



OLA
OUR LADY'S
ABINGDON

GCSE / IGCSE
Information booklet
2024—2026



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Introduction

This information is all about your curriculum for the next two years when you are in Years 10 and 11. It describes what the school enables you to do, how this has developed from Year 7, and how it will lead you into OLA 6th and the future.

The past

In Years 7–9, you have studied many compulsory subjects and had a limited choice over other studies. A few subjects have been taught in parallel with each other which has ensured that you know what they are all about. This has provided the chance to experience many different courses of study which will help you to make choices now.

Years 10 and 11

These are the years in which you will be studying GCSE courses and it is hoped that you will achieve your potential in many subjects at GCSE level. OLA provides a wider range of courses of study because we believe in a broad curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils. Therefore, you will eventually have to make choices about what to 'take' and what to 'drop'. Nevertheless, the school still believes that a broad and balanced education is essential and so some subjects have been designated as a compulsory core for everyone. This means that you will be able to choose three subjects from a list of 13 options.

We are proud of the varied choices that we have available for you. However, it is essential that you realise how we make a timetable from all the choices listed. Like every other school, we group option subjects together into blocks from which you will be asked to select only one subject per block. So, if there are two or three subjects you want to do in the same block you will only be able to take one of them. Now, you can see that the combination of subjects in each block is quite important. For this reason, we are not giving you the blocks now. Instead, we are asking you to give us ideas of the subjects that you think you would like to study. The subject blocks will be created after we have had your ideas in the hope that we can adapt them to suit your needs. This is the start of the process that will eventually give you the chance to choose your three optional subjects for the next two years. You are just giving your ideas at this stage and you will be asked to make your final choice once blocks are published later this year. Do read all the information in this booklet because this is an important time for you.

After all pupils have submitted their initial ideas, it may become clear that there are only a few wanting to study a particular subject and, as a result, we may need to change that option. This is another reason why you are advised to list four choices now – three choices plus a reserve.

The future

At the end of Year 11 you should have a good set of examination results because pupils at OLA have consistently managed this in the past. Therefore, during Year 11, you will be given another booklet like this one about the subjects available in the Sixth Form and you will find an even greater choice available to you. This means that your experiences now in the transition to Year 10 will be valuable preparation for the time after GCSEs, whatever course of action you choose to follow.

Abbreviations used in this booklet

AQA is the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

CIE is the Cambridge International Examination.

IGCSE is the International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

OCR stands for Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations.

Ofqual is the Office for Qualifications and Examinations Regulation.

Pearson is the company behind one of the main Awarding Bodies; they still use the name Edexcel for some of their materials.

WJEC is the Welsh Joint Education Committee and EDUQAS is the part of WJEC that produces examinations for use in England.



General information

Most pupils are expected to study at least nine GCSE subjects and to keep a balanced programme of education that best prepares them for the future; the following subjects are compulsory:

1. English: Language and Literature
2. Mathematics
3. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) including Careers (not examined)
4. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (not examined)
5. Physical Education and Games (not examined)
6. Religious Studies
7. Science subjects (Combined Science or Separate Sciences)

Even though these subjects are compulsory it is worth reading the details about them in this booklet because the precise course of study can vary from pupil to pupil according to individual ability and aptitude. Another three subjects will come from the list below. The option blocks will be decided following your ideas for subjects that you may want to study. We will do everything possible to satisfy your initial ideas but this is not always achievable.

- Art and Design: Fine Art
- Art and Design: Textiles Design
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Food and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Spanish

In the sections that follow you will find advice about this process from the Careers Advisor and details of all subjects that you may study arranged in alphabetical order. If you need more advice and help, your Form Teacher, Head of Section, Careers Advisor, or other members of staff will be happy to discuss your ideas for subjects. Once you have your initial ideas for subjects, please complete the form in the back of this booklet.

Faculties

Subjects
Maths & Computer Science
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Academic PE)
Creative Arts (Academic Music, Art, Design Technology, Food & Textiles)
Humanities (Business, Economics, Geography, History and Psychology)
English (Drama and Film & Media)
Languages (French, Spanish and Classics)
Religious Studies (PSHE, RSE and Chaplaincy)

Careers advice

It is widely agreed that it is essential to follow a broadly-based course of study so that you gain a balanced education and can remain flexible in the future. However, should you already have any particular career interests, you need to ensure that you choose a subject combination which will be helpful to you. This can be discussed with subject teachers and the Head of Careers.

