



LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A GUIDE TO GCSE SUBJECT CHOICE

for

YEAR 9 PUPILS

December 2023

CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

You are about to make some of the most exciting choices of your education so far, as you start to think about which subjects you want to take for GCSE in Years 10 and 11. The choices you make now may well influence the rest of your academic education, and lead to opportunities later in your life. It is important that you appreciate which options are available to you, and what is involved in each subject, so that you can make thoughtful and informed choices.

The notes in this booklet are intended to be a general guide to help you to select which subjects to study. You should talk to your subject teachers about what the GCSE involves and could also speak to older pupils about the subjects they chose. The school careers advisor, your Form Tutor and Head of Year will also be a source of valuable information and advice over the next few weeks.

The lessons you have next year will be a mixture of compulsory and options subjects; you will take 10 GCSEs in total.

All pupils will take the following **compulsory** subjects:

- English Language & Literature (2 GCSEs)
- Mathematics (1 GCSE)

All pupils will also have lessons in the following subjects:

- Values – a subject tackling religious, moral, political, economic, health and social themes, as well as study skills.
- P.E. and Games



When choosing your 7 **options** subjects, please remember:

- ▶ All pupils must choose **at least two science** subjects (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics)
- ▶ All students must choose **at least one modern or classical language** (French, German, Spanish, Latin or Greek), which you must have studied previously.

You should **choose 7 subjects from the following list** (all of which will lead to a GCSE):

- Art – either Art & Design **or** Photography (**not both**)
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- German
- Greek
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education (P.E.)
- Physics
- Religious Studies (R.S.)
- Spanish

What happens now?

You have about a month to make your choices. During this time, you should read through this booklet and talk through the details with your parents or guardians, and your teachers. The Year 9 Parents' Evening in December is an important opportunity for you to work towards final decisions.

Some words of wisdom...

- ▶ **Start thinking about your choices now** - this will give you more time to come to the right decision
- ▶ **Don't focus too much on what career you think you want when you are older** – you will probably change your mind many times before you get a job
- ▶ **Try to achieve a good balance of subjects** – this will keep your future options open; we recommend that you maintain a good balance between the arts, humanities and sciences and that you consider continuing with at least one practical subject
- ▶ **Choose the subject not the teacher** – you won't necessarily have the same teacher next year so make decisions based on how interesting you find the subject
- ▶ **Pick what you enjoy and what is right for you** – it can be tempting to make the same choices as your friends; what is right for someone else may not be the best option for you
- ▶ **Think about the skills that each subject will teach you** – long-term, the skills that you develop can be more helpful than the content covered

Some questions you may have...

Should I choose my subjects to fit in with one particular career?

It is unlikely at this stage that you will have made up your mind about what you would like to do in the future. Most Year 9 pupils only have vague ideas, which are likely to change over time. It is perhaps most sensible to select a good balance of subjects in order to keep open as many future paths as possible.

Should I choose the subjects I am best at?

It is true that to gain entry into Higher Education and many careers, you will need good grades in examinations. However, you should make sure you are genuinely interested in the subjects you choose, and not just pick the ones you find easier.

How do I work out if a subject is useful?

All the subjects we offer are meaningful and useful. The core curriculum (English, Mathematics, Science and a Modern Foreign Language) covers the requirements of most universities and careers. Your options subjects all offer you knowledge, skills and understanding that can be applied to a range of situations and future contexts. Consider that the skills you will learn will be extremely valuable in your future career.

Mathematics

Edexcel GCSE 9-1
(Higher Tier)

Assessment: 3 papers, 90 minutes each
100% Examination (33% Non-Calculator, 67% Calculator)

What will I learn?

- To continue to develop your skills in problem solving and investigation by exploring new mathematical contexts.
- You will study a variety of mathematical concepts in numeracy, algebra, geometrical reasoning, ratio and proportion, probability and statistics.
- The knowledge gained in these areas will then be put to use in particular to solve "open ended" problems where a range of different techniques may be required.
- The examinations will have a much greater emphasis on "problem solving" than previously as well as the need to memorise mathematical formulae.

English

Eduqas GCSE 9-1

Assessment:

Language: 2 exams (1 - 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 40%; 2 - 2 hours, worth 60%)

Spoken Language – Pass, Merit, Distinction

Literature: 2 exams (1 – 2 hours, worth 40%; 2 – 2.5 hours, worth 60%)

English is a vibrant and exciting compulsory subject; it is very much about ideas and arguments: how to form, understand and express them both in writing and orally. At the heart of future career paths and social situations is communication which makes the skills gained in this subject valuable way beyond the summer exam.

At the end of the two year course pupils receive two separate qualifications, a GCSE in English Language and English Literature, both from the Eduqas exam board graded 9-1. It is to be expected students will find the courses both demanding and rewarding in terms of the content and the assessment.

Lots of creativity, discussion, debates and analysis of texts are to be found in English lessons. Where possible, teachers aim to take pupils to see productions so they can fully experience the texts they're studying and see them come alive.

English Language:

“Language is the armoury of the human mind, and at once contains the trophies of its past and the weapons of its future conquests.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

This course is assessed in an un-tiered exam with 20% of the writing marks coming from the students' accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Pupils will sit two exams which both test reading and writing. The first exam will be 1 hour 45 minutes in duration and is worth 40% of the marks, assessing understanding of a 20th Century text through structured questions as well as pupils' ability to write creatively. The second paper is worth the remaining 60% and will last 2 hours. Students will respond to 19th and 21st Century texts, they will also need to write to persuade or discuss in a format they would find in everyday life.

