

GCSE
CURRICULUM
INFORMATION
BOOKLET

2025 - 2027

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides information about the GCSE process and courses of study, including options available, so that pupils can make informed choices. It includes specific information about each subject including the course aims, content, methods of study, and how the subject is assessed.

In Years 7-9 the pupils study a wide range of subjects, giving them a broad and balanced educational foundation. However, the time required to cover the GCSE and IGCSE syllabuses means that it is not possible to continue all subjects to GCSE/IGCSE level, so some selection of subjects is necessary.

To preserve the balance of the curriculum and to ensure that they develop a variety of skills, 'core' areas are studied by all pupils. Pupils will take the following compulsory core subjects for GCSE/IGCSE:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish)

In addition, pupils will be able to choose three options from the remaining subjects described in the booklet. The range of optional subjects available and access to these depends upon an individual pupil's performance in the subject concerned. For educational reasons there needs to be a sufficient number of pupils studying each individual subject for that Option to run. Where a subject is heavily subscribed there may be two groups.

The pupils also follow other courses which do not lead to GCSE examinations. These are very important to their overall education, helping them to develop general life skills and enabling them to make informed decisions about their futures.

2025 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Week Commencing Monday 22nd January

Pupils receive presentations from subject leaders and have individual discussions as appropriate

Tuesday 28th January

Year 9 Parents Evening

Thursday 30th January

Subject Preference Form goes live (initial choices)

Monday 10th February

Deadline for Subject Preference Forms to be completed (9am)

Monday 24th February

GCSE option blocks will be set; pupils will then be sent a second Subject Preference Form to indicate their firm choices within the allocated blocks

Subject Preference Form

This form allows the pupils to indicate four optional subjects they would like to study and to select either French or Spanish as their core modern language.

Once the Subject Preference Forms are completed, subjects are arranged into blocks. We will then publish these blocks and ask pupils to choose their subjects again from the allocated blocks. We cannot guarantee that all subject combinations are possible.

The form can be accessed [here](#) and will be available from Thursday 30th January. The link will not work before this date.

GCSES AND IGCSES

The syllabuses that are followed and the examinations taken are written by external examination boards. In some subjects the grade awarded includes a contribution from coursework (called non-exam assessment or NEA). In addition to the final examinations, this work is completed by pupils during the course, which is marked by their teachers and externally moderated. The amount of coursework and its nature varies from subject to subject.

Results for GCSE and IGCSE subjects will be reported as grades 9-1.

In addition to the information contained in this booklet, pupils are advised to:

- consult with subject teachers regarding the course content and their aptitude for their chosen subjects
- discuss with parents
- access examination board websites for more detailed specifications namely:

a) Pearson Edexcel

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses.html>

b) AQA

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/qualifications>

c) Cambridge Assessment International Education

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-upper-secondary/cambridge-igcse/>

d) Careers advice

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Comparison of old GCSE letter grades to new number grades

CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

Key questions to consider

Try to get a broad and balanced combination of subjects. Clearly it is very important to study subjects you enjoy. Think about what attracts you to a subject: its approach, content, practical work, projects, experiments or even the teacher. Be careful not to be too influenced by the latter and try not to think about what your friends are choosing. The decision must be yours.

What are your strengths?

Again, these must influence your choice because they may help you to achieve the high grades necessary for future progress.

What is the advice of your teachers?

Obviously, you must consider this as teachers are specialists in their field and will often be able to explore how their subject can help you progress on your chosen future career path. On occasion, it may even happen that parents and teachers offer conflicting advice. It may help you in sorting out such difficulties if you consult either your Form Tutor or another trusted adult.

How much coursework is involved?

The amount of coursework varies from subject to subject and it is important to strike a balance between those subjects that have a significant element and those that have little or no coursework. The individual subject entries in the curriculum guide should give details of coursework requirements.

What is the relationship of these subjects to Sixth Form courses?

When you move on to the Sixth Form you will be expected to study three subjects (sometimes four depending on the school you attend or for example if you choose to study a subject like Further Mathematics) for two years. For most subjects it is important to have taken the GCSE but this is not the case for all of them. There will also be the opportunity at Sixth Form to start new subjects such as Business Studies, Psychology, Economics and Government and Politics.

A LEVELS & UNIVERSITY

Most subjects at degree level have few specific A level subject requirements; what is usually more important is the actual grades you achieve. The information below is given in good faith and is believed correct at time of publication.

However, it should be taken as a likely indication only. Requirements can vary from one university to another and universities reserve the right to change entry requirements at any time, and may do so as little as between one and two years before the year of entry. To be sure of the current specific A level subject requirements of a course at a particular university, you should check the university's website or contact the university direct.

