During Year 10 they will build their knowledge needed for the written paper and develop their practical skills – students will undertake small designing and making projects. The course is made up of two assessments, 50% Non-Exam Assessment (coursework) and 50% written exam.

NEA: During the second half of the summer term of Year 10 until February in Year 11 they will undertake the non-exam assessment – the briefs/context will be set by the exam board. This is a design and make task where students are required to submit a 3-dimensional outcome alongside a concise folio of research, design, planning and evaluation

Written exam: The written exam is 50% of the final grade.

The exam is made up of 100 marks and questions will vary from multiple choice, short answer questions, mathematical questions such as working out area, percentages, ratios and extended long answer written responses.

Progression:

D&T will help to prepare students for life in a technological society as well as enabling career opportunities within growing industries such as business, architecture, graphic and product design, engineering and project management. Learners who study Design and Technology can progress further to A Level Design and Technology and Engineering. Students will also learn to work independently and become creative and effective time managers.

Cambridge Nationals in Engineering Design Level 1/2

Exam Board: OCR

A Summary of the Course:

You may be interested in the *Cambridge Nationals in Engineering Design* if you want an engaging qualification where you will use what you learn in practical, real-life situations, such as: Using both 2D and 3D engineering design techniques. Designing new products to meet a design brief. Communicating engineering design ideas.

This will help you to develop independence and confidence in using skills that would be relevant to the engineering design and development sector. The qualification will also help you to develop learning and skills that can be used in other life and work situations.

An inquisitive mind about how things are manufactured and work alongside a good level of maths would be beneficial to cope with the content of this course.

Students will cover 3 units.

R038: Principles of engineering design

This is assessed by an exam. (1hour 15 minutes)

In this unit you will learn about the design process.

Part A – includes 10 multiple choice questions

Part B – includes short answer questions and extended response questions.

R039: Communicating designs

This is assessed by a set assignment. In this unit you will learn how to use sketching and engineering drawings to communicate your ideas.

This set assignment contains 4 focused tasks.

R040: Design, evaluation and modelling

This is assessed by a set assignment. In this unit you will learn how to create and test models of your design. Topics include: Product evaluation, modelling and design ideas. This set assignment contains 6 focused tasks.

Content:

R038: Principles of design engineering

In this unit you will learn about the different design strategies and where they are used, as well as the stages that are involved in iterative design, which is currently one of the most widely used design strategies. You will learn about the type of information needed to develop a design brief and specification, and the manufacturing and other considerations that can influence a design. You will develop knowledge of the types of drawing used in engineering to communicate designs, as well as the techniques used to evaluate design ideas and outcomes, including modelling methods.

R309: Communicating designs

In this unit you will learn how to develop your techniques in sketching, and gain industrial skills in engineering drawing using standard conventions that include dimensioning, line types, abbreviations, and representation of mechanical features. You will enhance your confidence and capabilities by using

computer aided design (CAD), 2D and 3D software, to produce accurate and detailed drawings and models that visually communicate your designs.

R040: Design evaluation and modelling

In this unit you will learn how products are made and how this can help to inform designs. By disassembling existing products you will discover how they function and how they were manufactured. You will develop your virtual modelling skills using computer aided design (CAD) 3D software, to produce a high-quality model that will be able to simulate your design prototype. You will also develop your physical modelling skills using modelling materials or rapid prototyping processes to produce a physical prototype.

Subject Specific Information:

All students will need to purchase an Engineering Design starter kit at the beginning of Year 10 which will include a workbook, course guide and A3 carry folder and folio.

All items produced as part of the practical element of the course will be retained by students at the end of the course. To enable this to happen, parents are asked to contribute towards the cost of materials.

Assessment:

Throughout the course, students will cover the subject knowledge needed for the written paper and develop their analytical, design and making skills. Students will undertake small projects to equip them with the necessary skills to complete each unit. The course is made up of three units. R308 is a written exam and is worth 40% of the final mark. The other units are centre assessed units and are worth 60% of the final grade. In Year 10 students will complete unit R039 which will count towards 30% of their final mark. In Year 11 they will complete unit R040 and the written examination R038 on principles of engineering design.

Progression:

The course will prepare and enable students to follow a pathway to college or an apprenticeship route. Students who study Engineering Design can progress further to study A Level Design and Technology and Level 3 Engineering apprenticeships/courses.

GCSE Drama

Exam Board: OCR

Overview:

Drama is a practical course. Students will be expected to perform in a range of groups and on their own. The GCSE relies heavily on collaborative skills. Groups will work together to bring their creative ideas to fruition. Drama hones performance skills for passionate performers but it also refines presentation, innovation and teamwork skills that will be important for all in future careers.

“Our task is to educate their (our students) whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it.”

— [Ken Robinson, The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything](#)

A Summary of the Course:

The course will be assessed in three components (30% + 30% + 40%) and the teacher will be the examiner for the first component only. Component 2 will be assessed by a visiting examiner and Component 3 will be an exam.

