

Weldon Village Academy



Year 8 Guided Pathways KS4 Course Information March 2026



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Dear all,

Thank you for your engagement with the Guided Pathways process. We appreciate that it can feel daunting to be making 'big' decisions at a relatively young age and hope that this booklet will help with your decisions.

The core curriculum of English Language, English Literature, Maths and Science is compulsory. The study of science starts with Combined Science (2 GCSEs) but there may be the opportunity in Year 10 to study for Triple Science (3 GCSEs). This will depend on student progress during Year 9, and does not require students to "select" Triple Science.

On the following pages are short summaries of the courses we are offering for Key Stage 4 study, to allow parents and students to quickly see the ways that courses are assessed and where they link to potential careers.

As a general rule of thumb, GCSE courses are more likely to be assessed by examination whereas vocational subjects (iMedia, Child Development etc) will have an onus on project or coursework.

Core Curriculum

Subjects
English (Language and Literature)
Mathematics
Science
Core Studies (non-examined)
Physical Education (non-examined)
ICT Skills (non-examined)

All examined subjects lead to GCSE qualifications or Level 2 Equivalents such as BTEC. This means that most students will follow a complete programme of study ultimately leading to either 9 or 10 GCSEs or equivalent. Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) forms an integral part of Key Stage 4 and helps ensure all students are supported with their next pathway at Post 16.

Guided Pathways

The subjects available within this programme are wide and varied which allows students to explore new subjects or continue those studied in Key Stage 3. Guidance is given on the Pathways Form as to the choice of subjects offered to each student. In making these choices, they are expressing a preference for the subjects they would like to follow.

Whilst it is hoped that all courses and subjects will be available in September, and that students are able to study their choices, it is important that students select reserve choices. We cannot guarantee every student will be able to study their choice or that all subjects will run, although we will do our very best to try and make that possible.

Students should consider a number of factors before making their final choices. As well as selecting subjects where they have talent and subjects they enjoy, students should consider their ambitions for future study or careers. Choosing a combination of subjects that offers some variety during their GCSE years whilst building a good foundation of subjects to move on with. They should certainly ask the question 'to what extent is a subject desirable or essential to a preferred career?'



GCSE Courses

GCSE courses are aimed at the whole ability range. They are assessed by various means. Some have an element of school-based assessment completed during the course. All have a final examination or assessment worth at least 40% of the overall grade which is taken towards the end of the course.

To be successful in completing GCSE courses it is vital that students consistently produce their best work at all times. Controlled Assessment tasks which earn marks towards the final grade in a subject may be set at regular intervals from the very start of the course.

The English Baccalaureate

This accreditation, strongly supported by the government, requires a student to achieve a grade 4 pass or higher in the following combination of subjects:

- English Language & Literature;
- Mathematics;
- a minimum of 2 GCSEs in Science subjects;
- either History or Geography;
- French

Students do not receive an additional certificate for achieving this combination but subjects in this list are considered to be 'facilitating' subjects and are highly regarded by both universities and future employers. In an interview or selection process, if one student has this combination and another does not, it may be that this could be used as a deciding factor.

Many leading universities will require two facilitating subjects to be studied to Advanced Level to gain an offer. Ensuring a student has a broad range of GCSE subjects is one of the best ways to keep future career choices open.

Humanities

(Geography & History)

Our aim is to prepare students for the future. Humanities subjects are highly thought of by employers and further education colleges and sixth forms. After completing the GCSE courses, students will apply for a place in Sixth Form, college or for an Apprenticeship. It is therefore important in ensuring all students leave Weldon Village Academy with the best mix of subjects possible to allow them to follow any career path they wish.

Modern Foreign Languages

(French)

Whilst modern foreign languages are extremely well thought of, we do appreciate that not every student will be able to cope with the demands of studying a language at GCSE. However, we have analysed the data available on, as well as our knowledge of all students and have decided that, for some students, studying a language will be the default choice as it will increase their career options and prospects beyond GCSE. Whilst studying a language is not compulsory for all students, it is recommended that if you enjoy studying a language and are willing to work hard then this would be greatly beneficial. Your personalised option form will indicate whether studying a language at GCSE is compulsory or optional.

