



# Rainham Mark Grammar School

## GCSE Choices Booklet 2026



*Be the best version of yourself*

# GCSE Options Years 10 – 11

Moving into Year 10, from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4, is an important stage in your educational career. This is the first time you will have had the opportunity to exercise some choice over your programme of study. Before this, everything you have studied will have been determined for you. Now you will have a chance to select some elements in your programme that are of real interest to you. Having such choices can be both exhilarating and daunting. It is important that you give careful thought to your choices and that you take notice of the advice you are given.

There are a number of ways in which you will receive advice and information. You will have this booklet that contains an outline of all courses, including the optional ones. There will also be sessions at school, and a careers fair to attend. Mrs Robbins, Mr Lawrence and your form tutors are also on hand to advise. We have already met with your parents and carers to explain the process.

So, think carefully, talk to people who can help you, read this booklet carefully, and enjoy choosing your option subjects for next year.

## Career Ideas

The process of choosing a career path will vary with every student as it is a very unique and individual journey. We will support and guide you on your career journey from Year 7 all the way through to Year 13, and in many cases beyond. Whilst career support and guidance continue throughout your time at school, we do start to encourage year 10 & 11 students to independently research different careers to enable them to get a thorough understanding of the opportunities available.

Very few students know exactly what they want to do as a career in Year 10 or 11. Many students will in fact change their minds over the next 4 or 7 years as they complete their Higher Education; Degree Apprenticeship or Gap Year. To ensure every student reaches their potential, we encourage students to take a flexible approach to all opportunities that arise along the way. Finding your dream job can be difficult in a competitive world, which is why we are passionate about ensuring students are as qualified, skilled and prepared as possible. Graduates, whether that is through a Degree or Apprenticeship Degree, still have a higher chance of securing work in their chosen area than school leavers. Many jobs, which in the 1960s and 1970s were open to A level leavers, now require a degree. Most of our Year 11 students stay on into the Sixth Form and, of these, well over 80% go on to university.

University entrance and Degree Apprenticeships are competitive. Well established Universities and businesses are looking for high academic standards and for students who can contribute to their community and ethos. We have had successful applicants in every subject. It is important to remember, however, that University admissions refer to GCSE results and the school reference when making offers of places. Good GCSE grades are therefore important, but so is other evidence: work experience, music, drama, playing in school games teams. Students in Years 10 and 11 need to work hard on all aspects of their education, character and skills in order to utilise their school life and their career pathway. Remember that careers support and guidance is available at any time with Mrs Williams.

## Choices for Years 10 and 11

During the GCSE years you will study a number of 'core' subjects:

- English Literature and English Language
- Maths
- Science (biology, chemistry and physics)

- A Modern Language: French, German or Spanish
- Geography or History

You will continue to take PE, RPE and PSHE as **non-examination subjects**.

Other subjects are optional; you must make choices.

You can choose **two** of the following GCSE subjects:

- A second Modern Language: French, German or Spanish i.e., the other language that you have studied in KS3. If you are considering this option, please speak to a member of the MFL department.
- Business or Economics
- Geography
- History
- Information and Communication Technology (Creative iMedia) or Computing
- Physical Education
- Art
- Drama
- Photography or iMedia
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Design Technology or Food Preparation and Nutrition

Unfortunately, you **CANNOT** select the following combinations for your options;

- ✘ Information and Communication Technology (Creative iMedia) and Computing
- ✘ Business and Economics
- ✘ Photography and Creative iMedia

## Curiosity Scholars Opportunity

As part of the GCSE options process, students may be offered the opportunity to take an additional GCSE through our Curiosity Scholars programme. This is designed for students with a genuine interest in a subject who are willing to show extra commitment and dedication.

The additional GCSEs currently available are **GCSE Classics** and **GCSE Astronomy**. These courses will run after school and are taken alongside a student's main GCSE subjects.

Students may apply for **one additional GCSE only**; it is not possible to take both. There is no expectation that students will take an additional GCSE, and choosing not to apply will not disadvantage them in any way.

Places are limited, and students will be required to complete an application process. Further details will be shared in due course.

You will be given help and advice as you make these GCSE choices. Subject teachers will spend some of your lesson time going over the GCSE content and expectations and you will have the opportunity to also speak to students who are currently studying their GCSES.

### Availability of Subjects

Although we describe all these subjects, please note:

- If insufficient numbers of students come forward for a subject to make a big enough group, the subject cannot run.
- Only if staff are available can a subject be taught.
- If there is excess demand for a subject and we cannot provide enough sets some degree of selection will have to be made. The order of preference of subject indicated in the choices form will be considered.
- It may not be possible to take every combination of subjects.
- We strongly advise you to try to make a balanced choice.

# GCSE SUBJECTS

To give you some guidance here are some brief descriptions of the subjects taught.

## Core GCSE Subjects (the subjects that must be taken):

### English Language

The English Language course completed in years 10 and 11 follows the AQA specification. Classes are mixed ability. The students will sit two examinations testing a range of skills.

Paper 1 is entitled 'Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing' and the students will be answering 4 questions of increasing complexity, on an unseen prose passage from a work of fiction. Students will then be asked to complete a creative writing task which can either be a description or the opening of a story. 24 marks are available for content and organisation. 16 marks are available for spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. There will be a stimulus picture in the examination for this. The examination is 1 hour and 45 minutes long. This paper is worth 50% of the course.

