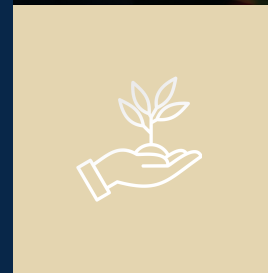
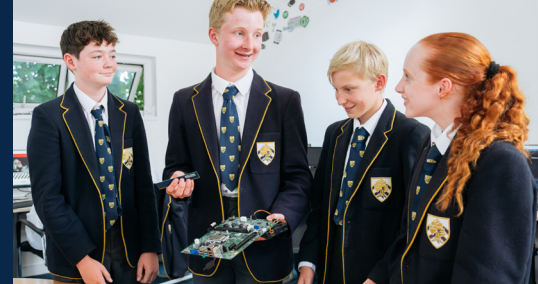
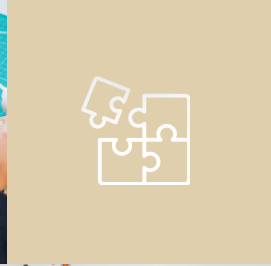
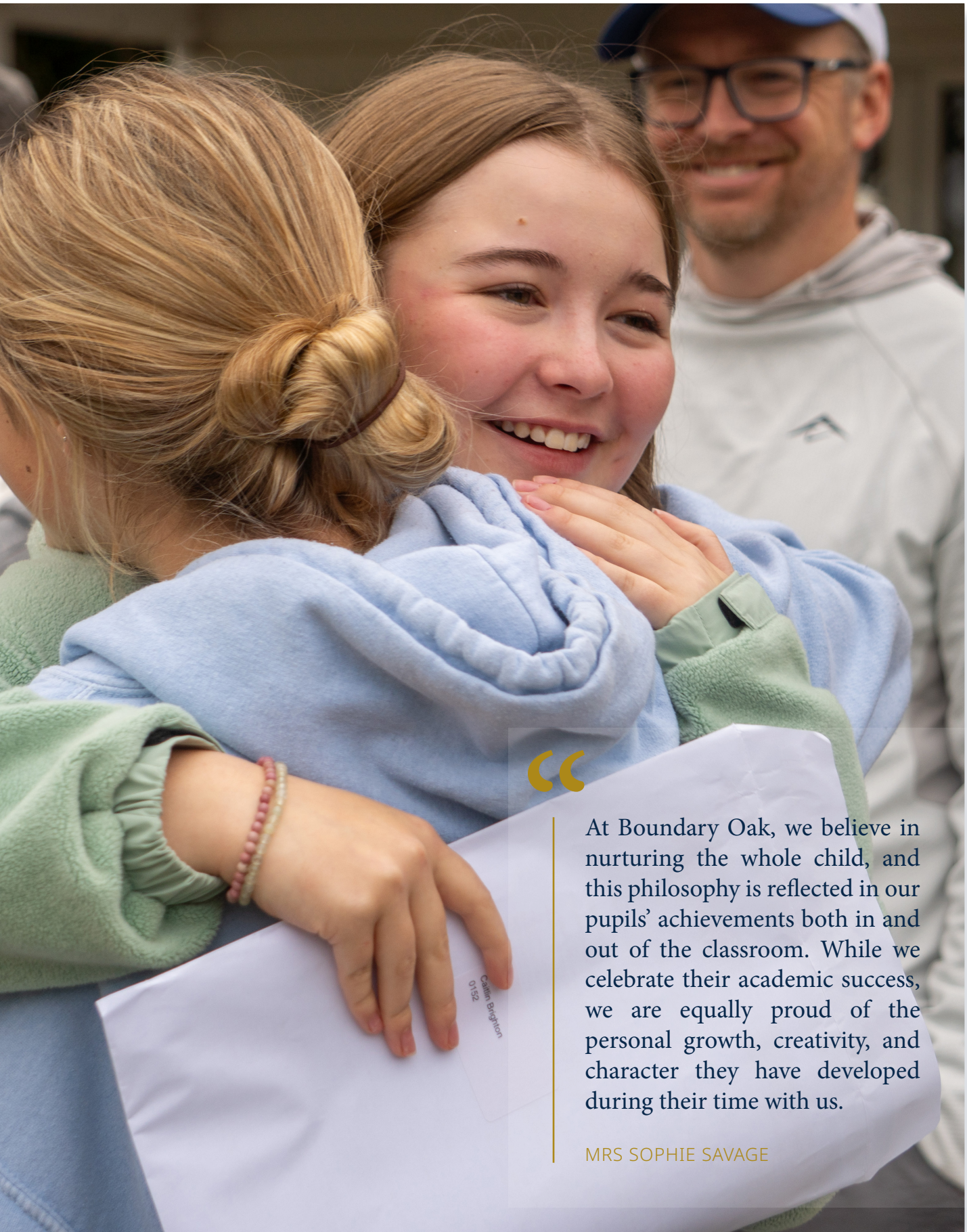


GCSE Options Guide



Boundary Oak School





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At Boundary Oak, we believe in nurturing the whole child, and this philosophy is reflected in our pupils' achievements both in and out of the classroom. While we celebrate their academic success, we are equally proud of the personal growth, creativity, and character they have developed during their time with us.

