



Sir Graham Balfour School

Year 9 Pathways
Booklet
2026

CONTENTS

Introduction from Mrs Haines, Deputy Headteacher

General Information

The Compulsory Core Subjects

English Language & English Literature
Mathematics
Science (Trilogy)
Physical Education
SMSC
PSHE/Careers

The Optional Subjects

(All subjects GCSE level unless stated)

Art and Design
Business Studies
Computer Science
Digital Information Technology (BTEC)
Design Technology specialising in Resistant Materials
Design Technology specialising in Textiles
Drama
Engineering (OCR Cambridge National)
Enterprise & Marketing (OCR Cambridge National)
Food Preparation and Nutrition (GCSE or vocational equivalent)
French
Geography
German
Health and Social Care (OCR Cambridge National)
History
Music (BTEC)
Philosophy, Religion and Ethics
Photography (we are hoping to offer this for the first time in September 2026)
Physical Education
Psychology
Separate Science

Dear Students and Parents/Carers,

You have now reached the stage in your school career when you need to look ahead and choose the subjects you will study during Years 10 and 11. The decisions you make are important ones, and you will need to think about them very carefully. This booklet provides much of the information you will need to help you decide your preferences; however, please remember that you can receive useful advice from parents/carers, friends, other students in your House group, teachers, our school careers adviser and from Mr Smith who oversees careers guidance in school.

The key dates in this process are:

Date	Activity
22nd January	Pathways assembly
From 23rd January	Form time programme relating to Pathways
WB 26th January	Pathways interviews with parents/carers
5th March	PHSE Day focused on pathways and careers
10th March	Year 9 Subject Parents Evening
WB 16th March	Pathways forms emailed to students
15th April	Deadline for pathways forms to be submitted
June/July	Subjects confirmed to students

As you are aware there have been many changes to the educational landscape over the last few years. One of the consequences of this is that Sixth Form Colleges, Colleges, Universities, employers, and apprenticeship providers are increasingly looking for a broad range of academic subjects to be studied. For this reason, we have introduced a range of different Pathways for our process, where the options choices are tailored specifically to the needs of each child. Details of the Pathway that your child is on will be given in the Pathways interview, but if you have any further questions or queries regarding this then please do not hesitate to contact me at school. In addition to this, I strongly recommend that you read the information regarding the Stafford Sixth Form curriculum offer and entry criteria if you are thinking about studying A-Levels (<https://www.staffordsixthformpartnership.co.uk/>), as well as using your Unifrog log-in (<https://www.unifrog.org/>) to research the subjects that would be useful to study if you already have an idea about the type of University course, College course, apprenticeship or career that you would like to follow in the future.

I hope that you find this booklet useful, and that you will be able to discuss, as a family, the information it contains. This is a very important phase of a student's life, and the choices made will have a lifelong impact so please do not hesitate to contact staff at the school if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs R Haines
Deputy Headteacher

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The Year 10 and 11 curriculum at Sir Graham Balfour is designed to ensure that all students experience a rigorous, broad and balanced education, combined with a reasonable amount of choice. Our aim is to provide a continuity of educational experience through to the age of 16, whilst keeping students' options open, and that is why we have a Pathway system in place to support students to study a broad and balanced range of subjects that will help to set them up for the next stage in their education, employment or training.

The Curriculum Structure 2026-2027

Our timetable is structured on a 50 periods per fortnight basis. We have 5 teaching periods per day, each of 60 minutes duration.

The overall curriculum is divided into a Compulsory Core, which all students follow, and options, where students can follow their choice of subjects.

The Compulsory Core time allocation:

Subject	English	Mathematics (with planned periods of PSHE/Careers)	PE/Games	SMSC	Science
Number of lessons per fortnight	8	8	3	2	9

Note:

Although all students **MUST** study these subjects, in many areas the students will be organised into sets which may follow different variations of the courses.

Option Blocks time allocation:

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
5	5	5	5

Options Subjects

1. Students can only study ONE subject from each block.
2. Although all these subjects are offered at this stage, it may NOT be possible to run all of them if insufficient students choose a subject, or a change in staffing means that we are not satisfied that the curriculum in that subject could be delivered to a good standard.
3. Where a course is oversubscribed, students with the highest number of demerits will be identified and put onto their second-choice course until the class size is optimised.
4. Students who are asked to change, or decide themselves to change from an oversubscribed subject, will be guaranteed all their other first choice subjects.
5. Examinations in all courses are full GCSEs or fully accredited and equivalent alternatives.

Assessment

Final exams are sat in Year 11 May/June time and these grades are used by colleges, 6th Form and apprenticeships. Results day is held in August.

GCSEs in England changed in 2017. The new GCSEs ensure that students leave school better prepared for work or further study. They cover more challenging content and are designed to match standards in high performing education systems elsewhere in the world. The table shows the equivalence between the new grading structure with the old grading structure, and GCSE and Vocational equivalences.

Old GCSE Grade	New GCSE Grade	Cambridge National/BTEC Tech Awards
A*	9	Level 2 Distinction*
	8	
A	7	Level 2 Distinction
B	6	Level 2 Merit
B/C	5 (Strong Pass)	
C	4 (Standard Pass)	Level 2 Pass
D	3	Level 1 Distinction
E	2	Level 1 Merit
F/G	1	Level 1 Pass
U	U	Fail

English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The subjects that make up the EBacc are:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- geography or history
- a language

The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors.

The EBacc is not a qualification, however, by taking the subjects outlined in the English Baccalaureate, you will be giving yourself the best options and opportunities for further education, by ensuring you have the broad base of core academic subjects that universities and colleges prefer.

The subjects for the English Baccalaureate were selected in consultation with university groups, such as the Russell Group. They explained the subjects that they would like to see candidates qualified in, as well as subjects that gave pupils the best possible range of options when it came to choosing A Levels and university courses.

Research shows that a pupil's socio-economic background impacts the subjects they choose at GCSE, and that this determines their opportunities beyond school. A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.

At Sir Graham Balfour, the Pathway a student is placed on, determines the minimum amount of EBacc subjects that they will have to study in Year 10 and 11.

Choosing Your Subjects – Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- Look carefully at the information about each subject in this booklet.
- Ask your teachers for any information you can't find.
- Think about the career you wish to follow (if you know it) and choose your subjects accordingly – make sure you know what qualifications you will need.
- If unsure, keep your options choices as broad as possible. Make sure that the subjects you opt for will allow you to access Sixth Form, college, University, employment or apprenticeships.
- Choose subjects that you like – you are more likely to succeed in subjects you enjoy studying.
- Listen carefully to the information, advice and guidance given in your Pathways Interview.

Don't:

- Choose a subject because your friends are doing it – you should study what **you** want to study.
- Choose subjects based on who you think will be teaching it – you may not get the same teacher in Year 10 as you have in Year 9.

*Remember – it is not possible to change your option subjects if you change your mind halfway through Year 10. You will be studying these subjects for the next two years and the grades you achieve will stay with you for life – so it's important to get as much information as possible and to make the right choices. **You will have two weeks in September** at the start of Year 10 to make changes to your options.*

**THE
COMPULSORY
CORE**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE

What will I study?

At GCSE students' study both AQA English Language and English Literature courses. For English Language, students will read a selection of non-fiction and fiction texts and learn to write creatively and discursively. For both Papers 1 and 2, which require understanding of fictional and non-fiction texts, we study language and structure, their form, their purpose and the impact on the reader. Importantly, we focus on two challenging skills: responding critically and comparing points of view. These skills in particular help to prepare students for AQA English Literature A-Level.

For GCSE English Literature we study the following Literature texts: Romeo and Juliet, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, An Inspector Calls, a collection of 'Power and Conflict' poetry from AQA, as well as other unseen poetry. Our aim is to use the text as inspiration to teach writing skills and encourage students to experiment with different styles of writing. We deliver a curriculum which teaches students the skills needed to make them independent readers and critical thinkers.

We also teach and assess Speaking and Listening skills, which is a discreet endorsement, not counting towards the GCSE grade. Students are internally assessed with pass, merit and distinction and a certificate is awarded from the exam board.

How and when will I be assessed?

English Language:

Assessments

All texts in the examination will be unseen.

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	+	Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	+	Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language
<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one literature fiction text <p>Section B: Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> descriptive or narrative writing 		<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text <p>Section B: Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing to present a viewpoint 		<p>What's assessed</p> <p>(AO7–AO9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting responding to questions and feedback use of Standard English
<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE 		<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE 		<p>Assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher set throughout course marked by teacher separate endorsement (0% weighting of GCSE)
<p>Questions</p> <p>Reading (40 marks) (25%) – one single text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 20 marks) <p>Writing (40 marks) (25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy) 		<p>Questions</p> <p>Reading (40 marks) (25%) – two linked texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) 2 longer form questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks) 1 extended question (1 x 16 marks) <p>Writing (40 marks) (25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy) 		

English Literature:

Assessments

All assessments are closed book: any stimulus materials required will be provided as part of the assessment.

All assessments are compulsory.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel	+	Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry
What's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shakespeare• The 19th-century novel		What's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern texts• Poetry• Unseen poetry
How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes• 64 marks• 40% of GCSE		How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• written exam: 2 hour 15 minutes• 96 marks• 60% of GCSE
Questions <p>Section A Shakespeare: students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.</p> <p>Section B The 19th-century novel: students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.</p>		Questions <p>Section A Modern texts: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.</p> <p>Section B Poetry: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.</p> <p>Section C Unseen poetry: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.</p>

Which key skills will I develop?

