

# Year 9 into Year 10 Progress Pathways Information for 2026-27



## Our Vision

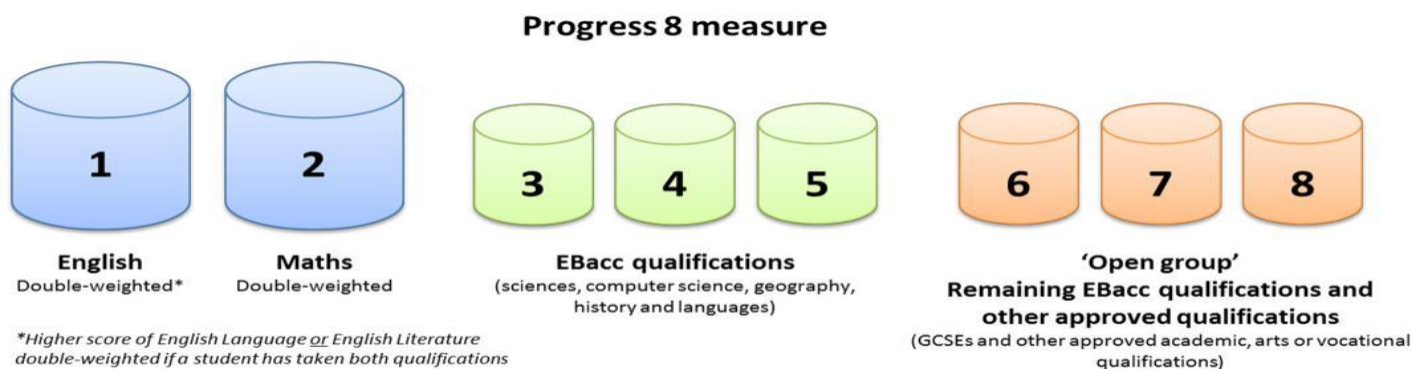
Ability is not fixed  
Dreams don't work unless you do



# The Progress Pathways process

Education has changed in recent years with new GCSEs, curriculum expectations and student performance measures introduced nationally. This has meant that schools have adapted their curriculums to meet government intentions and ensure their students are able to achieve to their potential to put them in the best possible position for making choices for the next stage of their education and training after 16.

- The First Entry Rule introduced in 2014 means that your child will sit all their exams in the summer of 2027.
- Your child's overall achievement will be judged by their average achievement across **8** subjects called Progress 8. The diagram below summarises the subjects making up the 8 subjects and the progress is measured against the scores they achieved at the end of primary school.



## What is this information booklet for?

This is for parents/carers and students to help discuss the choices they will make for their qualification courses next year. Students will also have an assembly, and parents will be sent a link to video presentation from our Vice Principal, Mr Rawes, which explains the Options process. These are accompanied by a Progress Report and Subject Parents' Evening (Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>) to further inform decision making and give an overview of progress to date. If parents still have remaining questions about the process, there will be a further opportunity to meet with Mr Rawes or a member of the school leadership team on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March by appointment. Further details will be sent regarding this in due course.

A calendar of the key dates for the whole options process is shown below. We hope you find this booklet useful and if you have any questions throughout this process of choosing options, please email Mr Rawes via [enquiries@castertoncollege.com](mailto:enquiries@castertoncollege.com) once you have viewed the presentation and attended Parents' Evening. Mr Rawes will be available on the Parents' Evening also for general enquiries.

## Key dates

- **Week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> February** – Year 9 Options video presentation will be available via the website (please note this is not a face-to-face presentation) and information booklet sent home
- **Week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February** - Year 9 Progress Report 2 sent home - this will contain a recommended Pathway for either Full EBACC or Core EBACC (further explained in the presentation & information booklet)
- **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm** – Parents Evening booking system opens
- **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March** - Subject Parents' Evening in school. Unfortunately, Mr Peplow (Geography) is unable to attend this event so we will run a virtual event instead on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March to ensure he can speak with interested parents. The other Geography staff will be available on the evening.
- **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March** – Virtual Parents' Meeting via video link for **Mr Peplow's Geography classes only**
- **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March** - Appointments available in school with Vice Principal or most appropriate member of school leadership team to discuss any final option queries
- **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March** - Options form issued via Microsoft Forms
- **9am Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March**– all Options returned via Microsoft Forms
- **Option choices are confirmed in Term 6**

## Which subjects are compulsory?

English Language and English Literature GCSEs  
 Mathematics GCSE  
 Science GCSE \*  
 A Humanities GCSE (Geography or History)  
 A Modern Foreign Language GCSE (for Full EBacc Pathway students)  
 Personal Health & Fitness  
 Personal Development Curriculum  
 Personal Social and Health Education  
 Careers Guidance / Citizenship / British Values

\*Most students follow a double award Science course worth 2 GCSEs, but some students will have the opportunity to take a separate GCSE in all three Sciences (Triple Science). This will be decided in the Summer Term of Year 9 based on attainment and will be taught within the science lessons throughout Key Stage 4.

