

Abundance Achievement Ambition



ST PAUL'S ACADEMY

Key Stage 4  
2024 -2026

Curriculum Offer Evening  
Wednesday 21st February  
4:30 - 6:30pm



# Building your future together

## Abundance Achievement Ambition



It is with great pleasure that I present to you our Key Stage 4 Options Booklet for the upcoming academic year. As Vice Principal in charge of curriculum, I understand the importance of this pivotal moment in your child's educational journey, as they embark on the path towards their chosen career and personal aspirations. The options available to our Key Stage 4 students have been carefully curated to provide a diverse and enriching curriculum that caters to individual strengths, interests, and future goals. We encourage students to explore a combination of subjects that not only align with their academic abilities but also ignite their passion for learning. Our dedicated team of teachers is committed to fostering a supportive and nurturing environment that enables every student to thrive. Please take the time to review the options outlined in this booklet, attend the scheduled information sessions, and engage in thoughtful conversations with our experienced staff to make informed decisions. Together, let us empower our students to shape their futures with confidence and enthusiasm!

**For our students making these decisions:** We will be providing taster sessions for the new KS4 subjects in the coming weeks for you, allowing you to get a firsthand experience of what these courses entail. Ultimately, you'll discuss your final choices as well as your reserves choices in an Options interview with your teachers. The decision of which subjects to study in KS4 is yours to make. Talk with your teachers, parents and carers and friends. However, bear in mind that you are the one who will attend classes, put in the effort to study, prepare for exams, and achieve these qualifications. So, read on, imagine the possibilities, and get excited about the opportunities and paths your choices will open up for you!

**Bronagh O'Neil**  
Vice Principal, Quality of Education



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## Curriculum overview

The core curriculum at Key Stage 4 provides the breadth and range of qualifications to prepare students for a highly competitive, diverse and ever changing higher education system and employment market.

Students follow a curriculum which allows them to gain GCSE qualifications in subjects which facilitate access to the full range of higher education institutions.

Almost all students are directed to select a humanities subject from either Geography or History alongside the core compulsory subjects; English, Maths, Science and Religious Studies and many students will be expected to study Spanish. This combination of subjects is known as the EBacc and provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education.

A small group of students will be identified for whom studying a traditional modern foreign language course and/or humanities subject is not

appropriate. At this stage these students will follow a programme which supports their Key Stage 4 progress, by making choices to maximise their chances of success as well as avoiding subjects which place a more significant emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills.

All students have a number of free choices which are unrestricted, enabling them to select subjects based on their own preferences. Students, for example, can choose to study a new subject like Business, or choose additional humanities or arts subjects. The combination of directed and free choice options enables all students to maintain sufficient breadth of study. However, it is good advice to all students that if they have an intention to study a subject at school or in a college Post 16, that subject should be chosen at Key Stage 4.



## English Baccalaureate subjects at GCSE

We are committed to offering a curriculum which provides a broad, balanced, relevant and personalised learning experience for all our students. It should also help to deliver outstanding achievement for all. We also need to ensure that it provides as strong a foundation as possible for future progression.

Universities, employers and the Department for Education recognise that while it is important to offer students a curriculum which meets their needs and interests, it is also crucial that doors are not closed off to them in terms of future progression; for example, for students hoping to go to university.

The Russell Group of top universities have identified 'facilitating subjects' at A Level i.e. subjects which are most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and ones that will keep the most options open. The subjects the Russell group universities have identified are those which the Department for Education has now included in a group of subjects at GCSE which is termed the 'English Baccalaureate' (EBacc) subjects.

These are:

English Language

Mathematics

Sciences (Combined Science or Triple Science - Biology, Chemistry or Physics)

Languages (classical and modern)

Humanities (Geography or History)

In order to ensure that our students are prepared as fully as possible for their adult life, we ask that almost all students are required to opt for at least one additional EBacc subject (as well as the core curriculum of Religious studies, English Language, Mathematics and Combined Science) as one of their GCSE options.

The option form therefore requires most students choose at least one subject from the following list and some students will be advised to choose two subjects from the EBacc list.

Geography

History

Spanish

They are, of course, able to choose further EBacc subjects as part of their remaining choices.