Pathways Form

A great deal of time has been invested by the Leadership Team and Senior Tutors in looking at individual students and their potential ability. Their current performance in all subjects and the bigger picture has helped make the decision about the best course of study at Key Stage 4. The school has therefore designed a pathway process that is individualised to every student and should lead to the best outcomes in terms of breadth of study and preparation for the future. Each student has been given a Pathways Form that is specific to them, rather than a generalised proforma. If you have any questions regarding your options form, please contact your Form Tutor or Senior Tutor in the first instance.

GCSE Grading

All GCSE courses have been refreshed and replaced over the past few years and all subjects now follow the new courses. This means that the qualification is no longer graded using A* to G letters, but instead with a new numbering system 9 to 1.

It is important to note that previously a C grade at GCSE was classed as a good pass. Under the new system, a grade 5 is classed as a good pass and a grade 4 is a standard pass.

Core Studies (core)

In this subject we cover three important areas of study: PSHE, Citizenship and Careers. Our aim is to develop students' self-awareness and personal qualities and to help them to become valuable and effective members of society. Students think about and discuss topical political, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events. They study the legal, political, religious, social, constitutional and economic systems that influence their lives and communities, looking more closely at how they work and their effects. We explore contemporary moral and ethical issues through a study of Britain as a multicultural society. Students will have the opportunity to explore a range of religious and philosophical viewpoints on issues that affect them and their community. Students are taught how to express considered opinions clearly and with confidence to a range of audiences.

Some of the key components are:

- Choices at 16+
- The World of Work
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Drugs Education
- Economic Understanding
- Managing Stress

Art and Design

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: Eduqas

General outline of the course: The course is designed for students to explore new ideas and express their own creativity. You will have the freedom to create individual artwork based around a set theme.

All students will have the opportunity to visit galleries in London and regionally. Practical work, theory knowledge and understanding are integrated to reach a personal response.

Students can produce work in a range of materials and explore a variety of approaches and techniques. In addition to drawing and painting they may also explore 3D work (sculpture in any available materials) and also photography and new media can be used for research, presentation and creative outcomes.

At the end of the course you exhibit your work to family, friends and to the general public.

You do not have to be great at drawing and be a great artist to do well at GCSE Art, it is much more important that you are committed to and enjoy the subject.

Assessment method:

The coursework is 60% of your final GCSE grade, with a final examination at the end of Year 11 worth 40%. The exam is a practical project and can be in any of the specialisms in which you have developed skills throughout the GCSE course. The exam consists of a set preparation time (about 10 weeks), with teacher guidance and input and a final outcome, produced independently under exam conditions (10 hour exam).

40% is a practical exam spread over 2 days.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

The GCSE Art course will enable you to develop creative and practical skills as well as other transferable skills which are advantageous in many A Level courses.

Many of our students go on to complete A Level courses or a college course in an Art specialism that suits them. The GCSE course is an ideal stepping stone to art-related courses, which are widely available both locally and nationally. Students wishing to go on to study Art A Level should study Art at GCSE. Art courses often followed = GCSE > A Level > Foundation Course or BTEC > Degree > Masters

Business

Qualification: GCSE Business

Awarding Body: OCR

General outline of the course: GCSE Business will equip students with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situation affect business decisions.

Studying GCSE Business will enable students to:

- Know and understand business concepts, business terminology and the impact of business on individuals and wider society.
- Apply knowledge and understanding to contemporary business issues.
- Develop as enterprising individuals with the ability to think commercially and creatively.
- Develop as effective and independent students.
- Investigate and analyse real business opportunities and solve business problems.

The Business Department requires students to:

- Maintain positive attitudes towards learning.
- Respect other students, staff and resources.
- Have a positive attitude towards home learning (homework).
- Develop the skill of independent study.

Assessment method:

Internal Assessment

Students will complete regular formative assessments which will assess knowledge, understanding and exam technique. These will be of a similar format to the external exams.

External Assessment

There are two external assessments for OCR GCSE Business. There are each worth 50% of the GCSE qualification. Each exam will last 90 minutes and take place at the end of Year 11.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

OCR GCSE Business will encourage students 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.

