



ALBANY ACADEMY OPTIONS 2024

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OPTIONS PROCESS

The Aim of this booklet is to guide you through the Options process, explain the subject requirements in detail and answer frequently asked questions.

At the end of the process you need to decide which GCSEs you want to take.

This is a big decision:

How to choose

DO CHOOSE SUBJECTS YOU:

- Like and ones which excite, motivate and interest you,
- Feel might help you in the general career area that you are interested in.

DON'T CHOOSE SUBJECTS JUST BECAUSE:

- Your friend chose it – You may not enjoy it and therefore are less likely to succeed,
- You like the teacher – They may not be teaching it next year,
- You have never studied it before – Find out if it really is what you want to do.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Our Ks4 curriculum is built on a 'less is more' philosophy which provides you with a wide range of academic subjects all of which lead to excellent post-16 qualifications provided by our local colleges.

Subject allocations per week are:

	Year 10	Year 11
English Language and Literature	4.5	4.5
Maths	4.5	4.5
Combined Science	5	5
Personal Well Being	2	2
Option 1	3	3
Option 2	3	3
Option 3	3	3
Total	25	25

Note we have a 2 week time table. English and maths students will have 4 or 5 hours per week on alternate weeks.

Qualifications

Core	
English Language GCSE	Taken by all students.
English Literature GCSE	
Maths GCSE	
Combined Science GCSE	
Options	
Geography GCSE	'EBACC' options- At least one option for all students.
History GCSE	
French GCSE	
Spanish GCSE	
Computer Science GCSE	
Art GCSE	'Open' options– Up to two for all students.
Religious Education GCSE	
Music GCSE	
Drama GCSE	
Food & Nutrition GCSE	
Separate Science GCSE	
PE GCSE	
Photography GCSE	
Design Technology GCSE	

*Students cannot choose Art and Photography GCSE

New Style GCSE

Over the past few years 'reformed' GCSEs have been introduced.

Key features of the new GCSEs are:

- All GCSE exams will be studied in a linear format and exams be taken in Summer 2026
- There will be a greater emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar
- All GCSE courses will be more rigorous, demanding and challenging
- No tiered exam papers except in Mathematics, Science and Modern Foreign Languages.
- New reformed GCSEs are graded 1 to 9 with 9 being the highest grade, 5 being considered a strong pass and 4 a standard pass.
- Students who do not achieve a standard pass of grade 4 in English or Maths at the end of secondary school are expected to continue to study these subjects in post 16 education

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What are options?

Options are preferences. When we talk about options at school, we mean choosing which subjects to study in Years 10 and 11 for your examination courses.

Why can't I have a free choice?

You cannot have a free choice because there is a National Curriculum and everybody has to take certain subjects called Core subjects. Albany Academy offers a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the National Curriculum to make sure that every pupil has a good general education up to the age of 16.

No one will be prevented from following a particular career because he / she has dropped a particular subject at the end of Year 9.

Which subjects do I have to do?

You must do the Compulsory Examination subjects; these are Maths, English and Science. The number and type of qualification will be determined by the faculty. You must also study PE, RE and PSHE in Key Stage 4, these are studied in Personal Well Being lessons.

In addition, you must take three subjects from the Key Stage 4 Option Subjects. This makes a total of eight examination subjects.

Are there any subjects I can't do?

You can't take any subject you haven't studied in Year 9, except Photography, which is new for everyone.

You can't study both Art and Photography because they are too similar to each other.

How do I choose the subjects I want to take? Do I choose the ones I am good at?

It is not always easy to choose the subjects you want to take. There are a few things to remember:

-

1. Your ability in a subject is important – so is your attitude.
Do you enjoy the subject?
Have you shown interest?
Have you worked hard?
Find out what your teachers think.
2. You may have a career in mind even at this early stage. Find out from Unifrog or Mrs Walmsley or from your subject teachers about qualifications needed for a particular job.

Do I choose subjects because I like the teachers?

Never choose a subject because of the teacher. Even the teachers do not know which groups they are teaching next year.

How do I know that I am going to like new subjects which I have not done before?

To find out more about new subjects, talk to the teacher of that subject and listen carefully. Talk to Year 10 and Year 11 students who are taking the new subject. Are you choosing the subject for the right reasons? Or just because it is something new?

Who will help me to choose?

Many people will be giving you help and advice. Your subject teachers will tell you all about the different subjects and what you will be expected to do if you choose them. Your tutor will be able to give you general advice. Mrs Walmsley and Mrs Staniforth are our 'Amazing Employees' specialists. Your parents will help you make your decision after discussion with your teachers.

Ultimately you have to help yourself and put the time and effort in to research subjects.

Once I have made my preference, is that it?

Usually, students make good choices about subjects, but sometimes students do not choose wisely.

You are advised to listen to your teachers who know you very well and who, because of their experience over many years, know what is best.

What if I change my mind?

Students, who make wrong preferences because they have not taken advice, very soon ask to change subjects. **This is often difficult or impossible once a course has started in Year 10.**

Will I always get the subjects I have chosen?

You may not always get your preference of subject. If your teachers and Key Stage Manager feel that you will struggle with a subject, you will be directed towards another one.

How many exams will I have to take? Do you take exams for all subjects?

You will be following a GCSE course and taking GCSE examinations in all of your subjects. All of these courses have post 16 progression routes.

What is coursework & Non-exam Assessment?

Coursework & Non-exam Assessments are an essential part of some of the Key Stage 4 subjects. Requirements are detailed on the subject pages. Please read them carefully.

Throughout your two years course of study your teacher will set Coursework or Non-exam Assessment for you to do. This Coursework or Non-exam Assessment will be marked by your teacher and these marks will go towards your final grades. Coursework & Non-exam Assessment is necessary because there are many skills in some subjects that cannot be tested by the traditional written exam such as practical skills.

How much coursework or non-exam Assessment will I have to do?

