



The Tiffin Girls' School

GCSE Curriculum Booklet 2026-2028

*"Pupils thrive here. Leaders and staff
work together to give pupils every possible
opportunity to do well and enjoy their education"*

'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement
October 2021

The Tiffin Girls' School Vision

Our vision:

'Our community is vibrant, curious, creative and inspires positive change. We dare to be wise.'

The school's motto **sapere aude** – **dare to be wise**, is embodied in its core values of *Community, Love of Learning* and *Character*.

Community:

Collaboration
Active Citizens
Celebrate diversity

Love of Learning:

Inspiration
Embrace knowledge
Creative & Critical thinking

Character:

Integrity & Respect
Courage & Resilience
Independence & Initiative



From the Headteacher

Dear Student

I am pleased to welcome you to the Year 9 Options Evening and I hope the information that you receive will help you to make well informed decisions about which subjects you wish to study over the next two years.

As you know, we promote a 'Love of Learning' at Tiffin Girls', encouraging you to take ownership of your learning and to be curious; something that you've already demonstrated in abundance since joining in Year 7. You now have an opportunity to make a choice about what you wish to develop a deeper understanding of at GCSE in the areas that inspire and excite you, delivered by staff who are passionate about their subject areas. To support you in this, we provide a rich, ambitious and broad curriculum and we know students go on to achieve highly in all subject areas.

This evening will be followed up by an online Parents' Evening, at which point you will have the opportunity to discuss in more detail your suitability for the courses you're interested in studying further. Before that, however, there is the opportunity to explore more about the GCSE course content with your teachers and through assemblies.

It is a hugely exciting time in your academic journey at Tiffin Girls', where you have greater freedom to choose what you study and I hope that this options process is clear and informative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "I. Keary". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Mr Keary
Headteacher

Introduction

All students follow a common curriculum during their first three years at The Tiffin Girls' School. In Year 10, however, they are offered an element of choice through an options process, which will enable the students to choose subjects they would like to study in greater depth over the next two years.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain the options process and to provide parents and students with information about the option subjects. If wise choices are to be made, it is essential that the information contained in this booklet is studied carefully, in the light of the aptitudes and interests of each individual, in addition to any particular career aspiration that the student may already have in mind. These courses enable students to vary their curriculum choice and give a wider range of individual curriculum pathways. Students and their parents should consult with teaching staff about these options and curriculum choices.

As well as this Information Evening, parents and Year 9 students will also have the opportunity to discuss the choice of subjects with teaching staff at the Year 9 Parents' Evening. This year the evening will be held on **Monday 19 January 2026 at 6.30pm**.

Every effort is made to enable students to study the subjects that they prefer, but it should be noted the school reserves the right to remove a subject if it is undersubscribed and if there are staffing challenges. Should this situation arise, parents will be informed and students will be counselled about their choice of other options.

Students will be submitting their choices electronically no later than **Friday 27 February 2026 at 4.00pm**, and instructions on how this is done will be sent to the students nearer the time.

We will build our Key Stage 4 timetable around the students' options from this point. Whilst the school endeavours to provide staffing for all the classes needed to accommodate our students' choices, changes after this date may be harder, or indeed impossible to accommodate. It is important that students are confident about their choices by this date and understand that changes may not be possible beyond the deadline.

Changes to GCSEs

From 2016, students undertaking a GCSE in all subjects will follow the new style GCSE courses, and students will receive grades from 9-1 instead of alphabetical grades. The detail and content of these new courses are outlined in this booklet.

All GCSEs will be sat at the end of Year 11, in order to provide the students with the best opportunity to achieve the highest grades.

Options Timeline

| Date | Event/Action |
|---|--|
| Monday 19 January 2026 6.30pm | GCSE Options Information Evening |
| January and February 2026 | Virtual Options Talks by Heads of Department for students in assembly time |
| Thursday 22 January 2026 3.00-7.00pm | Parents' Evening for students |
| January and February 2026 | Pastoral support available for students via their tutor and HOY |
| Monday 9 February 2026 | Start of window to select Options |
| Friday 27 February 2026 | Deadline for submission of options choices by <u>4.00pm</u> |

Overview of the Options Process

In Years 10 and 11, students study 10 examined courses.

Over the next two years, every student will study a course that leads to examinations in the following core subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics.

All students must choose four options in addition to the above compulsory courses. These must include a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language, either French or Spanish.

The Optional subjects include:

- Fine Art
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology: Graphics or Resistant Materials
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies.

All students will leave Year 11 having gained a GCSE in Mathematics but some will study all of the course in Year 10 and then go on to start studying Additional Mathematics in Year 11. This Fast Track Maths is available to those students for whom teachers consider it to be a sensible pathway. Students' choices in regard to this subject will be monitored by subject staff and eligibility confirmed prior to final completion of their options choice form. Above all, this is subject to the discretion of the Maths Department.

There are many possible permutations of courses that can be followed. This should cater for the needs of the majority of students, though we cannot guarantee to be able to accommodate all choices, and therefore it is important that a reserve is chosen.

We understand that the decision-making process is a challenging one and should be given the care and attention that it demands. To support you in the decision-making process the following page highlights some advice and guidance that we have put together based upon our experiences, and the frequently asked questions of students and parents that have been through this process.

