



Talbot Heath
Independent School for Girls aged 2-18



GCSE OPTIONS 2025-26



Choosing your GCSE options is an exciting and important step in your journey at Talbot Heath. The subjects you select now will help shape your learning experience over the next few years and can influence your future pathways, both in school and beyond. We encourage you to take the time to explore each subject carefully, considering your interests, strengths, and aspirations as you make your decisions.

This booklet is designed to provide you with all the information you need to make informed choices. Please read each section thoroughly, discuss your options with your teachers and family, and don't hesitate to ask questions if you need further guidance.

Remember, this is your opportunity to take ownership of your education - choose wisely and confidently!

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COMMON GCSE OPTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do I have to choose?

There simply isn't enough time to study every subject you're currently taking to the level needed for exams at age 16 and beyond. By choosing, you can focus on doing your very best in the subjects that matter most to you. Remember, it is about quality, not quantity!

2. Why can making choices feel difficult?

- You might have to stop studying a subject you really enjoy.
- Some of the options available might not appeal to you.
- If you're unsure about your future career, it can be hard to know which subjects are best for you.

3. Why is this choice so important?

Once you start your courses, you'll be studying them in depth for two years, and it is not easy to change later on.

Dropping certain subjects now could mean closing the door on some jobs or careers in the future.

4. How should I decide what to choose?

- Think about which subjects you enjoy and why.
- Consider how your choices might affect your future plans-read the Careers Information section for ideas.
- Look ahead to see how your choices could influence your A Level options.
- Talk things through with people who can help: your parents, your Form Teacher, Subject Teachers, the Head of Careers, older students, and anyone working in a career you find interesting.

5. Are there any restrictions?

There are no restricted combinations but we recommend you consider a balance of subjects - avoid taking too many subjects with large coursework requirements.

Your tutors will look through your provisional choices to give you advice and guidance before finalising your option form.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About the GCSE Examinations

All the courses you will study in Years 10 and 11 lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). This is a nationally recognised qualification, and every subject follows strict guidelines called "national criteria" to make sure the exams and grading are fair and consistent for everyone.

For most subjects, your final grade will be based mainly on your performance in the exams at the end of the course, although a few subjects may still include some practical work or non examined assessment (coursework). The exam papers are designed to give every student the chance to show what they know and can do, no matter how others perform. Grades are awarded on a scale from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest). For reference, a grade 4 is similar to the old grade C, a grade 7 is like the old grade A, and a grade 9 is reserved for truly exceptional achievement.

Your GCSEs and Future Careers

It is important to choose a balanced mix of subjects, as dropping a subject now could limit your future career options. If you have a particular career in mind, make sure you find out which qualifications you'll need, so you can continue with the right subjects at GCSE. Remember, doing well at GCSE is essential for moving on to A Level courses, so it makes sense to pick subjects you enjoy and do well in.

During Year 9, every student has a one-to-one interview to talk about their career interests and subject choices, as well as taking part in careers activities in class. This support continues all the way through to Sixth Form, with careers advice available in Years 10 and 11, especially when it comes to making choices after GCSEs. In Sixth Form, you'll also get guidance about university options and future plans, so you'll always have help as you make these important decisions.

CORE P.E.

A wider range of activities is included in the PE programme for the Lower and Upper 5 students. Both year groups follow a balanced curriculum which includes individual sports and team games. This may include some sports they have not participated in as much such as basketball, yoga/pilates, table tennis, handball, ultimate frisbee, fitness, wellbeing walks and aerobics.



P.S.R.E.

All students in Lower 5 and Upper 5 are required to follow this P.S.R.E. (Personal, Social and Religious Education) Personal Development course.

Sessions take place fortnightly during a designated PSRE lesson and also during assembly time. The course covers a range of contemporary moral and social issues. Specialists are regularly invited into school to deliver presentations on topics such as sex and contraception, drug and substance misuse, the role of magistrates, and strategies for managing stress.





GCSE

CORE SUBJECTS

There are 5 core subject GCSEs:

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Combined Science (2 GCSEs)



GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OCR J351

Learners will develop the skills to read fluently and write effectively by engaging with a wide variety of high-quality texts both literary and non-fiction. They will be required to challenge their critical thinking skills and develop their ability to synthesise information and evaluate ideas. Learners will be given the exciting opportunity to experiment in their own writing across a range of contexts and styles. Their own writing will be informed by the deep understanding of the language gained through studying a range of text types. They will be empowered for life with the practical ability to write with grammatical accuracy, with accurate spelling and punctuation and employing a sophisticated range of structural devices. Learners will also develop a confident control of spoken English.

