



READING SCHOOL

CURRICULUM GUIDE

KEY STAGE FOUR

2016 - 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Excellence, Integrity and Leadership at Key Stage Four

This is a time of great change in the world of education. There are changes to the curriculum at GCSE and A Level along with corresponding changes to the assessment process. The old A*-G grading is no more and has been replaced with the new 1-9 grading system. OFQUAL and the Department for Education have been clear in their statements that the new GCSE examinations will be more difficult and that access to the top grades of 8 and 9 will be more challenging than ever before. It is against this background of change and challenge that we believe that a new three year GCSE programme will provide better support and opportunity not only to meet the demands of the more rigorous qualifications but also to provide greater super curriculum opportunities.

We are offering a wide range of courses at Key Stage 4 ensuring that there is an excellent quality of curriculum provision. At Reading School we welcome the emphasis of the English Baccalaureate on academic subjects. The subjects included are designed to enable all pupils to be given the opportunity to acquire a breadth of knowledge, ensuring that opportunities are not closed to them in terms of future progression. It is important for each Reading School pupil to choose a course programme that is balanced and meets their individual needs. We aim to support and guide pupils through this important process. Listening to advice is a vital part in the decision making process and therefore pupils need to make sure that they talk through their ideas and ambitions with as many people as possible.

The English Baccalaureate consists of English, Mathematics, History (Ancient or Modern) or Geography, the Sciences and a Language (Ancient or Modern). The English Baccalaureate is a compulsory element of our curriculum offer at GCSE and therefore students should study at least one of Ancient History, History or Geography as a GCSE option which will ensure that all the criteria for gaining the English Baccalaureate are met.

This Key Stage 4 Curriculum booklet has been produced to inform you about the principles behind the Reading School Curriculum offered at Key Stage 4. The academic curriculum is of crucial significance because of the very nature of Reading School as an academic, selective school. However, the personal development curriculum is equally important in order to produce active, responsible citizens through the nurturing of integrity and leadership. Furthermore, our extra or co-curricular provision is very important and the development of physical education and sport is a key priority at Reading School. In addition, we are committed to the international dimension in Education and we have developed links for Reading School pupils with schools in Denmark, India, Kenya, Tasmania and the USA.

To Reading School pupils currently in Year 8, we ask you to choose those subjects which you enjoy most, which you find fascinating and present you with a challenge. The curriculum offered enables you to achieve academic excellence whilst also nurturing integrity and developing leadership skills.



Mr TJ Harris
Deputy Headmaster

SECTION 1

PLANNING

AND

DECISION MAKING

PLANNING YOUR KEY STAGE 4 PROGRAMME

If you are unsure about what choices to make, it is important to realise that help is available:

- For instance, your subject teachers will be very happy to speak to you on an individual basis to discuss concerns or answer questions.
- At the Parents' Consultation Evening on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 (4.15pm–7.30pm), subject teachers will be available to offer advice and the Headmaster will also give presentations on the options process. Mr Harris, Deputy Headmaster, will be available throughout the evening to answer any questions relating to the Key Stage 4 programme of study.
- Fiona Corby, the School's Careers Consultant will be available to meet with your son to discuss future pathways during the school week. Your son can contact Fiona to make an appointment via the email address careers@reading-school.co.uk
- The Careers section of the Learning Resources Centre, with information appropriate to you, should also be utilised.

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO

Do

- Do think carefully about your choices.
- Do choose subjects you are interested in and feel successful at.
- Do be realistic about your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Do try to keep a range of subjects.
- Do seek and follow advice from teachers, tutors, parents and other adults.
- Do think of likely future requirements for your education or career.

Do not

- Do not choose a subject just because your friend has.
- Do not choose a subject just because you like a teacher.
- Do not choose a subject because you think it is easy.

CHOICES

Whilst up until now your lessons have virtually all been decided for you, Year 8 is when you can choose some of the subjects you want to study over the next two years.

It is important to know that you should not worry if you are unsure at this point what career you wish to follow. Of course you may already have some thoughts about your future career, but equally you may not. As stated earlier in this booklet, Fiona Corby, our Careers Consultant will be attending the parents' consultation.

Making the right choice is important. You may already greatly enjoy some subjects and want to consider studying these. Also, if you have some idea of what you want to study at University, there may be some subjects you need to take in order for you to get there.

Basic information relating to the subjects offered in the 2016-2019 Key Stage 4 Curriculum for Year 8 pupils has been provided. Further details and advice are available from Heads of Department and subject teachers.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

The support of parents is most valuable in giving your son the confidence to make the right choices.

Their choices should be based on interests and abilities and not what their friends are doing, or whether they see a subject as an easy option.

