



E-ACT Montpelier
High School

KS4 Curriculum Options 2025 - 2027

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GCSE Subject Applications 2025

A Guide for Year 9 Students

Now that you are in Year 9 the time has come for you to make some decisions about your future and the subjects you will be taking in Year 10. These decisions are extremely important, and whilst at this stage you may not know which career you would like to pursue eventually, the subjects you apply for need a great deal of thought and consideration from you, your teachers and your parents and carers.

At Montpelier High School we aim to offer support and guidance throughout this decision-making period in order to make it an enjoyable and even exciting time for you.

The following pages present an outline of the subjects you must take and the subjects you may apply for. Students will also be asked to choose a reserve subject. We design our curriculum option blocks around student choices each year. This allows many students to have their first subject choice preferences or subject reserve preference. We cannot guarantee that all options can be accommodated and therefore may need to ask you to change one of your subject options if the combination of courses is not possible, or if the subject does not have enough uptake. Please select carefully as the option blocks will be created around your submitted choices.

We strongly recommend following the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), when selecting options subjects, as this is a widely recognised performance measure by all post-16 provisions and looked upon favourably by universities. To ensure students qualify for the EBacc, alongside their core subjects they must also study either History or Geography and a language.

Parents and carers will be asked to agree to the choices made by the child before the final preferences can be submitted. Further information about this process will be given at this Virtual Information Evening.

The deadline for preferred options submissions online is **Thursday 13th February**.

You will need to think very carefully about which subjects you would prefer to study. There is information about each option subject in this booklet.

How to choose your GCSE Options

All students will study English Language, English Literature, Maths and Science. All students begin Year 10 studying for triple science; after year 10 exams, students will either continue on the triple science pathway or move to the combined science pathway.

Students choose three subjects to study alongside the core subjects.

1) Option one – Choose one subject from this list. You should also choose a reserve subject.

- **History**
- **Geography**
- **French**
- **Spanish**

2.) Choose two additional subjects from this list. You will also choose two reserve subjects from the list.

- **Art**
- **Business Studies**
- **Computer Science**
- **Design & Technology**
- **Drama**
- **French**
- **Food preparation and nutrition**
- **Geography**
- **Health and Social Care**
- **History**
- **Music**
- **Physical Education**
- **Performing Arts**
- **Religious Studies**
- **Spanish**

REMEMBER... The following subjects may all be studied at V6, our sixth form, without having studied them at GCSE level.

Business Studies

Sociology

Psychology

Religious Studies

Theatre Studies

Health and Social Care

However, you will need to demonstrate either academic aptitude or skills which have been developed from activities outside school

We recognise that **students with a special educational need will need additional discussions with our learning support team and SENDCo about the year 9 options** process. Where education, health and care plans require alternative curriculum support or adaptations, we will work with parents and carers to ensure all children have the best curriculum offer.

For students who have a fixed educational or career pathway planned post 16, that the balanced curriculum option offer does not enable them to meet this goal, we would ask parents/carers to have a discussion with their child's Head of Year to ensure we can support their next steps.

Important dates for your diary

Options Taster Fortnight	Fortnight commencing January 13 th
Options Open Evening	January 23 rd
Parents Evening	January 30 th
Options Deadline	February 13 th

Careers advice

Students all have logins to Unifrog, where they can get advice about options and future careers, as well as logging any extra-curricular experience they are getting. Our Careers Lead, Ceri Donovan, will provide a code for parents, so that you can sign up and see what resources are available.

This Unifrog seminar will be useful to students:

[151 Preview - Sort - Webinars Past - Teacher - Unifrog](#)

In PSHE students have covered the following sessions to support with their choices:

- What are my skills?
- What comes after school? - the main learning pathways
- Decision making - choosing what to study at KS4
- Taking control of your careers journey
- Working & earning - managing your money
- What is the labour market & why is it important?

We can recommend these websites as having useful information about different subjects and future career pathways:

[Careerpilot : Get information : GCSEs : Choosing your GCSEs](#)

[Jobs that use... - Careers - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Prospects | Job & Course Search | Career & University Advice](#)

[MYPATH - YouTube](#)

Extra-Curricular Activities

Why Offer Enrichment?

Developing a thriving enrichment programme is an essential part of promoting employability, academic attainment and teaching young people the skills they need to make good choices. These skills have benefits well beyond the classroom, and ensure that you have a broad and balanced curriculum.

