



Holmer Green Senior School

Key Stage 4
September 2021 - July 2024

Year 8 Option Choices



Welcome From the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware throughout Years 7 and 8 all students cover a compulsory range of subjects. As students move into their Key Stage 4 studies there is some element of choice as students select their options. The courses offered allow students to develop their personal interests whilst retaining the breadth of knowledge and skills necessary for them to be successful after they leave the Sixth Form.



When considering your option choices it is worthwhile thinking further ahead to potential careers, universities and apprenticeships and working back from there as to what your son/daughter may need to take, GCSE course wise. The majority of students will not have a clear idea of which Higher Education course or career path they are going to follow. It is therefore sensible to study a broad range of subjects. The website 'Informed choices' <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/start> refers to a modern foreign language and humanity as well as Mathematics, English and Science as giving students the greatest range of future option choices. Ultimately, employers and universities are looking for students who have done well across a range of GCSEs which shows consistency and a strong work-ethic.

Factors influencing student choice will include academic ability, subject interest, course content, excellence (often linguistic, artistic, sporting, creative) and career implications. It is important that your child is not tempted to choose a subject because their friend has chosen that subject, or to choose a subject solely because they like the teacher. When choosing subjects, ignore the discussion about whether you will need it or not. In reality, most of what a child studies, will not be used again, however, this does not make it worthless. The broadened knowledge base, the skills learnt and the techniques used to master subjects lead to a well-rounded, knowledgeable individual who can contribute to discussions and therefore stands out from the crowd at interview.

Students should seek guidance about their options from you as well as teachers and, having listened to and thought seriously about the advice, choose subjects that complement their strengths, interests, and provide a sound basis for future aspirations.

University places are reliant on outstanding GCSE and A Level results. To study a subject at A Level at Holmer Green Senior School, students will need a minimum Grade 6 in that subject at GCSE. If their ambition does not include applying for a place at university, good results are still essential for their entrance to college, apprenticeship or employment.

During the option process we make every attempt to meet individual preferences, however there are occasions that this is not always possible due to lack of interest in a particular course that year.

We wish you and your child the best with their option choices and are here to support as needed.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Hillyard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Ed Hillyard

[Introduction from Mr Hillyard](#)

Your Choices At Key Stage 4

Your Choice for Years 9, 10 and 11

Making GCSE option choices is an important milestone in your child's school career. The purpose of this booklet is to assist with the decision making process and to ensure you and your child have as much support as you need.

You need to consider:

- Personal preference
- Current levels of attainment
- Future career plans

Core Curriculum

All our students will follow a common core of subjects that comprises English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies. Students will sit a GCSE qualification in each of these subjects. They will also all do core Physical Education and PSHCE which is not assessed as a GCSE.

In addition to these subjects, all students will study a number of optional subjects.

GCSE Examinations

All students will start work on GCSEs in Year 9.

All students will be assessed at the end of Year 11 through GCSE examinations and coursework. These examinations are designed to assess what individual students know, understand and can do. Students will have assessments including controlled assessments, which will vary from subject to subject. Failure to complete any aspect of the course will almost certainly jeopardise success in the examination.

New Grading System	Level 1/2 courses	Old Grading System
9		
8	Distinction *	A*
7	Distinction	A
6	Merit	B
5	Pass	C
4		
3		D
2	Level 1	E
1		F
		G
U		U

GCSE Gradings

GCSE gradings have changed. When your child sits their GCSEs in 2024 they will receive grades from 1-9, 9 is the highest grade and 1 is the lowest. A grade 4 is a pass grade and equivalent to the GCSE 'C' grade. These grades have replaced the A* to G grades with which you may be familiar. If you have any questions about these changes then please contact Mr Callender, Head of Year 8.

Careers advice and guidance at HGSS

At HGSS we believe that preparation for employment and the world of work is fundamental in readying our students for life after school. Whether students plan to progress to further or higher education, an apprenticeship or directly into the workplace, we endeavour to provide them with appropriate information, skills awareness and guidance to make the right choices to match their aspiration.

We aim to inspire our young people about different industries and opportunities through a range of activities from visiting speakers in assemblies, Oracy, Enterprise and STEM initiatives, school trips and workplace experiences, to activity in the classroom directly linking careers to the curriculum. We know that alongside qualifications, employers are increasingly looking for applicants with evidence of employability skills and understanding, so across the school years we will explore the world of work, encouraging students to develop basic professional skills and track their experiences to reference in future applications.

We use the Gatsby benchmarks (a comprehensive toolkit identified by Government to deliver best practice careers guidance to UK students) to develop and improve our careers provision, and our dedicated Careers Adviser provides impartial careers information, advice and guidance to students at key points in their learning journey. Our Careers Adviser will guide students to identify specific training routes, explore wider career inspiration and provide independent advice on the range of post 16 / post 18 pathways.

Students and parents can access a range of resources on our school website, including our dedicated Careers website, Eclips (accessed via mystuff) which includes up-to-date labour market information as well as specific pathways for a wide range of jobs and sectors.

Ultimately, our intention is for HGSS students to not only succeed while they are with us, but to go on to achieve future success in education, training or employment.