Accountancy

Mathematics occasionally required

Ancient History

History, Ancient History or Classical Civilisation preferred or required

Archaeology

History, Latin or Greek sometimes preferred; a science subject occasionally required

Architecture

Some courses require Maths or Physics. A level Art is not required although a portfolio is expected

Astronomy

Maths and Physics usually required

Biochemistry

Chemistry required. Biology or Maths also preferred

Biological Sciences

Biology and Chemistry usually required

Business Studies

Maths occasionally required or preferred

Chemistry	Chemistry and another Maths/Science subject usually required
Chemical Engineering	Chemistry and Maths usually required, with physics also preferred
Classics	Latin or Greek usually preferred or required
Computer Science	Maths often required. For some courses, Computer Science is preferred
Dentistry	Chemistry required with two Maths/Science subjects preferred
Drama	Theatre Studies and/or English required. A foreign language and/or History are required for some courses
Economics	Maths required for many universities. Further Maths is preferred at very competitive institutions
Engineering	Maths and Physics normally required, except for foundation courses and some civil engineering courses
English	English normally required and a foreign language to GCSE at some universities
Environmental Science	Biology and Chemistry usually preferred
Food Science/ Technology	Chemistry required. One or two more Sciences often preferred
French	French required. Second foreign language is often an advantage

Geography	Geography normally required
History	History required or preferred
Law	No specific requirements though subjects such as English, History, Maths are well regarded
Mathematics/Statistics	Maths required
Medicine	Biology and Chemistry required with additional Maths/Science subjects preferred. A small number of medical schools like to see Arts/Humanities studied in Year 12
Music	Music normally required
Pharmacy/ Pharmacology	Chemistry required. Two more Maths/Science subjects preferred
Philosophy	No specific subject requirements, though subjects such as Religious Studies, Classical Civilisation and Maths are well regarded
Physics	Maths and Physics usually required
Psychology	One or two Maths/Science subjects.
Spanish	Spanish required. Second foreign language advantageous
Sports Science	Maths, Physics or Biology sometimes required
Veterinary Science	Chemistry required plus two Maths/science subjects preferred

THE CORE CURRICULUM

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Modern Foreign Language
(French or Spanish - information under
options)
Science



ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Language 4EA1

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Literature 4ET1

The aims of this course are to enable pupils to:

- Develop their understanding of the spoken word and their capacity to participate effectively in a variety of speaking and listening activities, matching style and response to audience and purpose.
- Develop their ability to read, understand, enjoy and respond to all types of literary and non-literary texts; recognise and appreciate themes, attitudes and the ways in which writers achieve their effects; develop information retrieval strategies for the purpose of study.
- Develop their ability to construct and convey meaning in written and spoken language, using correct grammar and Standard English (except in contexts where non-standard forms are needed for literary purposes), matching style to audience and purpose.

Course Content

Fiction, non-fiction, plays and poems are read in School but pupils are also required to read privately, to gather a wider reading experience and develop informed preferences. An awareness of current affairs and contemporary issues is encouraged to enhance class discussion and gain skills which are practised further in debating and speech writing tasks. Theatre visits are organised, both during School hours and in the evening.

Pupils work in pairs and groups of various sizes to discuss ideas arising from literary texts or contemporary issues, and report back. Topics for discussion are selected by the teacher and the class. Authors visit annually to discuss set texts which the pupils study, developing their understanding of these novels and plays, as well as sharing their experiences as professional writers, inspiring our pupils' own imaginative writing through powerful creative writing workshops.

Homework is very varied, for example: narrative, discursive or descriptive tasks, letters, newspaper articles, reading for discussion, preparing oral work, wider research and preparation for coursework or formal written responses to literary texts.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of class work and homework. Internal School examinations or end of text assessments further inform individual progress where appropriate. Written coursework contributes to the pupils' final grades in Literature.

Final assessment at the end of Year 11

IGCSE English Language Specification A (Assessment Route Two)

- 100% Written Examination (Externally Assessed – Paper 1 and Paper 2) Non-Fiction and Transactional Writing/Poetry and Prose with Imaginative Writing.

IGCSE English Literature (Assessment Route Two)

- 60% Written examination (Externally Assessed - Paper 1) Unseen Poetry, Poetry and Modern Prose
- 40% Coursework (Internally Assessed - Paper 3) Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts



SCIENCE

Separate Science:

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/2 GCSE Biology 1B10

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/2 GCSE Chemistry 1CH0

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/2 GCSE Physics 1PH0

Combined Science

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/2 GCSE Combined Sci 1SC0

The GCSE Science qualifications enable pupils to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding through the specific disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science, through different types of scientific enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them
- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on science through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Pupils will develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of working scientifically through undertaking practical work, including the completion of a number of mandatory core practicals. Pupils will need to use their knowledge and understanding of these practical techniques and procedures in the written assessments. Four main areas are covered:

- development of scientific thinking
- experimental skills and strategies
- analysis and evaluation
- scientific vocabulary, quantities, units, symbols and nomenclature.