A tweet from Tim Peake, the British astronaut living and working on board the International Space Station for six months, summed up perfectly the need for both character skills and work experience: *“Character is important – a CV may get you the interview, but character will get you the job.”*

A successful enrichment programme will promote the life-skills needed for everyday life, develop “soft skills” that employers and universities look for, while also giving students the opportunity to find out more about their interests, passions, discovering new skills & interests and links to the work on the character development of compelling individuals - as we cannot as a school teach character but we can provide opportunities for the individual to take ownership of their own character and personal development.

Our ambition is to reinstate Enrichment by building it back better and in a more purposeful way. Below are just some of the possible enrichment activities that you may be able to select from:

HPQ

Home Language Club (opportunity to study a language spoken at home to GCSE level)

Orchestra

Choir

Musical instrument exams

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Business leaders/enterprise

Community conservation

Student Council: Learning and Teaching Committee

Philosophy through film

School Play

Sports: Basketball, Badminton, Dance

Student council Inclusive Communities

Movie Critic Club/Film Studies

Historical Fiction Book Club.

Diversity Club

Debate Club

Running for Fitness

HIT High Intensity Training

Design for Pattern (Textiles)

Sociology GCSE

Student Leadership & Mentoring

Some of the courses will come with formal qualifications, some will involve competitions and awards – all will be part of school passport to success and you will be able to record, review and evaluate your involvement and contribution to the wider community on Unifrog.

GCSE Home Languages

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

Alongside GCSE studies, students can also choose to independently study for a qualification in a language learned in childhood in the home environment, also referred to as mother tongue, first language, or native language. We will offer past papers and mark schemes, but it is an independent offering which means students will not attend lessons or have papers marked.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

Languages examinations will consist of four elements: **listening, speaking, reading** and **writing**. Every language that is assessed will need an examiner, we are actively looking for volunteers in various languages if this is something you feel you can offer, please contact the school. However, you cannot be an examiner for a family member.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Students should see Mrs Sims during term 1 of the academic year as all entries for home languages need to be submitted during term 2. A reminder will be sent via the tutor PowerPoint. Students will also need parental permission via email amy.sims@mhs.e-act.org.uk before any entries can be made.

GCSE Art & Design

Exam Board: AQA

WHY CHOOSE GCSE ART & DESIGN?

If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, GCSE Art & Design is a great choice. We encourage students to select GCSE Art & Design who are keen and enthusiastic, whatever their ability level. The skills you gain make it a great complement to other subjects. GCSE Art & Design is a way of seeing things and making sense of the world around you. It can help you with further study and prepare you for the world of work.

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

You will produce two projects on the themes of Natural Form and Pattern. You will be guided through developing a sketchbook for each project that will enable you to develop your skills and abilities. The exam board, AQA, will set an assignment that leads to a timed exam at the end of the course.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

Your work is assessed on four Assessment Objectives:

AO1 Develop your ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding (Develop ideas linked with artists)

AO2 Refine your ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes (Refine ideas and experiment with resources, media, materials)

AO3 Record observation, insights and ideas relevant to your intentions as work progresses (Record ideas and observations, successfully use visual language and the formal elements eg colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture, and use drawing skills for different needs and purpose)

AO4 Present personal response that realises intentions and demonstrates an understanding of visual language (Make a personal and meaningful response)

The course has two components.

Component 1 is coursework. It is worth 60% of the final mark. It is assessed by your teachers.

Component 2 is an externally-set assignment, or an exam. It is worth 40% of the final mark. AQA provide a variety of options; you will develop a piece of work over 12 weeks, ending with a 10-hour exam piece.

Art & Design opens the door to lots of exciting careers:

- Fashion design
- Graphic design
- Theatre designer
- Animator
- Video game designer
- Illustrator
- Museum curator

How will it fit in with your other subjects?

Studying art and design helps to create a broad and balanced curriculum, which is an excellent foundation for whatever you want to do afterwards. The transferable skills you'll gain, such as creativity, analysis and problem solving, complement a range of other subjects and careers.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

A-Level Art.

Foundation course in Art & Design.