Spoken language skills will be assessed but will not form part of this qualification; instead they'll be reported separately and graded Pass, Merit or Distinction.

English Literature:

“Books are like imprisoned souls till someone takes them down from a shelf and frees them.”

Samuel Butler

English Literature covers a wide variety of texts and genres through un-tiered closed book exams, meaning pupils need to have both a broad and deep understanding of the texts they're studying. 5% of the marks will be awarded for accurate use of spelling punctuation and grammar.

The first exam is worth 40% of the marks and is 2 hours in duration; it will test knowledge and understanding of a Shakespeare play and a collection of poetry. The second paper is a 2 ½ hour exam which tests the knowledge and understanding of a 19th Century novel, fiction or drama from the British Isles from 1914 onwards and some unseen poetry.

Art and Design

AQA GCSE
Art, Craft and Design
Specification

Assessment:
60% coursework
40% examination (started in February of your Year 11)

Why study Art?

GCSE Art & Design is an exceptionally enriching and stimulating subject. While many pupils opt to take art for GCSE because they greatly enjoy the subject and/or because they possess natural artistic flair, the vast majority do so because they recognize its broader educational value. Among much else it:

- promotes creativity and lateral thinking;
- significantly enhances one's ability to communicate through visual means;
- makes pupils more technically adept;
- encourages pupils to analyse sources incisively;
- makes pupils more culturally aware;
- encourages pupils to consider profound ideas and enhances their ability to question things more thoughtfully.

The increasing dominance of visual communication in the modern world – perhaps one of its defining features – means that art is a very important academic subject. It is worth noting that in the UK economy, the Creative Sector (underpinned by visual artists) is the second only to the Financial Sector as a generator of income for the Exchequer.

What will I learn?

All GCSE art students engage with a variety of artistic disciplines and media, which include:

- **drawing:** pencil, charcoal, pen & ink, pastel etc.
- **painting:** watercolour and oil are our two main painting media, although we also stock and use gouache and acrylic
- **mixed-media;**
- **lino printing;**
- **digital photography:** art students will have access to the departmental PCs when these are not being used by photography students.

You will also learn to:

- analyse images through art history, and contextual studies;
- develop and evaluate your ideas;
- articulate your thoughts, and communicate with an audience.

Other information you may want to know...

A few myths dispelled:

- You do not have to be 'brilliant at drawing' to gain a top grade for GCSE art. Photography; using computers to manipulate imagery; doing art historical research; establishing meaningful links with other subjects such as music, drama and history; coming up with good ideas... these are just some of the things which mark the most successful GCSE artists.
- Some people may tell you that there is 'far too much coursework for art'. This is an oversimplification. Whilst the proportion of the final GCSE grade determined by coursework is high (60%), it is sensibly spread over one-and-a-half years, the final half year being devoted to the exam unit. Pupils have ample time to manage and complete their coursework, which is nothing to be afraid of.

Biology

AQA Biology GCSE
(8461)

Assessment:
100% externally assessed examination (Summer of the Year 11)
Continual practical skill assessment throughout the GCSE course (although not separately assessed)

Why study Biology?

GCSE Biology is an exciting and dynamic subject as it seeks to inform students of many developments that are occurring in the natural world around us: from genetic engineering to fighting the spread of outbreaks of contagious disease such as Ebola; from evaluating evidence of theories of evolution to assessing the effects of climate change. Biology is at the heart of many developments that are relevant and it is critical that we understand the story behind the headlines!

The topics covered during the GCSE will build upon and extend the foundations laid during the Biology lessons in Lower School. Familiar topics such as cell biology, animal and plant physiology and genetics are developed further, and new concepts such as scientific enquiry and the control of body systems are introduced. In addition, there are many opportunities to evaluate scientific methodology and to develop practical skills giving a hands-on aspect of the course.

What will I learn?

Within the subject there will be opportunity for students to develop their subject knowledge and other important skills which are transferable to other disciplines:

There will be a number of key topics covered over the duration of the course, these are:

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Whether it is the intention to follow the subject to study at a higher level or not, Biology at GCSE develops an appreciation of some of the topical and relevant issues that face society today and tomorrow. A GCSE in Biology is essential if it is the intention to study any science at a higher level and complements many other subjects such as Geography and Sports Science. In particular, it is a prerequisite to allow entry onto the study of any Bio-Medical courses or professions in later life.

If you have any further queries, please talk to your Biology teacher or Mr Millatt as Head of Department.

Chemistry

AQA GCSE

Assessment:
100% examination
(two equally weighted papers)

Why study Chemistry?

Chemistry covers a wide variety of topics fundamental to an understanding of science and materials. Life is a whole series of chemical reactions, and understanding Chemistry helps to understand how we live and how we can cure illnesses. Chemistry will help mankind develop new ways to create and harness energy. Chemistry will discover new materials. In short, Chemistry makes life better!

What will I learn?

- The course uses practical lessons and demonstrations to illustrate the way in which chemists explain the behaviour of matter and synthesise new substances. The importance of the chemical industry and its interaction with society is also investigated.
- You will learn to handle chemicals, sometimes quite dangerous ones, in a safe way.
- You will learn how to plan and execute different types of practical work. Sometimes you will work alone but often the work is done in pairs or small groups within the class. Most importantly, you will learn to think in a logical way and this skill is well-respected by universities and employers.
- Topics cover 10 main areas including:
 - Atomic structure and the periodic table
 - Chemical changes
 - Energy changes
 - Bonding, structure and the properties of matter
 - Rate and extent of chemical change
 - Quantitative chemistry
 - Using resources
 - Chemical analysis
 - Chemistry of the atmosphere
 - Organic chemistry

Other information you may want to know...