It is essential in English for students to engage with the text we study. We choose interesting texts to prepare students for the unseen texts in the examination. Thus, we teach skills to make students confident in reading and understanding any text from different time periods. We aim to foster a collegial atmosphere where students can evaluate their own learning and respond to texts in a critical way. We often work in pairs and small groups and use debate to develop and strengthen the students' point of view. Therefore, we build communication skills and encourage teamwork. Over the two years, focusing on the key skills enables students to learn and revise these skills in preparation for the terminal exams.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

We teach English Literature at A-Level and so, if students wish to, they can continue their studies into sixth form where we go on to study the rich and engaging language of Shakespeare, the Romantic Poets, WW1 poetry, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, as well as encouraging students to read widely to form their own ideas about the prevalent themes in great literature, past and present.

MATHEMATICS GCSE

What will I study?

In Years 10 and 11 students continue their study of the five areas of Mathematics:

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

Students are also assessed in their ability to:

- Use and apply standard techniques.
- Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically.
- Solve problems within Mathematics and other contexts.

How and when will I be assessed?

All students follow a linear course entitled Edexcel GCSE Mathematics. There are two tiers of entry: Foundation and Higher. Higher tier students can achieve grades 9-4. Foundation tier students can achieve grades 5-1. Students can change tier at any point during the course. All students will sit their GCSE Mathematics examinations in the summer of year 11 via three examinations (two calculator, one non-calculator). All students will be formally assessed via two summative assessments in year 10 and two sets of pre-public examinations in year 11 with additional in class assessments to track progress and provide intervention as necessary. Weekly homework providing more immediate feedback is set based on retrieval of topics taught in previous years.

Which key skills will I develop?

Learning Mathematics will develop your logical reasoning. You will be expected to link different areas of Mathematics. Problem solving is an increasingly important area of Mathematics which requires perseverance and often attempting to solve a problem via a different approach. Accuracy and detailed methods are always required. As the Mathematics curriculum consists of a large array of skills to be applied in many scenarios there is an emphasis on learning many facts and methods. In lessons you will be required to work in pairs/small groups/on your own allowing discussion and independent learning.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

GCSE Mathematics is essential to study A Level Mathematics. Mathematics supports the study of the sciences and is essential for career paths in engineering, accountancy and other financial areas. A strong qualification in Mathematics is increasingly becoming a requirement for many degree courses.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Yes.

Any other relevant information?

- You will be expected to bring a pen, pencil, ruler, scientific calculator, compass and protractor to all lessons.
- Revision guides, revision cards and revision workbooks are available at a discounted rate through the school shop.
- Reviewing work covered in lessons daily vastly helps memory retention.

SCIENCE GCSE

Combined Science: Trilogy

What will I study?

GCSE Science is compulsory for all students in Year 10 and 11 who do not opt for the Separate Science courses and leads to the award of two Science GCSEs. This course is ideal for the student who does not wish to gain 3 GCSEs in the Sciences, usually because they wish to focus on other areas of the curriculum. The course provides a good grounding in science from a team with a proven history of success.

This is a 2-year course made up of the three Sciences taught by subject specialists. The course incorporates topics which are relevant to people today in their daily lives and are student centred in approach. There is a high proportion of practical work which we use to embed the ideas. The course is well supported with the materials that are on Office 365.

Science in this school consists of Chemistry, Biology and Physics modules taught by specialist teachers.

Biology topics	Chemistry topics	Physics topics
1. Cell biology 2. Organisation 3. Infection and response 4. Bioenergetics 5. Homeostasis and response 6. Inheritance, variation and evolution 7. Ecology	8. Atomic structure and the periodic table 9. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter 10. Quantitative chemistry 11. Chemical changes 12. Energy changes 13. The rate and extent of chemical change 14. Organic chemistry 15. Chemical analysis 16. Chemistry of the atmosphere 17. Using resources	18. Forces 19. Energy 20. Waves 21. Electricity 22. Magnetism and electromagnetism 23. Particle model of matter 24. Atomic structure

We begin a bridging course in Year 9 which aims to introduce the students to the rigors of GCSE.

How and when will I be assessed?

There are 6 exam papers sat at the end of Year 11 with two papers for each subject. Each paper is of a similar format:

- Written exam of 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Foundation and Higher Tier.
- 70 marks.
- Each paper is worth 16.7% of the GCSE.

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

Which key skills will I develop?

Combined Sciences will ensure that students develop team working as well as independence, organisation and the ability to use the scientific method to test ideas; students should be able

to apply knowledge to situations that are new to them and be able to use scientific ideas to explain observations.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

A-Levels in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology or Level 3 BTEC in Applied Science

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

There is no general Science A-Level, post-16 students choose to study the individual sciences separately. A grade 6 or above is required to start the Science A-Level courses in the Stafford Partnership.

Any other relevant information?

More information can be found at: www.aqa.org.uk

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

What will I study?

This is a compulsory foundation subject for all students in Years 10 and 11 and is designed to allow students to develop their involvement in a selection of activities. The aim is to develop safe performance, increase knowledge, and improve competence. Students will have the opportunity to increase their understanding of the importance of the roles of participant, official and spectator. The programme is designed to encourage students to gain a depth of knowledge and skill for selected activities that will enable them to continue their participation in physical pursuits throughout adult life.

How and when will I be assessed?

Assessment will take place at the end of each topic and students will be marked out of 20 (this is in line with the GCSE PE specification).

Assessment is continuous, practically based, by both student and staff observation. Grades are based on attainment and effort, with clear recognition of any extracurricular involvement.

What qualifications will I achieve?

Although there is no formal qualification, students will have the opportunity to undertake a leadership course within the subject. They will also learn the importance of health, fitness and diet; students will also learn importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Within PE students will have the opportunity to develop their skills, gain confidence and teamwork skills which can be transferred to elements of everyday life.

Where might this qualification lead me?

Having a keen interest in sport will ensure lifelong health and fitness. It will ensure good communication and leadership skills. Sporting interest will provide students with a pathway towards physically demanding vocations, coaching opportunities and working within the sports industry.

Activities covered in Years 10 and 11 this year are:

Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Handball, Health Related Exercise, Sports Aerobics, Rounders, Rugby, Soccer, Trampolining, Volleyball, Table Tennis and Tennis.

We also offer leadership opportunities, requiring students to lead activities for their peers, younger Balfour students or local primary students.

Although PE is a compulsory subject, it is important for students to actively take part as sport builds self-esteem, develops communication and teamwork skills and it gives students the opportunity to win and lose. This subject ensures students understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and take what they have learnt and use it for lifelong learning.

What else do I need to be aware of?

Throughout PE, students will have the opportunity to take part in extracurricular clubs, fixtures and working with younger students.

SMSC

This is a compulsory subject which combines RE and Citizenship as part of the curriculum. SMSC stands for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education and is a unique subject which is taught to all students from Year 7 to Year 11.

SMSC at Sir Graham Balfour School attempts to address the following key aims:

- To make students aware of the values and attitudes needed to be successful in life in the 21st Century.
- To give students the tools to:
 - Develop a spiritual nature.
 - Develop a moral compass.
- To promote understanding and acceptance of society and the cultures within it.

What will I study?

Year 10:

- Ethical Debates on War
- Religious and Cultural Debates
- UK Democracy
- The UK Justice System

Year 11:

- Medical ethics
- The UK's Role in World

How will I be assessed?

Students are assessed based on a sticker system. They are working towards awards in:

- Respect
- Teamwork
- Understanding
- Research and knowledge
- Speaking and listening
- Empathy

They need to prove that they have demonstrated each skill three times before they are awarded with a sticker.

PSHE/CAREERS

We will have a regular taught period of Personal, Social, Health, Economic (PSHE) education and careers for all Year 10 and 11 students. The following topics will prove very useful and informative to students:

Elements of road safety

Preparation for the world of work and higher education (CVs, letters of application, interview techniques etc.)

Sex and relationship education, including topics around consent and coercive relationships.

Health education

Managing finances

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Mrs Metcalfe (Deputy Headteacher), Miss Marshall (Assistant Headteacher) or Mrs L Smith (Careers and Aspirations Lead).

OPTIONS SUBJECTS

In alphabetical order by subject title

ART AND DESIGN GCSE



What will I study?

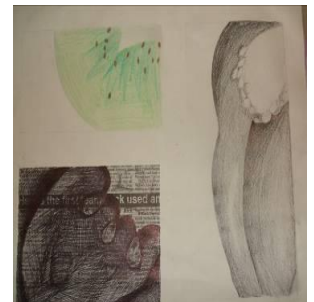
We follow the AQA Fine Art Specification which offers an appropriate means for students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from Key Stage 3. It also lays the foundation for post-16 studies. All we ask for is commitment and an open mind. The course provides students with a wide range of creative, exciting and stimulating opportunities to explore their interests in Art and Design. Students will cover a range of topics, such as drawing, painting, photography and mixed media.

How and when will I be assessed?

Component 1: Portfolio	Component 2: Externally set assignment
Over the two-year course students will complete two units of work to form their portfolio. Each unit focuses on a theme and allows students to develop their ideas with a range of media and materials. They will demonstrate skills through refining, recording and realization of ideas.	Students respond to their chosen starting point from an externally set assignment paper relating their subject title and covering all assessment objectives.
96 Marks 60% of GCSE	96 Marks 40% of GCSE

Which key skills will I develop?