Higher Education – University degrees in Fine Art, Photography, Textiles, Architecture, Set design, Games design, Fashion Illustration, Animation, Interior design and many more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Look at the GCSE Art Specification on the AQA website: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design>

Check your understanding of the Elements of Art using BBC Bitesize:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z6hs34j>

Explore a range of artists / designers / crafts people using the Tate website:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/>

GCSE Business Studies

Exam board: Edexcel

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

On this course you will:

- explore the world of small businesses through the lens of an entrepreneur and discover how and why do business ideas come about and what makes a successful business?
- understand how to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us affects small businesses and all the people involved. Then investigate business growth and how a business develops beyond the start-up phase?
- learn about key business concepts, issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business.
- Learn about meeting customer needs, making marketing, operational, finance and human resource decisions as well as exploring how the wider world impacts the business as it grows.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The qualification will be assessed in two equally weighted written exams, with no coursework component.

Examination 1 - Investigating small business: 90 minutes (90 marks / 50% final grade)

- Multiple Choice, calculations, short-answer and extended writing questions.
- There are three sections in the paper and each section builds in difficulty, starting with multiple choice, moving to short answer questions and ending with extended writing.
- Sections B and C are based on real life, relevant business contexts and examples.

Examination 2 - Building a business: 90 minutes (90 marks / 50% final grade)

- Multiple Choice, calculations, short-answer and extended writing questions.
- There are three sections in the paper and each section builds in difficulty, starting with multiple choice, moving to short answer questions and ending with extended writing.
- Sections B and C are based on real life, relevant business contexts and examples.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

A Level Business
Degree courses in a range of subject choices: Business or any other business-related course such as Economics, Accounting etc
Banking
Retail Management
Accountancy
Entrepreneur

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Online resources such as Seneca Learning, BBC bitesize and Tutor 2 u.
Paper resources such as CGP revision guides and the course textbooks (but it is not necessary to purchase these resources).
Students will benefit from lots of examples used to teach the course, trips (when possible), varied units, tailored teaching and supportive staff.
For further information speak to Mrs Sims or Mrs Pandya.

GCSE Computer Science

Exam Board: OCR

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

Computer Science gives you an exciting, real and in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. This course uncovers what goes on ‘behind the scenes’, including learning to program in the Python programming language. You will feel challenged in this subject, and you will feel empowered by the knowledge that you are learning really useful 21st Century skills that you will need for a successful future in our modern digital economy.

You will learn to solve problems in creative ways and will discover that Computer Science touches every aspect of our lives. You will apply logic, maths and skills of critical evaluation. You will learn how Computers ‘think’ in binary, discuss the ethical implications of driverless cars and the security of your personal data, and understand some of the algorithms that power modern websites such as Google and Instagram.

Computer Science changes the way you look at the world and gives you a powerful set of problem-solving tools that can be applied to any of your subjects and your day-to-day life. During your study of Computer Science you will also develop your ICT skills which will be essential for a range of future careers.

The course provides an excellent pathway towards further study of Computer Science at A-Level and University and also to employment in related professions. There is growing demand for graduates who are qualified in this area. Students who have taken a GCSE in Computer Science and who progress to study the subject at A-Level or University will have an advantage over their peers who pick up this subject later on.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

You will be assessed through both written exams and coursework.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University Degrees in Computer Science Engineering and other related subjects.

Numerous ‘tech’ apprenticeships.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Computer Science Course:
<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/computer-science-j277-from-2020/specification-at-a-glance/>

Revision:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspeecs/zmtchbk>

Wider reading:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNIUrzyH5r6jN9uIlqZBpdo>

GCSE Design and Technology

Exam Board: OCR

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

Through hands-on practical activities you will learn how to harness your creativity to create innovative solutions to real-life problems. You will develop an understanding of the iterative design process and sought-after technical skills that will open up a world of exciting future qualifications and careers.

On the course you will design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, and develop an empathy for the needs, wants and values of others. Your prototypes will help you develop design modelling skills using a range of skills, including sewing, woodwork and CAD.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The qualification is underpinned by OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Design and Technology.

You will complete a personal coursework project, responding to a real life problem, and focusing on products, processes and materials that interest you: such as polymers (plastics), wood, textiles and metal.

On the course you will have access to the Design and Technology rooms, which includes 3D printers, a laser cutter and wood workshop and sewing machines. Through our partnerships you will also have the opportunity to work with Bristol University.

Qualification Structure:

- Principles of Design & Technology 2 hr written exam
- Iterative Design Challenge Coursework (40 hrs approx.)

