

# GCSE Options Booklet

## 2026-27



Dream Big. Work Hard. Be Kind.



# The Cooper School - GCSE Provision

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# Introduction



Across Key Stage 4, we offer students a broad, balanced and relevant programme of study which will be valued by Post-16 education providers and employers.

## THE CORE SUBJECTS

All students take these subjects to full course GCSE level:

- English - double certificate in Language and Literature (2 GCSEs)
- Mathematics
- RE
- Science:
  - Separate Science (3 separate GCSEs)
  - **or** Combined Science (a double qualification equivalent to 2 GCSEs).
  - Both routes involve studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

All students will also follow programmes of study in these core subjects:

- Physical Education (no examinations unless GCSE is chosen)
- Personal development (no examinations)

## ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS

Students are given the opportunity to express preferences for four additional subjects, one of which must be History or Geography (or students can choose both). Students must indicate their choices via the TOOLS online system after the Year 9 PCE on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February. Students have practised how to do this in school already and login details will be reshared nearer the time. The deadline for completion is **Monday 9th March 2026**.

**We try to offer students their first choices but this is not always possible.** Students are therefore asked to pick two reserve subjects.

Subject teachers, your child's PDM and the ACE team will all be talking about GCSE subject choices over the coming weeks and on **Thursday 26th February 2026** there is a virtual Progress Consultation Evening, at which further discussions can take place with individual subject teachers.

We hope this booklet will help Year 9 students to prepare wisely for the next two years.

# Key Dates



Date	EVENT
<b>January</b>	Throughout January, Options subject teachers will speak about their KS4 courses during timetabled lessons. For “new” subjects (eg Business and Sociology), resources will be shared with students to help them research these courses and decide if they are the right choice for them
<b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Students complete a <b>practice run</b> so that we can see where we may need to consider adjustments to numbers of classes and staffing.
<b>Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Year 9 Options booklet to be shared with students and parents
<b>w/b 9<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Year 9 reports to be sent home
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Year 9 Progress Consultation Evening (online)
<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February</b>	TOOLS open for students to complete final choices
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Deadline for submitting Option choices

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to read the subject information pages in this booklet and to attend the Year 9 Progress Consultation Evening on 26th February to gather as much information and advice as possible.





# A Broad Curriculum

The Government has announced that, following the recent Curriculum and Assessment Review recommendations, it will be scrapping the current “English Baccalureate” measure in favour of promoting the value of students choosing a broader range of subjects.

Although these new rules are not yet statutory, it is worth considering these recommendations when your son or daughter chooses their GCSE subjects as the intention is to make sure that children do not narrow their focus too early.

The new requirements (from 2028) will be that students will be expected to choose from ‘breadth slots’, which must include 2 subjects from the following 3 categories:

- Humanities
- Creative subjects
- Languages

Our curriculum offer has always been based around ensuring that students at The Cooper School have access to a broad, balanced and relevant selection of qualifications, which will enable them to pursue their interests and keep doors to further educational opportunities and employment open.

We would therefore strongly recommend that they choose a broad range of subjects from different categories including recognising the benefit of studying a language.

There is a recognised link between studying languages and greater opportunities in further education, as well as an increased likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education.

All students who wish to study a language will be allowed to do so and we therefore strongly recommend students should consider choosing one.

The next page shows the subjects on offer and the different subject category that they fall into.



# GCSE Choices

All Students will complete courses in the Core Subjects:

- English (Language and Literature)
- Maths
- Science (Separate or Combined)
- RE
- Personal Development (no exams)
- PE (no exams unless choosing GCSE)

**Students will then select four further subjects from anywhere in this table but one must be History or Geography**

<b>Arts</b> (pick a maximum of one)	<b>Design Technology</b>	<b>Languages</b> (must have previously studied)	<b>Humanities</b> (pick at least one)	<b>Other</b>
Art	Design & Technology	French	History	Business Studies
Photography	Food & Nutrition	Spanish	Geography	Computer Science
Textiles				Sociology
	<b>Performing Arts</b>			PE
	Drama			

## Reserve Choices

It is unfortunately often the case that, because of staffing, timetabling or the number of students opting for a subject, we are not able to allocate students all four of their choices so we ask them to make two reserve choices.

## Subject restrictions

Only one Art subject (Art, Photography or Textiles) can be taken as these are technically the same GCSE, just variations within the subject.

# Frequently Asked Questions



## **Can students take two languages?**

Any students who are native speakers of a Modern Foreign Language and who wish to complete a GCSE in the subject without selecting it as an option should contact the languages department and our Exams Officer, Mrs Tallis: [exams@thecooperschool.co.uk](mailto:exams@thecooperschool.co.uk)

## **Can students study a language they have not previously studied?**

The short answer here is, unfortunately not. If they have studied French up to this point, they cannot now switch to Spanish and vice versa.

## **Can students select two Humanities?**

Yes, students can select both History and Geography

## **Can students select two Art GCSEs?**

Unfortunately students cannot take more than one of Art, Photography or Textiles GCSEs as each of these subjects counts as the same GCSE.

## **What about Separate or Combined Science?**

The Science department will be sharing information with students in lessons about the two possible routes for science qualifications. Students will be asked to express their preference as part of the Options process.