# The Language of Options

## GCSE

Stands for General Certificate of Education and a pass is graded from 9 (top grade A\*\*) to 1 (lowest passing grade F). A lot of college courses and universities will demand at least a 5 to get on their courses. You will need a 4 in English and Maths at GCSE or you will have to re-sit until you achieve them or up to the age of 18.

## VOCATIONAL COURSE

The course may have more practical links to an area of work, and the assessment structure is likely to be different with more emphasis on coursework which is in the form of an NEA, but it is just as valid as a GCSE. These courses allow for two sittings of each exam, you retain the highest grade.

## L1 /L2 COURSE BTEC

Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grade 1-3, and level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades 4-9. All of our courses are Level 2 courses which means they are equivalent to GCSE and will allow access onto A level and Level 3 courses at 16.

## TERMINAL EXAM

This means you sit the written paper exams at the end of the course in year 11.

## NEA

Non-Exam Assessment is a type of coursework that can be done in the classroom but usually under supervised or exam conditions.

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## How to support your child with choosing their options for Key Stage 4

### UNDERSTAND THEIR INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS:

Identify your child's interests, passions, and academic strengths. Consider subjects they enjoy and excel in, as this can contribute to their motivation and success in the chosen GCSE or BTEC courses.

### EXPLORE POTENTIAL CAREER PATHS RELATED TO YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS:

Look into the academic requirements and skills needed for those careers. This information can help guide their choices and provide a sense of purpose for their studies.

### ENCOURAGE A MIX OF SUBJECTS:

Advise a balanced combination of subjects. While focusing on their interests, encourage a mix of subjects that can provide a broad skill set. This can keep doors open for various future academic and career opportunities.

### CONSIDER LONG-TERM GOALS:

Discuss their long-term goals and aspirations. Some professions may require specific subjects or qualifications. Understanding these requirements can help in making informed decisions about the most suitable GCSE or BTEC options.

### CONSULT WITH TEACHERS AND CAREER ADVISORS:

Seek advice from teachers and career advisors at school. They can provide valuable insights into your child's academic performance, potential career paths, and the requirements of different courses. Collaborating with educators can ensure a well-informed decision-making process.

# Options timeline

Ask lots of questions, get advice from a wide range of people, spend time researching and reflecting on your choices. You should use the next month making the most of the support and information made available to you to ensure that you make the best choices for yourself.



**Year 9 Curriculum offer evening:**  
Wednesday 21st February 2024



**New Subject Taster Sessions:**  
March 2024



**Parent and carer Q&A drop in:**  
March 2024



**Deadline to return option choices form:**  
Thursday 28th March 2024



**Final confirmation of offers to students and parents:**  
June 2024

# Core



# GCSE English

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

English Literature and English Language are an essential part to both academic and outside of school success. The art of developing both creative writing skills, analytical skills and overall articulation and framing of sentences, ideas and concepts. Students will become both lovers of reading, writing and speaking through concise and coherent lessons which are in alignment with our well thought out, ambitious and rich curriculum.

## What skills will I develop?

To write effectively with purpose, conviction and focus. To become critical, curious and constructive thinkers who can articulate their big ideas and engage in interesting socratic discussions. To read and interpret ideas and themes constructively. Be able to create clear and explicit references and links to wider society. To develop secure knowledge in both 19th century texts whilst learning relevant contextual information to enhance analysis skills and understanding of authors and poets intentions.

## How will I be assessed?

GCSE English Language  
English Language Paper 1 (2.0) 1 hour 55  
English Language Paper 2 (2.0) 1 hour 55

### Includes:

Imaginative Writing  
Transactional Writing  
Reading (*both fiction and non-fiction texts*)

### GCSE English Literature

Literature Paper 1 - 1 hour 45 mins  
Literature Paper 2 - 2 hours 15 mins  
Shakespeare and Post 1914 Literature  
19th century Novel and Poetry since 1789

## Where can this course take me?

With this, students will be able to excel within specific English paths such as: becoming a teacher, journalist, marketing, commercial writing, becoming a lawyer, freelancer or entrepreneur.

English is an excellent premise and foundation to any job role because the need to : read, write and speak is required as a holistic necessity.

The course prepares students for A levels English and then could propel students into choosing an English university degree.