Paper 2 is entitled 'Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives'. In this examination, students will answer 4 questions of increasing complexity, on two unseen prose passages from non-fiction. The passages could be letters, magazine articles, newspaper articles, autobiographies, blogs and so on. There will be a writing task which will ask the student to express their opinion or point of view on a topic. 24 marks are available for content and organisation. 16 marks are available for spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. This paper is worth 50% of the course.

Finally, there is a compulsory speaking and listening element to the qualification. Students will present to the class a formal speech on a topic chosen by the teacher. This will be graded as 'Pass', 'Merit' or 'Distinction' and will NOT impact on the final grade.

The qualification is graded from 9-1 with 1 being the lowest grade and 9 the highest grade.

# English Literature

The English Literature course completed in year 10 and year 11 follows the AQA specification. This course is completed in conjunction with the English Language course and is also mixed ability. The students will sit two examinations that will test their ability to write cogently and perceptively about 4 texts they have studied in class and two unseen poems.

- **Paper 1** is entitled 'Shakespeare and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel'. Students will study 'Macbeth' by Shakespeare and a 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. The paper consists of two essay questions. The students are given a passage to explore for each text, but they are also tested on the knowledge of the text as a whole. The examination is 1 hour and 45 minutes long.
- **Paper 2** is entitled 'Modern Texts and Poetry'. Students will study the play "An Inspector Calls" by J.B Priestley and 15 poems from the Power and Conflict anthology that AQA supply. They will also study a range of poems in preparation for the unseen element of the paper. The examination is split into three sections. Section A is an essay question on 'An Inspector Calls'. The students will have a choice of two essay questions, but unlike in paper 1, they will not have a passage to work with. Section B is an essay question in which the students compare two poems from the anthology. One poem is printed, the other poem is chosen by the student. Section C is the unseen poetry section and has two questions. The students will answer an essay question on one poem. The second question is a short essay (3 paragraphs) in which the students compare the two unseen poems. This paper is 2 hours and 15 minutes long.

This examination is closed book, students will not have access to copies of plays, prose or poems in the examination.

It is essential that all texts are read in preparation for the examination.

The qualification is graded from 9-1 with 1 being the lowest grade and 9 the highest grade.

# Mathematics

At Key Stage 3, we focus on providing a solid foundational pre-GCSE curriculum and make sure students are fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics.

At Key Stage 4, over the two years of studying the GCSE syllabus students will develop and consolidate their understanding through discovering and investigating the best of what is thought and said in mathematics. Students will explore all the key areas in mathematics through carefully selected tasks that push all students to their potential. This approach is followed throughout the two years of the GCSE course and is built upon the knowledge and understanding of the areas that the students have studied within their Mathematics education.

The more able pupils are offered an extra qualification which is called GCSE Further Mathematics. This qualification places an emphasis on higher order technical proficiency, rigorous argument, and problem-solving skills. It gives high achieving students an introduction to AS level topics that will help them to develop skills in Algebra, Geometry, Calculus, Matrices, Trigonometry, Functions and Graphs.

It is expected that most students will take the Higher tier examination, where grades 9 - 4 are available, and we will decide who will take Foundation in consultation with students, parents and staff. There is no formal coursework for GCSE Mathematics, although investigative work, problem solving and functional skills work are included in the course and the work is assessed by questions on the examination papers, three in total, the first paper being non-calculator the remaining papers requiring a calculator.

All students sit the Edexcel GCSE exam, and further information is available at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/mathematics-2015.html>

Students in Sets 1 take an additional GCSE, the Level Two Further Mathematics qualification from AQA. Further information:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/aqa-certificate/further-mathematics-8365>

The possession of a scientific calculator is essential. Alternatively, the department would recommend Casio's fx-991EX Classwiz calculator (also available at a discount) although any scientific calculator would be acceptable. Whilst graphical calculators are not a requirement we are encouraging students, particularly if they may be considering Mathematics A Level, to consider purchasing the Casio fx-CG100 calculator, which we offer at a discount. Further information on this particular calculator is available from Casio:

<https://edu.casio.com/products/cwiz/fx991ex/index.php>

<https://edu.casio.com/intl/calculators/graphing/fx-cg100/>

We hope that as our students continue their journey towards GCSE, we can help to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the subject. Please contact Mrs Hargreaves or Mr Chapman should you require any further details about our GCSE.

## Science

Students start their foundations in GCSE science (AQA) studies whilst in Year 9 and will continue to build on these foundations in Year 10. The students will be taught in separate (biology, chemistry and physics) science lessons from the start of Year 9. During the course of these studies the students will be assessed and at the end of Year 10 the students will be guided to an appropriate pathway for them for Y11 and their GCSE exams. The first pathway in Year 11 will be to receive three separate GCSEs one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics or via the second pathway where they will study Combined Science (all three sciences will still be covered, but a slight decrease in content) and obtain two GCSEs.

Students must complete key practical assignments throughout the course which are examined in their final written examinations. Students have on average 3 lessons per two-week cycle in each of the three sciences and most will be taught by one subject specialist teacher. All students will sit a total of 2 exams for each science subject for their GCSE's at the end of Year 11. The main difference is that the Combined Science examinations will be 75 minutes in duration whilst the separate sciences will be 105 minutes (due to the increase in content).

