



ASHFORD SCHOOL
Inspiring Minds

GCSE OPTIONS

2026-2028

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Introduction

Choosing your GCSE subjects is an important step in your educational adventure and is one of your first opportunities to consider the future that you wish to create, and where your qualifications might lead.

The GCSE courses are stimulating, enabling you to stretch your academic interests, and it is exciting to pursue the subjects you have chosen.

Of course, the academic work is just a part of your GCSE experience. We strongly encourage you to continue with your co-curricular activities so that you can develop important life-skills and experience joy and success beyond the classroom environment. We value your contributions to the school community and as you progress closer towards the Sixth Form, there may be opportunities to take more of a leading role in an existing activity or to try something new.

Although you will be busy over the next two years, this is a special time in which you will enjoy greater independence, more responsibility and a stronger sense of purpose. We are here to support you and to provide guidance so that you make decisions that will help you to realise your ambitions.

The future promises to be very exciting, so work hard, play hard and enjoy the next stage of your adventure at Ashford School.

Mr Matt Worrell
Head of Year 9



How do I choose my GCSE subjects?

For some, the choice of subjects will be obvious but for others it will be less so.

This booklet, together with help from your parents, tutors and teachers, should help you to make informed choices which are appropriate for you as an individual, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility to cope with any changes of direction that you might have in the future.

Future employers and university admissions officers will want to see that you have a range of skills and knowledge. They will also want to be sure that you can communicate effectively in discussions, and on paper, in more than one language; solve problems logically; manipulate numbers; use information technology efficiently and involve yourself in activities.

High achievement at GCSE is important evidence that employers will use to make judgments about you. Universities are consistent in their advice: they prefer quality to quantity. We would urge you to pick subjects that you feel enthusiastic about and in which you feel you will succeed.

What subjects are available?

At Ashford School, students are given the opportunity to study up to 10 GCSEs.

The core subjects you must study are:

- English Language (or IGCSE English as a Second Language).
- English Literature (NB: this is not open to students of the above IGCSE course).
- Mathematics.
- Double or Triple Science (see subject page for details).

The table below shows the subjects we plan to offer, subject to viable groups and staffing. The subjects have been arranged into four blocks based on our experience of popular combinations in previous cohorts. You will receive a link to an MS Form where you will be asked to indicate your initial choices, based on your selection of one subject from each of the four blocks. There will also be an opportunity for you to indicate an additional preference, if you find that the arrangement below does not allow for your first choice of subjects. For example, we may be able to accommodate a dual language selection, but this cannot be guaranteed as it is dependent on pupil choices and timetabling.

First draft of option blocks

For the majority of students, 4 options are chosen. However, for those seeking a reduced curriculum, 3 options can be chosen. This can be indicated on the options form.

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Business	Art & Design	Business	Drama
English as an additional language	Design & Technology	Computer Science	German
History	Food Preparation & Nutrition	French	History
Religious Studies	Geography	Physical Education	Learning Support
	Music	Spanish	Spanish
			Statistics

Please note: it occasionally happens that a subject does not run because of very low numbers opting for the subject. This is because the educational experience for the students is better if the group is of a reasonable size to allow for discussion and exchange of ideas.

In addition to the GCSE subjects, all students in Years 10 and 11 have tutorials, Personal Social Health Education and weekly Games and PE sessions. You will also be expected to contribute to the co-curricular life of the School.

What are the important dates for my GCSE Option Choices?

Thursday 13 November - Year 9 Divisional Assembly



Thursday 13 November - Year 9 GCSE Options Evening for Parents



Thursday 20 November - Year 9 GCSE First Indication Options Forms returned



November to February - GCSE Options Interviews if needed



Thursday 5 February - Year 9 Parents' Evening



Monday 16 February - Final Return of GCSE Choices



February to end of Spring Term 2026 - Final Discussions with students



Summer Term - Confirmation of Choices*

Note: After that time, you may still change your subject choice, providing that the changes fit the blocking scheme and that there is sufficient space in the teaching sets.

Where do I go for support?

We are confident that you will enjoy your experience of school in Years 10 and 11, but we recognise that there may be a few bumps along the way. The pastoral team are ready to offer support so that you can get back on track quickly.

At Ashford School, the focus of our pastoral and academic support is on each year group which also includes a House system. The tutorial and pastoral system at Ashford School works primarily on a horizontal basis with the Heads of Year managing the needs of pupils in conjunction with their team of Tutors and Assistant Tutors. In each year group, the Tutor is the first point of contact for both pupils and parents; the Tutor will liaise with and communicate any serious or ongoing issues to the Head of Year (and Head of Boarding House for boarders) and Mr Curry, Assistant Head (Pastoral, Safeguarding and Wellbeing).

Pupils in Year 10 will usually be assigned a tutor who will be their primary contact of support and work with them throughout the GCSE courses. Tutors meet daily with their groups and lead most PSHE sessions. This means that by the time students are in Year 11 and are considering their A Level choices, their tutors will know them very well and be able to offer helpful guidance for the next stage.

Mrs Ndongong, Assistant Head (Academic Monitoring & Performance and Sixth Form Lead) has overarching view of the academic life and progress of the students. She is assisted by three Heads of Year: Ms Martin, Miss Stirling and Mr Worrell.

There may be times when some pupils may require some more specialist support, and the School offers the facility of an experienced Wellbeing Team who can provide a range of services and interventions to support the physical, emotional and mental health of the pupils.

Where might my GCSE choices lead?

Mr Grech oversees the Careers Programme in the School and is available for 1-1 guidance sessions with pupils. He can also be contacted by parents for advice.

In Year 9, students participate in an informal, group interview with three or four of their peers to discuss their GCSE Options and consider the possible direction of their choices.

In Year 10, Students continue their journey using the Unifrog careers platform. They will complete personality and skills assessments which will match and recommend specific subjects and careers options. The outcomes of these assessments will be reviewed during PSHE sessions in which they will be introduced to the range of options available to them post-16 and post-18. In these sessions students will identify their careers aspirations and begin to map out their academic journey to achieve this.

At the end of the academic year students have a next steps meeting with either a member of SLT or the Careers/HE leaders. Students identified as requiring additional support and guidance are invited to a follow-up 1-1 with Mr Grech at the beginning of Year 11. Further careers themed sessions are undertaken in PSHE, and students are able to book an appointment with Mr Grech for any further support.

How can I enrich my experience in Years 10 and 11?

The co-curricular programme provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to try a range of different activities to complement their learning adventure at the School.

As pupils progress through the School, they are encouraged to start to specialise a little more in either sport, music or drama. Pupils in Years 10-11 will find that their chosen activities will have a higher standard, and the level of commitment will be greater. For example, in music, pupils may switch from the training orchestra to the full orchestra or jazz band.

From Year 9 and above, pupils are also encouraged to participate in experiences and develop specific skills that will support them for life after Ashford School. Activities such as Combined Cadet Force, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and debating are an important part of this phase. There is also a greater focus on academic enrichment through activities such as Science Olympiads or Maths Society, as well as opportunities to broaden horizons through supporting Primary school workshops.

What happens after my GCSEs?

Nearly all pupils will progress into the Sixth Form where they can study a range of qualifications. Most pupils will follow a curriculum of three A Levels. Level 3 qualifications are also available and some pupils may also elect to prepare for the Extended Project Qualification. Sixth Formers enjoy greater autonomy and independence and find it stimulating to refine their curriculum to focus on their academic interests.

As important role models in the School, pupils flourish with the greater leadership opportunities. Indeed, they find valuable time in which they feel they can be proactive and give back to the community. Many comment that the Sixth Form is the highlight of their educational experience at Ashford School and their experiences during their GCSE courses are an important step in this direction.



CORE SUBJECTS

English Language

Board: AQA

Specification: 8700

AND

English Literature

Board: AQA

Specification: 8702

Why study GCSE English Language?

GCSE English Language enables pupils to examine a variety of challenging texts and to enhance their analytical and evaluative skills. Pupils learn to develop a hypothesis and justify their opinion in a rigorous argument. They also experiment with a variety of writing genres and styles, learning to utilise language precisely and effectively to address the requirements of a specific audience and purpose.

Why study GCSE English Literature?

GCSE English Literature gives pupils the opportunity to read and explore culturally significant texts. Pupils are encouraged to engage with 'Big Ideas' and consider how the writers present their characterisation and themes effectively. They will also examine the significance of context and its influence on a text.

Important information

Please note, all pupils are prepared for a GCSE in English Language. A few students will study this as a single pathway. Most pupils will also follow the English Literature course. The English Department will provide guidance about these pathways to ensure pupils are able to enhance their potential achievement.

Course Overview and Content: GCSE English Language

Pupils study non-fiction and fiction extracts from the 19th century to the present day. They develop their extended writing skills (including imaginative expression and presenting viewpoints) and also enhance their spoken language skills.

This is a linear course leading to two examinations:

- **Paper 1:** Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1 hour 45 minutes)
- **Paper 2:** Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1 hour 45 minutes)

NB: The spoken language task is a compulsory internally assessed and moderated qualification. It does not contribute towards the final GCSE grade.