Parents: 5 ideas of what you can do to support your children achieve their career aspiration

1. Talk to your children about what they want to do after school and help them to investigate options and pathways.
2. Discuss skills in the workplace and encourage them to talk to friends and family about different kinds of careers and workplace environments.
3. Help them to identify their own skills and strengths, and the kind of work and environment that might suit them.
4. Where appropriate, help them to visit further and higher education institutions on Open Days, and find work experience or shadowing placements.
5. Positively support your child's ambitions and aspirations.

[Presentation from Mrs Rogers, Careers Advisor](#)

Core Subjects at Key Stage 4

English Language GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

The aim of the GCSE English Language course is to study a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Students will learn the necessary skills to analyse and comment on the different texts, but also to develop their own critical way of evaluating the texts.

Students will also cultivate their writing skills for different genres including writing to persuade, writing to argue, informative writing and descriptive writing. They will learn how to structure their writing and write in creative and imaginative style.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel English Language](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students are assessed at the end of every term on the current component of the curriculum they have studied.

There are no set texts for this GCSE, students will study a range of extracts from Victorian Literature, as well as modern non-fiction texts such as: bibliographies, travel writing and newspaper articles.

There is a spoken language endorsement that must be taken in order to grade on the English Language exam. This is awarded a separate mark of pass, merit or distinction.

How will you learn?

English Language is taught in conjunction with English Literature. The skills that are developed through the teaching of the literature texts are then transferred across to the unseen texts in the English Language papers.

Our lessons involve discussion, debate as well as written work. It is expected that students will own their own copies of the texts so that they can annotate them in class and are provided with poetry anthologies from the exam board.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

English Language is required for the majority of further education courses. It is also essential for A Levels and degree courses in written subjects. English is also a key element of most career pathways but some specific jobs that seek English graduates are: teaching, public relations, journalism, copy-writing.

Inspirational figure or quote

I like books that aren't just lovely but that have memories in themselves. Just like playing a song, picking up a book again that has memories can take you back to another place or another time.
Emma Watson, actor and English graduate.

Core Subjects at Key Stage 4

English Literature GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

The aim of the GCSE Literature course is to study a variety of British writers both traditional and contemporary, as well as a range of poetry.

Students become critical readers, exploring issues in society and questions about the nature of what it means to be human through texts across the ages.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel English Literature](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students are assessed on two exam papers sat at the end of Year 11. The exams are closed text which means that there are no texts allowed in the exam.

For Paper 1, students study 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'An Inspector Calls', for Paper 2 students study either 'Jekyll and Hyde' OR 'A Christmas Carol' depending on their set and an anthology of poetry provided by Edexcel.

How will you learn?

Students learn through class discussion, debate and annotation of the key texts. It is expected that students will own their own copies of the texts that we study so they can annotate and note-take throughout lessons.

The English Language course is designed to complement this course and students develop the skills they need for both GCSEs in the study of literary texts.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

English Literature is a key element for most career pathways as well as being a highly valued subject for most A-Level and Degree courses.

Most careers require a good standard of written English but Literature is particularly favoured in journalism, Public Relations, law and teaching.

Inspirational figure or quote

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

Maya Angelou, 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings'.

Core Subjects at Key Stage 4

Maths GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

The curriculum at HGSS is integrated and creates mastery over time on the following content: numbers, algebra, ratio, proportions & rates of change, geometry & measures, probability & statistics. Throughout the Key Stages we take pride in extending our students knowledge deeper. Great emphasis is placed on understanding mathematical concepts and the student's ability to communicate their approach both orally and in written format. The teaching of GCSE content begins in Year 9 and the students take the GCSE Maths exam at the end of Year 11.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel Maths](#)

Course overview and assessment

During Key Stage 4 progression, students are continually introduced to both old and new mathematical concepts. Periodically students will take assessments during the year. These are based upon current GCSE papers. Before sitting these formative assessment, students will receive a revision list from their teacher. The integrated nature of the assessment points will assess their ability across the complete range of skills. Students will also be assessed, informally, by their teachers throughout the year. These will be topic based and will assess students on what they have been learning during each of the assessment periods.

The final exam will comprise three equally-weighted written examination papers at either Foundation tier or Higher tier. Paper 1 is a non-calculator assessment. A calculator is allowed for Paper 2 and Paper 3. Each paper is 1 hour and 30 minutes long and has 80 marks.

How will you learn?

We follow the schemes as produced by the exam board, and are continually monitoring any resources, advice and further specification information to adjust and best fit the needs of our students. Teachers will adapt their teaching according to the needs of their classes, but follow a plan set for all year groups. You and your child are always welcome to ask for further information on the structure of their learning.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

After GCSE Mathematics students can pursue A-Level Mathematics, Maths in Context and Further Mathematics here at HGSS.

In terms of careers, there are a wide range of options for students with strong analytical and problem-solving skills and that makes Mathematicians highly desirable. Careers could include Accountancy and Finance, Data Analysis, Engineering and Teaching but you could also be an Economist or Statistician. The list is endless!

Inspirational figure or quote

Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.
Archimedes.

