



BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

GCSE SUBJECT CHOICES 2024

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Specification Details

This booklet is intended to help pupils entering the Lower Fourth (Year 9) and their parents to make sensible decisions about their choice of subjects for GCSE. We hope that it contains enough information to start thinking about these choices. There will be opportunities at the GCSE Course Information Morning on **Saturday 9th March** to ask further questions and obtain advice, both about courses in general and about individual pupil's needs.

THE GCSE COURSE

The GCSE course at Bromsgrove covers the three years of the Lower and Upper Fourth and the Fifth Form (Years 9, 10 & 11)

The GCSE Curriculum

The three year GCSE programme that our Lower Fourth (Year 9) students will embark upon in September will have a depth of academic rigour, whilst retaining a large element of student choice and flexibility between and within various subject areas.

All students will work towards qualifications in English Language and English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics (as stand-alone separate or a combined dual award). Pupils will also take at least one language and at least one of History, Geography, Classical Civilisation or Religious Studies. Beyond these subjects, students have two further options which may be used to take creative subjects or weight their overall programme of studies further to the humanities or languages. Pupils also undertake two lessons a week in non-examined Health and Movement and one in PSHE.

The following table gives a tabular visualisation of the subjects to be studied:

Mathematics	English	Sciences	Humanities	Languages	Arts & Other Options
Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory	Plus choose one of:	Choose one of:	Choose two of:
Mathematics	English Language	Biology	Geography	French	Art or Textiles or Photography
(1)	English Literature	Chemistry	History	German	Design Technology
(# of GCSEs)	(2)	Physics	Religious Studies	Spanish	Drama
		(2/3)	Classical Civilisation	Beginners Spanish	Music
			(1)	Beginners German	Computer Science
				EAL	Business
				(1)	Classical Civilisation
					Latin
					Physical Education
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					Religious Studies
					(2)

ADVICE ON HOW TO MAKE GCSE CHOICES and CAREERS ISSUES

In choosing your subjects to go along with English, Mathematics, a Modern Language, the Sciences and Religious Studies, Classical Civilisation, History or Geography, you are able to choose subjects that will suit you. Your abilities, interests and career hopes should be considered to give you a balanced and appropriate programme.

You will want to choose subjects in which you are fairly successful. Your class and subject teachers will be able to tell you what the requirements are for the various subjects, and guide you on how easy or difficult you will find them. You will also naturally gravitate towards subjects you think you will enjoy.

Do not close off future options at this relatively early stage in your schooling. If you have career ambitions which require the study of certain subjects, you must bear this in mind. What you choose now does affect later choices in education; most IB or AS level courses expect the subject to have been passed at GCSE, but IB or A level Economics, Politics, Business Studies, History, Geography and Drama and Theatre Studies do not. It is necessary, however, to check with the department about particular skills which may be required.

1. Very few careers are now open to pupils who achieve only GCSE qualifications, and many professions which used to accept post-Sixth Form entrants are now requiring degrees. A degree-level qualification is now the norm.
2. Medicine and veterinary science usually require very high grades at GCSE, followed by very high grades in the IB or A level for acceptance at university. These are increasingly careers only for the very able pupils, and it is wrong to encourage the average pupil, no matter how great their interest, into thinking that they will automatically be successful. Credible candidates need at the least the strongest of science and maths backgrounds.
3. Physics and Mathematics in the Sixth Form are essential for engineering. Design Technology is a useful, though not essential, additional subject to consider.
4. Careers in accountancy, law, banking and a number of others do not demand specific subjects (apart from English and Mathematics) at GCSE level. However, history or literary interests are obviously a help in law, and geography may be a help in chartered surveying. In the same way, business studies will be a useful subject for would-be accountants.
5. Where people are set on their future path, choices should be well focused – potential future linguists should take two languages, anyone set on history at university must take history, and so on.
6. Leaving out certain subjects can close doors to certain careers, though the choice we offer makes this quite difficult. The Careers Department will advise on particular situations.

