



GCSE OPTIONS 2026

ART AND DESIGN

Subject Leader Art: Mr A. Edwards
Examination Board: Eduqas
Syllabuses: Fine Art - C651QS

Why Study Art?

Studying Art, craft and design provide entry to an unprecedented range of specialisms, skills (both traditional and digital) and careers and allow them to specialise at A level in either Fine Art or Graphics

The creative industries are significant, contributing £84.1 billion GVA and employing over 2.8 million people, making Art and Design a pathway to a lifelong, satisfying career.

The Guardian newspaper suggested that artists had one of the most future proof jobs? It stated that "art will continue to change and evolve with technology, not disappear" and that possibly one of the big new sectors of work, augmented reality could provide work for the next generation of artists.

The Arts Council has produced research suggesting that creative thinking is the future for the job market and Art and Graphics is instrumental in helping develop these skills. So having taken a specialist creative subject could be a major advantage in the future job market. But what jobs are open to you? Probably more than you think. For example: Graphic designers, Illustrators, games designers, cinematographers, Architects, Multimedia artists and animators, Interior designers, Landscape Architects, Curators, Museum technicians and conservationists.

Art gives you the foundation, knowledge and choice to progress in these pathways by teaching you to:

- Seek creative solutions using materials and techniques intelligently, imaginatively, and experimentally.
- Develop knowledge of how art and design function and are valued across diverse cultures and time periods.
- Foster a sense of inquiry, take practical and intellectual risks, and make considered decisions.
- Make aesthetic and cultural judgments and articulate your preferences.
- Engage with art, craft, and design in public spaces.

Additionally, it contributes to the development of key skills valued by employers, such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, strategic thinking, research, collaboration, perseverance, self-direction.

It also promotes personal growth, citizenship, and social responsibility. It will allow you to develop practical, design and presentation skills and to experience citizenship, personal care and social responsibility.

Fine Art Specialism

In Fine Art we explore a range of mediums and processes, these include drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, digital work. Students will start by developing their skills in a range of mediums including pencil, pen, felt-tip, colouring pencil, oil pastels, charcoal, paint, printmaking, photography, photoshop, illustrator, and 3D materials. Students will then have a chance to specialise in an area they feel most confident producing a range of final pieces for their projects.

Students will undertake one coursework project worth 60% of the final mark and one Externally Set Exam Project worth 40% of the final mark. Each project is open ended and requires a creative approach; the current project is Portraits. You need to be able to develop your own ideas and be able to creatively and imaginatively come up with ways to explore your topic. Independence is key as is good time management. You will often be expected to work at lunch or afterschool to complete work and develop your project.

You must be willing to consider new ways of working and thinking outside of the box to create work that is personal and inventive. But above all you must have a passion for the subject.

Assessment

There are 4 Assessment objects which you will have to meet to be successful

- **A01 – Critical Understanding** – This Assessment Objective is primarily concerned with the development of the project, the links and understanding you show about artists and designers and your own work.
- **A02 – Creative Making** – This Assessment Objective is about exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
- **A03 – Reflective Recording** – This Assessment Objective focuses on the drawing, painting, sculpture etc., and the quality of it as your work progresses, as well as your ability to annotate your work effectively.
- **A04 – Personal Presentation** – This Assessment Objective is about you creating a personal and meaningful final piece, the quality of it and the connections you have made with other artists.

Meeting the assessment objectives will be a continual process beginning from day 1 of the course. It is key to remember that every piece of classwork and homework goes to helping develop your portfolio which is graded in the final assessment in Y11. Assessment objectives are all interlinked and as work progresses, they are achieved collectively.

The **Final grade** in Art is made up of two marks:

- 60% from the coursework grade. This is work completed from September in Year 10 to Christmas in year 11. It is a major body of work encompassing many pieces of work.
- 40% comes from the exam. The exam is run slightly differently to most subjects. Students are given an exam paper in January and are given a range of starting points. They then have a set amount of time to prepare

developmental and experimental work; this is referred to as the "prep period" and lasts several weeks. During this period the teacher helps and guides the students allowing them to develop a final piece idea. At the end of the prep period a 10-hour exam is sat over 2 days in which students complete a final piece in exam conditions without assistance.

Syllabus details may be found at www.eduqas.co.uk

Computer Science

Subject Leader Computer Science: Mr Goff

Exam Board: AQA

Syllabus Name: Computer Science (9-1) - 8521

The qualification will build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established through the Computer Science elements of the Key Stage 3 program of study. The content has been designed not only to allow for a solid basis of understanding but to engage learners and get them thinking about real world application.

Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification must encourage students to:

- build on their knowledge, understanding and skills established through the computer science elements of the programme of study for computing at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- enable students to progress into further learning and/or employment
- understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation
- analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs
- think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- understand the components that make up digital systems, and how they communicate with one another and with other systems
- understand the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society
- apply maths skills relevant to computer science.

Paper 1: Computational thinking and programming skills

What's assessed?

Computational thinking, code tracing, problem-solving, programming concepts including the design of effective algorithms and the designing, writing, testing and refining of code.

This paper covers the fundamentals of algorithms and programming.

This component is an externally assessed written examination representing 50% of the total marks.

The examination lasts 2 hours.