GCSE study of science provides the foundation for understanding the material world. Scientific understanding is changing our lives and is vital to the world's future prosperity. All pupils learn essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science. They gain appreciation of how the complex and diverse phenomena of the natural world can be described in terms of a small number of key ideas that relate to the sciences and that are both inter-linked and of universal application. These key ideas include:

- the use of conceptual models and theories to make sense of the observed diversity of natural phenomena
- the assumption that every effect has one or more cause(s)
- that change is driven by differences between different objects and systems when they interact
- that many such interactions occur over a distance without direct contact
- that science progresses through a cycle of hypothesis, practical experimentation, observation, theory development and review
- that quantitative analysis is a central element both of many theories and of scientific methods of inquiry.

These key ideas are relevant in different ways and with different emphases in the three subjects.

Pathways for GCSE Science

There are two separate pathways for GCSE Science; the Combined Science pathway (Double Award) and the Separate Science pathway (Triple Award). Both pathways are academically rigorous and require pupils to sit examinations in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Both provide a base for further study of Biology, Chemistry and Physics at GCE Advanced Level and beyond.

Pupils opting for Combined Science will study a shorter course in each science that covers approximately two thirds of the content of Separate Science. They will receive the equivalent of two GCSE qualifications and will benefit from a slower pace of lesson and increased consolidation and revision time at the end of the course.

Pupils opting for Separate Science will cover the full content in each science. This is more suitable for those who have a particular aptitude for science and are already keen to study two or more sciences at A Level. The increased volume of content makes the course much more demanding in terms of pace and there is less time for consolidation. Pupils receive three separate GCSE qualifications.

Year 9 began their GCSE Science courses in the Autumn term with all pupils following the Separate Science pathway. Allocation to Separate Science or Combined Science will take place in Year 10 and will be based on pupils' engagement with material and their performance in assessments and examinations. Pupils wishing to pursue the Separate Science route must be working at a minimum of grade 6/7 in all three Sciences by the end of Year 9.

Assessment

All pupils will sit six externally examined papers comprising two papers for each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

These are available at foundation tier (grades 1-5) and higher tier (grades 4-9). Pupils must complete all assessments in the same tier and all assessments will be in May/June during their Year 11.

Combined Science papers are one hour 10 minutes in length. Separate Science papers are one hour and forty-five minutes to reflect the increased content.

All papers contain a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.



OPTIONS SUBJECTS

Art and Design
Computer Science
Design and Technology
Drama
French
Geography
History
ICT
Music
Physical Education
Spanish

Please note that certain subjects may not be offered in the event that there are insufficient pupils choosing a subject to form a viable teaching set.



ART AND DESIGN

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Art and Design 1AD0

This course should interest all pupils who wish to follow a career in any aspect of art or design, or who simply enjoy the subject and wish to continue it to the end of their school career at PGHS. Pupils who undertake the course will develop an understanding of the elements of Art and Design, the capacity for creative thought and action, a critical faculty and the use of subject specific language.

The course involves

- recording observations, experiences and ideas, analysis and evaluation;
- developing ideas and exploring 2D and 3D media and processes including ICT;
- Art and design appreciation, personal responses, written work, critical study, and gallery visits to major galleries and exhibitions.

In Year 10 and Year 11 there will be a number of educational visits to London galleries. In addition, a compulsory one-day figurative drawing workshop takes place at School with Royal Academician artists. Pupils are expected to work autonomously and to produce independent homework each week for their individual projects.

It is hoped that, as well as giving a greater understanding of the essential nature of Art and Design, this course will inspire pupils with an interest in cultural and creative aspects of society which they will be able to use throughout their lives.



Course Content

- Unit 1: Personal Portfolio (coursework unit), worth 60% of the final grade;
- Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment (examination unit involving a minimum preparatory period of four weeks and a 10-hour supervised timed test), worth 40% of the final grade.

There is an annual GCSE Art Exhibition in which every GCSE Art pupil's work is celebrated and on display.

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Art and Design supports progression to A level - the GCSE and A Level have a common structure, and follow a similar approach to assessment. This course can lead into Art Foundation and BA honours degree courses.

Pupils may consider careers involving Art, Architecture, Craft, Createch, Engineering, Fashion, Film, Graphics, Game Design, History of Art, Illustration, Interior Design, Media Studies, Medicine, Photography, Photojournalism, Publishing, Theatre Design, Textiles, Teaching and Lecturing, Video and 3D Design.