# GCSE Mathematics

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Higher / Foundation Tier

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The course aims to build on the skills and knowledge developed in years 7-9, with a focus on developing conceptual understanding and applying skills and knowledge to higher order problem solving. The main objectives of this GCSE (9-1) Mathematics course are to enable students to: develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems, reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions, They will also be equipped with the skills to comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

## What skills will I develop?

The course will cover the following key areas:  
Number: Structure and calculation, Fractions, decimals and percentages, measures and accuracy  
Algebra: Notation, vocabulary and manipulation, equations and inequalities, graphs, problem solving, sequences  
Ratio, proportion and rates of change: similarity, congruence, direct and inverse proportion  
Geometry and measures: Properties of shapes, constructions, theorems, trigonometry, area, volume, vectors, using standard units of measure for length, mass, capacity, weight, volume  
Probability: Calculating probabilities by calculation and the use of relevant diagrammatic representations  
Statistics: Collect, collate, analyse and make inferences about data using relevant calculations and diagrams

## How will I be assessed?

**Two tiers are available: Foundation and Higher.** The qualification consists of three equally-weighted written examination papers at either Foundation tier or Higher tier. All three papers must be at the same tier of entry and must be completed in the same assessment series.

Paper 1 is a non-calculator assessment and a calculator is allowed for Paper 2 and Paper 3.

*Each paper is 1 hour and 30 minutes long.*

*Each paper has 80 marks.*

## Where can this course take me?

Teaching, engineering, accountancy, statistician, data analyst, doctor, scientist, computer programmer, software developer, risk assessment analyst, actuarial scientist, banking, researcher

# GCSE Combined Science

GCSE

Exam board: AQA

Higher / Foundation Tier Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The course should enthuse and engage your interest with new topics and the opportunity to explore and understand theories at greater depth. The specification is divided into topics, each covering different key concepts of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Teaching of practical skills is integrated with the theoretical topics and they are assessed through the written exam papers. These courses are taught as separate sciences; the three subjects (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) are taught in separate modular units. They have an emphasis on scientific literacy i.e. the knowledge and understanding students will need to make sense of the science they will encounter in their everyday lives.

## What skills will I develop?

Your GCSE Science will help you to develop essential key skills that will serve you well in many A Level subjects and as the foundation for a wide range of careers. These skills include analysing data, evaluating information, conducting fair research and the ability to recall and apply facts to new situations. The skills you are taught are embedded whilst learning new content across a wide range of topics such as cell biology, bioenergetics, quantitative chemistry, the evolution of the Earth's atmosphere; the application of the electromagnetic spectrum in everyday life and the importance of energy.

## Where can this course take me?

This course leads well onto all science A level courses and careers in a wide range of sectors including pharmacy, radiology, dentistry, medicine, midwifery; nursing; nuclear engineering, petroleum chemistry, psychology and clinical or laboratory based research.

# GCSE Religious Studies

GCSE

Exam board: AQA

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The KS4 curriculum covers the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam. There are four Themes taught as well, selected to allow students to explore socially relevant ethical and philosophical questions. The units are interleaved, to enable students to link key concepts together and strengthen their understanding by revisiting concepts across the years.

- Christian beliefs and teachings
- Christian practices
- Jewish beliefs and teachings
- Jewish practices
- Relationships and family
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion and life
- Religion, human rights and social justice

## What skills will I develop?

GCSE Religious Studies is essential for comprehending our diverse and globalized world. It provides students with a solid grasp of various values, beliefs, cultures, and crucial ethical dilemmas, ranging from cloning morality to marriage and divorce ethics in both religious and secular contexts.

## Where can this course take me?

With Religious Studies GCSE you will develop valuable skills such as; critical thinking, debating, ethical decision making and analytical skills which will help you to study a wide range of A levels. The combination of logical critical thinking and a comprehensive understanding of the world means that you will be equipped and prepared to enter a society that is increasingly globalised and multicultural. Popular career routes include careers in law, government, theology and medicine.

## How will I be assessed?

Assessment is 100% exam based. The course consists of six externally examined assessments which contain a mixture of different question styles, including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

**Two written papers – Biology**  
**Two written papers – Chemistry**  
**Two written papers – Physics**

*Exam time for each paper is 1 hour, 15 minutes*

## How will I be assessed?

**Specification A:**

Christianity and Judaism

**Component 1:**

The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices

- Beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity
- Beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism

*Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of GCSE*

**Component 2: Thematic studies**

- Relationships and family
- Religion and life
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, human rights and social justice

*Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes - 50% of GCSE*

# Options



# GCSE Art

GCSE

Exam board: OCR

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Fine Art involves creating work primarily for aesthetic, intellectual, or conceptual purposes rather than practical functions. Learners will develop skills and understanding in their chosen Fine Art area(s) by exploring techniques, processes, and critical sources, including historical and contemporary artists. They must demonstrate creativity in areas like drawing, installation, lens/light-based media, mixed-media, land art, printing, painting, and sculpture, using various processes such as painting, drawing, printing, carving, modelling, and digital media.

