

Key Stage 4

Academic Years 2026-2028

Options Course Guide



Church of England
High School



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Our Curriculum

Curriculum Vision

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith and a rich set of opportunities that support and challenge our students so they are equipped to succeed. Through their engagement in society at Bishops' and beyond, students make a positive difference through their wise action and a sense of responsibility. Our students' initiative, drive and resilience will enable them to flourish and live 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10).

Our theologically rooted Christian vision, John 10:10, means that our curriculum is driven by educating the whole person in order that they may serve the common good. This means that our curriculum philosophy is underpinned by our values of Dignity and Respect, Aspiration and Hope, and Wisdom, Knowledge, and Skills. Our curriculum values support our students on their personal, academic and spiritual journeys and help them to become positive members of society with a deep understanding of Christian and British values.

We offer a challenging, well sequenced curriculum which is broad and balanced focusing on breadth before depth, promoting new knowledge through subject based learning which will support each individual to strive for progress and self-improvement throughout their seven-year journey at Bishops. Student progress is achieved through high quality teaching and access to a range of engaging learning opportunities enabling students to fulfil their whole potential and view education as a lifelong process.

Key Stage 4 (KS4) Curriculum Provision

The curriculum provision provided for Year 10 and 11 students closely follows the National Curriculum requirements for KS4 (14-16) with all students studying for qualifications in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. In addition to these core subjects all our KS4 students follow GCSE Religious Studies and non-examined core PE and Lessons for Life. Our broad and balanced curriculum offers students choices both within and in addition to the National Curriculum framework.

All our KS4 option courses are designed to have clearly defined progression routes into our Sixth Form, local FE colleges or apprenticeships schemes. We offer a range of different academic and vocational courses to choose from ensuring all students experience an exciting and relevant curriculum, matched to their needs, aspirations, and progression opportunities, that enables them to flourish and succeed.

We are committed to supporting each individual student whilst at the same time providing academic breadth through the wide diversity of courses available at KS4.



From the Headteacher

At Bishops' we enable our students to flourish and have 'life in all its fullness'. Our Year 9s are about to embark on an important, yet exciting time in their life and their learning journey. For the first time in their education, they will be offered a choice of subjects they want to continue to study in Year 10 and Year 11. All will have benefited from the breadth of KS3 curriculum, and it is wonderful to hear students talk about the subjects they have been particularly inspired by and a willingness to nurture their interests further, or in some cases to experience a new subject. Their aspirations go beyond GCSE study into Sixth Form and beyond. Their interests, skills, talents, and aspirations are varied, and the options process is designed with this in mind. I am looking forward to nurturing their endeavours to be the best versions of themselves as they transition into KS4 study.

Miss H Cairns

Headteacher

From the Deputy Headteacher

An exciting time is approaching for our Year 9 students; over the next few weeks they will be guided through the options process and will be choosing the option subjects they wish to study in Year 10 and 11.

At The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School, we pride ourselves on the provision of an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum for all our students, enabling them to develop the knowledge and skills required by employers, colleges, universities and for their lifelong learning and success.

Your child will have a range of option subjects to select from, and we will look to support them in choosing the best option subjects for them. This booklet provides information on the option subjects available and the core subjects to be taken in Year 10 from September 2026. It is very important that you read this booklet carefully and discuss the option subjects available with your child. On each subject section within the booklet, you will see an overview for that subject, a link to the specification and the potential progression routes that these qualifications may lead to. An electronic copy of this booklet can be found on our website, bishopschester.co.uk/subject-options/

The KS4 subjects that your child will be studying in Year 10 and 11 will be based on consultation between yourselves, your child, class teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Our staff team have an outstanding commitment to support your child in choosing the best option subjects for them.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure your child continues to enjoy their learning journey here at Bishops', flourish, and succeed in fulfilling their whole potential.

Thank you in advance for your support in this process.

Mrs C Robbins

Deputy Headteacher – Quality of Education

From the Options Lead Teacher

Year 9 is an exciting and important time in your child's education. Students are looking forward to joining the Upper School and for the first time can choose their own subjects to complement the core curriculum. It is important to view this process as a milestone within their seven-year journey towards Sixth Form or into further education or training if Sixth Form is not the right path for them.

We trust our students to make these important choices. We do not have a set of pre-populated blocks of subjects to choose from, instead we build our curriculum each year around the choices of our students as we believe that students are more likely to succeed when following courses, they have actively chosen and are passionate about. To have a genuine interest and enthusiasm in a subject, together with a proven record of success during Year 9, is always a sound basis from which to start your selection. Do not choose a course for the wrong reasons, i.e. you get on well with a teacher or because a friend chooses it. The chances are that you will have different teachers and may not be in the same class as your friend. We also ask students to select more subjects than they will study, which will be selected from if we are unable to fulfil their top three choices.

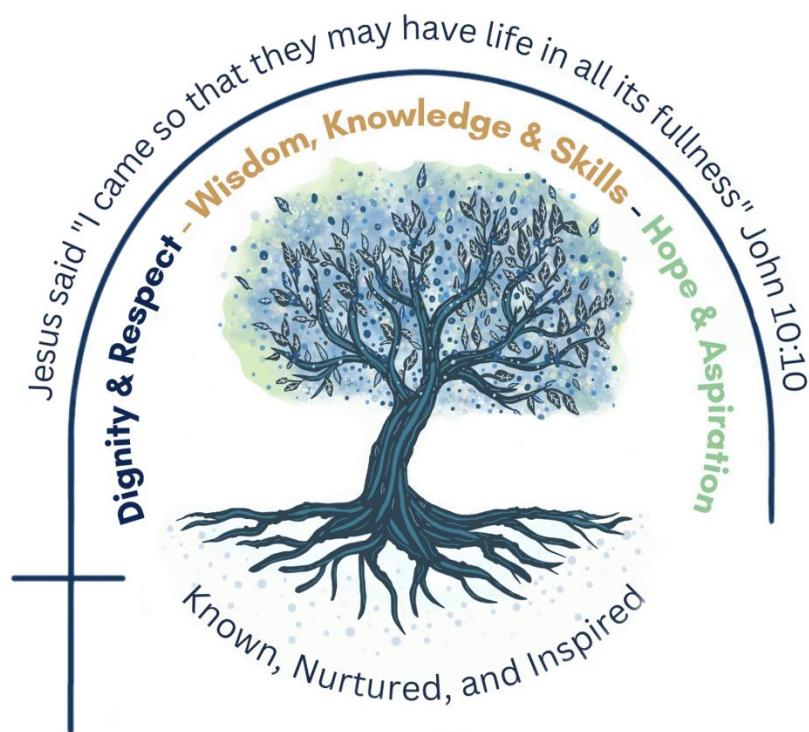
All of this can be a little daunting! We offer a great deal of support to students in making these important decisions during the Option process. Please take the time to read through this guide carefully which contains important information about the KS4 courses on offer.