Universities, like many employers, value a rounded education. If, for example, a budding young scientist has met their course's requirements by taking biology and maths A levels, why shouldn't they vary their experience with a language or an arts subject?

Tim Bradshaw, chief executive of the Russell Group (May 2019)

COMPUTER SCIENCE

OCR GCSE Computer Science J277

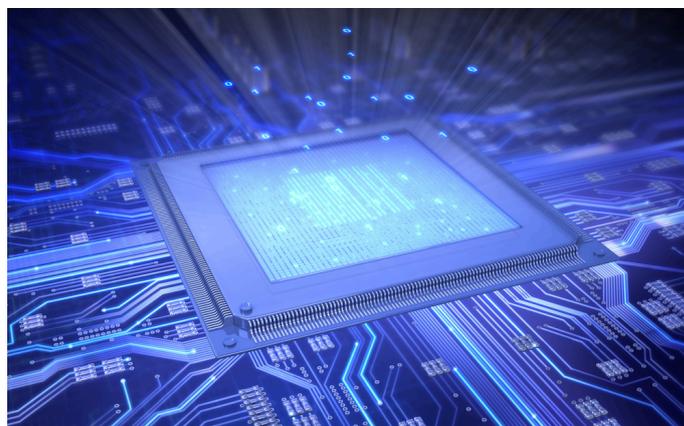
What is Computer Science?

Computer Science is the study of computers and computational systems. It includes the theory, design, development, and application of computer software and hardware. It is a broad and rapidly evolving field and it encompasses many different areas of study such as: programming, algorithms, databases, networking, artificial intelligence and more.

Computer Science is a fascinating and rapidly growing field that is shaping the way we live, work, and communicate. It offers many exciting career opportunities and is a valuable skillset to have in today's digital age.

In Year 9, pupils are introduced to the fundamentals of Computer Science, learning how to write code in a programming language, understanding how computers work and how they communicate with each other, and exploring some of the many applications of computer science in various fields.

As you progress in your studies, you will learn more advanced topics such as data structures, algorithms, and computer architecture. Moreover, you will also have opportunities to apply your knowledge and skills in projects that involve designing and building software and hardware systems.



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Design & Technology 1DT0

For everyone, GCSE D&T opens the door to a wide range of careers in the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. It is also excellent preparation for careers in many other fields e.g. medicine, law and computer science. Whatever career you choose, the knowledge and skills you learn, particularly those concerned with rapidly developing technologies, will be extremely valuable. You will also develop skills, such as teamwork and time management which are highly prized by employers. You will apply your D&T skills and knowledge (and what you learn in maths, science, art and other subjects) to solve real-life problems through hands-on project work.

As well as job satisfaction, rewards will include a good salary and good promotional prospects. The average salary for designers is growing much faster than the UK average and engineers typically earn £25,000 to £40,000 more than the national average. Alternatively, you may decide to be an entrepreneur and start your own company or business. Many exciting careers in Design, Manufacturing or Engineering require the practical and problem-solving skills that D&T provides and the demand for people in these areas of work is growing fast.



I have found that the design skills I learnt in school and at university have helped me become a 'global citizen' - able to develop solutions to problems in very different parts of our world.

Professor Yewande Akinola MBE, award winning Engineer

Course Content

Understanding users

- Who your product is for and their needs
- How the product will be used

Learning about materials

- Including traditional, smart and modern materials
- Selecting the best materials for making your designs

Analysing products

- Understanding how everyday products have been designed and made
- Learning about the work of past and present designers, makers and engineers

Learning how things work

- Using mechanisms, electronics and computers to control things; including robots
- Designing and making products that don't fail in use

Designing (including Computer Aided Design – CAD)

- Taking risks to create more imaginative ideas
- Clearly communicating your design ideas to others

Making (including Computer Aided Manufacture – CAM)

- Working safely with tools and equipment
- Making high quality working prototypes

How is it assessed?

- Written examination 50%
- NEA (coursework) 50%



DRAMA

WJEC Eduqas GCSE Drama C690QS

This subject develops pupils' understanding of human behaviour, themselves and the world in which they live. It promotes critical thought and encourages pupils to work constructively with others in a group. It is academically rigorous in the sense that theatre is studied as an art form with a specific discipline and set of techniques.

Pupils are required to study texts in detail and produce high quality written work as they do for English Literature IGCSE. Most importantly, perhaps, Drama nurtures self-confidence and the ability to communicate and present oneself clearly and effectively; qualities which place pupils in an excellent position when applying for places in further education and employment.