Deciding Wisely

Please be very careful about what you are choosing. You need to make sure YOU have made the best possible choices. The following is a summary of the key points to consider that we feel are most noteworthy whilst making your possible choices:

- It is important that you have a balanced curriculum to keep your options open for the future
- Choose to study those subjects that you enjoy the most and that you are good at
- You will be studying your options for two periods per week for two years; make sure you pay attention to the previous point
- Extended writing subjects are helpful on your academic profile because they will help you to develop analytical and reasoned arguments and writing styles. We would therefore encourage you to choose at least one humanities subject
- Creative subjects are helpful on your academic profile as they demonstrate an ability to problem solve. We would therefore encourage you to choose at least one creative subject
- Choose subjects that complement and will develop the skills that you enjoy using and are good at
- Ensure that you understand the different practical and theoretical demands of the subjects
- There is no guarantee that teachers of particular subjects now will continue to teach your class at GCSE next year
- The decisions that your friends make are based upon their personal evaluation of their own strengths, ambitions and skill sets. Ensure that your decision is informed in the same way and not simply a reflection of what your friends will be studying
- Ask yourself some testing questions when making decisions e.g. Will I enjoy this subject more than the other? What subjects do I need to study for my future career aspirations?
- Use the exam board website to explore the specification (content and assessment) on offer
- Ensure that you understand the different practical and theoretical demands of the subjects, as well as the amount of Non-examined assessments (NEAs).

Exam Board websites

AQA www.aqa.org.uk

Edexcel www.edexcel.com

OCR www.ocr.org.uk

Additional examination entries

On occasion, families may feel the need to seek external entry for a subject that their child is not studying at the school. The school operates a strict policy for external entries the details of which are below. This ensures that the workload of students is not unnecessarily increased and ensures that examination provision is focused on the offered curriculum. Should you have any requests in regard to this, please write in the first instance to the Exams Office.

After considering the educational implications of early entry for GCSE, AS Level or A Level and other external examinations, the governors have agreed that:

1. Internal candidates studying for subjects which are outside the curriculum offered at The Tiffin Girls' School may be offered the opportunity to sit for qualifications in Year 10 and above. For languages they will need to provide their own oral examiner. We are unable to make provision for any candidate to sit any subject which includes a unit of NEA. Internal candidates will not be allowed to sit for additional GCSEs or A Levels in subjects that are offered by the school but which they are studying outside of school.
2. A decision will be taken based on each candidate's individual circumstances, taking into account the professional judgement of the staff and the availability of resources. Administration and invigilation fees may be payable.
3. Candidates for whom French or Spanish is their home language may be offered the opportunity to sit GCSE in that language in Y10 or earlier if deemed appropriate. The candidate will need to provide their own oral examiner, unless agreed otherwise with the French or Spanish departments.
4. If a candidate is to sit an examination in a centre other than The Tiffin Girls' School, parents need to inform us via the absence request form. The candidate will then need to collect her UCI number from the exams office to give to the entering centre.
5. If candidates wish to sit the examination at our centre, provided they fulfil the requirements of paragraph 1, 2 and 3, please notify the Exams Office in writing by the end of January in the year in which they wish to sit the examination. This ensures that GCSE entries are made to the examination boards without a charge for late entry being incurred.
6. Candidates who are not students at The Tiffin Girls' School will not be catered for in our examination arrangements.

GCSE Options Planning Sheet

This sheet is for you to use as a planning/thinking tool. We will use an electronic method to collect your option choices (details to follow) by 27 February 2026.

You must choose four courses and one reserve from the options below, and then put them into a priority order. **All students must study either French or Spanish.**

| Type of subject | Course | Option (Rank 1) |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Language | French (GCSE) | |
| | Spanish (GCSE) | |

- Try to ensure there is breadth and balance across all your GCSE subjects e.g. mathematical/scientific/language/humanity/creative focussed
- You are strongly recommended to include an extended writing subject amongst your options to go alongside your English (e.g. Geography, History, Religious Studies)
- Think seriously about including a creative subject amongst your options
- You cannot study both DT options.

| Type of subject | Course | Option (Rank 2-4 + Reserve) |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Creative | Fine Art (GCSE) | |
| | D&T Resistant Materials (GCSE) | |
| | D&T Graphics (GCSE) | |
| | Drama (GCSE) | |
| | Music (GCSE) | |
| Languages | French (GCSE) | |
| | Latin (GCSE) | |
| | Spanish (GCSE) | |
| Humanities | Geography (GCSE) | |
| | History (GCSE) | |
| | Religious Studies (GCSE) | |
| Technical | Computer Science (GCSE) | |
| Scientific | Physical Education (GCSE) | |

GCSE Options Online

Details about how to select your options will be supplied by Mrs Harris in time for Monday 9 February 2026.

Core Subject Information

2026-28

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English Language & English Literature

Examination Board: AQA 8700 (Language) AQA 8702 (Literature)

Course Content:

English Language and English Literature will be studied in an integrated course leading to two GCSEs. In order to fulfil the specification requirements all assignments set must be completed. All students in all groups are prepared for the same examinations: the higher tier for both English Language and English Literature.

English Literature is based on the study of all three genres: drama, poetry and prose. The course will give you the opportunity to read and enjoy a selection of Shakespeare, Literary Heritage and modern texts.

You will also have opportunities for creative writing and the study of non-fiction writing. You will produce assignments written in a wide variety of forms.

Speaking and Listening work is common to both subjects. This will extend the skills and experience you gained during Key Stage 3. An important aim is to develop your ability to express yourself effectively, adapting both language and approach. The marks awarded for Speaking and Listening do not contribute to the final GCSE grades but will appear as a separately graded component on GCSE certificates.