The science courses cover key aspects of each science and how they can be applied to a wider context in today's society, e.g. climate change, medicines. In order to monitor the student's progress, they will be assessed at regular intervals throughout the year by end of topic tests and end of year exams on their subject knowledge and general science literacy. These will be assessed and feedback given to how they are performing. This will enable their teachers to guide them towards the work they must do to achieve a high grade.

Additionally, they will be given guidance on the most effective ways to recap and revise their learning at regular intervals, including end of topic summary activities and completion of past paper exam questions. These will cover a mix of in-class and homework tasks, and will enable students to have a more active understanding of their strengths and weaknesses whilst equipping them with the study skills to improve their level of performance.

# Modern Languages – French, German and Spanish

The need to learn a foreign language has never been more important. The National Language Strategy highlighted that whilst languages 'are strategically vital for the future of the UK', there is a current dearth of language skills in the country. Learning a foreign language develops students' understanding of how languages work, trains their memories, and fosters the interpersonal communication skills that will help to prepare them for a labour market in which the demand for these skills is only expected to increase. It can also expand their horizons and nurture curiosity about other people and cultures.

All students must continue to GCSE in the language that they currently study in Year 9. In addition to this, it is possible for them to resume studying the other language that they studied in Years 7 and 8 by choosing it as an options subject. Students who are considering doing so should speak to a member of the MFL department for advice regarding the suitability of this option for them.

## GCSE French, German and Spanish

Students will be studying the Pearson Edexcel GCSE specification. The course enables students to understand, speak and write about a variety of topics. They study language and culture across six thematic contexts, all of which are assessed at the end of Year 11. These are:

- My personal world
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- My neighbourhood
- Media and technology
- Studying and my future
- Travel and tourism

The exam is split into four components which make up the final GCSE grade: Speaking 25%, listening 25%, reading 25% and writing 25%.

To complement their language studies, students may have the opportunity to attend an educational visit to France, Germany or Spain. In recent years, we have organised Year 10 visits to Paris, the Black Forest and Madrid. However, please be aware that running these trips is always contingent on staff capacity, and where they do run students are not guaranteed a place.

## Optional Subjects:

### **Art and Design**

This course provides a practical opportunity for students to develop their skills and understanding of the role, purpose and function of Art and Design. This is a broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and 3D processes, media and technologies.

Central to the course will be the development of students' creative and practical skills, an understanding of how to interpret visually what is seen, to develop as effective and independent thinkers and experience working with a broad range of media, materials and techniques.

Practical involvement in Art and Design will encourage students to develop skills in using materials in a personal and inventive way. They will be able to test their own ideas in seeking solutions to Art and Design themes and questions.

Critical and art history activities will be integrated with practical activities encouraging interest and investigation into the way a variety of artists and designers from a range of historical periods and cultures have worked.

Students will develop a portfolio of coursework. This includes three projects and the work done from the beginning of year 10 to January in Year 11 accounts for 60% of their final mark. They will also be given an externally set task for the other 40%.

The course will give students the opportunity to work in the areas of Drawing and Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Digital Media and Printmaking. Great talent is not essential. Students of average ability have been highly successful when they have enjoyed the activities, been interested in the subject and prepared to do the work. As there are twice as many periods given to the subject than in the lower school, students usually find their standards of work and their confidence rise quite quickly. Universities (all faculties) welcome achievement in a creative subject at GCSE level by applicants. They see it as part of a 'rounded', full education.

# Business

The Business syllabus is designed to convey some of the basic information about businesses and their operations and to analyse their role in today's society. The central theme is the inter-relationship of business with the environment in which it operates. The subject content includes:

- **Businesses in the real world** – size and structure, the different types of organisations
- **Influences on businesses** – both internal and external
- **Human Resources** - the recruitment, training, payment and motivation of employees
- **Marketing** - the design, pricing, advertising and promotion of products
- **Finance** - sources of finance and the interpretation of accounts
- **Operations** - production methods, quality, customers services and procurement

Assessment is split into two elements:

Paper 1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity

Paper 2: Influences of marketing and finance on business activity

Both exams are 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 50% of the GCSE and are a combination of multiple choice and case study/data response stimuli with a variety of long and short answer questions.

The course is useful to those who choose to find an apprenticeship, wish to pursue a degree course in business or management or have an ambition to start their own business at some stage in their lives.

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT AT GCSE YOU CANNOT CHOOSE TO STUDY BOTH BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS AS IT WILL LIMIT YOUR SCOPE OF SUBJECTS.**

# Economics

What is the best way of keeping inflation low? What can be done to reduce the level of unemployment? What can be done about road congestion? Why are house prices still rising? Should we give 'Trade or Aid' to less economically developed countries? These are questions familiar to most people. Economics looks at the way in which we allocate resources to gain the best possible advantage. The subject is therefore relevant to us as individuals as well as to the business world and government. Those students who have followed a course in Economics should be able to understand the workings of a complex modern economy.

They should be able to apply their knowledge to the above questions and to develop a clearer and critical understanding of matters which have a direct bearing on them. Students should also be able to collect, select, analyse and interpret data and to use tables, diagrams and graphs accurately and effectively in the communication of knowledge and ideas.

- The Basic Economic Problem – scarcity, choice and opportunity costs.
- The role of Markets and Money – demand and supply analysis, the labour market and the role of the financial sector in the economy.
- Economic Objectives and the role of the Government – the problems, the causes and the Government policies used to solve them.
- International Trade and the Global Economy – the role of international trade, balance of payments, exchange rates and economic development issues.