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

Students may go on to study a wide range of academic and vocational options, including Engineering and Product Design A Levels alongside other STEM subjects, as well as apprenticeship opportunities.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Course textbook entitled OCR GCSE (9-1) Design and Technology; Authors: Chris Walker, Sharon McCarthy, Andy Knight, Chris Rowe, Jennifer Tilley.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zdvv2sq>
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/OCR-GCSE-9-1-Design-Technology/dp/151040113X>

GCSE Drama

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

Drama is about more than acting. It is a course designed to help you build confidence, give you presentation skills and prepare you for a lifetime of communication skills at college, University and in the world of work. It can also be a pathway into acting if that is what you are interested in!

If you enjoy theatre trips, rehearsing and performing on stage, writing scripts, directing others, designing costumes or lighting, then this is the subject for you!

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

You will be assessed by one coursework unit, one practical examination and one written examination.

- **Practical Coursework (with written portfolio) 40% :**

You will be asked to respond to a theme, topic or issue in lessons. You will then be given time to devise your own performance based on this topic. You will present a final performance (10%) in groups which will be assessed by your teacher. Written supporting work will be done alongside this throughout the process charting your progress from beginning to end. this written work is also assessed by the teacher. (30%)

- **Performance Exam 20% :**

You will be required to work in a group and present a piece of scripted text. You will be asked to perform two small sections of the script playing 1 or more roles. An examiner for AQA will see this work and mark it. (20%)

- **Written Paper (1 hour and 45 mins) 40%:**

Section A: Theatrical terms multiple choice

Section B: Study of a set text

Section C: Study of a live theatre production seen

Each section will ask you to explore text from the perspective of a director, designer or actor. Lots of this work will be done through practical work in lessons, like studying the play for Section B.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in Drama, Theatre Studies and more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

**AQA GCSE Drama book by Annie Fox.
CGP books: Blood Brothers for Drama
GCSE**

GCSE English Language and English Literature

Exam Board: AQA, EDUQAS

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

All students will study AQA English Language and Eduqas English Literature. This is taught as a combined course which results in the award of two separate GCSEs. Both qualifications are linear and are 100% examination-assessed.

There is no tiered entry: all students will sit the same paper and the final assessment will use the GCSE levels 1 - 9.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

GCSE English Language is assessed by two AQA examinations:

Paper 1, Section A & B (50%): Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1hr 45 mins)

This paper aims to engage you in a creative text and inspire you to write creatively yourselves.

Paper 2, Section A & B (50%): Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1hr 45mins)

This paper aims to develop your insights into how writers have particular viewpoints and perspectives on issues or themes that are important to the way we think and live our lives.

Spoken Language qualification (0%): The aim of the assessment is to allow you to demonstrate your speaking and listening skills by giving a presentation in a formal context, using spoken standard English and responding to questions and feedback. Your achievement will be reported as Distinction, Merit, or Pass, but not count towards the final mark/level.

GCSE English Literature is assessed by two Eduqas examinations:

Component 1 (40%): This exam asks students to respond to a Shakespeare play (Romeo and Juliet) (20%) and two questions based on poems from the WJEC Eduqas Poetry Anthology (20%). (2 hrs)

Component 2 (60%): This exam asks students to respond to a post-1914 prose fiction or drama text (20%) and to respond to a 19th century prose fiction text (20%). Finally, students will be asked to respond to two unseen poems from the 20th/21st century (20%). (2hr 30mins)

- Students will study 'An Inspector Calls' by JB Priestley and 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens.
- Students are not permitted to take any texts into the examinations.
-

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in English, Journalism, American Studies and many more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Past papers and resources for English Literature, can be found at:
www.eduqas.co.uk and **English Language:**
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

GCSE French

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

During your first three years, you have already laid solid foundations for success in French at GCSE. Over the next two years you will build on the skills you have mastered, and you will explore some new topic areas.

You can now choose to speak and write about your own passions and topics of interest in your speaking and writing examination. You will also carry on improving your listening and reading skills while studying enjoyable topics.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The modern languages examination will consist of four elements: **listening, speaking, reading** and **writing**. All examinations are externally assessed and have an equal weighting of **25%** of the final grade.

You will have access to a wide range of new technologies to enhance your learning and make your experience fun and enjoyable. Alongside your studies in the Languages department, we encourage students to enjoy the culture of the country they are studying, and we organise trips to see foreign language films and plays.

In a survey by the Confederation of British Industry, French tops the list of languages required by business:

52% of businesses value and seek French-speaking skills when recruiting employees.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

French skills are highly valued and favoured by top universities offering degrees in Languages, Law, Politics, International Relations, Engineering and Medicine.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

For further help and language skills revision use the following links:
www.linguascope.com
www.atantot.com
www.kerboodle.com

GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition

Exam Board: OCR

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

This is an exciting and contemporary new course.