Course Overview and Content: GCSE English Literature

This is a linear course leading to two examinations:

- **Paper 1:** Shakespeare and 19th Century Fiction: Pupils study a Shakespeare play 'Macbeth' and a 19th century prose text 'A Christmas Carol'. They are required to examine an extract closely and then consider how it illuminates the whole text (1 hour 45 minutes).
- **Paper 2:** Modern Literature: Pupils study a modern text 'An Inspector Calls' and the Power and Conflict cluster from the AQA Anthology 'Poems Past and Present'. They will also analyse an unseen poem (2 hour 15 minutes).

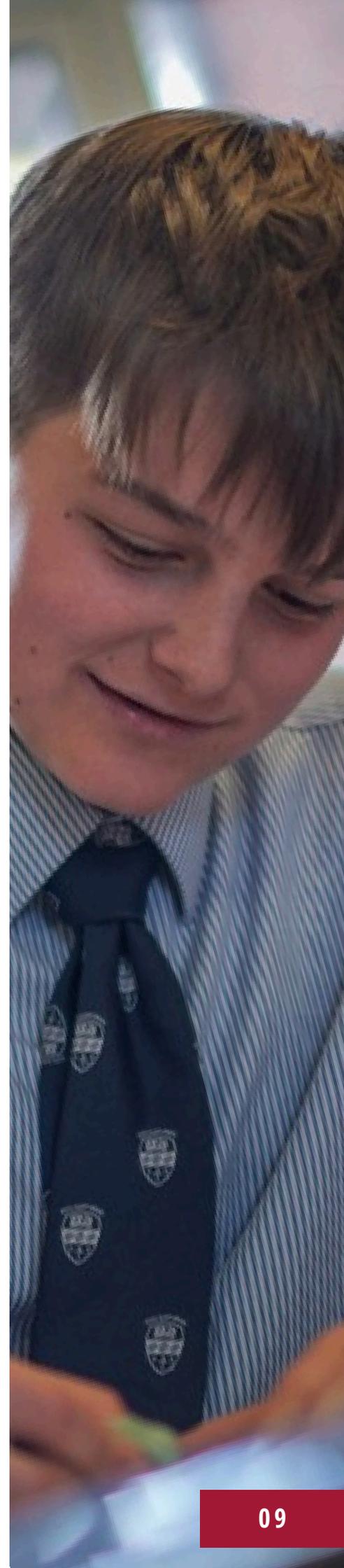
Enrichment

During the course, pupils may have the opportunity to attend live performances of the literature texts, talks by visiting writers or alumni who have pursued a literary direction in their career or to participate in writing workshops. We continue to encourage pupils to compose their independent material for 'A' Magazine and make the most of the wealth of resources in the Somerville Library.

Future pathways

For Key Stage 5, pupils can choose the A Level English Language and Literature combined course. This course contains aspects of the Literature course, looking at Voices in Speech and Writing, along with the added element of a creative writing coursework.

An A Level in English Language and Literature can be combined with a variety of academic subjects such as History, MFL, Psychology and Religious Studies, or even science-based subjects. Beyond university, a qualification in English Literature/Language can lead to a wide range of careers such as journalism, publishing, teaching, marketing, broadcasting, business or the legal profession.





IGCSE English as a Second Language

Board: Cambridge Assessment International Education

Specification: 0991/0993

Why study IGCSE English as a Second Language?

If you have come to the UK to study and improve your English, this is the course for you! This is a high-level IGCSE English examination for international students whose first language is not English. The focus is on academic uses of English, and it helps students with the language they need for all their other subjects as well. Pupils who successfully complete this course acquire strong language skills that will help them in their future academic careers, both at A Level and university.

Important information

The qualification involves 2 examination papers at the end of Year 11 focusing on reading, writing, and listening. There is an additional speaking paper that can serve as a separate endorsement or form part of the grade. The decision to choose one pathway or another will be made in consultation with the Head of EAL.

Entry requirements

Pupils are expected to have a level B1 according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to gain access to Year 10 and to GCSE study in Ashford School.

Enrichment

At the end of Year 10, pupils take a study trip to Brighton or another historical town in the southeast as part of a unit of study on buildings and monuments.

Future pathways

This qualification is widely recognised by English universities (e.g. UCL, Bristol University, Bath University) as an acceptable English language requirement.

Course Overview and Content

Year 1 of this course is built around a variety of topics taken from subjects across the curriculum.

Year 2 of this course is designed to strengthen your examination skills so that you can achieve the best grade you are capable of.

- **Paper 1** is 2 hours and covers a range of reading texts and comprehension exercises and three writing tasks, demonstrating your ability to write clearly and effectively to a specific audience.
- **Paper 2** is 55 minutes and is a listening paper focusing on real-life radio broadcasts and podcasts. There is also a 20-minute oral examination which is taken in March or April.

There is no coursework for this paper; the grades are awarded solely on the basis of the examination.

Mathematics

Board: Pearson Edexcel

Specification: 4MA1

Why study IGCSE Mathematics?

Studying Mathematics is stimulating and rewarding. It gives an insight into the world around you and equips you with valuable tools to solve real-life problems. In addition to enhancing your analytical and critical thinking skills, it offers invaluable support to a variety of other subjects including Chemistry, Computer Science, Geography and Physics, to name but a few.

Important information

The Mathematics department teaches the International GCSE syllabus. This is a linear course with final examinations in June. It is a recognized qualification for university entrance and is equivalent to a GCSE.

Course Overview and Content

The International GCSE is a traditional course emphasising the study of number, algebra and geometry including an introduction to sets, functions and calculus. It also includes some probability and statistics topics. The course is accessible at all levels, whether or not a student intends to pursue Mathematics beyond GCSE. It provides a solid foundation of Mathematics for every pupil, with plenty of time to secure basic skills. The ablest mathematicians will also find it to be an excellent preparation for their A Level studies, allowing those with strong algebra skills to tackle the algebra syllabus more rigorously. It is also more accessible for students from international schools.

IGCSE Assessment

At Key Stage 4, there is no coursework. Assessment is based purely on two final examinations in Year 11, which are of equal weight.

The International GCSE allows calculators in both papers, though numeracy skills are encouraged throughout the course.

Enrichment

Students with exceptional mathematical ability may be (on recommendation of their teacher) allowed to study Additional Mathematics as well, leading to a Free-Standing Mathematics Qualification (FSMQ) equivalent to an AS Level qualification.

Future pathways

For all students, the International GCSE in Mathematics is a gateway to opportunities. As a gold standard in Mathematics, it provides all pupils with the necessary qualification for advanced studies whether in Science, Humanities or Arts and beyond as a qualification for employment. Many students will choose to continue their study of maths at A Level where the subject is very popular. For the really able, there is the opportunity to take two mathematics A Levels, Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

To take A Level Mathematics in the Sixth Form, it is essential that you gain at least a 7 in International GCSE. To take A Level Further Mathematics you must gain at least an 8 in International GCSE.



Learning Enhancement

Learning Enhancement Lessons helps students who have accessed Learning Support lessons at Key Stage 3 or where it has been recommended in discussion with the SENCO and pastoral team. Lessons are divided into three:

Academic English

Delivered by the English Faculty, consolidating and reinforcing key skills required for the GCSE English Language syllabus, primarily focusing on the skills needed in Section A of the papers, such as comprehension, inference and analysis, summary and comparison, alongside core grammatical skills. There is also a focus on creative and persuasive writing skills, which are needed for Section B of the exams.

Academic Maths

Delivered by the Mathematics faculty consolidating and reinforcing key skills required for the GCSE Mathematics syllabus, primarily focusing on Foundation topics such as percentages and other number work, the fundamentals of algebra, such as simplifying and solving, and other key topics in data and geometry.

Academic Consolidation

Small group sessions with a Learning Support Specialist, where pupils are supported with homework, coursework and revision for their GCSE subjects. These lessons provide flexibility for students to seek guidance as required and we work in collaboration with subject teachers to direct students to relevant resources, encouraging them to be successful independent learners. The support offered in these lessons will vary, being tailored very much to pupils' individual needs as they arise.

Sciences

Board: AQA

Specification - Biology: 8461

Specification - Chemistry: 8462

Specification - Physics: 8463

Specification - Combined Science Trilogy: 8464

Why study GCSE Sciences?

The GCSE Science course aims to encourage pupils to:

- Acquire a systematic body of scientific knowledge, and the skills needed to apply this in new and changing situations, in a range of domestic, industrial and environmental contexts.
- Acquire an understanding of scientific ideas - how they develop, and the factors which may affect their development and their power, as well as their limitations.
- Plan and carry out investigative tasks, and consider and critically evaluate their own data, and that obtained from other sources, using ICT where appropriate.
- Use electronic (internet, apps, databases, simulations etc.) and/or more traditional sources of information (books, magazines, leaflets etc.) to research and plan an investigation.
- Select, organise and present information clearly and logically, and use appropriate scientific terms and conventions, and ICT, where appropriate.
- Interpret and evaluate scientific data from a variety of sources.