Progress to A Level Business or a modern apprenticeship would be an expected pathway.

Child Development

Qualification: Cambridge Nationals

Awarding Body: OCR

The **Cambridge Nationals in Child Development (OCR)** is an ideal qualification for students interested in understanding how children grow, learn, and develop from birth to five years old. It provides a strong mix of practical skills, applied learning, and theoretical knowledge, preparing students for future study or careers in education, health, and childcare sectors.

The course is made up of **three units**, combining external assessment with internally assessed practical coursework:

R057: Health and Wellbeing for Child Development

Assessment: Written exam (1 hour 15 mins) **Weighting: 40%**

Type: External, theory-based This examination tests students' ability to apply knowledge to realistic scenarios.

R058: Create a Safe Environment and Understand the Nutritional Needs of Children

Assessment: Coursework (set assignments) **Weighting: 30%**

Type: Internal, practical + theory. The practical nature of this unit allows students to demonstrate real-life skills—such as designing safety checklists or preparing meal plans based on dietary needs.

R059: Understand the Development of a Child from 1–5 Years

Assessment: Coursework (set assignments) **Weighting: 30%** **Type:** Internal, practical
This unit focuses on: Students may design and deliver play-based activities, then reflect on how these support development.

Visits and Practical Experiences

Where possible, the course incorporates:

- **Visits to early years settings**, nurseries, or playgroups, **Guest speakers** such as midwives, early years practitioners, or health visitors, **Opportunities to observe young children** (when appropriate), **Practical workshops**, such as preparing food for young children or designing safe play areas

These experiences help students link theory to the real world and develop confidence working with children.

- Are considering future pathways such as:
 - Childcare and Early Years Education, Nursing or Midwifery, Primary Teaching or SEND support, Social Work, Health and Social Care

Computer Science

Qualification: GCSE

Awarding Body: OCR

General outline of the course: You may be interested in this course if you like figuring out how things work, the OCR GCSE Computer Science course is like getting a behind the scenes tour of computers: you learn how the CPU acts as the brain of the computer, how memory and storage work, and how devices connect through networks. You also get to learn real problem-solving skills by creating algorithms, writing programs, and testing your own code.

What careers does it link to?

- Software developer
- Web developer
- Cybersecurity specialist
- Network engineer
- Robotics engineer
- App designer
- Machine Learning Technician (AI)
- (Not an exhaustive list)

J277/01: Computer Systems

You will learn about how the computer ‘thinks,’ and how it can be programmed to do the things you want! How to write code and solve everyday problems. You will learn about how computers are connected and how they share information across a network, their vulnerabilities, and the threats that we face in society. You will have an opportunity to debate new technologies and how they impact us and our future.

This component will assess:

- Systems architecture
- Memory and storage
- Computer networks, connections and protocols
- Network security
- Systems software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology

J277/02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

This component will assess:

- 2.1 Algorithms
- 2.2 Programming fundamentals
- 2.3 Producing robust programs

- 2.4 Boolean logic
- 2.5 Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments

How Will I be Assessed?

J277/01: Computer Systems	J277/02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes • 50% of total GCSE • 80 marks • This is a non-calculator paper • All questions are mandatory • This paper consists of multiple-choice questions, short response questions and extended response questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes • 50% of total GCSE • 80 marks • This is a non-calculator paper • This paper has two sections: Section A and Section B. Students must answer both sections • All questions are mandatory • In Section B, questions assessing students' ability to write or refine algorithms must be answered using either the OCR Exam Reference Language or the high-level programming language they are familiar with

There is no coursework or projects to be submitted as part of this course. Students will engage in projects during the course, but these are not externally assessed and do not form part of their final grade. Assessment is 100% exams.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

This course is excellent if you wish to go on and study or work in the field of Engineering, Networking, Software Development, Systems Analysis, Web/App Development, Cyber Security or Computer Programming, or just want the capability of designing your own solutions to whatever problems you may face. Students who choose not to study GCSE Computer Science are usually able to study Computer Science at A Level provided they achieve a sufficient grade in their Maths GCSE (this is often a 7 but depends on the course provider). Computer Science A Level is not usually required to study Computer Science relating degrees at university however most providers will require Maths A Level. To study a computer science at university, you'll usually need to have studied A-level maths, computer science or another science or technology-based subject.