Paper 2: Computing concepts

Paper 2 assesses a variety of theoretical units.

This paper covers the fundamentals of data representation, computer systems, the fundamentals of networks, cyber security, relational databases and SQL, as well as the ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology on wider society.

This component is an externally assessed written examination representing 50% of the total marks.

The examination lasts 1 hour 45 mins.

Practical Programming

Students will be required to undertake programming tasks during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language, at OPGS we are currently using Python. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular paper 1.

Possible Enrichment Activities

Cyber Discovery, Codewars, iDEA, Bebras Challenge, Bafta Young Game Designer, Raspberry pi club, Lego Mindstorms robotics, 'KODU' from Microsoft Research and codeacademy.org.

Website: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/computer-science/gcse/computer-science-8525/specification>

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

Subject Leader Design and Technology: Mr S. Peacock
Exam Board AQA
Design and Technology 8552

The course consists of two units; Unit 1 is a 2-hour written exam on 'Knowledge and Understanding' of Design and Technology and Unit 2 is a design portfolio and practical make activity. The Non-Exam Assessment (coursework) is completed in Year 11.

Unit 1	Unit 2
Knowledge and Understanding. Examination 50% of overall mark	Creative Design and Make. Non-Exam Assessment 50% of overall mark
A 2 hour exam which tests the student's knowledge on Core technical principles, Specialist technical principles and Designing and making principles.	Substantial design and make task. Students will produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence.

Throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 you will have been involved in a few different projects based on the fundamental skills used in D & T; drawing, sketching, CAD, researching, producing reports, investigating ideas, and designing and making products in a variety of materials. If you enjoyed the challenges this presented, and received good project marks and monitoring grades, then you should consider D & T as a GCSE option.

Designing and Making:

The Design and Technology GCSE will require you to produce a portfolio of work based around one of the exam boards set briefs. The briefs are not released by the exam board until June in Year 10. You will have to analyse the task, carry out a range of primary research, design, develop and plan the manufacture of the product you wish to make. This will be completed mainly on computers, and you will learn how to use '3D Solidworks', a 3D modelling software, so good ICT skills will benefit you. You will also be taught how to use other graphics software such as 'Techsoft 2D Design' and 'Adobe Photoshop'.

You will also need to manufacture a working prototype of the product you design and develop. This will allow you to get creative in the workshops and learn about a range of machinery and materials.

Examination:

'Knowledge and Understanding' is a 2-hour exam in the summer of Year 11, in which you will be tested on what you know about materials, tools and equipment, industrial and commercial processes, analysing and designing products, and the use of computers in designing and making. There is also a section which includes questions on sustainability, renewable energy and minimising waste – all very topical issues. The exam also contains Maths and calculation questions – working out volumes and areas, reading data and calculating costs for manufacture. You will have regular theory lessons to cover the exam content.

Should you study this subject?

Design and Technology is a big coursework-based subject and you will be expected to work hard and meet the strict deadlines during design and manufacture. The changes to exam specification means that you will now only have 35 hours to complete the design and make activity in Year 11 only.

You will be expected to work independently at home and attend workshop sessions after school.

You should enjoy designing, being creative and working with the machines and materials in the workshop. It will also help you if you are artistic and have good drawing skills as well as strong ICT knowledge.

This specification has strong links with Maths and Science.

This subject is important if you are thinking about pursuing a career in any field of design or engineering. This includes engineering, product design, architecture or any of the construction trades.

Contact: speacock@opgs.org

AQA GCSE Design and Technology web link:
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology/gcse/design-and-technology-8552>

DRAMA

Subject Leader Drama: Ms R Buckley **Exam Board: Pearson/Edexcel**

Drama is a very popular and oversubscribed subject. Students choosing this option would usually already be involved with the extra-curricular programme at school and/or external theatre schools/clubs.

Students are expected to dedicate themselves to the course, the course demands and the expectations of the Drama Department. The required commitment and rehearsal time supports the academic and performance-based expectations of the GCSE. There are trips to see Live Theatre as part of the study programme as detailed below.

The subject hones interpersonal skills, communications skills, emotional quotient, evaluative and analytical skills. This is not just aimed at actors, but also technical theatre designers and develops a whole host of transferable skills for the world of work. Study at GCSE can lead to the previously highly successful EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) and A level Theatre Studies.

Component 1: Devising

NEA

40% of the qualification – 60 marks

Content overview

- Create and develop a devised piece from a stimulus
- Performance of this devised piece or design realisation for this performance.
- Analyse and evaluate the devising process and performance
- Performer or designer routes available.

Assessment overview

- There are two parts to the assessment:
1) a portfolio covering the creating and developing process and analysis and evaluation of this process (45 marks)

2) a devised performance/design realisation (15 marks)

Component 2: Performance from Text

NEA

20% of the qualification – 48 marks

Students should also be fully aware that textual analysis and written assessments form up to 60% of the GCSE qualification. Drama is not an easy option. It takes time, dedication, commitment and resilience to be successful.

Content overview

- Students will either perform in and/or design for two key extracts from a performance text.
- Performer or designer routes available.