- Students must respond to 19th, 20th and 21st century texts.
- Students must compare at least two unseen texts.
- Spoken language will be assessed but will not count towards exam results.
- 20% assessment weighting will be for spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and grammar.

IGCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Pearson Edexcel 4ET1

The Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Literature specification inspires, motivates and challenges pupils through a wide range of texts, drawn from a range of different cultures. It will open new literary worlds for pupils, taking them on a journey through a diverse range of substantial literature. Pupils will study whole texts in a range of genres, stimulating their curiosity and igniting a life-long passion for literature. The course includes: a Shakespeare play; an anthology of poems from a range of cultures; a modern prose text; and a modern drama text. The course develops knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Pupils will develop their ability in reading literature critically while making connections across their reading. They will grow as articulate, informed, and insightful readers, developing skills that will empower them for life. Students must study a 19th century novel, an entire Shakespeare play and a selection of poetry, including representative Romantic poetry.

- One 2 hour examination on Poetry and Modern Literature
- Two coursework pieces: one on J.B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' and one on Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'.

MATHEMATICS

This GCSE course in Mathematics encourages students to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards Mathematics and to recognise the importance of Mathematics in their own lives and to society. It requires candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in the four main area of study:

Course Content:

Edexcel IMA1

- *Number and algebra, which involves calculations, solving numerical problems, equations, formulae and identities, sequences, functions and graphs.*
- *Shape, space and measures, which involves geometrical reasoning, transformations and coordinates, measures and constructions.*
- *Handling data, which involves planning and collecting data, processing and representing data, interpreting and discussing results.*
- *Using and applying mathematics, including functional skills, which requires problem solving, communicating and making reasoned arguments, to describe connections between mathematical concepts, in everyday real-life situations.*

This is a linear course with three examinations taken.

Each examination contains a mixture of questions from all of the above assessment objectives.

Currently, students in sets 1 to 3 are entered at the higher tier, with students in set 4 being entered at the foundation tier:

- *Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper: 1 hour 30 minutes - 33.3 % of the final mark*
- *Papers 2 and 3 are calculator papers*: 1 hours 30 minutes - 33.3 % of the final mark*

(*calculators must have trigonometric functions, but must not be programmable).

There is no coursework or controlled assessment element in GCSE Mathematics. GCSE Mathematics forms a good basis for the AS and A level Mathematics courses and is an invaluable tool for all other subject areas.





COMBINED SCIENCE

Equivalent to two GCSE grades

Tier Options: Combined Science can be examined at Foundation or Higher Tier.

Course Structure: Students taking Combined Science will complete six units from each science discipline, totalling 18 units.

Course Content:

OCR J250

BIOLOGY

J250/01 or 07: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- B1 Cell level systems
- B2 Scaling up
- B3 Organism level systems

J250/02 or 08: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- B4 Community level systems
- B5 Genes, inheritance and selection
- B6 Global challenges
(with assumed knowledge of B1-3)

CHEMISTRY

J250/03 or 09: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- C1 Particles
- C2 Elements, compounds and mixtures
- C3 Chemical reactions

J250/04 or 10: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- C4 Predicting and identifying reactions and products
- C5 Monitoring and controlling reactions
- C6 Global challenges
(with assumed knowledge of C1-3)

PHYSICS

J250/05 or 11: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- P1 Matter
- P2 Forces
- P3 Electricity

J250/06 or 10: 1 hour 10 minutes - 16.7% of total GCSE

- P4 Magnetism and magnetic fields
- P5 Waves in matter
- P6 Radioactive decay – waves and particles
(with assumed knowledge of P1-3)



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GCSE OPTION SUBJECTS

You may choose 4 GCSE's:

- Art (Fine Art, Textiles, Photography)
- Business
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science
(Chemistry, Physics and Biology)*

*Triple Science counts as one option choice.

ART: FINE ART, TEXTILES, PHOTOGRAPHY

Why choose Art, Textiles or Photo?

If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, Fine Art, Photography or Textiles is a great choice. The skills you gain make it a great complement to other subjects.

Art and design is a way of seeing things and making sense of the world around you. It can help you with further study and prepare you for the world of work. Students are encouraged to develop their own style and independence throughout the course whilst having one to one support.



Students will be able to select from the following for their GCSE:

Fine Art: (AQA 8202) Drawing, painting, sculpture, lens-/light-based media, photography and the moving image, printmaking, textiles, mixed media and land art..

Textiles (AQA 8204): Art textiles, constructed textiles, surface pattern, stitched and/or embellished textiles, soft furnishings, textiles for interiors.

Photography (AQA 8206): Portraiture, location photography, studio photography, experimental imagery, installation, documentary photography, photojournalism, moving image.