## **What happens if a student changes their mind about studying a subject?**

If this happens during Year 9, students should contact Mrs McMillan to discuss their decision and to review whether or not there are spaces available for the requested change(s). For a few weeks at the start of Year 10 students *may* also be able to request changes whilst there would remain time to catch up on any missed work in the new subject. Changes at this point will be more limited by timetable constraints, but where possible we will look to support any requests. Parents will be consulted before any change is finalised.

# Frequently Asked Questions



## **Why do I have to pick reserve subjects?**

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate your first choices, this is not always possible due to:

- The number of staff available to teach a subject
- Too many students choosing to do the same course
- Not enough students opting to do a course
- Therefore, pick your reserve choices carefully.

## **When do Options submissions have to be completed by?**

The deadline for completion is Monday 9th March. All submissions received before this date will be given equal priority (ie it is NOT "first come first served" as long as the deadline is met)

## **Does my child have to pick 4 option subjects?**

If your child has a Special Education Need or Disability that you and/ or we as a school feel would not be met by having a full timetable of KS4 subjects, the ACE team will be able to advise on the possibility of that student being "Option Light". This would mean selecting 3 subjects instead of 4 and having timetabled ACE lessons to enable support to be put in place for the Core and other option subjects.

## **Can my child drop a subject if they find they are struggling with workload?**

In a very small number of cases, this may be considered. This will be viewed as a measure of last resort and will ordinarily not be considered before Mock examinations have been completed in year 11. The full agreement of parents, the subject teacher, Head of Department and the Deputy Head (Curriculum) is necessary before any subject may be "dropped".



Thinking about the career path you may take when you are older can seem quite a daunting task. No one expects you to have all your career ideas planned out in Year 9, or even in Year 11. However, if you are thinking about a career in a specific area, this may guide your thinking about your GCSE choices.

To explore careers ideas, students regularly use the Unifrog Careers platform for activities in Lesson 0. This is available for students to use any time though so ask them to show you at home! There are careers quizzes that will give them some ideas based on their answers and lots of really useful articles and videos about different careers. The National Careers Service website also has information and guidance about over 750 different careers.

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We want to provide all our students with the opportunity to prepare for their transition into the ever changing world of work. We want all learners to be 'job ready and life ready for the economy of the future'. Students will experience a range of employer encounters, experience many types of workplaces and have experiences of a diverse range of job roles and careers. Some key ways we will support our students:

- Putting on several encounters with training providers, businesses and further education institutions.
- A range of talks throughout each year group.
- Work experience in Year 10 and 12
- Careers Fairs and STEM Careers activity sessions
- In Year 11 all students will get a 1:1 session with a highly trained careers advisor
- Trips/visits to work places





# GCSE ART (Fine)

## Course Outline

The 2D Art course at the Cooper School allows students to gain a strong foundation in artistic skills and knowledge. They will be given the opportunity to explore ideas through a wide variety of materials and artist studies. Each project will culminate in an original final piece. Coursework is worth 60% and the externally set task is worth 40%. The externally set task is in the form of an extended project.

- AO1 Students will develop their ideas through study of the work of artists, crafts people and designers from different times and cultures. This area of study includes talks from visiting artists and studio visits.
- AO2 Students will refine their ideas through experimentation using a wide variety of materials, techniques and processes.
- AO3 Students will record relevant ideas and observations in a variety of ways, including drawings, photography and research.
- AO4 Students will develop an original and personal response making connections with their research to create a final outcome.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

- If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, art and design is a great choice.
- The skills you gain make it a great complement to other subjects. Art and design is a way of seeing things and making sense of the world around you. It can help you with further study and prepare you for
- the world of work.

## Skills it will help you to develop

Alongside improving your practical expertise, you'll learn how to: develop, refine and record your ideas, present a personal response that realises your intentions, improve your creative skills through the effective and safe use of media, materials, techniques, processes and technologies successfully use visual language and the formal elements eg colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture• use drawing skills for different needs and purposes.

## What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

Art and design opens the door to lots of exciting careers including: Fashion design, Graphic design, Theatre designer, Animator, Video game designer, Illustrator, Museum curator, Photographer, Architecture, Product design, Textiles design, Ceramics, Advertising, Publishing and many more

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

We offer A Level art at the Cooper school and have a fabulous studio that is open to all art students.

## Assessment

### Component 1

Portfolio: produce a sustained project and a selection of further work that represents the course of study. This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

### Component 2

Externally set assignment: there's a separate externally set task paper for each title. It features seven tasks and you have to complete one of them. You get preparation time, plus ten hours of supervised time. This is worth 40% of your total marks.

## Exam board and weblink:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206>



# GCSE Business Studies

## Course Outline

Our GCSE in Business equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect decision-making. Learners develop their understanding of concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of contemporary issues on business operations.

**Component 1:** This component introduces learners to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. It explores the purpose and role of a business from first spotting an enterprising opportunity through to the growth of an established business. It takes a closer look at the role of marketing and human resources.

**Component 2:** This component takes a closer look at the role of operations and finance and introduces learners to external influences on business. It explores the importance of these influences and how businesses change in response to them. Finally, learners will use content from both component 01 and component 02 to make connections between different elements of the subject.