There is geometry in the humming of the string, there is music in the spacing of spheres. *Pythagoras.*

Core Subjects at Key Stage 4

Religious Studies GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

Students will learn how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture, and develop valuable skills that will help prepare them for further study. Religious Studies is a rigorous and demanding academic discipline which encourages philosophical thought, decision making skills, collaboration and independent working and the search for compromise and conflict resolutions. It creates opportunities for young people to develop their skills of dialogue, interpretation and analysis in a coherent context and also learn to respect themselves and understand their own identity, to respect others, and to understand their own and others' rights and responsibilities.

Exam board link [AQA Religious Studies](#)

Course overview and assessment

At the end of Year 11, Students will take assessments in the following, focusing on *two* religions: (Christianity & Judaism).

Unit 1: Study of Religions; beliefs, teachings and practices – 50%

Unit 2: Thematic Studies – 50%

- Religion and life
- Religion, Peace and Conflict
- Religion, Crime and Punishment
- Religion, Human Rights and Wealth

The GCSE will be assessed by two written exams and each exam is 1hour 45 minutes in length. The questions have a common structure of four – five part questions of 1,2,4 and 5 marks plus one 12 mark question in each.

How will you learn?

You will have two hours per week where lessons will focus on learning new content through discussion and a range of exam style questions. Lessons are designed to support the development of evaluation skills which makes up 50% of the GCSE. Your opinions are vital for this GCSE and by sharing them verbally this helps to be able to write them. We will work together to build your resilience and confidence in essay writing and have a real focus on key words and vocabulary.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

The skills obtained in Religious Studies are important in all careers that have contact with other people, such as the Police, retail, teaching, law, travel industry, advertising, human resources, commercial areas, planning, management, public administration, social welfare, the Armed Forces and many others.

Further Educational Opportunities: A level Religious Studies, Degree level Religious Studies/Philosophy and other qualifications linked to the above list.

Inspirational figure or quote

Religion is everywhere. There are no human societies without it, whether they acknowledge it as a religion or not. Octavia E. Butler

Core Subjects at Key Stage 4

Triple/Trilogy Science GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

The AQA course covers the programme of study for GCSE Science. It provides students with the opportunity to learn about many aspects of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics and how these are applied to everyday life.

Students will all aim to follow the Triple Science pathway which will give them 1 GCSE in each of the Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). The core content will be covered in Years 9 & 10, we will then build upon this and complete the triple content in Year 11. For some students it may be more suitable to use Year 11 to consolidate learning and complete the Trilogy qualification equating to 2 GCSEs rather than the triple pathway.

Exam board link [AQA Biology](#) [AQA Chemistry](#) [AQA Physics](#) [AQA Trilogy](#)

Course overview and assessment

Course overview and assessment

100% examination

For each GCSE there are 2 X 1hr 45min exams (making 6 exams in total)

25% of the exam papers will ask questions on the required practicals.

There will also be questions using GCSE Maths skills.

How will you learn?

Students will learn through variety of methods including teacher instruction, practical investigations, discussions, and group work.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Science is a subject with many areas of interest. It forms the basic grounding for most areas of work including engineering, medicine, electronics, environmental science, space, transport, communications, building, nursing, the armed services, food science, sport science, textiles, materials, ecology, zoology, botany, biotechnology... the list is huge! Studying Science will allow you to make choices about your future at 16 and give you the freedom to select from a wide range of careers. Once you have completed the course you can continue your studies at A Level in any or all of the three sciences.

Inspirational figure or quote

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less. Marie Curie.

Your Option Choices at Key Stage 4

Option Choices

The subjects listed below are available. Your route will inform you how many subjects you can choose from this list. You will need to make one reserve choice in case we are unable to offer you all of your choices.

Students will need to choose **3** option subjects. Within these 3 all students are expected to choose either History or Geography (or both). *It is highly recommended that students choose either French* or Spanish**. A reserve choice will also be needed.

In summary, one subject to be chosen from the following:

- Art & Design
- Art & Textiles
- Business
- Child Development
- Computer Science
- Construction & the Built Environment
- Design & Technology (Papers & Boards)
- Design & Technology (Timbers)
- Drama
- French*
- Geography (in addition to History)
- History (in addition to Geography)
- Hospitality & Catering
- ICT
- Music
- Photography
- PE (GCSE)
- Spanish*

Whilst every effort will be made to allocate every student their choices this may not always be possible as the timetabling process is complex. Some students therefore may have to study their reserve choice. Option forms will be issued on **26 March 2021** with a deadline of **3 May 2021** for the return of completed forms.

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Art and Design GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

To develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding needed to experiment, investigate, create and present personal work.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel Art and Design](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students will learn how to use a range of materials and processes including painting and drawing, sculpture, ceramics, photography, mixed media and ICT design.

Students will be assessed in two ways: 60% is coursework based and will be met in the form of a personal portfolio covering the above. 40% of the course is given over to the Externally Set Assignment (ESA), this takes the form of a smaller unit of practical work in Year 11 that is set by the exam board; students have a much shorter timeframe to produce work under a given theme and will sit a 10-hour timed test at the end of this period whereby they produce unassisted edited outcomes to conclude their projects.

How will you learn?

