



The Joseph Whitaker School

An Academy specialising in Sport and Performing Arts

GCSE

Guided Choice

Spring 2026

Academic Plus

Tuesday 3rd March - 6.30pm

Year 9 Guided Choice Information Evening

Friday 27th March 2026 – Choices form deadline

Any queries, or if you require any further information please email:
guidedchoice@josephwhitaker.org

Contents

(Information for Key Stage 4 course from September 2026)

Guided Choice Process

Heads of Subjects

GCSE Choices

Careers

Core Curriculum

English/English Literature

Mathematics

Science (Trilogy)

Physical Education

Life Skills and Moral Issues

GCSE Courses

Art

Business Studies

Computer Science

Drama

Design and Technology

Geography

History

Film Studies

Food Preparation and Nutrition

French

Music

Physical Education

Religious Studies: Philosophy and Ethics

Spanish

Triple Science

Vocational Courses

National Certificate in Health and Social Care

Technical Award in Hospitality and Catering

Guided Choice Process

Welcome to our Year 9 into Year 10 Guided Choice booklet.

This is an important time for all Year 9 students at The Joseph Whitaker School, as they make decisions over their Key Stage 4 guided choices; these decisions can have a real impact on their future career pathways.

All students will follow a core curriculum comprised of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, PE, and Life Skills and Moral Issues (PSHCE, Careers and RE). Alongside their core subjects, students are able to select a maximum of four additional optional subjects for study through Year 10 and Year 11. One of which must be French or Spanish.


The National Curriculum Review 2025 has influenced some changes in our curriculum offer so please make sure you read the following guidance.

Students will then select one subject from the following category. .



History
Geography
Ethics and Philosophy
Music
Art
Drama
Design Technology

Students will then select a further **two** subjects from following subject range. Further information on each course is available throughout this booklet. We believe our recent changes provide more options for students whilst still maintaining a board, academic portfolio of subjects.



History
Geography
Ethics and Philosophy
Music
Art
Drama
Design Tech
Food Preparation and Nutrition
PE
Computer Science
Triple Science
Business
French

Note: Students can pick more than one language or more than one humanities based subject.

Each year we develop our guided choices system to offer the most relevant subjects to suit the abilities and interests of the particular year group. We are focused on giving our students the opportunity to gain qualifications and skills that will maximise their future prospects.

As stated in our November 2024 Ofsted report *'The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum that provides Year 10 and Year 11 pupils with the opportunity to gain qualifications in subjects that reflect national expectations'*. We are pleased that Ofsted recognised our curriculum as a strength as we continue to have high aspirations for all students.

To preserve the academic curriculum and in recognition of the high status given to modern foreign languages by universities and employers we advise all students capable of achieving well to choose to study French and/or Spanish at GCSE.

We recommend that students opt for subjects which are challenging, achievable and also enjoyable to give a broad and balanced curriculum.

We will do everything we can to support students and parents so that appropriate choices are made. We endeavour to provide students with their first choice, however, this is not always possible.

Information on each of the option choices available is contained within this booklet.

For further information on the guided choice process please contact your child's form tutor, following the information evening on Tuesday 3rd March 2026.

The Joseph Whitaker School

Frequently Asked Questions

A range of talks will be organised, during tutor time for subject staff to assist the students with their guided choice. As always the objective is for students to choose courses of study from an informed and fully mentored situation and all staff are involved in helping students identify the courses best suited to their abilities and aspirations.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Question 1 | What do I need to know? | | | |
| Answer | It is very important to read this Booklet carefully so that you understand what each course is offering. It is also important that you have a realistic view of your own: | | | |
| | Interests | Self | Abilities | Career intentions |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Question 2 | Do subjects taken in Years 10 and 11 lead to a qualification? | | |
| Answer | Yes. You can gain a qualification from all subjects studied except Life Skills and Moral Issues and Core PE. These subjects are statutory and help students to develop their personal and social skills and a healthy well-being through a range of themes. | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Question 3 | Where can I get help and advice? | | |
| Answer | The following list will help you: | | |
| | Subject Teachers | Form Tutor | Head of House |
| | PSHCE Teacher | Family and friends | This Booklet |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Question 4 | Is it important that I know what career I want to follow? | | |
| Answer | No. Not at this stage. People often change their minds. This is a natural process because as you develop as an individual your career aspirations may change. It is important to keep as many doors open as possible and to aim high! We will ask you in the Options online form, TOOLS, for your preferred career but this is only so we can track aspirations in the school. | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Question 5 | Can I change pathways? | | |
| Answer | Pathways have been selected following a rigorous process of looking at individual students' data and ability. We believe that our curriculum needs to be ambitious for all. Only under exceptional circumstances will the school change a students pathway. It remains the school's reasonability to select the curriculum for the students. | | |

Please do not hesitate to contact school if you are unsure about any aspect of the options process. Please contact your child's Tutor or Head of House in the first instance.