Course Content

The course consists of two main units:

Component 1 - A sustained Portfolio (60%)

Students complete a skills unit in which they develop their understanding of the expectations and materials required to complete their chosen course followed by a personal project, as a response to a theme. Evidencing a journey from initial engagement with an idea to realising intentions. Throughout this, students will enhance their skills depending on their chosen area of study. All work is individual, student led and fully supported by staff enabling students to select themes for which they have a genuine interest and thrive whilst developing their own unique and informed approach to Art.



Component 2 - Externally Set Assignment (40%)

Externally Set Assignment. A second project completed in a shorter time frame which is developed on a chosen theme from the examination paper; culminating in a timed 10 hour examination to complete the project.

Component 1 and 2 are marked using the same assessment objectives, all areas are evenly weighted at 25%. Component 1 = 60% and Component 2 = 40%

- **AO1:** Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
- **AO2:** Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
- **AO3:** Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
- **AO4:** Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to their chosen title through integrated practical, critical and theoretical study that encourages direct engagement with original works and practice. They will also take part in extra-curricular opportunities specifically aimed at extending their learning.

The department is open two evenings a week and often at lunch to ensure your child has the best support possible to thrive.

The course is designed so that it is a strong foundation for further progression to Art and Design related courses such as A level Art and Design and enhanced vocational and career pathways. The creative industries are an area which is ever growing and developing in a world that is inherently becoming more visual.

Transferrable Skills

A GCSE in Art, Photography or Textiles gives you a wide range of valuable, transferable skills that are highly regarded by employers and universities in many different fields, not just the creative industries. These skills are essential for both academic success and professional life. Key transferable skills developed through a GCSE in Art include: problem solving, creative thinking and innovation, critical and contextual thinking, independence and time management, adaptability and resilience, communication and presentation skills.



BIOLOGY

The units which make up the Separate Science GCSE in Biology and the Biology units that contribute to the Combined Science GCSE qualification are the same; except that in each unit there is a greater breadth and depth of topics covered. Separate sciences are recommended for students considering studying science beyond GCSE.

Course Content:

OCR J247

J247/03: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- B1 Cell level systems
- B2 Scaling up
- B3 Organism level systems

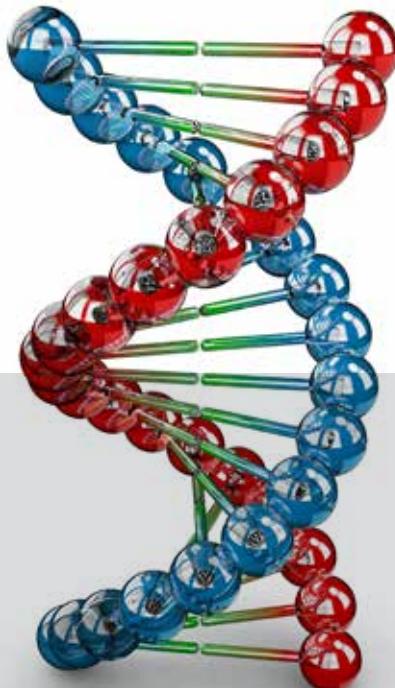
(Units B1 and B2 will have been completed by the end of Upper 4)

J247/04: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- B4 Community level systems
- B5 Genes, inheritance and selection
- B6 Global challenges

Practical skills (B7) are assessed within both of the written papers

Triple Science (biology, chemistry and physics) will count as one GCSE



BUSINESS

Why Choose Business?

The School offers business at GCSE to all students from year 10 upwards. Lessons aim to be student centred with an emphasis on active learning and participation by students during lessons. Topical and current business and economics information and media based resources are used in lessons to bring extra relevance to the theory which is learned in the context of real world situations.

The subject covers a wide range of business topics including how businesses are set up and run, how businesses grow, marketing, basic accounts and finance, people in business, production, technology and the business environment.



Course Content

OCR J204

The assessment consists of two components:

Business Paper 1: Business Activity, Marketing and People (Year 10) 90 minutes - 50% of the final mark

During year 10, students learn about marketing and enterprise, the marketing mix and market research. They study the reasons for marketing and market research; the product decisions businesses make; promotion strategies, pricing strategies and the channels of distribution available; primary and secondary methods of market research. Students also learn about setting up a business and features of enterprise; the sectors of the economy and chain of production; the resources and outputs of business; the objectives and growth of business; stakeholders of business and potential conflicts; the legal structure of businesses; business organisation and communication; employment and retention of staff; leadership and motivation; training and appraisal; employment protection and legislation.

Business Paper 2: Operations, Finance and Influences on Business (Year 11) - 90 minutes - 50% of the final mark

In year 11 students learn about methods of production, how technology affects production, lean production techniques and the importance of ensuring quality products for customers. They learn about finance, including how to raise finance for a business, cash flow forecasting, revenue, costs and break even and the importance of profit to a successful business. Students examine the external influences a business needs to deal with such as economic, environmental and ethical issues.