Therefore you should perhaps consider the following points:-

1. Which subjects does your son enjoy and is he good at?
 - This is a good place to start as your son is more likely to succeed if he enjoys a subject and has ability in it.
2. Something new?
 - New subjects can bring a fresh challenge. Do they match interest, aptitude and ability? Perhaps they might be useful in a future career?
3. How does your son like to learn?
 - How your son learns is important when thinking about which courses suit him best.
4. What are your son's interests?
 - Discussions with your son about his areas of interest will help to make the right choices.
5. Does he have a career in mind?
 - If your son has an idea of the sort of career he would like to follow, encourage him to find out about the courses and qualifications that would be useful.

The important thing is to keep options open by choosing a broad and balanced range of subjects at Key Stage 4.

KEY MILESTONES FOR PUPILS

- All Year 8 pupils to have the Key Stage 4 curriculum and option choices explained by the Deputy Headmaster
- Study Reading School 2016 – 2019 KS4 Curriculum Guide and discuss with parents
- Talk to teachers at the Parents' Consultation Evening, Tuesday 22nd March 2016
- Complete Final Options Survey* on SharePoint by 3.30pm **Thursday 28 April 2016**

*Do not complete your Final Options until you have discussed your choices with your parents. The Survey can be found on **SharePoint** and should be completed following these instructions:

- Click on the **Student** icon.
- Click on **Student Support** in the menu bar
- Look under **Surveys** in the left hand panel
- Click on the **Year 8 Final GCSE Options Choices**
- Click on **Respond to this Survey**
- You must complete all sections of the form
- Click on **Finish** to submit your responses
- NOTE: If you click on **Cancel** then none of your responses will be saved and you will need to start again from the beginning.

Please note that whilst we do our best to offer you all the subjects of your choice, we cannot guarantee to do so. Staffing constraints and timetabling issues may require the "reserve choice" to be used. However, there will be consultations should any issues arise.

KEY STAGE 4 (YEARS 10 AND 11)

As you are now nearing the end of Key Stage 3, it is important to plan your study programme for Key Stage 4.

At Reading School, we offer a broad Curriculum which is designed to take into account statutory requirements and also offer a wide range of provision. Whilst the majority of the Reading School Core Curriculum is compulsory, there is an element of choice in terms of Modern or Ancient Languages between French, German, Latin and Spanish.

Part of the Key Stage 4 Curriculum is composed of a wide range of optional subjects. It is necessary to make **four** choices. The option choices you make will depend on your particular areas of aptitude, ability and interest.

At least one Modern or Ancient Language must be one of your four choices. If you choose either German or Spanish you must currently be studying that language at Reading School.

At least one of Ancient History, History or Geography must be one of your four choices. This will ensure that all the necessary criteria for the English Baccalaureate are met.

KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

The Core Curriculum

You will study all of these subjects:

GCSE English Language
GCSE English Literature

GCSE Mathematics

GCSE Biology
GCSE Chemistry
GCSE Physics

AS Religious Studies

and GCSE French or German or Latin or Spanish. You may choose more than one subject from this group.

and GCSE Ancient History or History or Geography. You may choose more than one subject from this group.

Personal Development Curriculum

Personal, Social and Health Education, Citizenship, Careers and Work Related Learning and Physical Education.

Options

You must choose FOUR of the following subjects

(One of which must be French, German, Latin or Spanish and another must be Ancient History, History or Geography)

Ancient and Modern Languages

GCSE French

GCSE German

GCSE Spanish

GCSE Latin

You must choose at least 1 subject from this group

Humanities

GCSE Ancient History

GCSE Geography

GCSE History

You must choose at least 1 subject from this group

GCSE Art and Design

GCSE Computer Science

GCSE Drama

GCSE Economics

GCSE Electronics

GCSE Music

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

At Reading School we recognise that each pupil has individual needs, abilities and potential. The PSHE programme aims to provide for each individual a broad spectrum of study, embracing academic, personal, social and moral elements. As well as individual classroom sessions, we invite a number of key speakers in throughout the year to assist with the delivery of the curriculum. Further information on specific topics studied can be found on the school website.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) will cover the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip students with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being; **Child Protection and Safeguarding** issues are covered extensively throughout the PSHE programme at Reading School. Many areas of the SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) policy are also covered in the delivery of PSHE. The provision of **Careers Education** is an important part of the personal development curriculum.

The aim of the Key Stage 4 **Physical Education Curriculum** is to offer pupils an opportunity to specialise in selected sports as well as to provide an opportunity to develop skills in new sports. Please contact Mr Beckey, Director of Sport or Mr Bellinger, Subject Leader for PE, if you have any questions relating to the Physical Education Curriculum at Key Stage 4 at Reading School.