- Almost all universities require medical students to have A-level Chemistry. Without a good GCSE in Chemistry, you cannot go onto A-level.
- Choosing Chemistry at this stage is the first step on the road to a scientific career but it could also lead to many different and equally exciting pathways.

Classical Languages (Latin and Ancient Greek)

OCR GCSE

Latin/Ancient Greek Specification

Assessment:

100% Examination - 3 papers

(1 Language paper of 1.5 hours and 2 Literature papers, each of 1 hour)

Why study Latin and/or Ancient Greek?

If you have enjoyed Latin/Ancient Greek and have been successful at these subjects, you will wish to consider one or both for GCSE. They are among the most difficult and intellectually challenging GCSE subjects, and as a result they enjoy an extremely high reputation with top universities and employers.

The course comprises a 50% language element (translation and comprehension from passages of Latin/Ancient Greek which are not seen in advance), and a 50% literature element (intensive study of set texts, both prose and verse). The new syllabus has some optional English into Latin/Ancient Greek translation though candidates can choose to complete a grammar identification exercise instead. There is **no** examined oral element. There is **no** coursework.

These subjects will appeal to you if you want to:

- Develop your knowledge of complex inflected languages
- Improve your understanding of English grammar and vocabulary
- Improve your English communication skills orally and on paper
- Learn how to appreciate and analyse literary texts
- Increase your knowledge of the ancient world

What will I learn?

- To translate and comprehend Latin/Ancient Greek at the appropriate level
- A specified list of vocabulary
- A specified list of grammar
- Approximately 220 lines (half prose, half verse) from some of the greatest classical authors
- How to analyse, evaluate, compare, argue cogently and write fluently
- To engage in discussion, criticise, defend, ask, answer and listen.

What do I need?

- An interest in language and literature
- An interest in the classical world
- A solid work ethic.

What will I gain?

- An excellent learning experience from a group of experienced, enthusiastic and highly qualified teachers
- A good GCSE grade in one or more prestigious and highly-valued subjects.

Computer Science

OCR GCSE (J277)

Assessment:

2 Examinations (90 minutes each; both worth 50%)

Why study Computer Science?

This exciting GCSE gives you an excellent opportunity to investigate how computers work and how they are used, and to develop software and solve real world problems. A few years ago people chose Computer Science because they wanted to work in that field. Today people choose Computer Science because they know it underpins so many other fields.

Assessment

The assessment will involve two examinations (1 hour 30 minutes each) weighted at 50% each. There is no Non Exam Assessment associated with this subject any more.

What will I learn?

First of all, you will learn to program in the Python programming language (available to download for free from <https://www.python.org/downloads/>)

Content will include:

- Fundamentals of algorithms
- Programming (mostly Python)
- Data representation and Binary
- Computer systems
- Computer networks
- Cyber security

Link to specification:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/558027-specification-gcse-computer-science-j277.pdf>

What else?

The Raspberry Pi is a fantastic resource. You can find out more at <https://www.raspberrypi.org/>
The Arduino and Microbit are also excellent resources.

What next?

There is a major skills shortage in this field. Computer programmers are very much in demand. There is a huge growth in the development of apps and web based software. In this increasingly information intensive society, computer scientists are finding themselves highly sought after.

Future study options include computer science, software engineering, engineering, maths, physics, artificial intelligence, computer game design and computer networking and security.

Future career options include computer programmer, network manager, games designer and the security services.

However, many people are using their skills in other areas such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Nearly every kind of engineering relies heavily on Computing.

Design & Technology

AQA GCSE

Assessment:

50% Non-examined assessment (coursework)

50% Written examination (2 hours)

Why study Design & Technology?

If you are interested in any technical or creative career, D&T is for you. Fields such as Architecture, Product Design and Engineering are most closely related although many students choose D&T because they enjoy it!

GCSE Design & Technology aims to develop problem solving and design skills, to encourage curiosity, to stimulate interest and to promote the enjoyment of applying scientific and design principles to a practical situation whilst providing scope for pupils to expand their own ideas. Knowledge and experience are gained from a variety of sources and are used in conjunction with experimentation and demonstration to produce practical solutions to a wide variety of problems. Some of the areas in which your expertise will improve as a result of studying D&T are:

- Lateral thinking
- Experimentation
- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Idea sketching
- CAD and CAM (Computer Aided Design & Computer Aided Manufacture)
- Control systems
- Evaluation
- Practical ability
 1. Use of a wide variety of power tools and machinery
 2. Use of hand tools
 3. Modern CAM manufacture including 3D printing, CNC routing and laser cutting

What will I learn?

All GCSE D&T students will learn skills using a vast array of tools and machinery allowing them to ultimately design and prototype their own concepts without restriction. Over the 2 years, students will work on a variety of projects including a 'skills lab' which challenges them to use lathes, welders, 3D printers, thermoforming ovens, laser cutters and a multitude of hand skills to demonstrate their ability to use all of the equipment in the department.

Theoretical core technical principles

- New & emerging technologies
- Energy storage & generation
- Modern & smart materials
- Mechanical devices
- Material properties
- Basic engineering principles
- General understanding of all material areas including wood, metal, polymer, textiles and electronic systems

Specialist knowledge

- You will specialise in modern materials including an in depth study of polymers and their applications

Systematic and iterative design processes

- Producing a design portfolio which solves a real world problem
- Manufacturing a product or prototype
- Typical projects ... there are no typical projects! You will have the opportunity to develop your own project, developing a product from start to finish in order to solve a real world problem.

Other information you may want to know...