## Which subjects can students choose to study?

EBacc subjects	Notes
Geography GCSE	All students must choose at least one Humanities subject. Both Geography and History can be selected if desired.
History GCSE	
Spanish GCSE	All students on the Full EBacc Pathway are strongly recommended to study a Modern Foreign language. Core EBacc students can choose to study Spanish if they would like to.
<b>Other option subjects available</b>	
Computer Science GCSE (by agreement with Miss Goddard at Parents' Evening)	
Business Studies GCSE	
Religious Studies GCSE	
Food Preparation & Nutrition GCSE	
Design & Technology GCSE	
Information Technology CNAT	
Sport BTEC	
Art & Design GCSE (Fine Art)	
Drama GCSE	
Music Practice BTEC	
Health & Social care BTEC	

## How are students examined in summer 2028?

GCSEs will be graded as follows:

- 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest) in GCSEs

Following announcements in December 2011 from the Department for Education, GCSEs will be linear, meaning that for the most part exams will be sat at the end Year 11. Some subjects also have non-examined assessments (NEAs), this is work undertaken as part of the course which counts towards the final grade. Subjects vary as to how much NEAs are worth so again it is best to consult the guide for each subject.

**BTEC and CNAT** are examined by the production of two written assignments over the two-year course and an external exam at the end of the course (for Music this is an externally marked piece of coursework). These qualifications are equivalent to a GCSE but the focus is on more vocational learning.

These qualifications are graded as follows:

<b>Level 2 Distinction *</b>	equivalent GCSE grade <b>8.5</b>
<b>Level 2 Distinction</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>7</b>
<b>Level 2 Merit</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>5.5</b>
<b>Level 2 Pass</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>4</b>
<b>Level 1 Distinction</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>3</b>
<b>Level 1 Merit</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>2</b>
<b>Level 1 Pass</b>	equivalent to GCSE grade <b>1.25</b>

## Aim of the Progress Pathway

Our intention is to make the Progress Paths suitable to individual strengths and areas of interest. The guiding principles for a student are to pursue a suggested path that gives them the greatest opportunity to achieve the best grades possible at age 16 across a broad and balanced range of subjects built around the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) GCSEs of English, Maths, Science, Humanities and a Modern Foreign Language (where appropriate). From such a foundation of achievement, students will be well placed to access the opportunities available after GCSE.

Education and assessment changes frequently in England and as a school we respond to adapt our curriculum to provide the greatest opportunity for your child's success. In the Pathways which follow, there are certain guiding principles which should be borne in mind.

- **The Core is Vital:** Gaining the best grade possible in the Core Subjects of English and Maths (and to only a slightly lesser extent, Science) is absolutely crucial to influencing the opportunities available after GCSE. The choice of options has to support the best chance being given to gain good grades in the Core.
- **Quality not Quantity:** Future opportunities depend much less on the number of GCSEs/BTECs achieved than the level of achievement. The offer ensures all students will follow a minimum of 8 qualifications but not many more.
- **Play to your Strengths:** Exams are becoming more rigorous especially in EBacc subjects (explained in the next section) and now all GCSE exams must be taken at the end of the course. If continual assessment with lots of applied working and fewer exams is appealing, then choosing BTEC &/or CNAT options could well be the most sensible approach to achieving your best grades.
- **Create a good foundation for your future choices.** The options available are our broadest ever. All students have access to the full curriculum and I hope that will allow them to choose a combination of subjects which fills them with enthusiasm. The options are designed to ensure students have a broad and balanced curriculum so their options are fully open at 16. To ensure this is the case Block 1 of the options choices focusses on EBacc subjects.

The EBacc is a government measure which encourages students to have a good, sound academic base of English, Maths, Sciences, a Humanities subject (History or Geography) and a Modern Foreign Language (Spanish). We want to ensure our students follow a foundation of at least 5 of these subjects.

## Progress Pathways Advice

Prior to the Year 9 Parents Evening and before you need to make option choices, you will receive the next progress report which will confirm which EBacc Pathway we recommend. The options are structured so all students have access to choose from a range of non-EBacc subjects. This gives them the opportunity to opt for subjects which enthuse them, as well as providing a solid foundation of core subjects. The most important thing is that students reach the end of Year 11 with the best set of results possible. This will ensure the widest choice of routes being available to them when planning their future.