Assessment:

English Language The exams will account for 100% of the final result. There are two papers, both one hour and forty five minutes in duration. The reading questions in each paper will test your ability in understanding and analysing the language used by writers; the writing questions will test your ability in creative and discursive writing.

English Literature The exams will account for 100% of the final result. There are two papers, one lasting one hour and forty five minutes, the other lasting two hours and fifteen minutes. The first paper examines the Shakespeare play and 19th Century novel; the second paper examines the modern novel, modern poetry and unseen poetry.

Careers:

A minimum of a Grade 5 in English is vital for any further or higher education and therefore any career. High English grades are welcomed by all higher education institutions, including for students choosing careers in science and engineering. Universities and employers consider English skills to be of vital importance therefore English students go on to careers in the media, education, law, accountancy, advertising, marketing (amongst many others).

Mathematics

Examination Board: Edexcel (1MA1)

Course Content:

The GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 builds on the work done in previous years. There are six areas of study.

1. Number
2. Algebra
3. Ratio, proportion and rates of change
4. Geometry and measures
5. Probability
6. Statistics.

Whilst there are two tiers of entry for this subject, we will only be entering pupils for the Higher Tier where grades 4 to 9 are available.

Students are allocated to new sets at the start of Year 10 with this setting continuing throughout Years 10 and 11. A few students may move between sets depending on how well they are coping with the pace of their class. Two fast track classes are created at the start of Year 10.

Assessment:

There are three examination papers of 1 hour 30 minutes each

- Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper
- Papers 2 and 3 are calculator papers

Each paper has a range of question types; some questions will be set in both mathematical and non – mathematical contexts.

Careers:

A pass in GCSE Mathematics is vital for any further or higher education course and therefore to most careers. A good qualification in Mathematics at A Level is welcomed for admission to degrees in the Sciences, Engineering, Computer Science, Geography, Economics and Business Studies.

Mathematics Fast Track

Examination Board: OCR (6993)

Course Content:

It is anticipated that students who pursue the fast track option will study the majority of the GCSE content in Year 10 and study OCR's FMSQ Additional Mathematics in Year 11. Additional Mathematics provides extension to GCSE mathematics.

Additional Mathematics is available to those students whose teachers consider it to be a sensible pathway and it is subject to the discretion of the Maths Department.

For entry to the Sixth Form, Fast Track is not a requirement to study either Maths or Further Maths A-Levels.

Assessment:

GCSE: As above, sitting the GCSE examination at the end of year 11.

Additional Mathematics (6993): A two-hour paper sat at the end of year 11.

Careers:

See above.

Biology

Examination Board: AQA 8461

Course Content:

1. **Cell biology.** Exploration of how structural differences between types of cells enable them to perform specific functions within the organism. We also study cell division and stem cell technology, this is a branch of medicine which could allow doctors to repair damaged organs by growing new tissue from stem cells.
2. **Organisation in living things.** In this section we will study the digestive system, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. We will look at how they function and what can go wrong. We will study the plant transport systems and how this supports plant growth.
3. **Infection and response.** In this section we will study pathogens which affect plants and animals. We will explore both how our body prevents us from becoming infected and how our immune system responds after infection. We will study the development and importance of vaccinations as well as the rise and fall of antibiotics.
4. **Bioenergetics.** In this section we will study photosynthesis and respiration in organisms.
5. **Homeostasis and response.** In this section we will study homeostasis; the maintenance of a constant pH, temperature and water level. We will study the structure and function of the nervous and hormonal systems, looking in particular at the menstrual cycle and how our understanding of this has enabled us to develop both contraceptive pills and fertility drugs.
6. **Inheritance, variation and evolution.** In this section we will study how gametes are produced and how unique offspring are formed during sexual reproduction. We will look at mutations and their effects, both negative and positive. We will look at the theory of natural selection and also how humans have used artificial selection to produce livestock with favourable characteristics.
7. **Ecology.** We will study the carbon and water cycle as well as the negative effects human activities are having on the delicate balance of ecosystems around the planet. We will consider actions that need to be taken to ensure our future health, prosperity and well-being.
8. **Required practicals.** Throughout the course we will complete eight required practicals to support and consolidate understanding of scientific concepts and to develop and master investigative and practical skills.

Assessment :

| | | | | | |
|---------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| Paper 1 | Topics 1-4 | 1 hour 45 minute written exam | 100 marks | 50% of GCSE | Questions will be a mix of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response. |
| Paper 2 | Topics 5-7 | 1 hour 45 minute written exam | 100 marks | 50% of GCSE | Questions will be a mix of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response. |

Careers :

Biology is not just important for your chosen career; rather scientific literacy is an essential tool to be able to meaningfully interact with and understand the world around us. A science education opens up innumerable fields to you for the future, including medicine, ecology, marine studies, genetics, psychology, forensics, economics, politics, teaching, horticulture, astronomy and many, many more! Within the Biology GCSE, we hope to spark your passion and curiosity about the world.

