



MERCHANT  
TAYLORS'  
SCHOOLS

For Boys and Girls  
aged 4 to 18 years



# GCSE OPTIONS 2019



*The Best Education for Life*







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# How to use this booklet



Over the course of the next few weeks, you will receive guidance and help from a number of sources to help you make your selection of GCSEs. This is the first time you will take responsibility for your subject choices, and make decisions that will influence the next stages of your education and your future career. Therefore, you need to think carefully about what you want to do. Older girls who have already made their choices will be available to give plenty of help and advice. This booklet should be your starting point for information; it provides you with a clear outline of all the subjects that are on offer, the aims of the course, examination requirements and coursework.

Every girl has to take six compulsory GCSE subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. They then choose three optional subjects but at least one must be a Language and one should be a Humanity. You will need a good grounding in these subjects, regardless of which particular course you may go on to take at Higher Education. This provides a balanced programme of study that ensures that, after GCSE, you will still have the chance to study sciences, languages, humanities, creative or technical subjects to A level. It keeps the doors open so that you can develop your own interests and have a wide choice of careers.

## WHY DO YOU NEED TO CHOOSE?

1. Each subject taken to GCSE has to be covered in depth through a demanding syllabus, examinations and, in some cases, coursework. It would not be practical for you to do too many subjects.
2. You all have certain abilities, strengths and interests, so it is sensible to choose subjects which reflect these.
3. Most of you do not yet know what career paths you are likely to follow, so it is better to study as broad a range of subjects as possible.
4. If you count up all the subjects on offer at School, you could not do them all, so some level of choice is inevitable.
5. Most universities have a minimum requirement of only five GCSEs at Grade 5 and above, including Maths and English.

## MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM YEAR 9

Year 9 is the year in which you make choices about the GCSEs you want to study in Years 10 and 11. It is an exciting time, because you will have a growing sense of independence. It can also be a bit nerve-wracking! Am I making the right decisions? Will the choices I make now affect what I can do after I leave MTGS? What if I like all my subjects; which ones will I choose? For a lucky few, this will be an easy process, because you have very clear ideas of what you want to do. Those in that position are generally in the minority. However, the majority of you will find it less straightforward and so the purpose of this booklet and the Options Evening is to enable you to make informed decisions that you are happy with.

The key to choosing your options is to select subjects that play to your strengths and that you are inspired by and will enjoy. This is the best guarantee that you will be prepared to apply yourself fully and thus succeed. You should not be choosing a subject because you like the teacher, or your friends are doing it, or indeed because it worked well for a member of your family. As you can imagine, there is no guarantee that the same teacher will actually teach you for GCSE or that you will enjoy the subject if you do not have a genuine interest in it.

# Helping you to choose

Guidance will be given within your PSHE lessons, form periods, subject lessons and informed discussions with staff. You will have a chance to reflect upon your interests, strengths and weaknesses and to make choices in the light of that knowledge. There are lots of resources in the library devoted to careers which you can consult at any time. The Head of Careers is available to answer specific enquiries about which subjects are useful for different careers. Your parents will be able to help as well. The school aims to advise you, keeping your best interests in mind. For example, if you have not shown sufficient proficiency in creative subjects, we would discourage you from following such a course. Please also note that in the majority of cases you will be able to study all of your options, but occasionally this is not possible. We therefore ask you to make a reserve choice to accommodate this.



Classes are run according to demand and the viability of the final numbers. Other subjects will become available at A level, and some courses can be studied at A level without the GCSE in their subject, but only in consultation with the Head of the Department and on a case by case basis. However, the student would need to have demonstrated great ability, commitment and a good record at KS3 to succeed at A level.

## HOW TO CHOOSE?

1. Think about your ability in a subject. How are your skills best used? Are you good at writing essays, or better with numbers and equations?
2. Think about your interests. It is the subject that needs to interest you rather than the teacher.
3. Think about the career implications. The compulsory core subjects include the disciplines that you must have, but think ahead. If there are subjects which you might want to take at A Level (eg. Music), it may be a requirement to have first taken them at GCSE, but find this out as it is not always necessary.

Remember every subject on offer can help you to develop your knowledge, understanding and skills in some way. You should discuss your choices with your parents and teachers who are here to help you, but you will be taking the subjects so you need to make the decisions. These are your choices and no one else's. So you need to focus on what you enjoy most because you are unlikely to get satisfaction from a career which relies on subjects you dislike. Get as much information as you can from the sources listed above and then choose for yourself.

## TIMELINES AND DEADLINES FOR MAKING YOUR CHOICES

- Briefing meeting with Mrs Miller on 06/02/2019
- YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING – 13/02/2019 This evening gives you and your parents the opportunity to hear from Heads of Department in more detail about the subjects on offer. You will have a chance to ask questions and you should end up with a clear idea of what your choices are.
- FILLING OUT THE FORM confirming your choices must be completed by 28/02/2019.
- CHANGING YOUR OPTIONS If you change your mind after the deadline, your parents need to email Mrs Miller (b.miller@merchanttaylor.com) in the first instance. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that we will be able to accommodate your new option after the initial deadline.

## PLEASE NOTE:

THE INFORMATION IN THIS BOOKLET IS ACCURATE AT TIME OF PRINTING

You will be notified in writing to confirm your choices.