### Full EBacc:

This will mean that the student will study English, Maths, Sciences, Spanish, History or Geography (or both if they wish) and two other GCSE/BTEC/CNAT courses. This is a highly recommended and expected combination where a student can achieve a strong pass (Grade 5) or better in Spanish. The reasons for this are:

- 1) It remains a Government expectation that schools enter students for the Full EBacc where they can achieve well across these academic subjects.
- 2) The Full EBacc is an excellent foundation for students who are capable of pursuing an academic route at Post 16 giving a respected combination at GCSE which is well regarded by Russell Group universities and is often an expectation for A level providers.
- 3) Other local secondary schools both state, selective and independent follow a similar approach. We are conscious that our students will be competing with these students for A level course places and the acquisition of a modern foreign language GCSE can be of significance in securing places on courses where there is over subscription.

This is a range of qualifications based on the facilitator subjects\*. This combination has academic breadth and is well regarded by Sixth forms and universities. **Where the Full EBacc is recommended it should be followed. This is a combination that provides good preparation for further study at A level and beyond.**

### Core EBacc:

This will mean that the student will study English, Maths, Sciences, History or Geography and three other GCSE/BTEC/CNAT courses. A student on a Core EBacc recommendation can still choose to opt for Spanish GCSE which would enable them to access the Full EBacc. This combination of courses will offer access to the full range of educational opportunities beyond GCSE. With a core of facilitator subjects\* (English, Maths, Science, History or Geography) all A level or vocational routes would be available.

**\*Facilitator subjects are those subjects which need to account for at least two A level choices for students to be considered by the best universities.**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Are there any barriers to which option choices can be made?**

Broadly no, all students have access to the full range with a couple of caveats. Computer Science GCSE is a demanding technical qualification which requires students to have been developing coding skills prior to embarking on the qualification, again a student should only opt for this subject following a discussion of their suitability with Ms Goddard (eg@castertoncollege.com).

### **What if my child changes their mind about their options during Year 10?**

Whilst we always try to build flexibility in our timetable, requests to change options in Year 10 would not be expected. Given the amount of GCSE content that will need to be covered during Years 10 & 11, there would need to be a significant reason for changes to options to be considered beyond September 2026.

### **Is my child guaranteed to get their option choices?**

In recent years, 98% of students got their first choices in the option process. However, there can be limits on group size in some subjects (particularly Design & Food) and constraints on the number of groups we can run due to staffing and rooming requirements. Sometimes we are also unable to run a group if numbers are particularly low. On the whole we know that if students are following their interests they are going to enjoy their subjects and achieve more, so we will do all that we can to make sure a student is following their desired courses. By offering a free choice we are aware that there will be clashes but we wanted our offer to be as flexible as possible so our timetable could be built around student interest and demand. Where courses are oversubscribed, factors such as a positive attitude to learning within Year 9 will be considered when allocating places.

### **When will we find out what my child's option choices are?**

We will confirm option choices in Term 6. We have to wait until then as staffing can change up to the end of May teacher resignation deadline which could affect our ability to deliver an Option subject. However, we will discuss option choices with families throughout the process if there are any issues.

### **Given there are still two terms ahead, why are the Option Choices taking place now?**

Quite simply, we build the whole school timetable around the choices made by Year 9 to give the best opportunity for students to get their preferred choices. As you can imagine this is a complex process which we need to begin during Term 4.

# Guide to the Subjects

The guide to the option subjects is indicative of what the course content is currently like.

## HISTORY GCSE

People who study history are fearless explorers of the past. They investigate past politics, societies, cultures, art, education, economies, conflicts and much more. Historians look at how things have developed over time and connect the dots to understand how we got where we are today.

This GCSE course focuses on aspects of Twentieth Century Modern World History and British History from about 1000 AD to the present day. It combines depth studies (looking at a shorter time period in detail) with thematic studies (looking at a larger time period and studying aspects of change).

The GCSE is made up of 3 exams all to be taken at the end of Year 11:

**Paper 1:** *International Relations 1919-1975 and the USA 1919-1948* = 1 hour 45 minutes (50% of your GCSE)

A study of International Relations from 1919 to 1975. This will include early attempts at international cooperation from 1919 until the outbreak of World War Two; the causes of World War Two; the origins and key events of the Cold War from 1945 to 1975 ending with looking at the Vietnam war.

Our modern world depth study focuses on the USA from 1919-48: The Roaring '20s; The Wall Street Crash and Depression; Roosevelt's New Deal; and the impact of World War Two on US society.

**Paper 2:** *Power: Monarchy and Democracy 1000-modern day* = 1 hour (25% of your GCSE)

The British history we study focuses on the development of power and government in Britain from the late Anglo-Saxon period to the present day. We will be exploring who had power, who challenged power and why is Britain governed the way it is today.

**Paper 3:** *English Reformation and site study on castles* = 1 hour 15 minutes (25% of your GCSE)

This will include a site study based on the development of castles from 1000 to 1750. We will also complete a depth study on the English Reformation under the Tudors.

History is highly respected by colleges, universities and employers and is one of the key 'facilitating' subjects. It will help you to get many jobs, for example in the legal profession, civil service and management. It also helps you to understand present day problems of the world e.g. the current war in Ukraine and our nuclear age.