Heads of Subject

Here is a list of teachers in charge of a subject for you to find out more about the courses.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Art | Mrs M Howey |
| Business Studies | Ms L Phillips |
| Design and Technology | Mr L Charity |
| Drama | Mrs S Henderson |
| English | Ms Cresswell – Acting Head of English – Ms Morgan |
| Film Studies | Mrs C Morgan |
| French | Mrs A Hyvoz-Kemish |
| Geography | Mr J Souter |
| Health and Social Care | Mrs S Arnold |
| History | Miss K Edwards |
| Hospitality and Catering | Mr L Charity/Mrs S Jones |
| Computer Science | Mr J Herbert |
| Mathematics | Mr J Strain |
| Music | Mr D Ball |
| Physical Education | Mr R Bishop |
| PSHCE/Citizenship/Careers | Mrs C Cook |
| RS / Philosophy and Ethics | Miss E Godwin |
| Science | Ms Riley-Ball |
| Spanish | Mrs K Turnbull |

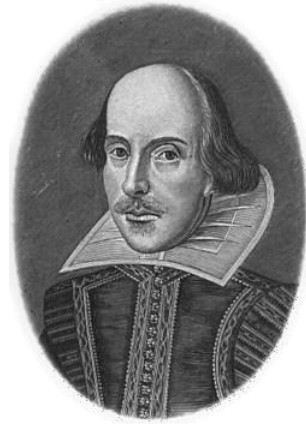


The Joseph Whitaker School

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Core Curriculum

English Literature



Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

You will learn how to read a text critically, identifying the writer's methods and exploring their effect. English Literature provides you with the opportunity to connect a text with its historical context, considering what the writer was seeking to highlight or criticise. You will engage with themes such as: love, conflict, betrayal, violence and power, and consider how the writer uses characters and events to explore these ideas.

All students explore a range of texts: a 19th Century novel, a Shakespeare play, a modern play, unseen poetry and a poetry anthology. You will create essays exploring comparisons between the text, or examining how the writer has presented a specific character, theme or relationship. GCSE English Literature gives you the opportunity to form a personal response to a text, exploring how and why a writer has presented their ideas.

How Am I Assessed?

This GCSE is 100% examination and is assessed across two papers. Each section is equally weighted and all examinations are closed book.

Paper 1

- 1 hour 45 minutes
- Shakespeare: extract based question (30 marks)
- 19th Century novel: extract based question (30 marks)
- There are four marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar available on this paper

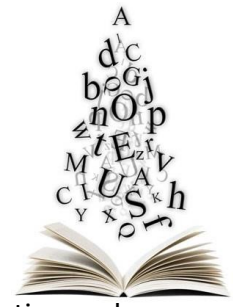
Paper 2

- 2 hours 15 minutes
- Modern text: a choice of two essay questions (30 marks)
- Poetry Anthology: a comparative essay on a named poem (30 marks)
- Unseen poetry: an essay and comparative question (24 marks + 8 marks)

What Career Options Do I Have?

English Literature is centered on: analysis, interpretation, communication and connections. Although it is essential for students who wish to study English at A level and beyond, English Literature can be a pathway to careers in Law, politics, media, advertising, journalism, and the corporate world.

English Language



Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

The English Language GCSE focuses on communication. You read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, exploring the methods used by the writer and analysing their effects.

The English Language course also offers you the opportunity to develop your own written communication by crafting a range of non-fiction texts, and narrative and descriptive pieces. You will learn how to confidently articulate your ideas and perspectives in your writing, using a range of vocabulary, methods and sentence structures.

All students will have the opportunity to develop their spoken communication, when your research and deliver a short Spoken Language presentation on a topic of your choice.

How Am I Assessed?

This GCSE is 100% examination and is assessed across two equally weighted papers.

Paper 1– Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

- 1 hour 45 minutes
- 1 unseen fiction text
- Reading: 4 analytical questions (40 marks)
- Writing: one piece of descriptive or narrative writing (40 marks)

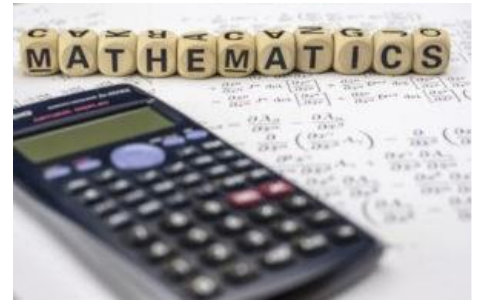
Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

- 1 hour 45 minutes
- 2 unseen non-fiction texts
- Reading: 4 analytical questions (40 marks)
- Writing: one piece of non-fiction writing to present a viewpoint (40 marks)

What Career Options Do I Have?

A pass (Grade 4) or strong pass (Grade 5) is required for entry to most courses, including vocational courses at college. Students who do not achieve a Grade 4 are required to repeat their GCSE.

Mathematics



Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

Students will study the following areas of mathematics:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio
- Geometry
- Probability
- Statistics

There are 3 assessment objectives:

- 1) Use and apply standard techniques
- 2) Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically
- 3) Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts

How Am I Assessed?

GCSE Mathematics has a Foundation tier (Grades 1 – 5) and a Higher tier (Grades 4 – 9). Students must take three question papers at the same tier. The school will carefully determine the most appropriate tier of entry for each student, drawing on staff expertise and assessment data to act in the student's best interests; parents will be kept fully informed of any change in tier. The information in the table below is the same for both tiers.

| Paper 1: non-calculator | + | Paper 2: calculator | + | Paper 3: calculator |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Content from any part of the specification may be assessed</p> | | <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Content from any part of the specification may be assessed</p> | | <p>What's assessed</p> <p>Content from any part of the specification may be assessed</p> |
| <p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 80 marks • non-calculator • 33¼% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment | | <p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 80 marks • calculator allowed • 33¼% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment | | <p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 80 marks • calculator allowed • 33¼% of the GCSE Mathematics assessment |
| <p>Questions</p> <p>A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.</p> | | <p>Questions</p> <p>A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.</p> | | <p>Questions</p> <p>A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.</p> |

What Career Options Do I Have?

Engineering, Computing, Finance, Business, Mathematical modelling and Statistics.

“Mathematics is the gate and key of the sciences” (Roger Bacon)

Combined Science

Examining Board—AQA—Trilogy (8464)

What Will I Learn?

