



GUIDED CHOICES BOOKLET



Information about the Key Stage 4 Curriculum 2026-2029

Name _____

Form _____



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Curriculum Choices at KS4

Dear Student,

Choosing the GCSE courses, you will study for the next three years marks an exciting phase in your life. It is the period when you build on your earlier learning and prepare for adult life, post 16, university, higher education and employment. This is a great opportunity for you to select and design part of your own curriculum through to Year 11 at Dixons City Academy.

You will not have complete freedom to choose all your subjects. English, Maths, Science, Spanish and Religious Education remain compulsory, and you will continue to study PDS and Physical Education. All GCSE / Vocational courses will begin in Year 9 and continue through to the end of Year 11.

We offer a highly personalised approach, where we use Year 8 Cycle 1 assessment data and information about your preferences to advise you on the best route for you that will lead to greatest success.

You will have listened in the assembly and watched the subject video clips that explains the Key Stage 4 curriculum in more detail. You will complete a pre-interview form that tells us more about you as an individual. A member of the senior staff will interview and talk to you about the variety of choices available to you. It is important now that you discuss your subject choices with your parents and teachers in preparation for your interview during term 4.

Your final form will need to be returned to your form tutor (after your interview) on or before Friday 20 March.

Mr. Gadsby
Assistant Principal
(ngadsby@dixonsca.com)



Timeline

During the year students consider careers guidance in PDS lesson with form tutor.

Week beginning - 2 February

Thursday 5 February – Assembly to launch the guided choices process.

Thursday 5 February – Year 8 consultation evening, presentation to parents.

Week beginning - 23 February

In Robust Reading this week students will be shown video clips about the subjects available. Along with the guided choices booklet students can start to explore which subjects they would like to study to GCSE level.

Week beginning- 2 March

Form tutors will support you with completing the form in preparation for your interview. Continue to do your research and read the through the booklet. These are important decisions as these are the subjects you will study for the next 3 years.

Week beginning - 9 / 16 March

Guided choices interview with a senior member of staff to support the decision-making process. Make sure you are prepared and have done your research for this meeting. Take your form with you to this meeting.

Friday 20 March 2026

Final Guided Choices form to be handed in to your form tutor

Term 6

Letter confirming subject choices will be sent home after the cycle 3 assessments. It is important that once the subject choices have been made and discussed that students continue to show excellence and determination in all subjects as the final decision as to what the students will study from year 9 onwards will not be confirmed until July 2026.

Types of qualification



GCSEs

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Geography, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science, Spanish, Computer Science, RE, Design and Technology, Fine Art, Drama and Music.

GCSE qualifications run for the above subjects; the grading scale was introduced in 2017 and uses the numbers 9 – 1 instead of A*-G with 9 being the top grade. Students will get a U where performance is below the minimum required to pass the GCSE. Most GCSE courses are linear, meaning all assessments are at the end of the course.

GCSE Subjects that still include non-examined assessment (NEA) are;
Fine Art, Design Technology, Drama and Music.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
	5 STRONG PASS
	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

Types of qualifications

Vocational Qualifications

Vocational qualifications provide a nationally recognised, work-related focus that help to develop knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to a broad vocational area and encourage independent learning in practical contexts. BTEC Level 2 First Award involves several units, usually 3 and are undertaken throughout the duration of the course. Most of these units will be internally assessed and externally verified. 40% of the qualification will be externally assessed.

The qualification is graded at level 1 and level 2.

- Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* (Grade 4 / 5 and above)
- Level 1 Distinction, Merit, Pass (Grade 3 and below)

The following are the vocational courses available at Dixons City Academy:-

Digital Information Technology

BTEC First Award (Level 1/2)

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-tech-awards/digital-information-technology.html>

Parents' Guide to BTEC qualifications

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/about-us/qualification-brands/btec.html>

Health & Social Care, Sport Studies

Cambridge Nationals (Level 1/2)

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/cambridge-nationals/>



Guided Choices- Subject Combinations

We want students to choose subjects based on what they are good at and what they enjoy but also ensuring a broad range of subjects. Students also need to consider the following, which is why we expect that all students will study Geography or History and most will study a language.

English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The English Baccalaureate is currently the achievement of the following subjects at grade 5 or above:

- English Language or English Literature GCSE
- Maths GCSE
- Science GCSE - Combined or Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- Geography or History GCSE
- Spanish GCSE

This is not a standalone qualification nor is an extra certificate given; it is recognition of achieving a high standard across this range of subjects.

Curriculum Personalisation

It is important that each student reach their potential by the end of Year 11. The curriculum is personalised for each student to enable this. When students have their Guided Choices interviews, this will be discussed. We encourage students to follow a broad and balanced curriculum that will keep doors open for the future, whichever career path they follow.