Component 1 will be completed in Year 10 and Components 2 and 3 in Year 11.

Component 1 - Devising Performance. 30%

Students will be given a selection of stimuli that will inspire a short group devised performance. Students will research one stimulus and develop and evaluate their work. Students will be assessed on both their final performance and a supporting portfolio that can either be written or delivered as a presentation.

Component 2 - Presenting Performance. 30%

Students will study a play in full and then work on extracts from it. Students will perform in two extracts from the play to a visiting examiner. The performance they do can be a monologue, duologue or a group piece. Students are assessed on their ability to realise a role on stage.

Component 3 - Exam. 40%

The exam paper is split into two sections. In Section A students will study the play Blood Brothers in a practical manner in lessons. In the exam they will be expected to reflect on their practical work and answer questions about their exploration. For Section B, students will respond to a set question about a live production they have seen.

"Creativity is as important as literacy" — [Ken Robinson](#)

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

- All GCSE Drama students are eligible to go on the New York Performing Arts Trip 2027.
- Students will take part in a workshop with a professional theatre company.
- We also run a theatre trip to Bristol or London in both Year 10 and Year 11.

Progression:

Ex-students have gone on to study and pursue careers in the following fields:

- Performance
- Events Management
- Teaching
- Law
- Politics
- Screenwriting
- Set Design
- Drama therapy
- Stage Management
- Creative Start-Up Companies

Why choose Drama?

“I’m a Drama student as well as a Senior Student at The Castle. I was able to stand in front of the school in the hustings confidently because of what I have learnt in my four years in Drama. I could be confident, expressive and communicate my ideas effectively to the school. I know I will use these skills throughout my life and value them highly.”

Year 11 student Nov 2024

“It is the best part of my week. It is the lesson I look forward to as I can move around and be creative and I know how important that has been for my mental well-being especially over the last few years.”

Year 10 student Nov 2024

“I encouraged my parents to let me take Drama. I knew that I would get so much out of it. I like working in a team and directing others. I hope to do a degree in Events Management and Drama has allowed me to practise these skills with my peers. I now feel I am a confident communicator and I’m ready to be a leader in the future.”

Year 11 student Nov 2024

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Exam Board: AQA

The GCSE would suit those who are pursuing an interest in Nutrition as well as close links to Science and PE. It is aimed at learners who enjoy all elements of cooking, technical skills, presentation and the understanding of the science and functions of ingredients.

Food preparation and nutrition is a creative and interesting subject, which, where possible, is taught through practical application. A visit to the Quantock restaurant to learn about food styling and fish preparation is a great session we offer and a visit to The Good Food Show and a Walktalkeat tour of London is another wonderful opportunity.

Topics covered and summary of the course:

Nutrition; a healthy diet, nutrition, energy balance, hydration and health implications.

Food provenance; where food comes from, the environment, technological developments in food, British and international cuisine.

Food choice; sensory qualities of food, seasonality, cost, religion, occasion, time of day, medical, ethical, portion size and preferences.

Scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food; why food is cooked, cooking methods, functional and chemical properties of food and preparing food safely.

Preparation and cooking techniques; preparing fruit and vegetables, making sauces, making doughs, cooking methods, marinating and tenderising, weighing and measuring, using raising agents, setting mixtures and many more.

Assessment:

The course will be made up from 50% exam and 50% non-exam assessment. Non-exam assessment will be split into two tasks, both undertaken in Year 11. These are 15% and 35% of the overall grade.

Briefs for these tasks will be set by the exam board in Year 11.

NEA1: Students will carry out an investigation into the scientific principles that underpin the preparation and cooking of food.

This task will provide learners with an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and practically apply their understanding of the science behind cooking. Students will practically investigate ingredients and explain how they work and why.

NEA2: Students will plan, prepare, cook and present 3 dishes in 3 hours.

This task will provide learners with an opportunity to cook up a storm and showcase their creativity and cooking skills. Students might make street dishes, food for sports people, create delicious tapas dishes or cook dishes for students on a budget.

Progression:

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition will equip students to go on to further study where they could explore many different careers such as becoming a dietician, working in food styling or photography, journalism, being a food critic, opening their own restaurant etc. They could also begin an apprenticeship in the catering industry. Above all, students will also have the knowledge and skills to feed themselves (and others) affordably and nutritiously for life.

GCSE Geography

Exam Board: AQA

A Summary of the Course:

An innovative, relevant and engaging Geography GCSE course which combines traditional aspects of geography with modern-day issues to reflect our ever-changing world. It offers a balance of theoretical and practical work, encouraging an active involvement in the subject. It's an ideal foundation for students who want to pursue geography at A Level or as a career, and it gives an understanding of global geographical issues and how to apply this to a range of contexts.