Assessment overview

- Externally assessed by visiting examiner.
- Performance/design realisation covering both key extracts is worth 48 marks.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

40% of the qualification – 60 marks

Content overview

- Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text
- Live theatre evaluation

Assessment overview

Section A: Bringing Texts to Life

- 45 marks
- This section consists of one question broken into six parts (short and extended responses) based on one extract from the chosen performance text.
- Performance texts are not allowed in the examination as the extracts will be provided.

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation

- 15 marks
- This section consists of two questions requiring students to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen.
- Students are allowed to bring in theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

It is important to note that students will be expected to visit the theatre (usually in London) at least three times during the two years at an approximate cost of £35.00 per trip.

Contact: rbuckley@opgs.org

Examination board:

Pearson/Edexcel

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/drama-2016.html>

Economics

Head of Department: Mr Turley

Exam Board: OCR

Why Economics?

We live in uncertain times and students will soon find themselves entering an adult life not equipped with the correct tools. Students with a firm understanding of basic economics are likely to be highly employable in a wide range of professional roles. Many of our students want to pursue a career in finance.

Economics is about people and their economic choices and decisions. This course will give students a great set of tools that they can use to make informed decisions. It will encourage students to take notice of world and their surroundings.

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Economics equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how consumers, producers and governments interact in markets nationally and internationally. It provides a solid introduction to this subject and an excellent step for an A-Level Economics.

The GCSE is made up of two units and these units are externally assessed:

Component 1:

Students are introduced to fundamental economic terms and concepts and apply them to explain how markets work in contemporary and historical economic contexts. They study the roles of the main

economic agents, how they interact, and the importance of financial markets.

There are two topics:

Introduction to economics

The role of markets and money

Written assessment

80 marks

90 minutes

50% of the GCSE

Introduction to the Economics

Component 2:

Students develop their understanding of how governments aim to achieve economic objectives and the effects of economic policies on markets, as well as the importance and impact of international trade.

There are two topics:

Economic objectives and the role of government

International trade and the global economy

Written assessment

80 marks

90 minutes

50% of the GCSE

National and International Economics

In both components students are encouraged to evaluate the moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise from economic activity. Both components include synoptic assessment.

ENGLISH

Subject Leader English: Mr S Taylor-Richardson
English Language AQA 8700
English Literature AQA 8702

The English course, which is compulsory at Key Stage 4, provides **two separate GCSE qualifications** from an integrated programme of study.

All students are entered for both subjects at the **Higher Tier**. The course develops:

- Detailed knowledge and understanding of fiction including Shakespeare, (Romeo and Juliet), a selection of poetry, a play (An Inspector Calls) and a novel (A Christmas Carol) as well as a range of non-fiction texts. We think you will find the texts and subjects for study interesting and the class activities thought-provoking and helpful.
- Language skills, which involve analysis, argument, persuasion, imagination, explanation and exploration in speech and in writing.

Both **skills** and **knowledge** are assessed through **terminal examinations**:

- **English Language:** 2 examination papers (100%)
Paper 1- Explorations in creative writing and reading (50%)
Paper 2- Writers' viewpoints and perspectives (50%)
Non examination Spoken Language (an assessment aimed to allow students to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills)
- **English Literature:** 2 examination papers (100%)
Paper 1- Shakespeare and 19th Century Fiction (40%)
Paper 2- Modern texts and poetry (60%)
- **Spoken Language** (Non exam assessment)

The aim of the assessment is to allow students to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills by:

- giving a presentation in a formal context
- responding appropriately to questions and to feedback, asking questions themselves to elicit clarification
- using spoken Standard English.

The English GCSE is an interesting, engaging and exciting course, giving opportunities to study a wide variety of texts as well as developing your own skills in creative writing.

High order skills and excellent results in English at KS4 are crucial, whatever your chosen path after GCSE; the skills you acquire on these courses are life skills.

The analytical skills and special interests that we hope you develop also provide you with an excellent foundation for A levels and Higher Education. In particular, good results provide access to one or more of the rigorous, motivating and prestigious A level subjects we offer in English as well as in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Nevertheless, wherever your specialist areas and strengths lie, you will need to be a good communicator.

We believe that you will enjoy the course and with a positive, mature attitude to your learning and a good work ethic, you can succeed at the highest level.

Please follow the links below for an overview of the courses, at a glance.

English Language:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

English Literature:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>

Contacts:

Mr S Taylor-Richardson (Subject Leader for English) STaylor-Richardson@opgs.org

Ms C Davies (KS4 Lead for English)
cdavies@opgs.org

FRENCH

Subject Leader: Ms P Roux
Examination Board: Edexcel

In year 9 students have the opportunity to start the themes assessed by the exam board. At the end of the year 9, they have a clear idea of the topics for GCSE and how they will be assessed at the end of year 11. In year 10 and 11 they will be getting a deeper understanding of the six themes covered by the specification. The six themes are:

- *Context 1: My personal world:*
- *Context 2: Lifestyle and well-being:*
- *Context 3: My neighbourhood:*
- *Context 4: Media and technology:*
- *Context 5: Studying and my future:*
- *Context 6: Travel and tourism:*

Structure of the assessment

Paper 1: Speaking

- Oral exam
- 25% of GCSE

Students are assessed on their ability to speak using clear and comprehensible language for a range of audiences and purposes, in different contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs and interests.