The course has excellent synergy with a variety of GCSE options and provides a good foundation in the analytical skills required for A Levels, including for those students specifically considering further study in A level Economics or Business.

Assessment is split into two elements:

Paper 1: Introduction to Economics

Paper 2: National and International Economics

**The papers are worth 80 marks and account for 50% of the GCSE each. Both are 1 hour 30 minutes and are a combination of multiple choice and long answer questions that will require a certain amount of real-life application to be made.**

## What is the difference between Economics and Business?

In simple terms economics looks at all activity which can be described as economic whether by individuals, businesses or governments. Business concentrates on a specific area of economic activity, i.e., the business, and studies it in detail. Inevitably there is overlap. For example, government policy affects businesses and the whole economy, so both subjects study this area but from different perspectives.

If you have any specific questions, do not hesitate to contact the Head of Department.

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT AT GCSE YOU CANNOT CHOOSE TO STUDY BOTH BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS AS IT WILL LIMIT YOUR SCOPE OF SUBJECTS.**

# Design and Technology

The Design and Technology GCSE will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully 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 work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

The course allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

In order to make effective design choices students will need a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding. The **core technical principles** are taught to all students. Students must then cover the **specialised technical principles** in the material category of their choice, the Design and Technology department will be offering the following material categories.

## Papers and boards, Timber, Metal based products, Polymers

### Core Technical Principles

- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Systems approach to designing
- Mechanical devices
- Materials and their working properties

### Specialist Technical Principles (Chosen material category)

- forces and stresses
- ecological and social footprint
- scales of production
- sources and origins
- using and working with materials
- stock forms, types and sizes
- specialist techniques
- surface treatments and finishes

### How it's assessed

#### Written exam

2 hours • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)

#### Non-exam assessment (NEA)

30-35 hours approx. • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

Substantial context-based design and make task

Students will produce a working prototype and a portfolio of evidence (max 20 pages)

# Food Preparation and Nutrition (AQA)

Food is an essential part of our lives, and this course will study the following five key areas.

## Year 10 Specification Content (all content covered):

### Practical 1: Food preparation skills

Students will be required to use general practical skills and knife skills to prepare and produce a wide range of food products. This will include preparing fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and a variety of carbohydrate foods. Students will have to show that they can use a wide range of equipment proficiently while using all cooking methods to prepare, combine and shape food. Students will work to learn how to tenderise and marinade meat, sauce making, doughs with the use of raising agents and setting mixtures. Students will make bread, shortcrust pastry, choux pastry, all in one sponge, whisked sponge, burgers, stir-fry, lasagne with fresh pasta, ragu and bechamel sauce, lemon meringue pie and Chelsea buns. Students will carry out a 'mini' NEA project and make two international dishes of their choice in two hours.

### Theory 2 - Food, nutrition and health

Students will learn about macro and micronutrients. Specifically, they will learn their function in the body, their main sources and the effects of deficiency or excess. Students will also learn about the need for water in the body and the importance of hydration.

### Theory 3 - Food science

Students will research why food is cooked. They will explore different cooking methods such as the use of an oven for baking, roasting, braising or the use of a hob for poaching, shallow frying, boiling. This will explore the functional and chemical properties of food and their scientific processes such as protein coagulation, gelatinisation and emulsification.

### Theory 4 - Food safety

Being an important topic, students will learn about food spoilage and contamination whilst discussing the positive use of microorganisms in food production. Students will explore how food should be stored and apply their knowledge of food safety when preparing and cooking food.

### Theory 5 - Food provenance

Students will discuss factors affecting food choices related to religion, culture, ethical and medical conditions. They will study traditional British food and international cuisine. Students will also learn about sensory testing methods and how to test the sensory qualities of a wide range of foods.

## Year 11 Non-Examined Assessment 1 and 2:

### **NEA1: Food- Science Investigation - A choice of 3 tasks (15% of GCSE marks)**

(Task issued from exam board in September of Year 11)

Understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Practical investigations are a compulsory element of this task.

### **NEA2: Food preparation assessment - A choice of 3 tasks (35% of GCSE marks)**

(Task issued from exam board in November)

Knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.

## End of Year 11 Written exam:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 hour and 45mins<br>100 Marks<br>50% of the GCSE | Multiple choice questions (20 marks)<br>Five questions each with a number of sub questions (80 marks) |
|---|---|

# Drama (Eduqas)

What is GCSE Drama all about?

Drama fosters your creativity, personal growth, self-confidence, communication and analytical skills through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding and the exercise of your imagination. It promotes your involvement in and enjoyment of drama as performers, devisers, directors and designers. It provides opportunities for you to attend professional and community dramatic performances and to develop your skills as informed and thoughtful audience members. Through the study of this GCSE, you will be given opportunities to participate in and interpret your own and others' drama. You will investigate the forms, styles, and contexts of drama and will learn to work collaboratively to develop ideas, to express feelings, to experiment with technical elements and to reflect on your own and others' performances.

The course is in three parts:

COMPONENT ONE: Devised Practical Performance – Internal Assessment NEA (40%)

TASK ONE - Devised Performance

- You will devise a practical performance based on a theme, linked with a practitioner or genre
- You may choose either acting or a theatre design skill
- Your teacher/examiner records the work to submit for external moderation
- The Component is internally assessed and externally moderated along with task two
- The Component is completed in September - November of Year 11

TASK TWO – Written Portfolio & Evaluation

- You will complete a written portfolio on the practical work you completed in Task One, under formal supervision.
- The report will include an exploration of key decision moments made throughout the process, the inclusion of technical elements and the content of the piece and an evaluation of your own work and that of the group;
- The unit is internally assessed and externally moderated with task one.