### What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Learners should have an enquiring mind and be interested in learning about the world around them, how businesses are set up and what it is that makes someone a great entrepreneur. Learners need to be good communicators, be able to explain their ideas and not be afraid of learning new things.

### Skills it will help you to develop

Learners will be able to evaluate choices and decisions about their own future working lives and have confidence in using both qualitative and quantitative data to make business decisions.

### What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

The qualification will encourage learners to make informed choices about a wide range of further learning opportunities and career pathways as well as develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware. Learners will develop an interest in business and entrepreneurial skills. They will see connections between theory and practice and be able to apply their understanding of business to real organisations

### Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A-Level Business and the BTEC Extended Certificate in Business

### Assessment

The GCSE in Business is a linear qualification with 100% external assessment.

OCR's GCSE in Business consists of two examined components that are externally assessed.

Each component carries an equal weighting of 50% of the GCSE qualification. Each examination has a duration of 1 hour and 30 minutes

### Exam board and weblink:

OCR: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/business-j204-from-2017/>



# GCSE Computer Science

Computer Science is a subject which incorporates programming (Python) alongside learning how Computer Architecture works to convert machine language into data we can understand and use - investigating how the ever changing digital world we live in relies on computer systems and networks to communicate worldwide.

## **Component 1 - J277/01: Computer Systems**

Study how the CPU and processors work, while investigating different computer memory and storage (RAM, ROM and Virtual). Gain an understanding on how computers store data in Binary, HEX and ASCII. Explore how today's network layouts help us communicate and function worldwide, investigating the legal, cultural and ethical issues that arise in the world of computing.

## **Component 2 - J277/02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming**

Learn the importance of the different algorithms used in the programming; Bubble, Merge and Insertion, produce designs using Pseudocode and Flowcharts while building firm knowledge in programming techniques. Explore how Boolean algebra (AND, OR, NOT) are used to produce robust programs.

## **Component 3: Practical Programming (not assessed)**

All students are given the opportunity to undertake a range of programming tasks, either to a specification or to solve a problem (or problems), during their course of study. Students may draw on some of the content in both components when engaged in Practical Programming

## **What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?**

You will need to gain a deep understanding of computational thinking and how to apply it effectively to a range of different problems as well as develop strong programming skills

## **Skills it will help you to develop**

Thinking creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically, understanding the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society.

## **What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?**

There are many opportunities available in the IT Industry this course paths the way for future careers including; Programmer, Software Engineer, Cyber Security, Forensic Computer Analyst, Networks and network Security.

## **Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?**

This courses complements the learning in GCSE programmes such as Engineering and Maths the specification has been designed to transition seamlessly into Computers Science at AS Level and and/or A Level, it is a perfect stepping-stone into a BTEC National in IT & Computing, a level 1/2 Apprenticeship.

## **Assessment:**

Component 1: External Exam – written paper worth 50% of overall qualification

Component 2: External Exam – written paper worth 50% of overall qualification

## **Exam board and weblink:**

OCR J277 – Computer Science



# GCSE Design & Technology

## Course Outline

This is a course that is split between Design Practice and Technology theory.

The coursework (NEA) is a design-based portfolio with a prototyped final outcome, worth 50% of the final grade. This part of the course has been designed to encourage students to be able to design and make a product with creativity and originality, using a range of timber-based materials, techniques and processes. Students learn about and can access all material areas but specialise in detailed knowledge of timber-based materials. The curriculum includes a range of mini projects and develops experiences using timber based materials prior to starting the coursework project.

The theory content covers all aspects of what it means to be a designer in the world today. The 7 theory units cover new and emerging technologies, energy, materials, systems, mechanical devices, designing principles and making principles. This part of the course is assessed with a final exam, worth 50% of the **overall grade**.

### What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

- Enthusiasm and artistic flair—a keen inventor
- Willingness to re-work ideas and develop them
- Interest in industrial processes of making, sustainability and materials science
- Hard work and determination with theory learning and coursework

### Skills it will help you to develop

Research, visual communication, problem solving and practical skills. Students will learn to use a range of tools and processes with different materials. Knowledge of industrial techniques and practices. Knowledge of materials, technical principles, industry practice.

### What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

This qualification is useful to students pursuing a career in design, construction, architecture, engineering, graphic design, model making, motor manufacture, and it opens doors to a wide range of creative and current entrepreneurial job potential.

### Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

AS/A-Level and beyond. Product Design A level is available within the Technology department.

**Assessment:** 50% Exam , 50% Coursework

### Exam board and weblink:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology/gcse/design-and-technology-8552>



# GCSE Drama

## Course Outline

The AQA GCSE drama programme of study covers 3 components

### Component 1: Interpreting Theatre (40%)

In this component students will practically study a set text from the role of actor, designer and director. They will then sit a written exam responding to questions about what they explored, in addition they will answer a question about a piece of live professional theatre they have seen.

### Component 2: Devising Theatre (40%)

This component requires students to create, develop and perform a piece using a stimulus provided by the exam board. Alongside the creation of the piece students must produce a portfolio of supporting evidence.