Examination Board: AQA 8462

Course Content:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
Students learn models of the structure of the atom and link electronic structure to the development of the Periodic Table
2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
Students learn about ionic, covalent and metallic bonding and how bonding type is linked to the physical properties of substances, such as their boiling and melting points and conductivity
3. Quantitative chemistry
Students learn to use a range of chemical calculations from empirical and molecular formula calculations to mole calculations, gas volume calculations and percentage yield
4. Chemical changes
Students learn about key categories of chemical reactions; reactions of metals, acid-base reactions and electrolysis
5. Energy changes
Students learn about how to measure and interpret energy changes in reactions, using calorimetry and energy profile diagrams
6. The rate and extent of chemical change
Students learn how to measure rates of chemical reactions and study the factors affecting rate, such as concentration, pressure, temperature, surface area and the presence of catalysts
7. Organic chemistry
Students learn about the use of crude oil as a source of hydrocarbons, and study the properties and reactions of compounds containing the functional groups alkane, alkene, alcohol, carboxylic acid, ester and amino acid
8. Chemical analysis
Students learn chemical tests for laboratory gases and common cations and anions. They also study techniques such as chromatography and flame emission spectroscopy
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere
Students study the evolution and composition of the Earth's atmosphere and learn about the effects of atmospheric pollutants
10. Using resources
Students learn about how the Earth's resources such as metals, fossil fuels and water can be used sustainably. They also study use of resources to produce key products such as fertilisers, ceramics, composites and polymers.

Assessment:

- Chemistry 1 (Topics 1-5): 50% (1 hour 45 minute written paper)
- Chemistry 2 (Topics 6-10) 50% (1 hour 45 minute written paper)

Both papers will contain multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions

Careers:

The range of careers requiring qualifications in science is vast. It includes astronomy, biochemistry, ecology, electronics, the entire range of engineering, forensic science, geology, horticulture, all medical careers, optics, pharmacy, psychology, speech therapy and veterinary work.

Physics

Examination Board: AQA 8463

Course Content:

1. Forces. Students will learn: How forces are represented; how to calculate a resultant force; Newton's laws of motion; how to calculate speed, velocity and acceleration; what momentum is; how forces can be used in gears and levers
2. Energy. Students will learn: how energy is stored and transferred; how to calculate the energy needed to heat an object; What thermal conductivity is and how we compare different energy resources
3. Waves. Students will learn: the properties of mechanical and electromagnetic waves; the law of reflection; where colour comes from; how lenses work and how waves are used in communications.
4. Electricity. Students will learn: What an electric field is; What current, voltage and resistance is; how we use series and parallel circuits to make things work; how we use electricity in the home safely.
5. Magnetism and Electromagnetism. Students will learn: What a magnetic field is; how to make an electromagnet; how we use electromagnetism in various devices; how electricity is generated; why transformers are so useful in the national grid.
6. Particle model of matter: Students will learn: the difference between solids, liquids and gases; what happens when substances change state; how to measure and calculate density; things that affect pressure in gases
7. Atomic Structure. Students will learn: How our knowledge of the atom developed over the centuries; how some atoms are unstable; what radioactivity is; how to calculate the half-life of a radioactive substance; the dangers and uses of radioactivity
8. Space Physics. Students will learn: the lifecycle of a star; how planets orbit; what the solar system contains; how satellites stay up; how the universe was formed.
9. Required practicals. Throughout the course we will complete 10 required practicals to support and consolidate understanding of scientific concepts and to develop and master investigative and practical skills.

Assessment:

Physics 1 (Topics 2, 4, 6 and 7): 50% (1 hour 45 minute written paper)

Physics 2 (Topics 1, 3, 5 and 8): 50% (1 hour 45 minute written paper)

Both papers will contain multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions. Practical skills will be assessed in the written papers.

Careers:

Studying Physics gives us an understanding of the world around us that is invaluable. It opens us up to the possibilities of the incredibly small sub atomic world and the unbelievably large cosmos. Skills developed are transferable to many careers such as astronomy, computing, communications, electronics, the entire range of engineering, forensic science, geophysics, all medical careers, Nuclear Physics, optics, and many more.

Examination Board: AQA 8652 (French)

Course Content:

The course covers the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The specification covers three distinct themes. These themes apply to all four question papers. Students are expected to understand and provide information and opinions about these themes relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including people in countries/communities where French is spoken.

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular Culture
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Assessments:

Paper 1: Listening

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 2: Speaking

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 3: Reading

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 4: Writing

- 25% of GCSE

Careers:

Many universities offer courses combining languages with other subjects, such as law or business studies. Language skills are a valuable extra qualification for many careers. There are opportunities in fields such as broadcasting, advertising, publishing, teaching, commerce and the travel business. Many universities offering degrees in medicine like candidates to have a wide range of subjects; a modern foreign language is considered an excellent complement.

Examination Board: AQA 8692H (Spanish)

Course Content:

Through studying GCSE Spanish, students should develop their ability and ambition to communicate independently in speech and writing with speakers of the language for authentic purposes and about subjects which are meaningful and interesting to them. The study of Spanish at GCSE should also build students' confidence and broaden their horizons, enabling them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries, develop new ways of seeing the world, and better understand relationships between the foreign language and the English language. It is important that students following a GCSE Spanish course should become familiar with aspects of the contexts and cultures of the countries and communities where the language is spoken.

The specification covers three themes, which apply to all four question papers:

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle
- Theme 2: Popular Culture
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Students should learn the GCSE Spanish vocabulary list and will be expected to use this vocabulary across a range of contexts and assessment tasks. GCSE students will also be expected to develop and use their knowledge of the prescribed grammar throughout their course, across a range of contexts and assessment tasks.

Assessment:

Paper 1: Listening

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 2: Speaking

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 3: Reading

- 25% of GCSE

Paper 4: Writing

- 25% of GCSE

Careers:

There are more than 600 million Spanish speakers worldwide and Spanish is the world's second most widely spoken mother tongue. Learning to speak this language will open all types of new doors for you.