Course Content and Assessment

Written: 50% Practical: 50%

Component 1: Devising Theatre (40% of qualification)

- Internally assessed, externally moderated
- You will be assessed on one of the following: Performing; Lighting Design; Sound Design; Set Design; Costume Design (inc hair & make-up)
- You will participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by Eduqas.
- You must produce:
 - A realisation of your piece of devised theatre
 - A portfolio of supporting evidence
 - An evaluation of the realised performance

Component 2: Performing from a Text (20% of qualification)

- Externally assessed by a visiting examiner
- You will be assessed on one of the following: performing, lighting design, sound design, set design, costume design (including hair & make-up)
- You will study two extracts from the same performance text chosen
- You will participate in one performance using sections from both extracts

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre (40% of qualification)

- You will study a full performance text with the aim of understanding the work of theatre makers and the theatrical choices to communicate meaning to an audience.
- You will also analyse and evaluate your experience of a live theatre performance as a member of the audience.
- Externally assessed
- Written exam of 1 hour 30 minutes

Key considerations

Drama is a practical subject and pupils must relish the prospect of public performance. Texts are studied both academically and through performance so pupils must be prepared to use acting and performance skills in most lessons. There is the option to design an element of their final performances; however, they will still need to be able to present their ideas to an examiner and therefore must feel confident and secure in doing so.

They must understand that although each candidate is individually assessed, the success of a performance depends on working together as a group. Pupils must be fully committed and prepared to attend rehearsals after School when necessary. They must also be prepared to source costumes and props.

A significant part of the qualification involves learning how to analyse and evaluate not only their own work but also live theatre performances. As a GCSE pupil you will be invited to attend all theatre trips. Parents should be aware that pupils will be required to attend at least two of these theatre visits and that payment is in addition to usual School fees.

Pupils looking to pursue GCSE Drama may wish to enrich their experience and develop their performance skills by taking part in one of the extra-curricular projects available to them.



FRENCH

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE French 4FR01

French is an asset, not only for today's traveller and holiday-maker, but especially in the world of work. French is used to communicate with those in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and the Far East, Canada, Switzerland and Belgium as well as in France itself.

The course consolidates and expands vocabulary learnt up to Year 9, while practising the grammar and structures needed to understand and communicate effectively in both the spoken and written language.

Topics previously covered are revised, followed by work at a higher level to achieve greater fluency and accuracy in more complex language, and to develop the pupils' skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking which the examination tests.

Homework is an extension of classwork and learning vocabulary is an important part of this with weekly vocabulary tests and Vocab Express homework.

The department follows the IGCSE specification, which provides a challenging and structured basis for language learning as well as progression to GCE Advanced Level. The IGCSE course combines knowledge, understanding and application of grammar with pupil-focused and engaging assessment activities, which promote greater cultural understanding and positive attitudes to language learning.

This qualification comprises three external assessments:

- Paper 1 (Listening)
- Paper 2 (Reading and Writing)
- Paper 3 (Speaking)

Each skill contributes 25% towards the overall final grade and is externally assessed after the two-year course.

When they are in Year 10 or Year 11, pupils will usually have the opportunity to spend a weekend or a week in France to experience the language in a real-life environment. French is also brought to life at school when the Onatti Theatre Company visit in order to perform a well-known play in French.

Having a modern foreign language qualification is often an asset when applying for university places and there are many jobs where knowledge of French will increase the range of opportunities available. Careers using French include retail, hotel and catering, finance, travel, commerce, telecommunications, broadcasting, fashion design, legal work and teaching.

The top ten reasons to learn French

Knowing French will allow you not only to function, but to compete effectively in the global economy of the future.

Speaking French will increase your job opportunities and salary potential.

Studying French increases your appreciation of other people and their cultures.

French opens up an entire world of sporting events to enthusiasts.

Knowing French will improve your vocabulary in English; 40-50% of English vocabulary comes from French.

Learning a new language, like French, develops your critical and creative thinking skills.

Proficiency in French will significantly improve your chances of being accepted for university and graduate school.

Using French enhances your experience of travelling abroad to such countries as Canada, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa.

French is the language of culture, opening the door to art, music, dance, fashion, cuisine and cinema: for example, Gauguin, Brel and Dior.

French is the language of many great literary masterpieces, such as: *Les Misérables* and *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, and great philosophers including Descartes, Pascal and Rousseau.



GEOGRAPHY

AQA GCSE Geography 8035

Why study Geography?

There has never been a more exciting time to study Geography. Geography investigates the big issues facing the world today such as environmental responsibility, global interdependence, economics and climate change. It also aims to bring about an awareness of the global diversity of human and physical environments, an understanding of their formation and the impacts that they have on people and the world.

Compared to other subjects, Geography graduates are among the most employable. They possess an enviable array of skills that employers look for. Geographers can write reports, interpret data, devise questions, make decisions, analyse material and think creatively and independently. Geographers are good communicators, problem solvers, team players, computer literate, critical thinkers and are socially, economically and environmentally aware.