If you need to seek clarification from me, subject staff, or form tutor, please do not hesitate in approaching us through the usual channels.

M Close

Mr M Close

Timetable and Options Lead





The Options Process

The timeline below provides further information of what events and activities are coming up; these will support you and your child through the options process.

Dates	Events	Further information
Monday 19 th Jan	Year 9 Launch Event	An introduction to options. Year 9 students will participate in sessions focusing on careers and their 7-year journey at Bishops'.
Tuesday 20 th Jan – Wednesday 4 th Feb	Options information given to students during assemblies, lessons and PD sessions	Subject teachers and form tutors will devote time during this fortnight to give information about options and answer student questions.
Thursday 22 nd Jan	Options Information Evening for parents / carers	6:30pm. A Microsoft Teams meeting in which parents will be given information about the options process and support for Year 9 students.
Thursday 5 th Feb	Year 9 Options Parents Evening	Opportunity for parents to meet teachers and discuss options subjects.
Thursday 5 th Feb	Options choices can be made by students	Students will be sent a Microsoft Form to fill in that will be shared with them on Satchel.
Friday 13 th Feb	Options choices deadline	All options choices must be submitted by this date.



Making Choices

During Year 10 students will have a 50-period fortnightly timetable. The core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Lessons for Life, RE and PE will take up 35 periods per fortnight. The remaining 15 periods will be taken up by their **three chosen option subjects**, each having 5 periods per fortnight. Students may also undertake additional intervention programmes as part of their bespoke curriculum to help their progress within the core subjects.

There are a range of different option subjects available and, while they are assessed in a variety of ways, they are of equivalent value and standing. All option courses that your child will study will lead towards a recognised qualification, details of which can be found throughout this booklet.

GCSEs

GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education and is the main qualification taken by 14–16-year-olds. GCSEs are assessed mainly through written exams at the end of the two-year course with little or no coursework elements. Details of how each course is assessed is given in the individual subject information. GCSEs are graded from 1-9: with 1 as the lowest and 9 the highest grade.

BTEC/Technical Awards

In BTEC/technical courses, students' progress is continually assessed throughout the two years of study. There is also an externally assessed element. BTEC/Technical Award qualifications are equivalent to GCSE qualifications. Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades 1-3 and Level 2 GCSE grades 4 – 8.5. Most of our BTEC/Technical Awards courses within this guide are studied at Level 2.

Facilitating Subjects

The options process at Bishops' ensures that students follow a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the opportunity to study subjects that are regarded by many universities in the country to be 'facilitating subjects' at A-level. These are the subjects that are most likely to be required or preferred for entry to the widest range of degree courses and are listed below.

- English.
- Mathematics.
- Combined Sciences or Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).
- Humanities – History or Geography.
- Languages – Spanish or French.

Guidance in Making Choices

The students who are most successful in their chosen option subjects do well because they:

- Study a subject they enjoy.
- Believe that they will be successful in the subject.
- Understand that the subject will help them to achieve career goals.
- Have an excellent attitude to learning.
- Have made a commitment to the subjects chosen.
- Choose a subject that best fits their ability and interest.

Students should not make any decisions regarding their option subject choices until they have:

- Read all the information in this handbook.
- Listened to the KS4 Course Information Sessions from the teachers.
- Talked to their form tutor.
- Talked to their parents.
- Considered talking to our Careers Advisor.

Students should not choose a subject because:

- They think it is easy.
- They like the teacher in that subject (they might be taught by a different teacher).
- Their best friend has chosen it (their friends may be in different teaching groups).

Remember:

- A balanced choice of subjects is the best approach.
- A balanced choice will give students a range of experiences.
- A balanced choice will be more helpful to students in the future.

Students should view this options process as an important milestone within their 7-year journey at The Bishops' Blue Coat High School. Students should be thinking ahead to further studies and how the choices they make now could affect their entry to Sixth Form.

The minimum entry requirements into Sixth Form are:

- 4-9 grade in GCSE English.
- 4-9 grade in GCSE Mathematics.
- Plus 4-9 grade in three other courses or equivalent.
- All courses have recommended entry requirements. Full details are available in the Sixth Form Course Guide.

Submitting Option Choices

Students will receive a link to complete a Microsoft Form. This link will be shared with them on Satchel. Students will be guided through the process by their form tutors during a PD session on the day the links are sent out.

Sometimes it is possible that a course will be withdrawn if only a small number of students choose it.



Core Subjects

English

Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1



Course Code: 8700 / 8702

Subject Lead – Mrs J Hartley

Assessment Arrangements

Each GCSE has two examination papers:

English Language

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

English Literature

Paper 1: Shakespeare (The Merchant of Venice) and 19th Century novel (A Christmas Carol)

Paper 2: Modern texts (DNA) and Poetry (power and conflict poetry and unseen poetry)

Course Outline

All students will complete both the AQA English Language GCSE and the AQA English Literature GCSE from Years 10 to 11. There is no early entry or different tiers. All students will follow both courses and achieve two GCSEs.

Progression Opportunities

English offers excellent preparation for AS and A-level English studies, as well as giving students a grounding in a wide variety of literature and skills that will stay with them for life.

[View the specification online for English Language and English Literature](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for English Language and English Literature](#)



Mathematics



Examination Board: Edexcel GCSE 9-1

Course Code: 1MA1

Subject Lead – Mrs R Davies

Assessment Arrangements

Students must take three question papers within the same tier and all 3 examination papers will be taken at the end of Year 11. These papers are:

Paper 1 (non-calculator)	-	written exam	90 min	80 marks	33 ¹ / ₃ %
Paper 2 (calculator)	-	written exam	90 min	80 marks	33 ¹ / ₃ %
Paper 3 (calculator)	-	written exam	90 min	80 marks	33 ¹ / ₃ %

Course Outline

All students will complete Edexcel Mathematics.