Content:

Living with the Physical Environment: Students will study physical geography topics for this component. The three key topics are:

1. The challenge of natural hazards: students will study extreme weather events such as tropical storms, flooding and drought, as well as tectonic hazards such as volcanoes and earthquakes. Students will also study the evidence for climate change along with the causes, impacts and solutions to climate change.
2. The living world: students will study the characteristics and value of tropical rainforests and polar environments as well as the impacts of human activity in these regions.
3. Physical landscapes in the UK: students will study processes and landforms in coastal and river landscapes in the UK as well as the issues for people living in these areas.

Challenges in the Human Environment: Students will study human geography topics for this component. The three key topics are:

1. Urban issues and challenges: students will study urbanisation and the growth of megacities as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist for cities today.
2. The changing economic world: students will investigate why some countries are richer than others and why some low- and middle-income countries are experiencing rapid economic development.
3. The challenge of resource management: students will investigate how our increasing demand for resources has affected our planet, specifically looking at food.

Geographical Applications: this exam will be synoptic in nature and will draw on students' knowledge, understanding and skills from the full course of study. The exam consists of:

1. Issue evaluation: a resource booklet will be provided before the exam so students have an opportunity to work through the resources and become familiar with the material. The assessment will consist of a series of questions related to a contemporary geographical issue leading to a more extended piece of writing which will involve an evaluative judgment.
2. Geographical Fieldwork: Fieldwork will be undertaken on at least two occasions in contrasting locations. Students will complete an investigation on a question they have been set for each

location. They will be required to analyse the data they have collected and write up their findings. The students will then answer questions about their fieldwork in this exam.

3. Geographical skills: students will develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills, including cartographic, graphical, numerical and statistical skills, throughout their study of the course. Skills will be assessed in all three written exams.

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

Human Fieldwork - How successful is the regeneration at **Bristol's** Temple Quay?

Physical Fieldwork - How successful is the coastal management at **Lyme Regis**?

Assessment:

Living with the Physical Environment (35%)	Challenges in the Human Environment (35%)	Geographical Applications (30%)
<p>What is assessed:</p> <p>The challenge of natural hazards</p> <p>The living world</p> <p>Physical landscapes in the UK</p> <p>Geographical skills</p> <p>Exam lasts 1 hour 30 minutes (88 marks)</p> <p>Worth 35% of overall GCSE Grade</p>	<p>What is assessed:</p> <p>Urban issues and challenges</p> <p>The changing economic world</p> <p>The challenge of resource management</p> <p>Geographical skills</p> <p>Exam lasts 1 hour 30 minutes (88 marks)</p> <p>Worth 35% of overall GCSE Grade</p>	<p>What is assessed:</p> <p>Issue evaluation</p> <p>Fieldwork</p> <p>Geographical skills</p> <p>This exam releases a resource booklet before the exam</p> <p>Exam lasts 1 hour 30 minutes (76 marks)</p> <p>Worth 30% of the overall GCSE Grade</p>

Progression:

According to the Royal Geographical Society, geography graduates have some of the highest rates of graduate employment.

Geography is great for any kind of career that involves the environment, planning, or collecting and interpreting data. Popular careers for people with geography qualifications include: town or transport planning, surveying, conservation, sustainability, waste and water management, environmental planning, tourism, and weather forecasting.

The army, police, government, research organisations, law and business world also love the practical research skills that geographers develop. Because geographers learn about human and population development, geography can be useful for jobs in charity and international relations too

GCSE History B (School's History Project)

Exam Board: OCR

A Summary of the Course:

This is an interesting and varied course that covers a wide range of periods in History touching on aspects of Anglo Saxon Britain right through to the 20th and 21st Centuries.

This GCSE is divided into three papers. However, we will be studying 5 different topics.

Content:

1. British Depth Study: The Elizabethans

This course will give us a really good insight into Elizabethan Britain. The course allows us to look at political, religious, economic, social and cultural issues to gain a real flavour of the time. We will focus on the daily lives of the people and popular culture including theatres and the persecution of witches and the significance England had on the wider world.

This will count for 20% of your final mark.

2. Thematic Study: The People's Health, c.1250 to present

This course traces the development of public health from Medieval Britain, Early Modern Britain, Industrial Britain and Britain since c1900 to the present day. We look at key areas such as housing, food, clean water and waste as well as the role of the government. We look at what has progressed and what has held back the developments of public health and the repercussions that these had on the people of the time.

This will count for 20% of your final mark.

3. A period study: The Making of America, 1789 -1900

We look at Indian life and early settlers, the White settlement of the Great Plains and the inevitable conflict between the two races and ways of life, the Civil War and reconstruction of America, as well as the development of American cultures including the impact of reservations, growth of cities and mass migration.

This will count for 20% of your final mark.