## What skills will I develop?

Learners will learn to understand how sources inspire the development of their ideas. Reference will be made to the following:

- The study of Artists work and approaches of Fine Artists from contemporary and/or historical contexts, periods, societies and cultures Contemporary and/or historical environments, situations or issues.
- The ways in which meanings, ideas and intentions can be communicated through visual and tactile language, using formal elements, including: colour, line, form, tone and texture.
- Learners will learn the characteristics, properties and effects of using different media, materials, techniques and processes, and the ways in which they can be used in relation to learners' own creative intentions and chosen area(s) of Fine Art

## Where can this course take me?

This GCSE course supports progression to AS/A levels, Higher Education, Further Education, training, or employment. Its self-directed nature enhances skills valued by employers and higher education, showcasing self-motivation and creativity. Careers requiring GCSE art include architect, makeup artist, film/TV director, fashion designer, game designer, graphic designer, photographer, art therapist, teacher, and more.

# GCSE Business Studies

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

GCSE Business Studies explores the world of small businesses through the lens of an entrepreneur. It offers students the opportunities to study different types of business in different industries, including many real-life case studies. It looks at why businesses exist, how they are set up and how they are run. Studying GCSE business will assist you with the skills of developing business ideas, using maths skills to analyse data, making business decisions including financial, operational, marketing and human resources. This is explored through two Themes; Theme 1 'Investigating Small Business' and Theme 2 'Building a Business'. The skills learnt in GCSE Business Studies are transferable to a number of career paths.

## What skills will I develop?

In year 10, you will study Theme 1

"Investigating Small Business":

- Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting a business idea into practice
- Making the business effective
- Understanding external influences on business

And in year 11, you will study Theme 2

"Building a Business":

- Growing the Business
- Making Marketing Decisions
- Making Operational Decisions
- Making Financial Decisions
- Making Human Resource Decisions

## Where can this course take me?

- Business analyst
- Estate Agent
- Advertising & Marketing
- Business development manager
- Public Relations Officer
- Project Management
- Market Researcher
- Digital marketer
- Social Media Manager
- Recruitment and human resources (HR)

# GCSE Computer Science

GCSE

Exam board: OCR

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically understand the components that make up digital systems, and how they communicate with one another and with other systems understand the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society apply mathematical skills relevant to Computer Science.

## What skills will I develop?

The qualification is divided into two components and students will study the following topics

**Component 1:** Computer systems. This component will assess:

- 1.1 Systems architecture
- 1.2 Memory and storage
- 1.3 Computer networks, connections and protocols
- 1.4 Network security
- 1.5 Systems software
- 1.6 Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology

**Component 2:** Computational thinking, algorithms and programming. This component will assess:

- 2.1 Algorithms
- 2.2 Programming fundamentals
- 2.3 Producing robust programs
- 2.4 Boolean logic
- 2.5 Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments

## How will I be assessed?

Students will complete two papers, one for each component.

**Component 1:** Computer Systems will consist of a written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes -50% of total GCSE- 80 marks

This is a non-calculator paper. All questions are mandatory. This paper consists of multiple choice questions, short response questions and extended response questions

**Component 2:** Computational Thinking Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes- 50% of total GCSE- 80 marks

This is a non-calculator paper. This paper has two sections: Section A and Section B. Students must answer both sections. All questions are mandatory.

In Section B, questions assessing students' ability to write or refine algorithms must be answered using either the OCR Exam Reference Language or the high-level programming language they are familiar with.

## Where can this course take me?

A-Level Computer Science or an computing apprenticeship or degree. A career in cyber security, games developer, Web Developer, App developer and Systems Analyst to name a few.

# BTEC Construction and the Built Environment

BTEC Level 1 & 2

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades: Pass, Merit, Distinction

## What will I study?

Everyone taking this qualification will study three components, covering the following content areas:

**Component 1:** Construction technology: Understanding common types of construction used to build low rise buildings, material technologies and the essential maths and science that Designers and Builders use day-to-day, sustainability and how buildings' substructures and superstructures are constructed.