There are two levels of assessment:

Foundation tier	-	Grades 1-5
Higher tier	-	Grades 4-9

Students will develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts; acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems; reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions; comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Progression Opportunities

This qualification prepares students for progression to further study of mathematics at AS and A level, and also to the study of Core Mathematics. GCSE Mathematics is a requirement for progression to a wide range of courses at Level 3.

[View the specification online for Mathematics](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Foundation and Higher](#)





Science



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 Combined Science Trilogy

Course Code: 8464

Subject Lead – Dr C Toczyski

Assessment Arrangements

Most students will study AQA Combined Science: Trilogy (8464) leading to two GCSEs at the end of Year 11. For the Combined Science course there are six 1hr 15min examination papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Students will either study the foundation tier (grades from 1-1 to 5-5) or the higher tier (grades from 4-3 to 9-9).

Course Outline

GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy is interesting and relevant to all types of students. In this linear course, aspects of biology, chemistry and physics are taught, and the skills of investigating, observing and experimenting are explored. See also separate science Page 29.

Progression Opportunities

Both science routes provide an excellent grounding in science, leading to KS5 courses including A-Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

[View the specification online for Combined Science Trilogy](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Foundation and Higher](#)

Religious Studies



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 Religious Studies Specification A

Course Code: 8062

Subject Lead – Miss E Fletcher

Assessment Arrangements

Students will sit two 1hr 45min examination papers in the summer term of Year 11.

Course Outline

The Religious Studies GCSE course with AQA comprises of two exam papers Component 1: The Study of Religions: beliefs, teachings and practices and Component 2: Thematic Studies.

Religious Studies GCSE is compulsory for all students. Students are challenged by ultimate life questions and are given the opportunity to develop their own thoughts and opinions about religious, moral, and ethical issues.

Progression Opportunities

Having a qualification in Religious Studies is very important in modern society as it shows an awareness and appreciation of different beliefs, cultures, moral and ethical viewpoints. Students develop key communication skills in debates and discussions, and skills of evaluation through explaining their own point of view and comparing this to other views that may differ from their own.

[View the specification online for Religious Studies](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Religious Studies](#)

Physical Education (Core)

Physical Education is a compulsory activity at KS4 with no formal examination.

Our aim is to provide an opportunity for students to improve their health and wellbeing as well as practice and perform the skills and tactics of a variety of sports. Students will follow a set programme of 3 lessons across the two-week timetable cycle in Year 10 and 2 lessons in Year 11. During these lessons, students will select and perform in several sports, including traditional invasion games such as football, basketball and netball, net games such as badminton and table tennis, striking and fielding games such as rounders and cricket and alternative sports such as dodgeball and bench ball. Lessons provide the opportunity to increase students' physical activity time, to help improve their levels of fitness and physical health. They also allow the students to work collaboratively and cooperatively, whilst providing stress relief, to help improve their mental health and wellbeing. Extra-curricular clubs are available at Key Stage 4 and all students are encouraged to participate. Competitive sport opportunities are available, through school teams, in several sports and instil pride in representing the school and its values.

Lessons 4 Life (L4L)

All students in Years 7-11 receive fortnightly 'Lessons 4 Life' lessons as part of The Life Programme at Bishops'. These lessons explore a variety of topics that relate to three broad themes that are vital in preparing our young people for life in all its fullness now and in the future: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education, and Living in the Wider World. As part of our personal development programme, students also take part in Personal Development Days and PD sessions during Form Time that promote character education, leadership growth and a sense of social responsibility. The LIFE programme at Bishops' is underpinned by our school's Christian vision and values and aims to support the holistic development of our young people, helping them to develop skills that they need to manage their lives now and in the future, stay healthy and safe, and become well prepared for life - and work – in modern Britain.



Animal Care

Examination Board: Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Animal Care

Course Code: 603/7057/9



Subject Lead – Mrs C Woods

Assessment Arrangements

Coursework component 1	Worth 30%	January of Year 10
Coursework component 2	Worth 30%	September of Year 11
Written exam component 3	Worth 40%	May of Year 11

Why Study This Course?

This is an engaging and rewarding course which will allow students to learn how to care for different animals, including domestic pets, farm animals and exotics. The students will learn many aspects of animal care including handling and restraint, accommodation and animal biology, disease and healthcare. The course enables learners to develop their practical skills, such as using appropriate equipment and techniques to handle and restrain different animals, and to prepare and clean out animal accommodation ready for use using realistic vocational contexts. This course also helps to develop personal skills such as communication, teamwork, and research and project work, which are useful in many workplaces and other areas of study.

Course Outline

The components of this qualification cover particular areas of animal care:

Component 1 – Animal behaviour and handling and restraint

Learning outcome A: Understand animal behaviours and its impact on how animals are handled

Learning outcome B: Undertake preparation for safe animal handling and restraint

Learning outcome C: Demonstrate safe animal handling and restraint

Component 2 – Animal housing and accommodation

Learning outcome A: Understand factors affecting the selection of animal accommodation

Learning outcome B: Prepare and check animal accommodation using safe working practices

Learning outcome C: Be able to clean out animal accommodation using safe working practices

Component 3 – Animal health and welfare

Learning area A: Animal health

Learning area B: Animal disease

Learning area C: Animals and legislation

Progression Opportunities

The animal care sector is rapidly growing and is currently worth around £1 billion to the UK economy, and the veterinary services market is worth £6.1 billion. These sectors have 20,000 businesses, 78,000 employees and many volunteers. There are many different career paths and opportunities for those wishing to work in this sector. For students wishing to continue their studies in animal care, students will be able to progress on to Level 3 animal care, animal management or other land-based qualifications followed by university or employment within the sector.

[View the specification online for Animal Care](#)

Art, Craft & Design



Examination Board: Eduqas GCSE 9-1 Art - Art, Craft & Design

Course Code: C650QS

Subject Lead – Mrs L Willingham

Assessment Arrangements

- Portfolio of Work comprising of 2-3 coursework units (worth 60%).
- One 10 hour Externally Set Task (worth 40%).

Why Study This Course?

The creative industry is the fastest growing area in business this decade. It is the perfect time to engage with creativity and tap into a massive range of potential career opportunities.

Through choosing one of these courses, students will grow as confident, working artists. Students will not only scaffold learning with practical skills and techniques in a productive environment but will also learn how to present thoughts and information clearly and confidently, a skill which is advantageous in any job.