This two-unit specification enables you to develop your ability to actively engage in the processes of Art and Design, to build creative skills through learning and doing, to develop imaginative and intuitive ways of working and develop knowledge and understanding of media, materials and technologies in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures.



Where might this qualification lead me to?

GCSE Art and Design is the perfect foundation for moving forward onto A Level Art and continuing onto university. The qualification will aid any student wishing to take up a career in Art and Design and or any of the elements associated with the course.

Why choose this course?

Have you enjoyed learning about artists and their work? Have you enjoyed working in our Art classes at Key Stage 3? Have you enjoyed seeing your ideas develop? Have you enjoyed learning new skills in drawing, pastel blending, painting and shading? If you answered 'yes' to these questions, then you should consider taking GCSE Fine Art.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Although it is not essential it is advised that you study GCSE Art if you are hoping to continue with it at a higher level. GCSE Art is a strong foundation for further progression to Art and Design related courses such as A Level Art and Design and enhanced vocational and career pathways.



Any other relevant information?

This subject will build on your skills from Key Stage 3 and it is vital you are hardworking and committed to the subject. This subject will allow you to be creative and show off your talents in a variety of ways. After school Art club is offered at least two nights per week should you require extra help and guidance from your teachers. If you are interested in studying this subject, please feel free to come and see your Art teacher or visit the Art club on either Monday or Wednesday night (3.10- 4.10pm) where you can meet current GCSE and A-Level Art students and see Art in action! At the end of the GCSE course we celebrate your successes with an open exhibition. This gives you the opportunity to invite others to see your fantastic work on display.



BUSINESS STUDIES GCSE

What will I study?

You will study the Edexcel Business Studies GCSE course.

With political instability and upheaval around the globe, the growth of emerging markets in Asia and the rapid development of technology it is clear that the business environment is currently going through some of its biggest changes since the industrial revolution. This course provides a fantastic insight into this quickly evolving and fascinating world. The qualification is engaging and inspiring in the hope of creating commercially minded and enterprising individuals who can succeed in a world where the need for an understanding of the business environment has never been so important.

You will study 2 themes over the course, seen below.

Theme 1	Theme 2
1.1 Enterprise and entrepreneurship	2.1 Growing the business
1.2 Spotting a business opportunity	2.2 Making marketing decisions
1.3 Putting a business idea into practice	2.3 Making operational decisions
1.4 Making the business effective	2.4 Making financial decisions
1.5 Understanding external influences	2.5 Making human resource decisions

How and when will I be assessed?

You will sit two written examinations at the end of the course in Year 11.

Paper 1 – Theme 1: Investigating small businesses (1 hour 30 minutes)

90 Marks

50 % of the qualification

Paper 2 – Theme 2: Building a business (1 hour 30 minutes)

90 Marks

50 % of the qualification

Which key skills will I develop?

You will know and understand business concepts, terminology, objectives, the integrated nature of business activity and its impact on individuals and the wider world. You will be able to apply knowledge and business issues to local, national and global contexts. The course will also help you to become enterprising, creative and commercially astute. You will also develop skills as a problem solver and decision maker. It will also help you to become an independent, critical and reflective thinker with an enquiring mind and someone who can use quantitative and research skills to structure well thought out evidenced and balanced arguments. All aspects of your communication skills will be developed and enhanced and this will build confidence, resilience and valuable life skills.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

The qualification can lead to an A-Level or Level 3 BTEC Business Studies course, which is offered in the Stafford Sixth Form Partnership. The subject also lends itself to a wide range of options in the form of apprenticeships, university and employment. We are all going to be involved in the business world, either running our own company or working in one so this course gives a great foundation and insight to whatever path you decide to take in the future.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Although it is always preferable to study the subject at GCSE, it is not a necessity for this subject.

Any other relevant information?

Some useful resources are the Edexcel Revision Guides available in school, Businessstudiesonline.co.uk, BBC Bitesize Website and Tutor2u to name a few. Keeping up to date with events in the business environment locally, nationally and globally is extremely important, so reading or watching the news must become a habit.

COMPUTER SCIENCE GCSE

What will I study?

The course is aimed at learning how computer technology really works. It gives students an insight into what goes on behind-the-scenes, including programming, which is both challenging and absorbing. Students will learn about emerging technologies, the use of algorithms in computer programs, develop computer programs to solve problems and evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs in use in society.

How and when will I be assessed?

This GCSE consists of two written examinations and one controlled assessment.

Component 1- Computer Systems

50% of the overall qualification

1.5 hour written examination to be taken at the end of Year 11

Externally assessed by OCR

80 Marks

This unit includes the following topics:

- Systems architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Component 2- Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

50% of the overall qualification

1.5 hour written examination to be taken at the end of Year 11

Externally assessed by OCR

80 Marks

This unit includes the following topics:

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Component 3- Programming Project

Controlled assessment- set by OCR

Approximately 20 hours

This practical assessment will focus on the following skills and concepts.

- Programming techniques
 - Analysis
 - Design
 - Development
 - Testing and evaluation and conclusions

OCR issues three assessment tasks. The tasks provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their practical ability in the skills outlined in the specification.

Students create suitable algorithms which will provide a solution to the problems identified in the task. They will then code their solutions in a suitable programming language. The solutions will be tested at each stage to ensure they solve the stated problem and students must use a suitable test plan with appropriate test data.

The code is suitably annotated to describe the process. Test results are annotated to show how these relate to the code, the test plan and the original problem. Students provide an evaluation of their solution based on the test evidence.

Which key skills will I develop?

This qualification is underpinned by logical thinking and problem solving, skills that are useful for any further study or career options and will seek to develop and refine these skills throughout the two years. Computer Science aims to develop the technical knowledge and understanding to succeed in an ever changing, technology-dependent world.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

This qualification allows students to progress to A-Level Computer Science, which is available at Sir Graham Balfour School.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

You do need to study this course at GCSE to follow it at A-Level. The A-Level builds directly on the skills and knowledge learnt in this GCSE, especially concerning the programming skills and students benefit from having a greater depth of practise and experience in coding, problem solving and debugging.

Any other relevant information?

This is an academic course and requires:

- High level of motivation and commitment.
- Well-developed memory skills.
- Strong problem-solving skills.
- Strong research skills.
- Significant amounts of independent study to be successful especially in the examination.
- Controlled assessments require strong Programming skills (in Python or other languages) and extended writing.
- Good attention to detail.
- Ability to meet deadlines and good organisational skills.
- Strong literacy skills –ability to write essay style answers during the controlled assessment and during examination tasks.
- Strong numeracy and logical thinking skills- required for the manipulation of data, development of successful algorithms and creation of coded solutions.

Digital Information Technology - BTEC Tech Awards

Who is this qualification for?

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Digital Information Technology is ideal for you if you are a pre-16 student working at level 1 or level 2 and would like to find out more about the IT industry. This course offers a practical introduction to life and work in the digital sector. The qualification, which is 120 GLH, is the same size and level as a GCSE.

The digital industry

The digital sector is a major source of employment in the UK. Despite a turbulent economy in 2020 the Digital sector in the UK advertised 90,000 jobs per week during. Digital skills span all industries, and almost all jobs in the UK today require employees to have a good level of digital literacy. The UK Tech industry as a whole employs over 2.93 million people and has seen 40% growth between 2017-2019. The UK has positioned itself to be the 'Digital capital of Europe' as it continues to invest billions every year in digital skills and commerce. The modern world expects digital skills to be as important as English and maths. Having both technical skills and business understanding is the key to success.

Assessment

The three components in the qualification give learners the opportunity to develop broad knowledge and understanding of the digital sector, and specialist skills and techniques such as project planning, designing user interfaces and manipulating and interpreting data at Levels 1 and 2.

Internal assessment – externally moderated

Components 1 and 2 are assessed through non-exam internal assessment. The nonexam internal assessment for these components has been designed to demonstrate application of the conceptual knowledge underpinning the sector through realistic tasks and activities. This style of assessment promotes deep learning through ensuring the connection between knowledge and practice.

The components focus on:

- the development of core knowledge and understanding of different types of user interfaces, how user interface design principles are used to meet the needs of different users, and how organisations collect, manipulate and interpret data to draw conclusions and make decisions
- the development and application of skills such as project planning, iterative design of a user interface, using data manipulation tools to create a dashboard, interpreting and drawing conclusions from data
- reflective practice through the development of skills and techniques that allow learners to respond to feedback and to identify areas for improvement. Non-exam internal assessment is delivered through Pearson-set Assignments. These assignments are set by Pearson, marked by the centre and moderated by Pearson

Component	Description of Pearson-set Assignment	Window for assessment
Component 1: Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques	Non-exam internal assessment set by Pearson, marked by the centre and moderated by Pearson. The Pearson-set Assignment will be completed in approximately 6 hours of supervised assessment. 60 marks.	December/January and May/June from 2023 onwards
Component 2: Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data	Non-exam internal assessment set by Pearson, marked by the centre and moderated by Pearson. The Pearson-set Assignment will be completed in approximately 6 hours of supervised assessment. 60 marks.	December/January and May/June from 2023 onwards

Component	Description of external assessment	Assessment
Component 3: Effective Digital Working Practices	External assessment set and marked by Pearson, completed under supervised conditions. The assessment will be completed in 1 hour 30 minutes within the period timetabled by Pearson. 60 marks.	January/ February and May/June from 2024 onwards

What does the qualification cover?

