



# Key Stage 4 Curriculum and Exams 2025 - 2027



Dear Student

During the next few weeks, you will be choosing the courses that you will be following in Years 10 and 11. For the first time since starting school, you will have a real say in what you learn. Making these choices will not be easy. At Backwell there is a very wide range of courses to choose from, from familiar subjects to new GCSE courses that you have not studied at Key Stage 3. It is important that you, your teachers and your parents/carers, work together to make sure that you choose the most appropriate options for your future.

At Backwell our aims are:

- **for you to study courses that suit your abilities, skills and aspirations**
- **for you to follow a curriculum that is broad and balanced**
- **for you to be given the opportunity to focus on your strengths and to explore new areas of interest**

Over the coming weeks you will get many opportunities for information, advice and guidance about your options. There is an options evening for you and your parents/carers on **Thursday 30 January 2025** which will give you key information about our curriculum offer, the options process and there will also be a chance to see work from options subjects and talk to students and staff. We may recommend some courses for you personally based on your strengths and needs. If so, we will write to you to share our advice.

As you read this booklet you will also notice that GCSE subjects are now graded 9 to 1 a change which we are now used to as a school. The majority of students will take nine subjects (ten if taking Triple Science).

We offer as much choice as we can, it is not always possible to run a course which very few students choose, and some combinations of subjects may prove to be impossible to timetable. For this reason, we ask you to give two reserve subjects in order of preference. Please give careful thought when deciding upon these as in the rare event where you cannot be given your first choices, you will be given your reserve subjects.

If you are unsure about anything or would like some advice about which subjects to choose, please ask!

The deadline date for handing forms back in is **Wednesday 26 February 2025**.

Yours sincerely

**Jon Nunes**

Headteacher  
January 2025

**Please keep this booklet handy at home.**

**There is a lot of information you will need during Years 10 and 11.**

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# YEAR 9 OPTIONS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What subjects do I have to take?

All pupils need to take the following core set of GCSEs:

- Maths
- English Literature
- English Language
- Combined or Triple Science
- History or Geography
- Modern Foreign Language unless advised not to

## How many subjects do I get to choose?

As mentioned above, students choose between History and Geography and select their chosen language. In addition, most pupils will choose two subjects out of the options subjects, and this may include a second humanities subject or a second language. Students also must select two reserve subjects

## Are all subjects GCSEs?

Most of the subjects we offer at Backwell School will lead to GCSE qualifications. Sports Studies and Performing Arts will lead to different qualifications. In these subjects, the way pupils are assessed is slightly different to GCSEs but the qualification they receive is at the equivalent level and will be regarded by sixth forms, colleges and employers as such.

## How do I choose my option subjects?

In tutor time you will complete activities which will help guide you through the process giving you the information needed to make informed choices. There will also be an opportunity for you to find out about subjects you have not studied. Some pupils might be guided towards courses we think they are more suited for, and this will be in conjunction with parents/carers. You can also talk to subject teachers who would be pleased to let you know more about their subject at GCSE.

## Am I guaranteed to get the subjects I choose?

In previous years most pupils receive their first choice of subject so there is a very high chance. However, due to timetable restrictions, this might not always be possible. In these rare cases, we will take your first reserve subject as a substitute.

## What happens if more pupils than there are spaces choose a subject?

When more pupils opt for a subject than there are places available, we endeavour to staff multiple classes. If this is not possible, we use the order of preference given to us to re-allocate students. This means that we would start by identifying students who have put this subject down as their fourth preference and allocate them their first reserve. If this yields too many students, lots are drawn to ensure fairness.

## Can I change subjects if I think I made a mistake?

Within reason, yes. We always want to give you the subjects you want to take, but we also have to work within the restrictions of a timetable. We will make no further changes after September.

## Will the subjects I take affect my future career and/or Post-16 choices?

Choosing subjects you enjoy is the most important consideration. Access to sixth forms, college courses or training providers rely upon meeting minimum grade requirements set by the providers rather than having studied certain GCSEs. Any Post-16 provider will expect applicants to have taken English and Maths GCSE. In certain cases, if a pupil wants to study a course they do not have a GCSE in (for example art based courses) then a provider might ask for them to demonstrate aptitude and interest in this subject necessary for studying it at a higher level.

## What is the English Baccalaureate?

The English Baccalaureate was introduced by the government in 2010 as an indicator that young people have been successful in their studies of a range of GCSE subjects. Our options process enables the vast majority of pupils to successfully gain the English Baccalaureate, where they must achieve a 5 - 9 grade in the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Two Sciences (Combined Science or the highest two from the Separate Sciences)
- Geography or History
- Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish)

However, the English Baccalaureate model will not suit all of our students and there are courses available for all ability ranges. Senior staff will guide students (and their parents) in making the right, fully informed decisions, so that the most suitable courses are chosen.

## What about University applications?

For pupils aspiring to apply for university our curriculum model at Key Stage 4 will allow the vast majority of pupils to satisfy every university that they have studied a broad and balance curriculum.

When making a university application, many institutions ask for a minimum number of GCSE subjects at a “good pass level” including English and maths. There is no standard interpretation of this amongst universities for example, applications to King’s College London require a grade 5 in English and maths, but Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool Universities put a grade 4 as their requirement.

For further information regarding GCSE requirements for competitive universities and courses, please refer to the following website <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/policy/publications/informed-choices/>

Please contact Mrs Mason if you would like more information or to discuss how these points may affect the future choices of your son/daughter.

# EXAMINATION INFORMATION

## Grading System at GCSE

GCSEs have been reformed meaning that students will be graded from 1 – 9 (9 being the highest grade) rather than A\* - G. Whilst direct comparison with the old-style grading system is not completely possible a simple view would be as follows:

New	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	
Traditional	A*	A		B	C		D	E	F	G	U

Ofqual have said that broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above. In addition, broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve an A or A\*.

Furthermore, they have said that the new grade 5 will be positioned in the top third of the marks for a current grade C and bottom third of the marks for a current grade B.

## Personal Data

The delivery of examinations and assessments involve centres and awarding bodies processing a significant amount of personal data. Backwell School is required to provide relevant personal data including, but not restricted to, name, date of birth and gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications. In some cases, additional information, which may include sensitive personal data relating to health, will also be collected to support requests for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration. Backwell School complies with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and will process all personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Further information can be found in our Data Protection Policy (exams) which is available on request from the Exams Office.

Awarding bodies may be required to provide a candidate's personal data to educational agencies such as the Department for Education (DfE), The Skills Funding Agency, regulators, UCAS, Local Authorities, and Learning Records Service (LRS). Additionally, candidates' personal data may be provided to a central record of qualifications approved by the awarding bodies for statistical and policy development purposes. Further information can be found in the JCQ Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice which is available on the Backwell School website under the 'Curriculum' tab.

# COMPULSORY CURRICULUM

All students will study our compulsory curriculum which includes maths, English language and literature and science (double or triple) as well as history and/or geography (details of which can be found on pages 22 and 25) and a modern foreign language (details of which can be found on pages 21, 24 and 35).

## Mathematics

*Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8300*

Students will be set by ability and will take either Foundation or Higher-Level Maths, either route will result in a GCSE Maths qualification.

Level of Entry	Set	Grades achievable (Grade 9 being the highest pass mark and 1 the lowest pass mark)
Higher Level (Grades U, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	1 - 3	9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, (U)
Foundation Level (Grades U, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	4 - 5	5, 4, 3, 2, 1, (U)

### What will students study?

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

### Assessment

GCSE Mathematics has a Foundation tier (grades 1 – 5) and a Higher tier (grades 4 – 9). Students must take three question papers at the same tier. All question papers must be taken in the same series. All three papers in both tiers assess content from any part of the specification and will consist of a mixture of question styles, from short single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.