Important information

All pupils in Year 10 follow the same AQA GCSE Sciences course, allowing access at the end of Year 10 to either the dual award GCSE Combined Sciences Trilogy pathway or the Triple Science pathway of GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The Trilogy Course is comprised of all three sciences, but has slightly less content and is therefore worth two GCSEs only and is the pathway followed by most pupils. At GCSE, all students, regardless of pathway, are taught by subject specialists, in specialist laboratories, and all are prepared for access to A Level study.

Initially all Year 10 pupils are streamed in the sciences on the basis of the science assessments conducted in Year 9 or by entrance paper performance. All pupils in Year 10 follow the same course. At the end of Year 10, school examinations take place across the three sciences and all pupils are re-streamed for Year 11 on the basis of their scores. To maximise success at GCSE, it is at this point that most pupils will be guided to continue with the dual award GCSE Combined Science Trilogy, or be recommended to attempt the Triple award. Prospective Triple award pupils should expect to excel in Year 10 sciences and be adept at independent study.





External examination of all pupils takes place at the end of Year 11, where two papers are taken in each science. The papers for the Triple award are longer and include questions on additional material drawn from A Level specifications. Experimentation is part of each subject programme, must be completed by all pupils and is examined in the final papers.

Please note:

- Examination is at either Foundation or Higher tier. It is usual that all but the occasional entry will be at the Higher tier. Foundation papers limit grades to 1-5.
- Assessed progress is monitored by the Head of Science in an ongoing way. If during Year 11 it becomes apparent that a change from the triple award pathway to the dual award is in the best interests of an individual pupil, then this decision will be made by the Head of Science, following consultation with teachers, pupil and parents.

Course Overview and Content

Year 9	Biology	4.1.1 Cell structure, 4.1.2 Cell division, 4.1.3 Transport in cells, 4.2.2 Animal tissues, organs and organ systems, 4.4.2 Respiration
	Chemistry	4.8.2 Identification of common gases, 4.9.1 The composition and evolution of the atmosphere, 4.9.3 Atmospheric pollutants, 4.10 Using materials, 4.1.1 Atomic structure, 4.1.2 The periodic table, 4.6.1 Rate of reaction 4.5.1 Exothermic and endothermic reactions,
	Physics	4.1 Energy, 4.2 Electricity
Year 10	Biology	4.2.3 Plant tissues, organs and systems, 4.3.1 Communicable diseases, 4.4.1 Photosynthesis, 4.6.1.1 Sexual and asexual reproduction, 4.6.1.6 Genetic inheritance, 4.6.2.1 Variation, 4.7.1 Adaptations, interdependence and competition
	Chemistry	4.10.1 Earth's resources, 4.10.2 Life cycle assessment, 4.4.1 Reactivity of metals, 4.7.1 Carbon compounds, 4.9.2 Greenhouse gases, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 Bonding, structure and properties, 4.2.3 Structure and bonding of carbon, 4.2.4 Bulk and surface properties of matter, 4.6.1 Rate of reaction, 4.5.2 Energy Changes, 4.8.1 Purity, formulations and chromatography, 4.4.2 Reactions of acids
	Physics	4.3 Particle model of matter, 4.4 Atomic structure, 4.5 Forces, 4.6 Waves
Year 11	Biology	4.5.2 The human nervous system, 4.5.3.1 Human endocrine system
	Chemistry	4.3.1 Conservation of mass and quantitative chemistry, 4.3.2 Amounts of substance, 4.4.3 Electrolysis, 4.6.2 Reversible reactions and dynamic equilibrium, 4.10.4 The Haber process 4.1.3 Transition metals, 4.7.2 Reactions of alkenes, alcohols and carboxylic acids, 4.7.3 Synthetic and natural polymers, 4.8.3 Identification of ions, 4.3.3 Yield and atom economy, 4.3.4 Concentrations of solutions, 4.3.5 Molar gas volumes 4.5.2 Chemical cells and fuel cells,
	Physics	4.7 Magnetism and electromagnetism, 4.8 Space

Enrichment

Pupils who consistently demonstrate a high level of ability in Physics are entered for the British Physics Olympiad Competitions - the Junior Challenge in Year 10 and the Intermediate Challenge in Year 11.

In Chemistry, small teams take part in Royal Society of Chemistry competitions when they are organised at regional level. In Year 11, pupils who are considering A level Chemistry or a science degree can join the Chemistry Academy. The Chemistry Academy is a co-curricular activity where exhibition chemistry is demonstrated. The pupils will become Science Ambassadors and will host students from local primary schools to share their passion for science with the next generation. This is a fantastic addition to a UCAS application.

Pupils showing enthusiasm and commitment in Biology could embark on the CREST programme (Discovery, Bronze, Silver and Gold). Students are also entered for the Intermediate Biology Olympiad.

Future pathways

The grade requirement for A Level study at Ashford School is at least grade 7 in the relevant single science or grade 77 in Trilogy. If you are not sure whether you should study a specific area of science at A Level, then the following websites provide more detailed information:

Biology: www.iob.org

Physics: www.careers.iop.org

Chemistry: www.rsc.org

Engineering: www.semta.org.uk

There are many scientific fields, leading to many careers:

Astronomy	Ecology	Human Biology	Physics
Botany	Engineering/Technology	Maths	Science Communication
Chemistry	Food Science and Nutrition	Materials Science	Zoology
Earth Science	Health and Medicine	Nanotechnology	Etc ...

You can be anything you want to be... These are but a few...

Applied Mathematician, Asset Manager, Astronomy Lecturer, Astrophysicist, Radio Producer, Biotechnology Research Manager, Chartered Mechanical Engineer, Chemical Physicist, Climate System Modeller, Curator, Forensic Scientist...





Optional Subjects

Computer Science

Board: OCR

Specification: J277

Why study GCSE Computer Science?

Computer Science allows pupils to develop a practical understanding of how computer systems work, as well as giving them the ability to create a wide variety of software in a written programming language.

This mixture of the theoretical and practical allows students to develop numerous skills. Chief amongst these is the ability to solve complex problems by taking the requirements of a task, breaking it down into its components and developing a solution. This highly prized skill is often viewed as a weakness amongst graduates and is something at which computer scientists excel. With its technical and scientific requirements, Computer Science complements similar subjects such as Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry well.

Important information

Students will learn how to program using Visual Basic at GCSE. This language allows them to easily get to grips with all the theory work covered during the course and provides an excellent starting point for learning further languages such as C# and JavaScript at A Level.

Entry requirements

Students should feel confident that they can take the practical skills they have begun to learn in Year 9 and develop them further. They should have an interest in computers, science and technology and be keen to learn more about how they work.

Course Overview and Content

Component 1 – Computer Systems (1hr 30mins exam, 50% of GCSE grade)

Covering the physical elements of Computer Science including:

- Systems architecture
- Memory and storage
- Computer networks
- Network security
- System software
- Ethical, social, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of technology

Component 2 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming (1hr 30mins exam, 50% of GCSE grade)

Covering the computational principles that underlying coding solution including:

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Programming robust programs
- Boolean logic
- Programming Languages

Students will also be given the opportunity to undertake a variety of practical programming tasks, the skills gained during which will be examined in Component 2.

Enrichment

Pupils will be given the opportunity to take part in the Bebras computational thinking competition and may proceed onto the Oxford Computer Science Challenge, depending on their progress. They will also have access to several different programming competitions throughout their two-year course.

Future pathways

Some students will go on to study Computer Science at A Level and beyond, embarking on a wide variety of careers ranging from software and games development to artificial intelligence to cyber security. Some will combine their abilities in Computer Science with other subjects they enjoy, for example in helping develop programs for gene research projects or mathematical models for Economics. For others, simply having a deep understanding of how computer systems work is vital, especially as such systems become more and more embedded in both our home and work lives.



Modern Foreign Languages (French / German / Spanish)

Board: AQA

Specification: 8652 / 8662 / 8692

Why study a Modern Foreign Language at GCSE?

Just think: how exciting would it be to speak a language without having to think about every single word? This is our goal! If you are prepared to work steadily throughout the course, you will be surprised and delighted by what you can achieve – a practical and life-long skill.

With foreign language skills you will have a **marked advantage in an increasingly competitive job market** – at all levels and in all professions. Students entering the world of work with language skills are understood to be **intelligent, committed, well-organised** and interesting.

In order to properly get to grips with a different culture, you have to travel and immerse yourself in that environment, proving that you are independent, adaptable and adventurous. Your ability to communicate in another language will be admired!

Graduates with Modern Languages have the **best employment rate** after medicine, and language graduates earn up to 20% more.

Important information

AQA GCSE Language courses have a Foundation tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier. All question papers must be taken in the same series.

Entry requirements

Pupils intending to study a language at GCSE will have studied said language throughout Key Stage 3. If a pupil has not followed an entire KS3 course in the said language, acceptance on to a KS4 course is subject to a satisfactory completion of a test in the chosen MFL subject.

Course Overview and Content

MFL GCSE

In any of the MFL subjects on offer, there are four components:

1. Listening and Understanding
2. Speaking
3. Reading and Understanding
4. Writing

All four of these components are examined at the end of Year 11. The Speaking exam is usually conducted between the end of March and early May of Year 11.