Techniques will be demonstrated. Later in the course students then have the opportunity to produce pieces that interest them. They can choose how they then develop their pieces into outcomes. This could be making pieces 2D and/or 3D. Students choose their own area of expertise once they have learned the basics. Subject specific skills gained include using paints, pencils, oil pastels, clay, ICT, printing onto fabric and other surfaces, using a camera effectively and communication about their intentions both verbally and in written format.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Art and Design is offered at Key Stage 5 and will complement any A Level combination due to the specific nature of the course and the freedom it provides.

Employment opportunities: Fine artist, Art Teacher, Work in TV, Online designer, Interior designer, Theatre designer, Museum curator.

There are many more!

Inspirational figure or quote

Creativity takes courage. Henri Matisse.

[Year 8 Options—Art & Design Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Art Textiles GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

To develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding needed to experiment, investigate, create and present personal work.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel Art and Design](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students will learn how to use a range of materials and processes including printing, weaving, embroidery, stage make up, fashion drawing, photography, mixed media and ICT design.

Students will be assessed in two ways:

60% is coursework based and will be met in the form of a personal portfolio covering the above. 40% of the course is given over to the Externally Set Assignment (ESA), this takes the form of a smaller unit of practical work in Year 11 that is set by the exam board; students have a much shorter timeframe to produce work under a given theme and will sit a 10-hour timed test at the end of this period whereby they produce unassisted edited outcomes to conclude their projects.

How will you learn?

Techniques will be demonstrated. Students have the opportunity to produce pieces that interest them and choose how to develop them into outcomes. This could be by making pieces suitable for a theatre production or a gallery or a fashion based item. Students choose their area of expertise once they have learned the basics. Subject specific skills gained include using a sewing machine, printing onto fabric and other surfaces, hand embroidery, silk painting, creating fabric using digital packages, using a camera and communication about their intentions both verbally and in a written format.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Art Textiles is offered at Key Stage 5 and will complement any A Level combination due to the specific nature of the course and the freedom it provides.

Employment opportunities: Commercial fashion designer, Fashion buyer, Business owner-fashion based, Printer, Commercial fabric designer, Costume designer, Lifestyle fashion coach.

There are many more!

Inspirational figure or quote

I think there is beauty in everything. Alexander McQueen.

[Year 8 Options—Art & Textiles Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Business GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

Business equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect decision-making. They develop their understanding of concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of contemporary issues on business operations.

The aim of the course is for you to understand the world of business, learn real life skills involving the handling of money as well as learning how businesses operate.

Exam board link [OCR Business](#)

Course overview and assessment

- Marketing, including advertising, development of products, setting the best price.
- Recruitment, including how businesses get the right staff and keep them working well.
- Business structures, including the different ways to set up a business.
- Finance, including how businesses get the money to set up and operate and how they make a profit.
- Business operations, including how businesses produce the things we buy.
- Influences on businesses, including the environment and how many businesses are operating around the world.

Two exams at the end of the course, each 90 minutes long. There is no controlled assessment. Some questions will be multiple choice, some will be extended writing to test your ability to explain why you made a particular decision.

How will you learn?

You will learn Business GCSE through being taught by a Business teacher as well as the Business teacher setting you some independent tasks. Learning should take place both in your books/folders or even online. Occasionally the Business Studies Department will organise guest speakers to aid your learning.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Independent trader, marketing, finance, Human resources, accountant, public relations, recruiter, business analyst, data analyst, operations, CEO, Finance advisor, Investment banking, investment analyst, management consultant, market research and sales.

The list is endless!

Inspirational figure or quote

"I never dreamed about success, I worked for it !" Estee Lauder

[Year 8 Options—Business Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Child Development Level 1/2 Certificate

Introduction & aims of the course

To learn about pregnancy, birth and the needs of young children:

- Reproduction and responsibilities of parenthood; antenatal care and childbirth; postnatal provision; childhood illnesses; and child safety.
- Equipment and nutritional needs of children.
- Development of children from birth to 5 years: physical, intellectual and social development; and learning through play.

Exam board link [OCR Child Development](#)

Course overview and assessment

Written examination 50% - a 1hr 15minute exam assessing:

Roles and responsibilities of parenthood; reproduction; pregnancy; birth; postnatal care; keeping baby safe and well; childhood illnesses; safety.

Coursework (50%)-

- Project 25%: investigating equipment and feeding requirements for children and carrying out a practical task.
- Child Study task 25% : understanding the development of a child from birth to five years and planning play activities to carry out with a child.

How will you learn?

Theory lessons delivered to suit all learning styles – use of books, task sheets, internet research, class discussions, presentations. The lessons also have a practical element looking at baby equipment for example. Past paper questions are also used to prepare for the exam.

Recommended Text: Cambridge National Level 1/2—Child Development, by Miranda Walker (Hodder Education) 2017.

Revision Guides: Cambridge National level 1/2—Child Development, My Revision Notes by Miranda Walker (Hodder Education).

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Suitable for students interested in nursing, teaching, midwifery, as well as childcare and parenting. Level 3 courses in Childcare and Health and Social Care available at Sixth Form and colleges

Inspirational figure or quote

I wish as well as everybody else to be perfectly happy; but, like everybody else it must be in my own way. Jane Austen

[Year 8 Options—Child Development Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Computer Science GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

This course will encourage students to understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science. They will analyse problems in computational terms, thinking creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically to find a solution. Learn the different components that make up digital systems and how they communicate with each other as well as understanding the impacts of digital technology have on individuals and the wider society.