COMPONENT TWO: Performance from a Text - External Assessment NEA (20%)

- You will be assessed on either acting or a theatre design skill, in two scenes from a published play
- The Component is externally assessed by a visiting examiner in March - May of Year 11

COMPONENT THREE: Written Examination (1 hour 30 minutes) - External Assessment (40%)

- You will be assessed on your ability to analyse one set text as an actor, designer and director and to evaluate a live theatre performance that you have watched during the course
- The unit is completed alongside your other summer examinations in Year 11

**Will I enjoy this course?**

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that is both academic and creative. You may have always wanted to have a go at making a play, performing, making costumes, building a set or operating the lights but never had the chance. You will enjoy this course if you enjoy working as part of a team and extending your skills within the arts.

### **How does it follow on from what I have learnt before?**

GCSE Drama follows on from drama work that you will have completed at Key Stage Three. You will develop dramatic skills to a higher level. You will also look at plays in more detail and look at ways of bringing a script alive on stage. Through an exploration of a wide variety of plays and styles, you will also extend your ability to analyse live theatre work as begun in the lower school.

### **What about written work and exams?**

As well as completing practical elements to the course (devised and scripted); there are also academic demands to the GCSE course. All components require students to extend their written skills and work to a high standard within this. Written outcomes come as a mixture of NEA and the final formal examination.

### **What other skills might I develop?**

As well as acquiring the skills involved in creating and performing drama, you will also be able to acquire skills in working with others, problem solving and communication. You will find that drama will help you feel more self-confident and prepare you to deal with a range of different situations and people.

### **What could I do next with GCSE Drama?**

There are many things you can do with a GCSE in Drama. You could go on to take an A Level in Drama & Theatre to progress further as a theatre maker. You may also follow a technical pathway such as lighting, sound, set/costume design, stage management etc. You might wish to go on into a job where it is useful to have had experience of drama or where you will need to use some of the skills developed during the course including public speaking, problem solving and creativity in the workplace.

# Geography (AQA)

Geography is a wide-ranging subject that combines well with many other GCSE subjects. Therefore, it does not matter whether your preference is for scientific/mathematical subjects or for literary/creative subjects - Geography will link well with all of them.

It involves study of the Earth's surface (Physical Geography), human activities (Human Geography) and emphasises the links between people and their environment. Geography is studied at all scales ranging from the global, through the national to the local. We also look at the contrasts between economically developed countries and the developing countries. The content of the course is extremely varied, and students acquire a wide range of useful practical skills e.g. use of GIS, mapping, graphical, ICT, statistical, analytical and research skills. There are also two days of fieldwork to investigate geographical ideas in the real world.

The Geography specification is very much geared to the relevance of Geography to the real world. It has a strong emphasis on environmental management and sustainable development which are key ideas in many jobs today. Geography also utilises many transferable skills widely sought after in the world of work. The course is divided into three units:

**Unit 1 – Living with the physical environment** – this covers the challenge of natural hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes, extreme weather in the UK and climate change, UK physical landscapes including coasts and rivers, and the living world, including ecosystems, tropical rainforests and hot environments.

**Unit 2 – Challenges in the human environment** – this covers urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world and the challenge of resource management, including the demand and supply of food, water or energy.

**Unit 3 – Geographical applications** – this involves issue evaluation, based on pre-released resources, fieldwork, based on two geographical enquiries carried out in contrasting environments and the use of a range of geographical skills. **This includes two fieldtrips, one to Minster Leas to study coastal management and one to Stratford to study urban redevelopment at the Olympic Park site.**

## Assessment

Assessment will be as follows:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Unit 1 – written paper of 1 hour 30 minutes</b> | <b>– 35%</b> |
| <b>Unit 2 – written paper of 1 hour 30 minutes</b> | <b>– 35%</b> |
| <b>Unit 3 – written paper of 1 hour</b>            | <b>– 30%</b> |

Assessment is linear so students sit exams in June of Year 11. There is no coursework element.

If you would like any more details about the Geography course or the assessment please see the Head of Department, or your current Geography teacher.

# History (Edexcel)

History is not just about memorising dates and names. It is about understanding the present by learning from the past, about exploring the lives of people who came before us, and discovering how their choices and actions shaped the world we live in today. In GCSE history, you will investigate everything from how cows wiped out smallpox, to how the indigenous people of the Plains were the first proponents of sustainable living. And everything in between. You'll learn how to think critically, analyse evidence, and form your own conclusions. You will develop skills that will be valuable in any subject, and for any career you choose. So, if you're looking for a subject that's both challenging and rewarding, choose history.

The Edexcel GCSE History course is divided into four main topics, spanning a broad scope of periods and testing a comprehensive range of specific and transferable skills. The course is assessed by three examinations at the end of Year 11. The topics are as follows:

## **Paper 1 Option 11 Medicine in Britain c1250-present and The British sector of the Western Front, 1914-1918: Injuries, treatment and the trenches**

30% of the qualification

Written examination: 1 hour 20 minutes (80 minutes)

This topic provides the opportunity to study the changes and continuities that have occurred in medicine in Britain, from the 13th century to the present day. You will examine the role of government, significant individuals and pioneering technology that paved the way for our medical understanding today. You will examine how war led to the development of medicine, with a focus on the Western Front during the First World War. This breadth study will clearly demonstrate the ever-shifting nature of our lives, and how causes and consequences are strongly intertwined throughout history.