Careers information and guidance features prominently in the Fifth Form, and tests of aptitude and interest are administered (for those who desire to take them) at the end of the Upper Fourth year. A report is written on the results of these, and this, together with the School's assessment of the academic prospects of individual pupils, forms a basis for discussions with Houseparents and careers staff about what to do after GCSEs.

Once a student is in the Sixth Form, the range of options has narrowed. For anyone in doubt as to his or her future, further careers tests and interviews may be requested. There is a structured programme throughout the Lower Sixth year giving extensive advice on the admissions procedures to both UK and international universities. This is provided on both a group and an individual basis.

Choices should be submitted by Friday 15th March 2024. These will be made via a Survey Monkey link that will be sent out following the Choice Information Morning on the 9th March. If you change your mind later, please let us know immediately. Timetabling for next year is done in April, and we may not be able to accommodate requests for certain changes after this has been done.

Choices will have to fit the timetable, and this may impose constraints for a very few pupils with unusual choices.

THE COMPULSORY CORE SUBJECTS

MATHEMATICS

Like most leading independent schools, our Mathematics Department follows Edexcel's International GCSE (IGCSE) course rather than the traditional GCSE course. The IGCSE is a strong preparation for study of Mathematics in the Sixth Form as it concentrates to a greater extent on algebraic topics and less on contextualised problems and some more obscure areas of statistics.

At Bromsgrove, it is usual that pupils study for the Higher Tier paper; however, where the Foundation tier is better suited, we prepare pupils for that examination. The top set also tackles an Additional Mathematics qualification. The nature of all Mathematics courses is to stretch pupils by developing a deep understanding of material they have covered. We set pupils so they can aim for their best possible grade; some pupils in lower sets stand a better chance of a good grade by ensuring that they fully understand the material they have met, rather than rushing through the hardest material in order to achieve full coverage. Considerable care is taken to ensure that pupils are placed in their correct set - that is, the set in which the Mathematics will be challenging but within their scope.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Bromsgrovians study Edexcel IGCSE English Language (4EA1) and Edexcel IGCSE English Literature (4ET1) courses, qualifications which are complementary but lead to separate awards.

Designed for students with English as their first language, IGCSE English Language develops the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively in both writing and speech. Students learn to employ a wide-ranging vocabulary, using correct grammar, spelling and a variety of punctuation, and adapting the tone and style of their writing to suit different purposes and engage their readers. The syllabus also develops textual analysis skills such as interpretation, synthesis, inference and evaluation. Students will produce a piece of imaginative writing and a poetry/prose comparison for coursework. In their exam they will be asked to analyse and compare two passages of non-fiction and produce a piece of 'transactional writing', for example a speech, a letter, an article, or an information text.

For their IGCSE English Literature course, students will study a variety of texts in depth, exploring the techniques writers use to present key themes and characters, as well as the significance of the texts' historical contexts and key features of the relevant literary genre. Students will produce two pieces of coursework, one on pre-20th century 'literary heritage' text, and one on a modern play. They will then sit one final exam paper testing their knowledge of a 20th century novel, two poems from the Edexcel IGCSE Anthology and a response to an unseen poem.

Whilst it is not particularly beneficial to have read the set texts in advance, reading widely and observantly beyond the confines of the syllabus remains essential. This will develop students' confidence with interpreting language and enhance their own powers of expression, and should be considered a prerequisite for those aspiring to the highest grades.

BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

Each of these subjects places considerable emphasis on the practical side of science and its relation to the world in which we live. Practical skills are assessed for the GCSE courses within the terminal exams.

Strong scientists, many of whom will be hoping to take at least one of the subjects further, will take Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate triple award qualifications. The stand-alone qualification in each of the Sciences sees them studied in both significant depth and breadth. However, where students need more time to reflect upon the core of each specification, they will work towards a combined science qualification - this is equivalent to two GCSE qualifications. The AQA Combined Science (Trilogy) course ensures that, as a minimum, all of our pupils gain a very good grounding in each Science subject. High grades in the Combined Science award will provide sufficient preparation for those wishing to study Biology, Chemistry or Physics in the Sixth Form.