Foundation Learning Curriculum

The Foundation Learning curriculum is for students who may need a more bespoke curriculum by taking a mixture of GCSE and entry level courses. This ensures achievement in a range of subjects. The programme is reviewed each year so that it is suitable for the needs of the students following it.

Guided Choices- Subject Combinations

This is the point where students now have some choices to make. It is important that they have done their research and thought about what they are good at and what they will enjoy.

Students have three choices to make:

1. Humanities

- All students choose either Geography or History.
- Study carefully the content of each course, as your interest and potential enjoyment in studying these topics for these courses are important part of this decision.

2. Two other option subjects

Students then need to make two further choices from this list.

Computer Science or Digital Information Technology
Drama
Fine Art
Health & Social Care
Music
Design and Technology (DT)
Sports Studies
Triple Science (Recommended students only)
Geography / History *

*Geography / History may be available if students want to study both subjects. This can only run as an option if there are at least 20 students who want to do this.

Based on the student choices these subjects will be put into two blocks. Some subjects will be blocked against each other and if there is a clash where there is only one class for each subject, it will be discussed with the students involved.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum 2026- 2029



The curriculum you will study for the next 3 years will consist of:

Key Stage 4 - Subjects/Courses	Number of lessons per week
English Language and English Literature	4/5
Maths	4/5
Science – Combined Science	5
Spanish	2.5
RE	1.5
Core PE	2
PDS	1
Robust Reading/Study Prep	2.5
Option 1 – History or Geography	2.5
Option 2	2.5
Option 3	2.5

Making Informed Choices



Guided Choices

Start with what you have been recommended to do. You have been recommended those courses based on your potential and your future in mind.

- **Be guided by:**
 - What you are doing well at, look at how you have done in assessments.
 - What you enjoy.
 - What you good at.
 - What you not so good at.
 - The combined workload of the subjects you are wanting to do.
- **Do your research:**
 - What is involved in studying the subject?
 - What are you hoping to study after your GCSEs?
 - How will subject choices affect your post 16 choices?
 - What career paths are you thinking about?
 - Will a subject enhance your career and higher education aspiration?
- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to your teachers.
- Don't pick something just because you think it is going to be less work or easy.
- Don't choose a subject because your friends are choosing it, you may not be in the same class!

Remember...

Try not to narrow down your options too much and keep a range of subjects.

Informed Choices...thinking ahead to university

The following document advises on subject choices if considering the Russell Group of universities.

<https://russellgroup.ac.uk/policy/publications/informed-choices/>

Option Choice- GCSE Fine Art



The GCSE course provides you with a wide range of exciting and creative opportunities to explore your interests in Fine Art. You will have more time to develop ideas and subject knowledge as well as building skills with different materials to produce fantastic outcomes that reflect your thoughts and feelings. The Creative Industries is the second largest contributor to the UK economy and offers a huge range of clear and exciting career paths. Some of our past students have gone on to incredible success in these fields; Computer Graphics, Web and Games Design, Architecture, Graphic Design and Illustration, Make-up Artist and Special Effects, Ceramics and Fashion, + many more!

In Year 9, you will have a chance to work with a range of new materials and processes, working on individual and group projects to increase your skills and confidence. More time to work on Art will help your skills and knowledge progress more quickly.

In Year 10 and 11, you will develop your portfolio (made up from all the work you produce in lessons and for homework) with a range of work using a wide variety of materials including: drawing, photography, painting, ceramics and computer graphics. This will enable you to record your ideas and allow you to show how you see the world around you in a variety of ways.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio: 60% of your mark. Completed by the end of Term 2 in Year 11.

Externally Set Task: 40% of your mark. An extended project, which starts in Term 3 of Year 11, chosen from a range of questions, ending in 10 hours to produce a final outcome under exam conditions. Completed for assessment by the end of term 5 in Year 11.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM Y7/8?

There is more time to develop projects and skills alongside others who have chosen to study Art and opportunities to express your own ideas visually. You will spend time improving and building practical skills and doing lots of drawing and writing about art.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT THE SUBJECT?

Good art skills. A love of drawing. Motivation and commitment. Creativity and imagination! You need to really want to create art and be able to work independently.

THE FUTURE

You will produce a portfolio of work to support progression routes in Art and Design as well as improving your haptic skills and visual acuity. The future workplace requires people who are creative, can work independently and be innovative

For further information visit the following web address:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse>

Further information is also available from Ms Akesson



Option Choice – GCSE Computer Science

In Year 9, you will study Unit 1 Computer Systems and Programming using Python. For unit 1 you will learn about computer hardware and software; how a computer processes and stores data. You will learn about data representation, conversion of binary to denary and vice versa. You will learn about computer networks and the use of computers in the wider world along with how to keep computer systems secure.