## **Paper 2 Option B4 Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588**

The Virgin Queen, Gloriana, good ol' Bess. This topic takes you on a journey of religious turmoil, political intrigue and how one woman turned a backwater into a global empire.

## **Paper 2 Option P3 American West c1835-c1895**

40% of the qualification. Written examination: 1 hour 50 minutes (110 minutes)

The creation of a superpower. If you want to understand the politics, geography and cultural differences of the United States of America today, study this topic. You will examine the life and culture of the indigenous people of the Plains, the lawless nature of the west and the growing tensions between the US government and the indigenous peoples of the Plains.

## **Paper 3 Option 30 Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917-1941**

30% of the qualification. Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (90 minutes)

The birth of a superpower. How did the world's largest country move from autocracy to communism to being one of the most powerful states of the 20th century? This topic examines how revolutionaries destroyed a dynasty and organised a political and economic state that has never been seen since. Explore the legacy of Lenin, Stalin and the impact of the revolution and civil war on the psychology of the Soviet Union and Russia.

# Creative iMedia (OCR)

Would you like to use your creativity to complete two different projects? You will develop practical skills that will be highly useful in the media industry, one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. You would take one external exam and complete two pieces of coursework.

This OCR course has been redeveloped, bringing together a range of skills that will be of benefit to you in Key Stage 4 and beyond. The three units are:

## 1) Mandatory coursework

25%

R094 – Visual identity and digital graphics

The topics taught include the development of visual identities for clients and the use of graphic design software to create stunning images. You will use the features of graphic design software to create a solution to fulfil a client brief. Projects covered in the past include creating clothing for characters in the metaverse, vinyl album covers, movie posters, packaging or console game advertisements.

## 2) Suggested coursework unit

35%

R098 – Visual imaging

This will involve combining static and moving images into a single project with the aim of creating a striking product in response to a client brief. Digital cameras will be used to capture images and video, followed by editing and testing. This unit would be useful for those who wish to pursue a technical career in the media industry.

## 3) Exam

40%

R093 – Creative iMedia in the media industry

Would you like to develop your knowledge of how the podcasts, apps, films and games that we enjoy on a daily basis are made? You will learn about digital media products, the planning involved and the different jobs available in the media industry. In addition, you will develop your understanding of lighting, animation and the laws. You will also study the properties of images, audio files and video files, including compression.

Last year's project involved a trip to Rochester in order to record video clips that would be used in a promotional video concerning sustainable transport. The students edited their videos in the subsequent four weeks.

The basis of the course is to teach students how to create digital media so that they have transferable skills that are valuable in the IT and media industries. It would also suit those who wish to have a career path in the creation of graphics or photography. The course has been designed to allow the learners to explore the areas of creative media that interest them. For more information, please ask your Computing teacher.

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/610942-specification-cambridge-nationals-creative-imedia-j834.pdf>

## **GCSE Computer Science (OCR)**

The course will give learners a real, in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. Learners will no doubt be familiar with the use of computers and other related technology from their Computing lessons. However, the course will give them an insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes', including computer programming, which many learners find absorbing.

It will prepare learners who want to study or work in areas that rely on these skills, especially where they are applied to technical problems. These areas include engineering, financial and resource management, science and medicine.

### **Computer systems (01)**

- Systems Architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural, and environmental concerns

80 marks. 1 hour and 30 minutes. This is a written paper, with no calculators allowed. 50% of the total marks.

### **Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (02)**

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

80 marks. 1 hour and 30 minutes. This is a written paper, with no calculators allowed. 50% of the total marks.

## Music (OCR)

This course encourages learners to engage actively in the process of academic and practical music study. Students will develop performing and composing skills, make links between different styles of music, broaden their musical experiences, develop imagination and foster creativity, recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop an awareness of musical chronology. Students learn about music they are already familiar with, and about unfamiliar styles from different times and cultures. The KS3 Music curriculum is an excellent springboard into GCSE Music, having given students a good grounding in composition and performance skills alongside an understanding of a wide variety of musical genres.

The focus of learning is provided through five areas of study:

- Area of Study 1: My Music
- Area of Study 2: The Concerto Through Time
- Area of Study 3: Rhythms of the World
- Area of Study 4: Film and Computer Game Music
- Area of Study 5: Conventions of Pop

Assessment is carried out over three units, which draw together all the activities from the areas of study.

### **Unit 1 – Performing Music – 30%**

Two performances, one of which must be an ensemble performance. Students should be able to play to at least Grade 4 standard by Year 11, so in Year 9 should be working on at least Grade 2 repertoire. You don't have to have taken the grade exam.

### **Unit 2 – Composing Music – 30%**

Two compositions, one of which is to a brief set by the exam board at the start of Year 11. The second is a free composition, allowing students to explore their own musical passions.

### **Unit 3 – Listening and Appraising – 40%**

A 1 hour 30-minute written paper comprising of 8 questions based on areas of study 2 to 5. Students hear excerpts of music and then answer questions based on what they hear, in conjunction with their contextual understanding.