Science forms part of the Core Curriculum and all students work towards at least two Science qualifications.

Students will study **equal amounts of Biology, Chemistry and Physics**. Science students investigate cutting edge ideas and innovations as well as the scientific principles that underpin them. For example, students study different organ systems of the human body and plants, develop theories about how life evolved and consider the evidence for the theories. In Chemistry lessons the fundamental ideas that underpin Chemistry understanding are studied in detail and then these ideas are used to investigate how Chemistry influences the wider world. Students will learn in Physics about how forces interact and how, as humans we can utilise these or overcome them.

Students are required to successfully complete a series of practical tasks, an understanding of these experiments and the “working scientifically” skills that are employed throughout the course are then assessed within each of the exams

Double Science students study five hours of Science per week, delivered by a team of two teachers.

How Am I Assessed?

Students following this course will gain two GCSE passes consisting of the Combined Science “Trilogy” course offered by AQA. The Biology, Chemistry and Physics elements of this course are delivered separately but are all examined at the end of Year 11.

What Career Options Do I Have?

This subject enables you to study transferable skills that are not necessarily available from other subjects.

Science as a subject is not solely about preparing you for a scientific career but practising a way of thinking, analysing and evaluating.

Students working towards this Trilogy Science award are eligible for A-Level courses should they achieve the entry requirements.



Non Examined Courses (Core)

Life Skills and Moral Issues

We believe that being prepared for the world beyond education is vital and through this course, students will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life.

The course brings together elements of RE, PSHCE and careers education. It encourages students to take an interest in topical and controversial issues to engage in discussion and debate; looking at Christian, Islamic and non-religious perspectives on such issues.

Pupils will learn about the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. They will consider the advantages of budgeting and managing their money and will learn how to play an active role in the life of school and the wider society, as active and global citizens.

Through active learning opportunities students will come to recognise and manage risk, take increased responsibility for themselves, their choices and behaviours.

Core PE

Throughout KS4 all students will continue with two hours of core physical education lessons each week. Within these lessons students will continue to develop their skills, techniques and tactics while acquiring the important life skills which are embedded within sport and physical activity.

If students have chosen to undertake GCSE PE within their option choices, core PE lessons will be used to supplement their learning.





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GCSE Courses

Geography



Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

Unit 1: Living in the Physical Environment

The Earth is restless and constantly changing. In this unit we explore the world in which we live, considering the processes and issues that might transform or indeed modify our natural environments. There are many ways the world we live in is changing and we as geographers explore why. Topics include: *The Living World, Natural Hazards, Rivers and Coasts.*

Unit 2: Challenges in the Human Environment

Humans play a massive part in the changing nature of the world. Often their behaviours and choices are studied in relation to nature and throw up many interesting questions. We need to study how people have impacted on the planet to allow us to predict how environments might change in the future. Topics include: *Urban Issues and Challenges, The Economic World, Resource Management*

Unit 3: Fieldwork and Geographical Skills

You will also be taught a variety of geographical techniques such as cartography, Geographical Information Systems (digital mapping), interpreting statistics, field sketches, photographic interpretation and a range of graphical skills.

Before sitting your final exams you will need to carry out two contrasting geographical enquiries to test and apply the theory you have learnt in the classroom out in the field. To undertake this the geography department will take you on two field trips. The first field trip is to the Peak District to investigate rivers and the second to Birmingham to investigate urban change and regeneration.

All topics are issue based, which offers the chance to learn traditional geographical theories through contemporary, real life examples. The course is academic in nature and requires a high degree of literacy and numeracy. If you wish to study A Level Geography in the future it is essential that you have previously studied the GCSE.

How Am I Assessed?

By 3 terminal exams:

Unit 1: Living with the physical environment 1 hour 30minutes

Unit 2: Challenges in the human environment 1 hour 30minutes

What Career Options Do I Have?

Geography fosters many transferable skills that can be applied across a variety of jobs and there are careers that are more geography specific such as:

Lawyer, geologist, hydrologist, flood defences engineer, conservation worker, pollution analyst, environmental consultant, surveyor, estate agent, transport officer, emergency services manager, cartographer, remote sensing analyst, weather forecaster, risk assessor, volcanologist, seismologist, location analyst, aid worker, armed forces, teacher, diplomat, civil servant, town planner, professor, GIS specialist, coastal engineer, travel agent, explorer, travel journalist, TV researcher and many more...

History



Examination Board - Edexcel Pearson

What Will I Learn?

GCSE History allows you to acquire a broad range of knowledge and skills. We begin Year 10 by studying Early Elizabethan England. The course considers the range of problems Elizabeth faced when she became Queen in 1558 including the question of whether she was the rightful heir to the throne. We spend some time learning about the plots against Elizabeth and the threat posed by her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. The course also delves into the reasons why England went to war with Spain and how Elizabeth was able to defeat the Spanish Armada.

The British America course allows you to gain an understanding of what colonial society was like and the problems that it faced including piracy, religious divisions and tensions caused by immigration. The course looks at the role of enslaved people played in the economy and society and considers the relationship between the colonists and the indigenous people. The course then investigates how the relationship between Britain and the colonists deteriorated, ultimately leading to the War of Independence.

Our thematic study on Medicine allows you to track how ideas about the cause of disease, treatments and methods of prevention have changed from the medieval times until the present day. You will study the Black Death, smallpox vaccination, cholera and even learn about modern day advances including the discovery of DNA, antibiotics and high-tech surgery. You will also learn about injuries, treatments and surgery on the Western Front of the First World War and you may be given the chance to visit the Battlefields during Year 11.