The amount or type of Non-Exam Assessment is different for GCSE qualifications in different subjects. Details on each qualification can be found under each subject heading. The next page lists the percentage of marks allocated for Coursework & Non-exam Assessment in each subject:

Coursework & Non-exam Assessment

Art & Design	60%
Art & Design: Photography	60%
Computer Science	None
Design and Technology	50%
Drama	40%
English	None
English Literature	None
Food Preparation and Nutrition	50%
PE	40%
Geography	None
History	None
Mathematics	None
Modern Language French	None
Modern Language Spanish	None
Music	60%
Science GCSEs	None
RE	None

Where can I find more information about subjects and about the qualifications needed for different jobs?

- Your teachers will give you all the information you need about subjects.
- Mrs Walmsley will be able to tell you about the qualifications needed for jobs and for courses after school.
- There is a great deal of information in the Careers section in the Library.
- Log onto Unifrog and research subjects and careers

Outside of school I speak a language not offered in the option subjects, can I take a GCSE in that?

You can take a GCSE in your additional language if you are prepared to study and practice for the written paper. The school may be able to assist you with this. The GCSEs available in modern foreign languages are: -

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Spoken Mandarin/spoken Cantonese), German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Panjabi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish and Urdu

The qualifications on offer in this option booklet may be subject to revision due to changes made by the DfE. Any changes made by Albany Academy will be in the interests of the students.

A University guide to making decisions about pre-16 education

Pre-16 qualifications and university entry

When applying to a competitive university and especially for a very competitive course at a competitive university, it is important that you consider all the aspects of the entry requirements, including the qualifications typically taken before you are 16.

General entrance requirements

Universities may ask for a specific number of GCSEs (or their equivalent). For example, medical courses usually ask for five grade 9/8s, sometimes more. Many universities have a universal requirement for grade 5/4 in GCSE English and maths

Currently University College London (UCL) is the only institution to require a modern language GCSE at grade 5/4 (C) or above for all courses. An application to UCL will not be discounted if a language hasn't been taken, but once enrolled students are expected to complete a short language course or undertake a half course unit in a language as part of their degree.

Some courses may also require specific grades if the subject hasn't been studied at a higher level. There are some examples below, but it's best to check with individual universities before applying:

Applicants to study medicine, dentistry and veterinary science are usually required to have very good results in maths, science and English.

Applicants for teacher training courses need a minimum of grade 5/4 in maths, sciences and English. Some universities may ask for a minimum grade 6.

For a degree in English, universities often look for applicants to have a GCSE in a modern or classical language.

For a business degree, sometimes a grade 7, more often at least a grade 6, in GCSE maths is required.

A grade 7/6 in maths is often required for a degree in psychology and a grade 6 in a science may also be required.

To study a science subject at university (including biology, chemistry and physics), applicants will usually need to have achieved a minimum grade 5/4 in maths at GCSE if they are not taking it at advanced level

The English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate was introduced as a performance measure for schools in England in the 2010 performance tables.

It is not a qualification. The measure recognises where pupils have achieved a grade 5 or better at GCSE in English, Mathematics, History or Geography, two sciences (Computer Science can count) and a Modern or Ancient Language. The English Baccalaureate includes academic subjects highly valued by the Russell Group, but it is not currently required for entry to any Russell Group university. Most universities require English and Maths. A few may also require a Modern Foreign Language. Successful applicants are normally expected to have achieved good grades in a range of subjects at GCSE or equivalent, and to meet any specific requirements for their chosen course.

CORE SUBJECTS

Subject title	English Language
Qualification awarded	GCSE English Language
Awarding body	Eduqas
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Pupils study a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and explore the skills required to analyse and evaluate them, such as, information retrieval and linguistic and structural analysis. In addition, as per the examination, English lessons focus significantly on creative writing and adapting writing for different audiences and purposes in varied transactional writing tasks.

How the subject is assessed?

The examination consists of two papers and both of these assess reading and writing skills. Component One is one hour and forty-five minutes in length and is worth 40%. Component Two is two hours in length and is worth 60%.

- Paper 1: 20th Century Literature Reading and Creative Prose Writing
- Paper 2: 19th and 20th Century Non-Fiction Reading and Transactional/Persuasive Writing

The assessment pattern in the syllabus is graded and certified on a nine-grade scale from 1 to 9 (where 9 is the highest) to enable candidates to show their ability in the subject.

Spoken Language (speaking and listening) is assessed separately throughout the course. It is marked by the subject teacher and reported separately at the end of the GCSE course.

Any Special Requirements?

None.

Progression Qualifications

It is important to note that any student not achieving at least a '4' will be required to re-sit the qualification at college or as part of their apprenticeship. Many A level and Level 3 courses require at least a 5/strong pass and specific courses, including English A level, may require a grade 6.

Careers

A GCSE in English Language is an excellent platform to go on and study A-Levels in a range of subjects and the skills acquired through the study of English Language are pivotal to pupils' future studies and development.

Further to this, English can be linked to careers in Law, Publishing and Journalism.

Subject title	English Literature
Qualification awarded	GCSE English Literature
Awarding body	Eduqas
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Pupils study a broad range of texts, including 20th century drama; 19th century prose; Shakespeare and an anthology of poems.

As per the examination, English lessons focus on understanding the plot and content of the texts before consolidating and developing skills of deeper analysis. Pupils look at the writers' craft and consider the language, structure and contexts of texts and how these contribute to meaning. In addition, pupils are required to gain a good understanding of characterisation and theme, as well as effectively drawing comparisons between linked texts.

How the subject is assessed?

The examination consists of two papers and both of these assess understanding and analysis of set texts. Component One is two hours in length and is worth 40%. Component Two is two hours and thirty minutes in length and is worth 60%.