In Year 9 PSHEE lessons, you have already looked at different careers on the Morrisby website based on the aspirations questionnaire that you answered, and have thought about what careers you might be interested in over the next few years. It is important that you revisit the Morrisby website to do some further research on your possible career paths, subject choices and qualifications required. You can only make good choices for the future if you have the necessary information and guidance. The Careers Library, situated at the back of the main library, is always open for you to browse and research different GCSE and A-Level courses as well as job opportunities and careers. If you cannot find what you are looking for then please ask.

During your option preparation you will receive guidance on how to search for information and make decisions.

As part of the continuing provision at school to help you with your career choices you will complete a set of assessment tests at the end of Year 10 which are all part of the Morrisby programme. The results of these tests will be explained in a report which you can download. At the start of Year 11 you will receive some guidance from a Morrisby careers adviser who will help to interpret your assessment results and suggest career avenues for you. You will be given more details about this when you are in Year 10.

In Year 10 you will also be invited to attend our Careers Convention which is held annually in conjunction with Abingdon School and St Helen and St Katharine. Do make sure you take advantage of all these opportunities as they will help with future career decision making.

Selecting your GCSE courses

Try to:

- Select subjects which you enjoy studying
- Select subjects at which you are successful or in which you think you may be interested
- Select subjects which will help you towards any career ambitions
- Ask your parents and teachers for advice
- Read through this booklet carefully
- Find out all you can about the subjects

Try not to:

- Select a subject because your friend is doing it
- Select a subject because you like the teacher. You may have a different teacher next year
- Worry about making your decisions. If you have concerns, discuss them with your parents, teachers, Careers Advisor, Form Teacher or Head of Section



Art and Design: Fine Art

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Code: 8202

Introduction

Art and Design is a two-year course. It offers a broad base of study in which you will have the opportunity to experience drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media and ceramics. You will be working from a variety of stimuli, combining direct observation with art historical reference. Independent research is encouraged through the development of personal sketchbooks that record contextual information and the progression of visual ideas. Emphasis on developing drawing skills will be at the heart of the course. It is the intention that you can sample the variety of ways of exploring a given subject matter while building on individual strengths. This variety should be integral to the making process and be demonstrated in each pupil's visual response. Such a course will provide you with a stronger sense of self-confidence and a greater sense of visual awareness.

It is a demanding yet extremely rewarding course that is in no way exclusively intended for those pupils with natural flair and ability towards the subject or exclusively for those intending to pursue art to Advanced Level. All prospective candidates are, therefore, welcome but expectations are high with enthusiasm and commitment being the major prerequisites.

Assessment

Portfolio: (60% of the final grade)

Two to three units of 'coursework' are assessed

Externally Set Assignment: (40% of the final grade)

A ten-hour controlled test

Component 1: Portfolio

The content of the portfolio will be determined by the particular requirements and nature of the course of study undertaken. There is no restriction on the scale of work, media or materials used. Each pupil must select and present a portfolio representative of their course of study. The portfolio must include both:

1. A sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief evidencing the journey from initial engagement with an idea(s) to the realisation of intentions. This will give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate, through an extended creative response, their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across their course of study.

2. A selection of further work resulting from activities such as trials and experiments; skills-based workshops; mini and/or foundation projects; responses to gallery, museum or site visits; work placements; independent study and evidence of the pupil's specific role in any group work undertaken. The work submitted for this component will be marked as a whole. Pupils should carefully select, organise and present their portfolio and must ensure that it provides evidence of meeting all four assessment objectives. They must identify and acknowledge sources which are not their own and provide evidence of drawing activity and written annotation.

Work selected for the portfolio should be presented in an appropriate format and could include: mounted studies, sketchbooks, visual diaries, journals, design sheets, design proposals, models, maquettes, prototypes, storyboards, video, photographic or digital presentations, records of transient and site-specific installations.

Component 2: Externally set assignment

AQA will provide a separate externally set assignment for each title, each with seven different starting points. Pupils must select and respond to one starting point from their chosen title. The externally set assignment provides pupils with the opportunity to demonstrate, through an extended creative response, their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding in response to their selected starting point.

The extended creative response must explicitly evidence pupils' ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skill and/or understanding from initial engagement with their selected starting point through to their realisation of intentions in the ten hours of supervised time. Pupils must ensure that the total submission for Component 2 evidences coverage of all four assessment objectives and evidence of drawing activity and written annotation. Pupils must identify and acknowledge sources which are not their own. Externally set assignments will be available to pupils and teachers from 2 January in Year 11. A preparation period, which can begin on or after 2 January, is followed by ten hours of supervised unaided work in which pupils are required to realise their intentions.