Creative iMedia

Qualification: Cambridge Nationals

Awarding Body: OCR

General outline of the course: You may be interested in this if you want an engaging qualification where you will use your learning in practical, real-life situations, such as:

- Developing visual identities for clients
- Planning and creating original digital graphics
- Planning, creating and reviewing original digital media products.

This will help you to develop independence and confidence in using skills that would be relevant to the media and IT industry.

What careers does it link to?

- Computing
- Creative electronic design
- Film-maker
- Editor
- Game design
- IT Support

Unit R093: Creative iMedia in the media industry (External Examination)

In this unit you will learn about the sectors, products and job roles that form the media industry. You will learn the legal and ethical issues considered and the processes used to plan and create digital media products. You will learn how media codes are used within the creation of media products to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. You will learn to choose the most appropriate format and properties for different media products. Completing this unit will provide you with the basic skills for further study or a range of creative job roles within the media industry.

Unit R094: Visual identity and digital graphics (Coursework Unit)

In this unit you will learn how to develop visual identities for clients. You will also learn to apply the concepts of graphic design to create original digital graphics which incorporate your visual identity to engage a target audience. Completing this unit will introduce the foundations for further study or a wide range of job roles within the media industry.

Unit R099: Digital games (Coursework Unit)

In this unit you will learn to interpret client briefs to devise original digital game concepts. You will learn to plan digital games effectively and to use a Game Design Document to create engagement among developers and clients. You will learn to

create, edit, test and export playable digital games which you have designed. Completing this unit will provide you with the basic skills for further study or a range of creative and technical job roles within the media industry.

Assessment method:

This course is assessed through a combination of a written examination and coursework.

The weightings of each unit are:

(R093 – 40%, R094 – 30%, R099 – 30%)

Design and Technology

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: AQA

General outline of the course: GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students for a wide range of careers in Design, Construction and Engineering as well as providing skills for life, mental wellbeing through hobbies and teaching students to be informed consumers able to participate responsibly in society. The course is creative, involving research, design, development, making and evaluation of the students own and existing work. Theoretical knowledge underpins each aspect of the design process.

What Will I Study?

Course Content: The GCSE Design and Technology (Product Design) course we offer at WVA, will provide students with a breadth of core technical knowledge and understanding that consists of:

- new and emerging technologies
- energy generation and storage
- developments in new materials
- systems approach to designing
- mechanical devices
- materials and their working properties.

All of the theory that is covered in lessons will be reinforced through practical projects that you can take home.

How Will I be Assessed?

Question paper (Externally assessed) 2 hours (100 marks) – 50% of GCSE Coursework
(Practical) (100 marks) – 50% of GCSE



Drama

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: AQA

General outline of the course: Drama GCSE is creative, interesting and challenging. Students learn how to independently apply their own creative ideas to reading and performing sections of a set text and script work. This will include acting, directing and learning lines. Drama isn't just about acting, so students learn about working in theatre, they explore design skills and see how they are used by theatre practitioners and industry professionals. Using voice, facial expression and physical skills as well as costume, make up and set design skills to elicit an effect on the audience. Finally, students will devise Drama, learning Drama techniques and using them to create original plays.

All students learn how to;

- Devise from stimulus
- Read, interpret and perform plays
- Create and sustain roles, using performance skills appropriately
- Students acquire design skills and develop knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of theatre practice
- How conventions, forms and techniques are used in drama and live theatre to create meaning.
- How creative and artistic choices influence how meaning is communicated to an audience.
- How performance texts are constructed to be performed, conveying meaning.
- How performance texts are informed by their social, cultural and historical contexts and are interpreted and performed for an audience.

Studying Drama will enable students to:

Drama also teaches students many life skills such as confidence, teamwork, decision making and compromise.