- Paper 1: Shakespeare and Poetry

- Paper 2: Post-1914 Prose/Drama, 19th Century Prose and Unseen Poetry

The assessment pattern in the syllabus is graded and certified on a nine-grade scale from 1 to 9 (where 9 is the highest) to enable candidates to show their ability in the subject.

Any Special Requirements?

None

Progression Qualifications

A GCSE in English Literature is an excellent platform to go on and study A-Levels in a range of subjects, particularly Language and Literature, as well as other complementary subjects.

Careers

Further to this, English Literature can be linked to careers in Law, Publishing and Journalism.

Subject title	Mathematics
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	Edexcel/Pearson
Grading awarded	GCSE 1 - 9

Subject content

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

How the subject is assessed?

Assessment is by formal tiered examination at the end of the course. Each pupil is required to sit three papers; two calculator papers and one non-calculator paper, each with equal weighting.

There are two overlapping tiers of entry: -

- Foundation Tier covering grades 1-5
- Higher Tier covering grades 4-9

Any Special Requirements?

Students are required to have the basic mathematical equipment which includes a ruler, protractor, pair of compasses and a scientific calculator.

Progression Qualifications

Many colleges require students to obtain a standard pass (Grade 4) to access Level 3 post-16 courses. Students not reaching the Grade 4 standard will be required to resist GCSE Mathematics at college.

Some post-16 courses require students to achieve a Grade 5 or above, such as A-Level Accounting, A-Level Business Studies, A-Level Computer Science, A-Level Economics, A-Level Geography, A-Level Psychology.

Some post-16 courses require students to achieve a Grade 6 or above, such as A-Level Mathematics, A-Level Biology, A-Level Chemistry, A-Level Geology, A-Level Physics.

Careers

Most jobs and careers will use mathematics in some way and employers see maths students as logical, numerate and committed problem solvers.

Maths is particularly useful in job areas such as the following:

- Accountancy, banking and finance
- Architecture and design
- Construction, engineering and manufacturing.
- Environmental sciences
- Management
- Medical technology
- Science and research

- Software developer

Subject title	Combined Science - Trilogy
Qualification awarded	2 GCSEs
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Students will study AQA Combined Science which is a dual award that covers Biology, Chemistry and Physics, and this course is worth two GCSE grades upon completion. They will be required to carry out 16 required practicals and there is a strong mathematical link throughout the course; see below

Exam	The percentage of the papers that has a mathematical focus
Biology	10
Chemistry	20
Physics	30

How the subject is assessed?

This course is terminal so all exams take place in May and June. Students will complete 6 exams to give a total of 420 marks. The marks are spread equally between all sciences so students need to achieve in all to get the highest grades.

The exams are as follows;

Biology paper 1 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Biology paper 2 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Chemistry paper 1 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Chemistry paper 2 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Physics paper 1 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Physics paper 2 – 1hr and 15 minutes with a total of 70 marks

Any Special Requirements?

There are no special requirements as all students need to study combined science as this is a core subject.

Having a good grasp of mathematical skills will help them to achieve the higher grades.

Progression Qualifications

A level science – at least 2 grade 6s in Science, grade 6 in maths and 2 grade 5s in other subjects

A level Science courses; Biology, Chemistry and Physics, Geology, Geochemistry and Geophysics

BTEC level 3 courses – at least a grade 4 in English and Maths and 3 grade 4s in other subjects

BTEC courses; Level 3 Applied Science, Level 3 Sports studies and exercise science

Both routes allow for progression to University

Careers

Science is becoming more important as it is a shortage skill within the UK. There are a huge number of career opportunities that students can enter such as the medical profession, i.e. doctor, nurse, pharmacist, public health and dentistry, to construction engineering, chemical engineering and mechanical engineering. Opportunities also occur in computing, electronics, telecommunications and electrical engineering and scientists also form an important part of the aerospace industry, industrial chemical manufacturing, textiles and car industry. This list is not exhaustive and there are many other careers where science is useful.

OPTIONS SUBJECTS

Subject title	Art, Craft & Design
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

The Portfolio or 'coursework' made up of an extended project with several outcomes plus further supporting studies (**worth 60% of the final grade, completed over 4 school terms**) and an Externally Set Assignment 'exam', which is another full project culminating in an exam of 10 hours' duration (**worth the remaining 40% of the final grade, following preparation carried out over the spring term of year 11**). The work must consist of work in at least two of the following areas of Art & Design using a variety of media: Fine Art, Graphic Communication, Textile Design, 3 D Design and Photography.

All project work also needs to include written annotation and documentation of ideas, work development and analysis of artist work and pupils opting for the subject need to understand the necessity for this written work element. Drawing will be used as a basis for the development of Artwork. Students will be expected to think creatively, work independently and develop ideas using a variety of techniques and media. Sketchbooks of extensive project development work are an essential part of the assessment, supplying most of the marks for each project.

It is vital students opting to take Art Craft & Design have the correct attitude to completing homework. A minimum of 1 hour 30 minutes must be spent on homework each week and students will be expected to spend extra time in the Art room over and above lesson time on a regular basis to keep organised and meet given deadlines. Students must also be prepared to work very independently and be self-motivated.

How the subject is assessed?

The exams and non-exam assessment will be marked under 4 assessment objectives:

AO1 Developing ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

AO2 Refine work by exploring ideas and experimenting with appropriate media and techniques.

AO3 Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

AO4 Present a personal, meaningful, informed and imaginative response that realises intentions.

Each assessment objective is worth 25% of the marks for both the Portfolio and the Externally Set Task and both are marked under the same criteria.

Any Special Requirements?

Students should only opt for GCSE Art, Craft & Design if they have enjoyed the variety of work during KS3 and have been achieving highly, or they may struggle with the course content.

School provides the majority of equipment and materials needed for GCSE Art Craft & Design but students will be expected to already have an apron, but purchase a folder to store their work, several sketchbooks and drawing pencils.