Exam board link [OCR Computer Science](#)

Course overview and assessment

J277/01: Computer systems – written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes, 50% of total GCSE

This component will focus on computer systems and assess the systems architecture, memory and storage, networks, network security, systems software alongside the ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology.

J277/02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming – written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes, 50% of total GCSE

Thinking and programming skills are taught through practical experience of solving real-life challenges. This enables students to have a deep understanding of computational thinking and how to apply it through a chosen programming language.

How will you learn?

J277/01- The lessons for these elements are often taught in a practical manner with written tasks and assessments throughout.

J277/02 – Students are taught through practical experience of solving real-life challenges.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

This course leads onto studying A-level Computer Science or a BTEC in Computing. Students can choose to continue onto University to study many courses within the computing field or an apprenticeship in a variety of fields – civil engineering, software developer, network engineer, IT support, IT analyst programmer, web developer, sound technician, computer aided design, applied science...the list is endless!

Inspirational figure or quote

Everyone should know how to program a computer, because it teaches you how to think. Steve Jobs.

[Year 8 Options—Computer Science Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Construction and Built Environment BTEC

Introduction & aims of the course

This course allows students the opportunity to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of the construction industry.

Students are enabled to develop a theoretical and practical knowledge of the built environment alongside some practical skills; to engage with the mathematical and scientific principles that underpin the construction industry, and to explore the impact of design through research and the application of their own ideas in response to a design brief.

Exam board link [*Pearson BTEC Firsts Construction and Built Environment*](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students will study three mandatory units:

Unit 1: Construction technology

Unit 2: Scientific and mathematical application for construction.

Unit 3: Construction and design

Students will build on the knowledge gained in the mandatory units by one further specialist unit.

Unit 4: Exploring carpentry and joinery principles and techniques.

Units 2, 3 & 4 are marked internally so students will receive feedback as to how they are getting on. Unit 1 Construction Technology is an externally assessed exam paper. The exam lasts for 1 hour 15 minutes and contains 60 marks.

How will you learn?

Drawing, practical tasks, making tasks, written activities, quizzes.

We also have a link with Wilmott Dixon, a construction company, who deliver sessions such as virtual site tours & talks from apprentices about their route into the industry.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Other Level 2 vocational qualifications

Level 3 vocational qualifications, such as BTEC Nationals.

BTEC Level 3 in Construction and the Built Environment

Related academic qualifications.

Learners who achieve the qualification at Level 1 may progress to related Level 2 vocational or academic qualifications, such as BTECs and GCSEs.

Inspirational figure or quote

It is not the beauty of the building you should look at: it's the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time. David Allen Coe

[Year 8 Options - Construction and the Built Environment](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Drama GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

GCSE Drama offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience. Students will create, perform and respond to drama as an actor or as a lighting/ costume designer.

Exam board link [AQA Drama](#)

Course overview and assessment

1. Understanding drama - 40% (written exam)
2. Devising drama - 40% (devised performance and coursework)
3. Texts in practice - 20% (scripted performance to a live examiner)

How will you learn?

Drama has a highly practical approach to learning, where students will learn through application and reflection. Collaborative learning is also key, where students will be encouraged to work with others to achieve learning goals. Students will learn to think analytically and evaluate which will support their learning in many other subjects, for example, English Literature.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Whatever the future holds, students of GCSE Drama emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills, applicable both in further studies and in the workplace.

As well as any career in the Film, television and theatre industry, the following sectors place high value on Drama education:

Law, education, management, sales and marketing, retail, events management & advertising.

Inspirational figure or quote

All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed. William Shakespeare

[Year 8 Options — Drama Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Design and Technology (Papers and Boards)

Introduction & aims of the course

Students will work predominantly with papers and boards learning how to cut and shape these materials (and others) to create a wide range of graphic products. They will have the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and to apply technical and practical expertise developing resilience and problem solving skills. Students will develop their drawing and communication skills generating a wide range of innovative ideas. They will gain experience of using CAD software and learn about industrial printing processes and finishes. Students will also learn about wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors.

Exam board link [*AQA Design and Technology \(Paper and Boards\)*](#)

Course overview and assessment

In Year 9 and 10 students will be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through focused practical tasks and extended design briefs. The lessons and projects will be structured to cover the exam specification whilst also giving students "hands on" practical tasks to deepen their understanding and retention. Homework will be used to prepare pupils for the following lesson and develop students' understanding of the theory of the subject.

In Year 11 students will complete their NEA. It is a substantial design and make task that requires students to produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence. It takes 30–35 hours approx. and is 50% of the overall grade.

At the end of Year 11 students will sit a 2 hour written paper which accounts for the other 50% of the grade.

How will you learn?

Focussed Practical tasks, designing & Making tasks, drawing, learning & using CAD, written activities, quizzes and homework tasks.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

This qualification offers the basic skills to enter the workplace as an apprentice or trainee in many of the skills industries, as well as vocational educational routes such A level Product Design. The majority of students recently completing this course have moved on to study a range of subjects including: architecture, automotive design, art foundation, graphic design, marketing at nationwide universities. There are a wide range of post-16 courses available at local colleges which value Design and Technology as a worthwhile and relevant subject base for many of their vocational and academic subjects.