4. History around us

This study is of a site in its historical context. Our site will be Glastonbury Abbey. We will be looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the physical remains, the ways historical sources add to our evidence and how the site fits into its wider historical context. *Will also include a site visit.*

This will count for 20% of your final mark.

1. World Depth Study: Living under Nazi Rule

This course offers us the understanding of the Nazi dictatorship. We will be looking at the impact felt across Germany and Europe. We will gain an insight into people's experiences of living under Nazi Rule, from a range of perspectives.

This will count for 20% of your final mark.

Educational visits and opportunities:

There will be an opportunity to visit Berlin and/or Auschwitz to chart the horrors of Nazi Germany in the **Easter of 2026**.

We will also have a field trip to Glastonbury Abbey for our History Around Us exam paper in Year 11.

Assessment:

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
Thematic Study The People's Health, c.1250 to present	40 marks for each study unit. Total marks for paper 80 marks. Paper length: 1 hour 45 minutes	20% Of total GCSE
British Depth Study The Elizabethans, 1580-1603		20% Of total GCSE
History Around Us (Glastonbury Abbey)	Total marks for paper 40 marks +10 marks SPaG Paper length: 1 hour	20% Of total GCSE
Period Study The Making of America, 1789-1900	40 marks for each study unit. Total marks for paper 80 marks. Paper length: 1 hour 45 minutes	20% Of total GCSE
World Depth Study Living under Nazi Rule, 1933-1945		20% Of total GCSE

- The structure of the main two papers will be similar (eg big judgment questions at the end of each paper) exactly the same ie the same layout and question styles for each, which will enable students to familiarise themselves with how to tackle certain question types. None of these should be a surprise as your teacher will be able to show you some examples to help you practise and, therefore, do well.
- Remember that the examiners want you to do well and will be looking for comments to reward rather than looking to spot mistakes or gaps in your knowledge.
- Many of the question styles will be like those you have already seen in Key Stage 3. There will be questions which ask you what you know and have learnt, and other questions which are more about your own opinions, allowing you to give your own explanations and reasons for something that happened in the past.

Progression

Studying history can provide a strong foundation for a variety of careers by developing critical thinking, research, and analytical skills. Here are some ways history can help with future careers, along with examples of famous British individuals who studied history:

Skills Gained from Studying History

1. **Critical Thinking:** Analyzing historical events and their impacts helps develop the ability to think critically and assess information from multiple perspectives.

2. **Research Skills:** Conducting historical research hones the ability to gather, evaluate, and synthesize information from diverse sources.
3. **Communication:** Writing essays and presenting findings improve both written and verbal communication skills.
4. **Understanding Context:** Learning about different cultures and eras provides a broader understanding of the world, which is valuable in many fields.

Career Paths

- **Law:** The analytical and research skills gained from studying history are highly applicable in legal professions.
- **Politics:** Understanding historical contexts can be crucial for policy-making and governance.
- **Journalism:** The ability to research and communicate effectively is essential for journalists.
- **Education:** Teaching history or related subjects at various educational levels.
- **Business:** Strategic thinking and understanding market trends can be enhanced by historical knowledge.

Famous British History Graduates

1. **Gordon Brown:** The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom studied history at the University of Edinburgh. His understanding of historical contexts likely informed his political decisions and leadership style¹.
2. **Sacha Baron Cohen:** The comedian and actor, known for characters like Ali G and Borat, studied history at the University of Cambridge. His background in history may contribute to his ability to create satirical content that reflects societal issues.
3. **Diane Abbott:** The first Black woman elected to the House of Commons, studied history at the University of Cambridge. Her historical knowledge supports her work in politics and advocacy.
4. **Jeremy Bowen:** The BBC correspondent studied history at University College London. His historical insight enhances his reporting on international affairs².
5. **Michael Mansfield:** A prominent barrister, studied history at Keele University. His historical perspective aids in his legal practice, particularly in human rights cases..

These examples illustrate how a background in history can lead to diverse and successful careers, leveraging the skills and knowledge gained through studying the past.

Next steps.....You can find out more about this course by going online and looking at:

www.ocr.org.uk

thehistorylowedown.weebly.com

GCSE French, German, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese

Exam Board: Edexcel

A Summary of the Course:

GCSEs are offered in French, German, Mandarin and Spanish.

You will spend time on activities which enable you to listen, speak, read, write and translate between the foreign language and English. This is done working with a partner, in small groups and with teachers. We will make use of a range of ICT resources and our language assistants will support you in developing your speaking skills. You will also gain a deeper insight into the culture of the countries where the language that you are studying is spoken.

The GCSE language qualifications are focused on the important ways that languages foster communication, broadening perspectives, introducing new cultures and helping students to become global citizens.