### **Examination** (100% of total; three papers)

#### Paper 1 (33.3%)

- Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks)
- Non-calculator

#### Paper 2 (33.3%)

- Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks)
- Calculator allowed

#### Paper 3 (33.3%)

- Written paper: 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks)
- Calculator allowed

# English

The English Department is committed to teaching a wide and varied course, enabling students to develop as speakers, listeners, readers and writers. They are encouraged to read widely, covering non-fiction texts in addition to poetry, prose and drama from different periods of British history. In their writing, students cover a range of forms from creative and expressive through to transactional and discursive, aimed at a variety of audiences. Students will have termly assessments to monitor progress.

All students in Years 10 and 11 will follow an English course leading to **two** full qualifications: GCSE English Language with the Eduqas exam board and GCSE English Literature with AQA. All assessments are by formal terminal examinations in May/June of Year 11. English classes are mixed ability with each class being taught by two teachers: one for English Language and another for English Literature. A balanced amount of lesson time is devoted to each subject.

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## English Language

*Exam Board: Eduqas  
Code: C700QSL*

### What will students study?

#### Year 10

- **Reading prose fiction** - Improving comprehension skills of an unseen (i.e. untaught) prose literary extract from the 20th century.
- **Creative writing** - Further developing narrative writing skills.
- **Spoken presentation** – A five-minute presentation on a topic of the student's choice.

#### Year 11

- **19th Century literary non-fiction** - Comprehension skills for literary non-fiction from the 19th century; comparing 21st Century texts on a similar theme.
- **Transactional and persuasive writing** - Learning and applying the written conventions of different non-fiction formats e.g. letter, article, report, review etc.
- **Consolidation of above units** - Reviewing skills taught in Year 10 with further trial exam practices.
- **Revision**

### Assessment

#### **Examination** (100% of total; two papers)

##### Component 1 (40%):

- 20th Century Literature reading
- Creative prose writing

##### Component 2 (60%):

- 19<sup>th</sup> and 21st Century non-fiction reading
- Transactional/persuasive writing

#### Plus:

##### Component 3: Spoken language

- Assessed internally; graded separately to the GCSE in English Language.



# English Literature

Exam board: Eduqas

Code: C720QS

## What will students study?

### Year 10

- **Post-1914 drama** - a modern play, *An Inspector Calls*, will be read and explored.
- **Shakespeare** - Students will study a whole Shakespeare play: *Macbeth*.
- **Poetry** - Using the exam board's anthology, students will study a cluster of 15 poems from 1789 to the present day
- **Unseen poetry** - Alongside the study of named poems, students will also enhance their analytical skills by writing about two unseen (i.e. untaught) poems from the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Year 11

- **19th century novel** - Students will study an entire novel from the 1800s. This will be either *A Christmas Carol* or *Jekyll and Hyde*.
- Revision of previous units

## Assessment

Examination (100% of total; two papers)

### Paper 1 (40%)

- Shakespeare
- Poetry from 1789 to the present day

### Paper 2 (60%)

- Post-1914 drama
- 19<sup>th</sup> century prose
- Unseen poetry from the 20<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup> century

For students to be able to make notes in their set texts, they will need to purchase their own copies of the Shakespeare play, 19<sup>th</sup> century novel and modern novel or drama. This will not apply to students entitled to Pupil Premium.

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Both courses are an excellent preparation for continued study of English Literature and English Language at Advanced Level. They are recognised and highly valued by further education institutions and employers alike.

# Science

GCSE Science at Backwell is a three-year course, therefore all students have already begun studying GCSE Science in Year 9. Most students will achieve two science GCSEs at the end of Year 11, however students who have shown ability for Science in Year 9 will be placed on an accelerated course from the start of Year 10 which will allow them to achieve three separate Science GCSEs. Both pathways see the courses taught in specific subject units; Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

We aim to ensure that all students are following the pathway in which they are most likely to attain the best possible package of Science GCSE grades. Regardless of which pathway is being followed, all students have the potential to gain full access to the complete range of Science A Levels, dependent, of course, on their final GCSE grades. The priority is therefore the quality of the science grades and not the quantity.

## GCSE Combined Science (Double Award)

*Board: AQA*

*Codes: Science Trilogy 8464*

All Year 10 students on this course are working towards exams at the end of Year 11. This leads to two GCSEs in science. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are all examined separately as part of this qualification. At the end of Year 11 they will take a series of exam papers; two in Biology, two in Chemistry and two in Physics. The course is 100% assessed by exam at the completion of the course and each paper is worth 16.7% of the final two grades. Students on the Combined Science pathway will study the following topics:

- **Biology:** Cell Biology, Organisation, Infection and Response, Bioenergetics, Homeostasis and Response, Inheritance, Variation and Evolution, Ecology.
- **Chemistry:** Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table, Bonding Structure and the Properties of Matter, Quantitative Chemistry, Energy Changes, Rate of Chemical Change, Organic Chemistry, Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere, Using Resources.
- **Physics:** Forces, Energy, Waves, Electricity, Magnetism and Electromagnetism, Particle Model of Matter, Atomic Structure.

This GCSE course is appropriate for anyone wishing to progress to A levels in any of the sciences or other Level 3 Science qualification (e.g. Applied Science).

# GCSEs in the Separate Sciences (Triple Award)

## Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Board: AQA  
Codes: Biology 8461  
Chemistry 8462, Physics 8463

Students who have demonstrated strong ability across all the GCSE Science topics studied in Year 9 will be invited to begin studying towards achieving three GCSEs on this accelerated course, beginning in Year 10. This enables students to achieve three separate Science GCSEs at the end of Year 11. The length and complexity of the course necessitates a fast-paced learning style and culminates in longer exams than for the Combined Science course.

**To be considered for this pathway, students must be attaining a minimum of grade 6 throughout Year 9. The triple award pathway has a significant increase in content and demand when compared to the Combined Science pathway but is delivered in the same number of lesson periods. Students who are struggling to keep up with the pace will join the Combined Science course. This protects the quality of grade outcomes and ensures the best possible chance of success.**

The Biology GCSE is broken up into seven topics. These will be assessed through two terminal exams at the end of Year 11, worth 100% of the overall grade and each having an equal weighting of 50%.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| ▪ Cell Biology           | ▪ Homeostasis and Response             |
| ▪ Organisation           | ▪ Inheritance, variation and evolution |
| ▪ Infection and Response | ▪ Ecology                              |
| ▪ Bioenergetics          |  |

The Chemistry GCSE is broken up into ten topics. Again, these will be assessed through two terminal exams at the end of Year 11, worth 100% of the overall grade and each having an equal weighting of 50%.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ▪ Atomic Structure and the periodic table         | ▪ The Rate and Extent of Chemical Change |
| ▪ Bonding, Structure and the Properties of Matter | ▪ Organic Chemistry                      |
| ▪ Quantitative Chemistry                          | ▪ Chemical Analysis                      |
| ▪ Chemical Changes                                | ▪ Chemistry of the Atmosphere            |
| ▪ Energy Changes                                  | ▪ Using Resources                        |

The Physics GCSE is broken up into eight topics. Again, these will be assessed through two terminal exams at the end of Year 11, worth 100% of the overall grade and each having an equal weighting of 50%.

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ Forces      | ▪ Magnetism and Electromagnetism |
| ▪ Energy      | ▪ Particle Model of Matter       |
| ▪ Waves       | ▪ Atomic Structure               |
| ▪ Electricity | ▪ Space Physics                  |

The topic headings are similar to those for the Combined Science pathway, however the Separate Science pathway has an increased amount of higher level content within these units. This GCSE course is appropriate for anyone wishing to progress to A levels in any of the Sciences or other Level 3 Science qualifications.

