

**NORTHAMPTON
SCHOOL *for Boys***

**GCSE PREFERENCES
2026-2028**

Information Booklet



INTRODUCTION

This booklet introduces the subjects that we offer at GCSE across Years 10 and 11. Here at Northampton School *for Boys*, we believe that students should receive a broad, balanced and aspirational education. As such, you all receive access to the the same ambitious core curriculum which includes Humanities and Languages in addition to English, Maths and Science.

You will all be given a choice of either History or Geography within the Humanities and two additional subject choices from our 'Enhancement' block; this group includes the additional humanity option of RE, performing and expressive arts, science subjects and technology options.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information about the subjects on offer in Years 10 and 11 so that you can express a preference for the subjects that best suit your interests, abilities, aptitude and potential for success at GCSE. Ultimately, this is all about 'opening doors' to ensure you have a breadth of opportunity for post-16 education and future study.

Core

All students will study the following subjects:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science

Humanities subject (History or Geography)
Core Physical Education (not examined)
PSHE (not examined)
Modern Foreign Language

These subjects are compulsory and cannot be changed except in unique individual circumstances and following a consultation with relevant members of Senior Staff. Final decisions on any proposed changes to this core offer are made by the Executive Headteacher.

Please note that the core Science option leads to an award equivalent to two GCSEs upon successful completion of the course. Core Physical Education and PSHE are not formally assessed and do not lead to a GCSE qualification.

Optional Subjects

You will be asked to express your preferences in the subject areas listed below. You will need to show **one** preference in the Humanities block and **five** preferences in the Enhancement block.

Humanities	Enhancement Subjects	
Geography History	Art Computer Science* Dance Drama DT Food and Nutrition	Music PE Religious Studies Photography Triple Science [#]

Your preference in Expressive Arts will depend upon the subject combination you study in Year 9. You **can only study arts subjects at GCSE that you have studied in Year 9.**

Students who wish to study Triple Science will need to meet a set threshold in their End of Year 9 Science Examination/end of term tests.

*Computer Science: Due to the highly technical and mathematical nature of the subject content, this course is most suited to students in set 1 for Maths. Any students not in set 1 Maths and considering Computer Science should first have a conversation with Mr Lehman as Curriculum Team Leader to discuss suitability and potential.

Expressing your Preference

You should discuss which subjects to select with a wide range of people. In particular, you should seek help and advice from your parents and your teachers.

Make sure you seek advice from your Form Tutor and subject teachers. Further help and guidance is available on Unifrog with advice on specific careers and post-16 destinations; this may be critical in helping you to decide on your GCSE preferences, especially where certain subjects are needed to pursue A level study.

You will be sent a link to an online form that you can use to show your preferences. You can complete this as many times as you like; the most recent one will be the one that is used. More details of how to complete the form can be found on the website and are explained in the recorded presentation from the GCSE Preferences Evening for parents.

How Should I Choose?

Choose subjects which you feel passionate about; you are far more likely to be successful at subjects you enjoy studying.

DO NOT choose subjects because:

- your friends choose them, or
- you like your teacher - you are likely to have a different teacher next year.

Will I Get My First Preference?

Most of you will be able to study your first preferences. **This cannot, however, be guaranteed**; there is a limit to the number of students who can study each subject. Therefore, it is extremely important that your second to fifth preferences are subjects which you are prepared to accept and you would be happy to study across GCSE.

Organisation of Groups

In some subjects you will be in mixed ability groups. You will be aware, however, that in English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Modern Languages you will be in sets.

Sets will be reviewed very carefully during Year 10 in particular following termly assessments; this to ensure that you are best placed in a group which allows you to maximise your academic potential.

GCSE Examination

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an examination which caters for the full ability range of pupils. Some subjects involve non-examined assessments (NEAs or coursework) in addition to an examination at the end of the course. Details of the Examination Boards and how the GCSE is awarded for each subject can be found on the relevant subject pages of this booklet.

What do I do now?

- Read the whole booklet carefully.
- Discuss your proposed Humanities preference with people at home and teachers in school.
- Discuss your proposed 5 'Enhancement' preferences with people at home and teachers in school.
- Discuss your preferences at Parents' Evening on Thursday 23rd April with subject teachers.
- Fill in the online Preferences Form by **Friday 8th May 2026**.

SUBJECT INFORMATION

GCSE PREFERENCES

2026 - 2028



ENGLISH LANGUAGE and ENGLISH LITERATURE (AQA course)

Students follow AQA courses leading to two qualifications in English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE. Students began studying for these qualifications in Year 9.