The History course ends with a study of Germany and the political and economic difficulties they faced after the First World War. You will gain an understanding of how and why Hitler was voted into power, how he established a dictatorship and how he controlled Germany during the 1930s.

How Am I Assessed?

The course is assessed through 3 examinations at the end of Year 11

Paper 1 - Medicine in Britain, 1250-present and the British Sector of the Western Front (1 hour 15 minutes)

Paper 2 - Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88 and British America.1713-83 (1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper 3 - Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39 (1 hour 20 minutes)

What Career Options Do I Have?

History is a subject which is highly valued in many careers and by many universities because it helps you to develop a range of skills such as analysis, evaluation, critical reasoning and both oral and written communication. As such it could lead you to careers in Law, Politics, Archaeology, Education and the museum and charity sectors among a wide range of others.

French



Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

The GCSE French course is organised around 3 main themes which are relevant and topical in the lives of young people today.

Theme 1: People and Lifestyle (My personal world: Identity and relationships with others, healthy living, well-being and lifestyle, education and work.)

Theme 2: Popular Culture (Free-time activities, customs, festivals and celebrations, celebrity culture.)

Theme 3: Communication and the World Around Us (Travel and tourism, including places of interest, media and technology, the environment and my neighbourhood,)

Through the study of these different topics you will further develop key skills such as listening, dictation, reading and translation, and the ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in speaking and writing, conveying what you want to say with increasing accuracy, spontaneity and fluency. The GCSE course will allow you to deepen your knowledge about how the French language works and to develop your understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where French is spoken.

How Am I Assessed?

The course comprises four exams which are all equally weighted in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The oral examination is completed in Year 11 and includes a role play, a reading aloud task and a description of a photo and a conversation around it. All other skills are completed at the end of Year 11 giving you plenty of time to develop your language skills. There are two tiers for the examination. Foundation assesses grades 1—5 and Higher assesses grades 4—9.

What Career Options Do I Have?

A GCSE in French would form part of the EBacc which is recommended by Britain's most prestigious universities for a variety of courses which are not solely language based. It would also lead on to further study of French at A Level or the ab initio study of another language at University.

A GCSE language would support careers in sectors such as Advertising and Marketing, Hospitality and Tourism, International Business and Management Consultancy. Other more traditional roles include translating and interpreting.

Language skills are in demand more than ever before as, due to Brexit, companies can no longer rely on standard procedures with more face to face interaction being of vital importance for a company's success.

Spanish

Examination Board - AQA



What Will I Learn?

The Spanish GCSE course is organised around 3 main themes which are relevant and topical to young people.

Theme 1: **People and Lifestyle** (My personal world: Identity and relationships with others, healthy living, well-being and lifestyle, education and work.)

Theme 2: **Popular culture** (Free-time activities, Customs, festivals and celebrations, celebrity culture.)

Theme 3: **Communication and the World Around Us** (Travel and tourism, including places of interest, media and technology, the environment and my neighbourhood,)

Through the study of these different topics you will develop key skills such as listening, dictation, reading, translation, critical thinking, resilience and the ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers. You will be able to convey what you want to say with increasing accuracy, spontaneity and fluency. The GCSE course will also allow you to deepen your knowledge about how the Spanish language works and to develop your understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where Spanish is spoken.

How Am I Assessed?

The course comprises four exams which are all equally weighted in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The oral examination is completed towards the end of Year 11 and includes a role play, a reading aloud task, a description and conversation around a photo. All other skills are also completed at the end of Year 11 giving you plenty of time to develop your language skills. There are two tiers for the examination: foundation assesses grades 1—5 and higher assesses grades 4—9.

What Career Options Do I Have?

A GCSE in Spanish is recommended by Britain's most prestigious universities for a variety of courses (which are not solely language based.) It would also lead on to further study of Spanish at A Level or the ab initio study of another language at University.

A GCSE language would support careers in sectors such as Advertising and Marketing, Hospitality and Tourism, International Business and Management Consultancy. Other more traditional roles include translating and interpreting. Language skills are in demand more than ever before as, due to Brexit, companies can no longer rely on standard procedures with more face to face interaction being of vital importance for a company's success.



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GCSE Courses Open Choice

Fine Art



Examination Board - OCR

What Will I Learn?

GCSE Art and Design is an inclusive course designed to suit a wide range of learning styles and abilities, maximising progress for all its artists.

It is a popular GCSE course and students enjoy learning a wide range of different techniques and skills. The course values both creativity and academic thinking and encourages students to make work with a creative ethos whilst at the same time beginning to understand the historical or cultural contexts of the work that inspires them.

Year 10 - In Year 10 students study one theme 'Portraits' which is underpinned by the teaching of the formal elements. Work developed supports the course assessment requirements and includes an in-depth exploration of materials and a well considered and relevant contextual study. Students are shown a wide range of artistic processes and techniques including; drawing, mixed media and painting, they are encouraged to develop and refine the skills they require for the increased independence required in year 11 and beyond. The students complete a year 10 exam at the end of the year.

Year 11- Students continue to develop their coursework until the end of the first term when they produce their final outcomes in a ten hour mock examination. In January of year 11 all students receive their final exam paper, and select one theme to develop over the remaining part of the course until it completes mid May. Throughout the exam preparation process students work with more independence building on the strengths they have discovered in year 10. The year 11 course whilst independent in scope is fully supported with clear deadlines, success criteria and targeted learning. Students will need to complete research on selected artists, and analyse work using art terms and vocabulary. There is also a new emphasis from the exam board for more use of ICT within the work submitted. Students are shown how to present their work on design boards in a professional way in preparation for external moderation and exhibition. Regular detailed feedback is given to ensure our young artists continue to make excellent progress and supports them in improving their work to meet their targets or better.