In the course you will develop a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills to cook and apply the principles of **food science**, **nutrition** and **healthy eating**.

You will learn about **food provenance** and **why we choose to eat** certain foods.

You will explore a range of **ingredients and processes** from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international) to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

You will build up a **practical cooking skills portfolio** helping to prepare you for an independent lifestyle. The range of skills include: effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking using a variety of food commodities, cooking techniques and equipment.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

Written examination - 1 hour 30 minutes (50% final grade)

Coursework Project (50% final grade)

You will start your coursework at the beginning of Year 11, which will cover the following areas:

1. **Food Investigation Task: (10 hours, 15%)** A 2000 word document based on a food science experiment, completed in school, under controlled assessment conditions.
2. **Food Preparation Task: (20 hours, 35%)** Consider the influence of lifestyle and consumer choice when developing meals and recipes. Plan, prepare, cook and present 3 dishes during one 3 hour practical.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in Food Science and Nutrition, Hospitality and Catering and many more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Helpful books:
OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Student Book, Author: Val Fehners, Anita Hardy.

My Revision notes: OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition (MRN), Author: Val Fehners

GCSE Geography

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

There has never been a better or more important time to study Geography. With growing interest in issues such as climate change, migration, environmental damage and the growth of cities, Geography is one of the most relevant courses you could choose to study. Geography encompasses a wide range of skills such as interpreting maps and satellite photographs, graphical and statistical skills.

The course will be a combination of Physical and Human Geography. Students will also build on map skills, extended writing and mathematical skills such as statistics.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The course is 100% exam based, with 3 exams completed at the end of Year 11.

- **Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment (1hr 30 mins, 35%)** Ecosystems, Natural Hazards, UK Physical Landscapes.
- **Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment (1hr 30 mins, 35%)** The Changing Economic World, Urban Issues and Challenges, Management of Resources.
- **Paper 3: Geographical Applications (1hr 30 mins, 30%)** Issue Evaluation using critical thinking and decision making, Fieldwork Project.

Students will carry out two field trips in Year 10. They will be questioned on both field trips in paper 3.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

Geography is a preferred subject for many of the Russell Group universities. GCSE Geography would be particularly helpful for degrees in Geography, Environmental Sciences, Maths and Politics.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Speak with Miss Allen or Miss Glenn. Links to the exam board, specification, sample papers and mark schemes can be found through this link:
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse>

BTEC Tech Award Health and Social Care

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

- Component 1 – Human Lifespan Development
- Component 2 – Health and Social Care Services and Values
- Component 3 – Health and well-being

Students will benefit from external visitors coming in to talk about their profession, trips, varied units, tailored teaching and supportive staff.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

60% coursework. 40% exam.

60% coursework:

- Component 1 – Human Lifespan Development – 30% of final grade.
- Component 2 – Health and Social Care Services and Values – 30% of final grade.

40% exam:

- Component 3 – Health and well-being – Exam in Jan / Feb and available in May/ June – 40% of final grade. Component 3 exam is sat in Year 11 (two attempts, last grade counts) with the coursework units completed in Year 10.

Units are assessed using a grading scale of L2 Distinction – L1 PASS.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

BTEC L3 Health and Social Care – which goes well with other A Levels including the Sciences. Relevant careers include nursing, paramedic, play worker and nursery manager.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The specification and further information can be found here <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-tech-awards/health-and-social-care-2022.html>

GCSE History

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

History is an academic subject respected by universities. Studying History encourages you to research and analyse information, and present your arguments in a coherent, concise and balanced fashion. Moreover, it encourages you to read and think critically and substantiate your arguments. The transferable skills gained are useful for many career paths within both the public and private sectors - History has been a popular degree subject of past Prime Ministers!

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

At the end of Year 11 you will take three exams covering the following four topics:

EXAM PAPER 1 : 30% final grade

- **Development Study with Historical Environment:** Migrants to Britain, c800 – present day with a case study of Notting Hill.

EXAM PAPER 2 (two topics) : 40% final grade

- **Period Study looking at World History (20%):** Spain and the New World 1490-1555 - looking at explorers like Columbus as well as the Aztecs and the Incas.
- **British Depth Study (20%):** Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588 - looking at Tudor themes such as the Church, the Spanish Armada and societal changes such as the rise of the theatre.