There is no requirement at this stage to choose whether to study the dual award or the three subjects as standalone subjects; this will be decided based on attainment and progress during the Lower Fourth.

HUMANITIES

Choose at least one of :

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(Ethics, Philosophy and World Faiths)

The aim of Religious Studies is to encourage students to develop their personal perspectives on life. The course explores religious and non-religious beliefs with a focus upon Buddhism, Christianity and Secular (non-religious) worldviews. Students develop the ability to construct well-reasoned, well-informed, balanced and structured argument reflecting upon their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt. Thus a GCSE in Religious Studies provides a rigorous academic programme of skills, laying the foundation for a broad range of future academic choice. The subject matter offers a unique study of the world that will provide a grounding for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community.

The course consists of two areas of study:

Component 1: The study of religions: Buddhism and Christianity

In these units, for each religion, students will explore core beliefs, authority, worship, festivals, and pilgrimage. The role and influence of religion in the lives of individuals, communities and the wider world.

Component 2: Thematic studies: Ethics and Philosophy

In these units, students will explore issues surrounding ethical and philosophical debates in:

1. Relationships and families – Attitudes to marriage, family, gender roles, sexuality, LGBT rights
2. Religion and life – Abortion, euthanasia Animal Rights, Environmental ethics, origins of the universe
3. The existence of God - Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, miracles, revelation, religious experience
4. Religion, peace and conflict – Protest, violence, terrorism, Just War, WMD's, pacifism, peace-making and the role of internationalism and the role of religion and belief in 21st century conflict.
5. Religion, crime and punishment - Justice and freedom, the causes of crime, the aim of punishment, types of punishment, death penalty, corporal punishment.
6. Human Rights and Social Justice – What are human rights?, the role of the UN, prejudice, racism, wealth, poverty.

Or

GEOGRAPHY

At GCSE, Geography aims to promote a lifelong interest in place: the location of places; what they are like; what challenges and opportunities there are; and what it is like to live there. It is concerned with why places are changing and why there are arguments about the use we make of them. In the GCSE course leading to the AQA examination, pupils will learn facts and processes from a range of places. They will develop the ability to use this information to analyse issues and write coherent pieces of extended writing.

This will be supported by the development of a range of numeric, literary, map and graphical skills. This will allow pupils to confidently interpret and analyse a wide range of data sources, from OS maps and sketch maps to aerial photographs and technical text. Decision making is encouraged, with pupils getting the opportunity to debate and discuss their ideas. This will see them develop key teamwork skills as well as the ability to reach their own independent conclusions.

Field work is an integral part of the GCSE. In the Lower Fourth students carry out an investigation into a local ecosystem, practicing teamwork and geographical investigation skills. The Upper Fourth students conduct a river investigation in the Carding Mill Valley, Shropshire, with the Fifth Form students visiting Longbridge to investigate economic change. There is also an optional biennial trip to Sicily to study tectonic hazards, in particular volcanoes.

The course alternates between Human and Physical Geography topics. Human topics consider themes such as urban issues and the impacts of economic factors on the environment, whilst Physical topics consider tectonic and weather hazards, ecosystems as well as the physical landscapes in the UK.

Or

HISTORY

History IGCSE aims to promote a lasting interest in the past and to develop a wide range of analytical skills. These include the ability to select, use and evaluate evidence and to understand the full meaning of a range of historical ideas.

The Edexcel specification covers a wide range of topics. For the historical investigation students will study USA from 1918 to 1941. This will look at the social and economic history of the US, spanning from the roaring 1920s through to the issues of the Great Depression in the 1930s, as well as assessing the validity of terms of recovery and crash. Students will then return to the latter half of the century for the depth study which will run from 1943 to 1974. This course will focus much more heavily on the political and social struggles of the various civil rights movements but will also touch on the early McCarthy era and the later Johnson/Kennedy attempts to alleviate social inequality.