MRS SOPHIE SAVAGE

2024 GCSE Results

IN NUMBERS

The following statistics are taken from our three year rolling average and last year's results.

93%

Percent of pupils achieved an overall GCSE pass rate across all subjects, compared to the national average of 70.4 %.

1.6

In 2024, pupils achieved an added value score of +1.6.

80%

Percent of triple science pupils received a grade 8 and above in 2024.



GCSE Options

AT BOUNDARY OAK



It Starts Here

Welcome to Key Stage 4. Now is the time to start thinking about which GCSEs you would like to do. You might already have a clear idea of the subjects that appeal to you and even a specific career path in mind - but it's more likely that you are still working this out and discovering where your interests and strengths lie.

While the choices you make at this stage can have a bearing on the choices you can take at college, rest assured that our broad range of subjects will give you the solid academic foundation that you need. Remember, your teachers are always happy to discuss subjects with you, and our Careers Coordinator can also provide you with further specific advice as needed.

You will be asked to choose three option subjects plus two reserve options. We will do our best to accommodate your first choices. We encourage everyone to keep a breadth within their subject choices. These options will be studied alongside the non-examined core subjects of Physical Education and Games, PSHE and Careers Guidance.

Your Experience

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

You will follow a two-year programme of study in Years 10 and 11 working towards GCSE or iGCSE examinations. Everyone follows a course in all the core subjects (leading to five GCSEs or six with the Separate Sciences Award). These are complemented by three optional subjects. This means you will take either eight or nine GCSEs.

■ Core Subjects

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Double Science (leading to Triple Science for some)

In addition, other compulsory elements include:

- PE and Games
- PSHE
- Careers Guidance

■ Optional Subjects

- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Economics
- Food Prep and Nutrition
- French
- Further Mathematics (by invitation only)
- Geography
- German
- History
- ICT
- Music
- PE
- Photography
- Psychology
- Spanish

TOP TIPS

The best advice we can give you when making your preferred option choices is that:

- You are logical and thoughtful in your approach.
- You make sure to gather all the information you need from subject teachers and don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Think about your own strengths, interests and past successes
- Look forward to where you are aspiring and reflect honestly as to where you are now.

In doing so, your decisions will be informed, rational and subsequently your GCSE programme will be a positive and fun experience.

GCSE GRADING SYSTEM

GCSEs and International GCSEs (iGCSEs) use a nine-point numerical grading system (with Grade 9 being the top mark).

For Maths, Modern Foreign Languages and Sciences, there are two tiers that you can be entered for: higher or foundation. Higher tier exams are awarded grades 9-4, while foundation tier exams are awarded grades 5-1. Decisions about which tier will be appropriate for you will be made with your teachers in the January/February before your GCSE exams in Year 11. Please see the following table of the numerical grading system - note that grades 1-3 are equivalent to D-G in the old grading system.

<i>The proportion of pupils who would have achieved a grade A or above should be about the same as those who achieve a grade 7 and above today.</i>	Current Grading	Old Grading
	9	A*
	8	
	7	A
	6	B
	5	
<i>The proportion of pupils who would have previously achieved a grade C or above should be about the same as those who will receive a grade 4 or above today.</i>	4	C

LEARNING SUPPORT

If we are already aware that you have additional learning needs, the Head of Learning Support, Mrs Horn and your subject teachers, will continue to monitor and review your access arrangements to ensure that they remain up to date and appropriate. Sometimes, additional needs become apparent as pupils approach GCSEs. If this is the case, staff will alert Mrs Horn, who will then investigate to establish whether there is a need for interventions and then advise teaching staff of strategies to support you in class. You might receive one to one guidance, or be invited to small group sessions/workshops to look at skill building for GCSEs, such as revision skills, decoding exam questions, formulating and planning an answer, and time management. Depending on your needs, you might need a boost in certain areas to increase your confidence or ability, or you might benefit from more continued support.

Core Subjects

YEARS 10-11 CURRICULUM



English Language

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study English?

English Language is a compulsory subject, which means everyone must study it at GCSE level. The main reason for this is that English is essential in today's world. No matter which future pathway you take, there will be an expectation that you are a confident and competent user of the language.

Course Overview

Pupils will draw upon a range of texts as reading stimulus and engage with creative as well as real and relevant contexts. Pupils will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes.

The aims and objectives of GCSE English Language are to enable pupils to:

- Read a wide range of texts fluently and with good understanding.
- Read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing.
- Write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately.
- Use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately.
- Acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Assessment Details

Component 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	Weighting
Written examination	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
80 marks	
Externally assessed	
Content overview	
• Fiction texts and descriptive writing	
Assessment overview	
• Reading (40 marks) - one single text	
• Writing (40 marks)	
Component 2: Writers' viewpoints and Perspectives	Weighting
Written examination	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
80 marks	
Externally assessed	
Content overview	
Non fiction texts, literary non fiction texts and writing to present a viewpoint.	
Assessment overview	
• Reading (40 marks) - two linked texts	
• Writing (40 marks)	

English Literature

Exam Board: Edexcel, IGCSE

Why Study English Literature?