A few myths dispelled:

- You do not have to be a 'brilliant' sketcher, nor do you have to have vast experience with CAD packages like OnShape, Autodesk Fusion360 or TechSOFT 2D Design as you will have the chance to improve these skills during the course and to use them in proportion to your skill level.
- Is it very scientific? A bit. You will certainly be encouraged to reflect on, and use practically, some principles that you will encounter in physics and in maths.
- Year 10 will include a range of mini projects that develop your skills in a range of techniques. It is very hands-on with plenty of opportunity to get in the workshop.
- Coursework is always seen as a major part of D&T. Yes, it does make up 50% of the overall marks, but that allows you to get feedback and improve your work at various stages over the two year period. The expectation for coursework is 30 - 40 minutes per week and if you keep up to date, you will cover the amount of work necessary to score a 9.
- The final exam makes up 50% of the total and covers a range of topics which are studied throughout the course and revised at the end of year 11.

Where does it lead?

- If you have an interest in studying Product design, Mechanical, Electrical, System engineering, Architecture, Industrial design, Aeronautics, Automotive design, Graphic design or any other related area then this is the course for you.
- Further study comes from the related A-Level course 'Product Design (3D Design)'
- A-level Design and Technology courses are regarded by many universities (including Cambridge, Loughborough and Bath) as extremely valuable if you intend to progress into Engineering, Architecture or Product Design fields.

Drama

Pearson Edexcel Drama (IDRO)

Assessment: Coursework – 40%
Performance – 20%
Written exam – 40%

Why Study Drama?

GCSE Drama is a diverse, stimulating and engaging course, which not only provides students with a deeper understanding of drama skills, techniques and practices but has far reaching benefits for their entire schooling. It aims to generate valuable communication, analytical and evaluative skills, whilst also aiming to improve students' confidence in performance work.

We firmly believe that drama is a subject which can provide students with unique learning opportunities, where they are encouraged to come to terms with themselves and the world in which they live; to develop intellectually, emotionally and imaginatively. The course supports progression to further study of Drama and a wide range of other subjects.

What will I learn?

You will learn how to:

- Create drama, including all the acting and staging skills that are needed to bring a piece of drama to life.
- Cooperate with others, listening and accepting the contribution of your peers.
- Create a character and play this character in a performance.
- Evaluate and analyse performance work.
- Express yourself in an active and exciting way using a range of strategies, elements and mediums.
- Prepare for a practical and written examination.
- Interpret plays in a creative manner.

Content and assessment overview

Component 1: Devising

Coursework. 40% of the qualification.

This component is internally assessed and externally moderated. The students create an original piece of theatre from a given stimulus which lasts 15 minutes. They are assessed on performance skills and also present a portfolio covering the creating and developing process and evaluation of the process, in the form of a 2000 word portfolio.

Component 2: Performance from Text

20% of the qualification.

Externally assessed by a visiting examiner. Two separate performances are created covering two key extracts from a text chosen by the centre.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

40% of the qualification. Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Section A: Bringing Texts to Life. This section consists of one question broken into six parts based on one extract from the chosen prescribed text.

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation. This section consists of two questions requiring students to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen. They are allowed to bring in theatre evaluation notes up to a maximum of 500 words.

Food Preparation and Nutrition

AQA Food Preparation and Nutrition

Assessment: Non-Exam Assessment (50%)
Food science task (15%) and practical assessment, including 3-hour practical exam (35%)
Single Examination paper (50%) 1 hour 45 minutes

Why Study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

The Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE is an exciting and creative course, which focuses on mastering practical culinary skills. It will help you develop a greater understanding of human nutrition and food provenance and introduces students to the world of food science, research and investigation. You will be taught to appreciate the art and skill of British and international cuisines and will investigate the challenges surrounding food security. This is an exciting and interesting course, which will develop your creative, practical and investigative skills and help you make the connection between theory and practice.

What will I learn?

Underpinning the course is an emphasis on human nutrition, working characteristics and food science. You will learn about British and international culinary traditions, provenance, consumer studies and food safety. At the heart of the qualification is a focus on developing practical skills, knowledge and understanding of food as a material to develop and create 'new' ideas and concepts for a range of consumer markets. Throughout the course there is no limit on your ideas. Imagination and creativity will not be stifled. You will learn lifelong skills and develop personal skills and attributes that you will need to succeed in any future career; problem solving, planning, creative thinking, resilience, analysis and evaluation. Many of our pupils opt for food technology because they enjoy the practical element and they find they have the natural flair, talent and creativity the subject requires. Many recognize its broader educational value:

- Information and communication
- Independent study skills
- Team work
- Planning and organisation
- Analyzing tasks and problem solving
- Being creative and experimental

Much of the learning will be hands-on and 'learning-by-doing'. You will make a wide range of products and develop your practical skills. You will learn about foods, ingredients, processes, techniques and functions of food through experimenting and testing. Diet, nutrition, health and consumer choice will also be explored.

How will I be assessed?

There will be one exam for this qualification, which will assess your knowledge of the theory behind food preparation and nutrition. The exam will be 1 hour 45 minutes long.

The second part of the assessment will be two non-examination assessments and will consist of one food science task involving food experiments, and a food preparation task involving practical work.

NEA 1: Students will use science to perform experiments as a food scientist.

NEA 2: Students will plan, prepare, cook and present a 2/3 course menu. This will provide you with an opportunity to showcase your creativity and cooking skills, e.g. a street food menu, create delicious tapas dishes or cook up a menu for a student on a budget.

French

AQA – 8658

Assessment: 4 exams, each worth 25%. Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking

Why study modern languages?