Assessment method:

Component One – Understanding Drama (Written)

What's assessed

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of one set play from a choice of nine
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

How it's assessed

Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes

- Open book

- 80 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Component Two- Devising (Practical)

What's assessed

- Process of creating devised drama
- Performance of devised drama (students may contribute as performer or designer)
- Analysis and evaluation of own work

How it's assessed

- Devising log (60 marks)
- Devised performance (20 marks)
- 80 marks in total
- 40% of GCSE

Component Three- Texts in Practice (practical)

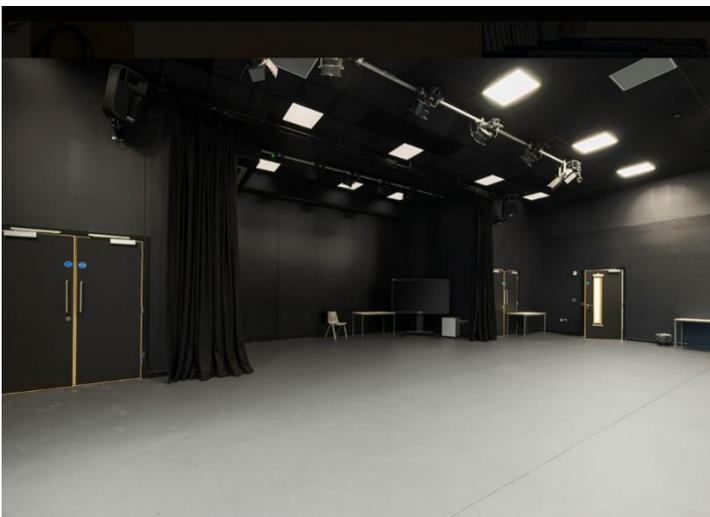
What's assessed

- Performance of two extracts from one play (students may contribute as performer or designer)

Free choice of play but it must contrast with the set play chosen for Component 1

How it's assessed

- Performance of Extract 1 (20 marks) and Extract 2 (20 marks)
- 40 marks in total
- 20% of GCSE



Post 16 and Career opportunities:

Successful completion of the course should lead to acceptance on to Drama or Theatre A Level courses. If you are wanting to become an actor, then GCSE Drama will start you on the path to become audition ready for those wanting to attend Drama school. The technical aspects of the course such as lighting or sound design could lead to acceptance at a College studying Technical Theatre.

English Language and Literature

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: AQA

General outline of the course: Students will study English Language and English Literature leading to two separate GCSEs. A wide range of texts are covered, including prose, poetry, drama and various non-fiction texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. English Language assesses skills in reading and writing with speaking and listening as a separate accreditation. English Literature examines the students' responses to Shakespeare, a Nineteenth Century English novel and a modern text.

Assessment Method: 100% Examination (both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature)

The course aims to develop the students' ability to:

1. Speak and listen effectively: students are taught to formulate, clarify and express their ideas; adapt their speech appropriately according to context; listen appropriately to others; use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English where appropriate.
2. Read effectively: students are given practice in fluent, accurate reading and are given the opportunity to enjoy and respond to literature of increasing complexity.
1. Write effectively: students are taught to develop compositional skills to aid clear communication of meaning to the reader; they are helped to develop a wide vocabulary and are taught to structure grammatically correct sentences and coherent paragraphs and whole texts; they are helped to develop good presentational skills, including accurate spelling and punctuation and legible, cursive handwriting.

Students will focus on:

1. Becoming mature and reflective readers, writers and speakers.
2. Developing the ability to write a variety of texts within time limits, keeping in mind form, purpose and audience.
3. Enjoying challenging literary texts in an informed and rigorous fashion.

Geography

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: AQA

General outline of the course: Our aim at GCSE is to develop a student's appreciation of the many diverse cultures and environments that they may experience during their lives; to gain an understanding of some of the world's key challenges and give them the skills, knowledge and abilities to research and communicate their ideas and opinions. They will have the opportunity to study the relationships between the human and physical environment and understand how our actions are changing the world. Students have to undertake two days fieldwork as part of their GCSE course. One of these days will be a human study, focusing on regeneration in Birmingham. The other will be a physical study, focusing on coastal environments in Hunstanton.