EXAM PAPER 3 : 30% final grade

- **Modern World Depth Study:** Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939 - looking at themes and content studied during Year 9 Holocaust unit.
- During the course there will be a variety of trips related to different topics, these could include visits to Berlin, to study context for the Modern World Study and an enrichment trip to a notable Tudor site, for example Hampton Court Palace.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

History is a preferred subject for many of the Russell Group universities. GCSE History would be particularly helpful for degrees in History, Law, Journalism, Teaching, Politics and Philosophy.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Further information about the course and topics can be found here:
<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/history-2016.html>

GCSE Mathematics

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE

Mathematics is a core subject and is therefore studied by everyone in Year 10 and 11.

We follow the new specification AQA Mathematics 8300 course which involves three written examinations at the end of the course: **one non-calculator** and **two calculator papers**. There is no coursework element in the syllabus.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The examination will contain three types of questions: A01 which are questions that require numerical fluency, A02 which require Mathematical Reasoning and A03 that require you to interpret a problem, select the correct techniques and solve a problem. These types of questions will appear in all three papers. The topics Number, Algebra, Ratio and Proportion, Geometry and Measure and Probability and Statistics are covered in all examination papers.

There are two tiers of entry for Mathematics:

- Higher targeting students whose target grade is 4-9
- Foundation targeting students whose target grade is 1-5

Any tier decisions will be made with the best possible outcome for you in mind. We will use information from assessments and the class teacher in conjunction with consultation from KS4 Coordinator and Head of Mathematics.

We use an online learning platform **SPARX Maths** (sparxmaths.com) to guide your progress and support you to become an independent learner. This package includes online quizzes that you complete for homework along with videos which are tailored to the quiz questions for extra support.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in mathematics, Economics, Architecture, Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Accountancy and many more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Schemes of learning and information can be found on the MHS Maths Department Website.

GCSE Music

Exam Board: EQUQAS

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

The course is particularly well-suited to students who:

- have an instrument focus
- enjoy listening to and learning about a variety of different styles of music
- can be creative with their musical ideas
- enjoy performing music
- take part in extra-curricular music at school

As with the curriculum that you have already followed in Years 7-9, the GCSE centres on three areas of musical activity:

1. Performing – showing and practising music
2. Composing – creating and writing original music
3. Listening and Appraising – applying keywords and theory to music questions

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

- **Performing (30% final grade)**

A solo performance and an ensemble performance.

- **Composing (30% final grade)**

Two compositions using techniques learned in any two of the areas of study; completed under controlled assessment.

- **Listening and Appraising (40% final grade)**

A written exam in which you will respond to questions based on extracts from Set Works that you will have studied, as well as applying your skills to unfamiliar listening questions.

The exam questions range from short answers to a more extended essay-style answer.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in Music, Music Technology and many more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Helpful book: WJEC/Eduqas GCSE Music Revision Guide
www.teoria.com
www.musictheory.net

GCSE Physical Education

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

The course is a combination of theoretical application and practical performance. Students will explore a wide range of topics which will provide a broad understanding of the human body's response to exercise. Students will learn about diet and nutrition as well as key concepts related to sports psychology and socio-cultural influences which can affect participation in sport. Students will be encouraged to learn through the physical and calibrate with others over the duration of the course.

Students who choose PE as a GCSE option should:

- Be passionate about sport and **regularly participate in at least ONE sport outside of school.**
- Be driven to find out how practical performance can be improved.
- Be interested in how the body adapts to achieve peak performances.
- Be intrigued by why nearly one billion people watch a single sporting event.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

Students will be assessed across three key areas.

- Written Exam: Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.
- Written Exam: Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.
- NEA: Practical performance in 3 sports + Written analysis and evaluation coursework.

Physical activities approved by AQA:

Athletics, Football, Badminton, Basketball, Camogie, Cricket, Dance, Figure Skating, Handball, Volleyball, Hockey, Hurling, Lacrosse, Netball, Rowing, Rugby, Squash, Table Tennis, Tennis, Boxing, Canoeing, Sailing, Cycling, Diving, Golf, Gymnastics, Sports Acrobatics, Equestrian, Rock Climbing, Sculling, Skiing, Snowboarding, Swimming and Trampolining.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

A Level PE
University degrees in Sport Science
Physiotherapy
Teaching
Coaching
Nursing and Medicine

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[AQA | GCSE | Physical Education | Specification at a glance](#)
[GCSE Physical Education - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)
[Speak to Ms McGarry, Ms Wade, Ms Ward or Ms Rolfe in the PE department.](#)

BTEC Performing Arts

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

A BTEC is another form of qualification like a GCSE. BTECs are graded as D*-P. The grade you receive for this subject is equivalent to a GCSE.