Studying English Literature helps pupils develop a deep understanding of both classic and modern texts, enabling them to make connections across their reading. It fosters critical thinking, allowing them to evaluate, discuss, and explain ideas in depth. By reading widely, pupils gain an appreciation for the richness of the English literary heritage while honing their ability to write analytically and effectively in Standard English. They also expand their vocabulary and acquire essential literary and linguistic terms to critically analyse texts.

Course Overview

Pupils will study a wide range of texts:

- Modern prose (such as *Of Mice and Men* or *To Kill A Mockingbird*).
- Poetry (taken from an anthology which ranges from *William Blake* to *Carol Ann Duffy*).
- Modern drama (such as *An Inspector Calls* or *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*).
- Literary heritage text (such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* or *Pride and Prejudice*).

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Poetry and Prose	Weighting
Written examination	60%
2 hours	
90 marks	
Externally assessed	
Content overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern Prose• Poetry	
Assessment overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section A - Analysis of unseen poetry.• Section B - Anthology poetry: comparing two poems.• Section C - A choice of 2 essay questions on the modern prose text.	
Paper 2: Modern drama and Literary Heritage	Weighting
Non Exam Assessment	40%
60 marks	
Internally assessed	
Content overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern drama• Literacy heritage text	
Assessment overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One essay on Modern Drama text• One essay on Literary Heritage text	

Mathematics

Exam Board: Edexcel, IGCSE

Why Study Mathematics?

Mathematics is a creative and highly inter-connected discipline that has been developed over centuries. It is essential to everyday life, critical to science, technology and engineering, and necessary for financial literacy and most forms of employment. A high quality mathematics education therefore provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject.

Course Overview

GCSE Mathematics covers a wide range of basic mathematical knowledge and skills, grouped into four areas: Number, Algebra, Geometry and Statistics.

Pupils will be assessed on their ability to use skills, reason mathematically and solve abstract problems. While studying mathematics you will be expected to use mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems.

The iGCSE course will focus on tiers of entry that allow pupils to be entered for the appropriate level. As a department we will assess each individual child's needs and following discussions between the teacher and parent we will decide the best tier to sit.

Assessment Details

Foundation Tier (5-1)

Written paper: 2x 2 hour examinations
Each paper is 50% of the qualification
100 marks

Higher Tier (9-4)

Written paper: 2x 2 hour examinations
Each paper is 50% of the qualification
100 marks

Science **COMBINED TRILOGY**

There are two Science routes at GCSE: Science Trilogy, which results in two GCSEs or the Separate Sciences where you gain three GCSEs (one for each science). Both routes require the study of all three sciences, with the separate sciences having additional content. Your suitability for separate or combined science will be based on your Year 9 performance.

Exam Board: **AQA, GCSE**

Why Study Combined Trilogy?

Combined Trilogy science is the best option for pupils who have a general interest in science as it is a two-GCSE sized qualification covering the three science disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Pupils will study all the same topic areas as described in the scientific disciplines above, however not in as much detail as the Separate Sciences, giving a broad understanding of the three sciences.

Course Overview

For the Combined Trilogy Science award, pupils will be assessed across three key disciplines: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics

In Biology, 10% of the marks will focus on mathematical skills. In Chemistry, 20% of the marks will involve mathematics, while in Physics, 30% of the marks will be dedicated to mathematical skills.

There are six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas, using multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions.

Assessment Details

Biology

2x Written examinations: 1 hour 15 minutes

70 marks

Paper 1 - Biology topics 1-4:

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics

Paper 2 - Biology topics 5-7:

- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry

2x Written examinations: 1 hour 15 minutes

70 marks

Paper 1 - Chemistry topics 8-12:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes

Paper 2 - Chemistry topics 13-17:

- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics

x2 Written examinations: 1 hour 15 minutes

70 marks

Paper 1 - Physics topics 18-21:

- Energy
- Electricity
- Partical model of matter
- Atomic structure

Paper 2 - Physics topics 22-24:

- Forces
- Waves
- Magnetism and electromagnetism

Science **SEPARATE SCIENCES**

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Separate Sciences?

Taking sciences separately at GCSE level will enable you to cover more content and therefore be better prepared if you want to take science A-levels. Top universities often prefer applicants who have taken separate sciences. Separate Sciences offers GCSEs for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, with a deeper focus on each. Your suitability for Separate or Combined Trilogy science will be based on your Year 9 performance.

BIOLOGY

Biology – the science that looks at the world around us and at all living things. It is exciting, fascinating and helps us understand how the most interesting organism in the world works – ourselves.

Course Overview

Studying Biology will deepen your understanding of environmental issues, health, disease, and the human condition. The assessment includes two papers, each testing knowledge from different topic areas through multiple choice, structured, short answer, and open response questions.

CHEMISTRY

Chemistry GCSE will take you further into this interesting and rewarding subject. This means more experiments; more skills to learn and more opportunity to look at the way the substances and materials used and abused in our modern day society are created and destroyed.

Course Overview

You will be taking the knowledge and skills you learn and applying them to new situations involved in 'living in the material world'. We will extend the work to cover areas outside the syllabus such as chemical synthesis where Pupils try their hand at creation of their own chemical compounds.