SECTION 2

KS4 SUBJECTS

ANCIENT HISTORY

(Head of Department: Mr MR Cooper)

Title of Specification: Ancient History
Examination Board: To Be Confirmed

The exam boards have not announced the new course yet, but topics covered in the past have been:

- The Greeks at War: The Greeks defend themselves, 499 - 479 BC, including the Battles of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis.
- The Rise of Rome: Hannibal's invasion and defeat, 218 - 146 BC, including the Battles of Cannae and Zama.
- Women in Ancient Politics: Agrippina the younger and her influence on Roman politics, AD41-59 or Cleopatra and her impact on Roman politics, 69-30 BC

Ancient History is a humanity subject within the English Baccalaureate.

Ancient History is a very popular course, which complements its sister course in Classical Civilisation at A level. In the current year 13 Classical Civilisation class 75% of students are continuing with a Classics related course at university!

The study of Ancient History equally allows pupils to explore a new subject area or to extend their interest within this field. It is a very accessible course, as pupils explore the history and cultures of the Romans, Greeks, Persians, Carthaginians, and Egyptians, using English translations of the original source material. Pupils have succeeded in this subject regardless of previous experience and a good proportion continue with the subject beyond GCSE. It complements the arts subjects, particularly History and English Literature; whilst providing excellent breadth as a subject in its own right.

ART AND DESIGN

(Head of Department: Ms A Creegan)

Title of Specification: Art and Design (Art, Craft and Design)

Examination Board : AQA

Why choose Art and Design?

You'll be part of something that the UK leads the world in.

In the UK, the creative industries, which include TV, film, music, design, crafts, fashion, games, tech and advertising, are worth £76.9 billion per year to the UK economy. This massive contribution is an all-time high and equates to £8.8m per hour, or £146,000 every single minute.

The creative industries have seen Gross Value Added increase by 15.6% since 2008, compared with an increase of 5.4% for the UK economy as a whole. In that context, GVA for the UK's creative industries increased at a higher rate than any sector in the economy including manufacturing, financial services and construction.

See thecreativeindustries.co.uk and creativeskillset.org for the possibilities that await!

Do you enjoy Art? Are you good at it? Will you work hard?

An education in Art and Design should lead to a better understanding of the visual world and provide opportunities for you to develop your own visual language and the capacity to make informed, critical judgments. As visual communication is increasingly important, this should give you the ability to express yourself effectively and help you to understand how ideas and information are communicated. You should develop awareness of the different roles of artists, designers, makers and photographers.

To be successful this course will require you to be independent and commit to extended learning outside of the classroom; it is hard work from the start, however, the more you put in the more you will enjoy yourself. Honest!

Course requirements and assessment criteria:

Unit 1: Portfolio

- Non-Exam Assessment – Set and marked by centre and moderated by AQA.
- No time limit
- 96 marks – 60% of GCSE

A portfolio that in total shows explicit coverage of the four assessment objectives. It must include a sustained project evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions and a selection of further work undertaken during the candidate's course of study.

Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment

- Non-Exam Assessment – marked by centre and moderated by AQA
- Question papers issued from 2nd January
- 96 marks – 40% of GCSE

Candidates respond to their chosen starting point from an externally set assignment paper relating to their subject title, evidencing coverage of all four assessment objectives.

BIOLOGY

(Head of Department: Mrs M C Maunder)

Title of Specification: Biology Gateway J247 Higher Tier 9-4
Examination Board: OCR

Please note that this specification is in draft form at the time of writing.

Modules:

B1 CELL LEVEL SYSTEMS	B2 SCALING UP	B3 ORGANISM LEVEL SYSTEMS
B4 COMMUNITY LEVEL SYSTEMS	B5 GENES, INHERITANCE AND SELECTION	B6 GLOBAL CHALLENGES

B7 PRACTICAL SKILLS: There are 8 practical areas that are assessed by practical activities set by OCR. The practical activities will take place in class within the normal scheme of work. However a record must be kept linked to achievement criteria in order to achieve the 'practical statement'.

Assessment

- Paper 03 External exam: (90 marks) assessing modules B1, B2 and B3
- Paper 04 External exam: (90 marks) assessing B4, B5, B6 including synoptic knowledge from B1, B2 and B3, and practical skill questions.
- Completion of a practical science statement.

GCSE Biology aims to give pupils opportunities to:

- Develop their interest in and enthusiasm for Biology.
- Develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.
- Acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of how science works and its essential role in society.
- Acquire scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for progression to further learning.