You are not able to take Drama GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts as two of your choices. Choose only one of these courses.

You should consider this course if you have abilities in singing or dancing. You can be assessed as an actor only, but you will only be able to perform pieces of Musical Theatre work.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

There are no written exams in this subject and all topics are assessed through coursework and performance.

Component 1 - Coursework (30%)

- You will study three different Musical Theatre performances and you can create a presentation showing your understanding of these three performances. For Example Oh, What a Lovely War', 'Rent' and 'Lion King'.
- This unit is about you showing an understanding about how theatre is made.

Component 2 - Coursework (30%)

- You will perform one piece of performance work from a recognised piece of work such Matilda and you will be required to dance, sing and act.
- You can perform solo work or be part of a group and you will perform different sections of the show in a showcase performance one evening in Year 10.
- You can perform for 2 minutes, a short section performance or do a complete show.

Component 3 - Examined Unit (40%)

- You will devise your own performance based on a 'brief'.
- You will work as part of a group of 3-7.
- You will perform for 10-15 minutes total.
- You can dance, sing or act or a combination of all three!
- You then write up logs of the development and presentation of your work

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study or university degrees in Drama, Theatre Studies and more.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Helpful Revision Guides:

- [BTEC Tech Award Performing Arts](#)
- [Acting Through Song: Techniques and Exercises for Musical-Theatre Actors](#)

GCSE Religious Studies

Exam Board: EDUQAS

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

This subject is about thinking; it is concerned with the big questions of life and how different religions have attempted to deal with them, and the moral issues that we all face. Religious Studies involves learning about different cultures and debating ethical issues that arise.

The course covers in-depth studies of two religions: Christianity and Islam, plus Issues in the Modern World.

Students should bring an open mind to the subject and be willing to consider other people's views. You will learn to respect different viewpoints, whilst not necessarily agreeing; to present a well-reasoned and balanced argument; and to be able to think clearly about the many important issues that life brings.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

There are 3 modules which are all examined at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework.

Paper 1 – Issues in the Modern World 50% of GCSE	Theme 1: Relationships Family, marriage, sex outside of marriage, divorce Theme 2: Life and Death Creation, abortion, euthanasia, the afterlife Theme 3: Good and Evil Causes of crime, punishment, the death penalty, forgiveness Theme 4: Human Rights Prejudice and discrimination, wealth and poverty, social justice.	1 exam 2 hrs
Paper 2 - Christianity 25% of GCSE	Beliefs and Teachings The Nature of God, Creation, Jesus Christ, Salvation, The afterlife	1 exam 1 hr

	<p>Practices</p> <p>Forms of Worship, Sacraments, Pilgrimage and celebrations, Christianity in Britain and the Worldwide church.</p>	
<p>Paper 3 – Islam</p> <p>25% of GCSE</p>	<p>Beliefs and Teachings</p> <p>The Nature of Allah, Prophethood, Angels, Akhirah (the afterlife)</p> <p>Practices</p> <p>The Five Pillars of Faith, Jihad, Pilgrimage and Celebrations, Islam in Britain and elsewhere</p>	<p>1 exam</p> <p>1 hr</p>

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

Religious Studies is a very well-respected qualification with a focus on essay writing and structuring an argument. This can lead to many different options at A-level and beyond including Law, Medicine, Psychology, Philosophy, Ethics and many more.

It is valued by universities because of the analytical and critical skills that it helps to develop.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

BBC Bitesize: (Christianity and Islam)
<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspeaks/zy7pbk>

TrueTube: (Videos on relevant topics)
<https://www.truetube.co.uk/OCR> past papers and exam questions.

GCSE Science: Combined or Triple Award

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

All students in Year 9 are taught by specialist Science teachers. Students will complete KS3 courses in Year 9, feeling prepared for GCSE level learning at the start of year 10.

Throughout the course of Year 9, 10 and 11 we will discuss your progress with you, your Science Teachers and your parents/carers. After your Year 10 Mocks, decisions will be made around which examination you will sit for your Year 11 GCSE examination you will sit your Year 11 GCSE examination (Combined Science or Triple Science) and the tier of entry you take will be finalised after the first mock examinations in Year 1 (Higher grades 9-4 or Foundation grades 5-1).