Many universities offer courses combining Spanish with other subjects. Language skills are a valuable extra qualification for many careers. There are opportunities in fields such as broadcasting, advertising, publishing, teaching, commerce and the travel business. Many universities offering degrees in Medicine like candidates to have a wide range of subjects; a Modern Language is considered an excellent complement.

Optional Subject Information 2026-28

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Fine Art

Examination Board: Edexcel 1AD0

Course Content:

GCSE Fine Art is a creative and conceptual subject. It requires you to use analytical and critical thinking skills in order to creatively express yourself. Students are expected to have a high level of self-motivation and initiative. The course enables you to expand and develop your own skills and interests, you will be encouraged to experiment with your own personal responses in order to produce original and imaginative work. GCSE Fine Art is an exciting and exhilarating course that allows you to personally develop and explore new ideas.

You will develop your research, analytical and practical skills. This allows you to look at the social and moral codes of many art periods and cultures alongside the practical applications that are relevant to these. The course will allow you to work in a wide range of media, techniques and processes in order to explore your own ideas. Initially to build up your skill-base you will be guided by your teacher with a very structured start to the course. As your confidence and skills grow you will work to a theme by developing your own ideas and be expected to make creative decisions with regards to your own art-making in order to create substantial final outcomes.

Assessment:

There are two components to the course; Personal Portfolio (Coursework) which carries 60% of the marks, and an Externally Set Assignment (Exam project) at the end of the course, which carries 40% of the marks.

Personal Portfolio; you will enter coursework completed over Year 10 and Year 11 for final assessment. Your coursework will address a particular theme which will be approached in a number of interesting ways over the two years.

Externally Set Assignment; this is an externally set project by the exam board. It contains a theme which you will interpret in a medium of your choice. In lessons, you will have eight weeks to carry out a mini project in response to the brief and then produce the final piece to your project in a ten-hour session under examination conditions.

Careers:

Creative thinking is encouraged in any number of careers. Directly linked to the visual arts include; artist, architect, graphic designer, fashion/textile designer, art director (film/tv), illustrator, animator, digital artist/illustrator, website designer, film editor, visual effects artist, photographer, interior designer, theatre designer, art therapist, advertising art director, art teacher/lecturer and art gallery/museum curator.

Computer Science

Examination Board: OCR J277

Course Content:

The course is essentially divided into two areas:

- The theory component deals with how computers work, and how they make possible the things that we all do with them. For example, we will look at:
 - How computers and the internet work. What happens when you press a key or click on a link? Why does the processor in your computer matter?
 - Security issues. How was a 15-year-old student able to access personal details of 20,000 customers of TalkTalk? What is social engineering?
 - The issues that arise from the use of computers. For example, is it OK for the police and others to have access to a list of all websites you have accessed?
- The programming component, which will involve you getting to grips with a real programming language (C#) and learning how to solve problems, for example by:
 - Manipulating numbers and words to produce the answers you want
 - Repeating actions lots of times to manipulate lots of data at once
 - Breaking complex problems into smaller chunks so that you can solve them
 - Reading and writing data from files.

The programming course is very practical. You will have to write a program to solve a problem in the Project, and this will give you the opportunity both to enhance your programming skills and to practice for the Unit 2 paper.

The skills from the Python work at the start of the year – trying things out to see how they work, learning to write precisely and in the right sequence – will be useful in this course.

Assessment:

There are two units, which are assessed as follows:

- Unit 1: a written exam, which cover much of the theory work (50%)
- Unit 2: another written exam which tests your understanding of programming concepts (50%)

Careers:

All major businesses require people with higher level technical skills, and there is a grave shortage of candidates, especially women and those with 'soft skills' such as literacy, people skills and teamwork. There are new opportunities in a wide range of fields such as mobile phone and tablet applications, virtual, augmented and mixed reality, data science, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, smart devices and social media. As well as working with mainstream businesses, new startup businesses can take off quickly, earning huge sums with a single new idea.

Design and Technology

Examination Board: AQA 8552

Course Content:

This GCSE will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness of and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology. These include 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.

Students will choose one of two pathways, Resistant Materials or Graphic Products. They cannot study both.

Both pathways follow the same GCSE specification and are divided into two components: Examination and non-examination assessment (NEA).

The examination component covers a broad range of topics such as new and emerging technologies, developments in new materials, mechanical devices, designers and their work and materials and their working properties. Students will study the material area linked to their chosen pathway in depth.

The NEA component involves the students in the completion of two design and make projects; a practice NEA in Year 10 and the NEA in Year 11. These projects focus on either resistant materials or graphic products, depending on the pathway chosen. Resistant materials projects are largely made in the workshop, using timber-based materials. Graphic product projects are largely made in the design studio using papers and boards. Students are also encouraged to work with a broad range of other materials including metals, plastics, textiles and more. Both pathways require students to use their imagination and experiment, communicating design ideas and decisions using different media and techniques. Students will develop a broad knowledge of materials and high-quality practical skills through the design and manufacture of quality functional prototypes.

Assessment:

Examination: 50% of GCSE

Written paper: 2 hours (100 marks)

- Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)
A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.
- Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)
Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response (8 marks) to assess a more in-depth knowledge of the specialist material area.
- Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)
A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.

NEA (Non-exam assessment): 50% of GCSE

Substantial design and make task: 30–35 hours (100 marks)

Students will produce a design folio and a functional prototype.

Assessment criteria:

- Identifying and investigating design possibilities
- Producing a design brief and specification
- Generating design ideas
- Developing design ideas
- Realising design ideas
- Analysing & evaluating

Careers:

Creative problem solving, project management and attention to detail are skills for life that could be applied to any career path. More obvious careers include: architecture, engineering, set design, packaging design, furniture design, interior design, film, TV and advertising, illustration, marketing, product design, design management.