This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will also develop key skills, such as user interface (UI) design and development and learn how to develop a project plan for your own UI designs.

Everyone taking this qualification will study three components, covering the following content areas:

User Interface and User Experience (UI/UX), are design elements that are intertwined and are critical aspects of any software, app, or website. Understanding how UI and UX is planned and developed can introduce you to concepts of human/computer interactions (HCI), human psychology, and marketing and design principles. You will develop an understanding of UI UX.

IT project management, which is often implemented to introduce technological improvements by rolling out change projects. Understanding how projects are structured is of vital importance. This qualification will enable you to use project-planning tools, models and techniques within a digital context.

Cloud Computing is an important computing concept to grasp in today's web based connected world. You will understand how computers are networked online and use web based services to improve data security and manage the costs of handling large volumes of data.

Where will this take me?

Once you have completed the qualification, you will have developed a practical understanding of the digital sector. You will have built useful skills, which are not generally covered in GCSE courses, and you will have developed a good understanding of whether the IT sector is for you, and if so, which part of it you might want to study further.

If you decide to go on to further study of the IT sector, the best option for you will depend on the grades you have achieved in this and the other qualifications you have taken, and what you enjoy doing. You could progress to a Level 2 Technical Certificate or to a Level 3 programme, such as A Levels, a T Level or a BTEC National, either on its own or in combination with A levels.

What other subjects go well with IT?

This course builds on and uses the knowledge and skills you learn in your GCSEs, particularly in Computer Science. It can also be complementary learning for creative media, engineering and maths. This course is different from studying GCSEs, as, by taking part in different types of digital activities, it gives you the opportunity to apply your knowledge, skills and the techniques you learn in practical ways.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY GCSE – Resistant Materials (Metals, Timbers and Polymers)



What will I study?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

Students will study core technical principles in a broad range of materials such as wood, metal, plastics, paper and boards and electronics. They will then have the opportunity to study a specialist technical principle in greater depth using designing and making principles.

Core technical Principles:

- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Systems approach to designing
- Mechanical devices
- Materials and their working properties.

Specialist Technical Principles:

- Selection of materials and components
- Forces and stresses
- Ecological and social footprint
- Scales of production
- Sources and origin
- Using and working with materials
- Stock forms, types and sizes
- Specialist techniques
- Surface treatments and finishes.

Designing and Making Principles:

- Investigating primary and secondary data
- Environmental, social and economic challenge
- The work of others
- Design strategies
- Communication of design ideas
- Prototype development
- Tolerances
- Material management
- Tools and equipment
- Techniques and processes.



How and when will I

Year 10: You will cover a wide range of theory and exam a series of minor projects in which you will of materials.



be assessed:

develop practical skills and style questions. There will be use a range and combination

Year 11: GCSE coursework through **controlled assessment** will begin. Consisting of a 20-page folder and a practical project in your chosen specialist material this will take approximately a year to complete. This accounts for **50%** of your final GCSE.

There will be a **2-hour written examination** at the end of your course which is worth **50%** of the total GCSE marks.

The exam is delivered in 3 sections:

Section A – (20 marks) A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Section B – (30 marks) Several short and 1 extended response question based on specialist technical principles.

Section C – (50 marks) One 12-mark design question and a mixture of short and extended responses based on design and making principles.

Which key skills will I develop?

You will be largely working independently and will be expected to be responsible for your own progression and meeting of deadlines. The course will introduce you to a broad range of skills. These skills will expect you to develop your own problem-solving skills in order for you to use them effectively. This will culminate with you manufacturing a quality product which demonstrates skill, precision and accuracy.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

This qualification could lead through to further academic study and courses such as A-Level or Level 3. This qualification could also lead to an apprenticeship or employment in the following areas:

- Product Design
- Printing
- Industrial Design
- Mechanical Engineering
- Joinery/ Carpentry
- Construction
- Motor mechanics
- Engineering

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

You will need this course to study either A-Level or Level 3 in Graphics/Product Design, Engineering or Resistant Materials.

Other relevant information?

You will enjoy the course if you want to study a subject that:

- Is both creative and technical.
- Is relevant to the consumer society in which we live.
- Enables you to design and make products.
- Places an emphasis on practical work.
- Develops a full range of skills that will be useful in other subjects you study and in employment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY GCSE – Textiles

What will I study?

The GCSE qualification is designed for students who want to study fashion and textiles in a practical way. It is a creative, vibrant and popular course that feeds perfectly into further study. Textiles students are encouraged to develop their skills in a wide range of materials, techniques and processes. Lessons are energetic and full of enthusiasm. With students experimenting and exploring a variety of traditional and modern techniques, conducting research into past and present fashion designers and looking at iconic designs, styles and movements that inspire the ever-changing world of fashion.



Students will study core technical principles in a broad range of materials such as textiles. They will then have the opportunity to study textiles as a specialist technical principle in greater depth using designing and making principles.

Specialist Technical Principles:

Core technical Principles:

- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Systems approach to designing
- Mechanical devices
- Materials and their working properties.



- Selection of materials and components
- Forces and stresses
- Ecological and social footprint
- Scales of production
- Sources and origin
- Using and working with materials
- Stock forms, types and sizes
- Specialist techniques
- Surface treatments and finishes.



Designing and Making Principles:

- Investigating primary and secondary data
- Environmental, social and economic challenge
- The work of others
- Design strategies
- Communication of design ideas
- Prototype development
- Tolerances
- Material management
- Tools and equipment
- Techniques and processes.

How and when will I be assessed?

Year 10: You will develop practical skills and cover a wide range of theory and exam style questions. There will be a series of minor projects in which you will use a range and combination of materials.

Year 11: GCSE coursework through **controlled assessment** will begin. Consisting of a 20-page folder and a practical project in textiles. This will take approximately a year to complete. This accounts for **50%** of your final GCSE.

There will be a **2-hour written examination** at the end of your course which is worth **50%** of the total GCSE marks.

The exam is delivered in 3 sections:

Section A – (20 marks) A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Section B – (30 marks) Several short and 1 extended response question based on specialist technical principles in textiles.

Section C – (50 marks) One 12-mark design question and a mixture of short and extended responses based on design and making principles.

Which key skills will I develop?

You will be largely working independently and will be expected to be responsible for your own progression and meeting of deadlines. The course will introduce you to a broad range of skills. These skills will expect you to develop your own problem-solving skills in order for you to use them effectively. This will culminate with you manufacturing a quality product which demonstrates skill, precision and accuracy.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

This qualification could lead through to further academic study and courses such as A-Level or Level 3. This qualification could also lead to an apprenticeship or employment in the following areas:

- Fashion and Design
- Fashion buying
- Merchandising
- Textiles promotion and marketing
- Contour fashion
- Many others

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

The GCSE Textiles course will equip students with the key skills and understanding to further develop and progress onto A Level Textiles. There are a vast range of university courses available within textiles and fashion for students wanting to study this at higher education.

Other relevant information?

You will enjoy the course if you want to study a subject that:

- Is both creative and technical.
- Is relevant to the consumer society in which we live.
- Enables you to design and make products.
- Places an emphasis on practical work.
- Develops a full range of skills that will be useful in other subjects you study and in employment.

DRAMA GCSE

What will I study?

Students studying GCSE Drama will have the opportunity to develop a wide range of creative skills over the two years. At the start of the course students learn about two key theatre practitioners Brecht and Stanislavski, they build on their knowledge by practically exploring the differences between Naturalism and Stylised Theatre.

These techniques are further explored when working in a group to create a performance that lasts around 12 minutes. Our students have the opportunity to add costume, lighting and sound to help communicate their artistic intention to the audience. Alongside the performance, they are expected to write a 2,000 word portfolio which demonstrates their ability to analyse and evaluate their rehearsal process and creative choices. For their written GCSE exam, students study the renowned play, *The Crucible*, where they complete extended writing questions about how they would perform, direct and design the performance. Drama isn't just about performing- students will learn about lighting, costume, sound and set.

For the second part of the exam students evaluate a live performance that they have seen, a theatre trip is usually arranged for the start of Year 11. The final part of the course is where students perform two scenes from published plays.

How and when will I be assessed?

Component 1: Devising (40% of the course)

You will work in groups to create and develop a devised piece based on a given stimulus (this is often an image, video, song or poem)

There are two parts to the assessment:

- 1) A typed portfolio covering the creating and developing process and analysis and evaluation of this process. 2000 words.
- 2) A devised performance that is recorded and marked internally.

Component 2: Performance from Text (20% of the course)

You will perform **two key scenes** from a published play.

This will be recorded in school and externally examined. Monologues, duologues and groups are allowed in this performance.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (40% of the course)

This is the examination portion of the qualification and is split into two sections:



- 1) You will study *The Crucible* and write about how you would expect this to be performed, directed and designed on stage considering the historical context of when the play was set and first performed.
- 2) You will evaluate a live performance of a play you have seen at the theatre focusing on the performance and an element of design.



Which key skills will I develop?

Studying Drama encourages the development of a wide range of personal, social and communication skills which are needed in any career path. Students often pick Drama to help them develop their confidence, public speaking, teamwork and creative skills.

It is important to note that there are expectations for students to complete extended writing across the course. They will develop analytical skills where they will critique their own work as well as their peers and professional performances. Often they will write from the perspective of a director and designer, therefore improving knowledge on key backstage roles.