**Exam Board: OCR**

**Specification: History A J410FB**

# GEOGRAPHY GCSE

Geography is made up of several topics, split into physical and human. Each topic is followed by an internal, formal assessment. The information in brackets is a small selection of some of the areas covered throughout each topic.

## **Living with the physical environment**

**Section A:** The challenge of natural hazards (includes hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes and climate change)

**Section B:** Physical landscapes in the UK (includes coasts and rivers)

**Section C:** The living world (includes rainforests and deserts)

## **Challenges in the human environment**

**Section A:** Urban issues and challenges (includes growth of cities, urban planning and sustainability with a focus on Rio de Janeiro and Bristol)

**Section B:** The changing economic world (includes global disparity in wealth and the complex future of the UK's economy)

**Section C:** The challenge of resource management (includes global issues with resource use and the inequality between rich and poor, with a focus on water)

## **Geographical applications**

**Section A:** Issue evaluation

**Section B:** Fieldwork

The essential component of each topic is good geography. Additionally, two compulsory fieldwork tasks will be completed in some part of the UK across GCSE, currently the city of Bristol and the Hunstanton coastline. Understanding and justification of what you are attempting to find out through the field work is essential and needs to be fully understood, anything less and this section could be a disaster!

## **Geographical skills**

You will be required to demonstrate and develop a wide range of skills including numerical, statistical, graphical and cartographic (maps with scales). This mirrors A Level geography which has long been heavily statistical but does offer students a practical use of these skills as part of their wider problem solving.

**Paper 1:** Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes - 88 marks (including 3 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology (SPGST)) - 35% of GCSE

**Paper 2:** Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes - 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPGST) - 35% of GCSE

**Paper 3:** Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes - 75 marks - 30% of GCSE

Geography is a dynamic and relevant subject for all young people, allowing them to consider their values and responsibilities whilst setting them up with skills desired by employers – such as teamwork, independent enquiry and analytical skills. The knowledge and skills are based within real life, making their use, and the understanding of them, especially meaningful.

**Exam Board: AQA**

**Specification: 8035**

# COMPUTER SCIENCE GCSE

***“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.”***

GCSE Computer Science provides an exciting opportunity to study a dynamic and continually changing subject which impacts on the digital world in which we live.

The GCSE course will give students the knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of Computer Science including the computational thinking skills needed to analyse problems, and design solutions. The course will give students a real, in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and will give them an insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes'.

Students will also gain practical skills, designing, writing and testing computer programs. We will be using Python as our programming language which all Year 9 students will already have begun learning in class. 50% of the course is assessed with a practical programming exam and 50% is assessed with a written theory exam.

The course will develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills through the study of computer programming. For many students, it'll be a fun and interesting way to develop these skills, which can be transferred to many other subjects and applied in day-to-day life. In this respect, the course will make an excellent preparation for students who want to study or work in areas that rely on these skills.

GCSE Computer Science suits students who enjoy problem-solving, can work independently and are genuinely curious about the technological world around them. Students **MUST** be committed to learning to program.

Susan Wojcicki

Senior Vice President, Google

*“Learning to code makes kids feel empowered, creative, and confident. If we want our young people to retain these traits into adulthood, a great option is to expose them to computer programming in their youth”.*

Charlotte Y11

*“I was a bit nervous at first but I've really enjoyed Computer Science, especially the coding. I definitely recommend doing it at GCSE”*

**Exam Board: Edexcel**

**Specification: 1CP2**

# CNAT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Cambridge Nationals (CNAT) are exciting, practical vocational qualifications. They are Level 1/Level 2 qualifications designed for students aged 14-16 years and complement GCSE choices. Cambridge Nationals inspire and help develop real-world skills through practical learning and help prepare students for the next steps whether that's A Levels, apprenticeships or a Level 3 vocational qualification such as a Cambridge Technical.

Cambridge National in IT will inspire and equip you with the confidence to use skills that are relevant to the IT sector.

## What will I cover?

You will cover:

- The key principles and concepts when creating IT products
- Creating complex spreadsheet solutions to meet requirements
- How augmented reality can be used to present information
- Creating an augmented reality model prototype to be tested and reviewed

You'll develop a range of skills to help you succeed not only in the workplace but in other subjects too. These skills include:

- Analytical skills
- Creative thinking
- Digital presentation
- Problem solving
- Research & planning

## How will I be assessed?

- Non-exam assessment (coursework) of 60%. Two pieces of coursework set by the exam board. One project will be based on spreadsheets. One project will be based on augmented reality.
- Final exam of 40% called IT in the digital world. This covers Design Tools, Human Computer Interfaces (HCI) in everyday life, Data and Testing, Cyber-security and Legislation, Digital Communications and the Internet of Everything.

## Future opportunities

By developing applied knowledge and practical skills, this course will help give you the opportunity to progress on to A Levels, a Cambridge Technical in Information Technologies, an apprenticeship or university.