Geography combines knowledge and understanding of both science and the arts. It, therefore, attracts all types of pupils and works well with any subject combination. Geography graduates are suited to careers in many areas, such as: politics, the media, architecture, engineering, economics, education and law. Geography is a very popular subject at PGHS and many pupils go on to study it at Advanced Level, either as a core subject with a view to continuing it at university, or as a companion subject for potential medics, journalists, engineers or politicians.

The Geography Department follows the AQA specification that explores a range of up to date geo-political and environmental questions that make the GCSE more relevant to today's world. All topics are examined over 3 papers at the end of Year 11, with the third paper being synoptic. This means that questions cover a number of different aspects of an issue so there will be some links to other parts of the core specification.

The Geography Department uses a textbook written specifically for the course and pupils will be encouraged to purchase their own copy so they can highlight text and make personal notes and annotations in the book.



The study of Geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together

Barack Obama

GCSE Geographers at PGHS complete 2 days of compulsory fieldwork: one day investigating the impact of human intervention on coastal processes at Walton-on-the-Naze; and one day looking at variations in quality of life in the Olympic Park in Stratford.

Fieldwork provides pupils with an opportunity to apply and develop their geographical skills as well as preparing them for the fieldwork element examined in Paper 3: Geographical Application

Course Structure

Paper 1 - Living with the Physical Environment

(35% of GCSE grade; 90minutes)

- The Challenge of Natural Hazards
- The Living World
- Physical Landscapes in the UK (Coastal Landscapes and River Landscapes)

Paper 2 - Challenges in the Human Environment

(35% of GCSE grade; 90 minutes)

- Urban Issues and Challenges
- The Changing Economic World
- The Challenge of Resource Management (one of: food, water or energy)

Paper 3 - Geographical Applications

(30% of GCSE grade; 90 minutes)

- Issue Evaluation
- Fieldwork: Coasts and Urban



HISTORY

Pearson Edexcel GCSE History 1H10

History is a very enjoyable subject and a popular option, which provides an opportunity to build on Key Stage 3 knowledge of the wider world and to continue to develop key skills.

History GCSE is widely recognised by all colleges, universities and employers as a subject which develops an understanding of the world we live in and the events of the last 100 years, which help to explain the problems and opportunities of the world today. In History you will study real people, working out what motivated them. You will improve your ability to judge whether you are being told the truth, learn to construct a logical argument, to communicate clearly and effectively and develop skills in the interpretation and evaluation of source material. The course provides a sound basis for study at a higher level.

Course Structure and Assessment

Unit 1 - Thematic Study: Crime and Punishment in Britain c1000 - present day

- 30% of GCSE grade
- Written examination - 80 minutes

Unit 2 - British Depth Study: Early Elizabethan England 1558 - 1588 & Period Study: Superpower Relations and the Cold War 1941 - 1991

- 40% of GCSE grade
- Written examination - 110 minutes

Unit 3 - Modern Depth Study: Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918 - 1939

- 30% of GCSE grade
- Written examination - 90 minutes

History is not a subject which is compulsory for any career (except that of an historian!) but it is of particular value to those going on to study Law, Economics, Politics and Education as well as developing an interest which will continue long after leaving School.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE ICT 4IT1

This IGCSE ICT Edexcel Course will allow you to explore current and emerging digital technologies and understand the issues raised by their use in a range of contexts by individuals, organisations and society.

The course will develop your awareness of the risks that are inherent in using ICT and the features of safe, secure and responsible practice. It will also broaden and enhance your ICT skills and capability.

IGCSE ICT gives you a good grounding in the wide range of ICT knowledge and skills necessary to function in the modern world both at work and at home. It is also a good foundation for A level courses in ICT as well as courses in further education and university.

You will learn about topics ranging from digital devices and connectivity, safe and responsible practice, and understand the impact of internet on the way that organisations do business. You will be also be encouraged to practice using software applications effectively.



Course Content and Assessment

Pupils study the following topics:

- Topic 1: Digital devices - Pupils learn about the range of digital devices available, the principles of these devices and how to select suitable devices and associated hardware and software to use in particular situations.
- Topic 2: Connectivity - Pupils learn about the ways in which digital devices exchange data and communicate with each other and with the larger systems supporting online organisations.
- Topic 3: Operating Online - Pupils study the risks to individuals and organisations of operating online. They learn about the way in which risks can be managed by both the individual and organisations. They become aware of the impact on individuals, organisations and society of the use of digital devices.
- Topic 4: Online Goods and Services - In addition to understanding how standalone and local area networks are used pupils learn about the increasing use of the online systems using dedicated links and the internet.
- Topic 5: Applying Information and Communication Technology - pupils learn how to use a range of software applications effectively and appropriately.
- Topic 6: Software Skills - pupils learn skills in using software for word processing, database management, spreadsheets, web authoring, multimedia presentations and graphics.