When developing their acting skills, students focus on broadening their abilities to use vocal and physical skills needed to fully develop a character. Students who are keen to gain practical experiencing in lighting and sound can volunteer to control the systems for a performance.

As the audience are the most significant people when viewing a performance, students are encouraged to articulate their creative visions and justify the impact they are intending to have on their audience. This can help students strengthen their analytical skills when understanding that all creative choices are made with purpose.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

GCSE Drama is a recognised qualification and can help many future pathways. Some students go on to study Performing Arts/Acting at College & Sixth Form and can seek support from Miss Winwood for their audition pieces. This could then lead to Drama School or University with the idea of becoming a performer or teacher.

OCR Cambridge National Engineering Design (Level 1/2)

G and B Pathway Only

What will I study?

We will follow the **OCR Cambridge National in Engineering Design** specification, which provides students with the opportunity to develop creative problem-solving skills through engineering projects. This course lays a strong foundation for post-16 studies or apprenticeships. All we ask for is enthusiasm, commitment, and a willingness to explore engineering design.

Students will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Understanding and responding to design briefs
- Researching and analysing existing products
- Creating and communicating design ideas using sketches and CAD software
- Developing and testing prototypes

How and when will I be assessed?

Component	Details	Marks	% of Qualification
R038: Principles of Engineering Design (Exam)	A written exam assessing knowledge of engineering materials, processes, and design principles.	70 Marks	40%
R039: Communicating Designs (Coursework)	Students produce design sketches, CAD models, and presentations to communicate their ideas.	60 Marks	30%
R040: Design, Evaluation, and Modelling (Coursework)	Students develop and test prototypes to evaluate and improve their designs.	60 Marks	30%

Which key skills will I develop?

This course will help you develop:

- ✓ Problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- ✓ Hands-on experience in engineering design and prototyping
- ✓ Technical drawing and CAD software skills
- ✓ The ability to evaluate and improve designs based on testing
- ✓ Communication and teamwork in an engineering environment

Where might this qualification lead me?

The **OCR Cambridge National in Engineering Design** provides a solid foundation for further study and careers in engineering, design, and manufacturing. It is an ideal steppingstone to:

- **Level 3 Engineering courses** (such as BTECs or A-Levels in Product Design)
- **Apprenticeships in Engineering or Design**
- **Future careers in Mechanical, Electrical, or Civil Engineering**

Why choose this course?

Do you enjoy using mathematical problem-solving? Do you like designing things? Do you like using computers? Are you interested in how products are engineered? If you answered 'yes' to these questions, then this course could be perfect for you!

Do I need to study this course to continue at A-Level/Level 3?

While it is not essential, studying this course will provide you with a strong foundation for further study in engineering-related subjects. It will also help if you want to pursue a career in design, engineering, or manufacturing.

Any other relevant information?

This subject requires a commitment to practical and theoretical learning. If you're interested in this course, feel free to speak Miss Fowler for more information.

OCR Cambridge National - Enterprise and Marketing (Level 1/2)

What will I study?

The Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing is aimed at students aged 14-16, studying a Key Stage 4 curriculum, who wish to develop applied knowledge and practical skills in enterprise and marketing. It is designed to sit alongside other GCSEs and contains both practical and theoretical elements, which will prepare students for further study of qualifications in enterprise, marketing, or business.

In this course you will learn about the key factors to consider and activities that need to happen to operate a successful small start-up business. This course will provide you with the knowledge and understanding of key enterprise and marketing topics. This qualification also allows students the opportunity to gain broad, transferable skills and experiences that can be applied as they progress into their next stages of study and life and to enhance their preparation for future employment.

How and when will I be assessed?

Unit no.	Unit title	Unit ref. no. (URN)	Guided learning hours (GLH)	How are they assessed?	Mandatory or optional
R067	Enterprise and marketing concepts	R/618/5877	48	E	M
R068	Design a business proposal	Y/618/5878	36	NEA	M
R069	Market and pitch a business proposal	D/618/5879	36	NEA	M

M: Mandatory

E: External assessment by exam board

NEA: Assessed by teacher, moderated by examination board

Topic contents

Unit R067: Enterprise and Marketing Concepts This is assessed by an **external exam**.

- o Characteristics, risk and reward for enterprise
- o Market research to target a specific customer
- o What makes a product financially viable
- o Creating a marketing mix to support a product
- o Factors to consider when starting up and running an enterprise.

Unit R068: Design a Business Proposal. This is assessed by a set **assignment**.

- o Market research
- o How to identify a customer profile
- o Develop a product proposal for a business brief
- o Review whether a business proposal is financially viable
- o Review the likely success of the business proposal

Unit R069: Market and Pitch a Business Proposal. This is assessed by a set **assignment**.

- o Develop a brand identity to target a specific customer profile
- o Create a promotional campaign for a brand and product
- o Plan and pitch a proposal
- o Review a brand proposal, promotional campaign and professional pitch.

The Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing is graded pass, merit and distinction for Level 1 and pass, merit, distinction, and distinction* for Level 2. Made up of three mandatory units: Units R067, R068 and R069 one examination and two controlled in class assignments. It will challenge all students, including high attaining students, by introducing you to demanding material and skills;

encouraging independence and creativity; and providing tasks that engage with the most taxing aspects of the National Curriculum.

What key skills will I develop?

Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills that are transferable to different real-life contexts, roles or employment:

- Verbal Communication/Presentation
- Analytical Skills
- Research
- Digital Presentation
- Planning
- Creative Thinking

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION GCSE

What will I study?

Food preparation skills will be integrated into the five sections:

1. Food, nutrition and health
2. Food science
3. Food safety
4. Food choice
5. Food provenance



How and when will I be assessed?

- **Written exam**

1 hour 45 minutes worth 100 marks and accounts for 50% of the GCSE, testing theoretical knowledge of food preparation and nutrition from Sections 1 to 5 above.

- **Non-Exam Assessment (coursework)**

Task 1: Food investigation will assess the students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Practical investigations are a compulsory element of this NEA task.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment will assess students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task. All students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours, planning how this will be achieved.

This section accounts for 50% of the GCSE and is assessed via the production of a written report (1,500–2,000 words) including photographic evidence of the practical investigation (task 1) and a written or electronic portfolio including photographic evidence. Photographic evidence of the three final dishes must be included for task 2.

Which key skills will I develop?

During this 2-year course you will learn how to work independently as well as within a team. All coursework involves working to deadlines as well as problem solving a range of products. Within the practical element of your work, you will be required to work efficiently and plan well in advance. In the examination element of the course, you will be expected to develop your memory skills. The course places an emphasis on the design and manufacture of quality products. You will be required to look at commercial products and form opinions as to their ability to satisfy consumer needs. You will also be asked to consider how those needs relate to moral, social, ethnical and environmental issues. Above all it encourages you to be imaginative and experimental when combining materials and using or developing

processes. You will build confidence in your ability to work with materials to produce and appreciate quality products.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

Career opportunities would allow you to continue studying Hospitality and Catering at A-Level or Level 3. You could go onto an apprenticeship in the Food industry or gain employment in a range of Food related jobs such as food tester, quality controller, food critic, researcher, marketing, technician or hospitality.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Yes. This course builds on the foundation of KS3 with scientific and technical elements that will need to be understood before you progress to A level.

Other relevant information?

You will be expected to cook on a regular basis and this can sometimes be expensive, so you need to be aware of the cost of taking this course. Homework makes a significant contribution to the development of your knowledge and understanding. For your Non-Exam Assessment you will be expected to do a considerable amount of research and development of your chosen topic in your homework sessions and to expand your folio contents.

FRENCH GCSE

What will I study?

You will study the language through a wide variety of themes and subjects, including describing your family & friends, your health & lifestyle, the area you live in, your opinions on music, TV, film & social media, your school & future plans and holidays.

How and when will I be assessed?

You will be assessed in Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing exams at the end of the course in Year 11. Each skill is worth 25% of your final grade. GCSE French has a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier.

Which key skills will I develop?

You will primarily learn how to communicate, understand and interact effectively in the language for a variety of purposes. As well as developing skills relating directly to learning the language, you will learn a host of transferable skills such as developing your memory, problem solving and communication skills. You will also develop a better understanding of English and you will develop your confidence in speaking and writing.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

Studying a language degree is essential for teaching a language, translating and interpreting. However, there are many other careers where a foreign language can open doors for you in the workplace. Careers that require languages can include:

- Banking / Finance
- Business
- Manufacturing
- Armed Forces
- Teaching
- Translating
- Tourism and Leisure Industry
- Law
- Sales & Marketing

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level?

Yes. A-Level French is taught at Sir Graham Balfour and Weston Road currently and a GCSE at grade 6+ is required to access the course.

Any other relevant information?

The National Curriculum encourages all students to continue their study of a foreign language in Key Stage 4, and the school recommends that all who are capable of continuing with a language should do so. With the changing and unpredictable nature of the EU, it is becoming ever more important that all young people should be able to use another language and language skills are becoming increasingly sought after in business. Many jobs require workers to travel and work abroad and it is a fallacy to believe that everyone speaks English.

We would encourage students to continue to study MFL as we have noticed that many universities are now expecting prospective students to have achieved a GCSE qualification in Modern Foreign Languages, regardless of the course of study.

GEOGRAPHY GCSE

What will I study?