The course consists of the following topics:

- **Paper 1 – Living with the Physical Environment**
 - A. The challenge of natural hazards
 - B. The living world
 - C. Physical landscapes in the UK (Coasts and Rivers)
- **Paper 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment**
 - A. Urban issues and challenges
 - B. The changing economic world
 - C. The challenge of resource management
- **Paper 3 – Geographical Applications**
 - Issue related evaluation fieldwork

There are three exams at the end of Year 11:

- **Paper 1 – Living with the Physical Environment**
 - Written exam: 1½ hours, 88 marks, 35% of final GCSE mark
- **Paper 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment**
 - Written exam: 1½ hours, 88 marks, 35% of final GCSE mark
- **Paper 3 – Geographical Applications**
 - Written exam: 1½ hours, 76 marks, 30% of final GCSE mark

The questions include short and long written answers, multiple choice and data response tasks.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

Students go on to study both physical and human geography, environmental sciences or use it as a facilitating subject which are those subjects which are most commonly required or preferred by universities to get on to a range of degree courses. Geography

is a very diverse subject and provides knowledge and skills needed for a range of careers which include Climatologist, Weather Forecaster, Geologist, Town Planner, Surveyor, Teacher (all levels), GIS consultant, GIS analyst, Architect, Conservation officer, Charity Worker, International Aid Worker. The subject covers many contemporary issues that the world faces today and places geographers at the forefront of being able to manage these.

Level 2 Technical Award in Hair and Beauty Studies

Qualification: Level 2

Awarding Body: City & Guilds

What careers does it link to?

- Hairdressing
- Nail technician
- Wardrobe/Hair in theatre
- Beauty therapist
- Spa worker

Assessment method:

- Exploring the world of hair and beauty (25%)
- Science of hair and beauty (50%)
- Design in the hair and beauty sector (25%)

The course is 50% examination and 50% project/coursework based.



History

Qualification: GCSE

Awarding Body: Edexcel

General outline of the course: GCSE Edexcel History is structured around three examination papers and is designed to give students a broad understanding of British and international history across different time periods. The course combines a thematic study, which explores how key themes such as power, society, or conflict change over a long span of time, with a focused study of a specific historic environment linked to that theme. Students also complete a period study that examines major developments over several decades, often in an international context, alongside a British depth study that looks closely at a particular era, analysing key events, individuals, and social, political, and religious changes. The final component is a modern depth study, which explores a nation or period in significant crisis or transformation. Across all papers, students are assessed through written exams that test their ability to analyse sources, evaluate historical interpretations, explain causes and consequences, assess change and continuity, and construct well-supported arguments using precise evidence.

The course is split into 3 examination papers sat at the end of Year 11:

Paper 1 – Thematic Study and Historic Environment

- Medicine in Britain c1250–present and the British sector of the Western Front 1914–1918: injuries, treatment and the trenches

Paper 1 written exam: 1 hour and 20 minutes exam 30% of the GCSE

Paper 2 – Period Study and Depth Study

- Anglo-Saxon and Norman England c1060–c1088
- The American West c1835–c1895

Paper 2 written exam: 1 hour and 50 minutes exam 40% of the GCSE

Paper 3 – Modern Depth Study

- Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918–1939

Paper 3 written exam: 1 hour and 30 minutes exam 30% of the GCSE

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

The skills gained through studying History are applicable to many careers including politics, the Civil Service, teaching, law and journalism. History provides a fantastic opportunity to ignite and engage your passion and interests in culture, society and politics. Studying History will help you develop into an independent learner, a critical thinker and a decision maker. All of these personal assets will make you stand out as you progress to A Level, university and/ or the workplace. Students who study GCSE History often continue to study History at A Level and take Government and Politics, English, and other humanities subjects alongside it.

Hospitality and Catering

Qualification: Level 1 and 2 Vocational Award

Awarding Body: WJEC

What careers does it link to?