# OPTIONAL COURSES

## Art, Craft and Design

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8201

This course gives students the opportunity to develop their art and design skills further, working with given project themes that allow them to develop work into personal outcomes in their chosen areas of study. Their coursework portfolio will include two projects in which they must include media and processes from at least two of the different areas of study: *Drawing and painting, illustration and graphic communication, digital photography and 3D.*

All work produced in lessons and home learning tasks will form their coursework component and during the course students will be expected to come to regular after school sessions for additional time and support to complete their work. We have lunchtime sessions for those students that would prefer to do their art home learning in school with our equipment and facilities.

**All students** will need to include drawing activities and written annotation on this course.

### Who might this course be suited to?

- Students who have enjoyed the creativity of art and wish to develop this interest further.
- Students who like to work independently when developing ideas for their own work.
- Students who can come up with ideas and get inspired to make art.
- Students who wish to develop new skills including photography and computers.
- Students who wish to continue with art education after GCSE.

### What will students study?

**Project 1 - Image and Text** – students will use this theme as a starting point for their first project inspired by different artists also working in this area. They will be experimenting with mixed media and learning the process of developing an idea. There are opportunities for working with a variety of drawing and painting media, on the computers with Photoshop, as well as using collage techniques to improve their composition skills. In Term 3 they will do a final outcome, potentially on a much larger scale.

**Project 2 - Surrealism** – students will use this theme as a starting point for their second project, inspired by artists from the past and the present. After choosing a subject matter of art to explore, such as portraits, landscapes, architecture, nature or animals, they will develop their own personal project in response to the theme.

**Project 3 – Skulls** – students will start their final project on the theme of Skulls in Year 11. We use this theme to give them lots of opportunities to work from first hand sources with the many skulls we have in the department. It is also a way of challenging them to come up with something very personal in response to a very open project theme. We expect them to use this to explore areas of art such as drawing and painting, clay and construction, digital and photographic, as well a more experimental use of media and processes.

The project will end in the final week of Term 2 when they will attend a whole day art session under exam conditions. This project will form the main part of their portfolio, which is 60% of their grade.

**Throughout these projects they will be:**

- Learning about the four assessment objectives, and how to present evidence clearly in their sketchbooks.
- Drawing from observation and imagination, using different reference sources including their own photos.
- Learning how to reflect on their outcomes and make decisions for refining and improving them further.
- Experimenting with 2D and 3D media before focusing on one and refining their technical skills
- Using the digital cameras and Apple Mac computers

**What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- Have a passion for making art both inside and outside of school.
- Be able to work independently in class and when setting themselves work out of lessons.
- An interest in looking at the work of other artists and going to galleries and museums.
- Enjoy experimenting, taking risks and making mistakes to develop ideas.
- Motivated and willing to come to afterschool sessions to use our facilities.

**How will this course be assessed?**

Art teachers, using the standards set by the exam board and then moderated across the other art classes, internally assess both components. These marks are then externally moderated by AQA in June with a sample selected for a moderator to see at school.

**Examination (100% of total)****Component 1 - Portfolio (60%):**

- Two sustained projects that cover the four Assessment Objectives – this will be the work produced in both Year 10 and 11 during lessons and home learning. They will also be expected to attend regular after school sessions during the two years.
- Work for the portfolio should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and provide evidence of written annotation and drawing activities.

**Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment (40%):**

- Selection of starting points given in January of Year 11.
- Ten weeks to prepare for a final outcome.
- Ten hours of supervised time under exam conditions over two days.
- Work for the Externally Set Assignment should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and provide evidence of written annotation and drawing activities.

# Art Textiles

Exam Board: AQA;  
Code: 4204

This course gives students the opportunity to develop their art and design skills further, working with given project themes that allow them to develop work into personal outcomes in their chosen areas of study. Their coursework portfolio will include two projects in which they will study and develop a wide range of textiles skills and techniques including designing, printing, embellishing and construction.

All work produced in lessons and home learning tasks will form their coursework component and during the course students will be offered extra sessions after school to consolidate their knowledge and expand their portfolio of skills. We have lunchtime sessions for those students who prefer to do their art home learning in school with our equipment and facilities.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

- Students who have enjoyed the creativity of art textiles or art and wish to develop this interest further
- Students who like to work independently when developing ideas for their own work
- Students who can come up with ideas and get inspired to create textiles
- Students who wish to develop new skills including pattern drafting and bespoke construction.
- Students who wish to continue with art textiles education after GCSE

## **What will students study?**

**Year 10** – the students will start from observation of a variety of different sources and learn how to develop ideas through experimentation and practice, before planning and completing a series of final outcomes. Two projects will be completed over the first four terms in the year, using feedback and advice to make improvements before handing in at the end of Term 4. Throughout these projects they will be:

- Expanding their knowledge of digital printing, use of Photoshop, stencilling, screen printing and basic construction
- Producing textile prints, using different reference sources including their own photos
- Experimenting with mixed media, including prints and embroidery
- Basic pattern drafting
- Bespoke construction

Aspects of the work completed from the first four terms will contribute towards their coursework submission that comprises of 60% of their final grade.

**Assessed coursework project** – the students will start on a new project theme during Term 6 of Year 10 and then continue it over the summer holidays. They will then hand in this project at the end of Term 2 in Year 11. Throughout this project they will be:

- Learning how to respond to a set project theme and outcome
- Presenting work effectively in a book to show clear links to the work of other artists
- Learning a wide range of textile techniques
- Using embroidery, print and construction to produce a developed outcome of their choice which could be a fashion or interior design option

This project will be the main submission for their coursework assessment.

**All projects will include:**

- Understanding how to find and use inspiration in a personal way
- Researching and responding to artists and designers
- Developing an idea through experimentation with different media
- Improving all textiles skills
- Drawing – how drawing can be used for different purposes including designing.
- Written annotation – how to write about their own work and the work of others.
- Using feedback as a way to make progress with their ideas
- Planning and creating a final outcome

**What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- Have a passion for making art textiles both inside and outside of school
- Be able to work independently in class and when setting themselves work out of lessons
- An interest in looking at the work of other artists and going to galleries and museums
- Enjoy experimenting, taking risks and making mistakes to develop ideas
- Motivated and willing to come to afterschool sessions to use our facilities

**How will this course be assessed?**

Art teachers, using the standards set by the exam board and then moderated across the other art classes, internally assess both components. These marks are then externally moderated by AQA in June with a sample selected for a moderator to see at school.

**Examination (100% of total; two papers)**

**Component 1 - Portfolio (60%):**

- Two sustained projects that cover the four Assessment Objectives – this will be the work produced in both Year 10 and 11 during lessons and home learning. They will also be expected to attend regular after school sessions during the two years
- Work for the portfolio should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and provide evidence of written annotation and textiles outcomes

**Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment (40%):**

- Selection of starting points given in January of Year 11
- Eight weeks to prepare for a final outcome
- Ten hours of supervised time under exam conditions over two days
- Work for the Externally Set Assignment should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and provide evidence of written annotation and drawing activities

# Business

*Exam Board: Edexcel  
Code: 1BSO*

Business takes an academic look at the many and varied skills required to run a business in today's Britain. Students will develop skills relating to conducting research, managing money, advertising and employing staff. Business students will discover how businesses operate and are organised and learn about their key elements and essential business functions.