1. GCSE French, German or Spanish

Content:

The vocabulary in this qualification enables students to communicate across a range of engaging and relatable thematic contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs. The following six broad thematic contexts are used to provide a focus for the teaching and learning of the vocabulary and grammar:

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

2. GCSE Mandarin Chinese

Content:

You will study 5 broad themes, each of which is broken down into smaller sub-topics. The themes are:

- Identity and culture
- Local area, holiday and travel
- School
- Future aspirations, study and work
- International and global dimension

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

There will be opportunities for trips and/or exchanges to France, Germany and Spain. These vary by language and year and further details will be given to students and parents when these become available. There will also be opportunities to take part in a range of competitions and extra-curricular activities.

The Mandarin Excellence Programme study visit to China is offered to students at the end of year 9, and is for students who are opting for Mandarin at GCSE and who meet the criteria set out by the Institute of Education and University College London, who deliver the Mandarin Excellence Programme.

Assessment:

You will be assessed in the four main language skills:

LISTENING READING SPEAKING WRITING.

There is one exam per skill and all exams will take place at the end of Year 11.

WRITING - 25% of final grade

This exam will include translation into the Target Language and short essays in that language. You will not be able to use a dictionary so there will be lots of practice of exam-writing techniques in your lessons.

SPEAKING (French, German, Spanish) - 25% of final grade

Task 1: Read aloud a short text and undertake a short, unprepared interaction relating to the text. In the read aloud task itself students will be assessed on their pronunciation and in the short interaction that follows students will be assessed on their communication.

Task 2: Undertake a transactional role play.

Task 3: Picture task with conversation. Describe a picture. Answer two compulsory questions related to the subject matter of the picture, then move on to a short unprepared conversation developed from the same thematic context.

You will not have to perform in front of a class; the speaking exam will be just you, your teacher (who will be the examiner) and a microphone so that your exam can be recorded and sent to the exam board for marking.

SPEAKING (Mandarin) - 25% of final grade

Task 1: Transactional role play

Task 2: Picture task with conversation

Task 3: General conversation task to include two themes

As with the other languages, you will not have to perform in front of a class; the speaking exam will be just you, your teacher (who will be the examiner) and a microphone so that your exam can be recorded and sent to the exam board for marking.

LISTENING - 25% of final grade

This will incorporate a variety of comprehension exercises, including gap-fills, multiple-choice questions and answering in both English and the Target Language.

READING - 25% of final grade

There will be a range of different questions about different texts; multiple-choice exercises, gap-fills and longer answers in both English and the Target Language. There will also be a question for translating into English on this paper.

Progression:

The content of the GCSEs in a modern language builds on the knowledge and skills developed at Key Stage 3 and provides a firm foundation for students to make a smooth transition to A Level or the International Baccalaureate if they choose to do so.

Each year a number of students from The Castle School go on to study a language as part of their post-16 course at local further education providers. Languages compliment a wide range of subjects, both at A level and at degree level. At university, languages are often combined with another course, for example Law, Business, Economics, Politics, International Relations, History or International Management. At this level, the course usually involves spending time working or studying abroad. Popular career fields with languages include Marketing, Journalism, Tourism, Airline Crew, Interpreting and International Aid.

By studying a language at GCSE, you will develop skills that will be useful for future work and employment; you are not just learning to speak another language, but also developing key skills such as intercultural understanding, the ability to see things from someone else's point of view, a global outlook, confidence, critical thinking and problem solving. Businesses and organisations not only want to recruit people who can speak another language, but people who have a deeper understanding of foreign environments and practices and who are first-class communicators.

Music – Eduqas GCSE Music OR Edexcel BTEC Tech Awards Music Practice

Reasons to choose music

If you're already playing an instrument or sing you can develop your skills and take a GCSE or BTEC in Music. If you don't already play an instrument or sing, you can take the opportunity to learn new skills which will stay with you for life. If you already enjoy writing your own music or songs, you can use this ability and experience towards your GCSE or BTEC. If you are a creative person who wants to learn to make music, these two courses will give you that chance. If you love listening to music and you can spot all the details, sing every riff, you have already developed some abilities you need.

GCSE Music - What will I complete?

Component 1 – performing - 30% - teacher assessed

- A minimum of two pieces lasting a total of 4-6 minutes, recorded in the year of assessment (year 11).
- One piece must be an ensemble group piece lasting at least one minute.
- One piece linked to an Area of Study (see component 3 below). Grade 3 music is the standard level and can score full marks if played perfectly. You can use any instrument or voice or use a technology option.

Component 2 – composing - 30% - teacher assessed

Two pieces:

- One in response to a brief set by the exam board - there are 4 to choose from each year. Last year, one of the briefs was to write a theme for a new film about King Arthur.
- One free composition - any style you want to write in linked to the Areas of Study below, eg you could write a pop song, this is linked to Area of Study 4 - popular music.