Progression Qualifications

Progression routes for Art and Design includes college study in a range of vocational visual arts courses, which can lead to pathways into the creative industries or further study at university or there are even apprenticeships available in the Arts and Design sector.

Careers

Creativity is valued in many careers, not just the ones directly linked to the Art & Design industries. The GCSE Art, Craft & Design course is one of the few courses that help you to develop this. Art helps you develop skills that make you more employable, especially in today's society when the pace of change is so fast. People with flair and creativity are vital in most jobs. The arts help you generate a range of ideas and solutions to problems. They develop originality of thought and higher order thinking skills.

Subject title	Photography
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

The Portfolio or 'coursework' made up of an extended project with several outcomes plus further supporting studies (**worth 60% of the final grade, completed over 4 school terms**) and an Externally Set Assignment 'exam', which is another full project culminating in an exam of 10 hours' duration (**worth the remaining 40% of the final grade, following preparation carried out over the spring term of year 11**).

During Year 10 and Year 11 students will produce several assignments. Each assignment is comprised of work presented in display folders, used to show the development of ideas and will include written analysis of other photographers' work to take inspiration from. The student will also document how they have used Adobe Photoshop to develop their own work digitally using a range of tools to edit work in multiple ways, perhaps experimenting too with colour, contrast and a range of filters before presenting final images. There is a large element of written work on the course to document project development work. Also, as GCSE Photography is affiliated to GCSE Art & Design, within project work there needs to be evidence of an element of 'drawing'. Students who perhaps struggle with drawing should understand that 'drawing' can take many forms however. All projects are individual to each pupil and pupils opting for GCSE Photography must be prepared to think creatively, work very independently and be very self-motivated. They must also be prepared to spend extra time in the Photography room over and above lesson time when necessary to keep organised and meet given deadlines

At Albany Academy, we conduct the course via digital means and school can provide the majority of photography equipment and materials including industry standard Adobe Photoshop software needed for digital image manipulation.

How the subject is assessed?

GCSE Photography is assessed under the same Assessment Objectives as GCSE Art, Craft & Design. *For more details see the entry for GCSE Art, Craft & Design.*

Any Special Requirements?

It is preferential that students opting for GCSE Photography, should have enjoyed Art during KS3 and have been achieving highly in the subject, or they may struggle with the course content.

This is due to the obvious similarities in the subject.

Students will be expected to purchase display folders to store their work. School has DSLR cameras and other camera equipment that needs to be kept in school. Students on the course must be prepared to share these with others.

A GCSE Photography student can complete the course and potentially achieve a good grade with school equipment though if a pupil has their own (preferably DSLR) camera, they can photograph subjects away from school premises in their own time.

You cannot take both GCSE Art, Craft & Design as well as GCSE Photography.

Progression Qualifications

Progression routes for Photography includes college study in a range of vocational photography / visual arts courses, which can lead to pathways into the creative industries or further study at university or there are even apprenticeships available in the Arts and Design sector.

Careers

Creativity is valued in many careers, not just the ones directly linked to the Art & Design industries. The GCSE Photography course is one of the few courses that help you to develop this.

Photography helps you develop skills that make you more employable, especially in today's society when the pace of change is so fast. People with flair and creativity are vital in most jobs. The arts help

you generate a range of ideas and solutions to problems. They develop originality of thought and higher order thinking skills.

Subject title	Computer Science
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Award	OCR
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

“There’s so many exciting things going on in the computer industry that if you have an idea, a dream, something that you want to do, then just go for it.” Stephanie Shirley

The OCR GCSE Computer Science specification is an exciting and modern qualification that is relevant to the changing world of technology. This creative and practical subject blends the theory and the practical elements of computer science in a way that students can use to solve real world problems. The programming element of the course involves, creativity, invention and excitement. The qualification values computational thinking and this course enables the development of these skills alongside innovation, imagination and problem solving.

Unit 1: Computer Systems

Topics include: Systems architecture, Main memory and Storage, Computer networks, connections and protocols, Network security, Systems software, Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Unit 2 Computational thinking, algorithms and programming,

Topics include: Algorithms, Programming fundamentals, Producing robust programs, Boolean logic, Programming languages and Integrated development environments

How the subject is assessed?

There are two 1.5 hour final exams **each worth 50% of the final grade** taken at the end of Year 11.

Computer System: A theoretical paper, with short answer and structural questions. Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained and coherent line of reasoning.

Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming: This paper has 2 sections: Section A and Section B. Section B will assess the student’s ability to write or refine algorithms and must be answered using either the OCR Exam Reference Language or Python Programming Language.

Any Special Requirements?

The course is an exciting and interesting course for anyone who enjoys creative practical problem solving.

It is a recommended (but not a requirement) that students have access to a computer with Python version 3 or above installed. This software is free of charge and simple to download.

Progression Qualifications

Progression routes for Computer Science include opportunities to study computer science in a range of A levels, vocational qualifications and progress on to university.

College courses include: A Level Computer Science, Information & creative technology BTEC, Computing & ICT BTEC . There are also apprenticeships available in Computer Science depending on skills, and qualifications.

Many science based university courses include Python for data science. If you are thinking of a career in science the coding element of this course will be particularly useful.

Careers

Computers are now an integral part of everyday life, in the future almost every career will use technology from digital doctors to digital farming. The more computer science knowledge you have the more careers and jobs will be available to you.

There are currently a wide range of careers available to students who have studied computer science: *Digital Artists, Cyber Security, Machine learning engineers, Social media managers, Software developers, VFX artists, Web developers, Multimedia programmers, Software testers, Games developers, Digital copywriters, Nanotechnologists, Researchers, Network engineers, CAD design and research, Online fashion developer.*

Subject title	Design & Technology
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

GCSE Design and Technology is an exciting and creative course that will prepare students to participate confidently in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to become creative and critical thinkers, develop skills in design and apply their practical expertise to make products that solve real and relevant problems.

A detailed breakdown of course content can be found on the AQA website.