How Am I Assessed?

- 100% class teacher assessment, internal moderation followed by external moderation.
- All work is completed in the classroom with an expectation that some studies are finished for homework—50% of their overall mark requires some written research and investigation. The final ten hour exam is fully practical
- 60% Course work and 40% exam
- Four key areas of assessment, all with equal weighting—Develop, refine, record, and present. (Your sketchbook is worth much more than your final pieces so commitment to lessons is vital.

What Career Options Do I Have?

- Art and design is the corner stone to any creative pathway. These include but are not restricted to: architecture, graphic design, media and publishing, theatre design, fashion, product design, interior design, illustrator, as well as the more traditional routes such as art teacher, artist, game design, branding and designer to name a few.



Business Studies

Examination Board - Edexcel Pearson



What Will I Learn?

Business Studies requires students both to understand the dynamic environment in which business operates and to appreciate the many and varied factors which impact upon business behaviour. Students will work towards gaining an understanding of the issues facing UK businesses in the 21st Century. Regular reference will be made to the business world. The topics to be studied include:

Marketing—The 4 Ps, Market Research, Market Segmentation and Market Mapping

Entrepreneurs—Skills required to set up a business, the different business formats you can use and the problems with setting up your own business

Finance—Cash flow, costs, revenue and profit calculations, break even, performance measurements. The course will require some basic GCSE Maths level calculations

Economic Factors—Inflation, unemployment, business cycle, monetary and fiscal policy and exchange rates

Production methods Job, Batch and Flow production, quality and stock control

How Am I Assessed?

2 x 90 minute exam papers, each with a mixture of multiple-choice, short answer and essay questions. The essay questions will be linked to short case studies which you must use to support your answers. Please note we spend a lot of time in lessons ensuring all students can produce the high standard of writing required to reach grades 8 and 9.

What Career Options Do I Have?

Business Studies lends itself to a wide range of possible career options. Students have previously gone onto University to study Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Finance, Marketing and Human Resources as well as other non-business related university courses.

The subject is also useful for anyone wishing to start their own business or for anyone with an interest in business in general.

The skills taught in Business Studies can be used in most jobs as they provide you with an understanding of how businesses are organised, motivated and deliver their targets.

Computer Science

Examination Board - OCR

What Will I Learn?

Computer Science is a fascinating and technical subject in which we look at how computers work, how communication happens over computer networks and how that communication is secured, and the moral, ethical and legal issues surrounding computers. You will also get to investigate the CPU, and how everything which happens on a computer can be traced back to simple addition and subtraction.

Throughout the course you will study programming. You will get an opportunity to program using Python. Generally this will be in the format of learning new programming skills, and then using them to write programs. There will be many opportunities for problem solving, which is one of the key traits needed to do well on this course. If you give up at the first hurdle, then you may want to reconsider if you really want to do this course. This course is for good problem solvers, who are disciplined and hard working.

Finally we look into the theory behind programming. It is not a case of just sitting down and writing a program, there is a lot of planning involved, as well as trial and error. If you have determination, a passion for computers and a love of maths and science, this is the course for you!

Please note that due to the academic demands of this course you will need a predicted grade of a 5, or above, in Maths. (If your predicted grade is lower than a 5 please discuss with Mr Herbert)

How Am I Assessed?

You will be assessed through two exams:

50% - Computer Systems

50% - Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming



What Career Options Do I Have?

Applications Developer

Web Designer

Data Analyst

Technical Author

Game Developer

IT Trainer

IT Consultant

Information Systems Manager

Network Manager

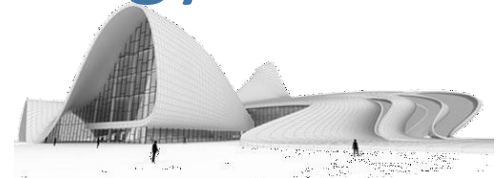
Cybersecurity Specialist

Machine Learning Engineer

AI Developer

Design and Technology

Examination Board - AQA



What Will I Learn?

This is a two year course in Design and Technology that will build upon skills students have learnt during the rotations at Key Stage 3. It will introduce new subject knowledge whilst building a wide range of new practical skills and techniques.

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise. It allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques, and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth by specialising in their favourite areas of Design and Technology.

GCSE Design and Technology enables students to learn a wide variety of different skills such as; technical drawing, modelling, Computer Aided Design, 3D simulation, Computer Aided Manufacturing to develop innovative and creative design solutions to the contextual challenges set by the examination board. Students are also given the opportunity to use machinery and processes used in industry. The new GCSE empowers students to produce creative and bespoke outcomes, and encourages students to develop their own design style as budding young designers. Project outcomes can include different materials; however, they can specialise in their preferred material area for the written examination.

During Year 10 a series of practical projects are studied alongside core and specialist theory lessons to prepare students for their final Year 11 NEA project work and examination.

How Am I Assessed?

Assessment is based upon two components

A coursework project of 40-60 hours during Year 11 (NEA) 50% of mark

A terminal examination 50% of mark

What Career Options Do I Have?

On completion of the course, students can take their studies further at A-Level or could complete a vocational course or apprenticeship. This course provides a clear pathway to a wide range of design, engineering and manufacturing related degrees and careers such as: graphic design, architecture, interior architecture, aeronautical design, vehicular design, industrial / product design, engineering, mechanical engineering, design engineering, manufacturing engineering, fashion marketing and merchandising, visual merchandise designers and many more.