### Component 3: Performing from a Text (20%)

In this component students will rehearse and perform two extracts from a published play.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

- Work with different groups
- Listen to their ideas
- Contribute to the writing of group scripts
- Experiment with a range of genres and styles
- Perform: it is the best way to become more confident

## Skills it will help you to develop

Critical Thinking, Negotiating, Public Speaking, Self-Confidence, Self-Awareness, Working & dealing with others, Performing skills, Problem Solving

## What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

Anything!, Teaching, Nursing, Public Relations, T.V., Theatre Work, Law, Dealing with other people etc....

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A-Level Drama at our sixth form and you can also complete a degree in Drama

## Assessment:

Component 1 is a written exam.

Component 2 is assessed internally by the teacher and you will be marked on your performance. A 2,500 word devising log documenting the devising process.

Component 3 will be performed to a visiting examiner.

## Exam board and weblink:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/gcse/drama-8261/specification>



# GCSE English Language & Literature

## Course Outline

Students will read a wide range of texts and with good understanding, and make connections across their reading

### English Language:

Paper 1: 50% of GCSE grade - Explorations in creative reading and writing

Paper 2: 50% of GCSE grade - Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

### English Literature:

Paper 1: 40% of GCSE grade - Shakespeare and the 19th century novel

Paper 2: 60% of GCSE grade - Modern texts and poetry

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

- Write accurately and, when appropriate, entertainingly, in a variety of styles
- Participate in range of discussion tasks effectively
- Be disciplined and self-motivated when working independently
- Read thoughtfully, inferring meaning between the lines and being aware of the author's purpose and how it is achieved
- Learn to analyse unseen texts independently

## Skills it will help you to develop

Written/spoken communication, Reading skills, General knowledge of other times and cultures

## What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

Along with Mathematics, this is the most commonly required qualification.

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A Level English Literature and A Level English Language & Literature at our sixth form. A number of A-Level English courses are offered by most sixth form colleges, as well as at university level.

## Assessment

### English Language:

Paper 1: 50% of GCSE grade - Explorations in creative reading and writing

Paper 2: 50% of GCSE grade - Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Separate Spoken Language endorsement

### English Literature:

Paper 1: 40% of GCSE grade - Shakespeare and the 19th century novel

Paper 2: 60% of GCSE grade - Modern texts and poetry

## Exam board and weblink:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>



# GCSE Food Technology - Preparation & Nutrition

## **Course Outline: GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition**

This course focuses on understanding food, nutrition, and healthy eating. Students will learn about the nutritional needs of different groups, food provenance, sustainability, and the impact of food choices on health and the environment.

Practical skills are a key component, with students preparing a range of dishes and mastering various cooking techniques. They will also study food safety, hygiene, and the science behind ingredients.

Assessment includes a written exam (50%) on food theory and a practical assessment (50%) where students plan, prepare, and present dishes. This course builds skills for further study or careers in food and nutrition.

## **What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?**

To make the most of GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition, students need strong organization and time management skills for planning and cooking tasks. Attention to hygiene and safety is essential, along with an interest in nutrition, healthy eating, and food science. Creativity in dish presentation, a willingness to practice practical skills, and the ability to apply theory to real-life cooking are also important for success.

## **Skills it will help you to develop**

Nutritional Knowledge, Debating skills, research, visual communication, problem solving and practical skills. Students will learn to use a range of tools and processes with different materials accurately, skilfully and safely.

## **What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?**

Clinical Dietician, Sports Nutritionist, Child Nutritionist, Public Health Nutrition, Food and Nutrition Management, Food Science, Food Technologist, Product Developer, Catering, Food Photography, Environmental Health Officer, plus many more.

## **Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?**

Yes, we offer a Level 3 Diploma in Food Science at our sixth form.

## **Assessment: Non- Exam Assessment (NEA)**

This is split into two tasks for 50% of GCSE:

### Task 1: The Food Investigation

This is worth 15% of the GCSE and requires students to complete a 10hour investigation as set out by the exam board. This will be released on 1st September of year 11. This would be a 7 page report.

### Task 2: Food Preparation Assessment

This is worth 35% of the GCSE and requires students to plan, prepare, cook and present a range of dishes for a set situation. The exact task title will be released on 1st November of year 11. This would be a 12 pages report and 3 hour cooking exam.

## **Exam board and weblink:**

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-8585>



# GCSE Geography

## Course Outline

We will be following the Edexcel B GCSE geography course. This is an issues based course that we have largely chosen based on the student survey we conducted last year. It has three main parts to it, they are:

- Global Geographical issues– hazards, development and urbanisation.
- UK Geographical Issues– physical and human landscapes (inc. fieldwork).
- People and Environment Issues– biospheres, forests and energy.

This course is designed to be engaging, it will enable you to explore the world and examine the issues it faces. It will be an essential guide to help you prepare for the 21st Century world that you will live in. It will keep you aware of the changes that are taking place and how they will affect your future.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

- enjoy exploring content that is relevant to the world you live in and to your future.
- discuss things that could affect your future and current events.
- focus on the environment
- enjoy practical work outdoors, either around school or further afield (compulsory)
- enjoy learning through investigation, not just listening and reading
- develop a full range of transferable skills that will be useful in other subjects you study

## Skills it will help you to develop

Geography is an ideal subject for developing a full range of 21st century skills. You will learn how to research information from a range of sources and present it in a variety of ways, both written and in diagrams. Your fieldwork will help you to develop the skills of organising your own time, and learning and co-operating with others.