Art and Design: Textiles Design

Awarding Body: OCR

Specification code: J174

Introduction

Art and Design: Textiles Design, is an exciting course that allows pupils to further develop the skills they have already begun to acquire during Years 7 to 9. They will have the opportunity to be creative and develop a range of designs and products using fabrics. Pupils will foster a deeper understanding of fibres, yarns and fabrics through the application of a wide range of techniques and processes. Pupils will explore the work of both historical and contemporary textile designers and artists and analyse their work to inspire their own ideas. Throughout their work pupils will constantly evaluate their processes and refine their concepts as their projects develop.

Course components

- **Constructed textiles**
- **Digital textiles**
- Dyed fabrics
- Printed fabrics
- **Fashion design**
- Installed textiles
- Soft furnishings
- **Stitched and/or embellished textiles**

Currently we explore the areas highlighted in **bold text**, however this is not exclusive and pupils are able to develop their own projects in any direction they deem appropriate.

A number of core activities are explored throughout the course. Pupils will use drawing as a tool to present their ideas, however, this can take the form of fashion sketches (using body templates), stitched sketches, digital sketches or collage. The course does not require you to be an outstanding artist.

Assessment

OCR's GCSE in Art and Design: Textiles Design consists of two components.

Component 1

Pupils must produce work in response to a centre or learner-set starting point, brief, scenario or stimulus and carry out a portfolio of practical work based on this brief. This work will be presented as a portfolio and will comprise of a selection of the pupil's best work from various projects over the two-year course.

This component is a non-examination assessment (NEA). It is internally assessed and externally moderated using the marking criteria set out by the awarding body. This component is marked out of 120 and contributes 60% to the overall mark in Art and Design: Textiles Design.

Component 2

This is an externally set task based on an early release paper which will be issued to all pupils on the 2 January in the year of certification.

Pupils will be provided with five themes each with written and visual starting points or stimuli. From these, one option must be selected by each pupil and they will then use this theme as the basis for their personal response.

Pupils will have a number of weeks to prepare for the externally set task which will be completed in a ten-hour supervised practical examination in the spring. The externally set task is internally assessed and then externally moderated using the marking criteria set out by the awarding body.

This component is marked out of 80 and contributes 40% to the overall mark in Art and Design: Textiles Design.

Progression

This course leads perfectly into an A-Level in Textiles Design and is a good grounding for a range of fashion and textiles based degree courses.

Computer Science

Awarding Body: AQA Specification

Specification code: 8525

Introduction

AQA GCSE Computer Science is a demanding yet rewarding course. It helps pupils develop their understanding of the mathematical principles behind modern digital technology. Problem solving is at the core of the course: pupils analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing, and evaluating programs.

Course content

- Practical programming in Python
- Algorithms: searching, sorting, data compression
- Binary and hexadecimal arithmetic
- Mathematical representation of text, images, and sounds
- Computer architecture and logic circuits
- Fundamentals of computer networks
- Relational databases and structured query language
- Elements of cyber security
- Ethical and legal issues related to digital technology

Assessment

The course is assessed by two written papers with no coursework component.

Paper 1: (Computational Thinking and Programming Skills) tests computational thinking, code tracing, problem solving and programming. Some questions involve writing code in Python on paper during the examination.

Paper 2: (Computing Concepts) tests theoretical knowledge and includes a mix of short answer, long answer and multiple-choice questions, mathematical tasks and extended response questions involving writing SQL code on paper.

Design and Technology

Awarding Body: Pearson Edexcel

Specification Code: 1DT0

Introduction

Design and Technology is about designing and making things that work well. It is inventive and fun. The subject allows you to look to the future, be creative and innovative and create new products. Pupils will draw upon a wide range of knowledge to solve problems in relevant real-life contexts and make decisions that matter to the users of the products and to the wider community.

The course will foster awareness amongst pupils of the need to consider sustainability and the environmental impact of their designs and products. Design and Technology informs pupils of further learning opportunities and career choices. The subject can lead to a whole variety of careers, such as:

- Engineering (all types)
- Architecture
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Product Design
- Project Management
- Graphic Design
- Computer Aided Design
- Materials Science
- Jewellery Design

This specification has been designed to encourage pupils to design and make products with creativity and originality using a range of materials and techniques. Materials for study include paper/card, woods, plastics and metals, new and smart materials and can also include electronics. Not only does the subject encourage creativity but it also provides opportunity for personal development. It teaches pupils to work independently and to become problem solvers and self-organisers.

Packaging, labelling and instructions are encouraged as part of the complete design proposal and advertising can be used to supplement the making experience and help create products which can be evaluated for their commercial viability.

Homework

Homework will be set each week and may involve theory and/or practical tasks.