This will then be placed against the context of the international developments with the superpower relations course which will study the beginnings of the Cold War from 1945 as the Grand Alliance breaks down, through to its peaks in the late 1950s and early 1960s with Berlin and Cuba, before concluding the course in 1972 with a study of the detente period.

To provide a British perspective there will also be the breadth study on changes in medicine from 1848 to 1948, focusing on how advances in technology and understanding helped progress the effectiveness of modern healthcare. This will look at developments including the 'germ theory' which led to the early antiseptics, the development of anaesthetics and the subsequent attempts to enact changes in sanitation to a society that was not always receptive to change.

The assessment of the course is based 100% on two examinations, each one will be 1.5 hours each with two sections. The breakdown will be:

Paper 1: Superpower Relations 1943 – 72, A Divided Union USA 1945 – 74 (50% of the total marks)

Paper 2: USA 1918 – 41, Changes in Medicine 1848 – 1948 (50% of the total marks)

In all of the above, source material is reviewed and questioned, participation in discussions encouraged and the ability to write tightly argued and justified prose is practised.

Or

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

'Class Civ' is a fascinating subject, looking at ancient **Greece** and **Rome** in all its aspects and by many means: archaeological remains, works of art, and written documents in translation - both practical (letters, inscriptions) and literary (poems, histories, plays, philosophy). Accordingly, no knowledge of ancient languages is required to take this subject at GCSE.

The course offers a varied look at two major themes on the ancient world: 'Myth and Religion', where ancient Greek and Roman myths are understood in the context of their relevance to religious and political life in the ancient world, and 'Roman City Life', looking in-depth at the types of building, living conditions, social and political organisation, and 'daily life' in several cities of Roman Italy (Rome, Ostia, Pompeii & Herculaneum). Each topic is worth 50% of the final assessment, and each examined at the end of the course.

Cultural study is enhanced by surveying a combination of literary, visual and archaeological source material from a well-defined list for each topic. Therefore, pupils will build up their knowledge using anything from the timeless stories of mythology or Homer's epics to the daily minutiae of a letter of Pliny or detail of an inscription, from the image of a Greek statue or painting from Pompeii to the purpose and construction of buildings such as the Parthenon or Colosseum.

An interest in history, literature and the ancient world in general are strong recommendations. No knowledge of Greek or Latin is required, and pupils do not need to have studied the subject previously.

LANGUAGES - choose at least one of either:

French
German
Spanish
Beginners' Spanish
Beginners' German
English as an Additional Language

MODERN LANGUAGES

Courses in French, German and Spanish (for continuers or beginners in Spanish and German) aim to give pupils a high level of written and oral fluency. Spanish and German are offered in year 9 for both beginners and continuing pupils of these subjects. It should be stressed that the beginners' courses follow the same programme as the continuers. Pupils studying the languages are assessed in reading, writing, listening and speaking. These skills are developed through pupils taking an active part in lessons and experimenting with the language. For an authentic language experience, students are encouraged to participate in trips. We have a highly successful visit to Potsdam near Berlin as well as a study trip to Spain and an activities trip to France. Pupils are strongly encouraged to participate, and examination results have reflected this participation. The department is fortunate to be very well equipped and has the services of native languages assistants in all three languages. Pupils find (I)GCSE languages challenging but rewarding and, ultimately, increasingly useful in the world of education and business.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

All international pupils whose English level is below C1 (advanced) on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), study for IGCSE English as a Second Language, through a rigorous and challenging English course at advanced level.

The Cambridge International GCSE in English as a Second Language (ESL) is broadly equivalent to many of the benchmarks of Level B2 to C1 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Students at this level are expected to: understand the main ideas of complex text about both concrete and abstract topics; interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes interaction possible without strain; produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects; and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Students will be expected to communicate formally and informally in a range of contexts, and will also be expected to understand a wider range of texts, styles and registers than they can produce themselves. The aim of the Cambridge International GCSE in English as a Second Language (ESL) is to test English language competence through realistic and contextualised tasks based on authentic texts. Reading, writing and listening skills are tested through two examination papers. Speaking is tested through a face-to-face interview at School.