Drama



Examination Board - Eduqas

What Will I Learn?

GCSE Drama is an exciting, challenging and creative course. It includes the opportunity to devise and act in dramatic plays or create a set, lighting, costume, sound or lighting design for a play; study drama texts; attend live theatre productions; learn effective speaking and listening and presentation skills; and grow in confidence and self-awareness. You may be interested in a career in the Performing Arts but if not, then the knowledge that you will learn in terms of public speaking, communication and team working are skills which all major employers in the United Kingdom consider to be vital to their company's success. The creative industries are our fastest growing sector, contributing £13 million per hour in the UK economy.

How Am I Assessed?

Component 1 Devising Theatre. You will create your own piece of drama as Actor or Designer using the ideas of a specialist practitioner. Internally marked and externally moderated. 40% of the GCSE.

Component 2 Performing or creating a Design for a Text. In this unit you will perform an extract from a professionally published play. Externally examined. 20% of the GCSE.

Component 3 Interpreting Theatre. Study one plays and review a live theatre performance. Written examination 40% of the GCSE.

What Career Options Do I Have?

This GCSE specification provides opportunities for progression to courses in further education in all related subjects, including English and Modern Foreign Languages, History and Politics, Psychology, Music and Dance. It is supported by all education institutions as an entry qualification in other subjects. Equally, it is a highly enabling subject for students wishing to pursue a career that involves communication such as law, education and the arts and media industries, sales and marketing. Business employers, for instance, particularly like to see drama on a prospective employee's CV because it suggests a high level of presentational and interpersonal skills.

More than
9994
students studying at Russell Group Universities since 2012 have an A Level in **Drama and Theatre**.
They are studying:
Medicine, Law, History, Geography, Theology, Philosophy, Classics, Art, Music, Psychology, Politics, Maths, Business, Economics, Engineering, French, German, Computer Science, Dentistry, Russian, Management, Biomedical Sciences, Chemistry, Film, Spanish, Italian, Physics, as well as, Drama, Theatre, English and many more.
source: essentialdrama.com

Film Studies

Examination Board - Eduqas (WJEC)

What Will I Learn?

Have you ever found yourself completely absorbed in a film, wondering how it is that the team behind it managed to make you feel that way? Ever imagined yourself holding the award for Best Picture at the Oscars?

In GCSE Film Studies you will learn how to see the art of filmmaking in a whole new light. Through the study of six exciting, interesting and unique films you will learn about all aspects of filmmaking from cinematography to narrative structure. You will learn not only how existing film makers do it, but will also have the opportunity to write your own film! Furthermore, you will study the key developments in film and Film-making from the first moving images to the role of CGI.

In order to develop your understanding of the film industry, the units covered include a variety of films. The units are: Mainstream Hollywood Films where you will study US films such as 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' and 'E.T The Extra Terrestrial'; Independently Produced US Film 'Whiplash'; Global film, the Saudi Arabian, 'Wadjda; International Film, 'District 9'; and the British film, 'Submarine'.

You will also study different genres, looking at a range of films to prepare for your coursework production—the opening sequence to a horror film. The skill of screenplay writing is also further

How Am I Assessed?

The new Film Studies course is both intellectually demanding with 70% exam and creatively stimulating with 30% coursework production (film extract or original screenplay excerpt).

Component 1: Written exam—1hr 30 minutes 35% of qualification

Component 2: Written exam—1hr 30 minutes 35% of qualification

Component 3: Coursework Production—30% of qualification

What Career Options Do I Have?

Film Studies students often make it their passion, going on to work in the Film and Media Industry, whether it be in screenplay writing, directing, editing, acting, costume design, make-up, sound production, set design, marketing or any of the other exciting roles in the industry.

The skills gained through the course also support students well in their English studies and is taught by the English and Media Department. The styles of writing feed into any professional vocation, but easily lend themselves to other areas like Business and Management, Journalism, Advertising, Law and Psychology. Likewise the skills developed in production work involve high levels of creativity and originality, and so undeniably work well with careers in Art and Design, ICT and Drama. Skills such as team work, meeting deadlines, reading for meaning and high levels of organisation are all required which are desirable for any employer. For any further information, please speak to Mrs Morgan.



Food Preparation & Nutrition

Examination Board - AQA



What Will I Learn?

AQA GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course that places practical cookery skills at its heart, ensuring students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition and the science behind the food they eat. It is designed to bridge the gap between kitchen expertise and academic theory, teaching students not just how to cook, but why ingredients behave the way they do when prepared and heated. By the end of the course, students will be qualified to pursue further study or careers in the catering, food science, and hospitality industries.

Throughout the course, students will master 12 key technical skill groups, including high-level knife skills, dough making, and sauce preparation using traditional and international cuisines. Alongside these hands-on activities, learners delve into five core areas: **nutrition and health**, exploring how different nutrients impact the body; **food science**, which investigates the chemical properties of ingredients; **food safety**, covering essential hygiene and microbiology, **Food Choice** is about the "why." It explores the diverse factors that influence what people decide to eat; and finally, **food provenance**, which looks at where our food comes from and its environmental impact. This combination empowers students to make informed, healthy, and sustainable food choices for themselves and others throughout their lives.

In Yr.10 students will build on the skills learnt at KS3 and transition from basic cooking level to a higher-level of technical skills by looking at things like Meat & Fish Preparation, Doughs & Pastries, Sauce making, advanced Desserts and much more.

How Am I Assessed?

| Assessment is based upon two components | Assessment |
|---|-------------|
| Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) (50%): Two tasks completed in Year 11 1: Food Investigation 2: Food Preparation task | 50% of mark |
| Written Exam (50%): A 1 hour 45 minute paper (100 marks) consisting of multiple-choice questions and five longer structured questions | 50% of mark |

What Career Options Do I Have?