This is an overview of the specification:

Unit 1 Listening	Unit 2 Speaking	Unit 3 Reading	Unit 4 Writing
Examination Weighting 25%	Examination Weighting 25%	Examination Weighting 25%	Examination Weighting 25%
<p>Foundation tier: 35 minutes, 40 marks</p> <p>Higher tier: 45 minutes, 50 marks</p>	<p>Foundation tier: 7–9 minutes (+ 15 minutes' supervised preparation time), 50 marks</p> <p>Higher tier: 10–12 minutes (+ 15 minutes' supervised preparation time), 50 marks</p>	<p>Foundation Tier: 45 minutes, 50 marks</p> <p>Higher Tier: 1 hour, 50 marks</p>	<p>Foundation Tier: 1 hour 10 minutes, 50 marks</p> <p>Higher Tier: 1 hour 15 minutes, 50 marks</p>
<p>Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (32 marks at Foundation tier and 40 marks at Higher tier)</p> <p>Section B – dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list (8 marks at Foundation tier and 10 marks at Higher tier)</p>	<p>The format is the same at Foundation tier and Higher tier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-play (10 marks) • Reading aloud task and short conversation (15 marks) • Photo card discussion (25 marks) 	<p>Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally (40 marks)</p> <p>Section B – translation of sentences from the target language into English, minimum of 35 words at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier (10 marks)</p>	<p>Tasks included at Foundation tier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing short sentences to describe a photo • writing a text in response to five compulsory bullet points • five short grammar tasks • translation of sentences from English into the target language • writing a text in response to three compulsory bullet points <p>Tasks included at Higher tier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • translation of sentences from English into the target language • writing a text in response to three compulsory bullet points • an open-ended writing task (student responds to two compulsory bullet points)

Students must take all four question papers at the same tier. All question papers must be taken in the same series. The themes on which the assessment will be based are as follows:

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

Students will be issued with either a digital or a paper textbook in which the GCSE vocabulary and grammar are listed, as are the strategies for understanding, which are expected to be developed.



Enrichment

The Modern Languages department is lively and exciting, running GCSE courses in French, German and Spanish. Working with native speakers as assistants, the modern language teachers are passionate about their subject and committed to transferring this enthusiasm to their pupils. We make no claims that a modern language will be easy, but we know exactly what is needed to maximise the potential of all our pupils and have the determination and expertise to ensure they achieve this. A full programme of cultural trips and exchanges helps to bring classroom work to life.

We regularly organise trips to Spain and Germany to give you the chance to practise your language skills in real settings.

Future pathways

You can continue your language studies at A Level in the Sixth Form with a minimum requirement of a 7/8 grade at GCSE. This subject can be combined with a variety of academic and practical subjects, such as History, Geography, English, Economics, Business Studies, Design Technology, and any science-based subjects. Given the demand for culturally intelligent, outward looking and polyglot employees, it makes absolute sense to include an MFL in your A Level portfolio.

EAL Support

(This may be in place of another subject)

No Exam

English as an Additional Language Lessons

These lessons are suitable for international students who need to improve their English language skills, but who may take part in the mainstream English lessons with the rest of their year group.

This course is designed to help pupils refine their general and academic English, as well as give students language support to help them succeed in their other GCSE subjects.

Most EAL pupils are entered for GCSEs in their home languages (i.e. a Chinese pupil will sit IGCSE Chinese as a First Language). Some EAL students may also do English as a Second Language with the EAL Department.

All international students will be assessed on arrival by the EAL staff in order to determine the level of support each pupil requires.

Statistics

Board: Edexcel
Specification: STO

Why study GCSE Statistics?

Data is all around us. In the modern world, a strong understanding of how to use and interpret data is an essential underpinning for scientific pursuits, in the world of marketing, in business and in the wider world. Statistics helps us make sense of the information we are bombarded with through our news and through social media, which statistics can help us make sense of. For those who enjoy studying Mathematics, this will give a greater insight into practical applications of data.

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements, but it is advisable that pupils enjoy Mathematics and specifically the data and probability aspects of the KS3 Mathematics curriculum. Pupils should also be confident in their numeracy to get the most out of the course.

Course Overview

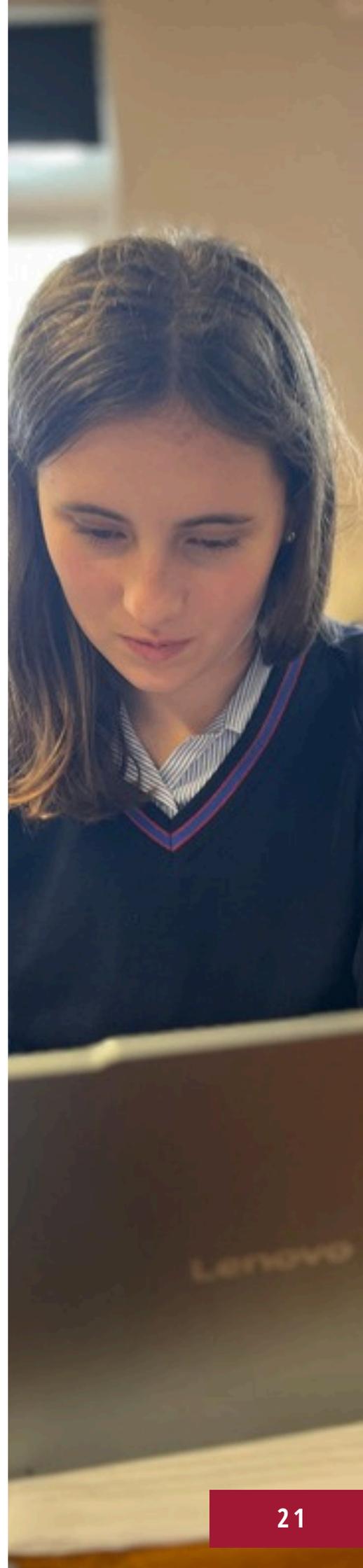
There are three strands in this course:

Data collection

This component covers the collection of data, including the planning and decision making required to obtain and record the data. Pupils will learn about the different types of data and how to obtain representative samples from larger data populations.

Data processing, representation and analysis

Once collected, data needs to be tabulated and represented in a variety of ways, so pupils will learn how to create and interpret diagrams such as pie charts, stem and leaf diagrams, histograms, population pyramids and choropleth maps. They will also learn how to interpret data, including measuring skewness, different types of mean, other measures of central tendency and dispersion and recognising errors or distortion in graphical representations. They will also analysis data for correlation, finding lines of best fits and correlation coefficients.



Probability

Pupils will compare measured data to theoretically predicted outcomes, using representations such as two-way tables, Venn Diagrams and other sample space diagrams to represent outcomes. Probability formulae, including for conditional probability and independence will be used to compare to experimental data. In addition, experimental data will also be compared to expected results from the binomial and normal distributions.

Enrichment

Pupils will have opportunities to use spreadsheets and to analyse real-world data. Sampling is a key part of the curriculum, so pupils will also have opportunities to create samples of data and to analyse these in their lessons.

Future Pathways

Statistics teaches skills that are essential in many A level subjects. In addition to providing an excellent foundation for the statistical elements of Mathematics and Further Mathematics, data analysis skills are key parts of Business, Biology, Economics, Geography and Psychology A levels.

Beyond school, statistics are widely used in many scientific disciplines, business, marketing and in social sciences

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Board: AQA

Specification: 8585

Why study GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition?

Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and popular course which encompasses many practical cooking skills. It aims to teach you all about food in its widest sense and help you to learn and develop a wide range of food preparation skills. It has been developed to help you understand:

- What food is composed of, why we need it and how it affects our long-term health.
- How food can be prepared and cooked skilfully and safely to produce delicious and nutritious meals for different people and situations.
- What happens to the ingredients in food when you prepare and cook them.
- Where food comes from and how it is produced and sold.
- Which foods are eaten in different cultures throughout the world.
- How the food choices people make affect the health and wellbeing of themselves, their families and the people who produce the food.
- How the food choices people make affect the health and well-being of the global environment and its natural resources.
- How you can become an informed and thoughtful consumer of food.
- Food Science – chemical and functional properties of ingredients.

Entry requirements

The Key Stage 3 curriculum at Ashford School has been designed to equip you with the skills required to access and achieve in Food Preparation and Nutrition at GCSE. Our most successful pupils will be creative, inquisitive and have an interest in nutrition, as well as a sound basic knowledge of Food Science, and the health, safety and hygiene rules that are implemented when preparing any food. Students must enjoy the subject, have a good level of skill in cooking, and have an interest in the characteristics and properties of our food. Good time management, analytical, design and evaluation skills are also an advantage. **Food Preparation and Nutrition has a maximum capacity of 16 pupils.**

Course Overview and Content

Food preparation skills and knowledge is developed and integrated into five core topics which include: Food nutrition and health, food science, food safety, food choice and food provenance.

The specification consists of two NEA tasks. NEA1 is a food investigation task which is a written report and includes some practical investigations. NEA 2 consists of practical work and a written portfolio. The two elements of NEA work will be worth 50% of the final GCSE grade. A written examination is also part of the specification and makes up the other 50% of the final grading.





NEA Task 1: Food Investigation –

Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.
10hr written report 1500-2000 words. This is 15% of the final grade.