THE OPTION SUBJECTS - choose two

Art
Textiles
Photography
Business
Classical Civilisation
Computer Science
Design and Technology
Drama
English as an Additional Language
Geography
German
History
Latin
Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies

Details of each course can be found on the following pages.

For details about Languages and Geography/History/Religious Studies/Classical Civilisation see the core subject details on the previous pages.

ART and TEXTILES and PHOTOGRAPHY

There are three Art options at GCSE level. **GCSE Art** covers a range of both 2D and 3D media including painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and ceramics, photography, textiles, and site-specific art. **GCSE Textiles** allows pupils to focus on this area and specialises in surface pattern, dyed and screen printed techniques, machine and hand embroidery, and constructed textiles and sculptural work.

GCSE Photography teaches pupils how to take photographs and document the world around them using a camera. Techniques such as The Rule of Thirds, Cyanotype Photography and developing films in a dark room are also covered.

The courses are designed to provide engaging, challenging, coherent and meaningful learning experiences through a flexible structure that supports the sequential and incremental development of creative practice. Our rewarding and immersive programme of study broadens experience, develops imagination and technical skills, fosters creativity and promotes personal and social development. The focus of the specification is to nurture an enthusiasm for all the Arts.

Art, Craft & Design: Students are initially directed through teacher-led projects so that all experience an element of painting, drawing, printmaking, and 3D work. Photography is usually treated as an activity to enable pupils to amass a rich portfolio of techniques and methods. Interwoven with these disciplines is the critical, analytical, and contextual study or history of art component – essential for developing the understanding, procedures, influences and methodologies of artists. In the Fifth Form, pupils increasingly take greater ownership of their work and draw on their own cultural experiences, exhibiting an understanding of their strengths, limitations, and artistic interests. Students need to be able to articulate their ideas and opinions in a fluent and coherent way both verbally and visually. Sketchbooks are used to compile source material, experiences and to work through ideas and concepts. Final outcomes may take any number of forms. Coursework = 60% Exam = 40%.

Textiles: involves the creation, selection, and manipulation of textiles across a variety of practices. Embracing both traditional and contemporary technologies, a strong contextual element is also required as the work of textile artists, fashion designers and crafts people is explored. Natural and manufactured materials including paper, wire, tissue, plastics, recycled packaging, silk, wool, cotton, polyester and hessian are utilised. Disciplines include constructed textiles, digitally printed and sublimation dyed and screen-printed textiles, fine art textiles and fashion textiles. Pupils are required to work in one or more of these disciplines and although clearly not exclusively garment construction, many pupils take advantage of the qualified tailoring and pattern drafting expertise of Department staff. Coursework = 60% Exam = 40%.

Photography: Students who opt for a GCSE in Photography will be introduced to a variety of experiences that explore a range of photographic media, techniques, and processes. They will be made aware of both traditional and new technologies. The department is fully equipped with a darkroom and 35mm cameras. Students will explore relevant images, artefacts and resources relating to a range of photography, from the past and from recent times, including European and non-European examples. This should be integral to the investigating and making processes. Students' responses to these examples must be shown through practical and critical activities that demonstrate their understanding of different styles, genres, and traditions. Photography students will engage in the practical and theoretical implications of new platforms for making, viewing and distributing images, for example the change in the consumption of photographic images including the 'selfie' culture. Students will use sketchbooks/workbooks/journals to underpin their work. Adobe Photoshop to manipulate images will be covered, but students will also be expected to experiment and manipulate their images using traditional materials. Coursework 60% Exam 40%

Pupils may opt for only one of Art or Photography or Textiles.

BUSINESS

GCSE Business is an exciting and extremely relevant course with the focus on acquiring the necessary skills to aid decision making and problem solving. The harsh reality is that all of us will commence work at some point and knowledge of how organisations of all types are run and managed is a useful life skill. These skills are important whether you intend to run your own business or plan to play an important part in the management of another. Career aspirations in the traditional professions (Law, Accountancy etc) will be enhanced by the study of Business.