Paper 1

- 50% of IGCSE grade
- Written examination - 90 minutes
- The examination covers material from Topics 1-4

Paper 2

- 50% of IGCSE grade
- Practical examination - 180 minutes
- The examination covers material from Topics 5-6

MUSIC

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Music 1MU0

The GCSE music course aims to give a wide experience of music from different cultures and historical periods through listening, performing and composing. It is, therefore, a continuation of the work covered in Key Stage 3.

Course Structure and Assessment

Performing (30%)

This involves both group and solo performances. Each performance is worth 15% of the final GCSE mark. This will give pupils the opportunity to showcase their solo pieces and work in an ensemble with other musicians.

Composing (30%)

This involves composing two pieces of music across the two years. One will be a free composition of the pupils' choice, the other will be a set brief. Previous years have included composing for adverts, film trailers and writing pop songs. Each piece is worth 15% of the final GCSE mark.

Listening and Appraising (40%)

This involves developing the ability to recognise different features based on eight set works. This ranges from Western Classical music to popular fusions. This will be assessed through a 1 hour 45 minute written exam in June of Year 11.

Pupils will have the opportunity to attend concerts, workshops and masterclasses throughout KS4. There will also be many opportunities for GCSE pupils to perform and work with other musicians.

Careers in Music

There are many careers that stem from a background in music including: music journalist, music producer, film composer, performer, booking agent, events manager, music teacher, music therapist, musical director, backstage production team, songwriter and radio producer. Music is also a valuable asset to many jobs in other fields.

Benefits to studying Music

Language skills. Recent studies have clearly indicated that musical training physically develops the part of the left side of the brain known to be involved with processing language, and can wire the brain's circuits in specific ways. Learning a musical instrument also improves how the brain understands human language, which can help pupils learn a second language.

Self-esteem. Music allows pupils to try something new and develop confidence as they master singing or playing an instrument. When pupils are working towards a common goal, they appreciate that their 'voice' and interests are heard and understood by others. This joint effort creates a sense of secure acceptance that is critical to their self-esteem.

Listening skills. Music involves listening to yourself and to the rest of the ensemble. Musicians need to hear tempos, dynamics, tuning, and harmonies. This helps auditory development in the brain.

Mathematical skills. Reading music includes learning rhythmic note values which are essentially fractions. Many musical concepts have mathematical counterparts.

Relieving stress. We all know that listening to a favourite artist or song can lift a mood and relax us. The same goes for creating music. It gives pupils a release, allowing them to immerse themselves in something that's fulfilling and calming.

Creativity. Music nurtures pupils' creative side. Employers identify creativity as one of the top five skills important for success in the workforce.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

AQA GCSE Physical Education 8582

GCSE PE encourages pupils to:

- be inspired, motivated, and challenged, and enable them to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career pathways
- develop knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness, and wellbeing
- develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge to improve performance
- understand how the physiological and psychological state affects performance in physical activity and sport
- perform effectively in different physical activities by developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas
- develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance in physical activity and sport
- understand the contribution which physical activity and sport make to health, fitness, and wellbeing
- understand key socio-cultural influences which can affect people's involvement in physical activity and sport.



Course Structure and Assessment

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport

(30% of GCSE grade; written examination - 75 minutes)

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

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport

(30%; written examination - 75 minutes)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and wellbeing
- Use of data

Non-exam assessment:

Practical performance in physical activity and sport

(30%)

Pupils are assessed on their practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity). It is essential that they are at a good level in their three chosen sports/activities, and at least at club or county level in one sport/activity. They are also assessed on their analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity. The NEA is assessed by teachers and externally moderated by AQA.

Analysis and Evaluation

(10%)

Written coursework of how they have brought about improvement in one activity.



SPANISH

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE Spanish 4SP01

Spanish is one of the most important languages in the world. Spoken in more than twenty countries, it is a useful language for work and travel.

National and international companies are increasingly involved with business opportunities in Spain and Latin America, recruiting employees at all levels who can speak Spanish. As for travelling, the advantages of being able to speak and understand Spanish are tremendous!

This course builds upon the vocabulary and grammar covered in Year 8 and 9, introducing new topics at a higher level. It will develop pupils' skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Work is undertaken individually, in pairs or in groups, depending upon the task. Homework is an extension of class work and includes learning vocabulary. There is no assessed coursework.

The department follows the IGCSE specification, which provides a challenging and structured basis for language learning as well as progression to GCE Advanced Level. The course combines knowledge, understanding and application of grammar with pupil-focused and engaging assessment activities, promoting greater cultural understanding and positive attitudes to language learning.