How the subject is assessed?

50% Coursework

Students are expected to complete an extensive design and make project, including a written portfolio in response to a given context.

50% Exam

The Design & Technology exam is separated into three sections:

- Core technical principles
- Specialist technical
- Designing and making principles

Any Special Requirements?

Students should have a sound understanding of mathematics, be able to draw accurately both by hand and using computer aided design software, have confidence using tools and equipment as well as the ability to work independently and safely using their initiative.

School provides the majority of equipment and materials needed for GCSE Design & Technology, however, students are expected to provide their own materials to manufacture their final GCSE project. PP students may be eligible to have materials provided for them.

Progression Qualifications

A-Level Qualifications

Design and Technology, Product design (3D), Product design (textiles), Systems and control technology, Engineering.

Vocational Qualifications

There are a range of vocational qualifications such as BTECs, NVQ/SVQs, and diplomas linked to design & technology. These include graphic design, fashion styling, art and design, media, engineering, construction and building services and motor vehicle – technology and repair.

Apprenticeships

Work based apprenticeships that can be accessed following the study of design & technology include junior product designer, theatre set carpenter, farrier, service technician, civil engineering technician, plumber, design and draughting technician and engineering model maker.

Careers

Listed below are some examples of careers that could follow the study of Design & Technology. Aerospace engineer, Animator, Architect, Bricklayer, Cabinet maker, Carpenter, CNC machinist, CAD technician, Electrician, Lighting technician, Medical illustrator, Offshore roustabout, Pattern cutter, Petroleum engineer, Plasterer, Plumber, Primary school teacher, Quantity surveyor, Secondary school teacher, Set designer, Sign writer, Telecommunications engineer, Tree surgeon, Window fitter.

Subject title	GCSE Drama
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	Eduqas
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject Content:

The course offers students the opportunity to explore Drama through both practical and written tasks. Students will be introduced to a range of styles, key practitioners and influential playwrights whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills.

How the subject is assessed?

Component 1: Devising Theatre (40%)

Component 1 is a mix of both practical and written work.

- Practical – In groups you will be given the choice of 4 different stimuli; a picture, a song, a quote and a statement. You must use influence from a practitioner or genre to create a performance based on the stimulus you have chosen. This performance will be done in front of a live audience, recorded and sent off to an examiner to be marked.
- Written – Students must complete two pieces of written coursework for this component; a portfolio which explains your creative choices and an evaluation of the final performance.

Component 2: Performing from a Text (20%)

Component 2 is a practical part of the course which requires you to work in groups and perform two contrasting sections from a professional script. This performance will be done onstage in front of a live audience and visiting examiner.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre (40%)

Component 3 is made up of a 1 hour and 30-minute written exam that is split into two sections.

- Section A – You will answer questions based on a set text that we have studied in class. You must answer questions from the point of view of an actor, director and designer.
- Section B – This section requires you to watch a live professional performance in a theatre and answer an evaluative question.

Any Special Requirements:

- You must be a confident person and be able to perform in front of a live audience
- You must be able to work effectively as part of a group
- You must be committed and willing to give up your own time to attend after school and dinner time rehearsals when preparing for practical performances
- It is a requirement of the course that you attend the theatre to view a piece of live professional work at least once. You will then evaluate this during the written exam at the end of Y11.

Progression Qualifications:

Students who study GCSE Drama are viewed as innovative, confident and successful people who can rise to any challenge and are highly sort after for jobs ranging from a career path in the industry like Actor or Theatre Director to a career in Public Relations work or teaching.

Opting for GCSE Drama provides you with a good progression route to more advanced qualifications including *BTEC Acting or Performing Arts, A Level Drama, A Level Theatre Studies* or *A Level Performing Arts*. Beyond KS5 you can then study at Degree level any Drama related subject such as *BA (Hons) Drama, BA (Hons) Performing Arts, BA (Hons) Drama and English* or *BA (Hons) Drama: Theatre Film and Television*.

Careers:

The GCSE Drama course not only prepares you for potential Performing Arts jobs and careers but instils skills that are needed for all pathways, such as confidence, social skills and independence. Career opportunities that a Drama GCSE can lead to include; Actor/Performer, Teacher, Choreographer, Director, Youth/Community Worker, Stage Manager, Theatrical Designer, Lighting/Sound Technician etc.

Subject title	GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	EDUQAS
Grading awarded	GCSE 9 to 1

Subject content

This subject which was first offered in 2016. Food Preparation and Nutrition has been developed to amalgamate the best parts of Catering, Food and Nutrition and Food Technology. The course covers the preparation, cooking and serving of food. Students will make a wide range of dishes using commodities such as meat, cereals, vegetables and dairy products. Recipes may be modified to alter characteristics and nutritional value. All recipes are taught with links to food choices, dietary goals and the sensory properties of food. Food safety and legislation is studied and applied throughout the course. In addition, students will learn about food provenance which includes consideration of food technologies used to produce our food, ethical considerations and sustainability.

How the subject is assessed?

Food Preparation and Nutrition is assessed through exams and controlled assessment tasks, each worth 50% of the overall qualification. Controlled assessment is completed in year 11, this includes a short investigation worth 15% and a longer cooking task which includes a 3-hour practical examination worth 35%. A written paper is completed in the summer term of year 11 and is worth 50% of the final grade.

Any Special Requirements?

Students studying Food Preparation & Nutrition will need to purchase chef whites. These can be personalized with an embroidered name and are ordered through school in the summer term of year 9. For most students ingredients will need to be provided from home for practical lessons each week, Pupil Premium students may be eligible for ingredients to be provided by school.

Progression Qualifications

Every year we see some of our year 11 Food students' progress onto City and Guild's vocational courses at local colleges. Food and Nutrition GCSE prepares students well for level 1, 2 and 3 courses in Catering and Hospitality. Many local colleges offer level 1 and 2 Apprenticeships in Catering and Events Management. Most courses include some level of work placement within the Industry. While it is, to some extent, vocational in nature, many of our students take food as a GCSE subject that they will enjoy and achieve a good result in. This GCSE is Progress 8 and Attainment 8 approved for students wishing to move onto A level courses.