Students will develop a deep understanding of the varied structures and aims of businesses operating in Britain today. They will compare small sole traders to large public limited companies. They will consider the differences between organisations operating in the charity sector and those operating in the private sector. During their course they will also consider the role and sources of finance in the everyday and long-term operations of a business.

Though students might feel they already have an intuitive grasp of what it takes to run a successful business, Business will allow them to take a much deeper, nuanced look at what is involved. They will have to use their writing and mathematical skills to analyse and explore the issues facing organisations as they are founded, grow and evolve over time.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

- Students who have strong mathematical skills and a good grasp of written English. They will have to interpret data and graphs, perform calculations and write paragraphed essays suggesting courses of action for businesses.
- Students with an interest in how modern Britain operates will find the course engrossing – there will be many opportunities to relate the contents to everyday life and the news.
- The course is particularly relevant for students considering management, marketing, project management, business accounting, economics, management consultancy, human resources, or business journalism as a basis for further study or a career.

## **What will students study?**

### **Unit 1 – Investigating Small Business**

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting a business idea into practice
- Making a business effective
- Understanding external influences on business

### **Unit 2 – Building a Business**

- Growing the business
- Making marketing decisions
- Making operational decisions
- Making financial decisions
- Making human resource decisions



### **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- Learners will gain the ability to use evidence and to arrive at reasoned judgments based on information from a variety of sources. Students need to be able read texts closely and extract salient points to support their arguments.
- Students will learn to organise and communicate their knowledge in a structured and organised manner. An interest in the news and current affairs will be a vital component.
- The course offers plenty of opportunity to apply mathematical skills to real life examples; for example, students might have to calculate loan repayments, profit and loss and cashflow as well as analysing simple company accounts.

### **How will this course be assessed?**

The GCSE Business course will be examined entirely through written examinations. A minimum of 10% of subject marks will be allocated through quantitative skills (i.e. calculations and interpretation of data).

Assessment will occur via two equally weighted examinations at the end of the second year of study. These are:

- Paper 1: Investigating Small Business (1hr 45 minutes, 90 marks)
- Paper 2: Building a Business (1hr 45 minutes, 90 marks)

# Computer Science

Exam Board: OCR  
Code: J277

With a heavy influence on coding, you will learn how to create and test simple programs and apps. You do not need to know a programming language already as we will teach you either Python or Visual Basic. You will develop logical thinking skills and a systematic approach to solving problems. These are sought after skills than can be applied to anything you do in the future. Computer Science is an approved English Baccalaureate course.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

- Computer Science is based on logical mathematical principles. It provides a practical application to maths, so it is well suited to students who enjoy their maths lessons. Generally, it is best suited to students in sets 1 - 3.

## **What will students study?**

- **Computer Systems**  
In this unit you will learn about computer hardware (the CPU, memory and storage systems), computer communications (networks, Wi-Fi and the internet), operating systems and computer security. You will also learn about the ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.
- **Computational thinking, algorithms and programming**  
In this unit you will learn about the fundamentals of programming. You will develop skills in writing algorithms, using different programming techniques and testing programs to ensure they are correct and free from bugs. You will also learn about the tools used to help the developer such as an IDE, assemblers, interpreters and compilers.

## **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

This course is particularly suited to students who enjoy and persevere with problem solving.

## **How will this course be assessed?**

Unit 1 - Computer Systems (50% of total mark)

- Examination: 1 hour 30 minutes. No calculator allowed.

Unit 2 - Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (50% of total mark)

- Examination: 1 hour 30 minutes. No calculator allowed.

# Design and Technology

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8552

Design and Technology is purposeful, as well as being fun and exciting! Studying GCSE Design and Technology will build on what you learnt about designing and making in Key Stage 3. You will use your knowledge and skills to design and make new and better solutions to real problems - on your own and with others - working with materials you choose.

Our GCSE course allows students to learn about materials including traditional, smart and modern materials. Designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials processing techniques and computer aided design and manufacture. They will also have the opportunity to study timbers in greater depth as our chosen specialist technical principle.

GCSE Design and Technology provides an ideal grounding for studying AQA A Level Product Design. This course can also lead to careers and apprentices in product design, industrial design, desktop publishing, film and television production design, architecture, engineering, and many more academic and creative fields.

## **What will students study?**

In Year 10 we will complete several mini projects focusing on resistant materials, engineering and graphic design working through an iterative design process and allowing students to design and develop independently. This learning will underpin a student's final coursework project (the Non-Exam Assessment or NEA) which is started just before the end of Year 10, and preparation for the written examination (Unit 1) in the second year.

In their second year (Year 11) students will complete their NEA, designing, developing and making a product based on a selected context provided each year by the examination board; this will both satisfy and challenge each student as an individual. Following completion of this, the students will undertake a course of preparation for their written paper through further study and focused practical tasks and experiments.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

This course is the ideal choice for:

- Anyone who enjoys both theoretical and practical learning experiences.
- Students with a desire to design and make creatively.
- Students who might wish to consider a Post-16 apprenticeship or A Levels in engineering and/or creative subjects.

## **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

The course is open to all Year 9 students who:

- Enjoy not only the making, but the designing element of the course, including technical drawing.
- Can work with deadlines within projects in order to complete on schedule.
- Would be prepared to develop ownership of and show dedication to their project work.
- Would be prepared to challenge themselves, take risks and make mistakes.
- Want to learn more about the technical world in which they live through analysing a range of different products and industrial processes in the acquisition of theory knowledge.

### **How will this course be assessed?**

The course is assessed through four different Assessment Objectives (AO's);

- AO1: Identify, investigate and outline design possibilities to address needs and wants.
- AO2: Design and make prototypes that are fit for purpose.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate:
  - Design decisions and outcomes, including for prototypes made by themselves and others
  - Wider issues in design and technology
- AO4: Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of:
  - Technical principles
  - Designing and making principles

#### **Unit 1: Written Examination (AO3 – 10% / AO4 – 40%)**

The written examination is two hours long and worth 100 marks - 50% of the total marks for the course. The paper is split into three sections:

- **Section A** – Core technical principles (20 marks); short answers assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.
- **Section B** – Specialist technical principles (30 marks); longer answers to test depth of knowledge.
- **Section C** – Designing and making principles (50 marks); short and extended answers.

#### **Unit 2: Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) (AO1 – 10% / AO2 - 30% / AO3 – 10%)**

A coursework-based assessment which will take around 30-35 hours and is worth 100 marks in total (the remaining 50% of the course). This is a single research, design, develop and make task with the assessment criteria in: *Investigating and Producing a specification; Designing and Making; Analysing and Evaluating.*

Students are presented with three different contextual challenges from the exam board. These are quite open and allow students to come up with a problem within their chosen context with the aim of designing and developing a product to solve that problem. Students must create their product for a target market and specific client, keeping their clients wants and needs in mind throughout the project.

The contextual challenges are released by AQA on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of this unit. Students would normally produce a working prototype and a portfolio of evidence (no more than 20 A3 pages). Work in this NEA will be marked by the class teachers and moderated by AQA.

# Drama

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8261

Improve your self-confidence whilst exploring the relationship between theatre, culture and politics.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

As well as developing performance technique through the study of Drama as a distinct art form, Drama at GCSE level equips students with essential skills they need to cope in the world of work. Students develop an awareness of body and voice; extremely useful in a job interview or when presenting ideas or findings to a group of people. Students gain a great deal of self-confidence and develop the organisational skills essential to working as part of a team. They learn to evaluate their own work and the work of others and make objective critical judgements with regard to the effectiveness of a presentation event. Drama should be thought of as an excellent way of gaining the life skills needed in any chosen career.