Inspirational figure or quote

To be a good artist/ lecturer/ designer/ guitar player, it takes practice. A lot of it. More than you can even fathom when you're starting out. Jessica Hische

[**Year 8 Options — DT \(Papers and Boards\) Assembly**](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Design and Technology (Timbers) GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

This course will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world enabling them to develop essential skills such as resilience & problem solving. Students will work creatively designing and making products predominately from timbers & plastics although other materials are also used. They will develop their drawing and communication skills, generating a wide range of innovative ideas, and practical skills including use of a broad range of processes, materials, techniques and equipment. Students will also learn about wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors.

Exam board link [AQA Design and Technology \(Timbers\)](#)

Course overview and assessment

In Year 9 and 10 students will be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through focused practical tasks and extended design briefs. The lessons and projects will be structured to cover the exam specification whilst also giving students "hands on" practical tasks to deepen their understanding and retention. Homework will be used to prepare pupils for the following lesson and develop students' understanding of the theory of the subject.

In Year 11 students will complete their NEA (Non-Exam Assessment). It is a substantial design and make task that requires students to produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence. It takes 30–35 hours approx. and is 50% of the overall grade.

At the end of Year 11 students will sit a 2 hour written paper which accounts for the other 50% of the grade.

How will you learn?

Focussed Practical tasks, designing & Making tasks, drawing, learning and using CAD / CAM, written activities, quizzes and homework tasks.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

This qualification offers the basic skills to enter the workplace as an apprentice or trainee in many of the relevant industries as well as vocational educational routes such as A level 3-D Product Design. The majority of students recently completing this course have moved on to study a range of subjects including: architecture, automotive design, art foundation, graphic design, product design and marketing at nationwide universities. There are a wide range of post-16 courses available at local colleges, which value Design and Technology as a worthwhile and relevant subject base for many of their vocational and academic subjects.

Inspirational figure or quote

Good design is like a refrigerator—when it works, no one notices, but when it doesn't, it sure stinks. Irene Au.

[Year 8 Options — DT \(Timbers\)](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

French or Spanish GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

Language GCSEs give you:

- A life skill: to develop communication and adaptability as well as increase cultural awareness.
- A competitive edge over others in the job market – you're one step ahead!
- The chance to acquire the EBacc qualification – much in demand by employers and universities
- A wider variety of interesting career prospects
- The chance to experience the culture of the language you study.

Exam board link [AQA French and Spanish](#)

Course overview and assessment

Three themes are covered:

1. Identity and culture
2. Local, national, international and global areas of interest
3. Current and future study and employment

Skills tested are all weighted equally. All four question papers taken in the same tier (Foundation/Higher).

- Listening – a written exam (25%)
- Speaking – an oral exam (photo card, role play and conversation) (25%)
- Reading – a written exam (25%)
- Writing: - a written exam (25%)

How will you learn?

In French we follow the Studio course.

In Spanish we follow Viva, with opportunities for both to buy recommended revision books.

In both languages, we complement the course with a variety of online learning tools, such as quizzes, vocabulary boosters, games and exercises. Work is also set online using Seneca and ExamPro to supplement learning.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Languages can be taken further with A Level. Knowledge of a language will open up doors in every career choice from retail, electronics, marketing, film and TV, media, advertising, fashion, aviation, engineering, education, law and medicine – the world really is your oyster with a language!

There are more jobs than ever requiring languages now we have left the EU with a need to maintain our competitiveness with the rest of the world.

Inspirational figure or quote

One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.
Frank Smith.

[Year 8 Options — Modern Foreign Languages Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Geography GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

This exciting, relevant and challenging course studies Geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them. Students will travel the world from the classroom, exploring a wide variety of case studies in the United Kingdom, newly emerging economies and lower income countries. Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

Exam board link [AQA Geography](#)

Course overview and assessment

Living with the physical environment = Paper 1 – 1 hour 30 minutes – 35% of GCSE

3.1.1 Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

3.1.2 Section B: The living world

3.1.3 Section C: Physical landscapes in the UK

Challenges in the human environment = Paper 2 – 1 hour 30 minutes – 35% of GCSE

3.2.1 Section A: Urban issues and challenges

3.2.2 Section B: The changing economic world

3.2.3 Section C: The challenge of resource management

Geographical applications = Paper 3 – 1 hour 15 minutes – 30% of GCSE

3.3.1 Section A: Issue evaluation

3.3.2 Section B: Fieldwork

Geographical skills – incorporated across all 3 papers

3.4 Geographical skills

How will you learn?

Students will develop essential skills such as problem solving, decision making, synthesising ideas, identifying issues and communicating findings through the undertaking of fieldwork. The course has strong links across the curriculum with Science, ICT and PSHCE. Our lessons typically involve a vast array of visual stimulus, discussion and geographical skills related activities that ensure regular practice of exam style questions. Upon completion of this two-year course, students will have the skills and experience to progress onto A Level and beyond.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

- Cartographer
- Commercial/residential surveyor
- Environmental consultant
- Geographical information systems officer
- Planning and development surveyor
- Secondary school teacher
- Town planner

Inspirational figure or quote

The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together. Barack Obama.