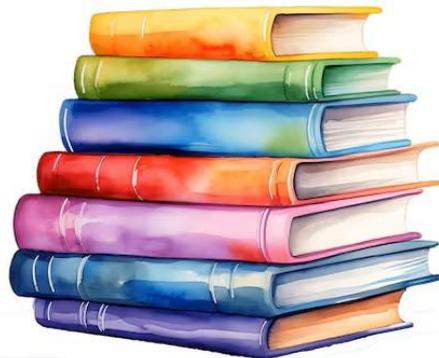
English Language

English Language is assessed through two examination papers, each lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes. You will learn to read, analyse and critically respond to a range of literary and non-fiction texts, and to write for a range of purposes. The examinations at the end of Year 11 will test your ability to retrieve information, summarise, compare, analyse and evaluate. They will also test your ability to write accurate, well-constructed texts which are appropriate for a given audience and purpose. Each paper is worth 50% of your total marks. You will be awarded a level 1 to 9 (9 = highest). Speaking and listening grades (pass, merit and distinction) are awarded by the examination board to reflect the student's ability in this skill, but do not contribute any marks to the overall GCSE.

English Literature

English Literature is also assessed through two examination papers. Paper 1 spans 1 hour 45 minutes, and Paper 2 spans 2 hours 15 minutes. You will study a range of poetry, a 19th century novel, a modern play or novel and a play by Shakespeare. You will be assessed in two written examinations at the end of Year 11 which will test your ability to analyse language and structure, interpret themes, setting and character and your understanding of the context. You will study William Shakespeare's "Macbeth"; Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol"; AQA Power and Conflict Poetry; unseen poetry and a modern play ("An Inspector Calls" by J.B. Priestley). Again, you will be awarded a level 1 to 9.

You can expect regular homework which focuses on the reading and writing skills assessed GCSE Level. There will be a continued emphasis on analytical responses and accurate writing skills.



MATHEMATICS

Mathematics at GCSE is split into the study of Number and Algebra, Geometry and Data Handling. You will follow the Edexcel GCSE Mathematics specification.

You will begin by reviewing numerical skills learned in Year 9, such as percentage work, fraction and decimal notation and indices, before picking up new material. There is an end of module assessment approximately every six weeks. These tests will help us to identify those students who are either coping easily with the work or finding it too difficult. It is very important that you revise well for these tests and do your best.

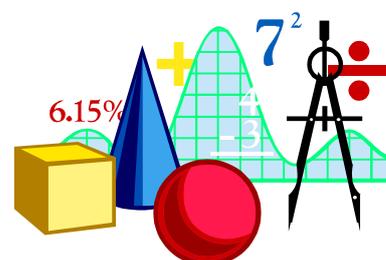
Under the umbrella of Algebra we also study graph work, in particular how difficult equations can be solved using a graphical method. We also study graphs in real life situations, such as foreign currency exchange.

Shape and Space covers many different aspects of Mathematics, such as Pythagoras' Theorem, Trigonometry and area and volume work. We study rudimentary proofs, such as why the angles in a triangle always add up to 180 degrees and, given that, how we can work out the sum of the angles in any polygon. Do not forget that you will be expected to bring a proper geometry set to lessons, as well as a scientific calculator. If you are not sure about your calculator, ask your Maths teacher.

Data Handling is becoming one of the fastest growing areas of Mathematics. The advent of computers has meant we can manipulate vast quantities of data easily and efficiently, but beware! Those who would seek to deceive are more than capable of turning figures to their own advantage. The study of data handling allows us to identify potentially misleading statistics, as well as calculating our own. We also work with the probabilities of single and multiple events.

You can expect regular Home Learning, much as you have had in Year 9. There is a stronger emphasis on method and presentation and problem solving. You should always ensure that your work is neat and clear. Extra help is also available in the form of lunchtime and after school clubs.

We hope you enjoy Mathematics at GCSE and remember, success comes with hard work!



COMBINED SCIENCE

(AQA Trilogy course)

The AQA Science course contains elements of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The course will help you to make sense of the science that you will encounter in everyday life and appreciate what it can tell you about yourself, your environment and the universe.