## **What will students study?**

In GCSE Drama students explore a range of themes and issues through improvisation and group work, for example Victorian values, imprisonment and mental illness. Students also have the opportunity to study plays written by professional playwrights, for example Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' and Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'. Students are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the school's considerable lighting and sound resources. Visits to the theatre to see professional performance events are an important part of the course (this could be locally and/or in London).

## **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

The course requires a sense of shared responsibility because you will often be working in a group. You need to be self-motivated and committed to your learning both in and away from the classroom (it is likely you will attend lunchtime or afterschool rehearsals to support a group you are working in). Students are encouraged to take an analytical approach to the drama they see and participate in, articulating verbally and in writing how meaning is conveyed through the combination of drama elements.

## **How will this course be assessed?**

Component 1 (40%):

- Study of one set play
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers
- How it's assessed: Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Component 2 (40%):

- Rehearsal and performance of a devised drama piece
- Analysis and evaluation of own work
- How it's assessed: Written diary charting the rehearsal process and the final performances

Component 3 (20%):

- Performance of two extracts from one play (students may contribute as performer or designer)
- How it's assessed: Performance of extracts

# Food Preparation and Nutrition

*Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas  
GCSE C560P1 and C560P2  
601/8093/6*

This GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition equips learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

- Students who have enjoyed cooking and nutrition and wish to develop this interest further
- This course is particularly suited to students who might want to consider further training in Food Science and Nutrition courses at Level 3, AS or A Level.
- There are many diverse career paths that this qualification is suited to, such as; the NHS in areas such as health promotion or as a dietician, as a nutrition consultant in the fitness industry, working within the food and beverage industry, or in product development or food safety, to name a few.

## **What will students learn?**

- to be able to demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking a variety of dishes using different cooking techniques and equipment.
- to develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food and the nutritional content of food and drinks.
- the relationship between diet, nutrition and health, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health.
- to understand the economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, diet and health choices.
- to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of functional and nutritional properties, sensory qualities and microbiological food safety considerations when preparing, processing, storing, cooking and serving food.
- to understand and explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international) to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

## **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- A keen interest in food, cooking and nutrition.
- Enjoys investigating, researching analysing and developing dishes, writing up their findings in a logical way.
- Organisation, time management, creativity and ability to work in a team
- The course is open to **all** Year 9 students.

### **How will this course be assessed?**

#### **Component 1: Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition (50% of qualification)**

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

- **Section A:** questions based on stimulus material.
- **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 (50% of qualification)**

Two Controlled Assessments.

- **Assessment 1:** The Food Investigation Assessment  
A scientific food investigation which will assess knowledge, skills and understanding relating to scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food (8 Hours).
- **Assessment 2:** The Food Preparation Assessment  
Prepare, cook and present a menu which assesses the knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food (12 Hours).

# French

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8652

## The importance of learning a modern foreign language

Learning a foreign language to GCSE level gives our students a broader, more balanced curriculum and can contribute towards the English Baccalaureate. Foreign language skills are essential for travel, tourism, business and for many international links in the world of work. French is the language of diplomacy and art, love and reason and is a highly valued global language.

The GCSE French course provides a firm foundation for advanced language study in combination with other subjects in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education. Foreign language learning gives valuable insights into the culture, society and attitudes of our European and international partners and the communication skills which are developed are important and will benefit all students of French.

Most students are expected to follow a GCSE language course. Students currently studying one language will continue with the same language. Students currently studying two languages can either continue with both or choose one.

## What will students study?

Over the two-year course, students will study topics under three main themes:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular cultures
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us.

Year 10 topics include:	Year 11 topics include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identity and relationships with others</li><li>▪ Healthy living and lifestyle</li><li>▪ Education and work</li><li>▪ Free-time activities</li><li>▪ Customs, festivals and celebrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Celebrity culture</li><li>▪ Travel and tourism, including places of interest</li><li>▪ Media and technology</li><li>▪ The environment and where people live</li></ul>

## How will this course be assessed?

**Examination:** 100% of total, four exams

There are four skills with equal weighting:

- Listening      25%
- Speaking     25%
- Reading      25%
- Writing       25%

GCSE French has a Foundation Tier (grades 1 – 5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4 – 9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier at the end of the two-year course.

The Modern Languages Department runs a successful exchange with Le Collège Broussais in Dinan, Brittany and students in Year 10 taking French are encouraged to participate in this programme. This is a fantastic chance for students to develop their language skills in a real-life context and to experience family life in France.



# Geography

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8035

In our rapidly changing world places which were once remote are becoming increasingly accessible. People who were once distant; both in location and culture, become nearer, and issues which once only affected "other people" become global issues which affect the lives of all. This exciting and relevant course studies geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the links between them.

Students will travel the world from the classroom, exploring case studies both in the UK and beyond. We also have the opportunity to go out on two fieldtrips.

The understanding and skills geography gives you are transferable to other areas of life and study and make the GCSE course an invaluable part of a well-rounded education.

## Who might this course be suited to?

This course is for students who would like to:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of a range of people, places and environments on both a local and global scale.
- Understand the decision-making processes which affect their development.
- Develop a "sense of place" and an awareness of the way in which people and environments interact, together with the opportunities, challenges and constraints that face different people in different places.
- Learn and apply a wide range of transferable skills - including those of map work, fieldwork, handling data and using information and communications technology.
- Understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

## What will students study?

**Topics of study** Topics are taken from the two main areas of the subject, Physical Geography and Human Geography. Students will study natural hazards and climate change, the physical landscape of the UK, including our coasts and rivers and how they can be managed. They will also study important national and global themes including international development, economic changes and sustainability.

### **Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment**

Section A: The Challenge of Natural Hazards (tectonics, weather hazards and climate change)

Section B: Physical Landscapes in the UK (rivers and coasts)

Section C: The Living World (ecosystems, tropical rainforests and hot deserts)

### **Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment**

Section A: Urban Issues and Challenges (global pattern, Rio de Janeiro and Bristol)

Section B: The Changing Economic World (International development, Nigeria and the UK)

Section C: The Challenge of Resource Management (UK resources and global focus on water)

### **Paper 3: Geographical applications**

**Section A: Issue evaluation** - This section contributes a critical thinking and problem-solving element to the course. The assessment will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate geographical skills and applied knowledge and understanding by looking at a particular issue(s) derived from the specification using secondary sources. It's always something different and highly topical.

**Section B: Fieldwork** - Students will undertake two geographical enquiries, in contrasting environments each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercises. We go to the River Holford in Year 10 and to the Temple Quarter regeneration area in Bristol in Year 11.

### **Geographical skills**

Students are required to develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills, including cartographic, graphical, numerical and statistical skills, throughout their study of the specification. Skills will be assessed in all three written exams. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps or other map extracts may be used in any of the three exams.

### **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- A keen interest in the world around them, including current affairs.
- Someone who is socially and economically aware, with a sense of environmental responsibility.
- A good communicator, team player and problem solver.
- Someone who can think creatively, express their opinions and work independently.
- A determination to develop a range of skills, from graphical and statistical to computer technologies.

### **How will this course be assessed?**

**Examination** (100% of total; three papers)

Assessment is in the form of three written papers:

Paper 1 (35%): Living with the Physical Environment - Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 2 (35%): Challenge in the Human Environment - Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 3 (30%): Geographical Applications - Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

# German

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8662

## The importance of learning a modern foreign language

Learning a foreign language to GCSE level gives our students a broader, more balanced curriculum and can contribute towards the English Baccalaureate. Foreign language skills are essential for travel, tourism, business and for many international links in the world of work. Indeed, Germany is the UK's biggest non-English-speaking trading partner; many major employers of UK nationals are based in German-speaking countries. In addition, language learning does two major things: it gives you a high-quality set of transferable skills; it empowers you with the cultural understanding to feel connected with, and open-minded about, the world around you.