Course Outline

The whole process including researching the relationships with the work of established artists, developing themes, and selecting ideas to pursue, is as important as the finished product. Students will use design sheets to present recorded observations, ideas, and experiences. This course promotes learning across a variety of experiences and through various processes, tools, techniques, materials, and resources to generate different kinds of evidence of working and outcomes. Emphasis is on an increased breadth of approach commensurate in demand with the other titles. The context of practice, rather than the breadth of activities and/or range of media employed, determines whether a student's work can be described as art-based, craft-based and/or design-based.

Progression Opportunities

This course provides a suitable foundation for the study of Art and Design at A level.

[View the specification online for Art, Craft and Design](#)



Business



Examination Board: Edexcel GCSE Business

Course code: 1BS0

Subject Lead – Mr L McAllynn

Assessment Arrangements

Two examinations each worth 50%. The duration of each examination is 1 hour 45 minutes.

Why Study This Course?

We interact with businesses every day; whether it's shopping, using our mobile phones, or watching TV. In Business, we explore how these businesses operate behind the scenes. Students dive into real-life examples and current news stories, gaining a deeper understanding of how businesses run and make decisions in today's world.

In Business, we explore real life topics like the current economic climate and how it affects businesses and our daily lives. This helps students build a strong understanding of business and its far-reaching impact on society.

Course Outline

Students are not expected to know much about business to join the course as this understanding will be developed. This course is structured around two key themes.

The first theme focuses on the entrepreneurial elements of small businesses and understanding how to identify a business opportunity then assess the feasibility of the business as an enterprise. It also teaches how to develop the enterprise and understand the influence the external business environment and economy might have on its success.

The second theme concentrates on scaling and expanding a business. Students will learn about all the functional areas within a business such as marketing, product development, finance, and human resources realising how effective decision making in these areas is essential for a business to thrive in a dynamic economy.

Progression Opportunities

Students will develop a range of knowledge and skills which will be useful for further study or careers in any business or economics related fields such as human resources, marketing or financial services. In addition, the well-established and diverse curriculum in this qualification make this course an excellent foundation to be used towards entry to a Level 3 BTEC, an A Level qualification or in the pursuit of an apprenticeship.

[View the specification online for Business](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Business](#)



Computer Science



Examination Board: OCR GCSE Computer Science

Course Code: J277

Subject Lead – Mrs K Caroe

Assessment Arrangements

Students are assessed through two written examinations.

Paper 1: Computer Systems (50% of marks) – 90 min written exam covering:

Systems architecture • Memory • Data representation • Storage • Wired/Wireless • Network topologies, protocols and layers • System security • System software • Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Paper 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming (50% of marks) – 90 min written exam covering:

Algorithms • Programming techniques • Producing robust programs • Computational logic • Translators and facilities of languages

Why Study This Course?

GCSE Computer Science develops your understanding of current and emerging technologies, how they work and applying this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts. You will use different programming languages to design, write and test computer programs to solve specific problems and develop a thorough theoretical understanding of Computing.

Course Outline

Computer Systems and Programming: Here you will look at how data input into a computer is handled and processed as well as Binary number systems and logic gates. Students will also explore the different types of memory and how it works and examine input, output, and storage devices in a computer system.

Progression Opportunities

GCSE Computer Science is excellent preparation for a Level 3 Computing /ICT course or an ICT Apprenticeships and there is a growing demand for ICT professionals who have programming skills.

[View the specification online for Computer Science](#)



Design and Technology



Examination Board: AQA GCSE Design & Technology

Course Code: 8552

Subject Lead – Mr S Hooker

Assessment Arrangements

Unit 1: Written Paper - 50%

Unit 2: Controlled Assessment - coursework practical project - 50%

Why Study This Course?

Design and Technology opens the door to a wide range of careers in the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. It is also excellent preparation for careers in many other fields e.g. medicine, law and computer science. The knowledge and skills you learn will be extremely valuable.

Course Outline

There will be a learning focus on the following:

Understanding who your product is for and how it will be used.

Clearly communicating your ideas.

Making high quality working prototypes (3D printing).

Learning about materials.

Analysing products – how they've been designed and made.

Learning how things work.

Evaluating your own and others' work.