## What sort of career/job can it prepare you for?

Employment opportunities where your geographical skills will be particularly valued include journalism and media, the law, engineering, business management, ICT, environmental management, teaching, economic planning, marketing, leisure, recreation and tourism and many more...

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer a Geography A level course at our sixth form.

## Assessment:

Component 1: Global Geographical issues (37.5% of qualification)

Component 2: UK Geographical Issues– physical and human landscapes (inc. fieldwork) (37.5 % of qualification)

Component 3: People and Environment Issues– biospheres, forests and energy (25% Of qualification)

## Exam board and weblink:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/geography-b-2016.html>



# GCSE History

## **Unit 1: Crime and Punishment 1000AD-Modern Day**

A study of the causes of crime, social attitudes towards crime and changes to punishments over time. A case study focus will be on 'Jack the Ripper' and late-nineteenth century England.

## **Unit 2: Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588**

A study of the Queen, government, religion, challenges to the throne from home and abroad and an investigation of Elizabethan society.

## **Unit 3: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-1991**

A study of the tensions that existed post-WW2, the origins and nature of the Cold War with topics such as: the Berlin Blockade and the Cuba Missile Crisis.

## **Unit 4: Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939**

A study of the Weimar Republic, how the Nazis came to power in Germany and life in Nazi Germany.

## **What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?**

Be dedicated, committed and enthusiastic, have a genuine interest in understanding the world we live in, Be prepared to work on, and improve, your extended writing, dare to share your ideas with the class!

## **Skills it will help you to develop**

Public speaking, Arguing and debating, Reading and extended writing, Understanding what motivates people, Working with others, Understanding who we are and how we got here!

## **What sort of careers/job can it prepare you for?**

Journalism, Law, Television, Banking, Retail, Police, Academic research

Most importantly, any job which requires you to understand how people work and demands that you can make your own judgements will benefit from a History education.

## **Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?**

Yes, we offer A Level History in our sixth form but History GCSE is also great preparation for the following A-Levels: Sociology, Government and Politics, Media Studies, English.

## **Assessment:**

### **Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment**

Written examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes

30%\* of the qualification

### **Paper 2: Period study and British depth study**

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

40%\* of the qualification

### **Paper 3: Modern depth study**

Written examination: 1 hour and 20 minutes

30%\* of the qualification

**Exam board and weblink:** <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/history-2016.coursematerials.html#%2FfilterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FSpecification-and-sample-assessments>



# GCSE Mathematics

Students will follow the AQA 8300 Mathematics GCSE specification.

Students will:

- develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems
- reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions
- comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Many other subjects at GCSE have mathematical elements so GCSE Maths will support studies in science, psychology, geography and many more.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Be prepared to: persevere with a task and aim to complete it, to discuss and justify your work, to make mistakes and ask for help, with all the correct mathematical equipment, to listen and learn, ensure that you have completed all of your work to the best of your ability.

## Skills it will help you to develop:

Understand the world, develop a questioning mind, focus your concentration, argue and clarify your ideas successfully, develop your thinking skills

## What sort of careers/job can it prepare you for?

Success in Mathematics will open doors to most careers you can think of!

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, to study A Level Mathematics or Further Mathematics you need to pass GCSE with a good grade 6 or above. We also offer Core Maths as an alternative for students who wish to continue with Maths but do not want to do a full A level.

## Assessment:

Three exams at the end of Year 11 each of which includes material from the entire syllabus (each of the 3 papers are out of 80 marks, worth one-third of the overall GCSE and 1 hour 30 minutes in length)

Paper 1 – non-calculator

Papers 2 & 3 - calculator

All students will require a scientific calculator and basic geometry equipment (protractor and a pair of compasses)

## Exam board and weblink:

[www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/gcse/mathematics-8300](http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/gcse/mathematics-8300)

## Further Maths:

We also offer a Level 2 qualification in Further Maths to our more able mathematicians. If you would like to know more then please speak to a member of the Maths team or visit this link:

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



# GCSE M.F.L

## Course Outline

### AQA

Two levels: Foundation Tier & Higher Tier

Three Themes:

1. Identity & Culture
2. Local, national international & global areas of interest
3. Current & future study & employment

All themes involve Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

### What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Memorise vocabulary on a wide range of topics, develop and apply grammatical knowledge, show an interest in different cultures, practise speaking skills (to get involved in everyday conversations), Accept making mistakes and learning from them, develop understanding of the spoken and written forms of the language, Develop the ability to communicate using a range of higher-level structures. Learn how to develop your skills independently using a range of interactive online platforms.

### Skills it will help you to develop

Listening and speaking to each other, Comparing, Interpreting, Translating

### What sort of careers/job can it prepare you for?

**A whole range of careers awaits you;** Travel agent, Secretary/P.A, Jobs for any business company, Hotel & Tourism, Air Steward/Hostess, Jobs related to the European Union / United Nations, Jobs with multi-national companies, Translator/Interpreter, Secondary school Teacher, English as a foreign language teacher. Catering jobs. International aid / Development worker. Diplomatic service officer.

### Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A Level Spanish in our Sixth form.

### Assessment:

25% Speaking & 25% Writing  
25% Listening & 25% Reading

**Speaking** is assessed in a school based speaking test which is recorded and sent to AQA to be marked as part of the final GCSE grade.

**Listening, Reading & Writing** are assessed under exam conditions at the end of the 2 year course.

**Exam board and weblink:** <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages>



# GCSE P.E

## Course Outline

The Course is structured as: 60% Theory, 10% Coursework, 30% practical performance (3 sports, 10% value from each) and covers a broad range of Sport Science study in preparation for A level PE or further sport study

Theory elements:

Component 1: Fitness and Body Systems (paper 1)  
(1hr 45 mins for 90 marks)

Component 2: Health and Performance (paper 2)  
(1hr 15 mins for 70 marks)

Component 4: Personal Exercise Programme (20 marks) (Course work)

Practical Element:

Component 3: Practical Performance  
(35 marks per activity x 3)

One individual, one team and one free choice sport. \*Candidates are required to secure video evidence in each sport, in fully competitive situations.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Organisation, Communication, Work in groups, Concentrate and stay focused, Motivate yourself and others

## Skills it will help you to develop

Sporting techniques, tactics and understanding, Knowledge of Health, Fitness and Exercise, Communication, Organisation Self-confidence and self-esteem, Team work

## What sort of careers/job can it prepare you for?

Sport/leisure industry, Fire Service, Police/Armed Forces, Teaching/Coaching/Officiating in sport and physical activity, Any job/career in which you will manage and lead people

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A Level P.E at our sixth form but you can also study Btec level 3 Sport studies and gain Coaching/Officiating Qualifications. Sport science/ Sport coaching degrees are also offered by most universities.

## Assessment:

70% Examination

30% Practical Coursework

**Coursework:** Non-examined assessment: internally marked and externally moderated

The assessment consists of students producing a Personal Exercise Programme (PEP), and will require students to analyse and evaluate their performance. These will be assessed by the teacher and moderated by Pearson

## Exam board and weblink:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/physical-education-2016>



# GCSE Photography

## Course Outline

GCSE Photography gives students the opportunity to develop creative skills in using a camera. You will learn how to take photographs with purpose, exploring composition, lighting and editing. The course is structured in a similar way to GCSE Art and is assessed using the same exam board assessment objectives.

**AO1:** Students will research photographers from many different contexts and themes. From there they will base their own studies.

**AO2:** Students will need to explore their own ideas in many different ways. This will include the exploration, different compositions, manipulation of images etc.

**AO3:** Students will record relevant ideas and observations.

**AO4:** Students will realise their ideas as a final outcome. This will be a personal response to the students' own research and experimentation.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

If you enjoy being creative and hands-on, GCSE Photography is an exciting and rewarding subject to choose. You will develop practical skills using cameras, lighting and digital editing, while learning how to plan, research and present your ideas clearly. Photography will also help you build strong analytical and communication skills as you study the work of professional photographers and reflect on your own creative choices.

## Skills it will help you to develop

The skills you gain in photography support many other subjects, including art, media, design and English. It's not just taking pictures, photography teaches you how to observe the world carefully, think creatively and express your ideas visually. These skills are valuable for further study and are highly useful in the world of work, where creativity, problem-solving and independent thinking are increasingly important.

## What sort of careers/job can it prepare you for?

Fashion photography, Graphic design, Theatre designer, Animator, Video game designer, Museum curator, Photographer, Product design, Textiles design, Advertising, Publishing, Interior design, Fashion and media journalism, Hair and make-up photographer, Retail design, Exhibition design, Jewellery design, Artist, Visual media, Teaching, film and tv

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Photography can be pursued at a higher level including A Level and degree courses.

## Assessment:

There are two components:

- Component 1 Portfolio: produce a sustained project and a selection of further work that represents the course of study. This is worth 60% of your overall marks.
- Component 2 Externally set assignment: there's a separate externally set task paper for each title. It features seven tasks and you have to complete one of them. You get preparation time, plus ten hours of supervised time. This is worth 40% of your total marks.

## Exam board and weblink: AQA

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/photography>



# Personal Development

## Course Outline

- This course covers aspects of Personal, Social, Health, and Economics Education and includes some Citizenship and Careers Education.
- The course is not examined.
- Curriculum is taught in Y7, 8 and 9, 10, 12 and 13.
- Delivered through tutor time and enrichment periods in Y11.
- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Celebrating Equality and Diversity
- Staying Safe online and offline
- Rights, Responsibilities and British Values
- Healthy Choices, including choices related to Drugs and Alcohol
- Life beyond school, including Careers.

### **What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?**

Be open-minded and prepared to listen to others; be respectful of other people's views and lifestyles; consider choices about your future.

### **Skills it will help you to develop**

The skills that are referred to as soft skills: self-confidence, collaboration, making informed decisions, constructing and supporting an argument and empathy and understanding for others.

### **What type of career/job can it prepare you for?**

Understanding ourselves and other people is vital in every area of our lives, be it social, academic or in the world of work. As part of the Careers module, students will explore their options beyond school.