There are three consecutive tasks:

- Task 1: Read aloud a short text and undertake a short, unprepared interaction relating to the text.
- Task 2: Role play: undertake a transactional role play.
- Task 3: Picture task with conversation. Then a short unprepared conversation developed from the same thematic context.

Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes plus 15 minutes' preparation time.

Higher tier: 10-12 minutes plus 15 minutes' preparation time.

Paper 2: Listening and Understanding

- Written exam
- 25% of GCSE

Students are assessed on their understanding of standard spoken French by one or more speakers, across a range of formal and informal contexts, and in familiar and unfamiliar settings.

-Section A: Listening. Students respond to multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions are set in English and students produce all responses in English.

-Section B: Dictation

Foundation tier: 45 minutes, including 5 minutes' reading time.

Higher tier: 60 minutes, including 5 minutes' reading time.

Paper 3: Reading

- Written exam
- 25% of GCSE

Foundation tier: 45 minutes.
Higher tier: 60 minutes.

Students are assessed on their understanding of written French across a range of formal and informal contexts, and in familiar and unfamiliar settings.

-Section A: Reading and Understanding. Students respond to multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions based on these texts. All questions are set in English and students produce all responses in English.

-Section B: Translation into English.

Paper 4: Writing

- Written exam
- 25% of GCSE

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in French for different purposes and audiences. Students are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in French. The instructions to students are in English.

Foundation Tier

- Question 1: picture-based task
- Question 2: one of two open-response questions, set in formal context
- Question 3: one of two open-response questions, set in informal context
- Question 4: translation into French

Higher Tier

- Question 1: one of two open-response

questions, set in informal context

- Question 2: one of two open-response questions, set in formal context
- Question 3: translation into French

Foundation tier: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes.

Contact proux@opgs.org

It is essential for students to discuss their GCSE language choice with their teacher.

GEOGRAPHY

Subject Leader Geography: Mr J Baird

Exam Board: Edexcel A, Syllabus Code: Geography 1GAO

Why choose GCSE Geography?

The course will enable you to gain an understanding of global and modern geographical issues. It will help you to develop analytical and interpretation skills that can be used in further education and your career. Geography is well known as a subject that links to all other subjects in the curriculum so a GCSE in Geography is a stepping stone to a whole range of opportunities. The skills you develop can lead to a wide range of careers in areas such as engineering, environmental management, ICT, journalism, media, marketing, accountancy and business management.

Is Geography the right subject for you?

Ask yourself what you enjoy about the study of Geography. Do you want to:

- Learn more and understand about the rapidly changing world that you live in?
- Learn through investigation and doing as well as listening and reading?
- Develop transferable skills that will help you in other areas e.g. research and IT?
- Undertake individual investigations on contemporary topics?

What will you learn?

The world is always changing. Geography gives you the chance to learn about these changes. Through the GCSE Geography syllabus, you will develop a 'sense of place' by looking at the world around you on a local, regional and global scale. You will examine a range of natural and man-made environments and learn about some of the processes which affected their development. You will also look at the ways in which people interact with their environment and the opportunities and challenges an environment can present, thereby gaining a deeper insight into the different communities and cultures that exist around the world.

There are 3 components which will be studied over the three years and will stretch and challenge your thinking.

Component 1: The Physical Environment

Students will cover issues such as:

- The physical geography of the UK

- A study of both coastal and river landscapes and processes, as well as management against coastal erosion and river flooding
- Weather hazards, e.g. tropical cyclones and drought
- Causes and consequences of climate change
- Characteristics of global ecosystems, such as tropical rainforests, and their management

Component 2: The Human Environment

Students will cover issues such as:

- A study of a UK city (Birmingham) and a city in a developing/emerging country (Sao Paulo) to look at its characteristics and how its changed over time
- Causes and consequences of migration
- How the problems of urban areas, such as over-crowding, can be solved
- The reasons why we live in an unequal world
- The management of natural resources, such as energy and water

Component 3: Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK challenges

Students will cover issues such as:

- The pressure on growing populations on the UK's ecosystems
- The costs and benefits of developing brownfield and greenfield sites
- River management in the UK
- Impacts and response to climate change on the UK
- Questions relating to their fieldwork experience

How will you be assessed?

All students will sit the following three exam papers:

- Paper 1 – 1 hour 30 minutes – 37.5% of total qualification – Students answer questions on Component 1: The Physical Environment
- Paper 2 – 1 hour 30 minutes – 37.5% of the total qualification – Students answer

questions on Component 2: The Human Environment

- Paper 3 – 1 hour and 30 minutes – 25% of total qualification – Students answer

questions on Component 3: Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK challenges

HISTORY

Subject Leader History: Miss A Aldous Syllabus: Edexcel History Specification

Why choose GCSE History?

Our course has been designed to develop your understanding of Britain, Europe and the Modern World. It is very popular with students who engage well with all the complexities, controversies and drama that a study of the past offers. In our lessons, alongside quality classroom resources, we also use film, posters, artwork, speeches, letters, artefacts and many other media to help understanding of the topics. Aside from the sheer enjoyment of learning these fascinating human stories, History GCSE also significantly increases your transferable skills including those of analysis, effective research and debating in sophisticated ways both in writing and in person. These skills can link to a wide range of future careers including, but not limited to, law, finance and banking, journalism, the Civil Service, politics, publishing and many more.