The GCSE German course provides a firm foundation for advanced language study in combination with other subjects in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education. Students will gain valuable insight into the culture and society of Germany and German-speaking countries. Students currently studying two languages can either continue with both, or choose one.

## What will students study?

Over the two-year course, students will study topics under three main themes:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular cultures
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us.

Year 10 topics include:	Year 11 topics include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identity and relationships with others</li><li>▪ Healthy living and lifestyle</li><li>▪ Education and work</li><li>▪ Free-time activities</li><li>▪ Customs, festivals and celebrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Celebrity culture</li><li>▪ Travel and tourism, including places of interest</li><li>▪ Media and technology</li><li>▪ The environment and where people live</li></ul>

## How will this course be assessed?

**Examination:** 100% of total, four exams

There are four skills with equal weighting:

- Listening 25%
- Speaking 25%
- Reading 25%
- Writing 25%

GCSE German has a Foundation Tier (grades 1 – 5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4 – 9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier at the end of the two-year course.

The Modern Languages Department runs a successful exchange with Camerloher Gymnasium in Freising, Bavaria and students in Year 10 taking German are encouraged to participate in this programme. This is a fantastic chance for students to develop their language skills in a real-life context and to experience family life in Germany.

# History

Board: Edexcel  
Code: 1H10

History GCSE offers the full range of grades (9 - 1) and aims to build on skills developed in Years 7, 8 and 9. It offers excellent intellectual training and is a valuable preparation for a wide range of careers, particularly law, journalism, broadcasting, politics and the civil service.

The course we follow is comprised of four topics assessed in three written papers. The papers are all taken at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework or controlled assessment. Students will be assessed on a variety of skills: recall and understanding; understanding of key concepts, such as continuity and change, cause and consequence; understanding differing historical interpretations; the use of source material.

## **Who might his course be suited to?**

The course is open to all Year 9 students and the two main requirements you will need are:

- A keen interest in History. Your lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 will have enabled you to study a range of historical periods, to study both political and social history, to study key turning points, to use historical sources and to see how the events of the past can be interpreted differently. This will give you a good insight as to what will be involved at GCSE.
- An enjoyment of writing and the ability to use a range of text and sources to construct written explanations and arguments.

## **What will students study?**

- Crime and Punishment through time: 1000 – present.
- Superpower Relations and the Cold War: 1941 – 1991.
- Weimar and Nazi Germany: 1918 – 1939.
- Early Elizabethan England: 1558-1588.

## **How will the course be assessed?**

### **Paper 1 - Thematic Study and Historic Environment (30%)**

This paper, 'Crime and Punishment through time 1000-present', focuses on understanding the nature and process of change, this will involve studying, for example, medieval methods of punishment, the Gunpowder Plot, 17<sup>th</sup> Century witch-hunts, development of the police force and prison system, the Derek Bentley Case and the ending of capital punishment. A further 10% of the total mark is awarded for analysing sources concerned with policing in Whitechapel (c1870 - 1900).

### **Paper 2 – Period Study and British Depth Study (Option 26) (40%)**

This paper covers two topics:

'Superpower Relations and the Cold War' 1941-91 (20%) looks at Europe after the end of World War 2: the formation of the 'Iron Curtain', the nuclear arms race, the Berlin Wall, Cuban Missile Crisis, Détente, later crises of the Second Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and fall of the Berlin Wall.

The 'Early Elizabethan England' paper looks at the problems faced by Elizabeth in her reign, including the marriage question and the plots against her, the reasons for the war with Spain and the defeat of the Armada as well as Tudor exploration and Elizabethan society and government.

**Paper 3 – Modern Depth Study (30%)**

'Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939' looks at the nature and problems of the Weimar Republic, Hitler's rise to power, how Hitler became chancellor and then established his dictatorship, and life in Nazi Germany.

# Music

Exam Board: Edexcel  
Code: 1MU01

Through an anthology of eight set works students will become familiar with a huge variety of musical styles and techniques which will help to develop their own composing skills and performances.

## Who might this course be suited to?

- Anyone who has a love of music.
- Students who have enjoyed performing, creating and listening to a variety of music at Key Stage 3.
- The course is particularly suited to those who wish to pursue a career in Music or the Performing Arts.

## What will students study?

This course is split into three key areas:

**Component 1 - Performing:** Students will perform as a soloist and in ensembles throughout the course in a variety of settings, from informal class performances to concerts.

**Component 2 – Composing:** Students will develop composing skills throughout the course, starting with smaller exercises and working up to full pieces by the end of Year 10.

**Component 3 – Appraising:** Students will study eight set works ranging from Beethoven to Queen to Samba. The broad areas of study are Instrumental Music 1700 – 1820; Vocal Music; Music for Stage and Screen and Fusions.

## What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?

- A keen interest in creating, notating and recording musical ideas.
- Open to finding out about new styles of music.
- The course is open to all Year 9 students, not just those who are already learning an instrument. However, students are required to perform so it is advised that they begin learning an instrument (or voice) at the start of the course, if not already doing so.

## How will this course be assessed?

**Coursework 60%, Examination 40%**

Component 1: Performing (30%)

- One solo performance
- One ensemble performance

Component 2: Composing (30%)

- One composition to a set brief
- One free composition

Component 3: Appraising (40%)

- 1 hour 45-minute exam containing:
- Six short answer questions based on set works and unfamiliar music
- Two questions based on general listening skills and music theory
- An extended response based on one set work and one unfamiliar piece

# Performing Arts (BTEC)

*Exam Board: Edexcel*

Do you enjoy performing? Would you like to take a hands-on, practical course that gives you a taste of what the Performing Arts sector is like? As well as giving you the skills and confidence to succeed in your next steps?

This course gives you the chance to perform and develop valuable skills and techniques in different disciplines and explore potential careers in the industry.

## **Who might this course be suited to?**

- Anyone who has a love of Dance or Drama
- Students who have particularly enjoyed the practical aspects of these subjects at Key Stage 3
- The course is well suited to those who wish to pursue a career in the Performing Arts
- Students who enjoy working alongside their peers to produce ensemble work.

## **What will students study?**

As the BTEC Award in Performing Arts is a practical introduction to life and work in the industry, you will explore the sector while developing specific skills and techniques, devising and delivering a workshop performance and also analysing, evaluating and enhancing your skills. There are three components:

**Exploring the Performing Arts:** The aim of this component is to give you a taste of what it's like to be a professional actor, dancer or musical theatre performer across different styles. During this component you will observe and reproduce existing repertoire, as well as explore:

- Performance styles, creative intentions and purpose
- Performance techniques, approaches and processes
- Performance roles, responsibilities and skills
- How practitioners create and influence what's performed

**Developing Skills and Techniques:** The aim of this component is to develop skills and techniques in the chosen discipline of acting, dance and musical theatre. During this component you will:

- Gain physical, interpretive, vocal and rehearsal skills during workshops and classes
- Apply your technical, stylistic and interpretive skills in performances
- Reflect on your progress and use of skills in performance, as well as you could improve

**Performing to a Brief:** The aim of this component is to consider how practitioners adapt their skills for different contexts and put this into practice in a performance. During this component you will:

- Use the brief and what you've learned to come up with ideas for the performance
- Choose the skills and techniques you'll need
- Build on your skills in classes, workshops and rehearsals
- Review the development process within an ideas and skills log
- Perform a piece lasting 10 - 15 minutes to your chosen target audience
- Reflect on the performance in an evaluation report

**What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- Practical ability in Dance and/or Drama
- Commitment to improve their skills in Performing Arts
- Sharing, experimenting and combining ideas for practical work.