In Year 10 and 11, you will study Unit 2 Computational thinking, algorithms and programming. Problem solving skills are particularly important for this unit. For the programming element, you will continue to develop your Python skills and will be presented with problems to solve; analysing, designing, programming, testing and evaluating solutions to problems.

ASSESSMENT

Unit 1 Computer Systems

Examined Unit – 50%, 1-hour 30min written exam paper

Unit 2 Computational thinking, algorithms & programming

Examined Unit – 50%, 1-hour 30min written exam paper

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM Y7/8?

In Y7/8 ICT is about experiencing both IT and computer science. This course will focus specifically on how computers work and computer networks work and programming.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT THE SUBJECT?

You need to be passionate and enthusiastic about computers and how they work.

It may be that you have started to program independently at home. You need to have the ability to break down problems, to solve problems and come up with solutions. You also need to have an interest in the wider uses of technology.

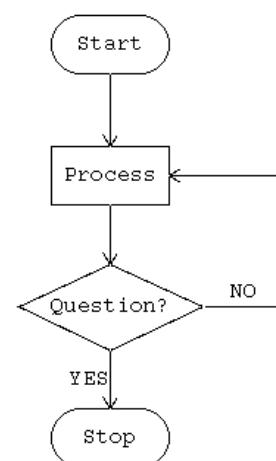
THE FUTURE

This course could lead to a career in Computer Science, programming, cyber security etc. There is currently a shortage in some IT professions such as Cyber Security. It is a course that develops problem solving skills which are useful for any type of career.

For further information, visit the following web address:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/computer-science-j277-from-2020/>

Further information is available from Miss Hussain / Mrs Orton



Option Choice – GCSE Drama



GCSE Drama includes the following:

- Exploration of characters, practitioners and styles through practical work and written theory.
- Rehearsal, performance and evaluation of plays, both scripted and devised.
- Visiting the theatre and studying live productions.
- Research of plays and characters.
- Development of technical / design theatre skills.
- Reading plays and writing essays from the point of view of an actor director and designer.

ASSESSMENT

The controlled assessment is worth 40% of the final grade. This is a devised piece with a written portfolio and an evaluation that is submitted in Year 11; students can work as actors or designers. Students will explore practitioners and different styles in workshop-style lessons before working independently, developing and rehearsing their plays. The stimuli are set by the exam board and students must work in a specific style. The assessment is marked by the teacher and moderated by Eduqas.

The exam is in two parts and is worth 60% of the final grade. The first part is a practical performance exam towards the end of the course where an Eduqas examiner marks a polished scripted performance. Students then have a 90-minute written exam: Section A is questions on a set text studied in class; Section B is a Live Theatre Review where students write about play, we have seen during the course.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

- GCSE Drama students have an interest and passion for live theatre and performing.
- There is much more written work, including essay writing.
- More study of technical theatre / design.
- Smaller groups.
- The standard of performance is much higher, and you will spend significantly longer rehearsing.

THE FUTURE

The GCSE could lead to A level at post-16. It is a useful qualification for any career choice as it shows students are creative, confident, and able to work independently and as part of a team. Many jobs require a 'role' to be played. Specific jobs for Drama students include Actor, Theatre Designer, Director, Theatre Management, Theatre-in-Education, Technician, Drama Therapist, and Drama Teacher.

A link to the specification is found below...

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/hydhvd02/eduqas-gcse-drama-spec-from-2016-e-050126.pdf>

Further information is available from Ms Johnston



Option Choice – GCSE Design and Technology

GCSE Design & Technology involves a broad approach to the designing and making of innovative and new products. There are a wide range of career opportunities to progress to from product design, construction, engineering and architecture to interior and graphic design.

Year 9 & 10

This is an exciting and challenging course that studies the world of Design & Technology. The course is biased towards 3D. Our projects are always changing due to new technologies and new ideas. Throughout the two years you will develop your knowledge and skills using the latest Computer Aided Design software and manufacture using fantastic equipment such as CNC Routers, Lathes and the latest 3D printing technology. You will of course develop your practical skills using more traditional tools and equipment. In addition to practical projects, you will study the theory side of DT. This will include learning about the development of the latest technologies, material technology (including Smart materials), modern manufacturing and study the work of past designers and present and how they have influenced the world around us. The theory will be assessed through an exam at the end of the course, and we will prepare you for this from the start of the course. Much of your knowledge and understanding of the subject will be gained through designing and making a variety of high-quality products. You will have the two years to develop and refine your skills using projects like the coursework project (NEA, Non examined assessment). This will ensure that you are fully ready to start in Year 11.

Year 11

At the beginning of the year, you will start your NEA. This will be a project-based task set by the Exam board, where you will design and make a product, evidencing it within an electronic document.