Information Technology is constantly evolving, and new jobs are developing all the time – you could work for tech giants or create your own products. So much is possible.

**Exam Board: OCR**

**Specification: J836**

# BUSINESS STUDIES GCSE

Businesses are everywhere! Business activity is the basis of so much that we take for granted in our everyday lives such as the goods we buy and the services we use.

The course gives students the skills and knowledge to understand how businesses are set up and managed. We give students the opportunity to see how businesses operate through real-life case studies.

The course provides the tools for students to become enterprising individuals. It encourages critical thinking and the use of business information to develop arguments and make justified decisions.

The GCSE will cover the following areas:

- Business activity
- Influences on business
- Finance
- Operations
- Marketing
- Human Resources

Students will sit **2 exams** of equal weighting at the end of Year 11. The exams require students to apply their knowledge of business theory to case study materials. There is no coursework for this qualification.

Knowledge of business and business processes is useful for all consumers and employees. In addition, it can be useful in many different jobs; including roles within the administrative and clerical job family, accountancy, banking and finance, retail sales and customer services. It will also be useful if you are thinking about setting up your own business or being self-employed in the future.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Specification: 8132**

# SPORT

## BTEC Tech Award

Year on year, the sport industry shows continued growth in employment and forecasts suggest this trend will continue. This comes from increased knowledge and understanding of the benefits of regular participation in sport and physical activity. Sport England provides well documented research of these benefits including improvements in physical and mental wellbeing, economic development, individual development and social and community development (2020). These contribute significantly to the quality of a person's life and, as such, there is a need to ensure there are sufficient people working in the industry to meet this demand and encourage regular participation in sport and physical activity. There has never been a better time to study sport.

Study of this sector at Key Stage 4 will complement GCSE study through providing an opportunity for practical application alongside conceptual study. There are also strong opportunities for post-16 progression in this vital sector.

### **Component 1:** Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity - 30%

Learners will explore the different types and provision of sport and physical activity available for different types of participants, barriers to participation and ways to overcome these barriers to increase participation in sport and physical activity. They will also research equipment and technological advances in a chosen sport or physical activity and how to prepare our bodies for participation in sport and physical activity.

The exam board set the assignment with 3 tasks. This is marked by the school and then externally moderated by exam board. This is taken in the Spring term of Year 10.

### **Component 2:** Taking Part and Improving Other Participants Sporting Performance – 30%

Learners will investigate the components of fitness and their effect on performance, take part in practical sport, explore the role of officials in sport and learn to apply methods and sporting drills to improve other participants' sporting performance.

The exam board set the assignment with 4 tasks. This is marked by the school and then externally moderated by exam board. This is taken in the Autumn term of Year 11.

### **Component 3:** Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants' Performance in Sport and Physical Activity- 40%

Learners will be introduced to and develop an understanding of the importance of fitness and the different types of fitness for performance in sport and physical activity. They will also develop an understanding of the body and fitness testing

This is an externally set and marked 90 minute exam taken in the Summer of Year 11.

**Exam Board: Pearson**  
**Specification: RSP**

# DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

**If you want something easy, then Design Technology may not be the subject you should be choosing. If you want to be challenged, like solving problems and are fascinated by how products are designed and manufactured, then Design Technology is the subject for you!**

Design Technology requires dedication and an ability to complete work under one's own initiative. There are 5 lessons a fortnight in all GCSE D&T this course offers an opportunity for students to identify and solve real problems by designing and making products or systems in a wide range of contexts relating to their personal interests.

**At Casterton we currently offer GCSE Design and Technology.**

You will learn to design with a wide range of different materials and through these materials you will learn about different methods of manufacturing and mechanical devices. You will also learn how to take design risks, helping you to become resourceful, innovative and enterprising.

Using your skills and knowledge from lots of your other subjects, you will be encouraged to explore different ways of thinking, so that by the end of the course you will look at the world around you with inquisitive eyes and be inspired to exercise your inventive muscles.

**Design and Technology GCSE is made up of**

- **50% of total marks from the exam component (2 hour written exam)**
- **50% from the Non-Exam Assessment component (coursework and prototype)**

The Design and Technology Specification set out the knowledge, understanding and skills required to undertake the design process of exploring, creating and evaluating.

The subject content is split into 3 sections. You will learn the following:

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

The Design & Technology GCSE will give students the skills to develop into confident creative designers and problem solvers, equipped to utilise current and emerging technologies - a skill set much needed in the world of work and modern society.

**Exam Board: AQA**

**Specification: 8552**

# FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION

To be successful in this GCSE you do need to enjoy cooking and have an interest in food and nutrition. You may need to practice dishes at home. Be aware that the course does involve significant written work as well as practical work.