There are two papers. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas, using multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions.

PHYSICS

In Physics you will be looking at an extensive range of topics in order to gain an understanding of the world around you.

Course Overview

The topics take you from the behaviour of electrons in a conductor to an understanding of the formation of stars and the evolution of our Universe. There will be ample opportunity to work on experiments that illustrate the concepts.

This course should enable you to make informed contributions about the issues of the day.

There are two papers. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas, using multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions.

Assessment Details

Biology Paper 1

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 1–4:

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics

Biology Paper 2

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 5–7:

- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry Paper 1

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 1–5:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes

Chemistry Paper 2

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 6–10:

- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics Paper 1

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 1–4:

- Energy
- Electricity
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure

Physics Paper 2

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

Topics 5–8:

- Forces
- Waves
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Space physics

Questions in paper 2 may draw on an understanding of energy changes and transfers due to heating, mechanical and electrical work and the concept of energy conservation from Energy and Electricity.

Optional Subjects

YEARS 10-11 CURRICULUM



Business Studies

Exam Board: Cambridge, IGCSE

Why Study Business Studies?

Throughout your business studies lessons, you'll develop a broad knowledge of business operations as well as gaining targeted skills in specific fields, such as customers, markets, finance, operations, strategy, business policy, communications and IT.

Course Overview

The course is composed of six interleaved units.

- Understanding business activity introduces the underlying ideas and concepts of business and includes the purpose and nature of business activity and how businesses can be classified.
- People in business focuses on the functional area of human resources and includes the importance and methods of motivating a workforce.
- The role of marketing, the distinctions between niche and mass markets and the techniques of market segmentation.
- Operations management considers the functional area of production and includes the meaning and methods of production and how productivity can be increased.
- The finance and accounting unit covers the need for and sources of business finance, cash-flow forecasting and working capital.
- External influences on business activity investigates environmental and economic influences on business activity and how these impact on a business.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Investigating Small Businesses

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

80 marks

Content overview

This paper will draw on all elements of the course with a greater emphasis on knowledge, understanding and application.

Assessment overview

The paper consists of four compulsory questions that require a mix of short answers and structured data responses.

Calculators may be used in the examination.

Paper 2: Investigating Large Businesses

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

80 marks

Content overview

This paper also draws on all aspects of the syllabus, placing greater emphasis on analytical skills and the evaluation of business scenarios.

Assessment overview

This paper consists of four compulsory questions all based on a case study which is provided as an insert with the paper.

Calculators may be used in the examination.

Economics

Exam Board: Edexcel, IGCSE

Why Study Economics?

Studying economics offers you an exciting opportunity to understand the real-world forces that shape our lives, from how businesses operate to how countries trade and manage resources. It helps you develop critical thinking and analytical skills as you explore the decisions individuals, companies, and governments make about money, goods, and services. Whether you're interested in a career in business, politics, or finance, or just want to be more informed about the world around you, economics provides a solid foundation.

Course Overview

By studying economics you will:

- Develop an understanding of economic concepts and apply these concepts to real-life situations.
- Calculate, interpret and evaluate economic data in order to make reasoned arguments and informed judgements
- Develop an awareness of economic change and its impact on developing and developed economies
- Understand economic issues, problems and possible solutions that affect mixed economies
- In microeconomics and business economics, topics include the basic economic problem, supply and demand, market structures, business costs and revenues, and the role of government in the market.
- In macroeconomics and the global economy, topics include economic

growth, inflation, unemployment, international trade, exchange rates, and the role of government in managing the economy.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Microeconomics and Business Economics

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

80 marks

Content overview

This component assesses understanding of how individuals, businesses and governments make economic decisions, with an emphasis on analysing market behaviour and business economics in real-world contexts.

Assessment overview

This paper consists of four compulsory questions, each worth 20 marks. The sub questions are a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer, data response and open-ended questions. Calculators may be used in the examination.

Paper 2: Macroeconomics and the Global Economy

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

80 marks

Content overview

This component assesses understanding of how national and global economic issues are interconnected, with a focus on analysing economic performance and policy in a global context.

Assessment overview

This paper consists of four compulsory questions, each worth 20 marks. The sub-questions are a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer, data response, and open-ended questions. Calculators may be used in the examination.

Computer Science

Exam Board: Cambridge, IGCSE

Why Study Computer Science?

Computing is a field where it is almost impossible to predict what will happen next, however by studying it pupils are given a strong grounding in the principles of programming and an understanding of how computers work in 'the real world'.

Pupils considering GCSE computer science should be aware that some elements of the course require strong mathematical reasoning. Our experience show that this option is best suited to pupils targeting at least grade 6 or above in mathematics.