30 Marks

NEA Task 2: Food Preparation Assessment – Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.

20hr portfolio no more than 20 sides of A4. This is 35% of the final grade.

70 Marks

Written Exam: 1 hour 45 Minutes –

Multiple choice (20 Marks)

Five questions, each with several sub-questions (80 Marks)

**100
Marks**

Enrichment

'We aim to bring in past/alumni students, and local entrepreneurs in the industry to demonstrate and speak to our students, to showcase different roles and pathways connected to the subject.

As a department we also encourage students to experience as many food related activities as possible to broaden their horizons, and we offer sessions for students to develop and enhance skills and confidence in the practical skills.'

Future pathways

Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study or embark on an apprenticeship, or full-time career in the catering or food industries. This course can also act as a pathway or can be the foundation for career opportunities in areas such as: clinical dietic, food and nutrition management, public health nutrition, education and research and more modern food industry jobs, such as food styling, craft brewers, restaurant designers, mycologists, development chefs plus Food PR and communications.

Physical Education

Board: OCR

Specification: J587

Why study GCSE Physical Education?

GCSE PE is the first rung on the ladder of studying Sport Science, and is a very wide-ranging, engaging and challenging course, with both theory and practical elements to it. Students will receive a well-rounded introduction to the world of Sport Science, including topics that cover areas such as sports psychology, physiology, biomechanics, training and nutrition for sport, sociological aspects of sport, and performance analysis.

Important information

60% of the course is assessed in two written exams sat at the end of Year 11. 10% is assessed in the coursework element, also covered in Year 11. 30% of the course is assessed by performances in three different sporting activities. Please see below for more details, or access the course specification on the following link:

(<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/physical-education-j587-from-2016/>)

Entry requirements

Candidates must be **confident practical performers ideally in at least one, if not two, different sports, with the mindset and determination to become competent in a third sport during the course.** Those that are already able to perform to a high level in their chosen practical activities are highly encouraged to take this subject. As a minimum, active and regular participation in School clubs and teams, as well as external clubs and organisations where appropriate, is vital in order to meet the assessment requirements.

Course Overview and Content

This course is delivered, and ultimately assessed, in two written exams, a piece of controlled assessment (coursework) and practical assessments in three different sports.

Component 1: Applied Anatomy & Physiology and Physical Training

(Written paper titled 'Physical Factors affecting Performance' (1 hour, 60 marks) – 30%)

The paper includes multiple choice and short answer questions, and one extended writing question.

Component 2: Socio-Cultural Influences, Sports Psychology and Health, Fitness & Well-being

(Written paper titled 'Socio-Cultural Issues & Sports Psychology' (1 hour, 60 marks) – 30%)

The paper includes multiple choice and short answer questions, and one extended writing question.





Component 3: Non-Exam Assessment – Practical Assessments and Written Controlled Assessment (All internally marked and externally moderated – 40%)

- **Practical Assessments (30%):** candidates will select **three** sports that they play regularly, and to a good standard, from a set list to perform for assessment during the course. **One must be a team sport, one must be an individual sport, and the third can be a free choice from the given list of sports.** These are worth 30% of the final grade, and therefore 10% per activity.
- **Written Controlled Assessment (10%):** students will complete an Analysis & Evaluation of Performance (AEP) that centres around applying knowledge and understanding gained from their theory lessons to practical performances and fitness testing on themselves and other performers. This is completed under controlled assessment conditions in the presence of teaching staff, although there are plenty of opportunities for individual study and research in pupils' own time in preparation for these sessions.

Enrichment

Pupils may have the opportunity to visit the Body Worlds Museum in London, to supplement their studies in anatomy and physiology. Trips also run to elite sport science testing centres at a variety of universities. Students will also benefit from visiting speakers, presentations and online seminars that are normally only shared with sports scholars and aspiring elite performers.

Future pathways

- The opportunity to study the excellent OCR A 'Level PE Course or the BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport (the equivalent of one A Level) in the Sixth Form at Ashford School.
- A starting point on the journey to a wide variety of Sport Science and Sports Studies degrees at universities, both home and abroad. (All the top sporting universities, including Loughborough and Bath, accept BTEC Sport students).
- Supportive theory for aspiring and current elite practical performers, including nutrition and the science behind training principles and application, as well as performance analysis.
- A multitude of careers in the Leisure and Fitness industries, from personal trainers, instructors and coaches to business management.
- Relevant content and Sport Science theory that can contribute to future Physiotherapy courses.
- Pathways into sports coaching and teaching, as well as sports analysis careers. A number of our former GCSE PE pupils have followed these pathways, and you can read more about that on our website.

Humanities

Business

Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1BS0

Why study GCSE Business?

This course offers you the chance to study a subject that has a huge impact on our daily lives, and on the world around us. As consumers you are beginning to interact with businesses on a daily basis, and the quality of our lives can be improved by the products and services that businesses offer us. After completing your education you are likely to enter the workforce as employees, managers and even entrepreneurs. An understanding of how the world of business works will really help you to be successful in these roles. As global citizens you should also be able to evaluate the positive and negative impacts that businesses have on society in areas such as the environment and human rights. The pace of change in technology and AI is also having a dramatic effect on the way that businesses operate, so it is very useful for you to be up to speed with the latest business developments.

Important information

This is a two-year course. Assessment takes place at the end of Year 11 with two exam papers, each of which carries 90 marks and make up 50% of your final mark and 1-9 grade. The two papers consist of a mixture of calculation, multiple-choice, short-answer and extended writing questions. Many of the exam questions are based on source materials about the performance of real UK and overseas businesses, so it is helpful if you can build up your general business knowledge whilst studying the course.

Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements, but to do well in this subject you will need to have a mix of skills. There is some number work, so it helps if you are reasonably strong at Maths. There are also exam questions where you will have to do some extended writing, so reasonable literacy skills would also be required. The ability to think logically and problem-solve would also be an advantage, as you will be asked to interpret some tables and graphs of business data, and consider alternative solutions to problems that businesses are facing. Perhaps most importantly you are likely to do better if you have a personal interest in the business world and the role that entrepreneurs play in it.

Course Overview and Content

In Year 10 you will look at how to start a business, and then establish it in your chosen industry. You will learn how to spot a business opportunity, develop a product and then bring it successfully to market. You will study how you finance the launch and expansion of a firm, and consider the factors external to the business, such as the state of the economy, which will determine whether your business is successful or not.





In Year 11 you will study how businesses expand at a local, national and global level. You will learn about the strategies that entrepreneurs use to achieve this in the four key business areas of finance, marketing, operations and human resource management.

Year 10: Theme 1 Investigating Small Businesses	Year 11: Theme 2 Building a Business
Topic 1.1 Enterprise and entrepreneurship	Topic 2.1 Growing the business
Topic 1.2 Spotting a business opportunity	Topic 2.2 Making marketing decisions
Topic 1.3 Putting a business idea into practice	Topic 2.3 Making operations decisions
Topic 1.4 Making the business effective	Topic 2.4 Making finance decisions
Topic 1.5 Understanding external influences on business	Topic 2.5 Making human resource decisions

Enrichment

The business theory will be brought to life using the context of actual businesses that provide real world context for classroom learning. We will aim to bring business into the classroom by inviting local entrepreneurs to speak to our students. We are also planning a GCSE Business trip to a local business so that the students can see business ideas being put into practice.

Future pathways

Studying Business GCSE would obviously give you a strong foundation to build on if you then opted for A level Business, where you could study the subject in greater depth. It would also be an asset if you opted for A level Economics as there is some overlap in terms of both content and exam skills between the two subjects. Looking beyond Sixth Form there are a wide array of business, marketing and finance-related degree courses for which an early grounding in the subject would be useful. In terms of preparation for the world of work, studying GCSE Business would tell you whether you might like a career in one of the four key functional areas of the course, working as part of a marketing team, in personnel, in business logistics or being employed as an accountant. Of course we hope most of all that in the future you might become an entrepreneur yourself, so that you can make full use of ALL of your business knowledge.

Humanities

Geography

Board: AQA

Specification: 8035

Why study GCSE Geography?

Are you:

- Curious about the processes that shape the landscape of our planet?
- Interested in the UK and global development issues?
- Enthusiastic to engage with the debates associated with the environmental issues surrounding the resources we use from our 'one world'?
- Keen to develop your analytical and mathematical skills?

Then Geography is the subject for you!

Important information

The specification provides a useful insight into many processes and issues that are of growing importance to our society and way of life such as globalisation, urbanisation, and resource sustainability, while maintaining some of the more traditional elements of studying and appreciating the physical landscapes and processes around us. Certainly, an understanding of the natural environment and our interaction with it is now an essential part of modern education, especially in areas such as hazard impact and management. In addition, the study of Geography at this level allows the integration of scientific knowledge with humanity and the development of a range of transferable, mathematical and communication skills.

Entry requirements

There are no specific requirements, although a good geographical ability gained at Key Stage 3 including good graphical analytical skills and strong written evaluation skills are important.