Both question papers have a section with multiple choice questions.

There is no longer any controlled assessment or pre-release stimulus material. There is explicit application and assessment of quantitative skills (minimum of 10% of overall marks) at the level of Key Stage 3 Maths.



CHEMISTRY

The units which make up the Separate Science GCSE in Chemistry and the Chemistry units that contribute to the Combined Science GCSE qualification are the same; except that in each unit there is a greater breadth and depth of topics covered.

Separate sciences are recommended for students considering studying science beyond GCSE.

Course Content:

OCR J248

J248/03: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- C1 Particles
- C2 Elements, compounds and mixtures
- C3 Chemical reactions

J248/04: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- C4 Predicting and identifying reactions and products
- C5 Monitoring and controlling reactions
- C6 Global challenges
- C7 Practical skills*

**Practical skills (C7) are assessed within both of the written papers*

Triple Science (biology, chemistry and physics) will count as one GCSE

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Why choose Classical Civilisation?

This fascinating course aims to provide students with an understanding of various aspects of the classical world, both Greek and Roman, such as literature, art, archaeology and history, and to develop students' critical responses to what they read. All material is read in English, and no knowledge of ancient languages is required.

Course Content

OCR J199

Students study two components:

Component 1: Greek and Roman mythology and religion - 50% of the final GCSE marks

This component focuses on comparing ancient Greece and Rome through both literary and visual/material sources. Students will study myths about the gods, heroes, and city foundations of Athens and Rome, as well as the shared importance of Hercules. Themes such as myth as a symbol of power and myths about the underworld will be explored. The course also examines religion in daily life covering temples, sacrifices, festivals, death, and beliefs in the afterlife. Students will develop the ability to compare Greek and Roman ideas, societies, and cultural influences on these themes.

Careers

Classical Civilisation is particularly useful for those interested in English Literature, Journalism, History, Law or Archaeology.



Component 2: The Homeric world - 50% of the GCSE final marks

This component explores the origins of Greek literature and civilisation through Homer's poems and the Mycenaean Age. We examine Mycenaean life, including archaeological sites, art, jewellery, and tombs, as well as the everyday experiences of ordinary people. Homer's *Odyssey* will form the literature half of this component. The course offers students a rich understanding of both ancient Greek history and epic literature.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Why choose Computer Science?

Computer Science is an exciting subject and can provide students with huge opportunities across lots of industries; this list shows some of the jobs it can lead to:

The GCSE in Computer Science is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It encourages students to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in Computer Science. Students also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs. The course is a combination of theory topics and practical programming.



Course Content

OCR J277

Students are assessed through two exam papers, both 1 hour 30 minutes:

Component 01: Computer systems - 50% of the total GCSE

Introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with Computer Science.

Practical programming

Students are given the opportunity to undertake programming tasks during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using the Python programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular component 02 (section B).

Component 02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming - 50% of the total GCSE

Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 01. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.

Careers in Computing

- Computer programmer
- Clothes designer
- CAD designer
- Games developer
- Software developer
- Software architect
- Geographical information systems officer
- Technical author
- Music data analyst
- MI5 MI6 and GCHQ

DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES

Why Choose Drama?

The course is exciting, challenging and rewarding. It encourages students to explore and actively engage in a wide range of creative and intellectual tasks in order to develop as effective, independent learners and as critical, reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.

GCSE Drama also enables students to work imaginatively and creatively in collaborative contexts, generating, developing and communicating ideas.



Working as part of a team is something that draws students to this subject. It is also a skill that attracts prospective employers and GCSE Drama and Theatre Studies provides a strong foundation for those wishing to take A level Theatre Studies/English in the Sixth Form; it also combines well with many other subjects to provide a broad and balanced choice of A level options.

If you have a love of drama and an interest in theatre; studying a subject which you enjoy will ensure future success. As an actor, director or designer, build your confidence and discover your potential through an exciting range of productions, visits to the theatre and the detailed study of texts.

Course Content

AQA 8261

The GCSE course is divided up into three components: two practical performances and one written exam paper.

Component 1: Written Exam Paper - 40% of the total GCSE. 1 hour and 45 minutes.

The written paper is comprised of three compulsory questions:

- Section A: four multiple choice questions on role and terminology
- Section B: four questions on a given extract from a set play
- Section C: one two part question (from a choice of questions) on a live production seen

Component 2: Devising Drama (Performance) - 40% of the total GCSE

- Performance of a devised piece of drama. Students may contribute as performers or designers.
- Completion of a devising log.