ASSESSMENT

Coursework: the NEA is worth 50% of the final grade. This will include a design folder (e-portfolio) and a manufactured product which you are fully able to test.

Examination: is worth 50% of the final grade. This consists of one, 2-hour exam paper which covers questions, design work on materials, products, and design and manufacturing.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

The biggest difference between GCSE and KS3 is that it is personalised. You have more freedom and time to design and develop a product within the design brief. Which allows you to develop independence and allow you to undertake bigger projects in more depth.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

To be successful in GCSE Design & Technology you should be:

- Creative,
- Enjoy making & developing things,
- Enthusiastic
- Inquisitive.

GCSE Design & Technology will develop the following skills:

- Problem Solving,
- Independence,
- Time management skills,
- Analytical.

THE FUTURE

At Post 16 you could go on to study A level Product Design specialising in 3D materials and will have the opportunity to work with up-to-date technology, software and equipment. There are many careers related to Design and Technology, agriculture, engineering and construction to healthcare and the food and drink industries.

3D MATERIALS

- Architect
- Civil Engineering
- Mechanical and Electronic Engineering
- Product Designer
- Software Engineering
- Graphic Designer
- Medical engineering

It is an exciting course, and our previous student successes can be seen on the DT corridor. Please come and have a look to see where GCSE Design & Technology can take you on our career line!

For further information about the specification visit the following web address:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology/gcse/design-and-technology-8552/specification>

Further information is available from Mr Fawell and any of the D&T Staff.

CORE SUBJECT – GCSE English Language



English Language GCSE will:

- Encourage students to read a greater range of high-quality challenging literature and non-fiction texts from a range of genres and types.
- Reading and writing will be equally weighted.
- Have a greater focus on making sure that students can write clearly and accurately, in good Standard English. There will be an increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Writing tasks will ask students to be thoughtful and independent writers who can 'design' writing pieces appropriate to a purpose and audience.
- Speaking and Listening will be assessed by teachers through a single presentation. Students will be awarded either a Distinction, Pass or Merit endorsement to sit alongside their English Language qualification. The assessment covers the key skills of:-
 - Presenting
 - Responding to questions and feedback
 - Use of Standard English

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be via two equally weighted examinations of 1 hour 45 minutes each. The overall qualification will be graded 9-1 where 9 is the highest grade and 1 is the lowest.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

The skills you will be using will be the same as KS3. In your cycle assessments you have experienced GCSE style questions. We will be building on these skills and stepping up the level of challenge through the reading material. In your writing, the emphasis is very much on making the right choices for each piece according to the purpose and audience of the text. Your writing needs to be 'crafted' and 'designed' – so you need to be able to make decisions independently about effective vocabulary, sentence constructions and appropriate techniques to engage your reader.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

- To interpret reading materials and select supporting evidence.
- To organise ideas into clear written pieces adapted to purpose and audience.
- Secure technical accuracy in written communication and the ability to use a range of sentence constructions to communicate your ideas.
- To speak and listen effectively, participating in discussions and promoting a personal viewpoint.

THE FUTURE

Most courses or employers will look for at least a 4 / 5 grade equivalent pass or above in English Language. To stay on and study English Language and / or English Literature at Post 16, students will need to achieve at least a 6 grade in English Language. In addition, students would be able to progress to further studies or education in this field.

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

CORE SUBJECT – GCSE English Literature



This course is taught as dual entry with English Language.

For English Literature students will be required to study:

- A 19th Century novel.
- A Shakespeare play.
- A selection of poetry from 1789 (from a set Anthology).
- British fiction/drama from 1914 onwards.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be via two examinations at the end of the course. The first examination will be extract based and focus on the set 19th century novel and Shakespearean text that has been studied. This examination is 1 hour 45 minutes. The second examination is 2 hours and 15 minutes. For this examination, there are 3 sections. The first section will require students to answer on their set text for modern drama / prose. Section B will be a comparison essay on the poetry studied in class in the Anthology. Section C is a comparison between two unseen poems.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

The skills you have been developing at KS3 will be further developed. You will learn more technical terminology to help in your analysis and be expected to write more detailed answers. However, the biggest difference is that you will be studying a selection of texts over a longer period of time and can study them in depth.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

- Secure analytical skills and the ability offer personal interpretations.
- Effective strategies for notetaking and organising ideas so that set texts can be understood deeply in preparation for the examinations.
- Motivation and discipline – set texts will need to be re-read and additional research undertaken to really push for the top marks.
- Good time management skills for the examination – particularly Paper 2.

THE FUTURE

Students taking English Literature may wish to progress to the study of this subject at both Post-16 and University. In addition, the course compliments subjects such as History, where interesting links can be made.