Course Overview and Content

The new AQA GCSE Specification 8035 has linear assessment via three externally examined papers, outlined in detail below:

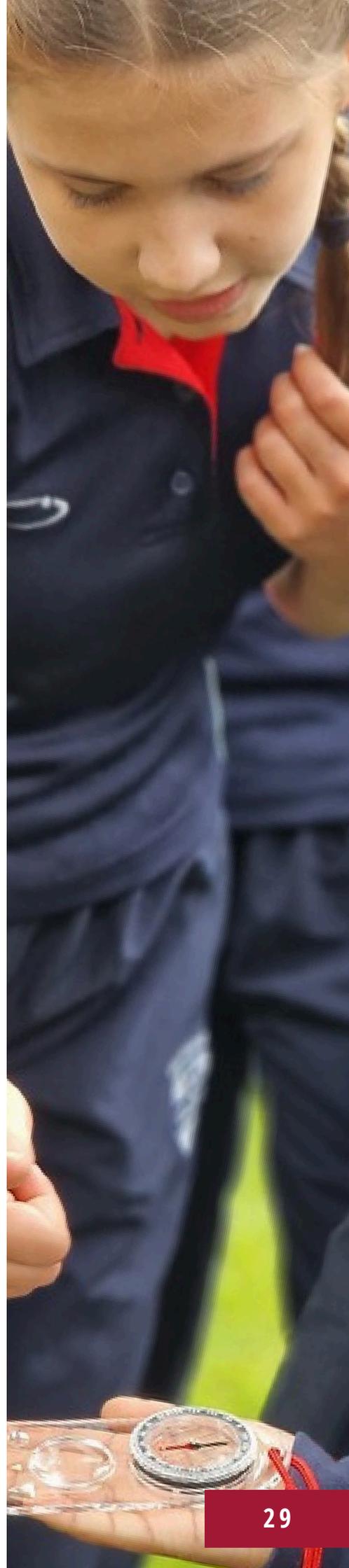
Paper 1 – Physical Environment worth 35% of the course

Paper 2 – Human Environment worth 35% of the course

Paper 3 – Geographical Applications worth 30% of the course.

All papers will be taken in the summer GCSE series at the end of Year 11.

The diverse content covered is given on the next page, reflecting the dynamic and contemporary, global nature of modern Geography.





Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment (35% of total assessment)

Section A – Challenge of Natural Hazards

- Tectonic hazards
- Tropical Storms
- Extreme Weather in the UK
- Climate change

Section B – Living World

- Ecosystems
- Tropical Rainforests
- Hot deserts

Section C – Physical Landscapes in the UK

- Coastal landscapes and management
- River landscapes and management

Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment (35% of total assessment)

Section A – Urban issues and challenges

- The global pattern of Urban Change
- Urban change and challenge in a Low Income Country (LIC)
- Urban change and challenge in a High Income Country (HIC)
- Sustainable development in an urban area

Section B – The Changing Economic World

- Economic development and quality of life
- Reducing the global Development Gap
- Economic development in a LIC or NEE
- Economic change in the UK

Section C – The Challenge of Resource Management

- Global Resource Management
- Resource management for the UK
- Water supply and issues

Paper 3: Geographical Applications (30% of total assessment)

Section A – Issue Evaluation Exercise

- Critical thinking and problem-solving exercise based on a pre-released thematic resource pack. This examines the students' geographical skills in analysing a range of resources (sketches, graphs, maps etc.) and their ability to synthesize and critically assess the information provided, taking into consideration the viewpoint of different stakeholders.

Section B – Fieldwork Investigation and Geographical Skills

- Students must undertake two contrasting enquiries that include the collection of primary data through geographical fieldwork. It is anticipated that these fieldwork opportunities will take place in Summer Term of Year 10.

Enrichment

Fieldwork is an integral part of the course so students should look forward to trips to local destinations where they can witness the theory in action. Pupils should also begin to look at the world around them with a keener geographical gaze and may be invited to attend lectures/conferences, take part in the Geographical Association annual competition, and are encouraged to regularly read the *Wideworld* magazine.

Future pathways

Geography's integrating nature makes it a good choice at A Level since it combines easily with maths, sciences, creative arts subjects and other humanities. It provides you with key transferable skills that are valued by employers in specific areas such as town planning, architecture, environmental conservation, journalism, leisure and tourism or civil engineering. More widely, it is highly regarded by financial (banking) and ICT industries as well as businesses where management roles are often filled by geographers.



Humanities

History

Board: AQA

Specification: 8145

Why study GCSE History?

History allows students to think deeply about pervasive human and societal issues, and produces well-rounded, politically and socially aware young people who can draw parallels between different eras and who understand the relevance of History to the present, allowing them to be active and informed citizens of the future. The worldly-wisdom it imparts is very good preparation for most workplaces and adult life in general, and crucial transferrable skills, such as distillation, evaluation, debate and persuasive writing are continuously strengthened as students discover and engage with the excitement and colour of past events.

Important information

We study four units in total, aiming to spend about 15 weeks on each unit. A range of different approaches are taken to lessons. Some will be discussion-based seminars, some will involve group work, or focused research on a specific enquiry question; some will be based on exam technique or the development of written skills. At GCSE, students begin to take greater responsibility for independent and group work and for meeting deadlines. The course is designed to be as accessible and supportive as possible, with a continued focus on building knowledge, subject-specific terminology and revision strategies. Booster sessions and drop-ins are also available for anyone who feels the need for a little extra support.

Entry requirements

The main requirements are enjoyment and interest, built up through studying History at KS3, as well as positive feedback and results in History assessments up to now. At the end of Year 9, if you have been at Ashford School, you will already have started the first GCSE unit of work on Health and the People. If you are joining from elsewhere at the start of Year 10, the Humanities Faculty have produced a [Transition to GCSE](#) booklet which will let you know what you can do to prepare in History.

Course Overview and Content

There are four main units in the new GCSE course, spread over two exams, each worth 50%. The units we have chosen to teach are varied, interesting and relevant to a lot of current national, global and political themes:

Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World (2 hours: 50%)

- Period studies: Germany 1890-1945 (looking at newly unified Germany under its emperors; Germany in World War 1, the post-war settlement and Weimar democracy, the rise of Hitler, Germany under Hitler and during World War 2).
- Depth studies: Conflict and Tension 1918-1939 (looking at international relations in the period between the two World Wars, especially the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations).



Paper 2: Britain – Shaping the Nation (2 hours: 50%)

- a) Thematic studies: Health and the people, 1000-present (looking at health and medicine over time, and the individuals and factors shaping developments in science and medicine).
- b) British depth studies (including a local study of a specific site relating to the period studied) of Elizabethan England. The site for the local study changes every year and is chosen by the examination board.

Enrichment

We aim to conduct at least one trip per cohort of GCSE students, the focus of which is carefully chosen to augment what has been studied in class. Often, that trip will support the site study in Paper 2, and in recent years we have taken students to Ham House, Chatham Dockyards in Kent, the Royal Observatory in Greenwich and the Wellcome Galleries in Euston Road. From 2022 onward, we have been taking students to the replica of the Golden Hinde ship on the South Bank in support of the Elizabethan England unit, and have also coupled that with visits to the Old Operating Theatre (2023) and the Globe Theatre (2024 and 2025).



Golden Hinde and Old Operating Theatre Trip, 2023

Future pathways

Studying History is excellent training for any career where you are required to use evidence and persuasion or make decisions, especially where those decisions affect other people.

These are the most popular career choices of History students, in order:

- Law
- Politics
- Civil Service
- Medicine
- Business
- Finance
- Accountancy
- Tourism
- Town planning
- Teaching
- Journalism
- Museum Curator / Archivist
- Research





Humanities

Religious Studies

Board: AQA

Specification: A 8062MA

Why study GCSE Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is an excellent way to learn about different aspects of human life, in particular the religious beliefs that people hold as well as their ethical outlook. Consider your own beliefs, for example, whether you believe there is a God, whether the soul exists, your thoughts on the rights and wrong of countries keeping nuclear weapons, or whether the UK law is correct in not allowing euthanasia (mercy-killing). These are a few of the topics that we study at GCSE level and there are plenty more. As you can see, Religious Studies considers the big questions in life, human issues that so many people are faced with. Students of Religious Studies are inquisitive, they want to live an 'examined life' as the philosopher Socrates said. Employers value this so much. They want to recruit people who are socially aware, can work easily with others, and who can think for themselves. With the focus of Religious Studies being on developing these skills, this is the ideal subject for GCSE study.

Important information

There are 8 modules in this course, 4 focusing on religious beliefs and practices, and 4 focusing on ethical issues. The religions we study are Christianity and Islam, including topics such as charity work and the different ways in which festivals are celebrated. In Ethics, we study Crime and Punishment, Human Rights and Social Justice, War and Peace, and lastly Religion and Life which includes environment issues, animal rights questions, abortion and euthanasia.

Pupils are actively involved in lessons, whether it is in discussions, debates, essay preparation in groups or research work. Lessons are designed to be interesting with the focus being on enjoying your learning.

As with any GCSE subject, homework is set that will include research work so that you develop into an independent learner. Support is ongoing throughout the year as needed, and workbooks/revision books are given to each pupil.

Entry requirements

Pupils will have shown an awareness of, and interest in societal beliefs and issues during Key Stage 3, and in particular, in Year 9. They will want to learn more information about religious beliefs, the place of religion in society, the different views on what actions are right and wrong, and how the law works in the UK and worldwide.