Component 3: Texts in practice (Performance) - 20% of the total GCSE

- Performance of two extracts from one scripted play. Students may select monologues, duologues or group scenes as part of their performances.
- Free choice of text.
- Students may work as performers or designers.

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

Why Choose Food Preparation and Nutrition?

This course will appeal to students who would like to develop a wide range of food preparation skills and gain a clear understanding of the role of nutrition and diet in health, as well as the principles of food hygiene and safety. Students are most likely to enjoy the course if they want to learn how to cook and present a wide variety of quality dishes and develop their understanding of the scientific principles behind food preparation and nutrition.



Course Content

Eduqas WJEC

1. Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of the total GCSE total qualification

2. The Food Investigation Assessment: 8 hours- 15% of total qualification.

A scientific food investigation which will assess the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food.

3. The Food Preparation Assessment: 12 hours (including a 3 hour practical session) - 35% of total qualification.

Prepare, cook and present a menu which assesses the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food.

Each assessment will be based on a choice of two tasks released by WJEC annually



How is the course assessed?

Non examination assessment: internally assessed and externally moderated

FRENCH (MFL)

Why Choose French?

Choosing French at GCSE opens diverse opportunities. It enhances communication skills, broadens cultural horizons and boosts employability. Widely spoken, French is valuable for travel and business, and it can lead to further studies and diverse careers.

France, like Germany, is one of the UK's closest trading partners, making French-speaking employees highly sought after and well paid in the business world.



Course Content

Edexcel IFR1

The GCSE French course starts in Upper 4. The papers have a two-tier structure, either Foundation or Higher.

The thematic contexts of this course are:

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

How is it assessed?

The course is assessed with final examinations in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in the summer of Year 11. There is no coursework.

Paper 1: Speaking - 25% of the total GCSE

The speaking examination includes a “read aloud” task, roleplay, a picture description and follow-on conversation

Paper 2: Listening and understanding - 25% of the total GCSE

A variety of questions set in English (multiple-choice, multiple-response short-answer open response) and a dictation.

Paper 3: Reading and understanding - 25% of the total GCSE

A variety of questions set in English (multiple-choice, multiple-response and short answer open response questions) and a translation into English.

Paper 4: Writing - 25% of the total GCSE

You are required to complete structured and open response writing tasks and translation into French

There will be weekly sessions with a native French Language Assistant to boost confidence and fluency in speaking.

Careers

Examples of jobs where French is useful include business development executive, translator/interpreter, teacher, travel and tourism, customer service representative, journalist, and even roles in finance, healthcare, and law enforcement.

Methods of study

Pupils will have extensive practice of the skills required for the examination. The students have access to a wide range of resources: including online resources such as the very popular Languagenut and Sentencebuilders platforms.

Lower 5 and Upper 5 benefit from an additional lesson in a small group with the language assistant, to practise for the speaking GCSE exam and to boost their confidence.

GEOGRAPHY

Why Choose Geography?

Geography helps you think independently and creatively, enabling you to make decisions.

Statistics show that compared to other subjects, Geography graduates are amongst the most employable due to the subject combining elements of Science and Arts.

If you enjoy Geography, carry on studying it! You are more likely to gain a good result in a subject you enjoy. The world in which we live is likely to change more in the next 50 years than it has ever done before. Geography explains why and helps to prepare you for those changes.

The AQA GCSE specification is both engaging and relevant to today's Geographers. The course enables students to explore the world, the issues it is facing and their own place within it. Students will gain far more than just geographical knowledge. They will gain confidence in geographical skills and undertake assessments that build on their KS3 knowledge, thus helping them to succeed in their chosen career path.



Course Content

AQA 8035

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment:

- Challenge of natural hazards (including earthquakes, volcanoes, weather hazards and climate change)
- The living world (ecosystems, tropical rainforests & hot deserts)
- Physical landscapes in the UK (including coastal & river landscapes)

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment

- Urban issues & challenges (Lagos, Nigeria, including squatter settlements and Bristol City, UK including the post-industrial economy)
- Changing economic world (development issues and solutions, Nigeria and economic futures of the UK)
- Resource management & food management (security, insecurity and sustainability)

Paper 3: Geographical applications

- Issue evaluation: pre-release resource booklet (12 weeks before the exams)
- Fieldwork: 2 geographical enquiries (one physical & one human)

Fieldwork

Students are required to attend two compulsory fieldwork days in contrasting local environments (river fieldwork in Dorset on the River Piddle and a study of urban regeneration at Ocean Village, Southampton). The skills and knowledge they acquire will be assessed within the exam papers. Students do not complete a piece of coursework.

HISTORY

Why Choose History?