Drama

Examination Board: AQA 8261

Course Content:

An intrinsically enriching subject, Drama at GCSE develops the following skills: creative thinking, analysis and critical evaluation, self-discipline, organisation and planning, presentation skills, research skills, teamwork, and the ability to work to a deadline. Students also build their confidence. The GCSE course builds on existing performance skills and introduces new techniques and styles.

Component 1: Understanding Drama

- Study of **one** set play from a choice of **six**
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

Component 2: Devising Drama

- Performance of **one** piece of devised drama (students may contribute as performer or designer)
- Analysis and evaluation of own work

Component 3: Texts in Practice

- Performance of **two** extracts from **one** play
- Students may contribute as performer or designer
- Free choice of play

For practical components, you can work as a performer (actor) or explore an area of theatrical design:

- Lighting
- Sound
- Set
- Costume
- Puppetry.

Assessment:

Practical work is worth 60% of the final mark and comprises components 2 and 3 (above). You are marked individually on preparation/process and final performance.

Written exam worth 40% of the marks. Component 1 (above).

The written paper comprises three sections:

Section A – Theatre roles and terminology (multiple choice)

Section B – Study of a set text (from a choice of six)

Section C – Study of a live theatre production

Careers:

The skills developed through the study of Drama lead into careers in performance, theatre, arts administration; careers based on people skills and interacting with others, such as personnel or social work and careers associated with presentation skills such as marketing, media and law. Drama will broaden your skill set and give you the ability to hold yourself with confidence in many different settings.

Geography

Examination Board: AQA 8035

Course Content:

The course examines the rich diversity of physical and human environments found in the world, the processes and factors which shape them and the issues that arise within them. The interrelationships between different environments are studied at a variety of scales from global to local.

There are three taught units:

Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment. There are three sections to this paper:

- a) Natural Hazards - tectonic and meteorological hazards
- b) Physical Landscapes - the physical landscape of the UK, rivers and coasts
- c) The Living World - ecosystems, tropical rainforests and cold environments

Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment. There are three sections to this paper:

- a) Urban issues and challenges – the causes and consequences of urban growth in different countries and ways to manage this
- b) The Changing Economic World – global developmental issues and the economy of the UK
- c) Resource Management – issues surrounding the supply and demand of food, water and energy

Paper 3: Geographical Applications. There are two sections to this paper:

- a) Issues evaluation – questions based on a resource booklet that is released 12 weeks before the exam
- b) Fieldwork – questions about two geographical investigations undertaken over the course of two years.

Assessment:

Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment. 1 hour 30 minutes. 35% of the GCSE.

The paper is split into three sections. Candidates answer all the questions in Section A and Section B and two out of three questions in Section C. Question types include: multiple choice, short answers and extended prose. There are no essay-based questions.

Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment. 1 hour 30 minutes. 35% of the GCSE. The paper is split into three sections. Candidates answer all the questions in Sections A and B and two out of four questions in Section C. Question types include: multiple choice, short answers and extended prose. There are no essay-based questions.

Paper 3: Geographical Applications. 1 hour and 30 minutes. 30% of GCSE.

Candidates will answer all the questions on this paper. Question types include: multiple choice, short answers and extended prose. There are no essay-based questions.

Careers:

Geography is a broad-based academic subject which will open up options for you in your future. Employers and universities see geography as a robust academic subject rich in skills, knowledge and understanding. Geography incorporates and combines elements of both Arts and Sciences. Wide ranging content and skills provide varied and flexible career options. Common destinations include Law, Medicine, Banking and Finance, Accountancy, business, journalism, international development, Engineering, tourism, planning, conservation, the civil service, academic research and geoscience.

History

Examination Board: AQA GCSE History 8415

Course Content:

1. **Russia, 1894–1945: Tsardom and communism.** This period study focuses on the development of Russia during a turbulent half century of change. It was a period of autocracy and communism – the fall of the Tsardom and the rise and consolidation of communism. Students will study the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of these two developments and the role ideas played in influencing change. They will also look at the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and the impact the developments had on them.
2. **Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972.** This wider world depth study enables students to understand the complex and diverse interests of different states and individuals and the ideologies they represented. It considers revolutionary movements during this time. It focuses on the causes and events of the Cold War and seeks to show how and why conflict occurred and why it proved difficult to resolve the tensions which arose during the Cold War. This study also considers the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and how they were affected by and influenced international relations.
3. **Restoration England, 1660-1685.** This option allows students to study in depth the restoration of the monarchy. The study will focus on the major aspects of Charles II's reign considered from economic, religious, political, social and cultural standpoints of this period and arising contemporary and historical controversies. Included within this unit is the study of the historic environment of Restoration England. The site will relate to the content of the rest of this depth study. It is intended that study of different historic environments will enrich students' understanding of Restoration England. There will be a visit to the historic environment site if possible, or otherwise we will undertake a tour of Restoration London.
4. **Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day.** This thematic study will enable students to gain an understanding of how the identity of the people of Britain has been shaped by their interaction with the wider world. It will consider invasions and conquests. It will also study the country's relationship with Europe and the wider world. It will consider the ebb and flow of peoples into and out of Britain and evaluate their motives and achievements. It considers the causes, impact and legacy of Empire upon the ruled and the ruling in the context of Britain's acquisition and retreat from Empire.