The course is based upon the four functional areas of a business (Marketing, Finance, Human Resources and Operations Management) as well as Business in the Real World and Influences on Business. The course looks at everything from entrepreneurs to large multinational companies. There is increasing consideration of the external environment in which all organisations operate, as well as exploration of the impact of globalisation upon a business. Within the course, a great emphasis is placed on pupil-based learning and the course is particularly suited to those prepared to offer their views and opinions about given scenarios. Both case studies and current business issues are used to develop understanding of theories and concepts. This is critical, as the external assessments will be based upon real business situations.

Assessment consists of two examinations which require students to use their knowledge and understanding of topics taught and to apply it to given business contexts. Students will need to display a range of skills including the calculation, interpretation, use and limitation of quantitative data and the analysis of qualitative data relevant to a business context to support, inform and justify their business decisions.

The increasing importance and relevance of Business is reflected in the wide range of Business courses on offer at university. If you have a genuine interest in current affairs and the way in which firms operate, the GCSE Business course offers an excellent introduction to the subject and a strong foundation for further study.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

The course gives learners an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. Learners will no doubt be familiar with the use of computers and other related technology from their other subjects and elsewhere. This course will give them an insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes'. Computer Science is all about how and why computers work and gaining the computational thinking skills required to successfully write your own computer programs.

The below gives an overview of the topics covered:

Unit J277/01: Computer systems (Written paper: 50% of total GCSE)

- Systems architecture
- Memory & Storage
- Networks, connections and protocols
- System software & System security
- Ethical, legal, cultural & environmental concerns

Unit J277/02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (Written paper: 50% of total GCSE)

- Algorithms
- Programming fundamentals
- Producing robust programs
- Boolean logic
- Programming languages and integrated development environments

Unit J277/03: Programming project

- Programming techniques
- Analysis, Design, Development, Testing, Evaluation of a solution.

The programming project will be completed in the Python programming language. While the project is not counted towards the final grade, it is an enjoyable part of the course, essential for developing your computational thinking and programming skills.

Students are likely to succeed if they have a clear logical mind, as indicated by both a strength and interest in Mathematics or the Sciences. No previous knowledge of programming is required.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology encourages learners to develop design and thinking skills that open up a world of possibility, giving them the tools to create the future. The subject excites and engages learners with contemporary topics seen in creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. It generates empathetic learners who have the ability to confidently critique products, situations and society in every walk of their lives now and in the future. Learners will be required to use critical thinking, leading towards invention and design innovation, to design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. Design and Technology is a subject that brings learning to life.

Within Design and Technology pupils learn how to use software such as Solidworks, and Techsoft 2D Design. They utilise Computer Aided Manufacture with cutting edge manufacturing capability including 3D printers, laser cutters and CNC machinery to realise their ideas. Pupils are taught by teachers with a wide range of experience in industry, design and engineering and learn about materials and manufacturing processes as well as design methodologies that deal with the real world.

The assessment's written exam brings together students' broad 'core' knowledge and understanding together with 'In-depth' knowledge of materials and manufacturing. A design paper also tests their ability to find workable solutions to problems they have not seen before. Coursework is completed in year 11 through a design portfolio and a prototype and this accounts for 50% of the final marks available.

The course not only provides pupils with the creative and dynamic skills needed for their GCSE but also sets them up to study Design and Technology at A level and in the IB. This can open up career paths in engineering, architecture, product design, and many other fields.

DRAMA

GCSE Drama allows pupils to foster creativity, personal growth, self-confidence, communication and analytical skills. It promotes involvement in and enjoyment of drama and theatre as performers, devisers, directors and designers. Students have the opportunity to study theatre texts from a literary and practical context, developing their skills as informed and thoughtful audience members.