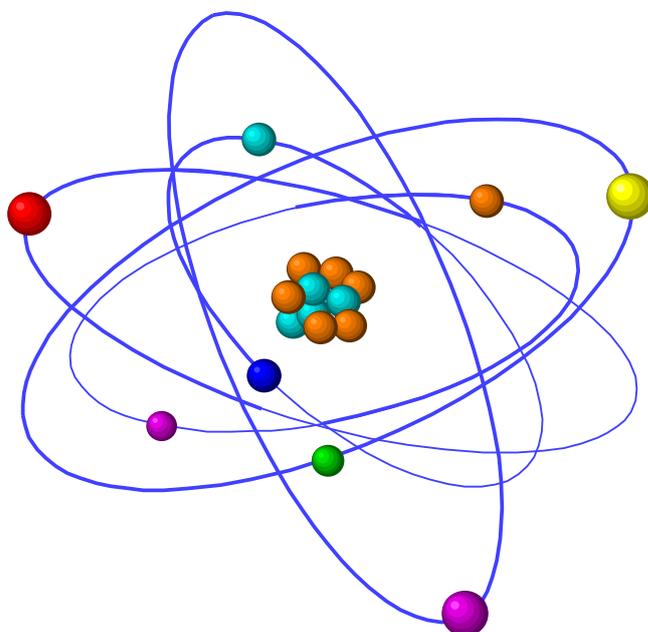
GCSE Science will develop your practical scientific capabilities and prepare you for more advanced courses such as A levels in individual sciences.

At the end of the course there are six examinations. There is no coursework or controlled conditions assessment, but students will need to complete a number of core practicals.

All students study science as part of our core curriculum offer. However, some of the highest attaining students in the year group who are particularly passionate about the subjects will be considered for Triple Science.

If you do not express a preference for Triple Science, then you will automatically be entered for the Science Double Award and achieve the equivalent of two GCSEs.

High achieving students who are already sure that they want to follow a scientific career or study A level sciences are advised to choose the Triple Science option as one of their top 5 preferences.



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

(Edexcel course)

It has never been a more important time to learn a foreign language. Languages like French, German and Spanish are incredibly useful – not just for visiting countries that speak those languages; the subject-specific skills are also highly desirable.

Fact: In a report published in 2022, the British Council identified that Spanish, French, German, Mandarin and Arabic are the top five priority languages to improve the UK's skills, security and influence in the world.

Being able to speak another language not only helps your communication skills, but also builds interpersonal, intercultural and public speaking skills – the soft skills which organisations value highly. Studies have shown that the process of learning a foreign language can also improve your ability to multitask, block out distractions and problem solve. During the course, you will refine many existing skills such as translation, comprehension and dictation and gain confidence and experience in listening to native speakers whilst also communicating and adapting your speech to suit a range of contexts.

You will be studying the new Edexcel course, which is assessed on the four core skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. Each skill makes up **25% of the overall exam** grade and is assessed at the end of Year 11. The course is made up of the following topics, which are studied from the mid-point of Year 9 onwards:

- **My personal world**
- **Lifestyle and wellbeing**
- **My neighbourhood**
- **Media and technology**
- **Studying and my future**
- **Travel and tourism**

Knowledge of another language is not just an awareness and understanding of another culture and another country's history: it gives us a window into how others live and think. We know that just 5 years of studying Languages at NSB opens up the doors to a lifetime of opportunities in sectors you may never have considered. Employers always tell us that students with language skills unlock their potential to open up new markets and communicate with a diverse range customers and clients. You do not have to be fluent in a language – just have the skills needed to be part of a conversation.



CORE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

(Not examined)

Physical Education aims to assist your overall development. We seek to develop skills in a range of physical activities. In order to build your confidence and self-esteem, you will be encouraged to develop the personal qualities of commitment, fairness and enthusiasm. It is equally important that you enjoy taking part in physical activities for their own sake. You will be encouraged to be physically active whilst at school and to continue your leisure pursuits in adult life.

Within the Key Stage 4 course all students will engage in a broad and balanced curriculum. Activities will include swimming, health and fitness, athletics and a range of both team and individual games.

Assessment is based on how well you, as an individual, make use of your talents and abilities. We aim to identify strengths and weaknesses and to address your individual needs and strengths.

No matter what your ability level in sport, you will both enjoy and be successful at PE provided that you co-operate with each other and staff and always apply yourself well in all activities.

There are many opportunities for you to develop your interests at all levels. As well as the various sporting clubs and teams, there is an extensive programme of Inter-House sport.