This course teaches you to make connections between theory and practice so that you are able to apply your understanding of food science and nutrition to practical cooking. The course will involve a mix of both theory and practical lessons. You will learn how to portion a whole chicken, fillet a fish, thicken sauces and many other practical culinary skills.

The course is made up of two components.

There are 6 areas of study within **Component 1 - The Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition**.

1. Food commodities
2. Principles of nutrition
3. Diet and good health
4. Science of food
5. Where food comes from
6. Cooking and food preparation

There will be one written paper in the summer of Year 11 based on the 6 areas of study in component 1.

1 hour 45 minutes = **50% of the total GCSE grade**

There are 2 non-examination assessments within **Component 2 - Food Preparation and Nutrition in Action**, together worth **50% of the total GCSE grade**.

**Assessment 1** – a scientific food investigation

8 hours - **15% of the total GCSE grade**

Report length 1,500 – 2,000 words

**Assessment 2** - a food preparation assessment

12 hours - **35% of the total GCSE grade**

A maximum of 30 typed A4 pages to include photographs, charts & graphs

Homework will consist of the following and you can expect homework each week.

- Preparing ingredients for practical lessons
- Research
- Written tasks
- Exam style questions
- Reading to support subject knowledge
- Practising cooking skills and dishes

Homework deadlines must be met in order for you to improve on previous grades and ensure you understand each topic.

Non-examination assessments have strict deadlines which must be met without fail.

You must bring your own ingredients for all practical lessons.

This course can lead to: Nutrition and Health Studies / Hospitality & Catering / Food Science and Technology at college or Apprenticeships.

The course is not an 'easy option'. It is fast moving, challenging and demanding. The non-examination assessments require considerable independent learning skills. If you enjoy science and food preparation, this is the course for you!

Whether it's training students to give them careers in the food industry or teaching them how to grow and cook food from scratch, Food Preparation and Nutrition shows that simple choices can make a big difference. It is designed to motivate students to develop the high level of knowledge, understanding and skills to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating.

**Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas**

**Specification: C560P1**

# SPANISH GCSE

Students will take exams in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are equally weighted at 25% each and will sit either the Foundation (grades 1-5) or Higher tier (grades 5-9).

The course is built around the following three themes:

## **Theme 1: People and lifestyle**

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

## **Theme 2: Popular culture**

- Topic 1: Free-time activities
- Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity culture

## **Theme 3: Communication and the world around us**

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 2: Media and technology
- Topic 3: The environment and where people live

## **Reasons To Study a Language at GCSE**

### **The global tech industry is booming**

'I want a job in tech but employers want me to speak a second language.' It might seem counter-intuitive but there's a huge demand for linguists in tech. Billion-dollar companies Duolingo and Quizlet are just a handful of giants that recruit translators, proof-readers and content creators with more competitors joining the scene.

### **The TV translator is 'on demand'**

There's been a huge spike in the need for translation work such as subtitling and dubbing. Professor Andy Way of Dublin City University School of Computing says: "Many tech jobs see a second language as a desirable skill, putting you ahead of some of the competition. In my field, engineers need the insights from translators to improve their technology in the future. Our systems are trained on data produced by human translators so, without them, we couldn't even begin to do what we do."

### **Languages give you the edge**

"Language skills are very sought after by employers," says economist Pawel Adrjan. A GCSE qualification in languages open doors for traditional careers but also in digital marketing, social media and sales.

### **Languages open up the world**

Learning any language can make us more successful working abroad and builds resilience and agility. It provides 'cultural capital'. Heather Morgan, international economist and serial entrepreneur, describes languages in tech companies: "It's also really helpful if you're thinking about changing careers or want to go to a company that's in a new space, which many tech start-ups are." We're living in the age of the soft skills, so being good listeners and communicators will not only boost your grades but also give you the edge in side hustles, networking and future life.

### **Employers know language students are quick learners**

Languages give you the edge because they're academically rigorous and challenging to learn and therefore not mastered by many. In applying ourselves to a second language, we improve our aptitude for study itself, especially our listening and communication abilities. When you learn one language, your brain is hardwired to those specific skill sets and so the next language will actually become that much easier to absorb - your grey matter is actually just built to learn yet another new language.

### **Languages are a commodity**

It's easy to fall back on outdated excuses like "English is the world language" to get ourselves out of trialling our own abilities. In this increasingly globalised world, languages have become like currency or stock - the more you speak, the higher your value rises.

### **Language qualifications give you lifelong options**

Every Modern Foreign Language teacher will tell you that language qualifications give you many options in life. It's worth remembering that in the UK there's still a shortage of MFL teachers, making it a buyer's market and providing a lot more freedom for where you want to settle as well. Some Russell Group Universities require a GCSE MFL qualification, regardless of the course applied for.