Throughout the course, pupils have opportunities to participate in and interpret their own and others' drama. They investigate the forms, styles, and contexts of drama, learning to work collaboratively to develop ideas and the confidence to experiment with technical elements, as well as to reflect on their own and the performance of others. Drama allows pupils to explore not only their own ideas, but also social, cultural and historical themes through the medium of theatre and to develop effective and creative ways of communicating those themes and ideas to an audience.

Pupils will have the opportunity to learn not only how to become effective performers, but also an understanding of how key performance styles have developed over time and about the conventions, ideas and processes involved in creating effective and engaging theatre. Through the study of both published plays and devised pieces, students develop both naturalistic and non-naturalistic approaches to performance, using a range of forms and strategies. Various elements that affect the way themes and character are communicated to an audience, such as use of space, lighting and gesture are also reflected upon. Work is contextualised through the study of key theatre practitioners.

The course is assessed in three separate components: through the development of a practical devised piece based on a stimulus and subsequent research; students acting in two scenes from a published play; and a final written examination, which assesses knowledge and understanding of theatre practices, techniques, and live performance. In the two practical components the student can choose whether to be assessed as a performer or in a production design role (lighting designer, set designer, costume designer, set and prop designer, or puppet designer).

LATIN

Pupils intending to take this course need to have studied Latin in Year 8.

This valuable and academically rigorous course enables pupils to develop a real fluency and competence in reading Latin – both for its own sake as the linguistic foundation of many modern European ('Romance') languages and (far more excitingly!) as a major language with which to understand the life, history and culture of the ancient world.

The GCSE course enables students to understand and translate 'unprepared' Latin, as well as giving them the opportunity to read Roman authors' works in the original language. Paper 1 tests language, and comprises stories for translation and comprehension: all new language and vocabulary for the course are completed by Easter of year 10, affording plenty of time to practice reading and translating. Papers 2 and 3 are based on 'set authors' which change every few years. These usually include extracts from the 'epic' poetry of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the histories of Julius Caesar and Tacitus, or the more personal poetry of authors like Catullus, Horace or Ovid. These texts are studied in great depth in class throughout the course, and the exams ask questions on their content, interpretation and style.

The primary reason for studying Latin should be personal interest in both language and in the ancient world; though it is also widely acknowledged that Latin develops a wide range of skills, including:

- competence in the intricacies of Latin language
- a sensitive and analytical approach to language more generally
- literary and linguistic analysis
- historical and contextual awareness of language and literature
- ability to make an informed and critical personal response to ancient ('source') material in the original language
- awareness of the continuing influence of the classical world on modern culture

*Pupils can, if they wish, study just one **modern** language for GCSE. However, this can be supplemented with **German or Latin in the option block** to give them two **or even three** languages at GCSE, and experience has shown that two **or more** languages very much complement one another and mutually enhance progress*

MUSIC

GCSE Music shows universities and employers that you are creative, that you have the discipline required to learn an instrument and that you work well both individually and with others. Music is constantly evolving, inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. We know that every student has different learning styles and musical tastes, which is why this GCSE course values all music styles, skills and instruments. There are three component parts, which have been designed to enable candidates to enjoy and appreciate the benefits of this subject.

Understanding Music (40% of the total marks)

The only examined unit in the GCSE Music course is taken at the end of the Fifth Form, and regular 'active' listening exercises prepare students for this examination. Students learn how to listen perceptively to music through the study of a variety of styles, each of which can inform compositional ideas and performance skills:

Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices *

Baroque, Classical, Romantic periods / Binary, Ternary, Rondo, Minuet and Trio, Variations, Strophic forms

Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble

Jazz, Blues / Musical Theatre / Chamber Music

Area of study 3: Film Music

Area of study 4: Popular Music *

*Two of the eight questions are based on extracts set by Eduqas: JS Bach: *Badinerie* from Orchestral Suite in B minor, BWV1067 / Toto: *Africa* (1982)

Performing Music (30% of the total marks)

Many students come to GCSE Music as performers, where the majority of their practical music making exists. Two performances are prepared and recorded: the total playing time is a minimum of 4 minutes (maximum 6 minutes). The standard level is Grade 3 (any exam board). Each performance is marked on accuracy, technical control, interpretation and expression. The skills necessary for this component are mostly prepared in individual music lessons with specialist teachers, and by joining extra-curricular groups at school. These activities are strongly recommended in addition to taking Music at GCSE level.