There are lots of reasons to study a modern language at GCSE. Not only will you find it enjoyable, but it is an essential component of an academic education which will set you up for future study and the world of work. Having a good modern language GCSE grade is vital on your CV if you plan to go to a top university. Some of these universities require one as an entry requirement, but all of them see it as a 'facilitating subject', so that even for something like medicine or engineering, they look for language skills, just as employers do in the jobs market.

Why study French?

French plays a hugely significant role in the modern world, from international business to the media, international diplomacy and global development. It is a great option for a wide range of future careers in business, law, economics and engineering, as well as being the ideal grounding for learning other languages in the future. Given the number and range of francophone countries around the world, being able to speak French will not only be useful for personal travel, it will also open doors for you, giving you the flexibility to study and work abroad. Modern Languages graduates rank amongst those with the highest employment rates in the UK!

In Year 10 you will be able to spend a week in Lyon on the annual exchange, which is run jointly with LGGS. This provides a dynamic and enjoyable way to improve linguistic skills, experience the culture first-hand and make new friends.

The GCSE French qualification offers a rich and creative curriculum, which enhances cultural understanding whilst developing linguistic knowledge. Lessons make use of authentic materials, such as excerpts from literary texts and films, to give you a greater appreciation of Francophone culture. Teaching activities are interactive and varied, designed to encourage you to become more confident in using French spontaneously for real purposes and developing excellent comprehension and written skills.

What you will study and how it is assessed

Through a balanced approach to language study, covering all four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, you will cover the following three themes:

- Identity and lifestyle.
- Popular culture.
- Communication and the world around us.

25% Listening – 45 minutes. Answers in French & English on a range of audio texts.

25% Reading – 1 hour. You must understand and respond to written texts of a variety of genres.

25% Writing - 1 hour 15 minutes. You must complete a translation from English into French, one structured piece of writing and one open-ended task.

25% Speaking – Between 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes prep time. Conducted by class teachers in school. Role play, reading aloud task with short conversation followed by a photo card task and unprepared conversation. Recordings will be sent off to the exam board for external assessment.

Geography

AQA – GCSE Specification 8035

Assessment:

Paper 1. Living with the physical world. 1.5 hours

Paper 2. Challenges in the Human Environment. 1.5 hours

Paper 3. Geographical Applications. 1 hour

Why study Geography?

GCSE Geography helps you to make sense of the world around you. It is up-to-date, hands on, it is relevant and it is fun. The course involves a good mix of topics from the study of natural hazards like volcanoes and tsunamis, to globalisation and the rise of China. The course will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the social, economic and physical forces and processes which shape and change our world. If you are interested in current affairs locally or globally, this is the course for you.

There are so many ways of learning in geography. It is very practical with opportunities to learn new skills, such as:

- modern computer based mapping (called GIS)
- fieldwork skills
- interpreting photographs
- map skills
- presenting and debating techniques
- role play

Fieldwork is a really important part of geography. We go to Morecambe, Lancaster and the Lake District. This provides you with a brilliant opportunity to experience some of the things you have learnt about in class, see things differently and of course have fun. At A Level, students go further afield to Iceland and possibly India.

You will improve your literacy through your report writing and written work and make practical use of your numeracy skills when you interpret data and construct graphs. It is a subject that encourages you to question and find out why things happen, to make links, problem solve and form opinions. Such skills make geographers excellent decision makers who are much valued in the work place. International development, environment, marketing, transport, tourism, travel, flood protection, weather, geology, national parks, oceanography and town planning are all career areas that geographers go into alongside law, engineering, and business.

What will I learn?

With the emphasis on up to date, located examples, the topics that are covered at G.C.S.E. are:

- Natural Hazards: Tectonic and Hazards, Weather Hazards, Climate Change
- Ecosystems, Tropical Rainforests, Hot Environments
- UK Physical Landscapes: Coastal Landscapes and Glacial Landscapes
- Urban Issues Globally and within the UK
- The changing Economic World
- Global variations in economic development and quality of life.
- Closing the Global Development Gap
- Newly Emerging Economies
- UK economic changes
- Resource management
- Energy issues

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035>

Geographical skills

Students are required to develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills, including cartographic, graphical, numerical and statistical skills, throughout their study of the specification. Skills will be assessed in all three written exams. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps or other map extracts may be used in any of the three exams.

You will be expected to:

- Keep up to date with geography in the news
- Empathise with other people's views and consider your opinion
- Use and understand geographical vocabulary
- Learn about places all over the world

Geography helps you to understand the world around you and develop critical opinions on topics that affect you.

German

AQA Assessment

Listening (25% - Final Exam)

This is a 45 minutes paper - you must understand and respond to the spoken language with questions in German & English on a range of audio texts. You will also write down a piece of German that is dictated to you.

Reading (25% - Final Exam)

This is a 1 hour paper - you must understand and respond to written texts of a variety of genres.

Writing (25% - Final Exam)

This is a 1 hour 15 minutes paper – you must complete a translation from English to German, one structured piece of writing and one open-ended task.

Speaking (25% - Final Exam)

This exam will last between 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes prep time and will be conducted by class teachers in school. It will comprise of a role play, reading aloud task with short conversation followed by a photo card task and unprepared conversation. Recordings will be sent off to the exam board for external assessment.

Why study German?

GCSE German offers a rich and creative curriculum, which enhances cultural understanding whilst developing linguistic knowledge. Lessons will make use of ICT and interactive teaching activities and are planned to encourage you to become more confident in using German spontaneously for real purposes, as well as to develop excellent comprehension and written skills. German is a great option for a wide range of future careers in business, economics, science and engineering and will open doors for you, giving you the flexibility to study and work abroad. German is a highly sought after language in the business world and offers many different career opportunities. It can be combined with many other subjects at degree level. Modern Languages graduates rank amongst those with the highest employment rates in the UK!