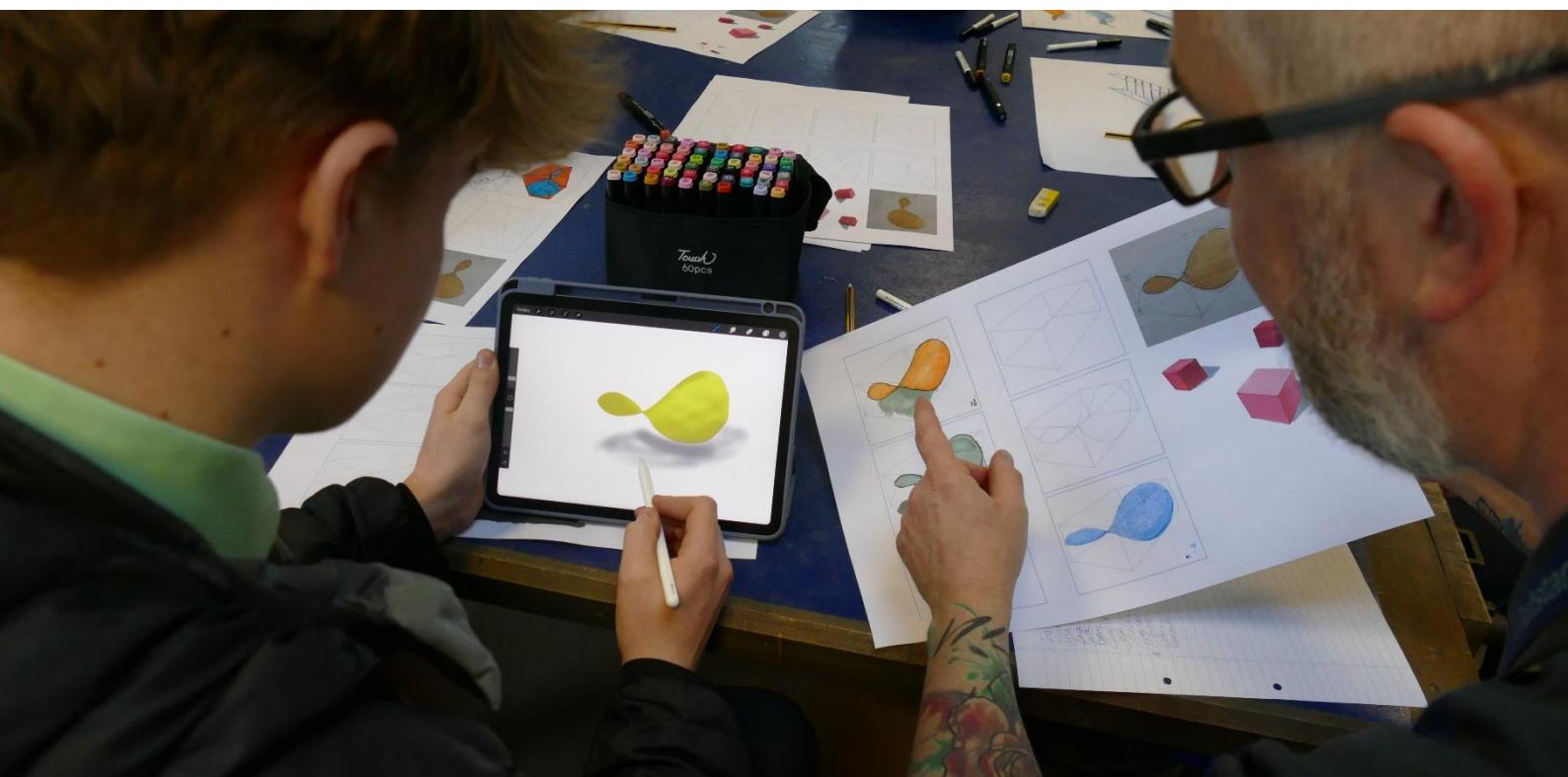
Progression Opportunities

As everything we use needs to be designed the job opportunities are vast. Some examples of careers are: Product Designer, Graphic Designer, Product Design Engineer, Interior Designer, Landscaper and Architect.

In recent years most students have gone on to study Engineering, Product Design and Furniture or Automotive Design.

[View the specification online for Design and Technology](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Design and Technology](#)



Drama



Examination Board: OCR GCSE 9-1 Drama

Course Code: J316

Subject Lead – Mr R Otton

Assessment Arrangements

Devising drama (creation of an original performance from a set stimulus)	30%
Performance of two sections of text (visiting examiner)	30%
Written examination (based on set text and live theatre review)	40%

Why Study This Course?

If you enjoy the way in which you learn in your drama lessons and like the challenge of creating performance in a variety of styles. If you are interested in the history of theatre and exploring how drama can develop your ideas within a range of different topics. This is an academic qualification and although lessons will be mainly practical there are coursework and written exam elements to the course. The course is a must for any student passionate about drama and being creative. A willingness to perform is a must for this option.

Course Outline

Throughout the two years students will:

- learn Theatre and its key practitioners.
- develop their practical understanding of how drama can communicate to a variety of audiences.
- evaluate live performances.
- analyse plays and use their knowledge of drama to develop a clear interpretation of a text.
- develop the skills needed to devise an original performance from a stimulus.
- understand the way structure, character, production values and dramatic techniques can impact on an audience.
- Develop and understanding of the role of actor, director and production designer

Progression Opportunities

GCSE Drama follows on from drama work undertaken in KS3. You will look at plays in more detail and look at ways of bringing a script alive on stage. It is proven that both business and law value drama as a qualification on a CV as it says a lot about a person's confidence and interpersonal skills.

The study of Drama can help you develop transferable skills which you can take into any career or job. It allows for developments in key skills such as leadership, communication, presentation, and the ability to develop ideas within a group.

Previous students have gone onto a number of different careers such as Acting, Directing, TV writing, Lighting Design, Law, Teaching, Playwrighting, Interior Design amongst others.

[View the specification online for Drama](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Drama](#)



Food Preparation & Nutrition



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 Food Preparation & Nutrition

Course Code: 8585

Subject Lead – Mrs H Lubbe

Assessment Arrangements

Written Paper	50% of total marks (1hr 45mins examination)
Coursework	50% of total marks comprising two tasks:
Coursework 1	(15%) Food Investigation - approx. 10 hrs.
Coursework 2	(35%) Food preparation assignment - approx. 20 hrs.

Why Study This Course?

The course will encourage students to develop a broad range of knowledge, understanding and technical skills related to food preparation and nutrition. As well as a wealth of progression opportunities, this course provides students with a crucial life skill.

Course Outline

This course includes a high percentage of practical cookery. It is essential that students have and continue to bring in correct equipment and ingredients.

The topics covered are: Food, Nutrition and Health, Food Safety, Food Science, Food Provenance, Food Choice.

Progression Opportunities

The food industry in the UK and Europe continues to expand (remaining one of the largest employers in the country), and there are many excellent career opportunities. Students can go to study Food Science and Nutrition at Key stage 5, and University courses such as Advanced Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Technology are possible advanced study routes.

[View the specification online for Food and Nutrition](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Food and Nutrition](#)



Geography – Facilitating Subject



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 Geography

Course Code: 8035

Subject Lead – Mr P Henstock

Assessment Arrangements

Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment:	90 min exam	35%
Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment:	90 min exam	35%
Paper 3: Geographical Applications, Issues and Fieldwork	90 min exam	30%

(Fieldwork will be examined as part of Paper 3 with visits to the North Wales coast and local area.)

Why Study This Course?

This exciting course deals with the major issues that face the world today. Including how different people around the world live and interact with their environment. It tackles crucial global themes including climate change, inequality, conservation, and economic development.

Course Outline

Paper 1: Natural Hazards - including earthquakes, volcanoes and hurricanes, climate change, the threat of rising sea levels and the use of the coast for leisure.
Ecosystems - the challenge of management and conservation.
Coastal and glacial landscapes.

Paper 2: Urban issues, planning, changing economic world and the challenge of resource management.

Paper 3: Questions will be based on your fieldwork investigation as well as decision making activities.

Progression Opportunities

Geographers make a great deal of use of transferable skills involving interpretation and analysis of information. Geography is a popular course of study at degree level and is in the top three subjects for graduate employment. Geography and History are both considered facilitating subjects by the Russell Group of top universities.

Geography is in the unique position of being classed as an Arts or Science subject at degree level.

Geography is an ideal option for students considering careers in Business, Law, Leisure and Tourism, Journalism, Publishing, Teaching, the Emergency Services, and the Civil Service.