Studying AQA Food Preparation and Nutrition provides a versatile foundation for various professional sectors, ranging from healthcare. For students interested in the scientific and industrial side, this course is the first step toward becoming a Food Technologist or Product Developer, where you oversee the creation, safety, and scaling of new food products for major retailers. If your interests lean toward health and wellness, the curriculum provides the essential biological and nutritional knowledge required to pursue a career as a Dietitian, Nutritionist, or Sports Nutritional Consultant.

Beyond the laboratory and clinic, the course mainly prepares students for leadership roles within the hospitality and business sectors including Hospitality Management, the technical skills mastered here are vital for becoming a **Chef**, **Head Chef** or **Development Chef**. Ultimately, this GCSE demonstrates to employers and universities that you possess a blend of technical precision, scientific understanding, and high-level cooking skills.



FutureChef National finalist

Music



Examination Board- Eduqas

What Will I Learn?

The Eduqas GCSE in Music encourages you to build on your current musical interests. The course allows you to engage actively in the study of music enabling you to understand and appreciate a range of different kinds of music. Compared to Key Stage 3, you will have a lot more freedom in what you study in order to make the course work for you and your interests.

During the course you will: perform pieces of music (that you choose) on an instrument or voice; compose original music in the form of song-writing or using industry-standard notation software; and learn how music is created and experienced in different styles and contexts.

There are four areas of study (including two set works) which will be the subject of examination in the listening paper. Over the course, you will study pop music, film music, musical theatre, jazz, Western classical music and how the elements of music are combined in each of these areas.

This is a fabulous course for those who enjoy performing, composing and listening to a wide range of music. You do not have to have formally studied an instrument or had singing lessons to be successful on this course. Should you wish to start lessons, the Music Department has a comprehensive team of instrumental teachers for you to choose from.

For further information on GCSE Music please contact Mr Ball.

How Am I Assessed?

| | Assessment |
|--|-------------------|
| Two performances (traditional or improvised); one solo and one group piece (audio recordings—not public performance) | 30% of total mark |
| Two compositions | 30% of total mark |
| Appraising exam on four Areas of Study | 40% of total mark |

What Career Options Do I Have?

Studying GCSE Music will develop your life skills including critical and creative thinking, cultural capital, social and historical understanding, self-discipline, self-confidence, perseverance and self-motivation.

GCSE Music provides a plethora of skills desired by employers and universities and these complement other subjects. For those wanting to take Music further than GCSE however, it's not just for those who want to be the next pop star!

GCSE Music leads into and is often a requirement for A-level Music or Music Technology. In Higher Education, there are a range of degrees on offer from Music and Music Technology to Music Production and Musical Theatre to Music Journalism and Stage Management.

Careers: Composing or Song writing, Events Management, Music Journalism, Arts Management, Music Production, Music Technology, Acoustics, Theatre, Sound Engineering, Stage Management, Music Therapy, Film and Television Industries, Media, Radio, Teaching, DJing, Publishing, Promotion and Marketing, Video Game Industry.

KS4 Physical Education



Guided Choices

If a student opts to study Physical Education at KS4, they will complete either the Edexcel GCSE PE or BTEC Tech Award in Sport course.

Places for these courses will be allocated by staff reviewing academic profiles and sporting performance to ensure that each student is on the most suitable course to support success.

| GCSE PE | BTEC Sport |
|--|--|
| <p>Scientific based content of body systems and their application to performance.</p> <p>Assessment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Two Exam Papers (60%)◆ Written Coursework (10%)◆ Three Practical Sports -Team & Individual (30%) <p><i>*Students must train & compete regularly within at least one sport</i></p> | <p>A more hands on course that will provide insight into the sport and fitness sector.</p> <p>Assessment through:</p> <p>Practical & Written Coursework (65%)</p> <p>One Exam Paper (35%)</p> <p>Sporting Performance and Leadership Assessed through video evidence</p> |

Key Information

Both course will require students to follow knowledge rich curriculums with an emphasis on written work through exam questions and scenario based coursework. Students must be aware that practical elements are the smaller parts of each course.

What Career Options Do I Have?

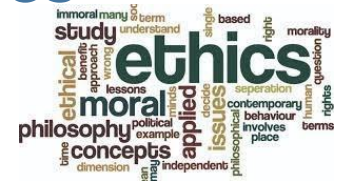
These courses will act as a stepping stone for students wanting to further their education in **A-Level PE** or **BTEC Sport** at 6th form, colleges or through an apprenticeship. We would strongly recommend these courses to any student aspiring to a career in sports coaching, PE teaching, personal training, sports injuries or the leisure industry.

Core PE

Throughout KS4 all students will continue with 2 hours of core physical education lessons each week. Within these lessons students will continue to develop their skills, techniques and tactics while acquiring the important life skills which are embedded within sport and physical activity.

Philosophy and Ethics

Examination Board - AQA



What Will I Learn?

GCSE Philosophy and Ethics allows you to acquire a broad range of knowledge and skills. Critical thinking - analysing and evaluating religious concepts and their application to real world issues. Research skills which involves conducting independent research on religious topics.

Communication, expressing ideas clearly and coherently in both oral and written forms. Debating and constructing arguments to persuade others of your opinion. Constructively challenging the ideas of others which you disagree with. Throughout the course we aim to promote tolerance and understanding of those with differing worldviews.