[Year 8 Options—Geography Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

History GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

Our GCSE in History inspires students' enthusiasm for the subject. They develop their understanding of the present by studying significant periods and themes from the past at a local, national and global level, engaging with a range of contemporary sources and later interpretations to gain an appreciation of how the world got to the point it is at now and how it will continue to evolve in the future. Apart from studying a wide range of exciting historic periods, students will learn a range of skills that will help their future studies and work. These include: communication and writing, how to construct an argument, research, investigation and problem-solving, analytical and interpretation skills.

Exam board link [OCR History B](#)

Course overview and assessment

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 minute exam, 80 marks worth 40% of overall GCSE

Thematic Study: The People's Health, c.1250 to present
British Depth Study: The Elizabethans 1580 to 1603

Paper 2: 1 hour exam, 50 marks worth 20% of overall GCSE

History Around Us: Hampton Court Palace

Paper 3: 1 Hour 45 minutes, 80 marks worth 40% of overall GCSE

Period Study: The Making of America 1789 to 1900
World Depth Study: Living Under Nazi Rule 1933 to 1945

How will you learn?

Your lessons will be centred around learning new content, as well as consolidating and reviewing your knowledge. Our exams cover a range of question styles, and lessons are designed with this in mind to develop your confidence. We spend lessons using quizzes to improve retention, practising essay writing techniques, and analysing primary sources and historian's interpretations of events. Teachers model work, providing valuable feedback to students and enabling them to make progress to achieve their potential. Discussion is built into lessons, as well as use of technology to support learning.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

History is one of the most highly regarded subjects by employers in a variety of fields. It is a useful qualification for those interested in: The Armed Forces, archaeology, business/management, Civil Service, journalism, law, library & archives work, media/film/TV industry, museum or gallery work, policing, politics, teaching, travel.

Inspirational figure or quote

The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future. Theodore Roosevelt.

[Year 8 Options — History Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2 Certificate

Introduction & aims of the course

Level 1/2 Hospitality and Catering offers the students a life-long interest in developing and creating visually impressive and nutritious dishes. In this course they will learn recipe development, food preparation skills, planning and problem solving. There is the opportunity to learn about issues related to nutrition and food safety and how they affect successful hospitality and catering operations. Learners will also have the opportunity to develop food preparation and cooking skills as well as transferable skills of problem solving, organisation and time management, planning and communication.

Exam board link [WJEC Hospitality and Catering](#)

Course overview and assessment

Unit 1: H&C Industry (40%). Understand how hospitality and catering provisions operate and how the provision meets health and safety requirements; including how food can cause ill health. This will be an externally assessed written exam paper 90 mins.

Unit 2: H&C in Action (60%) Students will safely plan, prepare, cook and present nutritional dishes. Students will understand the importance of nutrition when planning menus prepare, cook and present dishes. This is an internal assessed project and consists of a 3-hour practical exam. Students will present a 2-course meal, with all accompaniments, demonstrating a range of skills and presented to a high standard showing consideration for hygiene and safety.

All ingredients required for this course are to be provided from home on a weekly basis.

How will you learn?

A combination of theory and practical lessons to suit all learning needs. Practical lessons will usually start with a demonstration on how to follow the particular recipe highlighting the key skills needed for each dish. Theory lessons including use of textbooks, booklets, internet research, class discussions and past papers questions.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

According to the British Hospitality Association, Hospitality and Catering is Britain's fourth largest industry and accounts for around 10% of the total workforce. We offer the Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition for you to progress further. Future careers range from a Restaurant Manager, Accommodations Manager, Catering Manager, Chef, Conference Centre Manager, Hotel Manager, Restaurant Manager, Air Cabin Crew to name a few.

Inspirational figure or quote

Food is for eating, and good food is to be enjoyed. I think food is, actually, very beautiful in itself.

Delia Smith

[Year 8 Options — Hospitality and Catering Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Information Technologies Level 1/2 Certificate

Introduction & aims of the course

This qualification will teach students what different technologies could be used, about tools and techniques for use in different hardware and software technologies and how these can be integrated to create digital solutions to manage and communicate data and information. Students will also learn how to follow a project life cycle to complete a data management task. The skills learnt are really useful for the workplace once you leave school.

Exam board link [OCR Information Technologies](#)

Course overview and assessment

There are two units of assessment:

R012- Understanding tools, techniques, methods and processes for technological solution.

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, OCR-set and marked.

R013- Developing technological solutions.

Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated Approximately 20 hours coursework.

How will you learn?

R012 (exam element) - Lessons will include relevant and interesting real-life examples of the content. We will examine the impact of malware and social engineering on the world. We look for opportunities to use technology wherever possible as well as the regular ways to assess students.

R013 (practical element) - We will complete some theory and put it into practise and undertake a number of tasks that relate to a made up project. This includes practical demonstrations of the work and learning new skills in an interesting way.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Further study in BTEC ICT, which could then lead onto studying any one of the numerous courses on offer at university in this field.

Most jobs require an ICT proficiency. Completing this course will give you a confidence and skill level that will set you up for being more able in the workplace or if you wanted to follow an apprenticeship in any field.