# Which Subject can I choose?

All girls are expected to study the following **6 GCSEs**:

**English Language**  
**English Literature**  
**Mathematics**  
**Biology**  
**Chemistry**  
**Physics**

The remaining **3 GCSEs** should be chosen from the following option blocks:

## LANGUAGE

Choose at least ONE

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**French**  
**German**  
**Latin**  
**Spanish**

## HUMANITIES

Advised to choose at least ONE

**Classical Civilisation**  
**Geography**  
**History**  
**Religious Studies**

## OTHER OPTIONS

Choose to  
bring  
total to 3

**Art, Craft & Design**  
**Computer Science**  
**Drama**  
**Food Preparation  
& Nutrition**  
**Music**  
**Physical Education**



# CORE SUBJECTS



# English

## What does GCSE English offer me?

All MTGS students are entered for both English language and English literature GCSEs, thus gaining two GCSE grades for English at the end of the two-year course. GCSE English is required for entry to a wide range of A level and higher education courses. You will learn a range of essential skills, such as how to craft a convincing essay, and how to understand both explicit and implicit meanings in a variety of texts.



## What does the course entail?

Eduqas GCSE English Language assessment involves:

- Reading and answering questions on an extract from twentieth-century literature.
- Writing a short piece of prose narrative
- Analysing and comparing non-fiction texts
- Producing transactional/persuasive writing such as a letter, an article or a speech.

Spoken Language will be reported on as part of the qualification but it will not form part of the final mark and grade. This involves producing one presentation / speech, including responses to questions and feedback.

## GCSE English Literature assessment involves:

- An extract question and an essay question on a Shakespeare text e.g. *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth*
- Responding to unseen poetry and a set anthology of poetry from 1789 to the present day
- Analytical response to a post-1914 drama e.g. *An Inspector Calls*
- An essay question on nineteenth-century prose e.g. *A Christmas Carol*.

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## Beyond GCSE

A level English is an exciting and challenging course to study at MTGS. It links very well with other humanities subjects such as History and Classical Civilisation. Possible future careers for English students include publishing, journalism, advertising, law, public relations and media.

## Curriculum Enrichment

The creative writing group meets weekly and submits competition entries to Young Writers. Many of our students have had their writing published in anthologies. Students are also encouraged to submit writing for publication in the school magazine, Calliope. GCSE students attend theatre performances of set texts. For example, this year we saw the Spymonkeys' production of *A Christmas Carol*.



# Mathematics

## What does IGCSE Mathematics offer me?

IGCSE (International GCSE) Mathematics provides the essential numerical, algebraic, data handling and geometrical skills that underpin a vast number of subjects. Problem solving skills that are developed can be applied in every other area, improving your general thinking skills as well as your mathematical ones. Mathematics will help you think logically and analytically.



## What does the course entail?

IGCSE (International GCSE) is compulsory for all girls.

The specifications encourage students to think and reason mathematically and to develop confidence in their use of Mathematics.

The specification is divided into three areas:

- Number and Algebra
- Shape, Space and Measures
- Handling Data

The specification (code 4MA1) can be found on Firefly

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-international-gcses-and-edexcel-certificates/international-gcse-mathematics-a-2016.html>

## Beyond GCSE:

You will need at least a grade 7 at IGCSE to progress successfully to the A Level Mathematics course. A level Mathematics is highly recommended for most STEM degree courses and can be useful in other subjects such as Geography, Psychology, Economics and Business Studies. Girls who have studied Mathematics are in the fortunate position of having an excellent choice of career. There is still a huge national demand from employers in science, engineering and manufacturing who have a need for students who can think logically and analytically.

## Curriculum Enrichment

Extension questions and problem solving tasks are embedded within the mathematics curriculum for IGCSE, and in lessons we often looking at content which is beyond the scope of IGCSE work. In particular, topics such as Higher Algebraic Techniques, Calculus and Kinematics bridge the gap between Mathematics GCSE and A Level. Girls in Year 10 and 11 Set 1 are entered for the UKMT Intermediate Mathematics Challenge. This is a UK wide competition for students and is designed to stimulate mathematical problem solving. The top scoring 40% of pupils receive a certificate and the very best are invited to take part in the Intermediate Mathematical Olympiad or the Intermediate Kangaroo.

# Biology



## What does GCSE Biology offer me?

A two-year course with terminal examinations, allowing maximum time and depth of study over two years.

## What does the course entail?

### 8461/AQA Certificate In Biology

- This allows pupils to understand the scientific processes in Biology, whilst also implementing practical and investigate work.
- Topics covered include tissues, organ systems, genetic variation, homeostasis, proteins and enzymes, microscopy, the cell cycle and more.
- Skills developed include data presentation and data handling, following investigation design and experimental observation.
- 2 written papers are taken, each of 1 hour 45 mins, as terminal examinations at the end of Year 11. Each paper is worth 50% of GCSE total.
- There is no practical controlled assessment, but the knowledge and understanding of a number of required practicals are tested in the written papers.