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

Further information is available from Miss Clements

Option Subject – GCSE History



Year 9

World Depth Study: Living Under Nazi Rule, 1933-1945 (Paper 3)

Thematic Study: Migrants to Britain, c.1250-present (Paper 1)

Year 10

British Depth Study: The Elizabethans, 1580-1601 (Paper 1)

History Around Us: Fountains Abbey, 1132-present (Paper 2, includes a field visit to Fountains Abbey)

Year 11

Period Study: The Making of America, 1789-1900 (Paper 3)

ASSESSMENT

- Final written exams, comprising 3 exam papers (100% of the total marks). There is no longer any coursework or controlled assessment.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

At KS3 aspects of the past are studied more in outline, whereas at KS4 aspects of the past are considered in much more depth, whether that be taking a single area, such as Migrants to Britain, and studying that subject over an extended span of time, or by looking at a particular issue in the past and studying that in considerable depth. There is an increased emphasis on learning a large body of knowledge and then making links and connections across time periods.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

History is a 'training of the mind'. It develops skills of analysis and critical thinking. History is a good choice if you enjoy reading and finding information. It involves you using information and sources to argue your case and reach your own judgements. This can involve questioning and challenging views from the past, or weighing up the importance of different reasons.

THE FUTURE

Students choosing to follow a course in History will develop research and presentation skills that are needed in many professions, for example, law or journalism. Many employers value History for the grounding it gives in many key skills such as confident communication and handling evidence. You may also choose to study A level at Post 16. For further information about the current specification visit:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-history-b-schools-history-project-j411-from-2016/>

Further information is available from Mr Ablett



Option Subject- GCSE Geography

Year 9 - Geography in Year 9 starts with Global Geography and our 'shrinking world', and continues with an introduction to development, natural hazards, weather, climate change, resources, urbanisation and ecosystems. We then move on to look at the human and physical geography of the UK, including river systems.

Year 10 - Geography in Year 10 starts with the study of resource management in the UK, urban issues and challenges in Rio, and tropical rainforests; before moving onto economic change in Nigeria, global energy sources, tropical storms, and coastal environments.

We also undertake fieldwork in a human and physical environment which is compulsory for every student studying GCSE geography and is worth 30% of your final GCSE.

Year 11- Geography in Year 11 begins with the study of cold environments, before moving on to urban issues and challenges in London, the changing economy of the UK and finally tectonic hazards. Our studies finish with a Paper 3 issue evaluation.

ASSESSMENT

Three exams are taken at the end of the GCSE course in the summer term of Year 11 and are as follows, but are subject to change:

1. Living with the Physical Environment – 1hr 30 minutes, 35% GCSE
2. Challenges in the Human Environment – 1hr 30 minutes, 35% GCSE
3. Geographical Applications – 1hr 30 minutes, 30% GCSE

Paper 1 will test your knowledge on the physical environment, Paper 2 will test your knowledge on the human environment, and Paper 3 will test your knowledge on your fieldwork undertaken in Year 10 and the issue evaluation released towards the end of Year 11.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

KS4 enables us to go into more depth on a variety of current world issues from climate change to managing resources for the future and really gets students to consider how our actions can change our world for the better. Key themes of sustainability and development link topics together and give a greater understanding about interrelationships between the human and physical environment.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

Geography will suit you if you enjoy learning about our world and keeping up to date with current affairs (watching the news!). It allows you to gain analytical skills and encourages you to consider real solutions for global issues and challenges. You must also be confident with your maths, graph and map skills as these are tested throughout all 3 papers.

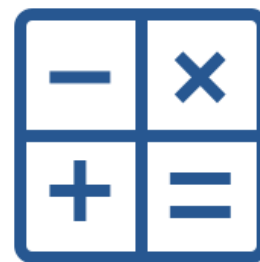
THE FUTURE

Geography GCSE develops a whole range of skills, including numeracy, literacy, teamwork, and analytical skills. GCSE Geography is a stepping stone to a whole range of future opportunities including journalism and media, law, engineering, business management, environmental management including working for the Environment Agency, planning, marketing, recreation and tourism. It can also be taken as a subject at A Level and at university.

For further information about the syllabus visit www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography

Further information is available from Miss Firth

CORE SUBJECT – GCSE Mathematics



All students will take the linear GCSE course which has three examination papers, each contributing 33.3% of the final grade. Students will take the three papers (one without a calculator, two with) at the end of Year 11.

There are two levels of entry: Higher and Foundation. Students will be awarded a Standard from 1 to 9, 9 being the highest grade and 1 being the lowest grade. The Foundation tier is graded from 1 to 5, and the Higher tier from 4 to 9.