Course Overview

This qualification aims to develop computational thinking and problem-solving skills, equipping pupils with the ability to tackle computer-based problems using high-level programming languages. Pupils will gain an understanding of the key components of computer systems and how they interrelate, as well as the role of the internet in communication and its associated risks. The course also covers the development and application of automated and emerging technologies.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Computer Systems	Weighting
Written examination, non-calculator	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
75 marks	
Externally assessed	
Content overview	
This component will cover:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data representation• Data transmission• Hardware• Software• The internet and it's uses• Automated and emerging technologies	
Assessment overview	
The paper consists of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-answer and structured questions• Questions will be based on Topics 1-6 of the subject content.	
Paper 2: Algorithms, Programming and Logic	Weighting
Written examination, non-calculator	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
75 marks	
Externally assessed	
Content overview	
This component will cover:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Algorithm design and problem solving• Programming• Databases• Boolean logic	
Assessment overview	
The paper consists of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-answer and structured questions plus a scenario-based question• Questions will be based on Topics 7-10 of the subject content.	

ICT

Exam Board: Edexcel, IGCSE

Why Study ICT? (Information and Communication Technology)

ICT develops important skills in pupils, such as data handling, which are transferable and useful for a wide range of jobs. In an increasingly digital world, it provides pupils with every opportunity to learn skills that will enable them to thrive.

Course Overview

The course has been designed to meet pupil needs in the following ways:

- Developing confident and competent ICT users - this qualification provides pupils with the opportunity of operating confidently in today's digital world. It is a useful, practical qualification which will provide the skills needed in further education and work.
- Providing pupils with relevant and transferable skills - pupils will learn about topics ranging from digital devices and connectivity, safe and responsible practice and understand the impact of internet on the way that organisations do business. They will also be encouraged to practice using software applications effectively.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Theory

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

This component will cover:

- Digital devices
- Connectivity
- Operating online
- Online goods and services
- Applying information and communication technology
- Software skills

Paper 2: Practical

Written exam: 3 hours

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Content overview

This component will cover:

- Applying information and communication technology
- Software skills

Assessment overview

The single tier of entry will contain a variety of question types, such as multiple choice questions, short and extended answer questions, graphical and data questions and practical enquiry questions.

Geography

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Geography?

Studying geography helps pupils understand global events and their role in living sustainably. Geographers develop key skills in analysis, problem-solving, and communication, making them well-suited for a wide range of careers. These skills are highly valued in many jobs, enhancing employability.

Course Overview

You will study three key units throughout the course, with exams at the end to assess your understanding. These units will cover:

- Physical Environment – Exploring the natural world, including landforms, ecosystems, and climate systems.
- Human Environment – Examining human interactions with the environment, including urbanization, population patterns, and economic development.
- Geographical Applications – Applying geographical knowledge to real-world scenarios, including mapping, data analysis, and problem-solving in various contexts.

At the end of the course, you will sit three exams, each corresponding to one of these units.

Assessment Details

Paper 1

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

88 marks

35% of GCSE

Assessment overview

Topics 1–3:

- The challenges of natural hazards
- The living world
- Physical landscapes in the UK

Paper 2

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

88 marks

35% of GCSE

Assessment overview

Topics 4–6:

- Urban issues and challenges
- The changing economic world
- The challenge of resource management

Paper 3

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

76 marks

30% of GCSE

Assessment overview

Topics 7–8:

- Geographical applications: Issue evaluation and fieldwork.

History

Exam Board: Edexcel, IGCSE

Why Study History?

History is valuable both for its insight into the past and for developing transferable skills, such as research, critical thinking, and argumentation. A Level and Degree History graduates are highly regarded by employers and often pursue research-based degrees in fields like Politics, Economics, Law, Journalism, and even Medicine, all of which rely on evidence-based analysis and communication.

Course Overview

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable pupils to:

- Expand their knowledge of key historical events, periods, and societies.
- Engage in historical enquiry to become independent, critical, and reflective thinkers.
- Ask relevant questions, investigate issues critically, and make valid historical claims using diverse sources.
- Understand how different people, events, and interpretations are historically significant.
- Organise and communicate their historical understanding, reaching well-supported conclusions.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Depth Studies

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

50 marks

Assessment overview

Pupils are assessed through an examination based on their selected depth studies. Pupils answer two questions, one on each of the depth studies they have studied.

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

50% of the qualification

50 marks

Assessment overview

Pupils are assessed through an examination based on their selected depth studies. Pupils answer two questions, one on each of the depth studies they have studied.

Citizenship

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Citizenship?

Citizenship offers pupils a unique opportunity to engage with the world around them, building essential knowledge and skills to participate actively and responsibly in society. The course encourages critical thinking, debate, and the development of informed opinions on current issues, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment.

It's an ideal choice for those who want to learn more about the world, contribute to positive change, and develop essential skills that benefit them in any career path.

Course Overview

Through the content studied and assessment, pupils will be equipped with the knowledge covering democracy, government, legal and political systems, rights and responsibilities, and modern British life, including diversity and global issues. Pupils also complete an Active Citizenship Project to create positive change, developing critical thinking and advocacy skills.

Assessment Details

Paper 1	Weighting
Written examination	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
80 marks	
Content overview	
The paper consists of two sections:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active citizenship (40 marks)• Politics and participation (40 marks)	
Assessment overview	
Question types include multiple-choice, short answer, source-based questions and extended answers.	
Paper 2	Weighting
Written examination	50%
1 hour 45 minutes	
80 marks	
Content overview	
The paper consists of two sections:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life in modern Britain questions (40 marks)• Rights and responsibilities questions (40 marks)	
Assessment overview	
Question types include multiple-choice, short answer, source-based questions and extended answers.	