### **Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?**

N/A

### **Assessment:**

There is no exam or coursework for PSHE.

### **Exam board and weblink:**

N/A



# GCSE Religious Studies

## Course Outline

Christian and religious perspectives on issues. The following modules are covered:

**Relationships and Families** - religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st century, roles of men and women; equality; gender prejudice and discrimination, diversity within traditions.

**Religion and Life** - how the earth and humanity began, environment concerns and responsibilities, the value of life covering the issues of abortion, euthanasia and animal experimentation.

**Religion, peace and conflict** - violence, war, pacifism, terrorism, just war theory, holy war, conflict and peace-making, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

**Religion, crime and punishment** - the causes of crime and the aims of punishment, the treatment of criminals, forgiveness, corporal and capital punishment.

This is alongside the study of **practices, beliefs and teachings** of **Christianity and Judaism**. Including: Moral principles, Worship, community, Festivals, Nature of God, Trinity, religious ideas of creation, Jesus (including, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension), Covenants, Mitzvot, Salvation, Eschatology, Judgement and afterlife.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Religious Studies examines different ways of looking at life, therefore critical thinking is very important. It is accessible to believers and non-believers alike. It will help you to reflect upon your experiences, your relationships, the meaning of life and the world around you.

## Skills it will help you to develop

- Developing an understanding of the beliefs of religious groups
- Empathy - the ability to 'put yourself into another person's shoes'
- Evaluation - the ability to examine something and give your opinion of it
- Communication - being able to explain your and other people's ideas and opinions

## What type of career/job can it prepare you for?

It will prepare you for a wide range of careers but especially those where an understanding of people is required, such as nursing, policing, social work, and teaching. Most importantly, as a subject that founded on critical thinking, a range of different A Level subject (Philosophy and Ethics, Law, History, Sociology, Psychology, Politics, English Literature...)

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer the option to study A-Level Philosophy and Ethics in our sixth form and the subject also can be studied at degree level

**Assessment:** This course is 100% exam based. There is no coursework on this course.

**Exam board and weblink:** AQA Full Course A

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062>



# GCSE Science

## (Separate Science and Combined Science)

### Course Outline

The aim of the GCSE is to enthuse our students about science and to develop the creativity and problem-solving skills that make it such a rewarding and demanding course. A science GCSE is essential for most professional jobs and higher level college/6th form courses, with most employers looking for at least a Combined Science GCSE. The skills taught are valuable to almost every employer in all types of careers and further study, although we do want students to be aware of the many careers that are possible within Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM subjects).

### The Two Possible Routes

All students must study science until the end of Year 11. However, there are two possible paths students can take:

- 1: Combined Science
- 2: Separate Science

(NOTE: All students have to study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics for GCSE regardless of the path they choose)

### What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

Practical work is integral to the AQA course and will be delivered frequently throughout the course. There is also a requirement for schools to deliver a certain number of key activities (the core practicals) and these will be assessed on written exams. There is no controlled assessment or coursework in GCSE science. We recommend that students wishing to do Separate science have an enjoyment and aptitude for science, as there will be more content to learn and faster paced lessons with less built-in revision time than Combined science.

### Skills it will help you to develop

Science subjects help to develop many important skills and competencies such as data analysis, logical reasoning, critical thinking, group work, problem solving and knowledge acquisition.

### What type of career/job can it prepare you for?

All science subjects are facilitating subjects for University and are widely respected by employers, Sixth Forms and Colleges alike. It is an essential subject for most professional jobs and many further education courses pursued after GCSE. These includes careers in medicine, engineering, forensics, veterinary sciences, and architecture. Those who wish to follow one of these career paths, or a similar career should consider taking separate science.

### Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Depending on what grades you achieve at GCSE, the Cooper School offers A-levels in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Both GCSE courses are excellent preparation for these courses, although the entrance requirements are slightly higher for Combined Science students wishing to take A-Levels.

### Assessment (100% exam at end of Year 11):

Number of Exams: 6 (2 per science subject)

### Length Of Exams:

Combined Science (1hr 15mins) (70 marks per paper)

Separate Science (1hr 45mins) (100 marks per paper)

### Tiers:

Higher Tier (Grades 4-9)

Foundation Tier (Grades 1-5)

(Students will have their tiers decided in Year 11)

### Exam board and weblink:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse>



# GCSE Sociology

## Course Outline

### Education

What is the point of education? Why are Maths and English compulsory whilst cooking and geography are not? Who decides? Who does education benefit?

### Families

How do families influence behaviour and society?

### Crime and Deviance

What do these mean and how are they different? Why are some things illegal and other things not? Why do some people obey the law whilst others don't?

### Social Stratification

Is there inequality in our society? If so, why? How do we decide who is at the top and at the bottom of our social structure?

### Methods

How do sociologists conduct their research? What are the dangers a Sociologist can face when researching? How do we make sure that our findings are helpful and accurate?