Proficiency on a musical instrument or voice is mandatory and having started the course students will be expected to take up (or continue) regular lessons on at least one instrument (including voice) with an appropriate instrumental teacher. As performing and use of notation are vital parts of the course, students are also strongly encouraged to attend an appropriate teacher-led school ensemble, such as Ukulele Club, Big Band, Brass Group, Wind Band, or String Group each week.

Students are encouraged to attend any other musical ensembles, whether in school or outside, to develop and extend their skills, and for the enjoyment of performing with other musicians. Student motivation and independent study skills are essential, as the course is both highly practical and highly academic.

The course is extremely rewarding, and gives students an opportunity to:

- Go on trips to shows and concerts when available
- Take part in a music workshop as appropriate
- Access the Music Department's Music Technology resources
- Be part of ensembles both inside and outside school
- Foster musical sensitivity, creativity and aural perception
- Foster academic curiosity and resilience

- Promote cultural development
- Be involved in music as performers, composers and listeners
- Develop teamwork skills and self-confidence through creating and performing music with others
- Be prepared to study Music and Music Technology at A Level

The specification can be found [here](#), and if you have any questions, please talk to a member of Music Department staff.

# Photography

## Introduction

Photography is a new, exciting course that is being introduced at Key Stage 4 due to the popularity of the topic at Key Stage 3. You will learn a range of practical skills concerning digital cameras, as well as theory relating to the wider theme of photography.

As a photography student you will learn about the exposure triangle, including settings for the shutter speed, aperture and ISO. You will investigate the role that all three play, and how to adjust the settings based on your subject content and situation.

You will study the work of famous photographers and develop your own style.

You will experiment with lighting including placement and intensity in order to highlight key areas. The course also covers viewpoints, focal length and composition rules. In addition, you will edit photos in post-production.

## How will I be assessed?

There are two components, as follows:

### **Component 1 – 60%. NEA, marked by your teacher and moderated by AQA during a visit.**

You will complete a portfolio that showcases your project from the initial ideas and design stage through to the development of your ideas. The portfolio should cover all four assessment objectives, which will be provided for you at the start of the course.

### **Component 2 – 40%. NEA, marked by your teacher and moderated by AQA during a visit.**

You will complete an assessment over ten hours, set by the examination board. Again, you will cover all four assessment objectives.

## Who should take Photography as an option?

- Would you like to see items from a different perspective?
- Would you like to approach your photography from a different angle, noticing abstract shapes, textures, people and nature in different contexts?
- Are you keen to tell a story through the use of media?
- Are you considering wedding or sports photography as a career, or is this course appealing due to personal development?
- Do you enjoy editing images using the latest software?
- Do you value the work of experienced photographers and would you like to research their work and philosophy?
- Do you enjoy taking photos in your free time?

## What might I use in the lessons?

- Digital SLR
- Softbox
- Tripod
- Reflector
- Backdrop
- External flashgun

- A range of lenses
- Photography umbrella
- Stands
- Filters

If you have any questions, please ask Mr Stewart or the Art Department.

# Physical Education – GCSE AQA

The GCSE Physical Education qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

Subject content:

1. Applied anatomy and physiology
2. Movement analysis
3. Physical training
4. Use of data
5. Sports psychology
6. Socio-cultural influences
7. Health, fitness and well-being

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|--|---|
| <p><b>Paper 1 - Human body (30%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied anatomy and physiology</li> <li>• Movement analysis</li> <li>• Physical training</li> <li>• Use of data</li> </ul> | <p><b>Paper 2 - Social and cultural factors influencing participation (30%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports psychology</li> <li>• Socio-cultural influences</li> <li>• Health, fitness and well-being</li> <li>• Use of data</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Non-exam assessment - What's assessed?

**Practical performance** in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity).

**Analysis and evaluation** of performance to bring about improvement in one activity. This unit is assessed by teachers and externally moderated by AQA (40% of GCSE)

For each of their three activities, students will be assessed in skills in progressive drills (10 marks per activity) and in a full competitive context (15 marks per activity). Students will be required to produce a written coursework assessing their strength and weaknesses (15 marks) and evaluating and applying theoretical aspects from the course (10 marks) to improve their performance in of their three practical sports.

Due to the practical element of the subject, students **must** be playing **fully competitive** sport at a good club level, or better (district/county/national), outside of school in at least one of the recognised GCSE sports below throughout the course.

|                |            |                 |               |              |              |
|----------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Amateur Boxing | Cricket    | Gaelic Football | Kayaking      | Rugby Union  | Table Tennis |
| Athletics      | Cycling    | Golf            | Lacrosse      | Sculling     | Tennis       |
| Badminton      | Dance      | Gymnastics      | Netball       | Skiing       | Trampolining |
| Basketball     | Diving     | Handball        | Rock Climbing | Snowboarding | Volleyball   |
| Camogie        | Equestrian | Hockey          | Rowing        | Squash       |              |
| Canoeing       | Football   | Hurling         | Rugby League  | Swimming     |              |

The content of this GCSE Physical Education specification is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle; to provide a route to study in Further Education awards, such as A Levels and to Higher Education in Physical Education as well as to related career opportunities.

For more information you can see the AQA GCSE PE specification here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/physical-education/gcse/physical-education-8582/specification>

## Religious Studies GCSE (AQA)

Religion is a significant force in the contemporary world. It motivates human ideas and behaviours, shaping societies and cultures both for good and ill. Religion is at the heart of many local, national and global acts of generosity and community building. It can also be a source of conflict and division, particularly where prejudice, ignorance and intolerance exist. Understanding how religion works can help you to understand current events. Understanding religion also helps you to understand people and what inspires them.