Students will be assessed on the following areas of mathematics:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Number | 4. Geometry and Measures |
| 2. Algebra | 5. Probability |
| 3. Ratio, Proportion and Rates of change | 6. Statistics |

The department often organises a series of revision classes, booster sessions or small tutoring sessions in Year 11 leading up to the final examinations, which are run after school.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

Mathematics does not vary significantly from KS3 to 4 and skills practised in KS3 will be required and built upon in KS4.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

The Mathematics GCSE is designed to be demanding and rigorous. To be successful students need to work diligently throughout Years 9-11, revise concepts regularly, complete homework to the best of their ability, persevere and have resilience. A sound grasp of algebra and number is key as these topics account for more than 50% of the assessment.

THE FUTURE

GCSE Mathematics at grade 5 or above is a requirement for the majority of advanced courses at post 16. Students may also wish to study mathematics at Post-16, usually the required grade to do this is a 7 or above.

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/mathematics-2015.html>

Further information is available from Miss Spafford

Option Subject – GCSE Music



The Edexcel GCSE Music specification is based on three musical components: performing, composing and listening to and appraising/evaluating music.

For performance you must be able to produce a recording of a solo piece and an ensemble piece. During the course you are required to write two pieces of composition; one to a brief and one free composition in your own style. You will also become more familiar with the theory of music, how to respond to and evaluate music and how to write extended responses to questions about some of the set works of the areas of study using musical language, which will cover the following: Vocal music, Music for Stage and Screen, Instrumental Music 1700-1820 and Fusions. The set works related to these areas of study are widely varied and range from works by JS Bach and Beethoven through to popular music by Queen and film music from Star Wars.

ASSESSMENT

Composition – the two pieces are worth 30% of the overall mark and the work for these will be split across Year 10 and Year 11 after some skills development and preparation work in Year 9.

Performance assessment – to be completed during Year 11 – 30% of total marks.

Listening and appraising written exam – May / June of Year 11 – 40% of total marks.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

There is an expectation that you learn to play an instrument or sing. Due to the high percentage of composition work and the challenges of the written paper there is an increased emphasis on theory of music and accurately notating music and more extended written work utilising musical language and understanding. To support the development of theory knowledge students, work through the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music Theory books and can take external exams up to Grade 5 level. Students can attend after school theory classes to support them with their theory work.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

As the assessment requires you to be secure across all aspects of music it is advisable that you feel relatively comfortable with performing, composing and listening to / responding to music. It is essential that you either play an instrument or have the enthusiasm and desire to learn as soon as you embark upon the course, as 30% of your overall mark is dependent upon your skills in this area. It is highly recommended that you attend an extracurricular activity to help with preparation and confidence with performing.

THE FUTURE

Students who have studied GCSE Music may progress to study A level Music or BTEC Performing Arts. It would suit employment that involves musical knowledge or interest. It is also useful for any form of employment, as you will develop teamwork, decision-making, creativity, and confidence skills.

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

Further information is available from Mr Hart

CORE SUBJECT – GCSE Religious Studies



The AQA GCSE RS course is a core subject at Dixons City Academy therefore all students at the academy will study this for their GCSE exam. Students will explore the religions of Christianity and Islam in detail developing their knowledge on the beliefs and practices of both. Students will also gain an in-depth study of differing religious worldviews on philosophical and ethical issues which will strengthen their ability to hold discussions and contribute to debates as well as formulating their own opinions on these topics.

COURSE CONTENT

An in-depth study of Christian and Islamic beliefs and practices

Study of four philosophical and ethical issues: Relationships and Families, Religion and Life, Peace and Conflict and Crime and Punishment.

ASSESSMENT

Two 1 hour 45 min GCSE exam papers will be sat at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 – Christian beliefs and practices

Muslim beliefs and practices

Paper 2 – Themes

Relationships and families; religion and life; peace and conflict; crime and punishment

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

The GCSE content involves a rigorous study of Islam and Christianity where students interpret Scripture and the response of religious believers to the philosophical and ethical issues studied such as animal experimentation, euthanasia and peace-making. It requires students to critically evaluate arguments in much more depth and formulate their own opinions on the topics discussed.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

Students should demonstrate an interest and appreciation in the diversity of living in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society. You should have a willingness to discuss, debate and reflect on your own views on the ethical, non-religious and religious arguments, ideas and theories presented.

THE FUTURE

Religious Studies is an interesting course that encourages students to reflect, question and challenge the ideas discussed in the classroom. It is an ideal area of study for careers that include working with people such as teaching, medical profession, law, media and does not limit potential career options. For further information about the syllabus visit the following web address:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse>

Further information is available from Mrs Ahmed



CORE SUBJECT- GCSE Combined Science

Students taking GCSE Combined Science will study a combination of Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics adding up to two GCSEs. With the new GCSE specifications there is a greater emphasis on mathematical skills and increased content.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be awarded two grades from 9-9 to 1-1. All exams will be taken at the end of Year 11. Practical skills are crucial to students' progress and will be assessed through exam questions.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

Many topics studied at GCSE will be covered to a greater depth than at KS3. Often with more emphasis on analysis, evaluation, and numeracy skills. These skills are highly prized by employers. There are also new topics such as genetics, electromagnetism and radioactivity.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

All Science subjects require problem solving, ability to communicate, practical and maths skills, as well as the ability to recall and apply scientific ideas learnt during the course.