CHEMISTRY

(Head of Department: Mr S Longstaff)

Title of Specification: Gateway Chemistry A J248 Higher Tier
Examination Board: OCR

GCSE Chemistry aims to give pupils opportunities to:

- Develop their interest in and enthusiasm for Chemistry.
- Develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.
- Acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of how science works and its essential role in society.
- Acquire scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for progression to further learning.

Comprises six teaching topics (C1 – 6) and one practical skills topic (C7).

Examined over two papers:

J248/3 90 marks examined over 1 hour 45 minutes worth 50% - this covers material from C1-3 and an element of C7

J248/4 90 marks examined over 1 hour 45 minutes worth 50% - this covers material C4-C6 but assumes knowledge from C1-3 as well as elements of C7

A portfolio of no less than 8 fully completed experiments needs to be produced over the span of the GCSE.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

(Head of Department: Mr H Hussain)

Title of Specification: GCSE Computer Science
Examination Board: AQA

The UK is the birthplace of the computer and computing is of enormous importance to the economy, and the role of Computer Science as a discipline itself, as an ‘underpinning’ subject across the science disciplines and engineering, is growing rapidly.

Computer Science gives pupils the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Innovation
- Reasoning
- Logic
- Resourcefulness
- Precision
- Problem solving

These skills will enable them to become authors of computational tools rather than simply users. By the time you search for your first job it is likely that it hasn’t even been invented yet! Technology changes but the principles and concepts upon which they are built remain constant. A good grounding in Computer Science will teach you how to deal with change and play an active and effective role in the digital world within which we live.

A course in Computer Science offers pupils a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of how computers work and to create and troubleshoot computer programs for real-life purposes relating to their own personal interests. Computer Science develops valuable programming and computational thinking skills, which are increasingly relevant to a wide variety of jobs. Employers want workers with an understanding of rigorous principles that can be applied to changing technologies.

The school has just opened four new laboratories for Computer Science and Engineering and the department is exceptionally resourced to support you to explore the digital realm in both hardware and software.

If you like doing things “your way” and have an independent streak wanting to find your own way through a problem rather than being told how to do it – then this is definitely the subject for you!

Assessment is through three components:

Computational thinking and problem solving (40%)	90 minute examination to assess computational thinking, problem solving, code tracing and applied computing.
Solving Problems Using Computers (40%)	90 minute examination to assess understanding of the theory content of the specification.
Developing Computing Solutions (20%)	Externally assessed and externally moderated 20 hour controlled assessment to develop a piece of work using programming software following a task brief issued by AQA.

Pupils are expected to keep a “digital exercise book” with a full and accurate record of all the work that they undertake. .

DRAMA

(Head of Department: Miss J Capon)

Title of Specification: Drama
Examination Board: AQA

Drama is taught in a very practical way at Reading School. The course is 60% performance based and 40% written examination.

Practical Work

During the course you will complete a variety of practical assessments; these will be both scripted and devised. You will work in small groups and commitment and enthusiasm for the subject are vital. You will learn about set design and lighting as well as acting. You will have the opportunity to perform to your peers as well as publicly.

Written Exam

The exam comprises of three components. Section A is a multiple choice question which focuses on theatrical terminology. In Section B you have to answer four questions on a given extract from a play we have studied. Section C asks you to comment on a live performance. You will be asked to choose an element of the production to write about; acting, lighting, sound design or audience response for example. You will be asked to comment and make judgments about the production.

Theatre Trips/Workshops

As part of the course we visit the theatre and see a variety of productions. You will also have the opportunity to work with professional actors within school.

Personal Skills

You will enjoy studying GCSE Drama if the following can be attributed to you:

- Enjoyment of drama and the theatre.
- Commitment to rehearsals and group work.
- A willingness to try out new ideas.

The skills you will learn studying GCSE Drama will prove highly beneficial in interviews for university and beyond. Team work, problem solving and creative thinking as well as presentational skills are highly desirable attributes in most walks of life.

The best way to find out about the course is to ask those studying it, so we did and this is one of the responses:

“Drama GCSE is an excellent choice; it has really boosted both my confidence and performance skills. I love the fact that we work in groups and so many of the lessons are practical. This subject makes you think and is creative, it is a huge amount of fun but the essays are analytical too. It has been an excellent choice for me.”

ECONOMICS

(Head of Department: Ms F Smith)

Title of Specification: GCSE Economics
Examination Board: OCR \AQA (tbc)

This is an opportunity to study a new subject which adopts a different perspective on the forces that shape our contemporary world at industry, national and international level. Pupils will work towards gaining an understanding of these issues in the context of 'real world economics'. The course will be delivered using examples of recent events to illustrate and understand key economic principles.