For more information visit [www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcsebiology/8461](http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcsebiology/8461)

## Beyond GCSE

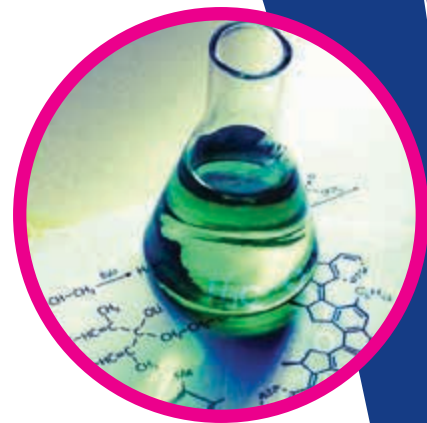
7-9 in Biology and Chemistry, a minimum of grade 5 in Mathematics, the course is useful for very many scientific university courses/vocational courses. The former includes Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Biochemistry, Physiology and Biomedical Science. The latter includes Nursing, Physiotherapy and Radiography.

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## Curriculum Enrichment

Biology students are encouraged to take part in a wide range of extracurricular activities which, in recent years have included lectures from outside, expert speakers on relevant areas of specialist interest, and on-line biological debates with academic biologists. These activities, along with some "Critical Thinking" extension lunchtime sessions allow able scientists to prepare for the rigours of the new GCSE specification.

# Chemistry



## What does GCSE Chemistry offer me?

GCSE Chemistry occupies a central position amongst the sciences. Almost any science-based course or career (where in the Food Industry, Health Care, Environmental Control, the Chemical or Pharmaceutical Industries) requires a basic qualification in Chemistry. The terminal assessment is designed to ensure the maximum amount of time to teach the syllabus.

## What does the course entail?

### Course Breakdown and Assessments

- 8462 GCSE Chemistry
- 2 written papers are taken, of 1 hour 45 minutes, each as terminal examinations at the end of Year 11.
- There is no assessed practical element. Each written paper constitutes 50% of the qualification including questions that are multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.
- For a PDF version of the draft specifications see <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry-8462>
- General topics: Atomic structure and the periodic table, Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter, Quantitative chemistry, Chemical changes, Organic chemistry, Chemical analysis, Energy changes, Rate of reactions, The Atmosphere and Using Resources.

## Beyond GCSE

Grade requirements 7-9 in GCSE Chemistry and a minimum of grade 5 in Mathematics.

Chemistry is essential for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Biochemistry, Physiotherapy and Biomedical Sciences. Also useful for many other scientific (Biological Sciences, Radiology, Nursing) and non-scientific (Law, Journalism, Archaeology, Geological Sciences) university and vocational courses.

## Curriculum Enrichment

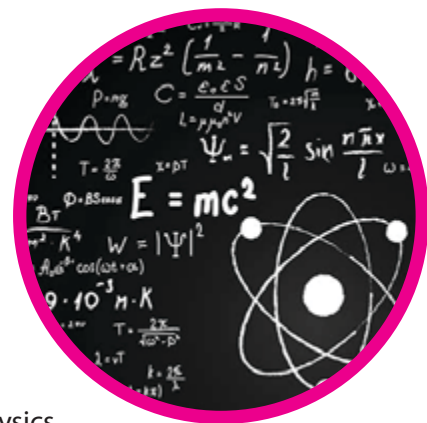
- Pupils are encouraged to progress by using the "Stretch and Challenge" extension activities and to contribute to the challenge wall display.
- The weekly GCSE clinic gives an opportunity for pupils to bring the most difficult, lateral-thinking questions to discuss with staff and to perfect their skills of application of data presented in a variety of forms.
- An annual "Top of the Bench competition", run by Liverpool university allows the most gifted Key Stage 3 Chemists to compete against other schools in the North West.
- National Science Week has been used as an opportunity for keen Chemistry students to take part in an on-line debating forum with prestigious Chemists entitled "I am a Scientist – get me out of here".
- Our dedicated Year 9 STEM day allows all pupils to tackle an open-ended Chemistry practical activity, in order to extend their investigative and competitive skills.



# Physics

## What does GCSE Physics offer me?

GCSE Physics topics are designed to engage and stimulate students in physics whilst teaching them fundamental, transferable skills. The course covers a wide range of topics, many of which can be applied to everyday life. Students are encouraged to learn and ask about the fundamental laws that govern natural phenomena, and take part in a number of practical investigations. From the subatomic level to the life cycle of a star physics offers a glimpse of the amazing world in which we live.



## What does the course entail?

- GCSE AQA Physics GCSE.
- 2 papers of 1 hour 45 mins terminal exams.
- [www.aqa.org.uk/science/ab/gcsephysics](http://www.aqa.org.uk/science/ab/gcsephysics)
- Physics 8463
- General subjects: Forces, Energy, Waves, Electricity, Particle Model of Matter, Atomic Structure, Magnetism and Electromagnetism and Space.

## Beyond GCSE

To study A level Physics at Merchant Taylors' Girls' School grade requirements are 7-9 in both GCSE Physics and Mathematics.

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Studying Physics at A Level is useful in many subjects but is particularly important for the following careers: Physics, Astrophysics, Medical Physics, Geophysics, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Architecture, Computer Science.

## Curriculum Enrichment

The Physics Department offer a strong extra-curricular programme that includes university lectures, Liverpool Young Physicist of the Year awards and the opportunity for students to go to NASA, Texas. We allow girls to express their interests and encourage them to take part in events/competitions that directly relate to their chosen areas of enjoyment in Physics and Engineering.