Assessment

Pupils are assessed by an examination and a non-examination assessment (NEA).

Examination

There is a single tiered written paper for 50% of the total marks. The paper has two sections and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes. The paper consists of two sections:

Section A assesses the core content and Section B assesses timbers (1DTO/1F).

Section A: The Core, carries 40 marks and includes a mixture of different question styles such as open-response, graphical, calculation and extended answers. There will be ten marks for calculation questions in this section.

Section B: Material categories, carries 60 marks and contains the mixture of question types found in section A. There will be five marks for calculation questions in this section.

Non-examination assessment (NEA)

The non-examination assessment (NEA) is 50% of the marks and 30 to 35 hours of work are devoted to it. This assessment has four parts based on four processes: Investigation, Design, Making and Evaluating.

Pupils will produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence for the NEA. In the portfolio, photographs will show the finished product and the various stages of the process to demonstrate how ideas have developed.

Drama

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Code: 8261

Introduction

This specification engages and encourages pupils to become confident performers and designers with the skills they need for a bright and successful future. All pupils devise drama, explore texts practically and work on two text-based performances.

Pupils can choose to develop as a:

- Performer
- Designer (lighting, sound, set, costume, puppets)
- Performer and designer

Whichever option they choose, pupils can be sure to gather many invaluable skills, both theatrical and transferable, to expand their horizons.

Assessment

Component 1: Understanding Drama

Written examination (40% of the final grade):

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of one set play from a choice of six
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

Component 2: Devising Drama

Practical/written (40% of the final grade):

- Process of creating devised drama
- Performance of devised drama
- Analysis and evaluation of their own work

Component 3: Texts in Practice

Practical (20% of the final grade):

- Performance of two extracts from one play (pupils may contribute as performer or designer)

English Language IGCSE

Awarding Body: Pearson Edexcel

Specification Code: 4EA1

Introduction

The study of the English language as a medium of communication, understanding and self-expression is one of the most important subjects on the school curriculum, underpinning all others. English is also a vital qualification for entry to further and higher education and employment.

Assessment

Written examination: (60% of the final grade)

Questions on non-fiction texts, both from an anthology you have studied and unseen, will test your ability to read with insight and engagement. A further question will require you to write clearly and appropriately for a specific purpose and readers.

Coursework: (40% of the final grade)

During the course you will produce pieces of personal and imaginative writing and analytical essays demonstrating your response to a topic and range of texts.

English Literature IGCSE

Awarding Body: Pearson Edexcel

Specification Code: 4ET1

Introduction

The study of English literature fosters the skill and understanding to:

- Develop and sustain independent interpretations of texts, supported with detailed textual references
- Analyse connections between texts, comparing features and qualities that connect and contrast the presentation of themes, characters and settings
- Analyse the impact of style, language, structure and form
- Relate texts to their social and historical contexts, and to the literary traditions to which they belong

Assessment

Written examination: Poetry and Prose (60% of the final grade)

- You will answer one question on a modern unseen poem and one question comparing two poems from an anthology you have studied.
- You will also answer a question on a modern prose text. You will not be able to take your text into the examination but will need to learn quotations to support your ideas.

Coursework: (40% of the final grade)

- You will complete one assignment based on a modern drama text.
- You will complete one assignment on a literary heritage text, i.e. one of the famous classics of English literature by Shakespeare, Jane Austen or Dickens.

Pupils usually buy their own copies of texts so that they may make notes in them.

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Awarding body: AQA

Introduction

GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition will equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and to apply the principles of food science, nutrition, and healthy eating. Studying this course allows students to make informed decisions about food and nutrition both now and later in life, as well as understand the huge challenges that are faced globally to supply the world with nutritious and safe food.

Subject content – What is covered?

Food preparation skills are integrated into the following topics:

- Food, Nutrition and Health – macro nutrients, micro nutrients, nutritional needs and health
- Food Science – cooking of food, heat transfer, the functional and chemical properties of food
- Food Safety – food spoilage, contamination, and the principles of food safety
- Food Choice – factors affecting food choice, British and international cuisines, sensory evaluation
- Food Provenance – environmental impact and sustainability of food, food processing and production

Assessment

Component 1 – Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of qualification

This component will consist of two sections and will assess the six areas of content as listed in the specified GCSE content.

Section A: Questions based on multiple choice

Section B: Structured, short and extended response questions to assess content related to food preparation and nutrition

Component 2 – Food Preparation and Nutrition in Action

Non-examination assessment (NEA): Internally assessed, externally moderated

Assessment 1: The Food Investigation Assessment

Students will carry out a series of scientific food investigations which will assess the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food.