Careers

A passion for food can lead to a wide range of career opportunities, working in hotels, restaurants, or tourist venues. There is a range of career paths — in agriculture, catering and hospitality, environmental health, leisure and tourism, retail sales and customer service, as well as engineering and manufacturing. Listed below are just a few of the food related jobs that are out there!

Food Scientists, Home Economists, Bakers, Cake Decorators, Baristas, Consumer Scientists, Chefs, Publicans, Wedding Planners, working in Food Manufacture and Quality Control.

Subject title	Geography
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	Edexcel
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

The syllabus we follow is the Edexcel Specification A: Geographical Themes and Challenges

The syllabus is divided into three units:

- The Physical Environment
- The Human Environment
- Geographical Investigations

How the subject is assessed?

The Physical Environment

Coastal Landscapes

River Landscapes

Weather Hazards and Climate Change

Ecosystems, Biodiversity and Management

Assessment: 37.5%. Written examination – 1 hour 30 minutes.

The Human Environment

Changing Cities

Global Development

Resource Management

Assessment: 37.5%. Written examination – 1 hour 30 minutes.

Geographical Investigations

Pupils will undertake a study of a river environment and an urban area. These fieldwork studies draw across knowledge and understanding from The Physical Environment and The Human Environment topics.

Assessment: 25%. Written examination – 1 hour 30 minutes.

Any Special Requirements?

It is compulsory pupils complete 2 days of fieldwork. This will involve a river study and a study of an urban area. This will incur a charge for transport.

Progression Qualifications

A level Geography

A level Geology

BTEC Tourism management / Travel and Tourism

Careers

Numerous job occupations including: Leisure and recreation industry, local government, meteorology, navigation, surveying, town and country planning, transport and communications, travel agency and tourism, environmental agencies/ National trust/Rangers, travel and tourism, community and charity work.

Subject title	History
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

The GCSE History content comprises the following elements:

- one period study
- one thematic study
- one wider world depth study
- one British depth study including the historic environment.

GCSE History students must take assessments in both of the following papers:

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world

Section A: America, 1920–1973: Opportunity and inequality

This section focusses on two key developments in a country's history over at least a 50-year period.

Section B: Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

This section focusses on international conflict and tension.

Paper 2: Shaping the nation

Section A: Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day

This thematic section looks at key developments in medicine over a long period of time.

Section B: Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

This is a British depth study incorporating the study of a specific historic environment.

How the subject is assessed?

Paper 1 – 2 hour exam covering both topics

Paper 2 – 2 hour exam covering both topics

Any Special Requirements?

Students should be interested in social and political history and enjoy reading extended texts and writing extended answers.

History requires critical thinking, research, making informed decisions and understanding people and events.

Progression Qualifications

A Level History

Careers

History is highly regarded by employers and colleges due to its emphasis on research, judgment and communication.

Career opportunities include journalism, the law, politics, armed forces and management.

Subject title	French
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Over the two years, students will study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based:

People and Lifestyle

- Types of family
- Relationships
- Marriage/partnerships
- Healthy & unhealthy living
- Your studies
- Life at school
- Education after GCSEs
- Jobs, careers & ambitions

Popular Culture

- Music

- Cinema & TV
- Food
- Sport
- Customs and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Communication and the world around us

- Travel and tourism
- holidays
- Where you live
- Media and technology
- The environment
- Poverty & homelessness

How the subject is assessed?

Assessment of the course is by examination at the end of Year 11 for Listening (25%), Speaking (25%), Reading (25%) and Writing (25%). Students will be entered for the same tier in all four language skills: Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) or Higher Tier (grades 4-9).

LISTENING (25%)	Written exam: 35 minutes (Foundation Tier), 45 minutes (Higher Tier)
SPEAKING (25%)	Recorded exam conducted one to one with subject teacher 7–9 minutes (Foundation Tier) + preparation time 10–12 minutes (Higher Tier) + preparation time
READING (25%)	Written exam: 45 minutes (Foundation Tier), 1 hour (Higher Tier)
WRITING (25%)	Written exam: 1 hour 10 (Foundation Tier), 1 hour 15 (Higher Tier)

Any Special Requirements?

Students interested in studying a language and developing their communication skills.
 Students interested in learning about another culture.
 Students are required to regularly take part in speaking activities in pairs, groups or whole class, in addition to developing their listening, reading and writing skills.
 The recorded speaking exam is one to one with the teacher and requires students to take part in a role play, a reading aloud task and talk about a topic linked to a photocard.

Progression Qualifications

A level French

Careers

Studying French offers a wide range of further education and career options. French is one of the EBacc subjects, which is a group of subjects that can open more doors to studying at A-level and at Degree level. At university studying French means a year working or studying abroad in a French speaking country which is an amazing opportunity. Beyond education, learning French can result in a career in translating, interpreting, tourism, teaching, international business, marketing, journalism, customer services, international aid and much more. Language skills are in demand and with many companies operating internationally a person with a modern language is a very attractive candidate.

Subject title	Spanish
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Over the two years, students will study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based:

People and Lifestyle

- Types of family
- Relationships
- Marriage/partnerships
- Healthy & unhealthy living
- Your studies
- Life at school
- Education after GCSEs
- Jobs, careers & ambitions

Popular Culture

- Music
- Cinema & TV
- Food
- Sport
- Customs and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Communication and the world around us

- Travel and tourism
- holidays
- Where you live
- Media and technology
- The environment
- Poverty & homelessness

How the subject is assessed?

Assessment of the course is by examination at the end of Year 11 for Listening (25%), Speaking (25%), Reading (25%) and Writing (25%). Students will be entered for the same tier in all four language skills: Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) or Higher Tier (grades 4-9).