A key part of History GCSE is the ability to become expert on specific time periods and an additional way we do this is through Enrichment opportunities. These include an immersive Blitz experience day where the History Department takes you back in time to wartime London, to support your Historic Environment Study. We hope to nurture an interest that will last a lifetime.

Summary of Edexcel History GCSE at OPGS:

Unit 1: Thematic study and historic environment

*Written examination: 1 hour and 20 minutes
30% of the qualification*

Warfare and British society, c1250–present (thematic study)
and London and the Second World War, 1939–45 (historic environment)

Unit 2: Period study and British depth study

*Written examination: 1 hour and 50 minutes
40% of the qualification*

Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91 (period study)
and Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88. (British depth study)

Unit: Modern depth study

*Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes
30% of the qualification*

Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39.

In **Year 10** students will focus on the British depth study: **Early Elizabethan England**. This includes the situation when Elizabeth became Queen and her rule – how did she maintain the image of the 'Virgin Queen'? Why did grammar schools develop? Plus, religious change and the international response including the Spanish Armada. It can also offer a bridge to future A-Level study, should students wish to continue with History in the future – most of these qualifications now have a Medieval or Early Modern British History module and we are conscious to set students up successfully for future study.

Also in Year 10, for the **Weimar and Nazi Germany** topic students evaluate how Germany recovered from the First World War, how the Nazi dictatorship was established and why this brought Europe to another destructive war. How did Germany deal with defeat and a punishing treaty? Why did their inter-war leader win the Nobel Prize? How did the Nazis develop a popular programme and create a dictatorship? Again, a mixture of clips, film extracts, debates and primary sources: posters, police reports, letters and more, will help students develop their sources skills.

In **Year 11**, students study their **Superpower relations and Cold War, 1941–91** period study. This provides continuity and stretch and challenge by building on Year 8 topics of the World Wars: looking at a range of events from the post-war conferences, Hungarian Uprising, Cuban Missile Crisis, and the collapse of the USSR. Students will have a strong understanding of international developments which have shaped our world today. Students will explore how close the world came to nuclear war, why the arms race developed, how the Berlin

Wall was constructed and how it fell decades later.

Students also study in Year 11 **Warfare and British Society, including London and the Second World War**. This topic will be taught using clips, maps and worksheet materials and students should find tracking one topic through this long time period very rewarding. We will be studying the nature and experience of warfare across this period, including the development of weapons technologies, strategies and the impacts on communities. From Norman archers to the Battle of Agincourt, from the Civil War battle at Naseby to the aerial raids of London during the Second World War, giving students great insight into the development of warfare over time.

Assessment to support learning:

For all four units a range of assessment will be used, from GCSE-style questions to frequent shorter recall quizzes. We also use Educake to support recall and revision, which is very popular with students, as is GCSE Pod with its short clips and quick questions. Revision is structured, spaced and supported with revision folders provided and Revision Guides available. Our Sixth Form Prefects offer supportive academic mentoring before exams.

Contact: aaldous@opgs.org

MATHEMATICS

Subject Leader Mathematics Mr J. Rhys

KS4 Mathematics Coordinator Mr P. O'Neill

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel GCSE 9-1 (1MA1) Higher Tier

Mathematics is a compulsory subject at KS4 and students will be following the programme of study for Edexcel Higher GCSE Maths 9-1. All students will follow the same course and take the Higher-Level exam. The grades available range from 4 to 9.

What will I study?

PEARSON EDEXCEL GCSE 9-1 (1MA1) HIGHER TIER

Assessment objectives

AO1: Use and apply standard techniques
AO2: Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically
AO3: Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts

Content

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

In Years 10 (and 11) all students will be taught Maths at the same time and students will be set in groups based on exam and assessment results throughout Year 9. As in Year 9, there will be opportunities for students to move sets during Year 10 depending on performance in the subject.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE is assessed by three 1.5-hour examination papers with all three papers

assessing the full range of the syllabus at the end of the course. The first paper does not allow the use of a calculator, whilst the other 2 papers do.

All students will be entered for their exams in the May/June of Year 11.

The top two sets in Maths will also follow an additional higher Maths qualification in order to stretch the most able and better prepare the students for A – Level Maths. Set 1 will study the OCR Free Standing Mathematics Qualification in Additional Mathematics. Set 2 will study the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics.

Contact: jrhys@opgs.org
poneil@opgs.org

Useful web site addresses

www.drfrost.org

www.corbettmaths.com

www.mathsgenie.co.uk

www.physicsandmathstutor.com

www.mathsgenie.co.uk/gcse

www.1stclassmaths.com

www.mmerevise.co.uk

www.examsolutions.net

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/free-standing-maths-qualification-fsmq-additional-mathematics-6993/> (for FSMQ Additional Mathematics)

[AQA | Mathematics | AQA Certificate | Level 2 Further Mathematics](#)

MEDIA STUDIES

Acting Subject Leader Media Studies: Mr Taylor-Richardson Exam Board: Eduqas (WJEC) C680QS

What does the course involve?