During your studies you will be able to spend time in Germany on the exchange with Neckargemünd, near Heidelberg. This provides a dynamic and enjoyable way to improve linguistic skills, learn about culture and make new friends.

What will I learn?

You will develop your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills through coverage of three themes:

- Identity & lifestyle
- Popular culture.
- Communication and the world around us

You will be expected to:

- use language imaginatively & creatively & give justified opinions
- make links between German & English to deepen your understanding
- understand & accurately use a wide range of vocabulary & structures.

And finally.....

There are many practical, intellectual and cultural reasons for learning German. Learning German takes hard work, time and dedication, but the rewards are worth it and it's fun! The skills you learn will benefit you in the future and be useful and valuable in a whole range of subjects, future courses and careers.

History

Edexcel

Assessment:

100% by examination (3 exams at the end of Year 11)

Why study History?

History is a popular and highly regarded option at LRGS with a track record of outstanding success in public examinations. Most boys take history because they enjoy it and find the range of topics such as Hitler, Israel/Palestine, Warfare and key characters that have shaped the history of our country interesting and rewarding. It is *the* subject for debate and one that doesn't shy away from controversy. Staffed by enthusiasts, boys taking history will find lessons challenging and stimulating and students should expect to play an active part.

What will I learn?

British Thematic study: Warfare and British society (c1250 to present) (20% weighting)

Historic Environment: London and the Second World War 1939-45. (10% weighting)

British depth study: The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189-1216 (20%)

Modern Depth study: Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918-39) (30% weighting)

Period study: The Middle East 1945-95 (20% weighting)

We offer varied opportunities outside the classroom via the History Society (debates/talks etc) as well as exciting trips to France/Belgium for Medieval, WW1 and WW2 sites. In recent years we have also offered Parallel Histories investigations and debates with other schools on divisive topics such as Israel/Palestine and on leaders such as Churchill. History is a thriving option at A-level and a high proportion of pupils go on to study history at University.

Amongst many other benefits to studying history:

- Studying history helps the student develop powers of analysis and the ability to be discerning when testing the credibility of evidence. This is a key skill when faced with "Fake News" and a world of spin.
- Our studies hone in on areas of controversy and provide excellent preparation for a career in Investigative Journalism, Law or Politics.
- You will learn how to form and to persuasively express your own opinions through discussion, debate and essays. (Contrary to myth, we do not set long essays and prefer short focused written answers!)
- If you are an entrepreneur it may be worth considering that History is the most commonly held first degree for Chairmen of the Fortune 500 Companies.
- If, on the other hand, you are going on to study Medicine or Sciences/Maths at University then History may prove especially valuable to you because of training it gives you in being able to summarise information quickly and to prioritise evidence.

For more information please speak to your History teacher, students who are studying the subject at the moment, or see Mr Kennedy.

Music

Pearson
(Edexcel)
GCSE

Assessment:
40% Listening – final exam
(1 hour and 45 minutes – externally marked)

30% Composition – 2 Controlled Assessments submitted
(internally marked and externally moderated)

30% Performance – 2 Controlled Assessments submitted
(internally marked and externally moderated)

Performing: You should play for at least 4 minutes in total and include both a solo and ensemble performances. These should be at least a minute in length. i.e. Solo – 1 minute, Ensemble – 3 minutes. Each performance will be marked out of 30.

Composing: You will need to compose two pieces of music of at least three minutes combined duration. i.e. Composition 1 – 1 minute, Composition 2 – 2 minutes. One composition will be composed to a brief set by the exam board, the other is a free choice. Each composition will be marked out of 30.

Listening and Appraising: Is assessed through a 1 hour 45 minute written paper. Section A will include questions related to 6 of your 8 set works, one short melody/rhythm completion exercise and a question on an unfamiliar piece. In Section B you will be asked to compare and contrast/or evaluate the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language of a set work with an unfamiliar piece of music.

Areas of Study and the Set Works:

Instrumental Music 1700-1820

- JS Bach: 3rd Movement from Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major
- Beethoven: 1st Movement from Piano Sonata no.8 in C minor 'Pathetique'

Vocal Music

- Purcell: Music for a While
- Queen: Killer Queen (from the album *Sheer Heart Attack*)

Music for Stage and Screen:

- S.Schwartz: Defying Gravity (from the album of the cast recording of *Wicked*)
- J.Williams: Main title/rebel blockade runner (from the soundtrack to *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*)

Fusions:

- Afro Celt Sound System: Release (from the album *Volume2:Release*)
- Esperanze Spalding: Samba Em Preludio (from the album *Esperanza*)

Why study Music?

If you enjoy performing music in your own time and are learning an instrument, having singing lessons or enjoy creating music on computers or in a recording studio, then this is a good subject to choose! If you would like to create music of your own, then composing will give you the opportunity. If you want to broaden your knowledge of all types of music, including classical, popular and world, then this course will give you an appreciation of the diversity of musical styles that exist today. Music graduates can offer some of the most highly desired key skills across all employment areas:

- communication
- problem solving skills
- time management
- creative thinking

What will you learn?

Students will learn to improve their performing skills and through their work in composing they will gain an insight into how music is constructed from their initial ideas through to the finished product. They will also learn how to analyse music in a variety of styles and discover the social and historical context in which music has been composed over the last 400 years or so.

All students have already gained many of the basic skills needed for this course in music lessons over the last three years at LRGS and will also be able to back this up further with their extra-curricular musical activities both in and out of school.