[View the specification online for Geography](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Geography](#)



Health and Social Care



Examination Board: Pearson BTEC Tech Award Level 1/2 Health & Social Care

Course Code: 603/7047/6

Subject Lead – Mrs G Cawson

Assessment Arrangements

40% external assessment, 60% internally assessed coursework style components.

Why Study This Course?

This is an accessible and engaging course which allows students to study health and social care through a variety of vocational contexts. You will study human lifespan and development, health and social care settings, a variety of health conditions and the skills, attributes and values required to work in the care profession. Students will develop skills, knowledge, and vocational attributes with a person-centred approach.

Course Outline

No prior knowledge is required to study Health and Social Care at KS4. Learning will focus on the following:

Component 1: Human growth and development across life stages and the factors that affect it.

Component 2: Health and Social Care Services and Values

Component 3: Health and Wellbeing

Progression Opportunities

Successful students can progress onto study Level 3 Health & Social Care or other vocational qualifications. Level 3 vocational courses can prepare students for employment or apprenticeships in the healthcare sector or social care sector.

[View the specification online for Health and Social Care](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Health and Social Care](#)



History – Facilitating Subject



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 History

Course Code: 8145

Subject Lead – Mr B Hodgeman

Assessment Arrangements

Exam Paper 1: Germany 1890-1945 and The Cold War in Asia 1950-1975 (50%) – 2 hrs

Exam Paper 2: Health and the People and Norman England 1066-1100 (50%) – 2 hrs

Why Study This Course?

History is about real people, the lives of whom were altered by the events of the world around them. The course challenges students on many issues throughout history, and at the same time requires them to think independently and critically about the world around them. Students will have the opportunity to study a variety of sources and interpretations, and they will become skilled in the understanding of historical problems where interpretations often differ. Many professions demand the skills developed in History.

Course Outline

Paper 1: Germany 1890-1945: Democracy and Dictatorship – a study on the changing nature of life in Germany, from the Kaiser to democracy to the Nazi regime

Paper 1: The Cold War in Asia 1950-1975 – studying the Korean and Vietnam wars during the Cold War, from American involvement to Communist opposition.

Paper 2: Health and the People: 1000-present – a thematic study on how medical knowledge and treatments have changed over time.

Paper 2: Norman England: 1066-1100 – a study of how William the Conqueror won power, then changed England to increase his control over the Anglo-Saxons.

Progression Opportunities

History is recognised by employers as a subject where students display high order skills. History is considered a facilitating subject by the Russell Group in terms of future applications to top universities. Former History students have gone on to careers in law, accountancy, business management, the police, retail training schemes, journalism, and broadcasting.

[View the specification online for History](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for History](#)



ICT



Examination Board: WJEC Level 1 or 2 Vocational Award in ICT

Course Code: 5539

Subject Lead – Mrs K Caroe

The qualification in ICT will improve knowledge about ICT and develop your confidence in using specific programs. You will learn about data management, how ICT is used in business and creation of an automated document.

Assessment Arrangements

There are two assessments - an externally assessed exam at the end of the course, and an extended piece of controlled assessment.

Why Study This Course?

If you are creative and enjoy your ICT lessons in Year 9 then this course will appeal to you. You will enjoy studying a subject, which is relevant to your own lives and experiences, and enjoy finding out your own answers – not just being taught! You will develop valuable ICT skills, which will be useful at home, in other subjects, in business and industry – whilst keeping your career options open.

Course Outline

During Year 10 you will develop skills to be able to approach the practical part of the course in Year 11. This will include spreadsheets, databases, Word documents and Photoshop. We will develop your existing knowledge from Key Stage 3 and progress this further. The controlled assessment is a 40-hour piece of work over a few weeks. We will also develop your theoretical knowledge during Year 10, and revisit this in Year 11 for you to succeed in the written exam.

Progression Opportunities

This course provides an excellent basis for further study of ICT and is a definite pathway to our L3 BTEC in IT which we offer in Year 12 and 13. It also provides a firm foundation for many other courses such as Media/Film Studies and Business Studies. The course has a strong emphasis on creativity and ideas and inspiration is a must, but also engages with the technical elements of applications which can be useful in further study (in any field) or in employment.

[View the specification online for ICT](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for ICT](#)





Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

– Facilitating Subject



French & Spanish



Examination Board: Edexcel GCSE French / GCSE Spanish

Course Code: 1FR1 / 1SP1

Subject Lead – Mrs C Bainbridge

Assessment Arrangements

Unit 1 Listening / Dictation	25%	Unit 3 Reading	25%
Unit 2 Speaking / Reading aloud	25%	Unit 4 Writing	25%
100% exam in Year 11. No controlled assessment.			

Why Study This Course?

We live in a multilingual, global society and the ability to communicate in a foreign language will stand you apart from others, broaden your horizons and open many doors for your future. This course will allow you to improve your communication skills, your understanding of grammar and to develop your linguistic ability. This course also aids an appreciation and respect of other cultures. Even if you are not considering a career in languages at this stage, some universities are requiring a GCSE in a language for courses such as medicine and who knows where life will take you?

Course Outline

The specification covers the following themes and sub-topics related to France/Spain and French/Spanish speaking countries:

- My personal world
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- My neighbourhood
- Media and Technology
- Studying and future plans
- Travel and Tourism

Progression Opportunities

A qualification in a Modern Foreign Language is very desirable. A modern language is extremely beneficial when linked to degrees such as Law, Journalism or Marketing and is a complimentary subject for many A Level courses. Languages are considered as facilitating subjects by the Russell Group.

Employers are very impressed by the ability to speak a Modern Foreign Language as it demonstrates a degree of discipline, resilience, and open-mindedness. Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages are even more important and are highly desirable, opening up no end of career opportunities. In a recent survey among British businesses, Spanish and French language skills were deemed to be the most useful, and surveys of past language graduates show they have a higher earning capacity and employability.

[View the specification online for French and Spanish](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for French and Spanish](#)

Music Practice



Examination Board: Edexcel BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice Level 1/ 2

Course Code: C660QS

Subject Lead – Mrs C Hynes

Assessment Arrangements

Component 1: Exploring Musical Styles	30%
Component 2: Music Skills Development	30%
Component 3: Responding to a commercial music brief	40%

Why Study This Course?