Specification Content: The Economics course has a broad specification that encompasses all major aspects of economic activity. The specification will cover:

- How the markets work (Microeconomics).
- How the economy works (Macroeconomics).
- The economic objectives and policies of government.
- The European context of the UK economy
- The international context of the UK economy
- The economic costs and benefits of globalisation.

Assessment:

Assessment will be by written exams only. We will defer the decision on which exam board to use until all the sample assessment materials are published (March 2017). However, the above content covers all the key principles of any introductory economics course and has been agreed by the government as the core content for economics at GCSE. (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/485240/Economics_GCSE.pdf)

THERE IS NO CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT OR COURSEWORK.

ELECTRONICS

(Head of Department: Mr H Hussain)

Title of Specification: GCSE Electronics

Examination Board: AQA

The UK invented Electrical and Electronic Engineering with the world's first university department at UCL with Sir Ambrose Fleming as its head. He created the equipment for Marconi to transmit the first transatlantic radio message to the new world. Reading is at the centre of the UK's Silicon Valley and there has always been a concentration of hi-tech jobs in the area.

This subject is closely allied with Computer Science, a simple analogy is that Electronics enables you to design the hardware upon which the software is written. Pursuing Electronics at GCSE will enable you to design simple programmable systems that handle sensor inputs and produce an output. You could even link 'interface' it with your pc or mobile device!

The school has just opened four new laboratories for Computer Science and Engineering and the department is exceptionally resourced to support you to explore the digital realm in both hardware and software.

Similarly with Computer Science, this subject suits those pupils who like doing things 'your way' and have an independent streak wanting to find your own way through a problem rather than being told how to do it – then this is definitely the subject for you!

Assessment is through three components:

Unit 1 (75%)	Written paper (2hr)
Unit 2: Practical Electronics System Synthesis (25%)	Controlled assessment task: Candidates design, construct, evaluate and write a report on an electronic circuit/system to perform a given specified function.

Pupils are expected to keep a 'digital exercise book' with a full and accurate record of all the work that they undertake.

ENGLISH

(Head of Department: Mr R Baldock)

The English Department offers *two GCSE (9 to 1)* courses, and *all Reading School GCSE pupils will follow both courses.*

GCSE English Literature (9 to 1) and ***GCSE English Language (9 to 1)*** are two independent, two-year courses with terminal exams in the summer of Year 11.

OCR's GCSE English Language (9 to 1) is designed to help learners explore communication, culture and creativity, to develop independent and critical thinking and to engage with the richness of our language and literary heritage. Learners will develop the skills to read fluently and write effectively. They are encouraged to engage with a wide variety of high-quality texts both literary and non-fiction, across a range of familiar genres. They will develop the skills to analyse critically and synthesise and evaluate ideas and information across unseen texts. Learners will be given the opportunity to experiment in their writing across a range of contexts and styles. Learners will use knowledge gained from wider reading to inform their written work. They will be able to write grammatically correct sentences, with accurate spelling and punctuation and utilise a range of structural devices. Learners will also develop a confident control of spoken Standard English and demonstrate the ability to use spoken language appropriately in formal settings.

OCR's GCSE English Literature (9 to 1) aims to encourage learners to read, engage critically with and explore a wide range of literature; to develop and sustain confident, personal responses to their reading, using supporting textual evidence; to use accurate, effective writing skills; and enjoy a variety of texts across the major genres, including modern texts and texts from different cultures, as well as classic literature.

Both specifications offer a clear progression from our Key Stage 3 programmes of study (including the OCR Living Texts qualification) and towards the A Level English Literature qualification offered at this school.

Both qualifications provide invaluable preparation for all kinds of post-16 study pathways, and will enable pupils (even those inclined towards science and mathematics A Levels) to carry their English studies into the sixth form.

OCR English Language (specification J531)

- 50% 'communicating information and ideas' (two hour exam), focused on reading and writing non-fiction texts, including C19th texts.
- 50% 'exploring effects and impacts' (two hour exam), focused on reading C20th literary prose texts, and creative writing.
- 0% 'spoken language', focused on speaking and listening skills (compulsory, but doesn't contribute to the overall assessment)

OCR English Literature (specification J532)

- 50% 'exploring modern and literary heritage texts' (two hour exam), focused on prepared and unseen prose and drama texts from the C19th to C21st.
- 50% 'exploring poetry and Shakespeare (two hour exam), focused on comparing prepared and unseen poetry, and a prepared Shakespeare text.