This is a two-year course in which you will study key media concepts of genre, narrative, representation and audience through a range of different texts such as TV crime dramas, film posters and adverts. You will be assessed on your ability to analyse a range of media texts using media language, considering the audience and media industries. You will also plan ideas for creating your own media products which will be assessed as coursework, in which you create the film marketing for a brief set by the exam board each year.

Course content includes:

- GCSE students will be required to study the marketing and promotion for the Bond film franchise. You will not watch any scenes from the films themselves in order to make a bigger distinction between Media Studies and Film Studies.
- There is a historical dimension to film study, with students studying set media products such as a Quality Street ad from the 1950s or The Man with the Golden Gun poster from 1960s.
- 'Non-examination assessment' worth 30% of the overall course grade in which students can produce print-based marketing material for a new film, in line with a specified brief, set each year by the exam board.
- Students will need to learn case studies set by the exam board from the following media forms: newspapers considering the

representation of events such as coverage of Covid and Partygate in the British press; advertising considering the representation of gender; magazines considering the representation of ethnicities; radio and video games considering the industry context and audience response.

- Students will also need to learn more in-depth case studies from television crime drama and music videos, taking into account 2 contemporary artists and one from the 1980s. Students will also need to analyse the online, social and participatory media to see how star personas are manufactured in the music industry.

Is the course for me?

You must already be good at and enjoy English to be successful at this subject. It involves similar skills of analysis and interpretation, writing well structured, detailed essay responses to questions and being creative enough to develop your own narratives and ideas. You will need to apply a wide range of subject-specific terminology and theory in relation to the case studies you learn. Therefore, the ability to be organised by keeping detailed notes, to work at a consistently high standard and to be able to meet deadlines is also essential because this course has a non-examination component.

For more information see Mr Taylor-Richardson

Contact: STaylor-Richardson@opgs.org

MUSIC

Director of Music: Mrs E Judges

Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas GCSE Music - C660QS

The WJEC Eduqas GCSE in Music offers a broad and coherent course of study which encourages learners to:

- engage actively in the process of music study
- develop performing skills individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control of the resources used
- develop composing skills to organise musical ideas and make use of appropriate resources
- recognise links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising and how this informs the development of music
- broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians
- develop awareness of a variety of instruments, styles and approaches to performing and composing
- develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music
- recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop some awareness of musical chronology
- develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds
- reflect upon and evaluate their own and others' music
- engage with and appreciate the diverse heritage of music to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.

COMPONENT 1: PERFORMING

Total duration of performances: 4-6 minutes

Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification

A **minimum of two** pieces, **one** of which must be an **ensemble** performance of **at least one minute** duration. The other piece(s) may be **either solo and/or**

ensemble. **One** of the pieces performed must link to an area of study of the learner's choice.

COMPONENT 2: COMPOSING

Total duration of compositions: 3-6 minutes

Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification

Two compositions, **one** of which must be in response to a **brief set by WJEC**. Learners will choose one brief from a choice of four, each one linked to a different area of study. The briefs will be released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. The **second** composition is a free composition for which learners set their **own brief**.

COMPONENT 3: APPRAISING

Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes (approximately)
40% of qualification

This component is assessed via a listening examination.

Eight questions in total, **two** on each of the four areas of Study.

Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices

Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble

Area of study 3: Film Music

Area of study 4: Popular Music

Two of the eight questions are based on extracts set by WJEC.

Expectations:

- Approximately grade 2 or above performance standard at the start of Year 10 (to be at least grade 3/4 standard by Year 11). Ungraded candidates are at the discretion of the teacher.
- All candidates should maintain regular instrumental/vocal tuition
- All GCSE candidates are expected to take part in the musical life of the

school, including extra-curricular music clubs.

As music is a performing art, you should be prepared to be involved in practical music making and you need to be broadminded in your approach. The commitment involved in this course goes well beyond the scheduled class lessons. The first year of the course

will build on knowledge gained in Key Stage 3 and include elements of the syllabus to form an effective start to the course.

Contact: ejudges@opgs.org

Website:
https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/music-gcse/#tab_keydocuments

PSYCHOLOGY

Subject Leader Psychology: Mr P Sheehan Exam Board: AQA

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour, a multifaceted discipline covering human development, social behaviour, and cognitive processes. Psychology looks to explain why people (and animals) behave the way they do and questions if nature or nurture are our biggest influence.

Within Psychology we cover fascinating, ground-breaking and (often) notorious studies. These include Phillip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison experiment into conformity and the impact of expectation on our behaviour. We also question the extent to which fundamentally good people can do terrible things, when we evaluate Milgram's infamous study into obedience. In addition; students are introduced to the scientific method underpinning psychological research.

Within GCSE Students explore this in the context of a wide range of theories and studies from different eras and approaches in Psychology. One of the best things about Psychology is that it will be a completely new subject for you, in every lesson you will be introduced to fascinating theories, incredible minds, and an opportunity to reflect on your own experiences.

The course will be assessed through two written examinations at the end of Year 11.

The course content includes:

- An understanding of biological concepts in Psychology, including neuroscience and genetics as contributors to behaviour
- An understanding of thought, information and mental processing as contributors to behaviour
- An understanding of the social area of Psychology, the impact of social and

environmental factors on behaviour and the influence of groups

- An understanding of how individuals change throughout their lives, with a particular focus on childhood and how both nature and nurture can affect individuals.