The listening skills studied will enhance the aural perception needed in language examinations. Performing skills will give students confidence in playing in front of an audience – useful if they intend to study, for example, drama or law. It will also provide a useful foundation for courses in Performing Arts or Music Technology as well as Music.

And finally....

The Music Department at LRGS has a large range of instrumental resources and an extensive music library. There are many thriving musical groups within the school and it is expected that GCSE students will take a leading role in these. The department provides dedicated rehearsal space with recently updated ICT facilities. Specialist computer programmes enable all students to produce high quality work. GCSE students have also engaged in joint education projects with the Lancashire Music Service and Lancaster Girls Grammar School.

Physical Education

AQA GCSE

Assessment

40% Practical

60% Theory (2 x 1 hr 15 mins examinations)

Why Study Theory of PE?

The upcoming Paris Olympic Games, and more recently the Men's Rugby and Cricket World Cups, demonstrate the effect that successful competitive sport can have on our nation. To reach the level of being an Olympic or professional athlete is something that most of us can only dream about, but to be involved in sport at that level as a coach or Sport Scientist is within reach of anyone with dedication and a passion for sport. Theory of PE is a course that allows an individual to take the first steps down the road to achieving that goal, either as an athlete or in one of the many related careers connected with elite sport.

What will you learn?

The course encourages pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, awareness and appreciation of their own and others' lifestyles in relation to physical education and to aspire to sporting success or a career in sport. The course encourages creativity and decision-making skills to enable students to plan effectively for performances and to respond to changing situations. Students will develop their ability to engage independently and successfully in different types of physical activity, and to develop and maintain their involvement in physical activity as part of a healthy active lifestyle. Pupils will also be encouraged in the pursuit of elite sport where applicable.

60% Theory (2 x 1 hour 15 mins examination)

During the GCSE course pupils will study the following topics:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data
- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being

40% Practical

This aspect of the course encourages students to make informed choices about getting involved in healthy physical activities that meet their needs, and to develop knowledge and understanding of the roles that the active participant can adopt and what constitutes effective performance in these different roles.

Pupils will be required to perform in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (these can be two individual or two team activities, plus one of either individual or team). Candidates will undergo a coursework element, which will require them to analyse and evaluate a performance to help bring about improvement in one activity.

Finally....

The content of the GCSE Physical Education specification is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle; to provide a route to further study such as A levels, possibly leading onto university to study a PE or sport related degree, and then onto a related career opportunity in pathways such as Sports Coaching, Physiotherapy, Diet and Nutrition, Biomechanics, Data Analysis, PE Teaching or Elite Sport.

Photography (lens-based and light-based media)

AQA GCSE

Photography Specification

Assessment:

60% coursework

40% examination (started in February of your Year 11)

Why study Photography?

The world is visual. We spend lots of time looking at images, and it's more convenient than it has ever been to take a photograph or a film. Youth culture is created through the sharing of images on places like Instagram and YouTube, and we record our lives through the pictures we make.

GCSE Photography is perfect for students who are fascinated by the world around them, those who are interested in society, their own identity, or who just have opinions they want to express.

The technical aspects of Photography provide an exciting challenge, and students enjoy getting to grips with concepts such as shutter speeds, apertures, and depth of field.

Studying Photography at GCSE:

- promotes creativity and lateral thinking;
- helps you understand how to communicate visually;
- makes you more technically aware;
- encourages you to analyse images and question things more thoughtfully;
- makes you more aware of your own culture and identity;
- gives you the opportunity to consider interesting ideas and opinions.

Creative skills are transferable, bringing benefits in later life, such as better communication and social skills. They have been linked to improved intellectual ability and wellbeing.

The Creative Sector makes massive contributions to the UK economy through fine art, television, film & media; games development & technologies; as well as digital photography, video, and more.

What will I learn?

All GCSE Photography students will learn about a variety of photographic approaches:

- portraiture, landscape photography, still life photography;
- narrative & documentary photography, photo journalism, street and location photography;
- Fine Art photography, computer manipulated photography.
- how to use a DSLR camera, how to use its different settings and how to use Photoshop

You will also learn to:

- analyse images through art history, and contextual studies;
- develop and evaluate your ideas;
- articulate your thoughts, and communicate with an audience.

Other questions you may have...

- Do I need to be good at drawing? Photography students use sketching as a tool to create wireframe drawings and plan images they might want to photograph. You do not have to be 'brilliant at drawing' in order to do this, the focus is on planning the shots you want to take.
- Do I need a camera? No, we have lots of kit for students to use. We have a set of Cannon DSLRs, and a suite of PCs with Photoshop for the students. You will be asked to spend a few pounds on an SD card.

Physics

Edexcel GCSE: Assessment: At end of year 11 (no coursework); 2 x 1.75 hour exam.

Why should you choose to study Physics at GCSE?

In Physics we study the world (and Universe!) around us. We try to understand the laws that govern it. Then we use our imaginations to create new ways of applying that understanding to make use of these laws to help mankind. Whether it is exploring space, designing more efficient lighting, faster computers, more versatile phones or better medical imagers or in detecting explosives and pollutants, Physicists are at the heart of it.

What will I learn?

The Edexcel GCSE in Physics helps students understand the scientific process of designing experiments, taking readings, gathering evidence and forming conclusions. The inquisitive mind is enticed along the road to greater knowledge and fuller understanding.

During the GCSE course you will develop skills in:

- practical work;
- mathematical application;
- asking the right questions;
- knowing where to find the answers you don't yet know.