FRENCH

(Head of Department: Mr MR Cooper)

Title of Specification: French
Examination Board: AQA

Unit 1 – Listening 25%
Unit 2 – Speaking 25%
Unit 3 – Reading 25%
Unit 4 – Writing 25%

Please note that there is no longer Controlled Assessment at GCSE and all exams are final.

Across all skills the work covered will focus on the following themes: identity and culture; local, national, international and global areas of interest; current and future study; and employment.

The students will develop their ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers as well as express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently in all four skills. They will get to tackle authentic spoken and written material, adapted and abridged, as appropriate, including literary texts.

The French department will offer several opportunities to discover French towns and enable the students to be immersed in a French environment with various trips running throughout the years. Further down the line, the 6th formers even have the opportunity to do their work experience in Brittany.

French is not only a popular language in Reading School, but acquiring a modern language is increasingly recognised as a very useful skill and valuable asset. A modern language will be an extra string to the bow when applying for both University courses and jobs. France is geographically the nearest country to Britain and plays a central role in the European scene.

We pride ourselves on providing an insight into the rich Francophone cultures and are always looking to keep in touch with the latest technologies available to make learning enjoyable.

GEOGRAPHY

(Head of Department: Dr K Young)

Title of Specification: Geography
Examination Board: AQA

Geography is a hugely popular GCSE choice nationally, as well as in Reading School. Teaching is characterised by a lively approach, aimed at exploring the geographer's natural curiosity and concern about major contemporary issues. It is Geography's ability to integrate the study of Earth's places, peoples, environments and societies that makes it so relevant to the understanding of the increasingly interconnected world in which we all live and work.

What will I learn?

The AQA course comprises three exams: Physical Geography (35%), Human Geography (35%) and an applied skills paper (30%). The Physical Geography topics include natural hazards, rivers, coasts and ecosystems. The Human Geography topics include population, globalisation and energy challenges. The final skills paper focuses in critical thinking and problem solving, using your knowledge from the human and physical topics. This paper also requires knowledge of fieldwork which replaces the traditional controlled assessment write up. Details about the fieldtrip will be available towards the start of the course.

What opportunities are there?

We are currently developing new field trips for the new GCSE to enrich your experience and compliment the new specification. Details of these will be available during the course. There are also many opportunities for pupils to enter geography competitions led by both the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society. For those seeking to continue Geography into the Sixth Form we offer university based tutorials, lectures at Royal Holloway University and a residential trip overseas to Iceland which runs every two years.

Where can Geography take me?

Geography is a key humanities subject, linking the Sciences and the Arts. GCSE Geography is a versatile qualification which develops independent critical thinking, with an appreciation of world events and a well-rounded education. Geography focuses on many skills including, numeracy, literacy, ICT, working with others, empathy and problem solving, all highly valued by employers. Its diverse subject content allows pupils to keep their options open later on and this is confirmed by a report from the Russell Group of universities who listed it as a facilitating subject, preferred by admissions tutors for its contribution to preparation for university study.

How have we performed?

Geography has consistently been a very popular GCSE optional subject for the past five years. In 2015 our students achieved 88% A*-A in GCSE Geography and 76% A*-A in A Level Geography.

To see more of what we are interested in, please follow us on Twitter @RSGeography

GERMAN

(Head of Department: Mr M Cooper)

Title of Specification: German
Examination Board: AQA

Examinations June of Y11

Unit 1 – Listening 25%
Unit 2 – Speaking 25%
Unit 3 – Reading 25%
Unit 4 – Writing 25%

Themes:

We will focus on the following themes relating to the German speaking world: media and culture, sport and leisure, travel and tourism, business, work and employment.

During the course you will have the opportunity to find out how the language works and to learn about the culture of the target language countries. We offer trips to German speaking countries and sessions with Native speakers to develop communication skills.

You will develop the following skills which are useful in a wide range of future careers:

- ability to communicate clearly
- presentation skills
- problem-solving strategies
- communicate with people verbally and in writing

Other reasons to study German:

- a language is **highly valued by Universities**
- people with language skills and knowledge are highly valued by employers
- Germany has a very strong economy
- German is the most spoken language in Europe
- you will stand out as someone who has made every effort to broaden their horizons
- you will do a variety of activities including current affairs and media
- you enjoy German

HISTORY

(Head of Department: Mr W Bailey-Watson)

Title of Specification: History
Examination Board: AQA

Why Study History?