At GCSE level in Geography we will be following the AQA Geography specification. This specification covers 2 main topic areas 'Living with the Physical Environment' and 'Challenges in the Human Environment'. Each topic area contains a number of individual modules covering different aspects of Geography and different challenges the world faces in the 21st century. These include the challenge posed by natural hazards, the challenges of increasing rates of urbanisation, how the Landscape of the UK has been shaped, the challenges of globalisation, how human activity threatens the planet and how these impacts on the resources we have available. In addition, the course contains two different, but compulsory, fieldwork activities on topics which change from year to year based on material released by the exam board.

How and when will I be assessed?

The specification consists of three examinations all sat at the end of the two-year course; there is no controlled assessment in GCSE Geography.

Paper 1 – Living with the Physical Environment – 1 hour 30-minute exam which is worth 35% of the final grade.

Paper 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment – 1 hour 30-minute exam which is worth 35% of the final grade.

Paper 3 – Geographical Application – 1 hour paper which is worth 30% of the final grade. This paper will be used to assess your knowledge and understanding of geographical skills including fieldwork skills based on the two fieldwork days.

All students sit the same exam papers. There are no tiers and papers consist of a range of question styles from 1-mark multiple choice questions to 9-mark mini essay questions.

Students will be assessed regularly throughout the course using a range of assessment material designed to simulate and prepare students effectively for the final examinations.

Which key skills will I develop?

Geography is a multi-skill subject which operates effectively alongside and in combination with a wide range of different subjects. At its heart it is a problem-solving subject and throughout the course we will be identifying issues and challenges facing our planet in the 21st century. We will use numeracy and literacy skills to investigate these issues and challenges by analysing and interpreting a wide variety of resources. We will investigate the science behind specific processes which shape our planet and influence and affect the lives of the people living on it, developing our empathy skills. We will develop and use ICT skills to further investigate an issue and to present our findings. We will encourage students to make decisions based on the evidence and present their ideas effectively using their literacy skills to meet the deadlines set. Finally, through fieldwork activities we will encourage and develop effective teamwork and analysis.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

The skills you develop can lead you to employment opportunities in a wide variety of careers such as journalism, media, engineering, ICT, travel and tourism, environmental management, risk management, marketing, business management and teaching. Geographers are everywhere and a GCSE in Geography is a stepping stone to a whole range of opportunities. It also leads onto the A-Level Geography course which is offered at Sir Graham Balfour School and has a successful track record of positive results over a significant period with many of our Geography A-Level students going on to study Geography at university every year.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

You do need to study the GCSE Geography course to progress onto the A-Level course. The GCSE will provide a strong theoretical, practical and knowledge-based foundation for the A-Level course.

GERMAN GCSE

What will I study?

You will study the language through a wide variety of themes and subjects, including describing your family & friends, your health & lifestyle, the area you live in, your opinions on music, TV, film & social media, your school & future plans and holidays.

How and when will I be assessed?

You will be assessed in Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing exams at the end of the course in Year 11. Each skill is worth 25% of your final grade. GCSE French has a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier.

Which key skills will I develop?

You will primarily learn how to communicate, understand and interact effectively in the language for a variety of purposes. As well as developing skills relating directly to learning the language, you will learn a host of transferable skills such as developing your memory, problem solving and communication skills. You will also develop a better understanding of English and you will develop your confidence in speaking and writing.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

Studying a language degree is essential for teaching a language, translating and interpreting. However, there are many other careers where a foreign language can open doors for you in the workplace. Careers that require languages can include:

- Banking / Finance
- Business
- Manufacturing
- Armed Forces
- Teaching
- Translating
- Tourism and Leisure Industry
- Law
- Sales & Marketing

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level?

Yes. It would be necessary to achieve a grade 6+ in order to continue with German at A Level.

Any other relevant information?

The National Curriculum encourages all students to continue their study of a foreign language in Key Stage 4, and the school recommends that all who are capable of continuing with a language should do so. With the changing and unpredictable nature of the EU, it is becoming ever more important that all young people should be able to use another language and language skills are becoming increasingly sought after in business. Many jobs require workers to travel and work abroad and it is a fallacy to believe that everyone speaks English.

We would encourage students to continue to study MFL as we have noticed that many universities are now expecting prospective students to have achieved a GCSE qualification in Modern Foreign Languages, regardless of the course of study.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – OCR Cambridge National

What will I study?

The OCR Cambridge National in Health and Social Care provides learners with the opportunity to develop essential sector-specific knowledge and skills in a hands-on learning environment. The course focuses on three key areas:

- **Practical Skills and Processes** – such as analysing information to assess an individual's health and creating a tailored plan to enhance their health and wellbeing.
- **Attitudes and Values** – with an emphasis on understanding and applying the care values that are crucial to the sector.
- **Core Knowledge** – covering topics that support effective practice, including human growth and development, the roles of health and social care services, and the factors influencing health and wellbeing.

This qualification equips learners with the foundation to progress further in the health and social care sector while developing practical skills for real-world application.

How will I be assessed?

Learners will complete three units that make up their overall grade:

- **RO32** - Principles of care (Exam 40%)
- **RO33** - Helping individuals find the support they need following life events (NEA—Non-Examination Assessment—coursework- 30%)
- **RO34** - Planning and delivering creative and therapeutic activities (NEA—Non-Examination Assessment—coursework- 30%)

Which key skills will I develop?

During this two-year course you will learn how to work independently as well as within a team. All coursework involves working to deadlines as well as problem solving. Within the practical element of your work, you will be required to work efficiently and plan well in advance. In the examination element of the course, you will be expected to develop your memory and problem-solving skills.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

The Health and Social Care Sector is one of the fastest growing areas for employment, with over 14 million people across the range of jobs from residential care work to dental nurses, from hospital technicians to dieticians and nurses, from nursery nurses to social workers to name but a few.

Where could this course take me?

By developing applied knowledge and practical skills, this course will help give you the opportunity to progress on to A levels, a Cambridge Technical in Health and Social Care, an apprenticeship or university.

The careers that start from Health & Social are endless – Nurse, Midwife, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Paramedic and more.

HISTORY GCSE

What will I study?

Our GCSE course is designed to provide you with a broad and diverse study of the history of Britain and the wider world. You will cover historical topics spanning over 1000 years studying Medieval and early modern British Depth studies, Modern non-British depth studies, thematic studies and period studies.

Our areas of study are:

Thematic study: Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000-present and Whitechapel, c1870-c1900 crime, policing, and the inner city. Whilst exploring this module here are some of the topics you will follow: the changing definitions of crime from vagabonds, witchcraft, smuggling, drug offences and racial discrimination. You will investigate case studies on trial by ordeal, the Gunpowder plot, the Witchfinder General, Conscientious Objectors and the end of the death penalty in Britain. Finally, you will study the problems of Whitechapel in London and the infamous case of Jack the Ripper.

Or

Thematic study: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present and The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment, and the trenches. Whilst exploring this module here are some of the topics you will follow: the Middle Ages, with a focus on the importance of the Church in everyday life and its reluctance to abandon faith in old methods for new ideas. You will then move onto the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, the process of industrialisation and into the nineteenth century, when new discoveries and developments started to have a big impact on the understanding of disease. The study finishes with a focus on the rise of technology in the twentieth century. You will also study a historic environment which focuses on the Western Front and the impact of the war on the nature of illness and the provision of medical care.

British depth study: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060-88. Here are some of the areas you will explore in this module: Anglo Saxon Society, the House of Godwin, the claimants to the English throne, the Battle of Hastings, the development of Castles, the revolts of the earls, the Feudal system as well as the death of William I.

Period study: The American West, c1835-c1895. Whilst exploring this section you will look at some of the following and more: the Plains Indians and their way of life, the Gold Rush, the problems of migration, the American Civil War, the growth of the cattle industry, cowboys and the Johnson County Wars and the destruction of the Plains Indians.

Modern Depth study: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1939. Here are some of the topics you will explore for this module: the creation of the Weimar government, the impact of the Treaty of Versailles, the 'Golden years' of the Weimar, the creation of the Nazi party, Hitler's rise to power, the creation of a dictatorship and life in Nazi controlled Germany.

How and when will I be assessed?

You have 3 key examined outcomes at the end of Year 11:			
Paper 1	Written and source-based paper divided into two main sections covering the Crime and punishment module.	Your examination lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes	Worth 30% of your qualification.
Paper 2	Written paper divided into two main sections covering the British Depth study on the Normans and the period study on the American West.	Your examination lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes.	Worth 40% of your qualification.
Paper 3	Written and source-based paper covering the Modern depth study on Weimar and Nazi Germany.	Your examination lasts 1 hour and 20 minutes	Worth 30% of your Qualification.

Which key skills will I develop?

Whilst studying this chronologically broad GCSE you will gain a developed understanding of how our world has been shaped, as well as a range of vital skills such as source analysis, problem solving, creative thinking, communication, and analytical skills.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

The skills developed during a History GCSE are extremely versatile allowing you to consider a range of A Levels and career options. History can gain you entry into a wide range of careers, including television, radio, journalism, the police force, social work and the civil service.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

You do need to study the GCSE History course to progress onto the A-Level course. You will also be able to transfer skills from other subjects such as English to help support your studies. The GCSE course will help develop your source analysis and analytical writing skills that are essential at A-Level and will support your transition to the subject.

MUSIC – BTEC

What will I study?

The BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice is a qualification for those of you interested in taking a hands-on Music course alongside your GCSEs. It will provide you with an insight into what it is like to work in the Music sector, with the opportunity to specialise in music technology/production, performing (playing an instrument/singing) or a combination of these.