Psychology

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Psychology?

This engaging and effective qualification introduces pupils to the fundamentals of psychology, developing critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills.

Course Overview

The course covers a range of topics in psychology, including:

- **Cognition and Behaviour:** Memory processes, structures, and perception (influenced by nature and nurture), visual illusions, and factors affecting perception.
- **Development:** Early brain development, Piaget's theory, intelligence, and the effects of learning.
- **Research Methods:** Data handling and research techniques.
- **Social Context:** Social influence, conformity, obedience, pro-social behaviour, and crowd dynamics.
- **Language and Communication:** Relationship between language and thought, human vs animal communication, and non-verbal behaviour.
- **Brain and Neuropsychology:** Nervous system structure, neuron function, brain structure, and an introduction to neuropsychology.
- **Psychological Problems:** Mental health, including the incidence, effects, and theories of depression and addiction, as well as intervention therapies.

Assessment Details

Paper 1: Cognition and behaviour

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

50% of the qualification

100 marks

Content overview

Pupils will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics:

- Memory
- Perception
- Development
- Research Methods

Assessment overview

The paper consists of four sections.

- Multiple choice, short answer and extended writing for each section.

Paper 2: Social context and behaviour

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

50% of the qualification

100 marks

Content overview

Pupils will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics:

- Social influence
- Language, thought and communication
- Brain and neuropsychology
- Psychological problems

Assessment overview

The paper consists of four sections.

- Multiple choice, short answer and extended writing for each section.

Modern Foreign Languages

We recommend pupils take at least one modern foreign language, with the option to study two where available. At Boundary Oak, we offer French, German, and Spanish at GCSE.

Exam Board: **Edexcel, GCSE**

Why Study a Language?

In our globalised world, knowing a second language is increasingly valuable, with high demand for skilled linguists. A Modern Foreign Language GCSE helps improve your language skills while boosting performance in other subjects. It also develops transferable skills such as empathy, teamwork, problem-solving, self-confidence, and perseverance. As part of the English Baccalaureate, a language GCSE keeps future study options open, with languages recognised by the Russell Group for broadening university degree opportunities. While challenging, requiring consistent vocabulary and grammar practice, the rewards of a language GCSE are significant and far-reaching.

Course Overview

The specification in French, German and Spanish covers a range of engaging and relatable thematic contexts. These are relevant to the pupils' current and future needs and include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

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

Assessment Detail

Each language has a Foundation Tier (grades 1 – 5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4 – 9). Pupils must take all four question papers at the same tier. The qualification is linear and all question papers must therefore be taken in the same series at the end of the course.

Component	Weighting
Paper 1: Speaking	25%
Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes + preparation time (15 minutes)	
50 marks	
Higher tier: 10-12 minutes + preparation time (15 minutes)	
50 marks	
Paper 2: Listening and Understanding	25%
Foundation tier: 45 minutes	
50 marks	
Higher tier: 1 hour	
50 marks	
Paper 3: Reading and Understanding	25%
Foundation tier: 45 minutes	
50 marks	
Higher tier: 1 hour	
50 marks	
Paper 4: Writing	25%
Foundation tier: 1 hour 15 minutes	
50 marks	
Higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes	
50 mark	

Physical Education (Examined)

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Physical Education?

GCSE PE combines practical and theoretical learning, encouraging enjoyment in physical activity while developing skills, techniques, and an understanding of effective, safe performance. The course promotes resilience, teamwork, and healthy habits, providing a foundation for future study in Science-based subjects like Biology, Sports Science, Psychology, and Physics. It includes 60% theory, covering sport, society, and contemporary issues, with links to Human Biology and Physics. Pupils must participate in three sporting activities, at least one of which is competitive outside of school. The course is classroom-based, with practical sessions and fitness testing.

Course Overview

Candidates will study:

- The human body and movement in physical activity and sport
- Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport

Pupils must undertake three activities as a player, including one team sport and one individual sport. As part of the practical assessment, they will also complete written coursework to analyse and evaluate their performance in one sport, identifying two strengths and weaknesses, and providing an action plan for improvement.

Assessment Details

Examination

Content overview

Paper 1: anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training and use of data (30%).

Paper 2: sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness and well-being and use of data (30%).

Candidates answer all questions; a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Assessment overview

Both papers are:

- 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks

Candidates should answer all questions; a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Externally assessed

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport (40%)

Content overview

Pupils are assessed in three physical activities:

- One team activity
- One individual activity
- One activity (team or individual)

Assessment overview

For each of their three activities, pupils will be assessed in:

- Skills in progressive drills: 10 marks
- Skills in full context: 15 marks
- Analysis of performance: 15 marks
- Evaluation of performance: 10 marks

Internally assessed by teachers & moderated by AQA.

Please see the extensive list below of the team and individual sports pupils can choose from.