Assessment 2: The Food Preparation Assessment

Students will prepare, cook and present a menu which will assess the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding, in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food.

Further information

Lessons will be a mix of theory and practical. Pupils will be required to bring in their own ingredients for practical sessions, this will likely be on a weekly basis in Year 10 and less frequent in Year 11.

Geography

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Code: 8035

Introduction

Geography suits people who are interested in the human and physical characteristics of a place, how they are changing and how different places and people interact. We work with a variety of case studies which will leave you with a better understanding of the issues that face people both in the UK and around the world. The case studies are 'real life' examples which help you to understand how the environment works. Examples may come from DVDs, the internet, books and newspapers. The case studies are taken from a variety of scales and in different environments.

Specification at a glance

- **Living with the physical environment**
Section A: The challenge of natural hazards
Section B: Physical landscapes in the UK
Section C: The living world
- **Challenges in the human environment**
Section A: Urban issues and challenges
Section B: The changing economic world
Section C: The challenge of resource management
- **Geographical applications**
Section A: Issue evaluation
Section B: Fieldwork
- **Geographical skills**

Assessment

Paper 1

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
88 marks (including 3 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology (SPGST))
35% of GCSE

Questions

Section A: Answer all questions (33 marks)
Section B: Answer any two from questions 2, 3 and 4 (30 marks)
Section C: Answer question 5 and one from questions 6 and 7 (25 marks)
Question types: Multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

Paper 2

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
88 marks (including 3 marks for SPGST)
35% of GCSE

Questions

Section A: Answer all questions (33 marks)
Section B: Answer all questions (30 marks)
Section C: Answer question 3 and one from questions 4, 5 or 6 (25 marks)
Question types: Multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

Paper 3

Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes
76 marks (including 6 marks for SPGST)
30% of GCSE
Pre-release resources made available from 15 March in the year of the examination

Questions

Section A: Answer all questions (37 marks)
Section B: Answer all questions (39 marks)
Question types: Multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

History IGCSE

Awarding Body: CAIE

Specification Code: 0977

Introduction

IGCSE History suits people who are interested in finding out about the past, have enquiring, analytical minds, enjoy problem-solving and are willing to discuss and share ideas in lessons.

Course outline

The IGCSE course is focused on 20th Century International Relations. The legacy of the First World War and the Versailles settlement, the League of Nations, Weimar Germany, the rise of Hitler and the outbreak of the Second World War form the basis of work in Year 10. In Year 11 pupils investigate life in Nazi Germany before the focus moves on to events after the end of the Second World War: the origins and events of the Cold War, including Churchill's 'iron curtain' speech, the Truman Doctrine, Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War.

Pupils develop an understanding of cause and effect, continuity and change, similarity and difference and develop their critical reading and communication skills.

Assessment

Paper 1: 'The 20th century: International Relations since 1919' and 'Depth Study B: Germany, 1918–45', 40%, examined at the end of Year 11

Paper 2: 'The 20th century: International Relations since 1919: historical enquiry', 33%, examined at the end of Year 11

Paper 3: Coursework (to focus on an aspect of the history of Germany 1918–45), 27%. Coursework will be started at the end of Year 10 and completed early in Year 11

In studying History you learn useful skills for the future:

- History involves learning to make accurate judgements about sources, detecting bias and unreliability and deciding whether the sources support a conclusion or not. These are valuable skills for further academic study and employment. They also underpin citizenship, providing pupils with an early opportunity to form conclusions based on evaluation of the available evidence.

- History involves presenting your ideas clearly and with evidence to back them up. You will continue to practise organising ideas and using facts to make a case. Pupils will have the opportunity to develop their skills of written and oral communication.
- History involves both creative and logical thinking, so it appeals equally if you are imaginative and like offering interesting perceptions or if you are more scientific and like thinking critically.
- History prepares you well for lots of careers – in law, broadcasting, the media, journalism and finance for example.

Summary

Lessons are stimulating, with a lot of discussion, debate and group work as you investigate, develop your ideas and then use them in written work or in presentations to the class. We use written sources, visual material, documentaries and feature films to develop understanding of the different units. Historians fast become independent, reflective and empathetic learners.

Latin

Awarding Body: OCR

Specification Code: J282

Introduction

Latin GCSE fosters and tests two kinds of skill. The first is the ability to understand the way the Latin language works in order to translate fluently from Latin to English and even to write very simple sentences in accurate Latin, with all the endings correct. In order to master this skill, you will continue to learn new grammar, work through exercises and translate stories, just as you do now. OCR supplies a list of all the vocabulary you need to know.