If you want to know why the world is like it is, it's the subject for you! Of course, all the skills you acquire will stand you in good stead for a huge range of careers. History is regarded as a very academic qualification. If you like to think, discuss and argue, and want to know more about our world, then it is likely that you will enjoy History at GCSE.

History is the study of how we got to where we are today. It explains why people behaved in certain ways and, thus, how current events have been influenced by the past.

We study it in the hope that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and develop our critical thinking skills.

Course Content

Edexcel 1H10

This is a varied course which includes some of the most interesting and important aspects of medieval, early modern and modern history. It also has the bonus of links with other subjects such as Science and RS. The course is comprised of the following elements:

Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment

- Medicine in Britain, c1250-present
- The British sector of the Western Front, 1914-18: injuries, treatments and the trenches



Paper 2: Period study and British depth study

- Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1588
- Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-91

Paper 3: Modern depth study

- Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39



Careers

History is suitable for a full range of careers as it is highly regarded as an academic subject, it is particularly desirable for students interested in law, politics, international relations and has transferable skills for a range of wider career options.

LATIN

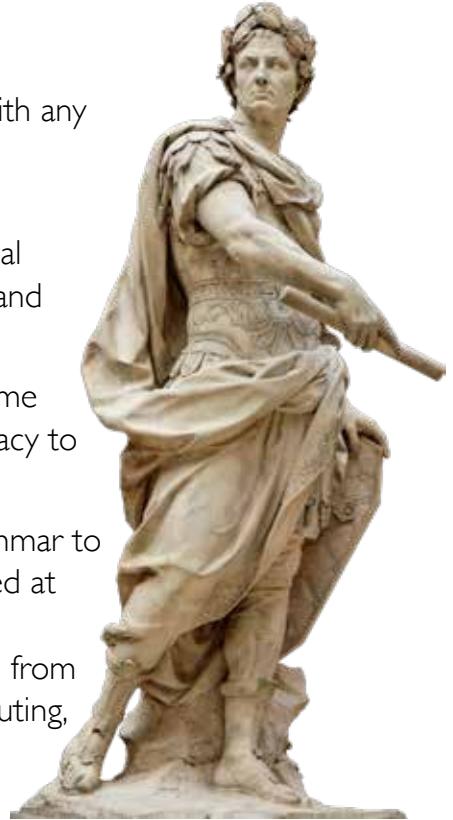
Why Choose Latin?

A GCSE in Latin is highly regarded by universities and works very well with any combination of academic subjects, as the skills and knowledge gained are transferable.

Latin not only provides a linguistic challenge, but develops critical, analytical and problem-solving skills. It also helps strengthen students' literacy skills and facilitates learning another language.

Students are given an authentic insight into the Classical world and become aware of the literature, poetry and prose that have shaped Western literacy to the present day.

This course aims to develop students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to be able to read, understand and interpret Latin texts. Latin can be studied at A level and at university and is particularly useful for those interested in English Literature, History, Law or Archaeology. The logical training gained from learning a classical language is also valuable for those interested in Computing, Mathematics or Accountancy.



Course Content

OCR J282

Students study Latin language and Latin prose and verse literature. The examination consists of three papers:

Component 1: Latin language - 50% of the total GCSE

Knowledge and understanding of Latin language are tested through translation, comprehension and grammar questions.

Component 2: Latin prose literature - 25% of the total GCSE

Knowledge and understanding of the prose set texts are tested mainly through comprehension questions, with some translation and an extended response question.

Component 3: Latin verse literature - 25% of the total GCSE

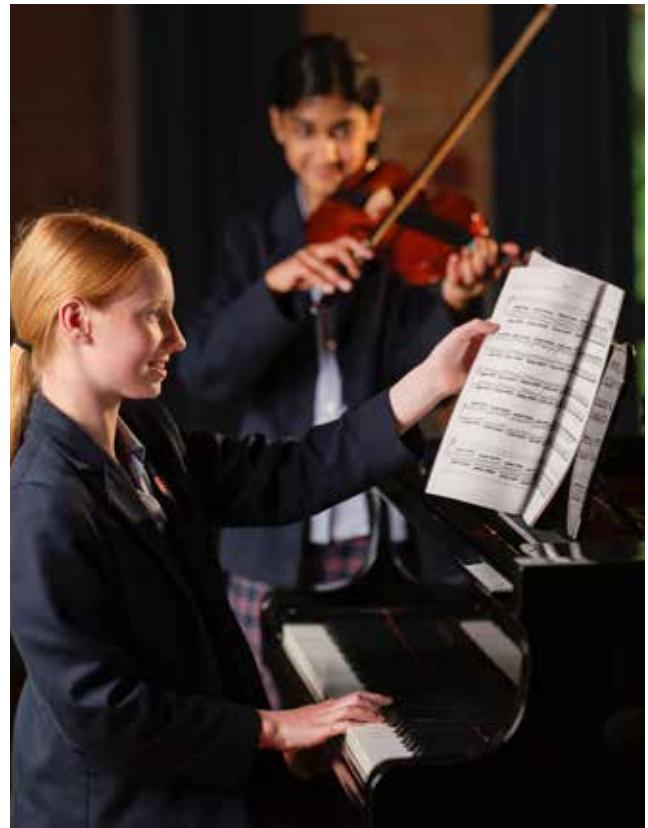
Knowledge and understanding of the verse set texts are tested mainly through comprehension questions, with some translation and an extended response question.