Composing Music (30% of the total marks)

Students are required to compose two pieces of music. One of these will be written to a brief set by Eduqas which will refer to a specific context (ie audience/occasion); the other gives the candidate a free choice of style. Composing music requires knowledge of notation, a desire to learn about various styles of music, and the dedication to create and develop musical ideas. Successful compositions contain a balance of repetition and contrast, and evidence that the candidate understands the capabilities and qualities of the instruments being written for. Musical scores and recordings are produced using Musescore (notation programme) or Soundtrap (DAW) at School. The compositions must last a combined minimum time of three minutes, and for both compositions, students must provide a programme note/composition log.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GCSE Physical Education is an exciting and stimulating subject for those who love taking part in sport and physical activity. It is designed to allow candidates to extend their knowledge in a wide range of topics from the way our bodies work and respond to exercise to the pathways athletes can take to the Olympics and on to how our brains process information to help us learn new sports skills. These diverse fields of study are divided into three units:

Unit 1: Applied Anatomy, Physiology and Physical Training

Unit 2: Socio-cultural Factors, Sports Psychology, Health, Fitness and Well-being

Unit 3: Non-Examined Assessment (Practical Activity Assessment and Analysis of Performance written coursework)

Units 1 and 2 are each assessed through written exams at the end of the Fifth Form. Both papers are an hour long and comprise 30% of the final marks (60% altogether). The papers are a mixture of multiple-choice, short and longer answer questions. Unit 3 contributes 40% to the final mark. Candidates' performances will be assessed in their three strongest sports and will also complete an Analysis and Evaluation of Performance coursework assignment. This is an opportunity for candidates to allow their knowledge of their best sport to shine.

Practical assessment is on-going throughout the course and we tend to give candidates marks for a wide range of activities to allow us flexibility in maximising the scores of their final three sports. It is an advantage to be a strong performer, but it is certainly not a barrier to a high final grade if not.

SPECIFICATION DETAILS FOR EACH SUBJECT

SPECIFICATION TITLE	QUALIFICATION	EXAMINATION BOARD	SPECIFICATION CODE
Art, Craft & Design	GCSE	AQA	8201
Art (Textiles)	GCSE	AQA	8204
Art (Photography)	GCSE	AQA	8206
Biology*	GCSE	AQA	8461
Business	GCSE	AQA	8132
Chemistry*	IGCSE	EDEXCEL	4CH1
Classical Civilisation	GCSE	OCR	J199
Computer Science	GCSE	OCR	J277
Design & Technology	IGCSE	Cambridge	0979
Drama	GCSE	AQA	8261
English (First Language)	IGCSE	Edexcel	4EA1
English Literature	IGCSE	Edexcel	4ET1
English as a Second Language	IGCSE	Cambridge	0511
French	GCSE	Edexcel	1FR1
Geography	GCSE	AQA	8035
German	GCSE	Edexcel	1GN0
History	IGCSE	Edexcel	4HI1
Latin	GCSE	OCR	J282
Mathematics (Specification A)	IGCSE	Edexcel	4MA1
Additional Maths	FSMQ	OCR	6993
Music	GCSE	EDUQAS	C660QS
Physical Education	GCSE	OCR	J587
Physics*	GCSE	AQA	8463
Religious Studies (Specification A)	GCSE	AQA	8062
Combined Science: Trilogy*	GCSE	AQA	8464
Spanish	IGCSE	Edexcel	4SP1

* All pupils will study the AQA Combined Science: 'Trilogy' course in the Lower Fourth. Pupils may progress to specialise in the separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics (I)GCSE courses during the Upper Fourth, where assessment data supports this.

*German pupils would be expected to study triple award science to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Abitur, if intending on pursuing higher education in Germany.