Inspirational figure or quote

The computer was born to solve problems that did not exist before. Bill Gates.

[Year 8 Options — Computing and IT Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Music GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

Students taking this course will engage actively in music study and develop performing skills individually and in groups. They will cultivate composing skills and broaden their musical experience and interests. Music GCSE will develop imagination, foster creativity and develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians. Students will develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music, recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop some awareness of musical chronology. GCSE music develops effective and independent learners with enquiring minds.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel Music](#)

Course overview and assessment

Performance – 30%
Composition – 30%
Listening & Appraising 40%

Students who take music GCSE will learn about different types of music from Baroque pieces by Bach and Purcell to music from more modern times such as Defying Gravity, Killer Queen and Star Wars. Students will also study world music from Afro Celt Sound System and Esperanza Spalding.

How will you learn?

There is a mixture of practical and theoretical learning tasks throughout the time studying GCSE music. Performance takes place on an instrument of your choice.

Composition is guided in small steps to give students ideas about composition before they are required to create a free composition.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Students may choose to continue with music, by studying A-level or BTEC music or performing arts or may choose to study other subjects. GCSE Music is highly regarded and provides transferable skills and a good foundation for a range of education and employment pathways:

Music: musician, sound technician, community musician, music therapist, teacher, private tutor, or a range of careers in the music industry, in a concert hall or music venue.

Arts/creative industries: work in film, TV, theatre, radio, arts administration or creative education.

Many other professions and pathways: e.g. medicine, law, accountancy.

Inspirational figure or quote

Where words fail, music speaks. Hans Christian Andersen.

[Year 8 Options - Music Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Photography GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

To develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding needed to experiment, investigate, create and present personal work.

General skills gained include literacy and communication skills. These are important aspects of Photography and students will be taught how to read imagery and understand deeper narratives within work. In addition to this, students will gain teamworking skills, the ability to problem solve and skills in ICT. Subject specific skills gained include technical understanding.

Exam board link [Pearson Edexcel Art and Design](#)

Course overview and assessment

Students will develop a range of skills and use a wide variety of materials, tools and processes. They will learn how to manipulate a range of photographic elements in order to take successful and meaningful shots as well as develop ideas through editing, using photographs and physical editing techniques.

Students will be assessed in two ways: 60% of this course is coursework based and will be met in the form of a personal portfolio covering numerous photographic techniques and a major project element. 40% of the course is given over to the Externally Set Assignment (ESA), this takes the form of a smaller unit of practical work in Year 11 that is set by the exam board; students have a much shorter timeframe to produce work under a given theme and will sit a 10-hour timed test at the end of this period whereby they produce unassisted edited outcomes to conclude their projects.

How will you learn?

Students will learn what a camera does and how to control specific outcomes/techniques. Students will be taught how to investigate, experiment, analyse and evaluate as well as develop practical skills and create individual work. Students will be issued with a list of inexpensive recommended equipment which can be purchased from school at a reduced cost. Students do not need to purchase a camera solely for this course. Students will need to venture to various locations in their own time to achieve independent and unique outcomes and to meet the various assessment objectives.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Photography is offered at Key Stage 5 and will complement any A Level combination due to the specific nature of the course and the freedom it provides.

Employment opportunities include: Commercial photographer, Fashion photographer, Filmmaker, Fine art photographer, Forensic photographer, Industrial photographer, Medical photographer, Nature photographer, Photographic illustrator, Photographic technician, Teacher, Photojournalist, Picture editor, Social photographer, Sports photographer.

Inspirational figure or quote

You don't take a photograph, you make it. Ansel Adams.

[Year 8 Options — Photography Assembly](#)

Optional Subjects at Key Stage 4

Physical Education GCSE

Introduction & aims of the course

This course is aimed at students who have an interest in sport, health and well-being. It provides opportunities to learn about the physiology, psychology and contemporary issues that affect the involvement of people in sport. The course also helps students to apply and develop knowledge and understanding of their personal training, which will enable an improvement in performance. Students will develop their understanding of the health and fitness benefits associated with taking part in sport. Especially important will be the ability to analyse and improve their own performance and that of others.

Exam board link [AQA Physical Education](#)

Course overview and assessment

Approximately 50% of teaching time is spent on theory and 50% on practical elements.

Theory Exam - equivalent to 60%

Paper 1: (1hr 15 mins) The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30%)

Paper 2: (1hr 15 mins) Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30%)

Practical Elements - equivalent to 40%

Practical performance in physical activity and sport (3 activities and self-analysis of performance).

How will you learn?

Practical element: The practical sessions will cover a variety of sports where performers will be assessed on their core skills and applying those skills to game situations. In Year 11 students will have final assessments in the role of performer in three sporting activities.

Theoretical element: The theory sessions will cover components including anatomy and physiology, physical training, sports psychology and health, fitness and well-being. Theory lessons are often taught in a practical manner with written tasks and assessments throughout.

After Key Stage 4 & future career pathways

Opportunities for further education: BTEC Sport, A Level PE, Sports Leaders.

Possible careers: Coaching, physiotherapy, teaching, nursing and many possible areas in the ever increasing sport and leisure industry.

Inspirational figure or quote

Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard. Tim Notke.

[Year 8 Options - Physical Education Assembly](#)

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