Assessment:

Paper 1- Understanding the modern world: 2 hours (50%). Section A will assess the Russia unit. Section B will assess the Cold War unit. Both sections will include both content and source questions.

Paper 2: 2 hours (50%). Section A will assess the migration, empire and the people unit. Section B will assess the Restoration England and the historic environment unit.

Careers:

History teaches you skills, such as research and the analysis and evaluation of evidence and the construction of arguments, which are widely respected by many different employers. As a result, History provides a route into a wide range of careers, including law, accountancy, business management and the media, the civil service, government, heritage management, journalism and many more. **History is often a desired or sometimes compulsory subject for Law, PPE, Politics, International Relations and English courses at University.**

Examination Board: OCR J282

Course Content

Language:

The GCSE course builds on the work we have done at KS3. You will meet new grammatical forms and sentence structures and gain a deeper appreciation of the wonderful logic and elegance of the Latin language. We use our expanding knowledge to translate stories about some of the most famous aspects of Roman history, including the early Kings of Rome, the Punic Wars (during which Hannibal marched his army and 37 war elephants across the Alps to attack Rome), and the Roman Emperors. You begin this course in a strong position: there is a fixed vocabulary list of 450 words which can come up in the GCSE exam, and you will have met nearly half of this list by the end of Year 9.

Literature:

We will study three fantastic pieces of original Latin literature with wide-ranging subject matter:

Verse literature: excerpts from Virgil, Aeneid, II: Have you ever wondered why the Trojans took that big, suspicious-looking wooden horse into their city? The Aeneid is considered by many to be the crowning glory of Latin literature. For GCSE we will read an action-packed and highly dramatic part of the poem in which one Trojan, Laocoön, warns against accepting the horse. The gruesome fate which immediately befalls him – surely a sign from the gods – helps to seal the fate of those trusting Trojans.

Prose literature: excerpts from Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights and Pliny, Letters: In this unit we will study the fable of 'Androclus and the Lion' and also the true story of a very friendly dolphin in North Africa. Besides the engaging subject matter there is much of interest here: the first story is set at the Colosseum in Rome, the very heart of the Roman empire, while the second takes us to the edge of the empire and gives us an insight into life in a Roman province.

In some ways this aspect of the course is similar to English literature, however there is a tight focus, studying approximately 220 lines of text in total, and we will see that Latin can create some literary effects which are not possible in English. The assessment of these papers includes translation and comprehension questions as well as literary analysis. Because these texts are studied in advance, it is possible to be very well prepared.

Culture:

Classics is the study of all aspects of the Greek and Roman world, including its history, art, archaeology, religions and cultural legacy. Throughout the course there will be opportunities for more in-depth discussion of these elements to further our understanding of the topics at hand. A trip to Bath and a trip to Rome is planned to take place during your GCSE course, and we also seek to attend other events such as museum exhibitions and productions of classical theatre.

Assessment:

The course is assessed by three papers.

Paper 1 – Language: the majority of this paper consists of translation and comprehension of stories from Latin into English. There is also a further short section in which students have a choice either (i) to translate some simple sentences from English into Latin, or (ii) to spot elements of grammar (such as an accusative or an infinitive) in a Latin passage. (50%)

Paper 2 – Verse Literature: translation, comprehension and analysis questions (25%)

Paper 3 – Prose Literature: translation, comprehension and analysis questions (25%)

Careers:

GCSE Latin is highly regarded by universities and will stand out on your CV. Students of Latin develop attention to detail, logic, communication skills and cultural insight. These qualities of intelligence and versatility are highly valued by employers. In science and technology, besides the grounding in technical terminology which Latin provides, Latin demonstrates your ability to synthesise complex information, solve problems and work with precision. Silicon Valley has also noted the parallels between the skills needed for Latin and those needed for computer coding. In law and business, Latin develops your capacity to make, understand and articulate nuanced points and to form and analyse written arguments. The literary and cultural aspects of Latin GCSE provide a key knowledge base for further studies or careers in the humanities or creative arts. Students who take Latin GCSE go on to study many different subjects at university, including Medicine, Dentistry, Maths, Law, History, English and Classics.

Examination Board: Eduqas

Component 1: Performing (30%)

- Candidates must perform a minimum of two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance in which they perform in an ensemble role for at least 60 seconds.
- The other piece(s) may be either solo and/or ensemble.
- The total duration of all performances must be at least four minutes.
- One of the pieces performed must link to an Area of Study of the student's choice (see below for details of these).
- Non-exam assessment; performances are internally marked by department staff and externally moderated by Eduqas.

Component 2: Composing (30%)

- Total duration of compositions: 3–6 minutes.
- Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief set by WJEC at the start of Year 11. Students will choose one brief from a choice of four, each one linked to a different Area of Study.
- The second composition is a free composition for which students set their own brief.
- The two pieces in combination must last a minimum of three minutes.
- Non-exam assessment; compositions are internally marked by department staff and externally moderated by Eduqas.

Component 3: Appraising (40%)

- Candidates study a wide variety of music across four areas:
 - Area of Study 1: Musical Forms and Devices (Baroque, Classical and Romantic music)
 - Area of Study 2: Music for Ensemble (Blues, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Chamber Music, etc.)
 - Area of Study 3: Film Music
 - Area of Study 4: Popular Music (Pop, Rock, Soul, Reggae, Hip Hop, Bhangra, fusions)
- There are two set works, set by Eduqas:
 - **JS Bach:** *Badinerie*
 - **Toto:** *Africa*
- This component is externally assessed via a listening exam, 1 hour 15 minutes long.
 - There are eight questions in total: two on each of the four Areas of Study.
 - Two of the eight questions are based on the set works; the other six are on pieces of unfamiliar music related to each Area of Study.