LISTENING (25%)	Written exam: 35 minutes (Foundation Tier), 45 minutes (Higher Tier)
SPEAKING (25%)	Recorded exam conducted one to one with subject teacher 7–9 minutes (Foundation Tier) + preparation time 10–12 minutes (Higher Tier) + preparation time
READING (25%)	Written exam: 45 minutes (Foundation Tier), 1 hour (Higher Tier)
WRITING (25%)	Written exam: 1 hour 10 (Foundation Tier), 1 hour 15 (Higher Tier)

Any Special Requirements?

Students interested in studying a language and developing their communication skills.

Students interested in learning about another culture.

Students are required to regularly take part in speaking activities in pairs, groups or whole class, in addition to developing their listening, reading and writing skills.

The recorded speaking exam is one to one with the teacher and requires students to take part in a role play, a reading aloud task and talk about a topic linked to a photocard.

Progression Qualifications

A level Spanish

Careers

Studying Spanish offers a wide range of further education and career options. Spanish is one of the EBacc subjects, which is a group of subjects that can open more doors to studying at A-level and at Degree level. At university studying Spanish means a year working or studying abroad in a Spanish speaking country which is an amazing opportunity. Beyond education, learning Spanish can result in a career in translating, interpreting, tourism, teaching, international business, marketing, journalism, customer services, international aid and much more. Language skills are in demand and with many companies operating internationally a person with a modern language is a very attractive candidate.

Subject title	Music
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	Eduqas
Grading awarded	GCSE 1 - 9

Subject content

Understanding music; Performing music; Composing music

How the subject is assessed?

Component 1: Performing – 30%

Performing on your instrument or voice as a soloist and in groups. The pieces you perform for the performance tests (coursework) will be of your own choice.

There is a requirement to perform **TWO** pieces of music (students' choice) however these must demonstrate technical ability on instruments and one must be a group performance (approximately grade 3). The other performance can be a solo or another ensemble, with a total duration of both pieces 4 – 6 minutes.

Component 2: Composing – 30%

Composing musical pieces that borrow ideas from areas that you study in your listening module and adding your own ideas. You will be encouraged to experiment, to write for different combinations of instruments (always your own choice) and to use ICT (PC composition packages, recording equipment and electronic instruments).

TWO pieces of music make up the remainder of the practical coursework. These can be in any style, mainly using computers and recording equipment to achieve the result (notation, guitar tab and lead sheets count as acceptable forms of coursework), 3 – 6 minutes in total.

Component 3: Appraising – 40%

Listening & Appraising. Looking at different areas of music, including how composers write for film and for special occasions. You will use these ideas in your own compositions. You will be encouraged to appraise both your own work and pieces by other composers.

The last component is a written exam, taking place at the end of the course. During the exam students are required to listen to music and answer questions about musical elements.

These will be focused on 4 areas of study, which are: Musical Forms and Devices, Music for Ensemble, Film Music and Popular Music

Any Special Requirements?

Students interested in all genres and styles of music, from Classical to Pop, Rock and Hip-hop. Students wishing to go on to further and higher education in music or related subjects.

Students should be willing to listen attentively to unfamiliar music and be able to use the elements of music and appropriate music vocabulary. They should also be able to read and write staff notation.

To complete the course students will need to sing or play an instrument as there is a significant amount of practical work.

Students will be required to perform in front of each other and take part in school concerts. It is strongly advised that students either be at a ABRSM/Trinity/Rock School grade 1 standard already and/or have been having instrument lessons either privately or through school for 1 year prior to the GCSE course start date. For performances at GCSE the expected minimum music grade standard is 3.

It is recommended that lessons are taken outside of class time; however school can offer instrumental lessons, which take place across the school day.

Progression Qualifications

Students will be required to achieve grades 5 and above to access Music A level at college level.

Careers

Performer, teacher, administrator, songwriter, conductor, composer, recording engineer, manager, promoter, or music publisher. There are also more jobs than ever in music business related areas, such as: careers in digital marketing, social media, PR, technology, label services, ticketing and merchandising. It is also common to find people who studied music working in consultancy, finance, banking, music therapy and legal jobs.

Subject title	Physical Education
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Should you choose to study Physical Education you will develop both practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

For the Theory assessment (60% of the course), students will complete two lessons of theory a week and will have to complete two different exams both one hour and fifteen minutes long. Students will receive homework on a weekly basis to help further embed knowledge from the classroom. PE Homework will be completed in the form of research projects, examination questions, extended writing tasks and presentations amongst many others.

At the end of each unit, all students will sit an examination to formatively assess progress and to ensure students are performing to their maximal ability.

For the practical assessment, students will be assessed across three different sporting activities as a player/performer. One of these activities must be in a team activity; one assessment must be in an individual activity, with the third assessment being either an individual or a team activity. Some students may choose to complete climbing as one of their three activities. This is run by a local company and would require a cost of £80 approximately for the training and final assessment. This would be completed in year 10.

For assessment purposes, students will be given the opportunity to purchase a personalised GCSE PE kit, which can be worn for all practical lessons including personal welfare lessons. This will incur a cost of between £30-£50. Pupil Premium students will be given a discounted rate. This is usually ordered once students have chosen their options.

ASSESSMENT

Written exams (60% of overall grade). Both written exams are 1 hour 15 minutes.

Paper 1: the human body and, movement in physical activity and sport (78 marks and 30 % of overall grade).

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

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (78 marks and 30 % of overall grade).

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

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport (100 marks/40 % of overall grade)

Students will have to be assess in three different physical activities as a player/performer and will have to complete an Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one of their chosen activities.

Any Special Requirements?

An aptitude for sports and the ability to work to deadlines and complete extended pieces of work.
Need access to internet/ computer at home.

Progression Qualifications

The next stage will be to complete an A Level in Physical Education. Physical Education can also support the learning for progressing onto A level Biology.