Course Overview and Content

This course will explore the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam, and a range of ethical issues from a religious and non-religious point of view.

Paper 1: Religions - Christianity and Islam

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| a) Christian Beliefs | b) Christian Practices |
| c) Islamic Beliefs | d) Islamic Practices |

Paper 2: Ethics - Thematic studies

- a) Crime and Punishment (types of punishment, arguments for and against the death penalty, the aims of punishment)
- b) Peace and Conflict (terrorism and extremism, reasons for war, nuclear weapons, Just War theory)
- c) Religion and Life (abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation, origins of the universe)
- d) Human Rights and Social Justice (prejudice and discrimination, wealth and poverty, law in the UK)

GCSE Assessment

There are 2 examinations (Papers 1 and 2) at the end of Year 11. There are no controlled assessments.

Enrichment

The department is hoping to offer a visit to London, firstly to the Royal Courts of Justice, to take part in a session on the right to religious expression in the form of wearing a religious symbol to work. This session looks at religious tolerance, human rights, and religious conviction. Students will have the opportunity to visit a place of worship as well, for example, St Paul's Cathedral and the London Central Mosque.

Future pathways

Religious Studies is recognised by employers as a challenging and rewarding subject that prepares students for an increasingly globalised world. At A Level the subject also broadens out to include philosophy at Ashford School, which is highly valued by employers and universities.

Religious Studies develops skills of analysis and evaluation as much as it teaches content, therefore career choices are broad. If students pursue this subject to A Level and beyond, they often opt for the following:

- International politics
- Barrister/legal field e.g. developing an expertise in medical ethics
- Local and national government
- International NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and charities
- Journalism
- Accountancy
- Television e.g. documentary making
- Education, such as teaching or Schools Project Manager
- Academia
- Civil Service
- Youth Work
- Human Resources
- Faith organisations
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Police
- Public Relations e.g. project consultant
- Policy Advisor
- Marketing





Creative Arts

Art and Design

Board: AQA

Specification: 8201(Art, Craft and Design)

Why study GCSE Art and Design?

This popular and successful GCSE course encourages you to be adventurous and enquiring in your approach to Art and Design, to understand the past, examine the present and look to ways of developing the future. The courses will introduce you to exciting practical skills and encourage you to enjoy studying Art in all its various contexts. Observational skills remain a key discipline in this course.

Important information

The department staff will be only too pleased to discuss your future plans. If you wish to have a tour around the department then please contact us to arrange a time.

Entry requirements

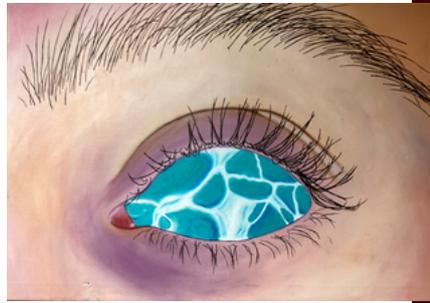
Pupils who study Art at GCSE will have shown commitment to their study of the subject at Key Stage 3 and in particular at Year 9. They will have shown this by handing in homework on time and to a high standard and setting a good example in classwork and discussions. They will be aware that producing work to a high standard can take time and it is imperative therefore, that homework is completed as it is set and by its due date. Above all, pupils who study Art will have a genuine interest in art and researching their topics; they will enjoy experimenting with different techniques and processes and not be afraid to get things wrong as this can often be when you are most creative.

Course Overview and Content



The syllabus is based on the relationship between the fundamental elements of line, tone, form, colour, texture and pattern and creative practices, such as drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture and photography. These are studied in various ways using observation, visual research, exploration, problem solving, analysis and discussion expressed in terms of sketchbooks, individual studies and final pieces.

This course will allow you to experiment with a varied range of ideas, materials and techniques in order to further your own creative journey. The course has been developed in order to maximise your personal creative potential and you will have great fun and satisfaction in exploring a wide range of materials, practices and experiences.



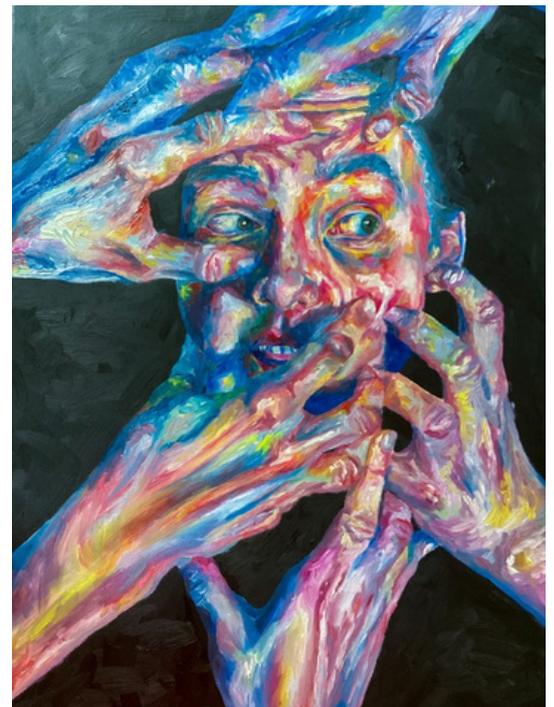
GCSE Course Components and Assessment

In Year 10 students will explore skills and practices in Art and Design in greater detail. They will be encouraged to become independent thinkers by exploring their own artistic journey under the guidance of their teacher. All work will be supported by detailed research into artists and designers from the past and the present.

During the first term of Year 11, pupils complete the controlled assessment (Unit 1), which consists of approximately 50 hours of coursework, including research, preparatory studies in the sketchbooks, larger studies and the production of final pieces of work in two and three dimensions. The externally set assignment (Exam Unit 2) will be introduced to pupils in the Spring Term of Year 11 and the practical examination will take place in March. The controlled test will last for ten hours, spread over two days. All the above work is assessed as a whole at the end of the course.

Enrichment

Students usually go on a research trip to gather resources for projects to a London gallery such as the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum. There are various art activities that can be joined where your teachers will be happy to tailor the work made to fit in with your GCSE course. We have an artist-in-residence who is also available to talk through ideas about your work and offer suggestions. Pupils have been on several trips including trips to Tate Britain for Year 10. There have been many opportunities and successes both within the school and at national art competitions.





Future pathways

For the student who has enjoyed and successfully completed the GCSE course there is the challenge of taking the A Level Art and Design course or Photography course in which they will learn painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and photographic processes in order to produce a wide range of work increasing the depth of experimentation and quality of their portfolios. This body of work can lead to a Foundation course in Art and Design and if the student is already very sure of their area of study, a degree course at a university or a school of art.



Ashford School has a reputation for excellence in Art and Design and successful careers in fine art, textile design, fashion, interior architecture, architecture, photography, game art (computer games design), advertising, illustration, product design and film making are examples of some of the exciting careers that have been pursued by our former Art and Design students.

Visit www.ashfordschoolart.com to see examples of pupil work, staff work, trips and activities as well as information on exhibitions. You can also see what we have been up to on Instagram www.instagram.com/ashfordschoolartdept or visit our virtual gallery at **Art - Ashford School**.

Creative Arts

Design and Technology

Board: AQA

Specification: 8552

Why study GCSE Design and Technology?

This is a stimulating and forward-looking course where you will gain experience of some of the technological processes that affect us all. At GCSE, you will gain an awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. You will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise. The GCSE course allows you to study a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and work with an extensive range of equipment. The course is practically based and investigates a number of design problems which are resolved by the production of a project manufactured from wood, metal or plastic. The systematic and logical problem solving approach is recorded in the production of a design portfolio where skills in the presentation of ideas, technical drawing and the use of IT are built upon. The final project represents a substantial proportion of the examination marks. Preparation for the exam is covered in specific theory lessons. In Year 10, theory lessons are taught weekly. They are separate from project lessons (three in seven lessons are theory based) and cover every aspect of the specification, although much of the theory dovetails with project lessons.

Course Overview and Content

You will understand the basic design principles of line, form and colour and their application in designing and be able to use graphic techniques and IT, including CAD, to generate, develop, model and communicate design proposals. You will be able to be flexible and adaptable in your designing in order to respond to problems, changing circumstances and new opportunities. You should consider the conflicting demands that moral, cultural, economic, environmental, historical and social issues can make in the planning and designing of products. You will be able to consider your own health and safety and that of makers, manufacturers, individual users and society at large and use tools and equipment safely, accurately and efficiently to achieve an appropriate fit, finish and reliable functioning in products that match their specifications. The course will help you develop your time management skills, setting yourself realistic deadlines for the various stages of manufacture, identifying critical points in the making process and providing alternatives to possible problems. You will also test, modify and evaluate the feasibility of your projects and how they can be further developed and modified.





Course Structure

There are two units: a non-examination assessment worth 50% and a written paper worth 50%.

Examination structure

The written paper is 2 hours long and is designed to test the application of knowledge and understanding through a broad range of questions on different materials. You will need to display specific material knowledge, and an understanding of core, specialist technical and designing and making principles.