### **Languages boost confidence**

Speaking a second language teaches you communication, presentation and soft skills that help you to connect to your audience more. All these transferable skills will give your overall confidence levels a boost, regardless of the scenario. I've trained students for university interviews, internships, work placements and job interviews and we've harnessed these skills to give them a head start and help them stand out from the crowd.

Finally, a language GCSE will not only help you communicate better it will also help you to understand the culture of the target language and the Spanish speaking world. Learning a foreign language will improve your literacy skills in English, and both universities and employers look favourably on people with the ability to speak a foreign language. The resilience and determination shown when studying a language presents an ambitious and hardworking profile to both higher education establishments and future employers.

**Exam Board: AQA**

**Specification: 8692**

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE

There are two 1hr 45min exams at the end of Year 11. One of these will be based on the two world religions that you study, and the other exam will assess your knowledge and understanding of each of the themes to be covered in philosophical and ethical studies. Each exam is worth 50% of your total mark. There is no controlled assessment (coursework).

## 1. The Study of World Religions (50%)

Students will undertake an in-depth study of two of the main world religions: Christianity and Islam. This will involve an investigation into the main beliefs, teachings and practices of these two religions.

## 2. Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World (50%)

This component looks at some key questions and dilemmas that people living in modern society have to deal with. Philosophical topics deal with matters of truth and reality on matters like the existence of God and why there is suffering in the world. Ethical topics deal with questions of right and wrong, and how people decide the best way to live in society today. The following themes are studied:

- Relationships and families (eg. marriage; sexual relationships; contraception; divorce)
- Religion and life (eg. the origins of the world; animal rights; abortion; euthanasia)
- The existence of God and revelation (eg. arguments for/against the existence of God; the problem of evil; general and special revelation)
- Religion, human rights and social justice (eg. freedom of religion; issues around racial and gender equality; attitudes towards money and wealth)

Religions have shaped the world we live in and continue to play a very important role in the world today. This course will help you understand the place that faith has in the lives of many people and in society as a whole. This course will help you make sense of the things that are going on in the world around you. Being able to see the world from different viewpoints will prepare you for any career that involves working with people.

You will learn lots of skills that will be useful in later life. You'll learn skills in interpreting and evaluating pieces of information, communicating and applying your knowledge, and in solving problems. You'll also have an opportunity to develop your debating skills.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Specification: 8062A**

# ART & DESIGN (Fine Art) GCSE

The GCSE Art and Design course covers a wide range of fine art activities (drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, etc.) and in-depth assignments. Fine art explores ideas, conveys experiences or responds to a theme or issues of personal significance. If you enjoy creating art that makes a statement, sends a message or just makes people see or feel differently, GCSE Art could be for you.

Throughout the course you will complete different projects with unique starting points that you are expected to respond to creatively (past starting points have been natural forms, identity and portraits). You will have the opportunity to experiment with a range of media to explore your strengths and interests. You are expected to work independently, using your creative and imaginative skills. You are required to use your research skills to undertake creative investigation into artist's work. You must be able to demonstrate drawing activity, independent research, experimentation and detailed written annotation. You are expected to record your ideas in sketchbooks, and you must meet strict deadlines. You will regularly review your progress and make improvements to your work. Above all, this course is for those who are passionate about the visual arts, and it is expected that you will have demonstrated a high level of commitment to your studies in Year 7, 8 and 9 to be considered for the course. You are expected to create meaningful and personal artworks of your own to meet the assessment criteria so a love for the subject is crucial to succeeding and enjoying the course.

**Component 1** – In Y10 and Y11 you complete two projects (coursework/portfolio). An introductory mini project and then an in-depth sustained project. You are given a starting point for both projects and are expected to respond creatively. At the end of the sustained project you are expected to create a final artwork over 10 hours in a mock exam (exam conditions) to prepare you for Component 2. Component 1 is worth 60% of your final grade.

**Component 2** – In Y11 you complete one final exam unit. This is an externally set project given directly from the exam board and students must respond to a starting point, develop their creative ideas through a project, then complete a 10-hour examination at the end. A final artwork outcome is created over two days during the exam. Component 2 is worth 40% of your final grade.

**You will be expected to complete prep at home every single week.** If work is not completed in lessons, you will be expected to finish it at home. Prep is set to ensure students do not fall behind with coursework. There is an Art Intervention session every week after school and students can attend this to finish outstanding work with teachers present.