History is the study of people, of events, of nations and of ideas. If we are to equip our pupils to understand the world they live in, it is essential they have a firm grasp of how it came to be. Our History course looks at pivotal moments, movements, events and people that shaped our world. The course will give students a chance to track monumental changes across a thousand year span, discover the wonders of Elizabethan England, and zone in on the wars and politics and the personalities that defined the 20th century. We cover such varied topics as the Wall Street Crash, Stalin and Lenin, British democracy, Pearl Harbor, Adolf Hitler, Elizabeth I, and Rasputin. We believe in developing philosophical, enquiring historians rather than giving answers. Our outstanding team embraces innovative approaches to teach pupils to think, solve problems, and decide why they believe the world is as it is today and where they think it should go next.

What topics are studied?

Modern World Depth Studies

- Russia, 1894–1945: Tsardom and communism
- Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

Thematic Study

- Britain: Power and the people: c1170 to the present day
- OR**
- Britain: Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day

Early Modern Depth Study

- Elizabethan England, c1568–1603.

Trips

In Year 10, we go to the First World War battlefields of Northern France and Belgium, a life-changing experience for any young person.

What are the views of current pupils?

“History is essential in showing me how ideas have developed, what causes world-changing moments and the role of people at the heart of action. I have loved the discussions, the debates and always finding my own opinion. History lessons are the highlight of my week.” *Year 10 pupil*

Results

In 2015, 62% of our students achieved A*s, showing the strength of the department. For three years over half the cohort has gone on to study the subject at A Level, where results are just as impressive – in 2015, 96% of AS students achieved an A grade with an average of 93%.

LATIN

(Head of Department: Mr MR Cooper)

Title of Specification: Latin
Examination Board: OCR

Last summer the Latin GCSE results were 35A*, 6A and 1B.

Main areas covered:

- Latin language*.
- A prose set text**.
- A verse set text**.

* Learners read/translate texts and stories in Latin to build knowledge and understanding of Latin vocabulary, accidence and syntax. The exam requires both translation and comprehension skills. A vocabulary list is provided to help prepare for the exam.

**Learners study Latin set texts and answer questions in English on aspects of content and analyse, evaluate and respond to the ancient literature they have studied. Each text length is approximately 100-120 lines.

Assessment

- 2 papers on the above disciplines – 1 language paper totaling 50% of the overall GCSE course and 1 set text paper worth 50% of the overall GCSE course.

Latin is a language subject within the English Baccalaureate.

There are a variety of reasons why you might wish to take a Latin for GCSE. Latin is a very well regarded and respected option. It enables the candidate to develop the ability to size up a situation, master a mass of disparate data, see the importance of keeping an open mind, and react sensitively to problems involving people. To this end many students of Latin find jobs in journalism, law, computing, research, archaeology, the City, some branch of commerce, accountancy, central or local government, and industry. Basically it is a very flexible qualification, which can be taken alongside humanities, modern foreign languages or science options alike, as its required skills lend itself to both disciplines.

However the most important reason for taking Latin for an option is that you have a genuine enjoyment in the subject!

MATHEMATICS

(Head of Department: Dr J Matthews)

Title of Specification: GCSE(9-1) – Mathematics(1MA1)
Examination Board: Edexcel
Specification : Higher Tier (grades 4 to 9)

GCSE Assessment:

Examination
Paper 1H: 1 hour 30 minutes; no calculator allowed; Paper 2H: 1 hour 30 minutes; scientific calculator required. Paper 3H: 1 hour 30 minutes; scientific calculator required. Each paper is equally weighted and carries 80 marks

Mathematics is a compulsory GCSE Subject.

It is required as a tool for other subjects as well as a basis for further study of the subject in its own right and career and University opportunities are plentiful.

Information on Additional Mathematics

Free Standing Mathematics Qualification OCR 6993

Specification content:

- Algebra
- Co-ordinate Geometry
- Trigonometry
- Calculus

All pupils study Mathematics to Higher tier GCSE. All sets follow the EDEXCEL (Pearson) specification. There is no coursework component in either course.

In Year 10 the top four sets will be taught Additional Mathematics (OCR Specification), a free standing unit examined by one two hour paper. There is no coursework in this specification.

A practice Additional Mathematics examination in February of Year 11 determines which pupils will take the exam in the summer (pupils must reach 40% to be entered). All pupils who go on to achieve GCSE grades 7, 8 or 9 are able to study Maths in the Sixth Form, whilst those pupils who study Additional Mathematics also have the option of studying Further Mathematics.

MUSIC

(Head of Department: Mr R Meehan)

Title of Specification: Music
Examination Board: OCR

Main components covered:

- Solo and ensemble performances.
- Two compositions; one free and the other set by the examination board.
- A listening exam based on the areas of study which are:
 - **The Concerto Through Time**
 - **Rhythms of the World**
 - **Film Music**
 - **The Conventions of Pop**

Assessment

- Assessment is 60% coursework and 40% the listening exam.