Component 3 - appraising - 40% - externally assessed examination

- Listening examination eight questions, two on each area study
- Area of Study 1: musical forms and devices (includes a set work. This year the set work you will be studying is Bach Badinerie)
- Area of Study 2: music for ensemble
- Area of Study 3: film music
- Area of Study 4 popular music (including a set work, this year the set work you'll be studying is Africa by Toto)

A set work is a piece of music which everybody has to learn about. There is one short classical piece and one rock/pop song. You can learn to play/sing parts of them to help you learn the details.

BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice Level 1/2 - What will I complete?

Component 1 - Exploring Music Products and Styles (Worth 30% of your final grade)

In summary: Create a PowerPoint of different styles of music, showing your understanding of iconic practitioners and how the music was created. Show practical understanding of the styles through 3 short examples of either performance, composition, Cubase sessions and recordings.

Aim: explore musical styles and techniques, and gain an understanding of roles in the music industry

Assessment: teacher assessed assignment.

During Component 1, you will:

- *Explore* different styles and genres of the music industry, eg Britpop, Dance and Blues
- *Take part* in practical workshops to understand stylistic features and characteristics of the music you have explored, eg play music individually, as a band and as a class.
- *Learn* about different styles, including the instruments and techniques.
- *Develop* techniques in performing, composing or producing those musical products, eg composing music in a band or on Cubase, Multitrack recording on Cubase.

Example Task 1

You will be asked to present information based on 4 musical styles. The musical styles are from a wide range (eg rock, pop, jazz etc). This information is usually presented in a PowerPoint presentation and could include written, audio or video annotations.

Example Task 2

For the second task, you must explore the techniques used in the creation of different musical products in different styles by developing some of the techniques you have learned into more developed projects.

For example, if you have researched reggae music and Bob Marley in task 1, you will explore and demonstrate some of the techniques used in the creation of reggae, like accented chords on beat 2 and 4. For each project, you must produce a 30 to 60 second audio/video example of the product.

You must cover at least 3 of the following products showing different styles and techniques for each of them.

- a live performance
- an audio recording
- music for film/media/computer games
- an original song or composition
- a DAW project.

Component 2 - Music Skills development (Worth 30% of your final grade)

In summary: Develop and progress in composition, performance and production keeping a log of your progress.

Aim: develop musical knowledge, skills, and techniques and apply them to a music product

Assessment: teacher assessed assignment.

During Component 2, you will:

- *Reflect* on your progress, and on areas for improvement.
- *Choose* a job role and explore the skills needed to fulfil it.
- *Develop* a range of skills.
- *Apply* skills and techniques in a music performance, creation or production.

You will have the opportunity to develop two musical disciplines (below) through taking part in practical tasks, while documenting (written, audio or film) your progress and planning for further improvement.

Identifying the skills you already have and what you need to develop is an important part of working in the music industry, as professionals are always striving to improve both technically on their instrument or vocals, and in their professional manner. This component aims to give you the opportunity to explore your professional and personal skills. You will also cover the skills and knowledge to share your work and collaborate with others.

Students will choose 2 of the 3 disciplines:

1. As a performer - learn pieces of music, instrumental or vocal technique, practise routines etc.
2. As a creator - using rhythmic and melodic patterns, chords and progressions, riffs and hooks, exploring and extending ideas etc.
3. As a producer - using software instruments, samples, inputting and editing audio, using effects, automation etc.

Component 3 - Responding to a Commercial Music Brief (Worth 40% of your final grade)

In summary: An example of the type of brief is to choose a song from a given list and recreate the song in a different style/genre either through performance or production.

Aim: put your skills into practice by responding to a brief as a composer, performer or producer

Assessment: externally assessed assignment.

During component 3, you will:

- *Choose* an area of the industry that you are most interested in (composer, performer, or producer).
- *Explore* the brief (the exam board will give you a task or 'brief) and you will come up with possible responses and ideas.
- *Use* relevant resources, skills and techniques to develop and refine musical material.
- *Present* your final response (solo or in a group).
- *Review* and reflect on your approach to the brief and your final outcome.

You will be given the opportunity to develop and present music in response to a given commercial music brief. You will work to your strengths and interests and apply the skills that you have learned throughout your course in a practical way. You will focus on a particular area of the music industry that excites and appeals to you and respond to a commercial music brief as a composer, performer or producer.

GCSE PE

Exam Board: Edexcel

A Summary of the Course:

This course will equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values they need to be able to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities. Students will also gain understanding of how physical activities benefit health, fitness and well-being.

Content:

Anatomy and Physiology
Fitness and Training
Health, Lifestyle and Diet
Sport Psychology
Sports based Physics
Performance enhancing drugs
Social economic influences in sport
Practical Sports Development

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

Trips will be organised which are relevant to the content of the course, as and when appropriate.

Subject-Specific Information:

The course is aimed at students who are actively engaged in sport both in and out of school and are playing sport in either a school or a club environment. The theoretical content does have challenging elements due to the extended writing and detail required, but all students who are willing to work hard and apply themselves, can achieve in this subject area.