GEOGRAPHY

(Edexcel course)

The Edexcel GCSE specification aims to help you acquire skills and knowledge relevant to helping you to understand the world we live in today. It can also be an important stepping stone towards specialising in Geography if you want to. It will allow you to appreciate issues and events both at a local, national and global scale.



Geography will help you develop your communication and teamwork skills, as you will often work on group projects. You will also develop your research and analysis skills including in IT and fieldwork, which means you will be able to collect and look for patterns in data.

Employers love the mix of technical and social skills people get from studying Geography, which they see as very **transferable**, i.e. useful for a whole range of jobs.

Geography is great for any kind of career that involves the environment, planning, or collecting and interpreting data. Popular careers for people with Geography qualifications include: town or transport planning, surveying, conservation, sustainability, waste and water management, environmental planning, tourism, and weather forecasting. The army, police, government, research organisations, law and business world also love the practical research skills that Geographers develop. Geographers learn about human and population development; Geography can be useful for jobs in charity and international relations too.

Assessment

Paper 1: Global Geographical Issues including climatic and tectonic hazards as well as looking at how India developed as an emerging country. Also, why is the world unequal in terms of levels of development and how can inequality be reduced?

Paper 2: UK Geographical issues, focuses on different physical and human landscapes in the UK, rivers and the impact of flooding. Coastal landscapes are also studied with a focus on how they can be managed to prevent coastal erosion and coastal flooding.

Paper 3: A decision-making paper which looks at why natural resources like food, energy and water are under pressure and how we can manage these demands without damaging the environment: a focus on interpreting geographical sources and making decisions.

As part of the course you will take part in **fieldwork** away from school (this will incur a small cost) and you will become aware of many issues you have never considered before. In short, we offer you the world!

HISTORY

(OCR course)

In Years 10 and 11 we follow the new OCR Explaining the Modern World History specification. The course is designed to provide an understanding of International Relations during the 20th Century as well as providing an in-depth study on the effects of conflict over the last millennium.

Topics covered in Paper 1 are: Conflict and Cooperation (1918-39), the Cold War (1945-1975), and in addition, there is a depth study on America from 1917 – 1948.

Paper 2 offers a breadth study that considers the attitude and effects of war from 790AD through to 2010, looking at the impact these have had on British society.

Paper 3 links with this module, considering Castles (Form and Function) between 1000AD and 1750AD. In addition, this will include a depth study focusing on Personal Rule and Restoration of the Monarchy (1629-1660)

There are three formal examinations. All examinations will expect students to have a detailed knowledge of the periods studied, along with the ability to analyse and interpret source work and historical interpretations of events.

Through the use of various written and visual sources you will learn how the world has evolved from the end of WW1 through to the modern society. You will come to understand how the relations between the super-powers have affected the rest of the world.

It is important that you hold a personal curiosity about the past and are keen to understand how the world we live in has been created by past events. We are sure you will find the course not only fulfilling, but also enjoyable.



DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

(AQA course)

Design Technology at KS4 will enable you to design and make creative and original products through a variety of practical, theoretical and ICT activities. You will use a range of materials including woods, metals and plastics and learn a wide range of techniques to prepare you for the controlled assessment task and final examination.

In Year 10 you will work through five different modules before starting your controlled assessment task during Term 6, continuing in Year 11. Each module will develop and refine the skills that you need to become a successful designer, engineer or technologist suitable for a wide variety of academic and vocational future careers.

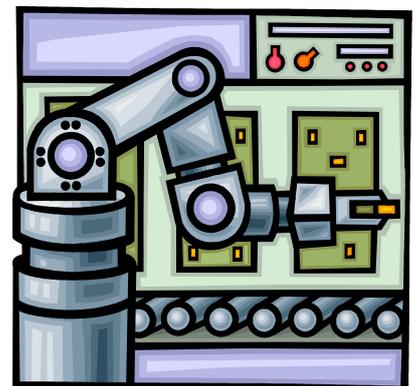
The **Controlled Assessment Task** is worth 50% of the total marks. You will select a single design-and-make activity from a choice of tasks set by the examination board. You will design, develop and manufacture a final product and produce a concise design folder and/or appropriate ICT evidence recording your progress. Your design folder will consist of approximately 20 pages of printed A3 paper or the ICT equivalent. You will spend approximately 35 hours on this activity during lesson time. As part of the evidence submitted you will make prototypes, include photographs of your finished products, as well as photographs of your working at various stages of the design-and-make process.