More excitingly, you will tackle an increasing amount of 'real' Latin written over two thousand years ago by real Romans. You will soon be able to read, enjoy and respond perceptively and critically to different kinds of Latin literature. This is the second skill and will be similar to the way in which you study English texts for English Literature IGCSE.

Building on the skills you will be developing this year to gain your Latin Entry Level Certificate, you will look at the different ways in which Latin can convey passion, anger, excitement or distress, how it can present a character, describe a vivid scene, or make you think about something in a different way.

For the GCSE examination itself you will study two set texts in detail through class translation, background research and plenty of discussion. These will include the delightful story of an elderly couple and their pet goose who, despite being very poor, welcome two strangers into their home, not realising that they are actually the gods Jupiter and Mercury.

Latin GCSE is not easy and continues to require a disciplined approach to learning and tackling translation. If you can put Latin GCSE on your university application or CV it will show that you can think clearly, can puzzle things out and that you do not give up easily. Latin is interesting and rewarding in itself, supports the study of English and Modern Languages at GCSE and is an excellent basis for Advanced Level work, not only in Latin itself, but in English, Modern Languages and History. It is also very useful for aspiring doctors, vets and scientists, as it can help you to master scientific terminology which often has its roots in Latin.

Assessment

Latin is assessed by three written examinations:

One language paper: 1 hour 30 minutes, 50% of GCSE

Two literature papers: 1 hour each, 2 x 25% of GCSE

Mathematics IGCSE

Awarding Body: Pearson Edexcel

Specification Code: 4MA1

The course

This course assesses work under three headings:

1. Number and Algebra
2. Shape, Space and Measures
3. Handling Data

You will revisit and develop topics already covered in previous years.

Assessment

There are two tiers of assessment, Higher and Foundation.

1. Higher Tier papers assess grades 3 to 9
2. Foundation Tier papers assess grades 1 to 5

University entrance requirements include Mathematics at grade 4/5 or above. Top three sets will aim to take the Higher Tier. Pupils in the lowest set may be entered for the Foundation Tier if appropriate.

At both tiers of entry, there are two papers, taken at the end of Year 11. Each paper is two hours long and is worth 50% of the final grade. A calculator may be used in both papers.

Further Mathematics:

Awarding Body: AQA Level 2 Certificate

Specification Code: 8365

Some pupils in the top set may also be offered the option to do the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics at the end of Year 11, although much of this is likely to be taught through a lunchtime or after school club. The course builds on work covered at IGCSE as well as introducing new topics such as matrix transformations. There are two papers, each 1 hour 45 minutes, with one paper being calculator based, and the other non-calculator. This qualification is aimed at those pupils likely to get a top grade at IGCSE. It is particularly useful for those thinking of taking Mathematics (or Further Mathematics) in the Sixth Form.

Modern Foreign Languages: French

Awarding Body: AQA

Take this course if you started French in Year 7

Specification Code: 8658

The course

We work from the book 'Studio GCSE' which was developed for the AQA Specification. Each pupil also receives a Grammar and Translation workbook which is theirs to keep and which assists them with the new requirement of practising translation from and into both languages. You will continue to listen, read, write and develop your speaking in all the topics prescribed. You will be encouraged to read magazines and books from the library and to widen your knowledge of French culture through current and authentic resources.

Aims of the course

To continue to teach useful, everyday French in an enjoyable way so that you can:

- Use French for leisure, holidays and possibly in future employment
- Understand how languages work and some of the grammatical rules they have
- Get to know what life is like in France and in other countries where French is spoken
- Have a good basis to learn more French in the future

Assessment

Four assessment units take place at the end of the course: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Each of these skills is worth 25% of the overall GCSE grade. All four skills can be entered at a Foundation or Higher Tier but no mixing of tiers is possible across different skills. All examinations are final and will be held at the end of Year 11. There will be no controlled assessments in Languages.

Homework

Throughout the course two pieces of homework will be set each week. One will usually be a preparation for the next lesson or for a test and another will be a piece of work which will allow you to practise what you have learnt in class.

The future

You should do your best to visit France – on school trips, privately or with another organisation. Such an experience will give you added confidence in the language and can help you to improve in oral and listening skills. If you are thinking of studying French at A-Level, it is essential that you should have spent some time in France before entering the Sixth Form. It is an ideal opportunity to learn languages at school because a knowledge of languages can be very useful in the future, whether for holiday use or at work.