Coursework from both components is assessed on the same four assessment objectives:

- **AO1:** Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
- **AO2:** Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
- **AO3:** Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
- **AO4:** Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Studying art and design helps to create a broad and balanced curriculum, which is an excellent foundation for whatever you want to post GCSE. The transferable skills you gain, such as creativity, analysis, experimentation, problem solving, imagination and reflection complement a range of other subjects and career paths. A GCSE in art and design can lead to AS or A-levels or a level 2/3 diploma post-16.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Specification: 8202/C**

# DRAMA GCSE

## **Drama GCSE will teach you the following:**

- Knowledge and understanding of drama techniques and conventions
- Develop your performance skills
- How to express yourself in an active and exciting way
- How to work in a group; contributing your own ideas and respecting those of others
- How to explore ideas by putting yourself in other people's shoes
- How to explore plays written by other people
- How to create your own devised drama work
- How to watch and evaluate other people's performances

## **Unit 1: Devising 40%**

Students will work in groups to create and develop ideas to devise a piece of drama lasting for 15-20 minutes. The stimulus will be provided by the teacher. This will be performed in a group of 3-6 performers and assessed by the teacher. Students will write about the devising process in a portfolio, which will be built up over a period of time, and this work will take place in an IT room. The practical work is filmed. The film and the portfolio are sent away to be moderated.

## **Unit 2: Performance from Text 20%**

Students will rehearse and perform two key extracts from a play text. They can choose to perform on their own (monologue), with a partner (duologue) or in a group of up to 8 students. This will be a polished performance in front of a visiting examiner. Students also have to write a short piece (100 words) describing what they have done to put the performance together. Rehearsals take place in class, with some additional sessions close to the exam date.

## **Unit 3: Theatre Makers in Practice 40%**

This is a written exam lasting for 1.5 hours. Question A contains questions on a play text we have studied in class. Before the exam, students will have read and performed this play text in order to make them very familiar with the characters and plotline, as well as the technicalities of performing the play. Question B asks students to write about a live theatre performance we have seen together. Please note that there will be a theatre trip in each year to prepare for this question.

Drama GCSE will help in the future by:

- It will develop your performing and creative skills
- It will help you to develop self-confidence and independence
- It will encourage and stimulate creative thinking and self-expression
- It will foster team working and co-operation skills
- It will develop an interest and enthusiasm for theatre and the performing arts
- It will give a springboard to further study in drama and theatre course
- It will give you a wide range of employable skills, useful for future work in a variety of professions

**Exam Board: Edexcel**  
**Specification: 1DR0**

# MUSIC PRACTICE

## BTEC Tech Award

This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will develop key skills, ranging from rehearsing to experimenting with technology, learning how to use musical equipment and instruments. The qualification is the equivalent of a GCSE.

Component information	Title	Content
Component 1 (Internally assessed coursework: 30% of final grade)	Exploring Music Products and Styles	Students will develop an understanding of different musical styles including popular music styles and other styles such as Film Music and Minimalism.  Students will apply their understanding of these styles to create music, for example a live performance, an audio recording and a composition for film.
Component 2 (Internally assessed coursework: 30% of final grade)	Music Skills Development	Students will demonstrate professional and commercial skills for the music industry.  Students will develop music skills and techniques for musical performances, writing their own music and recording music.
Component 3 (Externally assessed coursework and completed within exam conditions: 40% of final grade)	Responding to a Music Brief	Students are set a music brief by Pearson, and they respond to it using the skills developed through the previous Components as a composer, performer or producer. The assignment requires students to create their own version of a song, in a completely new style.

Once you have completed the qualification, you will have developed valuable knowledge, practical skills and a wider understanding of the music industry through a vocational context. Since you will be developing skills across several disciplines – such as music creation, production and performance – you will have a better understanding of whether the music industry is for you and, if so, which part of it you might want to study further and/or work in.

This course is different from studying GCSEs, as, by taking part in different types of practical vocational activities, it gives you the opportunity to apply your knowledge, skills and the techniques you learn in practical ways.

The skills you develop through studying music will show employers you have a wider range of interests and skills than most. It also shows that you have dedication and commitment to learn a musical instrument and to study music. BTEC Music Practice is hard work, but equally one of the most enjoyable subjects to learn and succeed in!

**Exam Board: Pearson**  
**Specification: RMP**

# HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

## BTEC Tech Award

You will focus on core care values, develop valuable skills and explore potential careers. This is a practical course where you will be able to:

- Develop your knowledge and understanding of the sector
- Appreciate the importance of care values
- Analyse and evaluate your skills

This course has two internally assessed components, and one will be externally assessed.

**Component 1** – Human lifespan development (**Coursework: 30% of final grade**)

**Component 2** – Health & Social Care, services and values (**Coursework: 30% of final grade**)

**Component 3** – Health & wellbeing - this component is externally controlled and completed within exam conditions at the end of Year 11 (**Exam: 40% of final grade**)

These components build on each other to motivate you to put what you have learnt into practice and grow in confidence.

You will be able to explore, challenge and realise your potential.

During the course you can see whether the industry is one you would like to be in, where you could go and gain the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in your next steps.

After completing the course, you can continue on to further vocational and academic study at Level 2 and Level 3, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships.

The skills you will learn such as self-reflection, communication, teamwork and problem solving, are transferable and can be used to support your progress in the future and the present.

The qualification is the equivalent of a GCSE.

**Exam board; Pearson**  
**Specification: RHS**

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