The topics we study include: forces & motion, waves, energy resources & energy transfer, electricity, magnetism & electromagnetism, radioactivity & particles, solids, liquids & gases.

There will be plenty of practical work so that you can see the beauty of Physics in action. As well as building on work you have done in the first three years at LRGS, there will be new ideas and concepts to grapple with. If you want to know how things work and understand the laws that govern the universe, Physics is the subject for you.

Some of the benefits of studying GCSE Physics:

- You will enjoy carrying out experiments to deepen your understanding of the world around you.
- You will be challenged by some difficult ideas and your understanding will grow as a result.
- You will develop skills (such as taking readings, formulating conclusions, being careful and accurate with apparatus, researching the development of ideas...) that will be useful beyond your studies.
- You can go on to study A level Physics leading to careers in research, engineering, electronics, astronomy, architecture, medical diagnostics.....

For more information, please speak to your Physics teacher, students in Year 10 or 11 who are studying the subject at the moment, or see Mr Bell.

Religious Studies

AQA Specification A

Assessment:

100% exam 2 exams at end of Year 11

Why study Religious Studies at GCSE?

We look at two areas: Ethics and Religious Beliefs and Practices. Beliefs and Practices is the study of ideas and the way that religious and non-religious people think. Ethics is the study of how we all decide what the right way to behave is. In the lessons we do a lot of discussion work and consider a whole range of contemporary issues. The course will teach you to think and to look at the world in new and exciting ways.

What will I learn?

You will do two units. Each unit has one exam of 1 hour 45 minutes at the end of the course.

Component 1: Beliefs, teachings and practices

In this section you will look at the key philosophical and ethical teachings in two religions; Christianity and Buddhism. You will consider what these religions say about the world, our place in it and how we should live our lives and treat others.

Component 2 Ethics

- Relationships and Families – you will look at attitudes to sex, marriage and relationships
- The Existence of God – you will consider the arguments for and against God's existence.
- Crime and Punishment – you will consider questions like should we send people to prison? Are some people evil? Should we use the death penalty?
- Religion and life - You will consider issues of abortion, euthanasia, medical ethics and animal rights.

What skills do I need?

You need to be able to think about ideas with an open mind. You should enjoy discussing different points of view and giving your opinion.

What subjects go well with Religious Studies?

Humanities like History and Geography. Any of the Arts subjects and English Literature. Science and Maths make a good fit too as the ethical dimension is useful when considering careers in medicine.

If I take Religious Studies what can I do next?

One route is to take Religion, Ethics and Philosophy at A Level. This can lead to a university course in a variety of areas: politics, philosophy, law, journalism, publishing, social sciences and arts subjects. Lots of jobs look for people who can think and consider new ideas; medicine and the sciences all contain an important ethical dimension.

And finally....

Pupil comments

'Religious Studies makes you think deeper about your life and your own beliefs about the world.'

'I do not believe in God but Religious Studies is my favourite subject. I like learning about other people's faiths and stuff in the real world.'

"RS is the subject I'm most likely to go home and talk to my family and friends about, we have big debates and I often keep thinking about them after school has finished"

Spanish

AQA Assessment:

25% Listening – 45 minutes. Answers in Spanish & English on a range of audio texts.

25% Reading – 1 hour. You must understand and respond to written texts of a variety of genres.

25% Writing - 1 hour 15 minutes. You must complete a translation from English into Spanish, one structured piece of writing and one open-ended task.

25% Speaking – Between 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes prep time. Conducted by class teachers in school. Role play, reading aloud task with short conversation followed by a photo card task and unprepared conversation. Recordings will be sent off to the exam board for external assessment.

Why study Spanish?

GCSE Spanish offers a rich and creative curriculum, which not only focuses on linguistic knowledge but equally exposes you to a greater intercultural understanding of a range of target-language speaking countries. Indeed Spanish is the official language of 20 countries and is widely spoken in others making it the second most spoken language in the world after Chinese with 400 million native speakers. During your studies, you will hopefully have the chance to travel to Spain on a residential trip. This provides a dynamic and enjoyable way to improve linguistic skills, to learn about the culture from experiencing it and to make new friends.

There are lots of reasons to study a modern language at GCSE. Not only will you find it enjoyable, but it is an essential component of an academic education. In order to achieve the English Baccalaureate, vital on your CV if you plan to go to a top university, you must have a GCSE in a modern language. Some of these universities require one as an entry requirement, but all of them see it as a 'facilitating subject', so that even for something like medicine or engineering, they look for language skills, just as employers do in the jobs market.

The study of a modern language also allows you to further enhance your communication skills, literacy, team work, problem solving skills and interpersonal skills amongst others. Lessons will frequently make use of ICT, and interactive teaching activities, and are planned to encourage you to become more confident in using Spanish spontaneously for real purposes as well as to develop excellent comprehension and written skills.

Not only could being able to speak Spanish prove useful on future holidays, it will also open doors for you, giving you the flexibility to study and work abroad. Equally, overseas inward investment into Spanish-speaking countries means that linguists are needed in the UK. The British Council's 'Languages for the Future' report in 2018 cited Spanish as the most important language for people in the UK to learn.

There are many practical, intellectual, cultural and sentimental reasons for learning Spanish. It is true that learning Spanish is not the easy option: it takes hard work, time and dedication. But it is worth it. Lack of foreign language knowledge frequently puts English speakers at a disadvantage when it comes to both travel and business. Keep up with your international peers and continue with Spanish.

What will I learn and how will I be assessed?

Through a balanced approach to language study, covering all four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, you will cover the following three themes:

- Identity and lifestyle.
- Popular culture.
- Communication and the world around us.