MUSIC

Why choose GCSE music?

Music is an academic subject in its own right, but it actually benefits other subjects too. A recent study in the UK found that playing a musical instrument appears to enhance general performance in other subjects at GCSE. Music develops imagination, resourcefulness, resilience, problem solving, team working, performance and presentation skills, listening skills, self-esteem, creativity, self-expression and confidence.

Both employers and universities see creative subjects as an asset. Increasingly, employers and universities are looking for young people who have skills that can be learned through music: creative thinking, resilience, emotional intelligence, adaptability, communication and tenacity to name just a few.



Course Content

OCR J536

There is only one exam for GCSE music – the remaining assessment is course work. This takes the pressure off revision during those critical weeks when pupils have many other exams.

There are three strands to GCSE music:

1. Performance (30%)

Students are required to produce two performances on any chosen instrument and/or voice with choices as follows - a solo either unaccompanied or with a live or pre-recorded accompaniment

- Performing an individual part within a live ensemble.
- A multi-tracked recording and/or performance in which the learner performs and records at least one part.
- A sequenced recording and/or performance where the learner programs all parts (into Logic Pro X)

2. Composition (30%)

Students create two compositions. One piece is a free choice composition and the second piece is composed in response to one of several briefs provided by the exam board which relate to the Areas of Study..

3. Listening and appraising exam: 1hr 30 minutes - (40%)

Students will listen to short extracts of music and answer a range of closed and open style questions. The extracts of music will be unfamiliar but are derived from the four different Areas of Study.

Four main Areas of Study will be explored in lessons to develop a detailed knowledge of a range of Musical styles:

- Film and Video Game Music
- Rhythms of The World
- The Popular Song
- The Concerto Through Time

Students are prepared for this exam by learning how composers and artists use instrumental resources and the elements of music to compose and perform music. Each area of study is explored in a practical manner, through listening, performing and creating music to enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of each style.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Why Choose P.E.?

Students will develop an understanding of the importance of participating in physical activity, and the long-term health benefits of a sustained active lifestyle, including key influences that impact on people's involvement in physical activity. Students will learn about the anatomy and physiology of the human body and fitness and body systems, and the demands placed upon the body during performance. They will learn about the psychology involved in sport and how sport has developed, including looking at how sports technology is developing.

The course encourages creativity and decision-making skills to enable students to plan effectively for sporting performances, and to respond to changing situations. This course is suitable for students who show a keen aptitude and standard in at least three sporting areas and who are actively involved in clubs (school or external) outside regular P.E. lessons. Students who take this course are often County standard in at least one of the three sports.



Course Content:

Pearson Edexcel IPE0

The course is assessed in four components:

Component 1: Fitness and Body Systems - written exam: 1 hour and 30 minutes - 36% of the qualification

- Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology
- Topic 2: Movement analysis
- Topic 3: Physical training
- Topic 4: Use of data

Component 2: Health and Performance - written exam: 1 hour and 15 minutes - 24% of the qualification

- Topic 1: Health, fitness and well-being
- Topic 2: Sport psychology
- Topic 3: Socio-cultural influences
- Topic 4: Use of data

Component 3: Practical Performance - 30% of the qualification

- Skills during individual and team activities
- General performance skills

Component 4: Personal Exercise Programme (PEP) - 10% of the qualification

(Non-examined assessment: internally marked and externally moderated:)

- To design a personal exercise programme to improve fitness levels.

Assessment overview

The assessment consists of students completing three physical activities from a set list.

- One must be a team activity.
- One must be an individual activity.
- The final activity can be a free choice.



PHYSICS

The units which make up the Separate Science GCSE in Physics and the Physics units that contribute to the Combined Science GCSE qualification are the same; except that in each unit there is a greater breadth and depth of topics covered. In addition, two further units will be studied for GCSE Physics.

Separate sciences are recommended for students considering studying science beyond GCSE.