### What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

A wish to understand others, a willingness to put aside your own ideas and examine others', a desire to have your eyes opened to the world we live in, a willingness to explore questions you didn't even know existed, an open and enquiring mind

### Skills it will help you to develop

Understanding what motivates people and why, Reasoning and explaining, Reading and extended writing

### What type of career/job can it prepare you for?

Journalism, Teaching, Public Relations, Law, Politics, Social Work, Medical profession, Television, Banking, Police  
Any job in fact, that requires you understand society today, put yourself in another person's shoes or understand the complex forces that influence our lives.

### Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

Yes, we offer A Level Sociology at A Level and Sociology GCSE is also great preparation for the following A-Levels: Sociology, History, Law, Politics, Media Studies.

### Assessment:

Paper 1: The sociology of families and education - 1 hr 45mins, 50% of GCSE, 100 marks

Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification - 1 hr 45mins, 50% of GCSE, 100 marks

**Exam board and weblink:** <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/gcse/sociology-8192/specification-at-a-glance>



# GCSE Art Textiles

## Course Outline

Students will be able to develop their creative and imaginative ability and learn techniques to communicate and express original ideas. This is achieved through investigative, analytical and aesthetic understanding.

Coursework involved:

### Unit 1

Made up of a variety of small projects looking at different topics and techniques. These projects run from the start of year 10 to Christmas of year 11 and is worth 60% of the grade.

### Unit 2

Students will be required to undertake a second portfolio as a controlled assessment set by the examining board and is worth 40% of the final grade. They will complete this between January in Year 11 and Easter. There is no written paper. All work is internally marked and externally moderated.

## What do you need to do well in order to be able to make the most of this subject?

This course is perfect for those who are creative and prefer coursework to written exams. Students will need enthusiasm and the ability to work independently and keep to deadlines

## Skills it will help you to develop

This course is very investigation and experiment based. Each topic is introduced with resources and demonstrations of equipment and techniques. There will be plenty of teacher help and previous students' exemplar work to help students to work independently on their portfolio and the accompanying practical outcome. Students will be able to work at their own pace as long as course deadlines are adhered to.

## What type of career/job can it prepare you for?

Fashion Designer, Textile Designer, Interior Designer, Costume Designer, Fashion Photographer, Teacher  
All careers/jobs will consider students who have creative and imaginative ability combined with practical experience demonstrating self-discipline and ability to work independently.

## Is it possible to go on and study this subject at a higher level?

A Level Art and Design Textiles is offered in the sixth form at our school. In addition there are numerous colleges offering a wide range of textile based courses such as BTEC, Diplomas and NVQ. University degree courses are offered in many areas of Textiles.

## Assessment:

### Unit 1

Made up of a variety of small projects looking at different topics and techniques. This is worth 60% of the grade.

### Unit 2

Students will be required to undertake a second portfolio as a controlled assessment set by the examining board and is worth 40% of the final grade. There is no written paper. All work is internally marked and externally moderated.

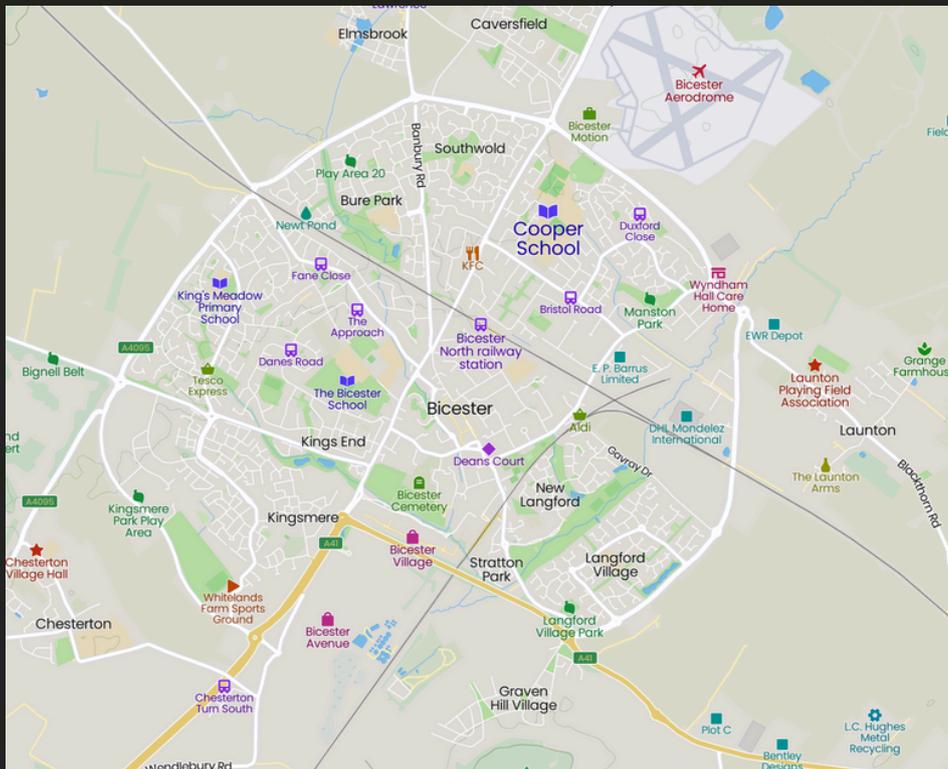
**Exam board and weblink:** <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/textile-design>





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