The **Written Examination Paper** is worth 50% of the total marks and is 2 hours long. This is one paper with three sections:

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks). A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks). Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks). A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.



FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

(AQA course)

If you love cooking and want to understand how and why ingredients work and the reactions created when preparing and cooking dishes, then this could be the course for you. There is a substantial amount of new theory and scientific concepts to cover that will be classroom-based learning, however, when appropriate, we will learn through practical activities.

We are following the AQA specification which is broken down into the following assessment objectives:



AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of nutrition, food, cooking and preparation.

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of nutrition, food, cooking and preparation.

AO3: Plan, prepare, cook and present dishes, combining appropriate techniques.

AO4: Analyse and evaluate different aspects of nutrition, food, cooking and preparation including food made by yourself and others.

This will be assessed in the following format:

50% Examination: This will take place in the summer term of Year 11 and is 1hour 45 minutes in duration.

- Section A - a range of multiple-choice questions worth 20 marks
- Section B - five longer response questions to show your understanding of the five topics worth 80 marks.

50% Non-Examination Assessments: Both of the tasks below will involve practical evidence and a portfolio of work to support this. These will be set by the exam board during Year 11.

1. 15% Food Investigation Task – a science-based experiment to show understanding of chemical and functional properties of ingredients. Assessed out of 30 marks.
2. 35% Food Preparation Task – to plan, prepare, cook and present three dishes in three hours (dietary needs/life-stages/culinary traditions). Assessed out of 70 marks.

The topics covered throughout the course are:

1. **Food, Nutrition and Health** – understanding macro and micronutrients and what makes a healthy diet.
2. **Food Science** – understanding and demonstrating a range of cooking methods to show functional and chemical properties of ingredients.
3. **Food Safety** – food spoilage, contamination (e.g. enzymes and bacteria) and food safety principles in storing and handling foods.
4. **Food Choice** – the wide range of reasons for dietary choices e.g. moral/ethical; medical; religious/cultural; lifestyle etc.
5. **Food Provenance** – the environmental impact and sustainability of ingredients, food processing and production.

You will need to be prepared to practise cooking at home and provide many of the ingredients required for your assessed tasks. **You also need to have some basic kitchen skills already** - general practical skills; knife skills; preparing fruit and vegetables; using a cooker/hob; using a range of kitchen equipment; understanding of basic cooking methods; an ability to prepare, combine and shape ingredients; sauce making; an ability to tenderise and marinade; and work with dough, raising agents and setting mixtures.

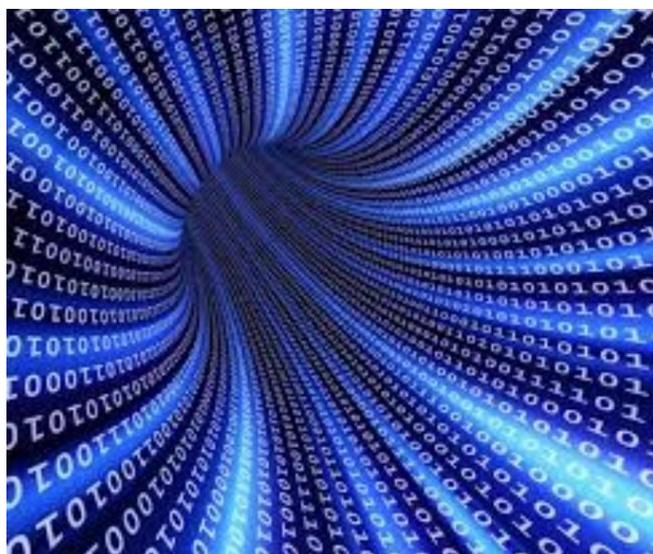
COMPUTER SCIENCE

(OCR course)

This thought-provoking and challenging GCSE is an ideal platform to learn and understand how computer systems work and how they are used in the everyday world. Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of computer science theory via their study of the fundamentals of computer systems, computer hardware, software, representation of data in computer systems, databases, communications and networking and programming. Students will improve their problem-solving skills while using the development life cycle and agile models to analyse and solve problems. Opportunities will be given to undertake practical investigations into the use of computing while programming and development skills will be tested.

The course is assessed via **two examinations, 50% each**. The first is based around **theory knowledge**, and the second is based around **programming and understanding of algorithms**.