Modern Foreign Languages: Spanish

Awarding Body: AQA

Take this course if you started Spanish in Year 7

Specification Code: 8698

The course

We work from the book 'Listos GCSE' to prepare for the AQA Specification. Each pupil also receives a Grammar and Translation workbook which is theirs to keep and which assists them with the new requirement of practising translation from and into both languages. You will continue to listen, read, write and develop your speaking in all the topics prescribed. You will be encouraged to read magazines and books from the library and to widen your knowledge of Spanish culture through current and authentic resources.

Aims of the course

To continue to teach useful, everyday Spanish in an enjoyable way so that you can:

- Use Spanish for leisure, holidays and possibly in future employment
- Understand how languages work and some of the grammatical rules they have
- Get to know what life is like in Spain and in other countries where Spanish is spoken
- Have a good basis to learn more Spanish in the future

Assessment

Four assessment units take place at the end of the course: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Each of these skills is worth 25% of the overall GCSE grade. All four skills can be entered at a Foundation or Higher Tier but no mixing of tiers is possible across different skills. All examinations are final and will be held at the end of Year 11. There will be no controlled assessments in Languages.

Homework

Throughout the course two pieces of homework will be set each week. One will usually be a preparation for the next lesson or for a test and another will be a piece of work which will allow you to practise what you have learnt in class.

The future

You should do your best to visit Spain – on school trips, privately or with another organisation. Such an experience will give you added confidence in the language and can help you to improve in oral and listening skills. If you are thinking of studying Spanish at A-Level, it is essential that you should have spent some time in Spain before entering the Sixth Form. It is an ideal opportunity to learn languages at school because a knowledge of languages can be very useful in the future, whether for holiday use or at work.

Music

Awarding Body: Pearson Edexcel

Specification Code: 1MU0

Introduction

Music is an exciting and diverse GCSE course which caters for musicians of all tastes, giving a solid foundation for A-Level Music (also with the Pearson Edexcel Awarding Body), and preparing candidates for lifelong involvement in music. Our approach to delivering the GCSE music course is based around developing skills, knowledge and understanding through practical music making, and most lessons involve playing, singing or composing in some form. There are three units in the examination, which assess your skills in performance, composition, and listening and responding with understanding ('appraising').

Assessment

Performing: (Unit code 1MU0/01. 30% of the final grade)

The skills necessary for this component will be developed through individual instrumental lessons or singing lessons, and through regular involvement in ensembles at school. There will be regular opportunities to participate in performances at school, which is an expectation for pupils who take Music GCSE. As a guide, by the time you take the practical assessment in Year 11, you should be performing at or above Grade 4 standard on your instrument or voice. You have to perform at least 4 minutes of music in total, including one or more pieces as a soloist and one or more pieces as part of a group. Each performance is judged on technical control, expression and interpretation. The mark will be adjusted slightly up or down if the music performed is easier or more difficult than the expected Grade 4 standard. Performance is marked internally and moderated by Edexcel.

Composing: (Unit code 2MU0/01. 30% of the final grade)

You are required to compose two pieces of original music. One of these will be based on a brief published by the Awarding Body; the other is a completely free choice. The combined length of the two pieces must be at least 3 minutes. The published briefs are linked to the Areas of Study for Unit 3 (see below). In the Year 10 curriculum you will learn about how to develop and structure creative ideas in music and how to put them together into complete pieces of music. This will be linked to study of the set works for Unit 3. In Year 11 you will compose your two assessed pieces, for which you have to submit a score and a recording. Many GCSE pupils use Sibelius notation software at school to produce their scores. They are marked internally and moderated by Edexcel.

Appraising: (Unit code 3MU0/01. 40% of the final grade)

You will study music from four Areas of Study, focusing specifically on two set works from each. During the course you will study the set works in depth and will also develop the skills and vocabulary to be able to write about familiar and unfamiliar music with understanding and precision.

The Areas of Study cover a broad stylistic range:

- Instrumental Music from 1700-1820
- Vocal Music (both popular and classical)
- Music for Stage and Screen
- Fusions (music that combines influences from more than one culture)

This is assessed through a written examination of 1 hour 45 minutes at the end of the course. It will include some questions on the set works and some questions on unfamiliar music that relates to the Areas of Study. Some of the questions require short answers identifying technical features of the music. In addition, there will be one question that requires an in-depth essay comparing two pieces of music (one set work and one unfamiliar piece).

Physical Education

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Code: 8582

Introduction

The specification requires you to study both practical and theoretical aspects of physical education. It is essential you are interested in sport generally, enjoy the challenges that sport provides and have no long-term injuries that would prevent you completing the course. There are two theory examination papers, a piece of coursework and assessment of ability across three chosen sports; so, a serious attitude to academic study and practical performance is also required.