You will explore a variety of music styles and the musical theory and techniques that underpin them, developing technical and practical skills through workshops and classes. All students will learn how to listen and analyse music from a range of styles and genres and create music for different purposes.

If you are interested in music technology/production, you will learn how to use professional music software to record, edit, arrange, and mix pieces of music; as well as microphones and other audio equipment to produce recordings. For those of you who wish to perform by singing or playing an instrument, you will develop your technique and stylistic interpretation of music, both as a soloist and as part of an ensemble (group).

To support your musical development, all students will have the opportunity to have weekly instrumental or vocal lessons from a visiting teacher. These are optional, are funded by the school (no cost to parents/carers) and are available in a range of instruments such as drum-kit, piano, electric/bass guitars, ukulele, brass, woodwind, string instruments, and singing. Depending on the instrument, you will either be provided with one to use, or for the larger instruments, can practise on those available in school.

There are three components in the qualification:

- **Component 1 – Exploring Music Products and Styles (30% of the overall grade):** you will explore a range of musical styles such as classical, popular, world music, and music for the media through listening activities, practical workshops, and the creation of musical products.
- **Component 2 – Music Skills Development (30% of the overall grade):** you will develop technical, practical, personal, and professional skills through the creation of original music, specialising in performance and/or music technology/production.
- **Component 3 – Responding to a Music Brief (40% of the overall grade):** using the skills and techniques you have learnt in Components 1 and 2, you will develop and present a cover version of a piece of music. This could be solely using music technology; through playing instruments; or a combination of these.

How and when will I be assessed?

All three components are assessed through assignments completed in class over a number of weeks. For Components 1 and 2, these are assessed by your teacher, with Component 3 being an external assessment, marked by the exam board. Please note that as there are no formal written exams at the end of Year 11, all the work you complete in class and for homework will be either in preparation for an assessment or will be work that will be assessed.

The Component 1 assessment in Year 10 will consist of a typed analysis of four different styles of music; and the creation of three short musical products with options including composing for a film clip, an original composition on a theme, a performance, and a dance music remix. For the Component 2 assessment in Year 11, you will choose two out of three areas to develop (from performing, creating music, and music technology). For each area, you will create a

portfolio of evidence to show the development of your skills, including the performance or creation of a piece of music based on a theme.

In the Component 3 assessment (also in Year 11), you will plan, create, and evaluate a cover version of a piece of music, reinventing it in a different style from the original. You will be able to achieve this using the skills and techniques learnt in the course, by producing it on music technology software, through performance on an instrument/singing, or a combination of both music technology and performance.

Which key skills will I develop?

The BTEC course will give you the opportunity to develop transferable and employment skills such as responding to a brief, self-development, planning, time management and communication.

You will also develop key musical skills required for progression to Level 3 courses, careers in the music industry or for your own work as a musician. These include understanding musical theory, listening, and appraising, knowledge of a wide range of musical styles, and composing, as well as skills specific to music technology and/or performance.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

This course is ideal if you wish to work in the music industry either as your chosen career or as a personal interest such as being a performer or music producer. Careers could include working in areas such as performance, broadcasting, record labels, film, live music events, music technology, teaching, and digital media.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

To study a Level 3 Music course, you would need to achieve at least a Level 2 Merit in BTEC Music. In addition, for an A-Level Music course your skills in performance (vocal or instrumental) should be at a Grade 4 Practical standard.

Any other relevant information?

With the course being practical in nature, having existing skills and an interest in performance and/or music technology will be an advantage. However, the course is open to all students, regardless of musical ability.

To be able to succeed in this qualification, it is expected that you will develop your music technology and/or performance skills in timetabled lessons but also during independent learning. The practice rooms and music classroom can be used at lunchtimes and after school so that you can improve your skills in playing instruments, singing, and/or using music technology software. Extra-curricular activities are also available for you to participate in if you wish to, including choir, music club, and the annual school production.

Examples of assessed work produced for the BTEC Music qualification, are available on Office365 in the Music folder (Students Portal > EXP ARTS > MUSIC > BTEC Music examples).

We are hoping to offer this course from September 2026. Parents/Carers will be required to cover some of the costs of the equipment required for this course, possibly including a specific camera. More information will follow if we are able to run the course.

PHOTOGRAPHY GCSE

What will I study?

The GCSE Photography Specification enables students to develop creative and technical skills while building confidence in visual communication and independent working. The course encourages students to explore photography in both digital and practical contexts, developing their understanding of camera techniques, composition, lighting, image editing and visual storytelling. Students will investigate the work of photographers and artists to inform their own ideas and will experiment with a wide range of techniques such as portraiture, landscape, still life, experimental photography and photo manipulation. All we ask for is commitment, curiosity and an open mind.

How and when will I be assessed?

Students complete a sustained portfolio of work over the two-year course. This includes a series of projects based on themes, where students research photographers, record ideas, experiment with techniques and develop final outcomes. Students demonstrate skills in planning, refining and presenting their work. Students respond to a starting point from an externally set paper. They have a preparatory period to research and develop ideas followed by a supervised final practical outcome.

Which key skills will I develop?

You will develop your creative thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills. Photography will help you improve your technical ability with cameras and editing software, your understanding of composition and visual language, and your ability to analyse images. You will also build resilience, organisation, time management and presentation skills that are valuable across all subjects and future careers.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

GCSE Photography provides a strong foundation for further study at A Level Photography, Art and Design or Media. It can lead to careers in photography, graphic design, advertising, film, journalism, digital media, fashion, marketing, architecture and many other creative industries.

Why choose this course?

Do you enjoy taking photographs and being creative? Are you interested in learning how images communicate ideas and emotions? Do you enjoy using technology and editing images? Are you keen to develop your own creative style and ideas? If you answered 'yes' to these questions, then GCSE Photography could be the perfect choice for you.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Although it is not essential, studying GCSE Photography is strongly recommended if you wish to continue with Photography or Art at a higher level. The course provides excellent preparation for advanced creative study and builds essential technical and analytical skills.

Any other relevant information?

This subject builds on creative skills developed at Key Stage 3. Students must be organised, motivated and willing to work independently to meet deadlines. At the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to showcase their work in a school exhibition celebrating their creativity and achievements.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS GCSE

What will I study?

In GCSE Philosophy and Ethics, you will follow the AQA Religious Studies A specification. This specification covers 8 topic areas. You will explore in detail the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam. Additionally, you will debate and explore the topics such as Crime and Punishment, Life issues, Peace and conflict and Family and Relationships. Each topic area will require you to explore different beliefs and attitudes, reflect on your own personal opinions, and debate why people agree and disagree with different aspects of modern-day life.

How and when will I be assessed?

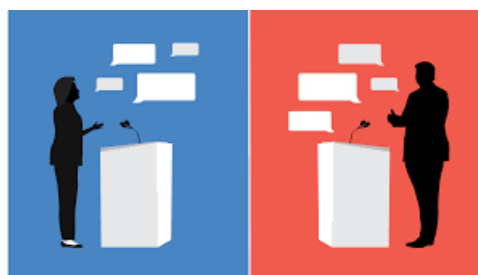
There is no controlled assessment option for the course, you will sit 2 exams. The exams are broken down as follows:

Assessment Overview		
Paper 1: The Study of Religions: beliefs and teachings & Practices	Topics: Christian Belief Christian Practices Islam Beliefs Islam Practices	Exam 1: 50% 1 hour 45 minutes written paper
Paper 2: Thematic Studies	Topics: Religion, crime and punishment. Religion and life issues. Religion, peace and conflict. Religion, families and relationships.	Exam 2 50% 1 hour 45 minutes written paper

Which key skills will I develop?

The course will help you to develop many other important skills such as:

- Empathy
- Logic
- Understanding
- Analysis
- Reflection
- Expression
- Interpretation
- Evaluation
- Essay writing



Where might this qualification lead me to?

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is a relevant qualification for ANY job which involves working with other people. It is well thought of by employers of the emergency services and legal services. The UK is a multi-faith society, and an understanding of our differences will help us live and work together peacefully.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

A-Level Religious Studies focuses on Theology, Philosophy and Ethics and thus a GCSE is not essential. However, a general regard for ethical issues and diversity is necessary.

Any other relevant information?

This subject is not about being religious; it is about establishing yourself as a person. It's about knowing what you think and being aware of what others think. The aim of the course is to give students the ability to say, 'this is what I think and why I think it'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION GCSE

What will I study?

Students will study a range of topics, theory based and practically. The topics include applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, sports psychology, socio-cultural influences on health, fitness and well-being and the use of data. Students will also look in depth at the practical application of sport and produce a performance analysis.

How and when will I be assessed?

- **Practical performance** – students will have to perform in 3 sports (one must be an individual sport; the second must be a team sport and the third in either a team or individual sport). Students must also analyse their best sport and produce a performance analysis. 100 marks are available for this and account for 40% of the total GCSE.
- **Examination** There will be two 1 hour 15-minute written examinations at the end of the course. These will include a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions. These exams account for a total of 60% of the final grade.

Paper one will cover (30%, 78 marks)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of Data

Paper two will cover (30%, 78 marks)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, Fitness and Well-being
- Use of data

Which key skills will I develop?