Our dedicated Year 9 STEM day allows all pupils to tackle an open-ended Physics practical activity, in order to extend their analytical and competitive skills.

A photograph of three students in school uniforms (dark blue blazers, light blue shirts, and striped ties) sitting at a table in a classroom. They are all smiling and looking at books. The student on the left is holding a small globe. The student in the middle is holding a book with a rainbow on the cover. The student on the right is wearing glasses and holding a book with a space theme. The background shows a classroom setting with a window and a colorful poster on the wall.

# OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

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# French

## What does GCSE French Offer me?

You will be able to develop the four skills you acquired at KS3 and develop your confidence and analytical competence through learning the language. In addition to your two double lessons, you will have a speaking lesson every week in a smaller group with a native French speaker.



## What does the course entail?

- Identity and Culture.
  - National, International and Global areas of interest.
  - Current and future study and employment
- For further information about the French specification:  
[www.aqa.org.uk/gcse-French](http://www.aqa.org.uk/gcse-French)

### Paper 1 Listening

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language.

### Paper 2: Speaking

What is assessed: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety Of purposes.

### Paper 3: Reading

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types of written language, including literary texts.

### 14 Paper 4: Writing

What is assessed: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes.

### Beyond GCSE

You will not be able to take German to A level if you have not studied it at GCSE but many universities offer language courses from scratch to A level and beyond.

### Curriculum enrichment

The department invite theatre companies into school to perform plays in the target language. The subject material is not confined to the GCSE syllabus and the plays offer a stimulating environment to support language learning.

Girls are introduced to literature and culture relating to the language they are studying (eg poetry and song).

Girls are expected to extend their vocabulary range whenever possible by accessing the wealth of reading and listening resources available both in the school library and the department.

The department possesses a wider range of Foreign Language DVDs which girls are encouraged to use in their spare time.

Girls all have a log in facility to access the online student resources associated with each course. This provides an excellent resource for the girls to hone and develop their linguistic skills.



# German

## What does GCSE German Offer me?

You will be able to develop the four skills you acquired at KS3 and develop your confidence and analytical competence through learning the language. In addition to your two double lessons you will have a speaking lesson every week in a smaller group with a native German speaker.

## What does the course entail?

- Identity and Culture.
- National, International and Global areas of interest.
- Current and future study and employment.

For further information about the German specification: [www.aqa.org.uk/gcse-german](http://www.aqa.org.uk/gcse-german)



## Assessments

### Paper 1 Listening

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types Of spoken language.

### Paper 2: Speaking

What is assessed: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes.

### Paper 3: Reading

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types of written language, including literary texts.

### Paper 4: Writing

What is assessed: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes.

## Beyond GCSE

You will not be able to take French to A level if you have not studied it at GCSE but many universities offer language courses from scratch to A level and beyond.

## Curriculum enrichment

The department invite theatre companies into school to perform plays in the target language. The subject material is not confined to the GCSE syllabus and the plays offer a stimulating environment to support language learning.

Girls are introduced to literature and culture relating to the language they are studying (eg poetry and song).

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Girls all have a log in facility to access the online student resources associated with each course. This provides an excellent resource for the girls to hone and develop their linguistic skills.

# Spanish

## What does GCSE Spanish offer me?

You will be able to develop the four skills you acquired at KS3 and develop your confidence and analytical competence through learning the language. In addition to your two double lessons, you will have a speaking lesson every week in a smaller group with a native Spanish speaker.

## What does the course entail?

- Identity and Culture.
  - National, International and Global areas of interest
  - Current and future study and employment
- For further information about the Spanish specification:  
[www.aqa.org.uk/gcsespanish](http://www.aqa.org.uk/gcsespanish)



## Paper 1 Listening

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language.

## Paper 2: Speaking

What is assessed: Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes.

## Paper 3: Reading

What is assessed: Understanding and responding to different types of written language, including literary

## Paper 4: Writing

What is assessed: Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes.

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## Beyond GCSE

You will not be able to take Spanish to A level if you have not studied it at GCSE but many universities offer language courses from scratch to A level and beyond.

## Curriculum enrichment

The department invite theatre companies into school to perform plays in the target language. The subject material is not confined to the GCSE syllabus and the plays offer a stimulating environment to support language learning.

Girls are introduced to literature and culture relating to the language they are studying (eg poetry and song). Girls are expected to extend their vocabulary range whenever possible by accessing the wealth of reading and listening resources available both in the school library and the department.

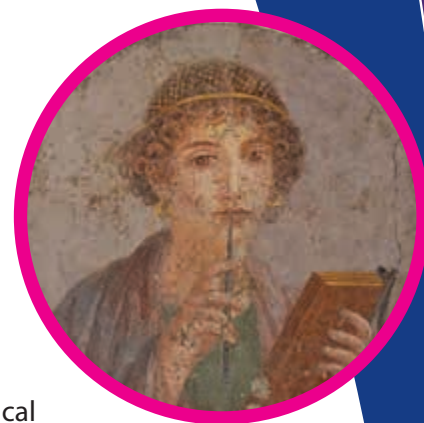
The department possesses a wider range of Foreign Language DVDs which girls are encouraged to use in their spare time.

Girls all have a log in facility to access the online student resources associated with each course. This provides an excellent resource for the girls to hone and develop their linguistic skills.