Philosophy—this is based upon the religions of Christianity and Islam. We look at a wide range of issues including

- **Beliefs and Teachings:** Explore fundamental beliefs, the existence of God, the afterlife, the impact religious beliefs have on the followers of that faith and the relevance of Holy Books in contemporary society
- **Practices:** worship, sacraments, and the role of the Church in peace and reconciliation. Explore Islamic practices like the Five Pillars of Islam, prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage.

Ethics—we study a wide range of contemporary ethical issues. We consider the approaches of Christianity, Islam, legal and secular viewpoints. These include

- **Religion, Peace, and Conflict:** war, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction , pacifism and the impact of war
- **Religion, Crime, and Punishment:** crime, punishment, capital punishment, forgiveness, and justice.
- **Life Issues:** abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation and the environment.
- **Family:** sexuality, contraception, marriage, divorce and the family.

How Am I Assessed?

The course is assessed through 2 examinations at the end of Year 11

Paper 1 - Philosophy -Christianity and Islam(1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper 2 - Ethics (Issues) (1 hour 45 minutes)

What Career Options Do I Have?

Studying Philosophy and Religious Studies can provide a solid foundation for various careers due to the development of critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills. While some careers may directly align with the content of these subjects, others benefit from the transferable skills gained during your studies. Some potential careers are – Law, Journalism and Writing , Academia and Research, Education, Counselling and Social Work , Non-profit and Advocacy Work , Publishing and Editing , all public sector jobs (Police, medicine, civil service etc), Public Policy and Government , Business and Management and many others.

Triple (Separate) Science

Examination Board - AQA

What Will I Learn?

When studying Double Science, students will get an overview of the three disciplines of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. In Triple Science, we have the opportunity to dig deeper into the detail of some of these areas of study, and also to explore some topics which are not covered at all in the Double Science course.

Triple Science is no more difficult than Double Science. The option time combines with the core Science time, such that students study 7 hours one week and 8 hours the next week of Science (evenly split between the three subjects, averaging 2.5 hours per week of each). The three Science subjects are each delivered by a specialist teacher for Biology, Chemistry, or Physics as appropriate.

For this reason, Triple Science is most suitable for students with a very strong interest in Science.

| Biology | Chemistry | Physics |
|--|--|---|
| Cell biology, Organisation, Infection and response, Bioenergetics, Homeostasis and response, Inheritance, variation and evolution, Ecology | Atomic structure and the periodic table, Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter, Quantitative chemistry, Chemical changes, Energy changes, The rate and extent of chemical change, Organic chemistry, Chemical analysis, Chemistry of the atmosphere | Energy, Electricity, Particle model of matter, Atomic structure, Forces, Waves, Magnetism and electromagnetism, Space physics |

How Am I Assessed?

Each of the disciplines involves two examinations of 1 hour and 45 minutes each. Foundation and Higher tier papers are available. All papers include multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions, and the topics are split evenly between the papers. For instance, Physics 1 covers topics 1-4 and Physics 2 covers topics 5-8. Each paper is 100 marks, and students receive three totally independent grades, one for each discipline.

What Career Options Do I Have?

Although not essential to study A-level science, or science courses at University, Triple Science can provide an advantage in these areas due to the increased depth in which the curriculum can be studied. Additionally, students who are particularly strong in one discipline can see this reflected in their results if they study Triple Science, whereas in Double Science, the grade awarded is an average of all three areas.

Careers Information Advice

We recognise the importance of effective Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) for young people and we expect all our students to develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. We aim to inspire every student through more real-life contacts with the world of work to help them understand where different choices can take them in the future and we wish to ensure that our students are not restricted by circumstances or location from becoming self-confident, well-educated and enterprising individuals.

As a school, we are committed to carrying out the Department for Education's Careers Strategy: Making the most of everyone's skills and talents. We have developed a whole school careers programme, which is meeting the eight Gatsby benchmarks for effective careers guidance. Some highlights of the programme are:

Access to 1:1 appointments and workshops with an independent careers

Opportunities to gain work experience in Year 10

Support and education around key decision making times (Year 9, Year 11, Year 12 and

Whole school careers fair in the summer term, with opportunity to speak with over 25 different employers, universities, sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeship and training providers from **the local area and further afield.**

Opportunities to complete NCS (National Citizenship Service)

Access (in school and at home) to the Unifrog careers software, which allows students to explore where their skills and interests can lead to in future

Dedicated information evenings at schools for

Tailored program of lessons delivered in PSHCE

Making the correct Option Choices

Know what you want to do after school? Research pathways to that job and 'reverse engineer' the qualifications you will need to get you there!

Not sure what you want to do? Explore the careers zones link! If you're still unsure studying a range of subjects will provide you with a good overview of different topics and different ways of studying.

If you plan on studying a subject at A-level it's worth checking whether you need to have a GCSE in it. You don't want to realise that you can't study a subject later on because you didn't study it at GCSE level!

Useful Websites

<https://www.unifrog.org/student>

www.brightknowledge.org/education/gcses-explained

www.successatschool.org/careerzones

'Careers Hub' on the school website

If you have any questions our Careers Leader is;

Mrs K Adams - adamsk@josephwhitaker.org

Year 9 Guided Choice Evening

Parents and Students Welcome

Tuesday 3rd March 2026

Presentation 6.30pm in the Main Hall

Students will be given individual logins and they will make their choices electronically. Further information will be emailed to parents.

NOTE:

The information given in this prospectus which relates to the school was valid at the time of printing.



The Joseph Whitaker School
An Academy specialising in Sport and Performing Arts

The Joseph Whitaker School

Warsop Lane

Rainworth

Nottinghamshire

Notes