During this course a range of skills and attributes will be developed such as an increased level of fitness, improved understanding of a variety of sports as well as improved knowledge of the tactical and theoretical elements associated with sport and the human body. Students will develop teamwork, communication, and leadership skills. They will also work on organisation, planning and being competitive.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

GCSE PE will ensure that you are fully aware of your own and others' health and fitness levels and give you an insight in how to improve them. It will give you a clear understanding of how sport is run and the benefits of sports. You will understand about nutrition and the human body. The GCSE will open doors for extended courses, such as: A Level PE, Level 3 BTEC and it will also provide a valuable insight for students wanting to go on to university to study sport. It will also give students a good grounding for vocations of a physical nature, such as the Police, Fire Service, coaching and within the fitness industry.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

You do need to study GCSE PE if you are thinking of taking A-Level or Level 3 BTEC PE in the future.

Any other relevant information?

To be successful in this subject, students must have a love for sport, and they need to take part in sport on a regular basis. Anyone who represents school or plays club level sport will be at an advantage for this subject. Students will require full PE kit, including football boots to enable them to access the practical element of the course.

PSYCHOLOGY GCSE

What will I study?

Psychology is the science of the mind and behaviour. You will be investigating how humans and animals behave and the reasons behind why we act in certain ways. Psychologists try to bring about change and help people with difficulties through psychological research. Students will have the opportunity to explore the following topics:

Paper 1: Cognition and behaviour

- Memory
- Perception
- Development
- Research Methods

Paper 2: Social context and behaviour

- Social Influence
- Language, Thought and Communication
- Brain and Neuropsychology
- Psychological Problems

How and when will I be assessed?

Students will follow the AQA specification, which comprises of two papers carrying equal marks. Students will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the subject area together with their ability to describe, critically analyse and evaluate key studies and theories. They will also be assessed on their ability to design, conduct and report on psychological experiments using research methods. The exam consists of a variety of question styles including multiple choice, short answer and extended writing.

Which key skills will I develop?

Students will often take part in group work and will develop their abilities to discuss their opinion on a variety of psychological concepts. Tasks will involve looking at and analysing data and arriving at conclusions regarding research findings. Furthermore, students will develop their written skills to answer extended exam questions, writing in full prose in an accurate and concise way with key specialist terminology. Being able to work independently is key; Psychology will be a new subject area for students and therefore they must show a proactive approach to learning and understanding a range of psychological theories. Alongside having a good level of English, Psychology involves many biological concepts and mathematical content and therefore students must expect to use and apply their mathematical and science knowledge within lessons.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

Psychology is an excellent subject to progress further at A-level. However, this is not compulsory. Students will still be able to choose to study psychology at A-level even if they haven't completed a GCSE in the subject.

Psychology compliments the other sciences well, as well as English based subjects such as history. Further to this, Psychology is excellent for anyone who wants to work with people in the future, as it will give you a greater understanding of how people interact together.

Other possible career paths include:

- Clinical psychology: working directly with people with mental health problems as well as conducting assessments, designing, and carrying out therapies.
- Forensic psychology: studying offending behaviour through work in the police, prison or probation service.
- Educational psychology: applying theory to young people in education, examining learning difficulties as well as social and emotional problems.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A level/level 3?

Although it is always preferable to study the subject at GCSE, it is not a necessity for this subject. You will, however, need a grade 6 or above in Biology or a grade 6 or above in Trilogy Science if you wish to study Psychology A-Level in the Stafford Sixth Form Partnership.

SEPARATE SCIENCES GCSE

This option is open for all students who have a curiosity about the world around us and beyond. Taking separate science will enhance your key skills problem solving, investigative approaches and critical thinking. The subjects are taught by specialists who engender interest in, and enthusiasm for, their subjects.

This option will result in the student gaining 3 separate GCSEs – in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. There is considerable overlap between these courses and compulsory Science courses: the Separate Science students will do more of the three sciences and gain a fuller understanding of the Sciences. Students will study the AQA GCSE syllabus.

BIOLOGY

What will I study?

Biology is a deeply relevant subject to all students as it seeks to explain how organisms work and how they are inter-related. Students find it an exciting and fascinating course to study. At Sir Graham Balfour we believe that the practical plays an enormous role in embedding theory, applying knowledge, and giving students a taste of the way the subject can be studied practically in later years.

This qualification is taught in 7 modules but examined by two papers at the end of Year 11. The course is very well resourced through the Office 365 and the wealth of exam paper material ensures that no candidate should be taken by surprise when it comes to the final exam.

The topics that make up GCSE Biology are as follows:

1. Cell biology: (types, tissues, microscopy, cell division, stem cells)
2. Organisation (digestive, transport, plant systems)
3. Infection and response (disease, immunology, antibiotics)
4. Bioenergetics (respiration, photosynthesis)
5. Homeostasis and response (hormones, nervous system, eye, reproduction)
6. Inheritance, variation, and evolution (reproduction, variation, gamete formation, genetics, DNA, natural selection)
7. Ecology (communities, biotic, abiotic, C and N cycles, human impact)

There is no coursework as the practical skills are assessed as part of the exam.

How and when will I be assessed?

All examinations occur at the end of Year 11 as follows:

There are 2 exam papers, and each paper is of a similar format as outlined below:

- They are written exams that are 1 hour 45 minutes in duration.
- They have a Foundation and Higher Tier.
- They are each worth 100 marks.
- They are each worth 50% of the final GCSE grade.

Question types:

Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response.

Which key skills will I develop?

There is a clear expectation that students summarise their lessons as they go along, and that revision starts on day 1 of the course. The Biology course will ensure that students develop team working as well as independence, organization and the ability to use the Scientific method to test ideas; students should be able to apply knowledge to situations that are new to them and be able to use scientific ideas to explain observations.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

All the science GCSE qualifications are highly regarded by employers and colleges alike and will be useful in any future employment or course.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A level/level 3?

Yes, without a good grade in Biology or Trilogy Science it would be impractical to attempt further study post 16. The course also leads onto A-Level Psychology.

Any other relevant information

Further information to be found at www.aqa.org.uk

CHEMISTRY

What will I study?

Chemistry is the branch of science concerned with the substances of which matter is composed, the investigation of their properties and reactions, and the use of such reactions to form new substances. Students find this course fascinating and it is taught in a way that relates Chemistry to the world around us. The ethos in the Science Faculty is about learning by doing, so practical experiments play a big part in lessons. This helps to embed knowledge, test theories and allows students to investigate their hypotheses about the subject.

There are 10 topics in the Chemistry GCSE, and they are as follows:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
3. Quantitative chemistry
4. Chemical changes
5. Energy changes
6. The rate and extent of chemical change
7. Organic chemistry
8. Chemical analysis
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere
10. Using resources

How and when will I be assessed?

There are 2 written exam papers, which are both sat at the end of Year 11, each worth 50% of the final grade. There are both Foundation and Higher levels available. Each of the papers are 1 hour and 45 minutes long and both contain multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

The course is very well resourced, and pupils are given a range of material to help them develop their learning, and revise topics, as well as being given access to a range of bespoke online resources via Office 365.

Which key skills will I develop?

Chemistry develops a wide range of skills such as:

- Scientific, numerical and technical skills.
- An enquiring mind.
- Logical approach to solving problems.
- Patience and persistence.
- The ability to analyse data.
- Leadership and team working skills.
- The ability to make decisions.
- Good spoken and written communication skills

Where might this qualification lead me to?

All the science GCSE qualifications are highly regarded by employers and colleges alike and will be useful in any future employment or course.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A level/level 3?

Whilst it is possible to do A-Level Chemistry after doing Trilogy Science at GCSE, the Separate Chemistry GCSE is better at preparing students for the rigours of the A-Level course.

Any other relevant information?

Students are provided with the materials needed to revise and develop their knowledge and understanding outside the classroom. With a huge number of documents and links available on Office 365, the course is very well-resourced.

All other information can be found on the AQA website.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry-8462>

PHYSICS

What will I study? Syllabus: AQA

Studying Physics at GCSE will give students the tools and concepts they need to be able to construct a scientific approach to solving problems. Students will learn to ask and answer questions about the fundamental laws that govern natural phenomena. Topics include:

- Energy
- Electricity
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic Structure
- Forces
- Waves
- Electromagnetism
- Space

The two-year course is assessed at the end in two papers, each worth 50% of the total GCSE and each one is 1hr 45min in duration. The questions are a mix of short and long answer and multiple choice.

Paper 1:
What's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Electricity • Particle model of matter • Atomic structure
How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • Foundation and Higher Tier • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE
Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.
Paper 2:
What's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces • Waves • Magnetism and electromagnetism • Space physics
How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • Foundation and Higher Tier • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE
Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Practical Investigation is not formally assessed but plays an enormous role in embedding theoretical understanding as well as applying and evaluating scientific ideas. The course is very well resourced through Office 365 and the wealth of exam paper material ensures that no candidate should be taken by surprise when it comes to the final exam. The course starts in Year 9 with a bridging course that aims to introduce students to the rigours of GCSE.

Which key skills will I develop?

Students will develop team working as well as independence, organisational skills, and the ability to use the scientific method to test ideas; students should be able to apply knowledge to situations that are new to them and be able to use scientific ideas to explain and evaluate observations.

Where might this qualification lead me to?

All the science GCSE qualifications are highly regarded by employers and colleges alike and will be useful in any future employment or course.

Do I need to study this course to do it at A-Level/Level 3?

Yes, without a good grade in Physics or Trilogy Science it would be impractical to attempt further study post 16.

Any other relevant information

Further information to be found at www.aqa.org.uk