# Latin

## What does GCSE Latin offer me?

- Latin offers you the opportunity to develop a range of valuable skills through the fascinating filter of the ancient world.
- It will give you a satisfying intellectual challenge through the mental gymnastics of solving unseen translations. You will develop the key transferable skill of problem solving, practising paying close attention to detail and following logical thought processes.
- Through analysing ancient literature you will develop a sensitivity to language and appreciation of nuance and subtlety. You will learn how to quickly extract relevant information and how to analyse and evaluate literary techniques.
- These skills will be honed as you read about the weird and wonderful world of the Romans, from fantastical mythology to courageous individuals and crazy emperors!



## What does the course entail?

Latin at GCSE builds on the language work undertaken in Year 9 and offers pupils the opportunity of reading some of Europe's oldest literature in the original language. We follow the OCR specification (J282) <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/latin-j282-from-2016/>.

There are 3 units:

- Language - Comprehension and translation of unseen material
- Prose Literature - Comprehension of author such as Livy, Pliny or Caesar
- Verse Literature - Comprehension of author such as Virgil, Ovid or Catullus

## Beyond GCSE

Further Study: Latin is one of the most respected subjects because of its traditional academic rigour and is highly regarded by the top universities.

Possible careers: Latin is the perfect indicator to future employers of your intelligence, adaptability and powers of reasoning. Whether you are considering a career in Medicine or Law, the business world or creative industries, from engineering and software design to publishing and politics, Latin gives essential skills for a whole host of career paths. With Latin under your belt you'll stand out from the other applicants in the modern competitive workplace.

## Curriculum enrichment

Optional translation into Latin adds an extra challenge for those wishing to stretch themselves. We also explore the historical, cultural and literary backgrounds of the texts read in order to develop a broader appreciation of Roman life. The department extends the learning process beyond the classroom by leading trips to Italy, Greece and London. Trips to museum, sites and plays are also offered when available.



# Classical Civilisation



## What does GCSE Classical Civilisation offer me?

- Classical Civilisation is a fascinating area of study, which will both stimulate your imagination and develop your core skills
- You will have the opportunity to explore a wide variety of topics, from fantastical mythology and adventure to the gritty realities of everyday life in the past. The ancient societies of Greece and Rome played a vital part in the development of the literature, thought and culture of modern Europe. Learning about how people lived, what they thought important and what they achieved in the ancient world will help you to make sense of the modern one
- As an unusual subject, not offered at many schools, studying Classical Civilisation will help you stand out from the crowd.
- You will also develop a wide range of transferable skills which are essential to further study and highly valued by universities and employers: Comprehension, Source analysis, Evaluation, Creativity and Essay writing

## What does the course entail?

We follow the OCR specification (J199) <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/classical-civilisation-j199-from-2017/>. There are two written papers, each worth 90 marks and lasting 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Paper 1 'Myth and Religion':** In this module, we study popular gods and myths of the Greeks and Romans, and the important part which religion and festivals played in everyday life.

**Paper 2 'The Homeric World':** In this module, we study the culture and archaeology of Mycenaean Greece (the time of the mythical Trojan War) and pair this study with a close reading of select books of Homer's Odyssey.

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## Beyond GCSE

**Further Study:** All are welcome to study Classical Civilisation at A Level and many find it provides that missing ingredient to sixth form study. It is a popular subject because of the variety of topics, excellent grades achieved and its reputation for academic rigour. Each year students love the subject for its own merits and find it a good compliment for their other humanities or a perfect contrast to their sciences.

**Possible Careers:** Classical Civilisation promotes an ability to develop and sustain a reasoned argument whilst tackling unfamiliar and sometimes alien concepts – this really does help you develop essential transferable skills. Recent Classicists from MTGS have gone on to study a variety of subjects at university (Medicine, Law, Psychology, Biomedical Sciences, Dentistry, Egyptology, Electrical and Electronic Engineering and, of course, Classics in its many forms).

## Curriculum Enrichment

'To extend students beyond the already broad curriculum, we read around the specified texts and explore a wider range of ancient sources. Open-ended, creative activities enable students to develop their own interpretations of the ancient world. Nothing compares to seeing the wonders of Greece and Rome in person, so we offer regular trips to the key sites of Greece and Italy, with a range of museum visits, plays and talks whenever possible.'

# Geography

## What does GCSE Geography offer me?

- Geography is a highly topical subject, ever changing as world events unfold. Geography will enable you to understand the inter-relationships between people and their environments. It will help you to make sense of the changes that are happening in the world around you and to make informed decisions.
- By studying Geography you will develop essential skills such as problem solving, decision making, identifying issues and communicating findings through the undertaking of a fieldwork investigation, individually and as part of a team.
- You will use a variety of resources including maps and Visual media as well as complex technologies such as GIS and remote sensing, to obtain, present and analyse information.
- These transferable skills are highly sought after by employers.

If you enjoy studying geography and are good at it — carry on studying it! You are more likely to obtain your results in a subject you enjoy and are good at.



## What does the course entail?

AQA specification (8035) <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035>

This specification highlights the critical importance of Geography for understanding the world and for stimulating an interest in places. It will inspire students to become global citizens by exploring their place in the world, their values and responsibilities to other people and to the environment.

### Paper 1: Living With the physical environment

3 units: The challenge of natural hazards. Physical landscapes in the UK, The living world.

### Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment

3 units: Urban issues and challenges, The changing economic world, The challenge of resource management.

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

### Paper 3: Geographical applications

1 Issue evaluation, 2 Fieldwork, 3 Geographical skills

(Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes - 76 marks (including 6 marks for SPGST) 30% Of GCSE)

## Beyond GCSE

Many GCSE geographers go on to study A Level Geography. Some students have continued their study of Geography at various Russell Group universities including Oxbridge. Other recent A Level geographers have gone on to study Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, English Literature and Economics.

## Cirriculum Enrichment

- As well as undertaking 2 days compulsory field work in the Lake District, students will have the opportunity to participate in a biannual field trip to Iceland.
- Students are encouraged to enter competitions run by the geographical association and the RGS such as the 'Young Geographer of the Year'.
- Subscriptions to the wide world magazine are available.

*("Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future." Michael Palin.)*

# History

## What does GCSE History offer me?

You will learn lots of skills which are TRANSFERABLE

- Dealing with large amounts of information and summarizing the important points
- Analysing information to see if it is trustworthy, biased, useful
- Using information to reach balanced judgements
- Writing coherent reports or essays which show your point of view and have solid evidence to support your argument
- Working as part of a group to discuss and share opinions to help you form your own
- Working independently which will encourage you to think for yourself and become mature in your judgements



## What does the course entail?

AQA History 8145 [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

### Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World (Written Paper — 2 hrs— 84 marks

Section A: period Study: 1B Germany 1890-1945: Democracy and Dictatorship

Section B: Wider World Depth Study: Conflict and Tension 1894-1918

### Paper 2: Shaping the Nation (Written paper — 2 hrs— 84 marks — 50%)

Section A: Thematic Study: 2B Britain: Power and the People: c1170 to the present day

Section B: British depth study including the historic environment: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603

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Girls studying GCSE History will have the opportunity to visit First World War Battlefields and Imperial War Graves in Belgium and Northern France

## Beyond GCSE

Historians make good journalists, lawyers, managers, business advisors, diplomats, civil servants and even politicians. Many girls who know they are going to study the sciences, choose History as something to contrast with their other subjects as it is an academically rigorous subject, highly regarded by universities and employers.

## Curriculum enrichment

GCSE History provides the opportunity for stretch and challenge throughout the course. Talented students are able to deepen their understanding of the course content and are encouraged to see beyond it, thereby enabling them to access the highest levels of achievement and derive real enjoyment for learning.

- We encourage independent learning through extension opportunities e.g. a wide range of topic related historical novels, contemporary film and DVDs
- There is the opportunity to visit historical sites including WW1 Battlefields and War Graves in Belgium and Northern France
- We subscribe to a number of on-line resources which encourage role-play and decision making.
- Participation in the Y10 and 11 Current Affairs Club encourages debate and development of informed opinion.



# Religious Studies

## What does GCSE Religious Studies offer me?

- You will learn how to present a logical argument both orally and in written work. You will do this by weighing up evidence and reaching your own conclusion.
- You will become aware of some key contemporary moral issues such as euthanasia, war, animal experimentation, capital punishment and the different religious and moral perspectives on these issues.
- You will have an understanding of some of the central beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam, and become aware of how these beliefs and practices impact upon the life of a believer and the community.
- You will learn to be sensitive to the beliefs, values and traditions of others.
- You will develop your listening skills. This is essential for any further education course and chosen career.



## What does the course entail?

The department follows the AQA GCSE Religious Studies A syllabus. In Year 10 students study the beliefs and practices Of Christianity and Islam. In Year 11 students study four ethical themes from a religious perspective. These themes include the sanctity of life, abortion, euthanasia, relationships and families, peace and conflict and crime and punishment.

Two examination papers will be taken at the end of Year 11. There are no controlled assessments.

## Beyond GCSE

Religious Studies provides a good background for any career where an understanding of people is an asset. Universities and employers like to know that applicants have thought about themselves and their place in the world. The skills gained from studying Religious Studies will be of benefit in professions such as law, the medical professions, social work, teaching, broadcasting, civil service, probation work and marketing.

## Curriculum enrichment

The department aims to stretch and challenge all students studying RS GCSE through a variety of ways. There is the opportunity during the course for students to visit places of worship such as the Al Rahma Mosque in Liverpool, where pupils will learn more about the worship and practices of Islam.

At the beginning of the GCSE course in Year 10 all students are issued with the additional textbook Revision Guide AQA Religious Studies. This provides additional examination style questions relating to all the units of work studied in the two year Religious Studies GCSE syllabus. In addition, students are encouraged to borrow the wide range of textbooks within the department to develop their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. Throughout the course students are recommended to watch relevant documentaries and programmes (e.g. BBC Big Questions) relating to the syllabus. All students are encouraged to take part in the variety of class discussions relating to religious and ethical issues.

# Art, Craft & Design

## What does GCSE Art, Craft & Design offer me?

You have the opportunity to explore a wide range of processes and media from printmaking and textiles to video and animation. You develop important analytical and practical skills as well as creative thinking, ICT and communication skills.



## What does the course entail?

We offer the AQA Art, Craft & Design syllabus. Coursework consists of a portfolio project which runs from September in Year 10 to Christmas in Year 11.