Music is ever-present in all our lives and the study of it is a rewarding and enriching experience. Music is constantly evolving, inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. Students will study a range of musical genres through practical activities, listening and composition tasks. We aim to broaden students' minds and foster a lifelong love of all music.

Course Outline

Component 1: Exploring music products and style (*internally assessed assignments*)

- Explore five musical styles
 - Pop Music - 1960s to present day
 - World Music
 - Music for media
 - Western Classical Tradition
 - Jazz and Blues

Component 2: Music skills development (*internally assessed assignments*)

- Develop personal and musical skills ready for the music industry
- Apply these skills to music products to evidence your development

Component 3: Responding to a commercial music brief (*20 hours project, externally assessed*)

- Students are given a choice of four genres and 10 tracks. Their task is to create a cover using one of the given genres and tracks within the 20-hour creation time.

Progression Opportunities

Music has obvious relevance in its own field and that of associated careers such as the theatre, television, and radio. As a rigorous intellectual discipline, it will give an entrée into a very wide range of professional and managerial careers.

[View the specification online for Music Practice](#)



Photography



Examination Board: Eduqas GCSE 9-1 Art & Design Photography

Course Code: C656QS

Subject Lead – Mrs L Willingham

Assessment Arrangements

The course offers the opportunity to complete a range of coursework projects and one exam project. The coursework is worth 60% of the grade and the exam component is worth 40%.

Why Study This Course?

Learning about photography will develop students' creative skills as well as their thinking and processing skills. Students must be interested in taking photographs of a variety of subject matter, including portraits.

Course Outline

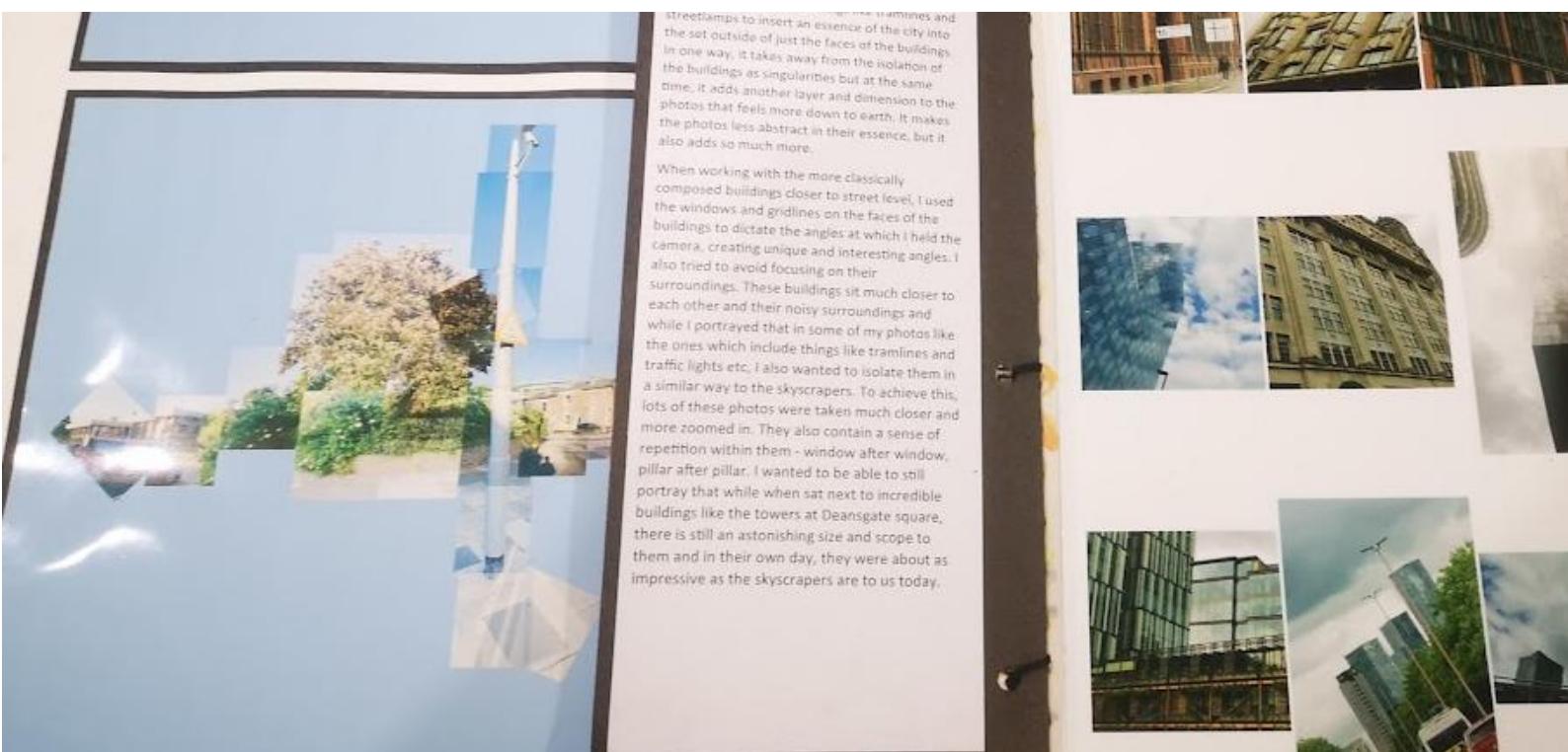
Coursework is completed throughout the course and involves working with digital cameras and graphic editing apps including Adobe Photoshop to produce photographic imagery. Through research and analysis students will work in a sketchbook to gain valuable insight into how photographers and artists work. From their research students will develop their own ideas and produce a personal response to their studies.

Throughout the course students will be taught to experiment with composition, studio lighting, cameras and editing. As part of the course, students are expected to take photographs in a variety of settings, including open-air locations that will link to your research, analysis, and artists. You may be instructed to search out suitable settings/locations for photographs outside of school in your own time. Organised trips to varied locations will be a part of the course allowing for further personal development and experimentation.

Progression Opportunities

This course provides a suitable foundation for the study of Art and Design with Photography at A level.

[View the specification online for Photography](#)



Psychology



Examination Board: AQA GCSE Psychology 9-1

Course Code: 8182

Subject Lead – Mrs G Cawson

Assessment Arrangements

Paper 1: 1 hr 45 min 50% of the qualification
Paper 2: 1 hr 45 min 50% of the qualification

Each paper will include multiple-choice, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Why Study This Course?