This qualification comprises three external assessments:

Paper 1 (Listening)

Paper 2 (Reading and Writing)

Paper 3 (Speaking)

Each skill contributes 25% towards the overall final grade.

When they are in Year 10 or Year 11, pupils may have the opportunity to spend a week in Spain to experience the language in a real-life environment. During the week pupils attend lessons in the morning and discover Spanish culture in the afternoon

The top ten reasons to learn Spanish

Having a modern languages qualification is an asset when applying for university places.

Knowing Spanish will greatly increase the range of work opportunities available to you.

Learning Spanish is good for your health! Research indicates that knowing more than two languages improves your memory and reduces your chances of developing dementia.

Spanish, Spanish everywhere. There are 3.5 million Spanish speakers in the USA; in Europe, Spanish is the second most popular second language after English.

Learning Spanish will truly expand your universe; “the limits of my language are the limits of my universe”.

Knowing Spanish will completely transform your travel experience. It will allow you to move from the role of observer to that of an active participant.

Knowing how to speak Spanish will enable you to help others. If you wish to volunteer in Latin America, knowing Spanish will give you the qualifications you need.

Learning Spanish will enable you to gain a better understanding of English.

Learning Spanish will allow you to better appreciate Hispanic cultural contributions, including Cervantes, Garcia Marquez and Goya.

Learning Spanish is fun and will benefit you for the rest of your life.

Careers Education and Guidance (non-examined)

Careers Education and Guidance gives pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding to manage their own lifelong learning and career development.

Pupils are helped to match themselves to courses, educational establishments, and the kinds of work that will suit them. They will investigate the changing opportunities in the world of work and learn about the key employability skills which will equip them for success in the future.

Pupils are encouraged to acquire information in a variety of ways, including individual research, group activity and discussion, work shadowing and work experience. The Morrisby program (which pupils are introduced to in Year 9) uses scientific profiling of abilities, personality, interests and motivation to help pupils discover their own unique characteristics. With this awareness they can ensure they keep their future options open and are able to make great choices from a considered range of options.

Pupils are helped with the skills needed to apply for post 16 education, including preparing a curriculum vitae, personal statement, application forms and interview techniques. Representatives from popular sixth form colleges and schools, as well as career professionals, are invited into School during Careers lessons to talk to the pupils in both Year 10 and 11.

Former PGHS Pupil, Narin Suleyman, trained as a doctor in 2012 and completed her foundation training at the North Middlesex and Whittington Hospitals. She then moved to the Lister Hospital where she is currently a Core Surgical trainee. Most recently, she has been awarded Membership to the Royal College of Surgeons, England.



PSHEE / Life Skills (non-examined)

The course in Year 10 and 11 is part of an integrated programme which runs from Year 7 to Year 11 and, as such, consolidates and expands topics explored lower down the School, as well as introducing more adult concepts.

Pupils will learn about various topics relevant to the development of their cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills. Some examples include:

- decision-making and problem-solving;
- creative thinking and critical thinking;
- communication and interpersonal skills;
- self-awareness and empathy;
- assertiveness and equanimity;
- resilience and coping with emotions, and coping with stress.

More broadly the course will cover such aspects as Citizenship, Work Related Learning, Economic and Financial Wellbeing, and Health Education. The statutory Relationships and Sex Education programme forms a part of the PSHEE curriculum.

Other areas may be explored if they are topical or particularly relevant to the class. In preparation for Sixth Form interviews and for their own general background knowledge for other subject areas, all pupils take part in discussions/debates related to world issues and current news items.



Physical Education (non-examined)

Physical Education constitutes an essential part of the School curriculum.

On entering Year 10, pupils are taught a wide range of sports at Southbury Leisure Centre. Activities include:

- badminton
- swimming
- basketball
- volleyball
- aerobics
- trampolining
- table tennis

The Leisure Centre offers an ideal environment for pupils to acquire new skills as well as consolidate previous learning experiences.

Year 10 and 11 netball teams will have training and matches throughout the year (normally on Thursdays after School.)

During the summer months they will have the opportunity to participate in tennis, rounders and athletics.



GCSE INFORMATION

If you have any further questions about the Options process, please contact Ms Proudlove.

If you have questions about a particular subject, please contact the Head of Department:

Art and Design	Miss Henry
Computing	Mr Pandelis
Design and Technology	Mr Pepper
Drama	Mr Bissessar
English (Language and Literature)	Ms Heald
French	Mme Parry-Garnaud
Geography	Ms Hopley
History	Ms Hopley (acting)
ICT	Mr Pandelis
Mathematics	Mr Desai
Music	Miss Lush
Physical Education	Miss Turanli
Spanish	Mme Parry-Garnaud
Science	Mrs Wood