Non-examination assessment

The NEA takes place during the final year of the course and is worth 50% of the final marks. It is internally assessed and externally moderated. Pupils are required to submit a concise design folder and/or the appropriate ICT evidence with a 3-dimensional outcome by the end of the Spring term. Throughout the project pupils should address the industrial and commercial practices, and the moral, social, cultural and environmental issues arising from their work. Experience has shown that pupils are often highly motivated when they devise their own project outcomes based on a personal interest or hobby. This is, therefore, to be encouraged.

Enrichment

The course encourages students to become more observant and to question the products and systems that surround them and play a pivotal role in their lives. In its simplest form, students will become more enriched by their surroundings and how they can apply information from the real world into their own design contents.

To further enhance and broaden their experiences, students visit The Design Museum in London, the New Designers exhibition and the Mini Factory in Oxford.



Future pathways

The GCSE course naturally feeds into the A Level Product Design course which can provide pupils with a strong foundation for a wealth of degree courses and careers including Product Design, Industrial Design, Fashion, Video Gaming production, Broadcast and Media Design, Technology communication, Engineering, Sports Technology, Medical and Surgical Engineering, Interior Design and Architecture.

Creative Arts

Drama

Board: OCR

Specification: J316

Why study GCSE Drama?

Drama not only encourages mental and physical versatility but also creativity, confidence and adventurous learning. It provides opportunities to examine the influence of drama on society, the work of playwrights, peers, practitioners, and performers, whilst equally exploring self-discovery through the practical art form. It allows pupils to study drama in an academic setting, interrogating this art form and applying their skills to the process of creating and developing theatre.

Important information

The course is designed to be as accessible and supportive as possible. This is a time to be as creative as your mind desires. You will be working in smaller groups and have drama tailored to your skills. You will also be required to attend theatre trips and workshops. This will enhance your learning and help you strengthen your creative process. You will notice that there is more emphasis on practitioners and set texts. This will help lead you into the A Level course and give you a strong understanding of the requirements of the 'page-to-stage' process.

Entry requirements

Pupils will have studied Drama in school. It is important that students have acceptable physical and verbal communication skills due to the content requirements of the course. An open mind and an understanding of teamwork will be valuable. Drama is both physically and academically demanding therefore dedication is key to success. Students should have received positive feedback and results throughout Drama assessments in Year 9. It is important to underline that there are performative aspects to this GCSE. Pupils who are uncomfortable performing on stage or in front of their peers may find this course challenging.





Course Overview and Content

Students will study practitioners and theatrical styles through various workshops and practical explorations. From this they will then devise, create and perform their own theatre. Furthermore, pupils will study a selected play and perform extracts in a specific theatrical style.

As well as practical work, they will also have opportunities to discover the technical elements of theatre and visit theatres to see live productions. Pupils study a set text and complete a written examination explaining how they would act, direct or design the extracts, as well as completing a live theatre evaluation.

GCSE Assessment:

Practical exam - Devising Drama/Portfolio 30%

Practical exam - Presenting and Performing Scripts/Pro forma 30%

Written exam - Explore and answer questions on set text/analyse and evaluate live theatre performance (1 hour 30 minutes) 40%

Enrichment

Pupils will enjoy opportunities to see productions and are strongly encouraged to experience as much live theatre as possible to broaden their horizons.

Future Pathways

The skills you learn in Drama are life skills needed in everyday encounters. A recent report discussed that these skills, developed within Drama, are desired within any employment or career, such as: using initiative and being self-motivated, organisation, working under pressure and to deadlines, ability to learn and adapt, communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation, valuing diversity and differences, problem solving, numeracy and IT. <https://www.stem.org.uk/system/files/elibrary-resources/2017/09/A4%20employability%20fold%20out%20Interactive%20v4.pdf>

The GCSE course naturally feeds into the A Level Drama and Theatre course which, combined with English, Music or Art and Design, provides a strong foundation for a wealth of degree courses and careers. The following are just a few: Theatre Studies, Directing, Drama and English Literature, Education, Teaching, Media Studies, Law, Film Studies, Performing Arts, Costume Design, Lighting Design. Due to the nature of the subject, it can also be paired with contrasting subjects to provide a broad platform with creativity and teamwork at its heart.

Creative Arts

Music

Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1MU0

Why study GCSE Music?

Through music, pupils come to a wider understanding of people's lives, cultures, and beliefs through their creativity. This also develops self-reflection and evaluation: how to improve? What are my next steps to success?

Following the applied study of Musical Elements in Key Stage 3, pupils study a wide range of set works, developing their analytical skills. Singers and Instrumentalists who have already started their learning journey are able to do well; the grading is weighted towards **non-examined assessment (NEA)** 60:40. Students are encouraged to maintain instrumental lessons with a teacher to ensure secure attainment in performance (see below).

GCSE Music is the first step on the path towards A Level Music, and further study at Music College or University.

Important information

It is essential that students become active participants in school ensembles: this builds up musicality and understanding, as well as providing the skills and opportunities in ensemble playing (a requirement for Performance **NEA**).

At Key Stage 4, pupils need to begin to listen to a wide palette of music in an analytical way; this sets the foundation for the Listening Exam, where the forms and structures of the music must be described with musically appropriate vocabulary.

Entry requirements

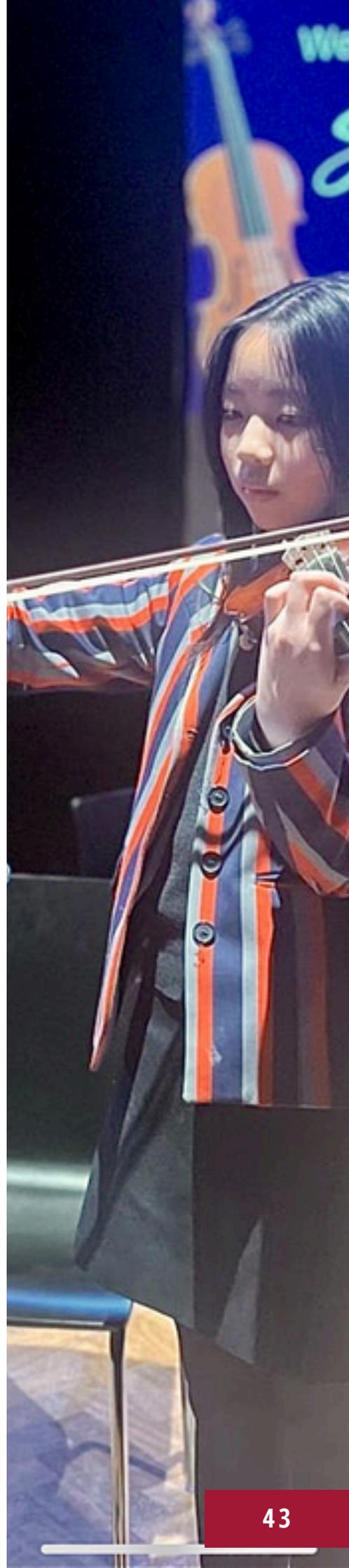
Students should be secure performers in an instrument or voice, aiming to achieve Grade 4 (standard) or higher, by the end of the course. It is suggested that pupils have already completed at least two years' learning. Continuous tuition and progress is necessary to secure as much of the 30% of the final mark as possible.

Enrichment

Students have opportunities to go to theatre and concert performances, and meet with visiting performers and composers. GCSE Music students have priority use of practice rooms and the MTS suite of computers.

Future Pathways

A Level Music is recognised as a valid university entrance subject, and builds on the skills developed in GCSE Music, including appraisal of a wide range of set works and musical analysis.





Course Overview and Content

The Edexcel GCSE Music course contains three sections: **Performing, Composing and Appraising.**

The aims of this course are to encourage students to:

- Develop their understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music, extending their own interests and increasing their ability to make judgements about musical quality.
- Acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to:
 1. Make music individually and in groups.
 2. Develop a life-long interest in music.
 3. Progress to further study, e.g. A Level and beyond.
- Develop broader life-skills and attributes, including critical and creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional and cultural development.

Students are encouraged to use music-related ICT, especially in the composition NEA, which forms 30% of the overall grade.

Assessment Format

Section 1: Performing (NEA)

Candidates must give at least:

- **one solo performance** lasting at least **one minute** and
- **one ensemble performance** lasting at least **one minute. The combined length must be a minimum of four minutes.** These have no audience and are recorded. This section is worth **30%** of the total GCSE Grade.

Section 2: Composing (NEA)

Candidates must submit:

- **one** composition based on a set brief (supplied by Edexcel in September of Year 11 and related to the Areas of Study) lasting at least **one minute**, and
- **one** free composition (chosen by the candidate) lasting at least **one minute. The combined length must be a minimum of three minutes.** Again, this section is worth **30%** of the total GCSE.

Students must submit a score and an audio of their compositions. These can be created through live performance, hand-written accounts or using computer notation software. From this software students submit a score (or written description) and recording for grading.

Section 3: Appraising (Written Examination)

- Candidates will answer questions and write an essay based on their study of 8 set works ranging over 4 areas of study: **Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Fusions** and **Stage and Screen.**

This section is worth **40%** of the overall examination.

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