This is an excellent foundation for those who wish to follow a course in Computer Science in the Sixth Form and is also a valued qualification in the world of work and useful for those with an interest in using computers to solve problems and who wish to learn about software engineering. There is a mixture of the traditional theory study of computer science along with its practical element of programming, providing a balanced experience. This is a fantastic opportunity to take an ever-growing subject that will challenge students to look at problems in a different light and find practical solutions while gaining understanding of computer systems.



TRIPLE SCIENCE

(AQA course)

This preference means students achieve **three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics**. You will study the three Science subjects with different teachers and at the end of the two-year course you will sit separate exams in each of the three subjects.

Physics is “the study of matter, energy, and the interaction between them”, but what that really means is that Physics is about asking fundamental questions and trying to answer them by observing and experimenting. The Physics course you will follow covers topics such as energy, electricity, atomic structure, forces, waves, magnetism and space physics. The course uses mathematics applied to real world situations and students who like Mathematics often find Physics enjoyable. Studying Physics at GCSE is very good preparation for Physics A level and would be valuable to anyone considering a technical career.

Chemistry is the study of materials, chemicals and how they react. Chemists try and explain why things happen and seek to design new materials for all types of technologies. The GCSE course covers topics such as atomic structure, the periodic table, bonding, rates of reaction, organic chemistry and chemical analysis. Studying Chemistry is good preparation for both Biology and Chemistry at A level and would be valuable to anyone considering a medical or paramedical career.

Biology is the study of living things, how they evolved and how they interact. The whole of the living world comes into Biology in all its diversity and wonder. For GCSE Biology you will study cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis, evolution and ecology. Studying Biology at GCSE is excellent preparation for A level Biology and also useful for anyone thinking of a career involving any aspect of health care or work with animals and plants.

At the end of the course there will be **two exams, each worth 50% of the GCSE, in each of the three Sciences**. There is no coursework or controlled conditions assessment, but students will need to complete several core practicals.

It is not necessary to study Triple Science to take A level Science subjects in the Sixth Form but for those who already know that they are going to follow a technical or science based career, it is a logical and rewarding choice.

To be considered for Triple Science you will need to have demonstrated the necessary aptitude and ability through the end of Year 9 exam and across the termly assessments.

ART

(AQA course)

Specification

- a. Coursework Portfolio (60%)
- b. Externally set assignment,
which includes a 10-hour exam (40%)



Overview

Art requires curiosity, a creative mind and a passion for the visual world. Throughout the course students are encouraged to develop their awareness of contemporary art and aesthetics, whilst exploring a variety of approaches to making and learning about art. Drawing will be a significant medium for development throughout the course in order to explore and record observations and ideas in response to each project. Any student who wishes to study Art GCSE should be prepared to experiment with materials and ideas to create exciting works of art.

Artistic Practice

Over the course of the GCSE students will be taught how to format a project to explore a creative journey through the development of ideas, techniques and processes. Students will have the opportunity to develop their artistic knowledge and work independently to establish personal responses to their chosen area of study. The course is designed to build upon prior knowledge from Key Stage 3 and enable individual development across different projects.

Skills, Techniques and Processes

Art is an exciting course which offers a broad range of approaches and techniques, including drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, collage, mixed media, ceramics, three-dimensional construction and relief work. There will be an emphasis on recording from direct observation to display the formal elements, which include, line, tone, shape, form and use of colour. An integral aspect of the GCSE is a willingness to experiment with materials, develop creativity and explore a range of techniques.

Knowledge and Research

Developing a good knowledge of Fine Art is a vital part of the course. Each project will be underpinned by research into the work of artists, practitioners, and movements to support contextual understanding and inspire the development of ideas. Through appropriate research students will develop the ability to critically analyse their own work

as well as the work of other artists. There will be an opportunity to visit galleries and exhibitions and work alongside a visiting artist, which will play an important role in helping to make connections with the student's own practical work. Home Learning will be set on a regular basis and is an important aspect of the GCSE.

DANCE

(AQA course)

- Exam 40% Critical Appreciation Paper
- Practical Controlled Assessment 60% (30% Performance and 30% Choreography)

The specification acknowledges the important role that dance plays in young people's lives. Any student who wishes to study GCSE Dance will bring previous experience of dance from their KS3 studies to the course. The specification aims to build on that experience. The course places a major focus on Contemporary Dance, however, GCSE candidates may perform in and choreograph work in any dance style of their choice, provided it allows them to access the full range of assessment criteria. The study of dance as an art form contributes to students' aesthetic and social development.