Assessment:

Composing and Performing are both assessed internally as controlled assessment and externally moderated. The listening paper is assessed externally in an examination.

Requirements:

By the start of Year 11, students opting for Music must be a minimum of ABRSM Grade 4 in their first study instrument, or voice, and should ideally have passed ABRSM grade 5 theory, or be about to take it. It is compulsory for GCSE Music students to take part in at least one school co-curricular musical activity for the whole two years unless special permission is obtained. Students who study the piano but not an orchestral instrument are expected to participate in the Senior Choir, which rehearses after school on Wednesdays, or one of the other vocal ensembles offered by the department such as the Percussion Ensemble.

Careers:

GCSE Music is a highly regarded qualification for university courses and a good foundation for A-Level Music; students taking GCSE Music often go on to study A-Level Music during Sixth Form. It is notable that you can study Music at virtually all of the Russell Group universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Music helps students develop a wide range of skills, particularly in independent research and analysis which will be of great value in the study of any subject at university and indeed in any career path. As an example, recent KS5 Music students have gone on to read Maths, Medicine, Physics, Architecture, Modern Languages, Law and History of Art at Oxbridge and leading Russell Group universities. Subsequently, their careers have included Medicine, Law, Accountancy, Engineering as well as working in the creative and music industries. There is also a strong history of students securing places to read Music at universities and conservatoires; several have gone on to obtain first class degrees from Oxbridge, with many also being awarded choral or instrumental scholarships.

Physical Education

Examination Board: Edexcel 1PE0

The PE GCSE course builds on existing practical performance skills whilst offering students the opportunity to learn new theory content surrounding the 'fitness and body systems' and 'health and performance'. Students further develop their research skills, communication, self-discipline, organisation and planning, presentation skills and teamwork. The mix between practical, theory and coursework content ensures lessons are stimulating and helps build on students' knowledge in other subject areas such as maths and biology.

- **Component 1: Fitness and Body Systems**

- Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology

- Topic 2: Movement analysis

- Topic 3: Physical Training

- Topic 4: Use of Data

- **Component 2: Health and Performance**

- Topic 1: Health, fitness and well-being

- Topic 2: Sport psychology

- Topic 3: Socio-cultural influences

- Topic 4: Use of Data

- **Component 3: Practical Performance**

Students need to choose three activities in total and you will need to perform three different physical activities, in the role of player/performance. You can choose either:

- **Two** team activities and **one** individual activity, **or**
- **Two** individual activities and **one** team activity.

Students can choose whether they wish to participate in activities in or outside of school. Please collect a list of eligible sports from Miss Boiling.

- **Component 4: Personal Exercise Programme (PEP)**

This is the only coursework aspect of the course which is completed during lesson time.

Assessment:

Component 1: Examination (80 marks – 1 hour 30mins)

C1 is externally assessed through one written examination paper. This will contribute a maximum of 36% towards your total marks.

Component 2: Examination (60 marks – 1 hour 15 mins)

C2 is externally assessed through one written examination paper. This will contribute a maximum of 24% towards your total marks.

Component 3 and 4:

C3: Three practical performances in the role of the player. You can achieve 30% of the marks from your three performances. This is moderated on a moderation day in your final year of assessment and through video evidence.

C4: Personal Exercise Programme. This will be worth 10% of the marks and includes devising a training programme to improve two elements of fitness.

Careers:

With the shift of focus in the assessed GCSE to a theoretical understanding of Sport and Sports Performance, the PE GCSE is becoming increasingly well regarded by university institutions as a subject which supports a number of other curriculum areas and careers. Such as careers in science, medicine, sports psychology, data science, leadership, project management, sport science, sport rehabilitation and physiotherapy. The PE GCSE is also well regarded for its development of key academic skills necessary for independent study such as research methodology, analytical thinking, and investigative work.

It should not be overlooked that the sports industry is one of the largest in the world with careers in sport, engineering, health and wellbeing increasing in funding and prominence. Also, a growing media coverage of key social issues such as obesity, health and drugs in sport make it a very relevant and topical subject to study in the modern 21st century.

Religious Studies

Examination Board: AQA 8062/3

Course Content:

Module 1: The Study of Religions

Students will study **Christianity** and **Judaism**. They will learn about the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies. These will include the nature of God, worship and festivals, key beliefs specific to each religion and how these may impact on people's lives.

Module 2:

There are FOUR themes covered in this module.

1. The first deals with **Crime and Punishment** and focuses on the causes of crime and subsequent types of punishment. Arguments are raised about the treatment of criminals including prison, corporal punishment, community service and the death penalty.
2. The second theme is **Existence of God and Revelation** and includes arguments for God's existence, such as the Design and Cosmological Arguments.
3. **Religion, peace and conflict** is the third topic. The students will explore beliefs and attitudes about the significance of peace, justice and forgiveness, and the reasons for 21st century conflict.
4. The last topic is **Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice** and includes attitudes to wealth and poverty in society.

Assessment:

Both modules are assessed by a written paper of one and three quarter hours. Each module is worth 50% of the final marks.

Careers:

This course is a solid foundation for A levels and degree courses which students can enjoy whether or not they have a religious faith. The subject provides a valuable background for many careers in which you have to deal with people- e.g the legal profession, journalism, management and teaching. Those students considering medicine will benefit from a grounding in the study of medical ethics that are covered in this GCSE.

Notes