The programme of study for the GCSE includes the following:

- Memory – how memories can be stored, retrieved, forgotten or even changed!
- Perception – why do we see illusions, and how do we make sense of the visual information we receive?
- Development – how babies develop their ability to understand the world around them, and how we develop the ability to learn
- Social Influence – why do we obey and conform to others' ideas, even if we don't agree?
- Language, thought and communication – what does your body language say about you? How does language influence the way we think?
- The brain and neuropsychology – How does the brain work and how does the structure of the brain affect behaviour?
- Psychological Problems – How can we explain and treat mental health issues such as depression and addiction?

Students will also gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of how psychological concepts can be studied, and what the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods are. Be prepared to carry out some exciting practical investigations of your own!

Contact Mr Sheehan: psheehan@opgs.org

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Director of Sport: Mr R Raye

Exam Board: AQA www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/physical-education

What will I learn?

GCSE specifications in Physical Education should equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness and well-being. This will require them to:

- 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 well-being
- understand key socio-cultural influences which can affect people's involvement in physical activity and sport

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE course is assessed over two units.

Unit 1: - The Theory of Physical Education - 60% of the Final Mark

Two externally marked Written Examination Papers.

Paper 1 (1 hour 15 minutes, 78 marks- 30% of GCSE):

- Applied Anatomy and Physiology – Musculo-Skeletal System/Cardio-Respiratory System, long term and short term effects of exercise and anaerobic/aerobic exercise

- Movement analysis – Lever systems, Planes and Axes of movement
- Physical Training – Health and Fitness, Components of Fitness, Testing, Training Principles, Training methods, Training sessions, Injuries
- Use of Data – Data Collection, Presentation of Data, Analysis and Evaluation of Data

Paper 2 (1 hour 15 minutes, 78 marks- 30% of GCSE):

- Sports Psychology- Classification of Skills, Goal Setting & SMART Targets, Basic Information Processing, Guidance and Feedback on Performance, Mental Preparation for Performance.
- Socio-Cultural Influences – Social Groups, Commercialisation, Ethical Issues
- Health, Fitness and Well-Being – Why we do exercise, Sedentary Lifestyles, Energy, Diet

Unit 2: - Performance in Physical Education – 40% of the Final Mark

Assessed in:

Practical Sports Performance (30% of GCSE)

- 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).
- Part 1- 5 core skills assessed in conditioned practices
- Part 2- Application of these skills to a fully competitive performance.

Analysis of Performance (10% GCSE)

- Students will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

PRE-COURSE INFORMATION:

Following confirmation of your son's place on the GCSE Physical Education course you will receive information/payment letters regarding GCSE PE Practical Sports

(Rock Climbing & Table Tennis), Learning Resources & Coursewear. This will enable your son to be fully prepared for starting the GCSE PE course in September 2026.

Contact: rroye@opgs.org

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Subject Leader RS: Miss L Trumper

Syllabus Name: Edexcel Religious Studies B

Course content: All students will study a full course GCSE in Religious Studies.

Syllabus Content:

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 - Religion and Ethics (1B)

Students must study all four content sections based upon the religion of **Christianity**.

- Christian Beliefs
- Marriage and the Family
- Living the Christian Life
- Matters of Life and Death

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 - Religion, Peace and Conflict (2C)

Students must study all four content sections based upon the religion of **Islam**.

- Muslim Beliefs
- Crime and Punishment
- Living the Muslim Life
- Peace and Conflict

The school is required legally to provide R.S throughout the school and so consequently it is better to pursue a full GCSE which is more

beneficial to the students than following a course with no accreditation.

All eight units of the two examination papers will be covered in years 10 and 11.

Assessment:

- There is **no** controlled assessment for RS. Two examinations are taken for this GCSE.
- Each unit/exam is worth 50 per cent of the total GCSE marks.
- Each unit/exam is assessed through a 1 hour 45-minute examination, divided into four sections.
- Each question is divided into four parts with each part increasing in difficulty.
- The total number of raw marks for each paper is 102.

Contact: LTrumper@opgs.org

Edexcel website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-b-2016.html>

SCIENCE

Subject Leader of Science: Miss R. Limer

Subject Leader Biology: Miss M. Knight

Subject Leader Chemistry: Mrs S. Love

Subject Leader Physics: Mr T. Hoskins

Examination Board: AQA

Students can opt to take Triple Science, worth three GCSEs or Trilogy (Double) Science worth 2 GCSEs. Trilogy students will have 9 lessons per fortnight, split between Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Triple candidates will have 14 lessons per fortnight, split between Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Each Science discipline is taught by a specialist teacher.

The aims of the courses are to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of chemistry, physics and biology;
- develop understanding of the nature and methods of the scientific process;
- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments;
- develop the ability to evaluate claims through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The specifications allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the content, including in associated mathematical and practical skills. There is overlap between the Triple and Trilogy courses, both courses following the same outline, although the content for Trilogy is much reduced.

Assessment

A range of question types will be used, including multiple choice, short answer and those that require extended responses. Extended response questions will allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. Extended responses may be in written English, extended calculations, or a combination of both, as appropriate to the question.