**How will this course be assessed?**

The course has two internally assessed components and one that's externally assessed. There is no formal written examination; assessment is in the form of practical performance and written log.

Component	Title	Assessment Method	Weighting
1	Exploring the Performing Arts	Internal	30%
2	Developing Skills and Techniques	Internal	30%
3	Performing to a Brief	External	40%



# Photography

Exam Board: AQA  
Code 8206

This course gives students the opportunity to cover a range of photographic experiences. Students learn different processes and techniques using technology to generate a variety of outcomes. They will develop knowledge, understanding and skills in different photographic genres using research and responses to a range of photographers. Students will be taught how to use digital cameras, studio equipment, Mac computers and Photoshop.

Some tasks will need to include drawing activities and written annotation on this course.

**All students** will need to include drawing activities and written annotation on this course.

**All students** will need to use Mac computers each lesson for editing on Photoshop and some will use Frog ePortfolios for presenting their work instead of a sketchbook. They must take this into consideration when choosing this course, as well as using a digital camera each week in and out of lessons.

## Who might this course be suited to?

- Students who enjoy taking photographs in their own time and wish to develop new skills using photography and Photoshop
- Students who want to learn how to use a digital camera on manual settings, set up and use the photography studio lighting.
- Students who have enjoyed using the Mac computers within their art lessons
- Students who wish to continue with photography education after GCSE

## What will students study?

### **In Year 10**

Term 1 – Elements project

Term 2 – Still Life

Term 3 – Portraiture

Term 4 – Photobook

Term 5 and 6 – Structures

Students will be given a starting point and learn how to develop ideas by experimenting and refining their photographs before planning and completing a final outcome.

The skills covered will include:

- Learning how to use the digital cameras on manual settings, learning about aperture and shutter speed.
- Downloading photos onto Mac computers and editing them on Photoshop.
- Understand the skills needed to create photographs; image manipulation, lighting, viewpoints, close ups, composition and depth of field.
- Set up photo shoots in the classroom, the studio, around school and outside of school in their own time, as well as a trip into Bristol.
- Drawing activities – how this can communicate ideas or develop their photographs in a more experimental way.
- Written annotation – how to write about their own work and the work of others.

## **In Year 11**

### **Term 1 and 2 – Natural Forms**

The first part of this project is based around natural forms, such as flowers, plants, shells and skulls. Students are then encouraged to develop a more personal response.

### **Term 3 and 4 – Externally Set Assignment**

Students respond to a question given by the exam board over the course of 10 weeks.

Both projects will include:

- Understanding how to find inspiration and use it effectively within their project.
- Researching and responding to photographers that interest them.
- Developing an idea through experimentation with photographic techniques and processes.
- Improving their skills with Photoshop.
- Improving their skills with DSLR photography.
- Use feedback to make progress with their ideas.

### **What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?**

- Enjoy experimenting with photography, looking for inspiration in the world around them, probably owning a DSLR camera.
- Come up with ideas and get inspired to take photographs.
- Enjoy working independently when developing ideas for their own work.
- Have a passion for doing photography both inside and outside of school.
- An interest in looking at the work of other photographers and going to galleries and museums.
- Motivated and willing to come to afterschool sessions to use our facilities.

### **How will this course be assessed?**

Photography teachers, using the standards set by the exam board and then moderated across the other photography and art classes, internally assess both components. These marks are then externally moderated by AQA in June with a sample selected for a moderator to see at school.

**Examination** (100% of total; two papers)

#### **Component 1 – Project 1 and Project 2 (60%):**

- Two sustained projects that cover the four assessment objectives
- Work for the portfolio should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and provide evidence of written annotation and drawing activities.

#### **Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment (40%):**

- Selection of starting points given in January of Year 11.
- Ten weeks to prepare for a final outcome.
- Ten hours of supervised time under exam conditions.
- Work for the externally set assignment should be carefully selected and presented, identifying sources and providing evidence of written annotation and drawing activities.

# Physical Education (GCSE) or Sports Studies (OCR)

Exam Boards: see below

These courses enable students to engage with Physical Education and Sport in both a theoretical and practical way. Students will be given information, advice and guidance about which course would be more suitable for them from their teachers. PE staff will advise parents at Year 9 Parents' Evening.

## Who might this course be suited to?

- Students who perform regularly in sports inside and outside of school.
- Students who are self-motivated, driven, and organised.
- Students who have a passion for sport and a genuine interest in learning about sports science, sports development, and the sporting industry.

## Pathways

- GCSE PE and Sports Studies are both Level 2 qualifications and have the same level points scores.
- Both courses provide a pathway to a Level 3 sports qualifications in the 6th form or college, such as A level Physical Education or Level 3 BTEC Sport.
- Both courses provide a good foundation of knowledge in respect of sporting performance and the sports industry, both of which are useful for any future career in sport.

Pearson Edexcel – GCSE Physical Education	OCR - Cambridge National in Sport Studies
<u>2 x theory exams</u> Paper 1 = Fitness and Body Systems (36%) <i>1 hour 45 minutes (80 marks)</i> Paper 2 = Health and Performance (24%) <i>1 hour 15 minutes (60 marks)</i>	<u>1 x theory exam:</u> Contemporary issues in sport (40%). <i>1 hour 15 minutes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues affecting participation in sport</li> <li>The role of sport in promoting values</li> <li>The implications of hosting a major sporting events</li> <li>The role NGBs in the development of their sport</li> <li>The use of technology in sport</li> </ul>
<u>Practical Non-Examined Assessment (NEA):</u> Three practical activities are assessed from the approved list (30%) as follows: one team activity; one individual activity; one choice activity. <i>(Video evidence is required for activities that cannot be performed in school)</i>	<u>Practical Performance and Leadership in Sport</u> Developing sports skills (individual sport, team sport and coaching) (40%). Practical and written coursework assessment.
<u>Written Non-Examined Assessment (NEA):</u> Design, perform and evaluate a Personal Training Programme (PEP) to improve performance in one practical activity. Written coursework (10%).	<u>Outdoor Adventurous Activities</u> Increasing awareness of the benefits of outdoor activities (20%). Practical and written coursework assessment.

GCSE	OCR Cambridge National
8/9	L2 Distinction *
7/8	L2 Distinction
6	L2 Merit
4/5	L2 Pass
4	Distinction
3	Merit
2	Pass
1	

# Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics

Exam Board: AQA  
Specification A: 8062

This is an exciting and relevant GCSE Religious Studies course focussing on religious, philosophical and ethical ideas. Students are challenged to explore contemporary moral issues from their own and others' perspectives. Students look in-depth at a range of topics and develop their own reasoned responses. They also study the beliefs and teachings of the two largest faiths, Christianity and Islam, and investigate how these communities respond to a variety of issues. The course offers opportunities for lively debate, helping students to grow and mature in their ability to defend their own beliefs and views, whilst recognising that there are people who think differently. P&R provides an excellent opportunity to develop the student's critical thinking and skills of analysis and evaluation, a transferable skill that benefits all other aspects of the curriculum. Exam technique and skills are learned throughout, and there is a clear structure to all exam answers so students are very well prepared for any potential questions.

## Who might this course be suited to?

- Anyone who has a keen interest in understanding current affairs and different people's beliefs and lifestyles.
- Anyone who would like to learn how to make well-informed and balanced arguments about religion, human life, and world problems.
- Anyone who might want to pursue a career in medicine, journalism, law, social work, policing or other public service careers.