THE FUTURE

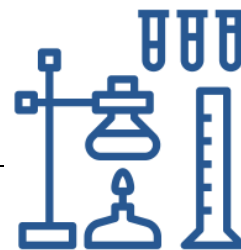
This course is suitable if you are planning to take A level Biology, Chemistry or Physics, or any other scientific post 16 course such as Applied Science or Forensics. There are many careers in science, such as medicine, engineering, pharmaceuticals, aeronautics, environmental, architecture, electronics to name a few. The entry requirements for A level Science courses are usually at least a grade 6-6 in GCSE Sciences as well as a grade 6 in English language and Maths.

For further information about the syllabus, visit the following web address:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science>

Further information is available from Mr Ahmed

Option Subject – TRIPLE SCIENCE – Biology, Chemistry & Physics



Students follow a course which consists of Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics. With the new GCSE specifications there is a greater emphasis on Mathematics skills and increased content.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be able to achieve independent grades in GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics from 9-1. In common with all GCSE subjects, all exams will be taken at the end of the course, which will be in the summer term of Year 11. Practical skills are crucial to students' progress and will be assessed through exam papers. There will be 6 exams at the end of year 11, each exam will be 1hr 45 minutes

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

Many topics studied at GCSE will be covered to a greater depth than at KS3. Often with more emphasis on analysis, evaluation, and numeracy skills. These skills are highly prized by employers. There are also extra topics such as genetics, organic chemistry and space.

HOW ARE COMBINED AND TRIPLE SCIENCE DIFFERENT?

Triple Science involves more science content, including some of the most demanding topics, and longer exams (1hr 45 minutes). It leads to one more GCSE than Combined Science.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

You need to be currently showing excellent attainment in English, Maths and Science. You also need to be passionate about Science as you will be studying Science for more than 7 hours a week. All Science subjects require; problem solving, ability to communicate, practical and maths skills, as well as the ability to recall and apply scientific ideas learnt during the course.

THE FUTURE

This course is suitable if you are planning to take A-level Biology, Chemistry or Physics. There are many careers in Science, such as medicine, engineering, pharmaceuticals, aeronautics, environmental, architecture, electronics to name a few. The entry requirements for most A-level Science are currently at least grade 6's in GCSE Sciences as well as a grade 6 in English Language and Maths.

For further information about the syllabus, visit the following web address:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science>

Further information is available from Mr Ahmed



CORE SUBJECT- GCSE Spanish

All students who are currently studying Spanish will continue to take this subject to GCSE.

All skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are practised within several themes.

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Theme 2: Popular culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

The language becomes more sophisticated and covers a broader range of topic areas, allowing your language skills to flourish!

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

Students who achieve a grade 5 or above:

- Make a consistent effort throughout the course to memorise vocabulary and practise grammar, including regular revision time at home.
- Work independently to thoroughly prepare for examinations.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be examined on the following skills. Each skill is worth 25% of the GCSE. Students will be entered at Foundation or Higher level.

- Listening
- Speaking*
- Reading
- Writing

*The speaking exam is delivered with the classroom teacher.

THE FUTURE

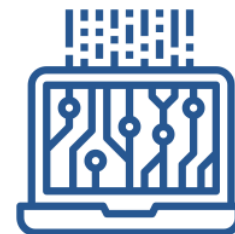
Studying Spanish at GCSE can continue to enhance your linguistic and communication skills. A modern language is fundamental in our ever increasingly interconnected world of business, leisure, tourism and education. Languages can be studied with many other subjects. Studying a language promotes the development of communicative, interpersonal and presentational skills as well as increasing job opportunities.

Below is a link to the specification for this qualification:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/spanish/gcse/spanish-8692/specification/specification-at-a-glance>

Further information is available from Mrs Millar

Option Subject: BTEC Level 1 / Level 2 Tech Award in Digital Information Technology



In Year 9 you study Component 1 Exploring the Principles of User Interface Design and Project Planning. You will explore user interface design and development principles; discover how to develop and review a digital user interface; investigate how to use project planning techniques to manage a digital project. In Year 10 you will study Component 2 Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data. You will explore how data impacts on individuals and organisations; develop a dashboard using data manipulation tools and draw conclusions and make recommendations on data intelligence.