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

- **Combined Science Examinations:**

Two 1 hr 15 min papers per subject (6 papers overall) **Gaining 2 science GCSEs**

- **Triple Science Examinations:**

- Two 1 hr 45 min papers per subject (6 papers overall) **Gaining 3 GCSEs, one per science subject.**

- **Practical Assessments:**

There is no coursework in Science. Instead, a number of required practicals are carried out in lessons over the three years. All students complete 30 required practicals (10 for each subject). Each of these are examinable so, as with any other lesson, it is important students do not miss these. Students will record these practicals in separate lab books which will remain in school for the duration of the course. These will be completed in years 10 and 11.

Science Support:

Revision guides, workbooks and answer booklets are available to purchase directly from school. Literature regarding these has already been sent home and payment option made available on ParentPay.

Alongside these I strongly encourage students to engage with online resources, (E.G., **Seneca Learning**, **GCSE Pod** and **BBC Bitesize**), to ensure they are constantly reviewing learnt material. For practice exam questions use the AQA section of [Physics & Maths Tutor \(physicsandmathstutor.com\)](#). Helpful interventions will also run in Year 11.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

A grade 6 in your sciences will allow you to access A level science subjects.

There is also the option of Applied Sciences at A Level equivalent.

GCSE Sciences are also really useful if you are interested in studying Psychology, Maths, PE or Health and Social Care A levels.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Further information on the AQA Biology, Physics and Chemistry specifications can be found at www.aqa.org.uk

Seneca – Senecalearning.com

GCSE Pod - www.gcsepod.com

BBC Bitesize – bbc.com/bitesize

GCSE Spanish

Exam Board: AQA

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THIS COURSE?

In your first three years, you've built a strong foundation in Spanish—now it is time to take it to the next level! Over the next two years, you'll develop greater fluency in speaking and writing, sharpen your listening and reading skills, and deepen your understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures.

This course offers you the opportunity to personalise your learning by exploring topics that matter to you. Whether it is sports, technology, travel, or global issues, you will have the freedom to bring your interests into your assessments, making your speaking and writing exams more relevant and engaging.

Throughout the course, you'll also enjoy learning through authentic resources like Spanish songs, films, articles, and podcasts. Our goal is to make learning Spanish practical, enjoyable, and rewarding!

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

The modern languages examination will consist of four elements: **listening, speaking, reading** and **writing**. All examinations are externally assessed and have an equal weighting of **25%** of the final grade.

To help you prepare, you'll have access to a range of digital tools, including interactive platforms and language apps, making revision both fun and effective.

In addition, we encourage you to immerse yourself in Spanish culture beyond the classroom. We organise cultural events such as Spanish film screenings, international days, and a trip to Spain, where you can practice your language skills in real-life situations.

We also run weekly **Spanish Club** sessions where you can get help with homework, practice conversation, or explore Spanish culture further. By the end of the course, you will not only have the skills to excel in your exams but also the confidence to use Spanish in real-world settings—whether you are travelling, studying further, or exploring future career opportunities.

In a recent study, Spanish was recognised as one of the most sought-after languages by employers, with **50% of businesses** prioritising Spanish-speaking skills when hiring new staff.

HIGHER STUDY OPTIONS

University degrees in Spanish English degree courses at some of the top universities require you to have a GCSE in a language. Some courses encourage you to offer a language e.g. European law or International Law.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

For further help and language skills revision use the following links:
www.linguascope.com
www.atantot.com
www.kerboodle.com

Choosing your options:

Dos and Don'ts

Do:

Talk to your teachers to find out more about the courses.

Look at the exam board websites to find out more about the topics.

Talk to older students you know who are doing to courses you're interested in.

Ask questions during the taster sessions and during careers sessions, about how you might use the subject in the future.

Choose things that you are interested in!

Don't:

Choose your subjects based on what teachers you like. There are no guarantees – teachers change jobs. The school cannot guarantee a particular teacher for any class.

Choose your subjects based on what your friends are doing. Again, there are no guarantees – you may not end up in the same class as them. Even if you do, you have to spend two years of your life doing this course, so it needs to be something you enjoy or find rewarding!

Choose subjects because you think they are easy. All GCSEs are planned to be equally difficult!