Categories	Physical activities
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acrobatic Gymnastics• Association Football• Badminton (doubles)• Basketball• Cricket• Dance• Figure skating• Handball• Hockey• Ice hockey• In-line roller hockey• Lacrosse• Netball• Rowing• Rugby• Sailing• Squash (doubles)• Table tennis (doubles)• Tennis (doubles)• Volleyball• Water polo
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boxing• Athletics• Badminton (singles)• Canoeing/ kayaking• Cycling• Dance• Diving• Equestrian• Golf• Gymnastics (artistic)• Rock climbing (indoor too)• Skiing/ Snowboarding• Squash• Swimming• Table tennis (singles)• Tennis (singles)• Trampolineing• Windsurfing

Food Preparation & Nutrition

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Food & Nutrition?

Studying Food & Nutrition equips pupils with life skills to cook healthy meals and develop creativity through practical learning. It teaches valuable transferable skills such as research, evaluation, teamwork, and problem-solving, while reinforcing links with Science and Mathematics. A qualification in Food, Preparation and Nutrition is valued alongside traditional subjects, and industry trips offer insights into Food Preparation and Nutrition. With a growing demand for food scientists, technologists, and nutritionists, this course can lead to careers in fields like sports nutrition, dietetics, and physiotherapy.

Pupils who excel in this course are interested in both the practical side of learning a range of high level skills and the theory behind food; safety, science, choice and provenance. The course requires pupils to write two reports in Year 11, worth 50% of the assessment. Both reports require pupils to meet deadlines, use organisational skills, analyse results and evaluate. The course complements; science, physical education and geography.

Course Overview

The course is divided into 5 main areas of study.

1. Food, nutrition and health
2. Food science
3. Food safety
4. Food choice
5. Food provenance

Assessment Detail

Examination 1 - Theory, Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition

Written examination

1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Assessment overview

Written examination consisting of multi-choice questions, short answer questions and structured questions.

1 hour 45 minutes

Examination 2 - Non Exam Assessment

Non-examination assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated.

NEA 1: 10 hours - 15% of total GCSE

NEA 2: 20 hours - 35% of total GCSE

Assessment overview

NEA 1: The Food Investigation Assessment

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. A report of approximately 1500 words will be produced

NEA 2: The Food Preparation Assessment

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.

A report will be produced of no more than 20 sides of A4

These assessments will be based on a choice of tasks released by AQA in Year 11

Art & Design: **ART, CRAFT & DESIGN**

Exam Board: Edexcel, GCSE

Why Study Art?

Studying Art allows you to develop creative skills, independent thinking, and practical application through different materials and processes. It's perfect for those who are imaginative, willing to experiment, and enjoy exploring new ideas. The course suits pupils who are keen to work independently, visit galleries for inspiration, and communicate their ideas and opinions through art.

Course Overview

Pupils will be required to work in at least one of the disciplines of painting, drawing, printmaking and/or sculpture.

Fine art may be defined as work which is produced as an outcome of the pupils' personal experience, rather than that which is created exclusively for a practical function, or that which is the outcome of a tightly prescribed brief. It is a means by which ideas are explored, communicated and, through visual information and enquiry, translated into art outcomes.

Work produced for this endorsement will demonstrate the use of formal elements and creative skills, and give visual form to individual thoughts, feelings, observations and ideas. Pupils will show evidence of trying to extend their own and others' ways of seeing the world. They will use the visual language of the subject sensitively and thoughtfully to support their intentions.

Assessment Details

Non Exam Assessment (Portfolio)

60% of GCSE

Assessment overview

The portfolio will consist of a sustained project. It is made up of more than one piece of art work and a candidate must demonstrate to the examiner his/her 'working process' (via sketches, notes, studies etc.) as well as the final product or products.

In addition they must evaluate their art and make informed connections with the work of professional artists and designers, from the past or present.

Examination Portfolio

The final piece to be completed within 10 hours under exam conditions.

40% of GCSE

Assessment overview

The exam topic (a broad based thematic starting point set by the examining board) is given to the candidate three months prior to the actual exam in order that preliminary studies can be carried out. During that exam, there is no written exam paper, instead the candidate will have 10 hours to produce a final piece, with reference to their preparatory studies, in response to the exam topic.

Design & Technology

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Design & Technology?

This course gives pupils the opportunity to study one material area of design and technology alongside the core elements of the subject.

The course covers all aspects of the National Curriculum for Design and Technology. You will learn about a range of materials, manufacturing processes, techniques and new technologies and be able to use them appropriately.

Pupils considering Design & Technology need to be aware that at least 25% of the exam paper will assess maths and science, so confidence in these subjects is recommended.

Course Overview

You will be designing and making products in wood, metal and plastic as well as developing an understanding of materials and processes used in the other areas of technology.

The 3 key areas of study are:

- Core technical principals
- Specialist technical principals
- Designing and making principles.

Assessment Details

The non-exam assessment involves a research, design, and evaluation portfolio, with the context provided annually by the exam board. All three areas are assessed through the non-exam assessment (coursework) and the written exam.