Music will provide a contemporary, accessible and creative course, with an integrated approach to the three main elements – performing, composing and appraising. Students are encouraged to be creative and to broaden their musical horizons and understanding with Areas of Study that inspire and challenge. This specification will enable learners to explore performance and composition with a focus on their own instrument and genre choices and offer opportunity to explore new instrumental skills. It is designed to appeal to, and cater for, a wide range of interests, instruments, personalities and directions. Learners will have the opportunity to explore instruments and Areas of Study depending on their personal preference and ability.

PHYSICS

(Head of Department: Mr H Hussain)

Title of Specification: Physics A

Examination Board: OCR Gateway Science (J249)

OCR's GCSE Physics course encourages learners to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science, through different types of scientific enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them
- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on science through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Content areas covered in the GCSE are:

P1: Matter	P2: Forces	P3: Electricity
The particle model Changes of state Pressure	Motion Newton's Laws Forces in action	Static and charge Simple circuits
P4: Magnetism and magnetic fields	P5: Waves in matter	P6: Global challenges
Magnets and magnetic fields Uses of magnetism	Wave behavior The EM spectrum Wave interaction	Physics on the move Powering Earth Beyond Earth

Wherever possible the department continues our tradition of practical investigations to develop our student's competence and familiarity with the process of scientific investigation. Similarly we do not constrain ourselves within the confines of the specification but will enhance elements of the course to provide a broader and detailed understanding of the topic at hand.

Assessments scheme

There are two papers at GCSE and for the Higher Tier these are:

Paper 3	Paper 4
Written paper 1 hour 45 mins 90 marks 50% of the qualification	Written paper 2 hour 45 mins 90 marks 50% of the qualification

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(Head of Department: Mr CJ Evans)

Title of Specification: Philosophy AS

Examination Board: AQA

Aims:

The philosophy specification asks these questions:

What can we know? Can the existence of God be proved? How do we make moral decisions? Are my mind and body separate?

These questions are fundamental and the material covered in the specification not only provides students with a good understanding of how these debates have, so far, been framed, but also acts as a springboard for consideration and discussion of students' own ideas.

In addition the course gives students an opportunity to develop independence and grapple with texts and concepts – key skills for all curriculum areas. Students will have the opportunity to engage in detailed analysis of philosophical texts, using an Anthology provided as a springboard for further independent reading and reflection. The Anthology contains extracts from a range of philosophical texts. Students are expected to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of them.

Teaching Modules and Assessments:

Students are working to an AS Examination covering:

Section A: Epistemology

Section B: Philosophy of Religion

Assessment comprises 3 hour written examination with a total of 80 available marks. Not all students will be entered for the examination, this is dependent on their progress. Those who enter the exam will receive an AS qualification (Award 1176). The exam will be sat in June of Year 11.

Specification Content:

Units 3a and 3b covering Epistemology and Philosophy of Religion.

Topics include Perception, Idealism, Realism, Concepts, Knowledge, Empiricism, The Concept of God, The Design Argument, the Ontological Argument, The Cosmological Argument, The Problem of Evil and Religious Language.

SPANISH

(Head of Department: Mr M Cooper)

Title of Specification: Spanish

Examination Board: AQA

Edexcel

Unit 1 – Listening 25%

Unit 2 – Speaking 25%

Unit 3 – Reading 25%

Unit 4 – Writing 25%

This course will immerse you in the language of 400 million people. It is one of the official languages of the UN and the second most spoken language in USA. You will also be learning the Spanish spoken in Latin America and about interesting places like Peru and Ecuador. You will improve your pronunciation while learning not only the language, but also the culture associated with it, such as the Pais Vasco and Cataluna. You will learn about the traditions and festivals of Spain such as the bull running in San Fermin. You will also learn how Spanish people celebrate Christmas and the three kings' parade among other interesting cultural topics. Considering that Spain is one of the top UK tourist destinations, you will also be listening and reading about important topics that help you to become a participant in your holidays in Spain rather than an observer.

One of the most important skills to learn when you are learning Spanish is to be able to understand people. In GCSE Spanish you will be practicing your listening by learning and singing along with the songs of Jennifer Lopez, Enrique Iglesias, Shakira and Marc Anthony.

Learning Spanish will give you a major head start to learning other Latin based languages such as Italian, Portuguese, etc. Reading in Spanish GCSE will introduce you to some of the best literature in the world, such as Don Quixote, the second most read book in the world. There is enjoyment in learning a language whose phonetics makes it a very easy language to learn.

The course will not only prepare you for GCSE Spanish, but it will also prepare you for life.