Performance

As a physical activity it promotes fitness and well-being. As performers, students develop confidence and self-esteem. They develop self and body awareness as well as sensitivity to others and team-work skills. Effective performance requires physical effort and the determination to succeed and improve.

Choreography

As choreographers, students employ the skills of problem-solving and creativity. Effective choreography requires imagination and the ability to synthesise a number of elements. In directing others, students develop their interpersonal and communication skills.

Critical Appreciation

As critics, students make informed decisions about the dances they see. They articulate their knowledge, opinions and preferences. Viewing professional dances fulfils students' cultural entitlement and broadens their artistic experience.

Overview

Dance expresses and communicates ideas and concepts through the interrelated processes of performance, choreography and critical appreciation. The practical emphasis of 60% will enable candidates to actively and physically demonstrate their knowledge and experience of dance in all three roles. The balance between performance and choreography is equally weighted at 30% each.



DRAMA

(AQA course)

Drama will increase your confidence, improve social and communication skills and develop your creativity and imagination. You will learn about various performance and technical skills including acting, devising, directing and design, and gain knowledge of playwrights, theatre practitioners, genres and styles, placing these within their social, cultural, political and historical contexts.

You are expected to be enthusiastic and willing to participate in practical sessions (which use a wide variety of explorative strategies and dramatic techniques), performances (which take into consideration the elements of drama and the drama medium) and discussions. You should be prepared to give up time outside formal lessons for rehearsals and theatre visits. Home Learning will be set regularly and is an integral part of the course. Note taking after practical lessons is particularly important so that you have the necessary information prepared for revision purposes and in order to be able to evaluate your own work.

You will also be expected to experience a range of live theatre visits and, at times, participate in Drama workshops. It would also be beneficial if you took part in extra-curricular opportunities such as performances, festivals and competitions as this will help further develop your skills and experience of theatre.

The overall assessment is in three component parts: ***Understanding Drama, Devising Drama and Text in Practice***. Each component part is broken down into varying sections to provide students with the opportunity to develop their understanding of drama as well as their practical skills:

1. Understanding Drama: Written examination

40% of GCSE

- a. Multiple choice **(4 marks)**
- b. Four questions on a given extract from the set play chosen **(44 marks)**
- c. A two-part question on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production **(32 marks)**

2. Devising Drama: Practical examination

40% of GCSE

- a. Process of creating devised drama **(devising log 60 marks)**
- b. Performance of devised drama (performer or designer) **20 marks**

3. Text in Practice: Practical exams

20% of GCSE

Performance of two extracts from one play as a performer or designer **(40 marks - 25 marks for each extract)**

Even if you choose the design route for Component 2 and 3 there will still be occasions where you will be expected to participate in practical tasks in Component 1.

A positive attitude, a high level of motivation and the ability to work co-operatively with others are perhaps more important than talent.

NB. The topics and plays chosen for Component 2 and 3 are at the discretion of the drama teacher. For the examinations in Year 11 we choose topics/plays based on their relevance to the given themes and suitability for our students and context at NSB; we strive to select texts which will engage the individual students and give them the best possible opportunity to gain the higher marks. In the past this has, at times, included topics/plays with strong language and hard-hitting issues. If you have any concerns about your son participating in a performance of this nature in Year 11 please contact the relevant drama teacher. They will only be given a role in a play of this nature if we think they are mature enough to respond to the subject matter with sensitivity. Issues and the context of each play are always discussed as part of the rehearsal process with relevant linked to PSHE and trigger warnings.



MUSIC

(Edexcel course)



If you love playing an instrument in ensembles, compose music away from school or love listening to different styles of music then this is a perfect option for you.

The course is split into three key categories: Performance, Composition and Listening.

Component 1: Performing **30% of the qualification**

Content overview

- Solo performing
- Ensemble performing

Performance focuses on how you play your main instrument. We look at a solo piece and how you also play in an ensemble. This could be with classmates or your teacher.

Component 2: Composing **30% of the qualification**

Content overview

- 1 free composition
- 1 composition written to a brief

Composition looks at your ability to write music. We will develop your composing style and focus on how and why melodies are created and harmonised in particular ways.

Component 3: Listening **40% of the qualification**

The final part of the course is an exam based on pieces of music you will have studied throughout the course. The music is wide ranging from Bach and Beethoven to Queen, the music of Star Wars and the songs of Broadway.

You must be learning one or more instruments during the course and may choose pieces to perform in any style of music. **It is recommended that you take instrumental lessons and sometimes these can be arranged through school if needed.** You should see the Director of Music, for further details.