Unit 1: Non-Exam assessment (NEA) - Coursework

50% of the qualification

100 marks

Unit 2: Written exam

Content overview

The syllabus comprises of seven units:

- Unit 1 - New and emerging technologies
- Unit 2 - Energy, materials, systems and devices
- Unit 3 - Materials and their working properties
- Unit 4 - Common specialist technical principles
- Unit 5 - Specialist material areas - materials specific
- Unit 6 - Designing principles
- Unit 7 - Making principles

Assessment overview

Written examination: 2 hours

50% of the qualification

Externally assessed

- Based on the 3 key study areas
- Consists of multiple choice and short answer questions examining the core technical principals.
- Consists of longer response questions that assess the specialist technical principals.
- Consists of questions that assess the designing and making process.

Drama

Exam Board: AQA, GCSE

Why Study Drama?

Studying drama enhances creativity, imagination, and social skills, while deepening your understanding of Drama as an art form. It fosters self-confidence, communication skills, and awareness of others, while exploring social and cultural impacts.

Course Overview

Throughout the course, pupils will explore a variety of drama styles, genres, and key practitioners. They will learn how performers communicate meaning to an audience, as well as key theatre conventions and terminology.

The course covers the roles and processes involved in contemporary professional theatre, how plays are constructed and realised, and how to create, interpret, and communicate a character or role. Pupils will also examine drama within its social, cultural, and historical contexts and how these factors influence performance.

There will be opportunity for pupils to go on various theatre trips. There is also an expectation that pupils will attend extra rehearsals when preparing for performance assessments.

Assessment Details

Component 1:	Weighting
Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes	40%
Content overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre.• Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.• Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.	
Component 2: Devising Drama	Weighting
Performance/ practical assessment	40%
Content overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and develop a devised piece from a stimulus.• Performance of devised drama or design realisation for this performance.• Analysis and evaluation of own devising process and performance.	
Component 3: Texts in practice	Weighting
Performance/ practical assessment	20%
Content overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance of two extracts from one play (pupils may contribute as a performer or a designer)• Centre choice of performance text.	

Music

Exam Board: OCR

Why Study Music?

In the first instance, take GCSE Music if you enjoy making music and would like to know more about music and your instrument. Employers value this qualification as it demonstrates creativity, self-discipline, motivation, teamwork, problem-solving, and the ability to perform under pressure.

The course requires playing an instrument and/or singing, with a strong emphasis on performance (30% of the GCSE), both solo and in groups. Final coursework is not performed in front of an audience, but musical competency is essential.

Course Overview

GCSE Music covers a wide range of topics, including The Concerto through Time, Rhythms of the World, Film Music, and Pop Conventions (including Musical Theatre).

Pupils will:

- Learn to read and write music for their instrument/voice, from basics to advanced skills like score reading and notation software.
- Develop instrumental and/or singing skills, with advanced pupils focusing on personal interpretation.
- Play in ensembles and learn to use Music Technology for composition and research.

No prior experience is required—just a love of music and a willingness to learn.

Assessment Details

Non-Exam Assessment	Weighting
Component 1 Content overview:	60%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance on the pupil's chosen instrument• Composition to a brief set by the pupil.	
Component 2 Content overview:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensemble performance• Composition to an OCR set brief	
Component 3: Listening and Appraising	Weighting
Content overview	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aural recognition and context heard /unfamiliar music from within the Areas of Study 2,3,4 & 5.	
Assessment overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes• 80 marks• The total length of performance required in component 1 or 2 and 3 or 4 is combined is a minimum of four minutes with at least one minute as part of an ensemble. Pupils can perform several short pieces for either or both components.	
Area of Study	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My Music• The Concerto Through Time• Rhythms of the World• Film Music• Conventions of Pop	

Photography

Exam Board: Edexcel, GCSE

Why Study Photography?

Photography will enhance your ability to see the world from unique perspectives, developing both technical and creative skills through personal investigation. You'll explore the work of photographers, artists, and designers to inspire your own creativity. Photography is present in everyday life, from advertising to magazines and album covers. If you enjoy taking and appreciating photos, this course is for you.

Course Overview

GCSE Photography allows pupils to explore both traditional and modern photographic techniques, including understanding light, composition, depth of field, and using DSLR cameras and studio lighting. You'll develop skills in digital manipulation, Photoshop, and digital presentation.

The course focuses on the theme of 'Identity,' exploring personal and place identity through various photo shoots like portrait, landscape, and motion capture. The course is ideal for pupils interested in Visual Arts careers and complements GCSE Art, leading to A Level Photography and Media.

Potential careers include fine art photographer, photojournalist, fashion photographer, graphic designer, and filmmaker.

Assessment Details

Non Exam Assessment (Portfolio)

60% of GCSE

Assessment overview

The portfolio will consist of a sustained project. It is made up of more than one piece of art work and a candidate must demonstrate to the examiner his/her 'working process' (via sketches, notes, studies etc.) as well as the final product or products.

In addition they must evaluate their art and make informed connections with the work of professional artists and designers, from the past or present.

Examination Portfolio

The final piece to be completed within 10 hours under exam conditions.

40% of GCSE

Assessment overview

The exam topic (a broad based thematic starting point set by the examining board) is given to the candidate three months prior to the actual exam in order that preliminary studies can be carried out. During that exam, there is no written exam paper, instead the candidate will have 10 hours to produce a final piece, with reference to their preparatory studies, in response to the exam topic.



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