Assessment takes place at the end of the course and provides options to suit our learners, including multiple choice and written questions, as well as a practical assessment. This broadens opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning. Learners will sit 2 exam papers for each science.

	Topic Title
GCSE Biology	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cell biology2. Organisation3. Infection and response4. Bioenergetics5. Homeostasis and response6. Inheritance, variation and evolution7. Ecology
GCSE Chemistry	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Atomic structure and the periodic table2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter3. Quantitative chemistry4. Chemical changes5. Energy changes6. The rate and extent of chemical change7. Organic chemistry8. Chemical analysis9. Chemistry of the atmosphere10. Using resources
GCSE Physics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Forces2. Energy3. Waves4. Electricity5. Magnetism and electromagnetism6. Particle model of matter7. Atomic structure8. Space physics

Contacts:

rlimer@opgs.org (Subject Leader for Science)

mknight@opgs.org (Subject Leader for Biology)

slove@opgs.org (Subject Leader for Chemistry)

thoskins@opgs.org (Subject Leader for Physics)

SPANISH

Subject Leader: Mrs Moreira

Examination Board: Edexcel

Overview

In year 9 students have the opportunity to start the 3 themes assessed by the exam board. Students have been learning the skills needed for the exams in year 11 as well as studying the higher content of the specification. Students are asked to produce extended written and spoken language pieces as well as understanding long reading and listening passages based on the basic language introduced for each topic. At the same time, they have to translate long simple texts into French and English. At the end of the year, they have a clear idea of the topics for GCSE and how they will be assessed at the end of year 11. In year 10 and 11 they will be getting a deeper understanding of the three themes covered by the specification. The three themes are:

It is essential for students to discuss their GCSE language choice with their teacher.

The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Spanish allows students to develop their ability to communicate in Spanish in both speech and writing. They will study language within a variety of thematic contexts relevant to their age and interests and will develop a greater awareness of the culture of Spanish-speaking communities and countries.

Subject aims

The aims of this qualification are to:

- provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study.
- develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, Spanish and to recognise the importance of languages.
- provide a strong linguistic and cultural foundation for students who go on to study languages at a higher level post-16.
- develop students' ability and ambition to communicate independently in speech and writing with speakers of the language for authentic purposes.
- develop students' ability to communicate independently about subjects that are meaningful and interesting to them
- build students' confidence and broaden their horizons, enabling them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries, develop new ways of seeing the world, and better understand relationships between the foreign language and the English language.
- enable students to become familiar with aspects of the contexts and cultures of the countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Thematic contexts

The vocabulary in this qualification enables students to communicate across a range of engaging and relatable thematic contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs.

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

- Travel and tourism

Paper 1: Speaking in Spanish (*Paper code: 1SP1/1F and 1H)

Internally conducted and externally assessed:

Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes plus 15 minutes' preparation time; 50 marks

Higher tier: 10-12 minutes plus 15 minutes' preparation time; 50 marks

25% of the qualification

Students are assessed on their ability to speak using clear and comprehensible language for a range of audiences and purposes, in different contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs and interests. There are three consecutive tasks:

Task 1: Read aloud (12 marks)

Task 2: Role play (10 marks)

Task 3: Picture task (12 marks) with conversation (16 marks)

Paper 2: Listening and understanding in Spanish (*Paper code: 1SP1/2F and 2H)

Written examination:

Foundation tier: 45 minutes, including 5 minutes' reading time, 50 marks

Higher tier: 60 minutes, including 5 minutes' reading time, 50 marks

25% of the qualification

Students are assessed on their understanding of standard spoken Spanish by one or more speakers, across a range of formal and informal contexts, and in familiar and unfamiliar settings.

Section A: Listening (40 marks)

Section B: Dictation (10 marks)

Paper 3: Reading and understanding in Spanish (*Paper code: 1SP1/3F and 3H)

Written examination:

Foundation tier: 45 minutes, 50 marks

Higher tier: 60 minutes, 50 marks

25% of the qualification

Students are assessed on their understanding of written Spanish across a range of formal and informal contexts, and in familiar and unfamiliar settings

Section A: Reading and Understanding (40 marks)

Section B: Translation into English (10 marks)

Paper 4: Writing in Spanish (*Paper code: 1SP1/4F and 4H)

Written examination:

Foundation tier: 1 hour 15 minutes; 50 marks.

Higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes; 50 marks.

25% of the qualification

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Spanish for different purposes and audiences. Students are required to produce responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Spanish. The instructions to students are in English.

Foundation Tier

- Question 1: picture-based task (8 marks)
- Question 2: one of two open-response questions, set in formal context (14 marks)
- Question 3: one of two open-response questions, set in informal context (18 marks)
- Question 4: translation into Spanish (10 marks)

Higher Tier

- Question 1: one of two open-response questions, set in informal context (18 marks)
- Question 2: one of two open-response questions, set in formal context (22 marks)
- Question 3: translation into Spanish (10 marks)

Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

Component	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	Total for all Assessment Objectives
1: Speaking	15%	2%	8%	25%
2: Listening and understanding	20%	0%	5%	25%
3: Reading and understanding	0%	25%	0%	25%
4: Writing	0%	18%	7%	25%
Total for GCSE	35%	45%	20%	100%