In Year 11 you will study Component 3 Effective Digital Working Practices. You will explore how modern information technology is evolving; understand what Cyber Security is and how to safeguard against it and consider legal and ethical issues in data and information sharing.

ASSESSMENT

Component 1 - Controlled Assessment – 30%

Component 2 - Controlled Assessment – 30%

Component 3 - Scenario Based External Assessment - (1 hour 30 minutes) – 40%

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT THE SUBJECT?

You will require basic Computer skills and understand a range of different software skills. You also need to be motivated and committed – with the ability to be independent.

THE FUTURE

This course could lead to a career in IT. There is currently a shortage in some IT professions such as Cyber Security. It is a course that develops problem solving skills which are useful in a range of careers.

For further information visit the following the following link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-tech-awards/digital-information-technology.html>

Further information is available from Miss Hussain



Option Subject: Cambridge Nationals Level 1/2 Health & Social Care

To work in a health, social care or early years setting, it is essential to understand the rights of individuals, person-centred values of care and how they can be applied. This qualification will help you to develop this knowledge and to understand the importance of effective communication skills when working in these settings. You will also develop the skills needed to ensure a safe and hygienic environment for those in care. Learners will cover key topics that are important when caring for and protecting people in health, social care and early years' settings as well as developing an understanding of different life stages, the impacts of life events and how to support this.

You are required to complete 3 units over 3 years:

- Year 9 - Creative and therapeutic activities.
- Year 10 - Supporting individuals through life events.
- Year 11 - Principles of care in health, social care and early years' settings. (70-mark exam)

ASSESSMENT

Each unit is awarded points at a Pass, Merit, or Distinction grade. At the end of the three years all of the marks/points are totalled to give a final grade. All but one of the units are assessed by a portfolio of work that is internally assessed and externally moderated with the other unit being assessed by a written exam. You must complete every unit.

The qualification is graded at Level 1 and level 2.

- Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* (grades 4 to 9)
- Level 1 Pass, Merit, Distinction (grades 1-3)

SKILLS REQUIRED TO BE A SUCCESSFULL LEARNER

Students are to learn and use a range of valuable skills that will help them to be successful on the course. Skills such as; organisation, independent learning, problem solving, research, revision, self-assessment and setting personal SMART targets to continually improve and progress. Understanding and embedding the PIES framework for caregivers to assess and address the needs of service users.

THE FUTURE

The course designed to provide an engaging experience for learners as well as a good foundation for further study within the field. There may be opportunity to progress onto the Level 3 Health and Social Care course, which further strengthens entry into further education. The course does provide some theory on practical, scientific and social experience based on care settings.

The specification for this course can be found below:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/711831-specification-cambridge-nationals-health-and-social-care-j835-assessment-from-2025.pdf>

Further information is available from Mr Ignatowski

Option Subject: Cambridge National Level 2 in Sports Studies



Learners will cover topical and contemporary issues in sport, including: - why people do and do not participate in sport, the promotion of ethics and values, the roles of National Governing Bodies and high-profile events have in sport, as well as how technology is used within sport. You will develop skills as a performer in two different sporting activities (one and individual and one a team sport) and learn how to lead sporting activity sessions. You will learn about the relationship between sport and the media through applying this to real life examples you will evaluate and interpret the different ways in which sport is represented by the media, in both a positive and negative way.

Over the three years you will study units from a range of areas including:-

- Year 9 - Sport and the Media
- Year 10 - Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities
- Year 11 - Contemporary Issues in Sport (70-mark exam)

ASSESSMENT

Each unit is awarded points at a Pass, Merit, or Distinction grade. At the end of the three years all the marks/points are totalled to give a final grade. All but one of the units are assessed by a portfolio of work that is internally assessed and externally verified with the other unit being assessed by a written exam. You must complete every unit.

The qualification is graded at Level 1 and level 2.

- Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* (grades 4 to 9)
- Level 1 Pass, Merit, Distinction (grades 1-3)

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KS3?

This course is different from KS3 PE, and not all of the lessons are practical, 75% of lessons are taught in a classroom, where coursework tasks will need to be completed on the content taught.

WHAT SKILLS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS SUBJECT?

You will learn and develop the following skills: independent and collaborative learning, problem solving, research, self-assessment and interpersonal skills. Leadership skills to teach your own PE lesson to younger students as part of an assessment.

THE FUTURE

These skills will help you progress onto further study in the Exercise, Physical Activity, Sport and Health sector. This may be Level 3 vocational qualifications, such as the Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical Activity, AS or A-Levels, such as Physical Education, Psychology, Sociology, Sport or Media or an apprenticeship in Community activator coach, Leisure team members, Personal trainer or Outdoor activity instructor.

The specification can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/610953-specification-cambridge-nationals-sport-studies-j829.pdf>

Further information is available from Mr Ignatowski

Notes

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