Assessment:

60% Examined Assessment

Component	Content	Assessment
Exam 1 – Fitness and body systems	Anatomy Movement analysis Physical training Use of data	1 hr 30 mins 80 marks (One 9 marker extended writing question on Physical Training) 36% overall
Exam 2 – Health and performance	Health, fitness and wellbeing Sport psychology Socio cultural influences Use of data	1 hr 15 mins 60 marks (One 9 marker extended writing question on Sport Psychology, and Socio-Cultural influences) 24% overall

40% Non-Examined Assessment (NEA)

30%	10%
Practical performance in 3 activities as a player/performer Each marked out of 30	Analysis and evaluation of a performance to bring about personal improvement in physical activity and sport.
One team activity	Written Personal Exercise Programme
One individual activity	Assessed on analysis and evaluation skills
Final activity is a free choice	

Component 3: Practical Performance – 30% of the qualification

Overview

The purpose of this component is to test students' skills in a range of practical performances. Students will be required to perform in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer. They will be required to demonstrate their skills in isolation/unopposed situations and demonstrate their skills in a formal/competitive situation while under pressure.

Students must choose and perform three different physical activities from the list below.

- one team activity
- one individual activity
- one activity of their choice, either a team or individual activity.

Students must participate in three separate activities.

Team Activities	Individual Activities
Association Football	Amateur Boxing
Badminton Doubles	Athletics – Field events
Basketball	Athletics – Track events
Hurling and Camogie	Badminton
Cricket	Canoeing
Dance	Diving
Gaelic Football	Golf
Handball	Gymnastics
Hockey	Equestrian
Lacrosse	Kayaking
Netball	Rock climbing
Rowing	Sculling
Rugby League	Skiing
Rugby Union	Snowboarding
Squash	Swimming
Table Tennis Doubles	Trampolining
Tennis Doubles	Tennis
Blind Cricket	Table Tennis
Goal ball	Boccia
Powerchair football	Polybat
Table Cricket	
Wheelchair Basketball	
Wheelchair Rugby	

Component 4: Personal Exercise Programme (PEP) – 10% of the qualification

Overview

The purpose of this component is to assess students' skills in analysing and evaluating performance through a personal exercise programme (PEP) in order to improve/optimize performance in a chosen physical activity.

Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the principles of training, relevant methods of training and use of data in order to analyse and evaluate their PEP. The PEP will cover a six to eight-week period, and can relate to any physical activity of their choice from the activities list given in Component 3: Practical Performance.

Progression:

A Level PE

BTEC Level 3 Sport and Exercise Science

BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Sport

Exam Board: Edexcel

A Summary of the Course:

This course is different from a GCSE in PE. The Tech Award gives students the opportunity to develop sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. Students will explore the different types and providers of sport and physical activity, as well as the equipment and technology available. Building on this, students will look at individuals' differing needs, to gain an understanding of how to increase participation in sport while further developing their knowledge and understanding of anatomy and physiology in a contextualised way. Students will then apply their knowledge and skills to planning and delivering sports activity sessions for participants in practical sessions. In addition, this qualification enables students to develop sector-specific skills such as sport analysis and sports leadership, and personal skills such as communication, planning, time management and teamwork, through a practical and skills-based approach to learning and assessment.

The grades range from Level 1 Pass, Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction*.
40% of the qualification is externally assessed.

Content:

Component 1: Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity. (30%) Pearson set Assignment- Case study. (Internal assessment with 3 tasks. Externally moderated)

Students will explore the different types and provision of sport and physical activity available for different types of participants, barriers to participation and ways to overcome these barriers to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Students will also research equipment and technological advances in a chosen sport or physical activity and how to prepare our bodies for participation in sport and physical activity.

Component 2: Taking Part and Improving Other Participants Sporting Performance. (30%) Pearson Set Assignment. (Internal assessment with 4 tasks. Externally moderated)

Students will investigate the components of fitness and their effect on performance, take part in practical sport, explore the role of officials in sport and learn to apply methods and sporting drills to improve other participants' sporting performance.

Component 3: Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants' Performance in Sport and Physical Activity. (40%) Pearson set synoptic exam paper. (Marked Externally)

Students will be introduced to and develop an understanding of the importance of fitness and the different types of fitness for performance in sport and physical activity. They will also develop an understanding of the body and fitness testing.

Progression:

If you are interested in taking your study of sport further, the subject specific knowledge and skills developed through studying the qualification, will give you a strong foundation for academic or vocational study at level 3, including apprenticeships. Further information about this qualification can also be accessed at: <https://qualification.pearson.com>

GCSE Religion and Philosophy – Religious Studies GCSE

Exam Board: AQA Religious Studies A (8062)

A Summary of the Course:

If you are looking for an option that requires you to face some of the most important issues in Britain today then look no further than GCSE Religion and Philosophy. It is a subject where you shape the lessons with ideas, discussions and your knowledge of current affairs. The topics you study aren't static, they accommodate our country's issues, you get to scrutinise how you view "truth" and analyse how people handle controversial topics.