- Armed services
- Hotel management
- Cruise Liners
- Health and safety inspectors
- Environmental officers
- Hospitality and catering establishments
- Accommodations Manager
- Catering Manager
- Chef
- Conference Centre Manger
- Fast food restaurant Manager
- Hotel Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Air cabin Crew

Assessment Method:

- Unit 1 Hospitality and catering industry. Theory work leading to and 90min exam – worth 40% of the final grade
- Unit 2 Scenario based coursework with practical cooking worth 60% of the final grade
- Practical exam 4 hours prep time - cooking 2 dishes with accompaniments.



Mathematics (core)

Qualification: GCSE

Awarding Body: AQA

General outline of the course: GCSE Mathematics covers a wide range of basic mathematical knowledge and skills. The subject is grouped into particular curriculum strands:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and measures
- Probability and statistics

GCSE Mathematics has changed to assess the new Key Stage 4 programme of study which schools and colleges are required to teach. The new secondary mathematics programmes of study place a renewed emphasis on problem-solving, functionality and mathematical thinking. The course should provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment, to give students the appropriate mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to help them progress to a full range of courses in further and higher education.

GCSE Mathematics covers a lot of basic skills you will use in later life. You will also use these skills in other GCSEs for example using formulae in Science, reading charts and scales in Geography or using measures and reading scales in D&T. Many college courses as well as many jobs have GCSE Maths as an entry requirement.

GCSE Mathematics is tiered into two levels. It is envisioned by the Examination boards that the majority of students will be entered for the Foundation tier.

The grades available for award at each tier are:

Higher: Grades 9,8,7,6,5,4 and 3

Foundation: Grades 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1

Grade 9 is the highest possible award.

Assessment method: 100% Exam

There are three exam papers that will be taken at the end of the course. Both Higher and Foundation papers are 1 hour 30 minutes long. All papers contain a mixture of short and long questions with the questions arranged so that the easier questions are at the beginning of the paper. The first paper of each tier is a non-calculator paper, the remaining two are calculator papers.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

GCSE Mathematics is generally required by most employers and by those wishing to go on to higher education. It gives a good background for those hoping to go into commerce or industry and especially those professions with a financial emphasis.

Most university courses in any subject require a specific level in Mathematics at GCSE. At the time of writing, it is unclear how the new GCSE levels will be interpreted by universities. It is clear that the bottom end of the old C Grade has been matched with the bottom end of a Grade 4.

However, the government has also placed high expectation on students gaining at least a level 5 in the new examination and this will, as a consequence, become the new level for which to aim. In the future this may mean that students who do not achieve a Grade 5 will need to continue to study GCSE Mathematics as part of their Post-16 education.

Modern Languages (French)

Qualification: GCSE

Examination Board: AQA

General outline of the course: At KS3, you acquired a significant amount of knowledge and understanding in listening, speaking, reading and writing. At KS4, the GCSE course builds on this and introduces you to a wider range of structures and topic areas including:

Theme 1:

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

Theme 2:

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

Theme 3:

- Communication and the world around us (Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest/Topic 2: Media and technology/Topic 3: The environment and where people live)

Assessment method:

The course covers Years 9 ,10 and 11. You will be informally assessed regularly and asked to target specific areas for improvement.

Your listening, reading, speaking and writing skills are tested separately at the end of Year 11.

Summative assessment takes the following form:

- 25% listening exam
- 25% speaking exam
- 25% reading exam
- 25% writing exam

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

A GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language ensures an essential basis for progression to further study at AS/A level and is a stepping-stone to the learning of other languages, not to mention plenty of interesting career and social opportunities. The world has become a much smaller place, thanks to technology and ease of travel. It is, therefore, crucial that we are able to speak to one another and appreciate different cultures. In an increasingly competitive employment market, a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language can make a big difference to your future employment and mobility prospects, whatever your career plans may be. Speaking a language fluently can lead to careers in teaching, interpreting, translating, sales, finance and marketing in many business sectors. It also develops your self-confidence, your powers of deduction, your communication and analytical skills and your awareness of language in general.

Music

Qualification: GCSE

Awarding Body: OCR

General outline of the course: GCSE Music consists of three main elements – performing, composing and listening. The performing and composing elements contribute to 60% of the course and are internally assessed. The listening component is 40% and requires students to answer specific questions on selected extracts of music encompassing a multitude of styles. The range of topics allows for practical and musical learning and can be tailored to the various types of musicians who choose to study it.