This comprises of sketchbook and practical work including research, development, experimentation and realization of personal ideas (60%). For the final 10 hour timed examination there is an unlimited preparation time where students respond to the externally set task (40%).

## Beyond GCSE

Most A Level students achieve a grade 7 (or above) at GCSE. Art is a very vocational subject and many A Level Art students go on to do a Foundation course at college before applying to Art school for a degree course. Recent candidates have gone on to study Art at Central St Martins, London, Graphic Design at Glasgow School of Art and Architecture at Liverpool University.

## Curriculum Enrichment

The Art course of GCSE offers students the possibility to work with a range of visiting artists and designers, through the Vitreum Art Gallery and our resident printmaker's scheme. There is usually one field trip for the course to either London or Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

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Our students are challenged through learning new processes and techniques often with specialist practising artists working alongside students to make ceramics, photography and print. Students are also encouraged to take part in local and national competitions. The Art dept is available every lunchtime and there is also provision for after school activities again with visiting artists.

# Computer Science

## What does GCSE Computer Science offer me?

This is a new and challenging course that will allow you to develop computer programming skills that will be examined within a Non-Examination Environment. You will be able to undertake the development of a computer program which you will have designed, written and tested to solve a problem. There is also another module which focuses on theoretical aspects Of Computer Science ranging from algorithms and computer systems to cyber security and the impact of digital technology.



## What does the course entail?

### Component 1 — Non-Examination Assessment

The non-exam assessment (NEA) assesses a student's ability to use the knowledge and skills gained through the course to solve a practical programming problem. Students will be expected to follow a systematic approach to problem solving, consistent with the skills taught during the course. Students will produced an original report outlining this development for submission to the examination board. This is not marked, however provides students with the opportunity to showcase their skills.

### Component 2 — Computational Thinking (2 x Written Examinations)

This module is assessed by two written examinations at the end of Year 11 and carries 80% of the final mark at GCSE. Topics (see below) are taught in theory lessons and are examined in the written papers.

1. Fundamentals of algorithms
2. Programming
3. Fundamentals of data representation
4. Computer systems
5. Fundamentals Of computer networks
6. Fundamentals Of cyber security
7. Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology on wider society, including issues of privacy
8. Aspects of software development

## Beyond GCSE

A GCSE in Computer Science is an attractive qualification and should be considered by students as a complimentary qualification enabling them to develop a wide range of problem solving skills that are applicable to further study or in the world of work.

## Curriculum enrichment

The department has begun to collaborate with the Computer Science department at Liverpool University and the National Computing Museum in Bletchley Park to provide students with interesting and challenging workshops enabling them to experience the latest developments in Computer Science. The department is now building global partnerships in the USA with Microsoft, Apple and IBM.

# Drama and Theatre Studies



**What does GCSE Drama offer me?**

*"We must all do theatre to find out who we are and to discover who we could become."* Augusto Boal

The challenges presented by GCSE drama are diverse – girls can opt to take the course as performers or designers (with a choice to specialise as a designer for set/stage, light, sound or costume/props). They study set plays, devise their own material and complete a written examination to show their knowledge of drama and the theatre. As part of the course, each half term girls are taken to a professional production to prepare them for the live theatre evaluation section of the examination. They also have the opportunity to take part in workshops delivered by visiting theatre companies and practitioners.

## What does the course entail?

AQA GCSE Drama 18261 - Specification: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/gcse/drama-8261>

The subject content for GCSE Drama is divided into three components (in the practical components students may specialize in performing, lighting, sound, set, costume and/or puppets):

<b>Component 1</b>	<b>Understanding Drama</b>	<b>80 Marks</b>	<b>40% of GCSE</b>
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### What's assessed

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

<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Devising Drama (practical)</b>	<b>80 marks</b>	<b>40% of GCSE</b>
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### 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

<b>Component 3</b>	<b>Texts in practice (practical)</b>	<b>50 marks</b>	<b>20% of GCSE</b>
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### 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]

## Beyond GCSE

It has been a long-held misconception that although studies in Drama and the Creative Arts lead to increased self-esteem, confidence and communication skills, there are few viable career options available for the future. 'The creative industries, for nearly a decade are the fastest-growing part of the economy. UK's creative industries contribute almost £90 bn net to GDP. It accounts for one in 11 jobs, a rate rising more quickly than all other parts of the economy. These jobs are also among the least likely to be lost to automation.' ('Creative Industries are Key to UK Economy' The Guardian 1st January 2017)

## Curriculum enrichment

In order to stretch and challenge drama pupils, workshops are arranged regularly with industry professionals and specialists. Girls attend drama technical, costume and puppetry workshops at LIPA, devising sessions with award winning physical theatre company, Frantic Assembly and pre-performance workshops at the Liverpool Everyman and Unity theatre's. Girls also have the opportunity to take LAMDA's acting course alongside their GCSE studies.



# Food Preparation & Nutrition

## What does GCSE Food and Nutrition offer me?

Food and nutrition are key issues for society. This exciting new course will allow you to improve your cooking skills at the same time as developing your understanding of nutrition and food science. You will also develop a range of transferable skills including report writing, ICT skills, data analysis and scientific enquiry.