GCSE PE will prepare you if you are looking for a career in teaching, physiotherapy, sports psychology, coaching, officiating, and personal training or in the health and fitness sector.

Subject title	Religious Studies
Qualification awarded	GCSE
Awarding body	WJEC Eduqas
Grading awarded	GCSE 9-1

Subject content

Component 1: Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World

Students will study the following four themes. All questions are compulsory.

Theme 1: Issues of Relationships

Theme 2: Issues of Life and Death

Theme 3: Issues of Good and Evil

Theme 4: Issues of Human Rights

This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the identified themes.

Component 2: Study of Christianity

Students will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity. This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the subject content.

Component 3: Study of a World Faith (Islam)

Candidates will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of one world faith with our choice being Islam. This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the subject content.

How the subject is assessed?

There are 3 exams for GCSE Religious Studies:

Component 1 is a two-hour exam paper and makes up 50% of the GCSE grade

Component 2 is a one-hour exam paper and makes up 25% of the GCSE grade

Component 3 is a one-hour exam paper and makes up 25% of the GCSE grade

Each exam will consist of 2, 5, 8 and 15 mark questions. The questions will require pupils to define key terms, describe religious beliefs and practices, explain the impact of these beliefs and practices as well as evaluating the importance of certain religious beliefs and practices.

Any Special Requirements?

To take part in GCSE Religious Studies, pupils should be prepared to take notes in lessons for revision purposes and to deepen their understanding needed to answer evaluation questions.

Pupils should also try to keep up to date with the news where possible as this will help with their understanding of current affairs, human rights issues and religious practices.

Progression Qualifications

A level Religious Studies

Careers

Any type of community work: health and social care, child care, teaching, police, fire service, nursing.

Any job which requires skills of evaluation and analysis: Law, psychology.

Any job working with people: Leisure and Tourism, retail, hotel management.

Subject title	Separate Science – Biology, Chemistry, Physics
Qualification awarded	3 GCSEs
Awarding body	AQA
Grading awarded	GCSE 1-9

Subject content

Students will study AQA Separate Science which means that they achieve a GCSE in each of the following sciences; Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They will be required to carry out 28 required practical's and there is a strong mathematical link throughout the course; see below

Exam	The percentage of the papers that has a mathematical focus
Biology	10
Chemistry	20
Physics	30

How the subject is assessed?

This course is terminal so all exams take place in May and June. Students will complete 6 exams (2 for each science) with a maximum of 200 marks for each GCSE. The marks are spread equally between both papers so students need to achieve in all to get the highest grades.

The exams are as follows;

Biology paper 1 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Biology paper 2 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Chemistry paper 1 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Chemistry paper 2 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Physics paper 1 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Physics paper 2 – 1hr and 45 minutes with a total of 100 marks

Any Special Requirements?

Students need to show an interest in all sciences; biology, chemistry and physics as they will achieve a separate GCSE for each subject.

Separate science bridges the gap between GCSE and A level science so it is vital that students demonstrate hard-working behaviours.

All A level science courses require 2 grade 6s in science as the entry requirement.

Having a good grasp of mathematical skills will help them to achieve the higher grades.

Progression Qualifications

A level science – at least a grade 6 in two sciences (the grade 6 must be in the science you choose to study), a grade 6 in maths and two grade 5s in other subjects

A level Science courses; Biology, Chemistry and Physics, Geology, Geochemistry and Geophysics

BTEC level 3 courses – at least a grade 4 in English and Maths and 3 grade 4s in other subjects

BTEC courses; Level 3 Applied Science, Level 3 Sports studies and exercise science

Both routes allow for progression to University

Careers

Science is becoming increasingly more important as it is a shortage skill within the UK. There are a huge number of career opportunities that students can enter such as the medical profession, i.e. doctor, nurse, pharmacist, public health and dentistry, to construction engineering, chemical engineering and mechanical engineering. Opportunities also occur in computing, electronics, telecommunications and electrical engineering and scientists also form an important part of the aerospace industry, industrial chemical manufacturing, textiles and car industry. This list is not exhaustive and there are many other careers where science is useful.

YEAR 9 OPTIONS 2024 FORM (Example only)

Subject choice

All students will be required to follow Examination courses in English, Maths and Science and Core non examination courses in RE, PE and PSHE (Personal Well Being) in accordance with the National Curriculum. Students will then be able to choose **THREE** Examination courses in option subjects. **One from Group A, and two others from Groups A or B.** Students are also required to enter a reserve choice.

Full name of student	Tutor Group
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Key Stage 4 Option Choices.

To ensure a balanced curriculum all students must select at least one option from Option Block A in the table.

The remaining two option choices are an open selection by students from either Option Block A or B. A reserve option is required. Reserves may be used where it is appropriate.

Option Block A	Choice ✓	Option Block B	Choice ✓
Computer Science		Art	
French		Drama	
Geography		Design Technology	
History		Food and Nutrition	
Spanish		Music	
		PE	
		Photography	
		Religious Studies	
		Separate Science	

My reserve option is _____ (must be different from already selected subjects)

***BACCALAUREATE ROUTE.** In order to study the English Baccalaureate, you will need to tick **Geography or History and French or Spanish** for two of your choices. The third would be a free choice. The GCSEs in English Language, Maths and Sciences complete the five subjects required in the English Baccalaureate.

I speak another language and would like to consider taking a GCSE in this.

The language is _____.

I agree that my son/daughter of tutor group will be prepared to study three of these chosen subjects to GCSE level and I will support the school in the requirements of homework and coursework/controlled assessment completion.

Signed: Parent Date:

Please return the completed form to your child's form tutor by **25th March 2024 at the latest.**

IF WE FEEL THAT YOU WILL STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED IN YOUR PREFERRED SUBJECT WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DIRECT YOU TO A MORE APPROPRIATE COURSE.