Content:

We will study the following Religion and Philosophy topics which will give students the chance to discuss some controversial issues that are current in the world and media.

- Human Rights and Social Justice – covering human rights, the causes of poverty, protected characteristics, discrimination and the need for social justice.
- Crime and Punishment- covering judgment, criminal activity, the law and justice, sentencing, prison, capital punishment, redemption, society's attitudes.
- Life - covering when life begins, the questions around termination and the laws, euthanasia and the law, how the world began.

All of these topics will look at different perspectives, including the perspectives of two religions, Atheist and Humanist.

Religion

Half of the exam is based on religious understanding and evaluation. The two religions we study in depth are Sikhi and Buddhism. Students have already started their learning of faiths in KS3. We learn about the beliefs and the practices of religion which will give clarity to the religious ethical standing.

The area in the religion we look at is their understanding of the meaning of life, death, creation, how and why they are influenced today by their scripture, how they worship, festivals they follow and the core teachings of their faith.

Educational Visits and Opportunities:

There is the potential to go anywhere in the world with Religion and Philosophy. An opportunity to Italy to visit Rome and the Vatican will commence in **2026**. (Date to be confirmed.) The focus will be to unpick the nature of creation and the very background of the Christian and Pagan faith. Additionally, we will also visit local sites to imbed our understanding of a range of religious views.

Subject-specific information:

What skills will you develop?

We are going to teach you how to argue your point and persuade others.

You will learn how to assert your ideas and opinions and the art of diplomacy when taking into account other people's beliefs and the confidence to question all of it. Constructive arguments, honesty and

respect will all be exercised in lessons. We will be covering things which you could go home and discuss with family and friends. With increasing maturity you will start to discuss issues which will challenge your interpretation of the world we live in.

Assessment:

How will this be assessed?	
Religion Beliefs and Practices	Ethics and Philosophy
<p>What's assessed? Beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions: Christianity Hinduism/ Buddhism</p> <p>How is it assessed? Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 96 marks (plus 5 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)) 50% of GCSE</p>	<p>What's assessed: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes: Theme A: Relationships and families. Theme B: Religion and life. Theme C: The existence of God and revelation. Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict. Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment.</p> <p>How it's assessed Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 96 marks (plus 5 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)) 50% of GCSE</p>

Progression:

I challenge you to find a subject which is more relevant. Where else will you question whose responsibility it is to provide humanitarian aid in Aleppo, whether a family should still be a nuclear construction, if gender reassignment is liberalism gone mad, if Trump is right to change abortions laws, if China over uses the death penalty or why there are proportionately more ethnic minorities in British prisons?

Religion and Philosophy will help in any career working with people; developing empathy and people skills. This can support careers in law, social services, public services, teaching, politics and medicine.

YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING
MONDAY 13 JANUARY 2025 6.00–8.00pm

Talk in Main Hall with Mr Simpson – Big Picture/Advice/Opportunities	
GOM	RBY
6-6.30pm	7-7.30pm
Balmoral, Lancaster and Caernarfon	Buckingham, Windsor and Sandringham

6-8pm Information gathering - informal drop-in sessions to give you an opportunity to find out subject specific information and to ask questions. It is anticipated that most students and families will have their questions answered at the options evening, or in class.

INFORMATION GATHERING 6.00-8.00pm

Subject	Lead Teacher	Room
Art and Design – Fine Art and Textiles	Mrs Summers and Mr Walker	T32
Art and Design - Photography	Miss Sastre	T31
Child Development Geography History Religion and Philosophy – GCSE Religious Studies	Mrs Fishlock Mr Marshall Mr Walker Mrs Norris	New Dining Hall New Dining Hall New Dining Hall New Dining Hall
Dance	Mrs Walsh	Drama Studio
Drama	Mrs Step	Drama Studio
Engineering Design and Design Technology	Mr Batchelor	N1
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Mrs Bowdler	T24
French German Mandarin Chinese Spanish	Mrs Hopkins and Mrs Reid Mrs Jones and Mr Floyd Mr Gan Miss Andres and Mr Floyd	Library Library Library Library
Information Technologies and Computer Science	Mrs Chapman, Miss Marney, Mr Clapp, Mr James	J16
Music (GCSE) and BTEC Music	Mr Adams and Miss Leech	J6 and J7
PE (GCSE) and BTEC Sport	Mr Jones	09
Learning & Exam Support	Mrs Higginbottom and Mr Keay	Conference Room
Careers Advice Bridgwater and Taunton College Richard Huish College Exeter College TBC The Space	Mrs Corbett	Small Hall/Main Corridor – careers and courses advice from a selection of our partner providers.