The course

The theory papers are made up of the following topics:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Physical training
- Movement analysis
- Use of data
- Socio-cultural influences
- Sports psychology
- Health, fitness and well-being

Pupils are required to be assessed in three chosen sports as decided by the pupil, teachers and parents. It is important that PE pupils are participating in their chosen activities regularly in and/or out of school. At least one sport should be followed at local club level or higher. Top grades in PE come from hard work, determination to improve and wider interest being demonstrated around the topics taught through independent reading and watching sport widely.

Assessment

Examination – (60% of the final grade)

The examination has two written papers each worth 30% of the total marks for the GCSE. Questions range in size/mark allocation across several topics.

Non-examination assessment – (40% of the final grade)

Broken down in the following parts:

1. Practical activity assessment (30% of the final grade)
You are assessed in three sports of your choice. One must be an individual sport and one must be a team sport, your third sport can either be an individual or a team sport.
2. Evaluating and Analysing Performance (10% of the final grade)
You are required to demonstrate your ability to analyse and evaluate your own performance. This is a written task in which you will have to:
 - Analyse aspects of personal performance in a practical activity
 - Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the performance
 - Produce an action plan which aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the performance

Religious Studies

Awarding body: WJEC (EDUQAS) – Religious Studies 9-1 Specification: Route B

Introduction

Eduqas Route B takes a distinctive issues-based approach to the study of Roman Catholic Christianity. It integrates a 75% study of Catholic Christianity, with a 25% study of Judaism. The thematic study part of each component will also require learners to contrast Catholic responses to philosophical and ethical questions with answers given not only by other Christian denominations but also those subscribing to humanist and atheist world views. While some of the language and ideas of the course may sound rather unfamiliar, they are brought to life by looking at all sorts of cultural expressions such as paintings, sculpture, news and even film. We work from an excellent text book.

Everyone will follow this course, which is taught by all members of the RS department and assessed by public examination. There are three papers at the end of the course and there is no coursework. Each component is assessed by compulsory questions focusing on two assessment objectives: AO1 – knowledge and understanding and AO2 – evaluation of the identified themes.

Assessment

Component 1: Foundational Catholic Theology

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (37.5% of the final grade)

Candidates will study the following two themes. All questions are compulsory.

Theme 1: Origins and Meaning

Theme 2: Good and Evil

Component 2: Applied Catholic Theology

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (37.5% of the final grade)

Candidates will study the following two themes. All questions are compulsory.

Theme 3: Life and Death

Theme 4: Sin and Forgiveness

Component 3: Study of a World Faith (25% of the final grade)

Written examination: 1 hour

Candidates will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism.

Where can RS take me?

Religious Studies teaches critical evaluative skills which cross-fertilise with English and other arts subjects. Besides religious vocations the majority of students who continue the subject to university level go on to careers in Law and the Media. James Norton, star of McMafia and the man tipped as the new James Bond, read Theology at Cambridge before starting his acting career.

What do I need?

To succeed in Religious Studies, you will need to be prepared to think about and form opinions on a wide range of topics. You also need to learn how to exchange these views with tolerance and respect. The course does not make any assumptions about your faith background. You are encouraged to offer your own opinions and learn how to support your views with sound arguments and evidence.

Sciences

Introduction

In Years 10 and 11 you will continue to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This means that the teaching of each Science will be in the hands of subject specialists.

Pathways

We are able to offer two pathways through GCSE Science: the Combined Science (Trilogy) qualification is worth two GCSE grades while the Separate Sciences pathway is worth three GCSE grades. Both pathways equip pupils to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics at A level and currently about half of our A level students came through each route for each of the three Sciences. The two pathways are taught in the same amount of curriculum time and, therefore, the Separate Sciences pathway is only offered to those who have shown the attitude and ability to cope with the increased workload and accelerated pace of the course. Both pathways allow pupils to access the full range of grades at GCSE and both allow for progression to study science subjects at A level and beyond.

Combined Science (Trilogy)

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Code: 8464

Separate Sciences

Awarding Body: AQA

Specification Codes: 8461 (Biology), 8462 (Chemistry) and 8463 (Physics)



GCSE Subject ideas form

Surname	
First Name	
Form	

The option subjects that I am thinking of studying:

You need to suggest **three** subjects. Please rank them in order of preference and also note down a fourth subject just in case we cannot create blocks that allow you to follow your first three ideas. Remember, you do not make your final choice until you are given the published blocks later. So, it will be quite understandable if you want to change your ideas before then.

1.	
2.	
3.	
Alternative possibility	

Notes:

(Anything else you would like to make us aware of)

This form is also available electronically using the QR code





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