Composition tasks can be completed using Sibelius or Cubase software. Music technology, both sequencing and recording, will be used during this part of the course. Students produce 2 compositions in different styles.

If you enjoy different aspects of music-making inside or outside of school and want to improve your skills in a focused but friendly environment, this could be the GCSE option for you!

PHOTOGRAPHY

(AQA course)

The course is both practical and theoretical. The practical element will involve topic-based projects enabling you to develop your visual and technical skills. Being an art-based course, emphasis will be placed on creative interpretation and experimentation.

You will learn to use both 35mm SLR and digital SLR cameras, a variety of medium format cameras plus accessories such as extension tubes, lenses, flash guns, tripods, cable releases and filters. You will have access to a professional studio with both tungsten and flash lighting. You will also develop darkroom techniques including film processing, printing, toning and tinting, as well as digital imaging software such as Adobe Photoshop.



The aims of the course are to:

- actively engage in the creative process, in order to develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds
- develop creative, imaginative and intuitive capabilities when exploring and making images
- become confident in taking risks and learn from experience when exploring and experimenting with ideas, processes, media, materials and techniques
- develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills
- develop and refine ideas with increasing independence
- develop knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in historical and contemporary contexts.

The course will be assessed through portfolio (60%) and an externally set assignment of 10 hours (40%).



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

(AQA course)



We are delighted to offer GCSE Physical Education, which will run alongside the core PE programme. If you join the GCSE PE course you will still follow the core PE programme as well. The course will follow the AQA specification.

Students must understand that the course has both practical and theory elements. Students will have two double lessons a week for GCSE PE, both of which will be theory based.

Practical 30%

All students will need to complete THREE practical assessments. Students must perform in each of the following areas:

- 1) Team activity
- 2) Individual activity
- 3) Either a team or individual activity

Look at page 46 onwards on this attachment to see which activities students can be assessed in: [AQA GCSE Specification](#)

NEA Coursework 10%

As part of their coursework all students will be assessed on their ability to analyse and evaluate practical performance in one activity and identify actions to bring about improvement.

Theoretical 60%

Students will sit two exam papers, each of which will last 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Paper 1	Paper 2
Applied anatomy and physiology Movement analysis Physical training Use of data 30% of GCSE	Sports psychology Socio-cultural influences Health, fitness and well-being Use of data 30% of GCSE

The exam papers will include multiple-choice, short answer and extended answer questions.

Within the theory content students will develop their knowledge in:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data
- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well being

Students are expected to engage fully in both theory and practical lessons, ensuring they have the correct kit and equipment at all times.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(OCR course)

If you are interested in the big questions about human life, the universe and everything, GCSE Religious Studies could be for you.

You will follow the new OCR GCSE Religious Studies syllabus. This course consists of two parts. In Part One you complete an in-depth study of **two** major world religions, looking at both beliefs and practices. In Part Two you will study Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world. Together the units will provide you with a broad understanding of how British society has been shaped by faith, making this course ideal for those with an interest in all types of public service.

In Part One, Beliefs and Practices, you will be studying Christianity and Islam. We have chosen two contrasting faiths so that you can see the similarities and differences between two very different ways of viewing the world. In each faith you will look at the key teachings behind the beliefs and how they have been demonstrated in different ways through time. You will then study the ways in which worshippers follow their beliefs so that you can gain a sympathetic understanding of the importance of faith in a person's daily life. The emphasis will be on getting as close to the ideas and practices of believers as possible.

In Part Two, Philosophy and Ethics, you will look at some of the key questions about existence. You will start by considering if there is any factual basis to a belief in God and what might be the basis of an ultimate reality. You will then study the impact of issues like medical ethics, war and peace, and human relationships. Finally you will be asked to think about the ways in which those with beliefs might interact with those people who do not have a faith at all.

Developing rigorous thinking skills is of great interest to any employer or higher education establishment, and Religious Studies has an excellent reputation as a subject. If you know that you have an enquiring mind and are open to a wide range of ideas and opinions then you should seriously think about choosing Religious Studies.

The Religious Studies GCSE course will consist of **two** Beliefs and Practices papers, worth 25% of the final mark for each faith and **one** Philosophy and Ethics paper worth 50% of the final mark. Being able to write clearly and logically would be a great advantage to you in this course. It would also be helpful if you enjoy reading and finding out more about other cultures.