It is one of the most fascinating sciences of the 21st century. You will learn to appreciate that there are often multiple explanations for why people behave in the way they do. Psychology has a multitude of real-world applications and it's very useful. If we know enough about the way humans work, we can intervene and reduce problems, such as mental illness, aggression, and addictions.

Course Outline

Paper 1 includes:

- ⇒ Perception
- ⇒ Memory
- ⇒ Development
- ⇒ Research methods

Paper 2 includes:

- ⇒ Social influence
- ⇒ Thought, language and communication
- ⇒ Brain and neuropsychology
- ⇒ Psychological problems

Progression Opportunities

GCSE Psychology offers the opportunity for study at A level and beyond. A qualification in Psychology will equip you with transferrable skills suited for a range of occupational settings and it links well to nursing, childcare, police, social work, army, and counselling.

[View the specification online for Psychology](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Psychology](#)



Physical Education



Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 Physical Education

Course Code: 8582

Subject Lead – Mr A Mitchell

Assessment Arrangements

Paper 1:	75 min exam	78 marks	30%
Paper 2:	75 min exam	78 marks	30%
Practical:	3 sports + analysis & evaluation	100 marks	40%

Why Study This Course?

You will enjoy high level teaching and learning across a variety of aspects of physical education, including physiology, psychology, physical training, and health and wellbeing. You can also enhance your practical performance in a number of sports and develop an ability to analyse and evaluate your own and others performance in your chosen sport.

Course Outline

The course breakdown is as follows:

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.

Applied anatomy and physiology, Movement analysis, Physical training, Use of data

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.

Sports psychology, Socio-cultural influences, Health, fitness and well-being, Use of data

Practical performance in physical activity and sport.

As a performer in 3 different activities, plus - Written/verbal analysis & evaluation of performance

Progression Opportunities

This course is beneficial for those students who wish to go into careers such as sports science, sports psychology, physiotherapy, leisure management and teaching to name a few. The course gives students an excellent basis for continued study at Sixth Form and further potential access to undergraduate university courses.

[View the specification online for Physical Education](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Physical Education](#)



Separate Science – Facilitating Subject

Examination Board: AQA GCSE 9-1 in Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Course Codes: Biology 8461, Chemistry 8462, Physics 8463

Subject Lead – Dr C Toczyski

Assessment Arrangements

This option leads to three separate GCSE grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (compared to a double grade for Combined Science). Students will sit six 1hr 45min examination papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Students will either study the foundation tier (grades from 1 to 5) or the higher tier (grades from 4 to 9). The tier will be specific to each subject.

Course Outline

Although the GCSE Combined Science courses prepare you for further scientific study at A-level, we also offer the Separate Science option route which is a good choice if you have a particular enthusiasm and aptitude for Science. If you opt for Separate Science over Combined Science there will be more lessons given to the subject, which allows us to study concepts to a greater depth and develop additional practical skills. In biology these topics include further detail on the human body such as the structure and function of the brain, the eye, and the kidneys. In Chemistry there is more emphasis on chemical analysis of compounds, the structure and reactions of organic molecules and additional quantitative analysis. In Physics there is an additional topic on space and the universe.

Progression Opportunities

Both science routes provide an excellent grounding in science, leading to KS5 courses including A-Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

[View the specification online for Biology, Chemistry, Physics](#)

[Recommended Revision Guide for Biology, Chemistry, Physics](#)



Careers Advice

Careers Lead – Mrs S Brickhill

The Bishops' Blue Coat High School holds the Quality in Careers Standard award which is a highly prestigious national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance in schools, colleges and work-based learning. Following on from careers work in years 7 and 8, we are committed to helping students with their GCSE option choices and providing a full and varied careers programme to help inform their decisions.

We provide:

Year 9

- Careers lessons during LIFE lessons
- Unifrog careers platform along with guidance on how to connect interests to specific careers
- Employer assemblies and engagement
- Specialist career lessons during assemblies
- Careers guidance from an independent careers advisor at year 9 options evening

Year 10 and beyond

- Guest speakers from a range of occupations
- One to one interview with a senior member of staff to discuss post 16 options
- Mock interview
- Regular interaction with local colleges and apprenticeship providers
- Careers appointment with an independent career's advisor
- Careers lessons during Personal Development Day
- Compulsory work experience

Students are reminded that they can help themselves by

- Looking out for open days and careers events advertised on Satchel One
- Using Unifrog to record all activities and search for relevant career
- Talking about your career ideas to your teachers who can help support you in your next steps

Some useful websites:

bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers

unifrog.org

careerpilot.org.uk



Frequently Asked Questions

Who should help students make their choices?

- Your parents / carers ... who know you best as a person
- Your form tutors ... who know you and your strengths in the school
- Your subject teachers ... who know your capabilities within a subject
- Careers Advisor ... who can give you information about job/career routes

Do students have a totally free choice for option courses?

All students will be able to make choices from the courses available in this guide. At least one of these choices must be a facilitating subject – these are subjects which are most likely to be required or preferred by universities and will facilitate entry to Level 3 studies. Students can select more than one of these subjects if they wish to.

Some subjects cannot be studied together such as Art & Photography or Computer Science and ICT.

How should students make their choices?

- Read this guide
- Talk to your teachers at parents' evening
- Listen to the information presented during the options process
- Think about your strengths and weaknesses

Will I get my first choice?

Whilst we do our very best to accommodate all student choices, there will be occasions when this is not possible. Most courses have maximum and minimum numbers and we do have to consider health and safety regulations in some specialist subjects. Due to these constraints, it is not always possible to timetable every possible combination of chosen courses. This is why we ask students to choose four subjects to aid our planning, even though they will only study three of them. If the first three subjects cannot be accommodated, the fourth will automatically be selected to replace one of the others, starting with the lowest priority subject. In the rare event that it is still not possible to allocate three of the four subjects, students will be contacted by Mr Close to discuss further options. If you would like to discuss any concerns regarding this process, please contact your child's form tutor, Year 9 pastoral team or Mr Close via email. The confirmation of subject option choices will be sent to students in due course.

Will I have homework?

All subjects will set homework. Students should complete homework to the best of their ability and submit it by the deadline set. Homework time should also be used to independently review work on a regular basis in order to prepare for assessments.

How much curriculum time will I spend on each subject?

Option subjects will have 5 lessons per fortnight in Year 10 and 6 lessons per fortnight in year 11.