## What will students study?

### **Component 1: The beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions**

- Christianity
- Islam

### **Component 2: Thematic studies**

- Relationships and families: Sex, marriage and divorce; Families and gender equality.
- Religion and life: The origins and value of the universe; The origins and value of human life, along with controversial issues such as abortion, euthanasia and animal rights.
- Religion, crime and punishment: Crime and the causes of crime; Punishment.
- Religion, human rights and social justice: Human Rights; Wealth and poverty.

## What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?

- Students who are curious about religious, philosophical and world issues.
- Students who have some skills in discussing, analysing and writing about their views and the views of others.
- Students who like a clearly structured way of writing.

## How will this course be assessed?

**Examination** (100% of total; two exam papers):

- Component 1 (50%): 1 hour 45 minutes
- Component 2 (50%): 1 hour 45 minutes

# Sociology

Exam Board: Eduqas (WJEC)

Sociology studies the structure and 'functions' of society. Students will develop a greater knowledge of how our modern society works. How we become the people we are; what influence nature has on us over our upbringing and the people around us (nurture). It will be a chance to study and debate many of the current issues faced by society today, for example poverty, inequality and welfare, education, crime, media, family and so on.

Students will have a working knowledge of some of these issues through personal experience of family life and education as well as an awareness of crime or discrimination in our society.

## Who might this course be suited to?

- Students who have a keen interest in wanting to understand the world around them.
- Students who do not accept things at face value, are able to be critical of the news/media and who can express themselves fluently in written work and verbally.
- The course is particularly relevant for students considering careers in the police, journalism, public relations, law, social work, education or the health service and/or for those thinking about studying courses such as Psychology, History, Philosophy, Media Studies, Health and Social Care, Economics or Sociology on to Post-16 education.

## What will students study?

- Unit 1 (Year 10) – Core Topic 1 (***Social Processes***) plus ***Families and Education***.
- Unit 2 (Year 11) – Core Topic 2: (***Social Structures***) plus ***social differentiation and stratification and Crime and Deviance***

Both units also include learning about ***research methods***.

## What skills and attributes would a successful student on this course have?

- The ability to use evidence and to arrive at reasoned judgments; to be able to read through items and extract points to support their arguments.
- To organise and communicate their knowledge in a structured and organised manner. An interest in the news and current affairs will be a vital component.
- The course offers plenty of new challenges to students and is equally as demanding, in terms of written work, as the other subjects within the 'humanities' options.

## How will this course be assessed?

There are two separate exams at the end of Year 11. Each exam lasts 1½ hours and is worth 50% of the GCSE. There will be a mix of short answer, structured questions and extended response (essay) questions, all compulsory. There is no controlled assessment/coursework.

# Spanish

Exam Board: AQA  
Code: 8692

## The importance of learning a modern foreign language

Learning a foreign language to GCSE level gives our students a broader, more balanced curriculum and can contribute towards the English Baccalaureate. Foreign language skills are essential for travel, tourism, business and for many international links in the world of work. The GCSE Spanish course provides a firm foundation for advanced language study in combination with other subjects in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education. Foreign language learning gives valuable insights into the culture, society and attitudes of our European partners and the communication skills which are developed are important and will benefit all students of Spanish.

Most students are expected to follow a GCSE language course. Students currently studying one language will continue with the same language. Students currently studying two languages can either continue with both, or choose one.

## What will students study?

Over the two-year course, students will study topics under three main themes:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular cultures
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us.

Year 10 topics include:	Year 11 topics include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identity and relationships with others</li><li>▪ Healthy living and lifestyle</li><li>▪ Education and work</li><li>▪ Free-time activities</li><li>▪ Customs, festivals and celebrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Celebrity culture</li><li>▪ Travel and tourism, including places of interest</li><li>▪ Media and technology</li><li>▪ The environment and where people live</li></ul>

## How will this course be assessed?

**Examination:** 100% of total, four exams

There are four skills with equal weighting:

- Listening 25%
- Speaking 25%
- Reading 25%
- Writing 25%

GCSE Spanish has a Foundation Tier (grades 1 - 5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4 - 9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier at the end of the two-year course.

The Modern Languages Department has run a successful Spanish exchange for over 10 years, and students in Years 10 and 11 taking Spanish are encouraged to participate in this program. This is a fantastic chance for students to develop their language skills in a real-life context and to experience family life in Spain.

# COMPULSORY NON-ACCREDITED SUBJECTS

## Physical Education

### (Non-Examination Course)

In Key Stage 4 all students will participate in five lessons (2 doubles and 1 single) of core PE per fortnight cycle. Extensive facilities available include our playing fields, sports hall, fitness suite, tennis/netball and basketball courts, and use of the leisure centre for squash.

We continue progress in the traditional sports and introduce new activities which may appeal to a wider cross-section of students. In the summer term of Year 11 our programme is more flexible, and students can make a choice of activities.

The underlying need for fitness awareness and improvement is addressed directly as well as being inherent in all activities, so students will be able to plan their own programme for use out of school.

House matches and inter-school fixtures continue at this level in the major games and are well supported and keenly contested. Backwell has a very good sporting reputation which we hope our students will maintain. Many will feel encouraged through their experiences to continue fitness training and games playing after they leave us and for many years to come.

Programme	Boys	Girls
Terms 1, 2, 3&4	Team games (Rugby, Football, Basketball) Rackets (Squash, Badminton, Mini Tennis) Health and fitness activities Variety of adaptive games & activities (Danish Long Ball, Ultimate Frisbee, Benchball, Dodgeball, Lacrosse)	Team games (Netball, Handball, Basketball) Rackets (Squash, Badminton, Mini Tennis) Health and fitness activities Variety of adaptive games & activities (Danish long ball, Ultimate Frisbee, Benchball, Dodgeball, Lacrosse)
Terms 5 and 6	Striking and fielding games (Rounders, Softball and Cricket) Athletics Option block	Striking and fielding games (Rounders, Softball and Cricket) Athletics Option block

# Personal Development

## **(Non-examination course)**

Alongside their formal curriculum, we feel it is essential to prepare students for life in modern Britain enabling them to make informed choices about their futures. As well as this we also aim to make Backwell students responsible citizens who are tolerant and respectful of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles who grow into adults who possess the skills and attributes to become valuable members of society.











The Personal Development curriculum is an integrated collection of themes which can be found throughout all curriculum areas. There are specific topics covered during twice weekly tutor sessions as well as a discrete, Personal Development lesson which occurs once a fortnight in the timetable. Careers information and guidance (CIAG), the statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum as well as Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education (SMSCE) content are all supported in these sessions.



# STUDENTS - CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

## Good and Bad Reasons!

Take a moment to consider why you are making these choices:

Good reasons for choosing a subject	Bad reasons for choosing a subject
 You are good at it.	 You like the teacher you've got at the moment.
 You like it.	 Your best friend is going to do it.
 You've read the information about it.	 You don't know what it involves exactly, but it sounds good.
 You've been to the information session about it.	 You don't like it much, but there's nothing better.
 You've talked it over with your parents.	
 It fits in with your future ambitions.	

## Option Subject Information

To give you an understanding of the courses that are available to you in Years 10 and 11 our options evening will provide an opportunity to see Year 10 - 11 work from options subjects as well as a chance to talk to students and staff. We hope this evening will be useful to giving you a flavour of what courses are on offer.

Finally... if you are not sure, ask!

Your teachers, your tutor, and your Head of House  
are there to help you.

## KEY DATES

Week beginning 27 January 2025	'Options' process launched. Options booklets distributed in Tutor Time to Year 9 students
Thursday 30 January 2025	Year 9 Options Evening
Week beginning Monday 3 February 2025	Options forms given out by tutors.
Wednesday 26 February 2025	Deadline for handing in options forms.