Area of Study 1: My Music

Area of Study 2: The Concerto Through Time

Area of Study 3: Rhythms of World

Area of Study 4: Film Music

Area of Study 5: Conventions of Pop

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

Many employers view Music quite highly because it demonstrates students' ability to show discipline, creativity and analysis. Aural perception is a large part of the qualification which can be transferred to other subjects, such as Modern Foreign Languages. It is an invaluable qualification for students wishing to study Music or Performing Arts beyond Key Stage 4.

Component Title	Component Overview
Integrated Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance on students' chosen instrument (can include vocals)• Composition to a brief set by the student• Explore the skills and capabilities of their instrument and produce a performance to demonstrate interpretation and technical control• Internally assessed, externally moderated
Practical Component	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensemble performance on any instrument• Composition to a board set brief, linked to an area of study• Internally assessed, externally moderated
Listening Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening, appraising and notation skills are assessed• Externally assessed

Physical Education: Sports Studies

Qualification: Cambridge Nationals

Examination Board: OCR



General outline of the course: Cambridge National in Sport Studies will encourage students to understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Sport Studies. They will develop learning and practical skills that can be applied to real-life contexts and work situations. They will learn to think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically. Students will develop independence and confidence in using skills that are relevant to the Exercise, Physical Activity, Sport and Health sector and more widely. They will understand topical and contemporary issues in sport, develop skills as a performer in two different sporting activities and learn how to lead sporting activity sessions. They will explore the relationship that media has with sport and understand how linked they are. Students will develop the skills of team working, research and planning and understand that sports performance goes far beyond just the simple physical activity of sport.

Students must be aware that the majority of this course is theory based. There will be a lot of classroom teaching and time spent typing up coursework in the IT suite. The assessment in two practical activities is only worth 10% of the overall grade. Students will be expected to complete homework and meet deadlines set for written coursework.

Assessment method:

Overview of Units

Mandatory Unit:

- **R184 – Contemporary Issues in Sport (Starts in Year 10 and completed in Year 11)**
Examined externally (written paper), 70 marks (40% of overall grade)

Non-examination Assessment (NEA) Units:

- **R185 – Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities (Starts in Year 9 and completed in Year 10)**
Centre-assessed, OCR-moderated (40% of overall grade)
- **R186 – Sport and the Media (Completed in Year 9)**
Centre-assessed, OCR-moderated (20% of overall grade)

Grading Criteria:

Level 2:	Level 1:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinction*• Distinction• Merit• Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinction• Merit• Pass



Science

Qualification: GCSE

Awarding Body: AQA

General outline of the course: Science offers either a Combined Science qualification worth 2 GCSEs or separate GCSEs in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, studied over 3 years.

GCSE Combined Science

The Combined Science 'Trilogy' course is designed to make Science more relevant to everyday life. The course teaches and assesses important content and skills that can be translated into future careers and Further Education. The course is assessed through terminal examinations in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at the end of Year 11. The exams have two tiers, Higher and Foundation and include questions based on practical activities conducted through the course. Combined Science has a 17 point grading scale, from 9-9, 9-8 through to 2-1, 1-1.

Separate Sciences award 3 GCSEs, studied over 3 years.

GCSE Separate Sciences – Biology, Chemistry and Physics

These students will be selected during the course at the discretion of the Science Faculty Lead.

Assessment method:

Six Papers: Two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each will assess different topics and all will be sat at the end of Year 11.

Duration: The papers are 1 hour 15 minutes for Combined Science and 1 hour 45 minutes for Separate Sciences.

Tiers: Foundation or higher

Weighting: The papers are equally weighted. Each paper is worth 16.7% of the grade, and is worth 70 marks for Combined Science and 100 marks for Separate Sciences.

Post 16 and Career opportunities:

A-levels in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Level 3 BTEC in Applied Science can be accessed by this route of study. However, students will need to meet the subject requirements before gaining entry onto the courses.

Question Types: Multiple choice, structured, closed, short answer and open response.