Course Content

OCR J249

J249/03: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- P1 Matter
- P2 Forces
- P3 Electricity
- P4 Magnetism and magnetic fields

J249/04: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of total GCSE

- P5 Waves in matter
- P6 Radioactive decay – waves and particles
- P7 Energy
- P8 Global challenges
- P9 Practical skills*

**Practical skills (P9) are assessed within both of the written papers*

Triple Science (biology, chemistry and physics) will count as one GCSE



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Why Choose Religious Studies

We live in a world where the concept of truth is increasingly defined not by an objective standard set by science or society, but by what appeals most to people at any given time. In the era of fake news, political extremes and religious fundamentalism, it is becoming increasingly important for young people to critically assess and evaluate ideas ahead of forming their own conclusions. This is what GCSE RS offers. In the course, students embark on a study of belief and ethics, exploring how religions have developed, and how these have informed society and the way we live. Students will explore issues that are hotly debated in society today, from euthanasia and abortion, to same-sex marriage and the death penalty.

A lively and inquiring mind is needed for RS. It is a subject for those who follow current events and enjoy 'arguing' and exploring how human beings interact with each other. It probes the nature and complexity of the human spirit and is not just what the scriptures say.

Course Content:

AQA A 8062

Students will conduct a close study of two world religions, Buddhism and Christianity, they will explore their origins, key beliefs and practices and their impact on society. This gives the skills of analysis, evaluation and empathy and forms half of the assessed content (one exam paper).

Component 1: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices - 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of the final GCSE grade

Students study the beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions:

- Buddhism
- Christianity

How It is Assessed

- Total: 96 marks, plus 6 marks for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG). Each religion is marked out of 48.

Component 2: Thematic Studies - 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of the final GCSE grade

Students explore four themes from religious, philosophical and ethical studies:

- Theme A: Relationships and families
- Theme B: Religion and life
- Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment
- Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice

How It's Assessed

- Total 96 marks, plus 3 marks for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

SPANISH

Why Choose Spanish

Studying Spanish at GCSE opens doors to new cultures and boosts your confidence in handling new challenges. It is highly valued by employers in fields such as business, law, tourism, education, and international relations, giving you a real advantage in an increasingly global job market.

There are over 460 million native Spanish speakers across more than 20 countries.

By choosing GCSE Spanish, you'll have the opportunity to discover the language and vibrant cultures of Spain and Latin America.

Learning a language will help you sharpen your memory and problem-solving skills. It is both fun and practical. You'll build valuable language skills for travel, study, and future careers.



Course Content

Edexcel ISPI

The GCSE Spanish course starts in Upper 4. The papers have a two-tier structure, either Foundation or Higher.

The thematic contexts of this course are:

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

How is it assessed?

The course is assessed with final examinations in the four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in the summer of Year 11. There is no coursework.

Paper 1: Speaking - 25% of the total GCSE

The speaking examination includes a 'read aloud' task, role play, a picture description and follow-on conversation.

Paper 2: Listening and Understanding - 25% of the total GCSE

A variety of questions set in English (multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions) and a dictation.

There will be weekly sessions with a native Spanish Language Assistant to boost confidence and fluency in speaking.

Paper 3: Reading and Understanding - 25% of the total GCSE

A variety of questions set in English (multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions) and a translation into English.

Paper 4: Writing - 25% of the total GCSE

Completion of a structured and open response writing task and a translation

Methods of study

Pupils will have extensive practice of the skills required for the examination. The students have access to a wide range of resources: including online resources such as the very popular Languagenut and Sentencebuilders platforms.

Lower 5 and Upper 5 benefit from an additional lesson in a small group with the language assistant, to practise for the speaking GCSE exam and to boost their confidence.

Careers

Examples of jobs where Spanish is useful include business development executive, translator/interpreter, teacher, travel and tourism, customer service representative, journalist, and even roles in finance, healthcare, and law enforcement.



GCSE OPTION FORM

Name Tutor Group:

Please select four choices from the list below. Please list in order of preference with (1) being your first preference. While we make every effort to ensure your combination of option subjects we ask you to make a reserve choice in the unlikely event that we cannot facilitate your combination of option subjects. We will contact you if this is the case so that we can discuss this fully with you and your family.

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Reserve choice.....

Subjects		
Art (Fine Art, Textiles, Photography)	Drama and Theatre Studies	Music
Biology	Food Preparation & Nutrition	Physics
Business	French	Physical Education
Chemistry	Geography	Religious Studies
Classical Civilisation	History	Spanish
Computer Science	Latin	Triple Science*

*Triple Science (Chemistry, Physics and Biology) counts as one option choice.

Signed (student) Date

Signed (parent) Date

Please complete and return this form to the Main Office by Friday 23 January 2026 at the latest.





Talbot Heath

Independent School for Girls aged 2-18

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