By studying this course you will:

- develop effective and safe cooking skills and know how to plan, prepare and cooking a variety of ingredients using different cooking techniques and equipment;
- Work with a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.
- Understand the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food and develop your knowledge of the nutritional content of food and drinks;
- Understand the relationship between diet, nutrition and health;
- Understand the economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, diet and health choices.

## What does the course entail?

### Component 1: Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition (50% of the qualification)

A written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

Topics covered: Nutrition, Food provenance and food choice, The science of food, Cooking and food preparation

### Component 2: Food Preparation and Food Science in Action (50% of the qualification)

This non-examination content will be completed during class time.

It is internally assessed and externally moderated.

The full specification can be viewed at [www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-j309-from-2016](http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-j309-from-2016)

## Beyond GCSE

Careers related to food and nutrition include: dietetics, bio-medics, food technology, product development, hospitality, journalism, medicine, environmental health, marketing and public relations.

There are a number of degrees that are directly related to food and nutrition including: Nutrition and Dietetics, Food marketing and Nutrition, Nutritional Biochemistry and Hospitality management.

## Curriculum enrichment

To further develop their practical skills pupils are encouraged and supported to take part in local and national food competitions, including 'Bio-bakes', the 'Teflon Diamond Standard' awards and the 'Game Star Challenge'.

The department has a sizeable library of food magazines and recipe books which pupils are encouraged to borrow and use to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject. We also run a lunchtime 'Food on the TV' club to enable pupils to watch and discuss current food programmes.

GCSE pupils are also invited to attend our lunchtime revision clinic.

# Music

## What does GCSE Music Offer me?

The AQA GCSE Music specification has been designed to enable candidates to enjoy and appreciate the benefits of being involved in playing music, making music, listening to music critically and importantly understanding how musical terminology is applied to a range of pieces of different genres and eras.



## What does the course entail?

There are three components:

- **Component 1:** Understanding music (40%) - a listening and written exam
- **Component 2:** Performing music (30%) - solo and ensemble
- **Component 3:** Composition (30%) - to a brief and a free composition.

Go to this link to read the GCSE specification:

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/music/specifications/AQA-8271-sp-2016.PDF>

## Beyond GCSE

The Music Department advises that in order to study A Level Music a student should be at Grade 5 or above in both performance and Music Theory. Music is admired and respected amongst higher education institutions and the work place. Its benefits are numerous: self-discipline, team work, developing self-awareness and confidence, problem solving, encourage creativity through listening, composing and performing, as well as promoting good health and well-being. Destinations of leavers in recent years include Oxbridge, Music Conservatories, Royal Northern College of Music, Lancaster University and Central School of Speech and Drama.

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## Curriculum enrichment

All practice examination questions are supplemented with an extension focus, providing opportunities for identification & selection of sophisticated terminology and reflection. Pupils prepare and lead a topic presentation followed by questions from the group, thus developing leadership, confidence & presentation skills, and supported by written feedback identifying areas for development. Pupils are encouraged to align their individual instrumental skills such as performance direction, structure, genre and context with syllabus topics and their associated musical elements. Lunchtime GCSE Clinic sessions focus on exemplar answers with extended 'what if?' responses.

GCSE students are expected to be fully involved in the music enrichment programme. Performance opportunities include choral, orchestral/instrumental ensemble repertoire in addition to musical theatre productions. ABRSM/Trinity/LCM examinations and the school's music competition further develop practical musicianship beyond the classroom.

# Physical Education

## What does GCSE Physical Education offer me?

For the Physical Education enthusiast the OCR GCSE PE Course Offers an exciting opportunity to take your sporting knowledge and performance onto to higher levels and gain an academic qualification in Physical Education.

It also requires the students to underpin their practical performances with theoretical knowledge of the anatomical, physiological and psychological demands of physical activity and how these factors affect physical competence.

The PE students will also learn how to use methods of practice to improve their performance in physical activity and the importance of being physically active as part of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Students studying GCSE PE should have an active involvement in sport on a regular basis either in school or outside of school and must be committed to practical performance. GCSE PE students should also be competent in science.

Playing for a school or club team or weekly involvement in a sports activity is a must for a GCSE PE student as 40% of their marks will come from Component 3 where there is a performance assessment in three activities and an analysis and evaluation written assignment.

## What does the course entail?

The GCSE PE Course comprises 3 components as detailed below, spread over two years.

### **Component 1:** Physical Factors Affecting Performance

- Anatomy and physiology
- Physical Training

### **Component 2:** Socio-Cultural Issues and Sports Psychology

- Sports Psychology
- Socio-cultural Influences
- Health, Fitness and Wellbeing

### **Component 3:** Performance within Physical Education

Performance practical in Three Activities — one team and one individual sport and one other Analysis and Evaluation of a Performance (AEP)

## Curriculum enrichment

In PE we offer many extracurricular opportunities which challenge our students. Our top athletes have the chance to perform at a high level in a number of sports, reaching regional and national finals. They also have further opportunities to be sporting ambassadors for the school on our international sports tours and through observing elite sport performances. Students are given the chance to take part in leadership roles within the department running and managing events staged at school or within the local community. Our players enhance their understanding of the many core and advanced skills and tactics used in different sport through participating at an increasingly more competitive level. The department constantly encourages our girls to strive for the very best they can achieve and our students are taught through a variety of differentiated methods, including practical sessions to ensure all students can access the content.





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