To study RS at RMGS is to look into the fundamental ethical questions which frame human existence, such as: When does life begin? When is it ever just to start a war? What are the aims of punishment? Is euthanasia ever right? How did the universe begin? Why is there terrorism? These are questions at the heart of GCSE Religious Studies. These questions are studied through the perspective of Buddhism and Christianity, following the AQA syllabus A.

Buddhism is a major world faith which encompasses a philosophical way of life. It involves 'right thought' as well as 'right action' and addresses the individual holistically. Christianity has been a major influence on British culture and thinking over many years. This course examines some key teachings and practices, identifying similarities and differences from the three major Christian traditions (Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox). Through the applied study of Buddhism and Christianity, students will develop their critical thinking skills.

A qualification in Religious Studies is a real asset for many careers and is of particular benefit to anybody working with people and ideas as it enables you to consider a range of viewpoints and evaluate their success and possible outcomes.

The 'Themes' studied are as follows:

1. Religion, human rights and social justice
2. Religion and life
3. Religion, peace and conflict
4. Religion, crime and punishment

The examination consists of two papers, each 1 hour 45 minutes long. Each area examined is divided into five questions, with a variety of shorter knowledge and understanding based questions and a longer more evaluative essay response.

If you would like to know more, please talk to Mrs Wood, Mrs Housden or Mr Murphy.

## Core non-examination Subjects

### Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) - (*Non-examination subject*)

PSHE is an umbrella subject loosely used to describe the teaching of children in a manner that will help them develop, make good choices in life and succeed.

The course covers the following topics:

- Careers Education, including planning for the next stage of education after GCSEs
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Safety (including Physical and Online Safety)

### Core Physical Education (Non-examination subject)

The Year 10 and 11 Core PE curriculum is designed to meet the diverse interests and needs of students by offering tailored pathways: Competitive, Recreational, and Health & Well-Being.

- **Competitive Pathway:** This pathway fosters a deeper understanding of advanced techniques, tactics, and strategies, encouraging students to compete at higher levels while developing leadership, teamwork, and resilience. (*GCSE PE Students must choose*)
- **Recreational Pathway:** Focused on enjoyment and active participation, this pathway promotes a love for physical activity through accessible and varied sports, building confidence and fostering social connections.
- **Health & Well-Being Pathway:** Centred on personal fitness and mental health, this pathway equips students with the knowledge and skills to maintain a healthy lifestyle, exploring activities like yoga, fitness training, and mindfulness exercises.

By offering these distinct pathways, the curriculum empowers students to take ownership of their physical activity journey, develop lifelong habits, and appreciate the importance of physical and mental well-being in different contexts.

Every encouragement will be given for individual interests and talents to be catered for, either at representative level or on a more recreational basis, and a wide range of clubs and teams are organised for these purposes.

Students considering careers related to Physical Education and sport will be given guidance about prospects and opportunities and will be encouraged to contribute in some way to the development of the subject by involvement with clubs and assistance with younger students. For further information please contact the Head of PE.

### Religious Education (Non-examination subject)

All students take an Ethics and Values course. They have one lesson a fortnight to reflect upon and debate a range of ethical issues and current events in society, such as why humans are valuable, medical ethics, what we can know and whether conflict is inevitable.



# OCR Classical Civilisation

A brand-new and exciting option for Year 9

Classical Civilisation draws on the extraordinary worlds of ancient Greece and Rome, this GCSE brings together mythology, literature, history, archaeology and art to explore the foundations of Western culture. Whether you love epic stories, enjoy analysing evidence, or want to understand how the ancient world has shaped the modern one, Classical Civilisation offers something genuinely unique.

What will I study?

## **Component 1- Myth and Religion (Thematic Study)**

This topic looks at what people in the ancient world believed, celebrated and feared. You will explore:

- The Greek and Roman gods including Heracles/Hercules
- Temples and religious rituals and festivals
- Foundation myths such as Theseus' labours and the origins stories of Rome
- Death, burial and the underworld in ancient Greece and Rome

## **Component 2- The Homeric World (Literature & Culture)**

This topic is split into two halves; we study Mycenaean Culture and selected books from Homer's Odyssey.

### Mycenaean Culture

Study the real Bronze Age world behind the myths, including:

- The magnificent palaces at Mycenae and Tiryns
- Tombs, treasure and grave goods, including the "Mask of Agamemnon"
- Frescoes, jewellery and pottery showing daily life
- What life was like for ordinary people—clothes, armour, trade, chariots and more

### Homer's Odyssey

You will read key books from one of the GREATEST adventure stories ever written. Expect:

- Monsters and magic from characters like the Cyclops and the witch Circe
- Loyalty and trickery from our very own Odysseus
- Courage and growth from Odysseus' son, Telemachus

### How is the course assessed?

There are 2 exam papers, one for each component. Each exam is 1 hour 30 minutes long, have a total of 90 marks available and worth 50% of the total GCSE grade.

### Who will love GCSE Classical Civilisation?

This subject is ideal for students who:

- Enjoy stories, myths and epic adventures
- Are curious about ancient cultures and how they still shape the world today
- Like analysing evidence, arguments and interpretations
- Enjoy English Literature or History and want a subject that blends the two