**Component 2:** Practical craft skills: covering the principles of safe working, selecting and using materials and tools, planning work in trades in either carpentry or brickwork and evaluating the quality of work produced.

**Component 3:** Construction and design: exploring how the design of different buildings can meet their function, and how to practically design buildings to meet the needs of the clients and the environment, including the various constraints on the design. Learners will be able to integrate knowledge across the qualification into their response to a design brief.

## What skills will I develop?

This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will develop your knowledge of construction methods, materials and design, applying mathematical and scientific principles to solve problems in a construction context. You will also develop key skills, such as planning work, interpreting technical information and designing to meet a client brief. You will get the opportunity to apply hand skills, safely use tools, measure and check the quality of work completed.

## How will I be assessed?

Components 2 and 3 are assessed through non-exam internal assessment. Non-exam internal assessment is delivered through Pearson-set Assignments. These assignments are set by Pearson, marked by the centre and moderated by Pearson. Centres must use these assignments for summative assessments and the assignments must be completed under supervised conditions. Component 1 is an exam assessment. This takes the form of an external assessment, taken under supervised conditions, which is then marked and a grade awarded by Pearson.

## Where can this course take me?

Once you have completed the qualification, you will have developed a practical understanding of the construction industry. You will have built useful skills, which are not generally covered in GCSE courses, and you will have developed a good understanding of whether the construction industry is for you, and if so, which part of it you might want to study further. If you decide to go on to further study of construction, the best option for you will depend on the grades you have achieved in this and the other qualifications you have taken, and what you enjoy doing. You could progress to a Level 2 Technical Certificate or to a Level 3 programme, such as A Levels, a T Level or a BTEC National, either on its own or in combination with A levels.

# GCSE Dance

GCSE Exam board: AQA

One Tier Entry Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Dance is a powerful and expressive subject which encourages students to develop their physical, emotional and intellectual capacity, whatever their previous experience in the subject. The practical component of the course (60%) enables students to study dance by 'doing' and the anthology of professional works (theory 40%) enables students to critically appraise and analyse. Dance helps you develop life-long skills: physical fitness, stamina and perseverance; motivation and discipline; communication and interpersonal skills; creativity; resilience and working in a team. There will be opportunities to work in groups sharing ideas and to work individually in order to really challenge yourself.

## What skills will I develop?

During your practical classes you will study two solo performances, create a piece of choreography and perform in a group dance. Alongside this you will study theory (1 lesson each week) based on safe dance practice (warm up, cool down, nutrition and hydration), study 6 professional works analysing aspects of production (lighting, costume, set design and accompaniment) as well as the choreography and analysis of your own practical work too.

## Where can this course take me?

Dance can bring you so many opportunities, such as Dance teacher, Professional dancer, Dance movement therapy, Arts administrator, Choreographer, Community arts worker, Dance movement psychotherapist, Personal trainer, Theatre director.

# GCSE Design Technology

GCSE Exam board: AQA One Tier Entry Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

## What skills will I develop?

GCSE Design and Technology allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth. They will develop their ability to communicate their design ideas effectively through the use of drawing and model making.

## Where can this course take me?

Design technology is a prerequisite to progressing to A level Product Design. This course can lead on to careers, apprenticeships or University studies in the construction, manufacturing, architectural, design and engineering sectors (Product design, interior design, civil engineer, mechanical engineer, electrical engineer etc.).

## How will I be assessed?

There are 2 units these are:  
**Written exam:** 2 hours (100 marks, 50% of GCSE)  
**Non-exam assessment (NEA):** Approximately 30 to 35 hours : (100 marks, 50% of GCSE)  
Students will produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence where work will be marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

# BTEC Digital Information Technology

BTEC Level 1 & 2

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades: Pass,  
Merit, Distinction

## What will I study?

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Digital Information Technology is for learners who want to acquire sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through vocational contexts by studying project planning, data management, data interpretation, data presentation and data protection as part of their Key Stage 4 learning. The qualification recognises the value of learning skills, knowledge and vocational attributes to complement GCSEs.

## What skills will I develop?

The Tech Award gives learners the opportunity to develop sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. The main focus is on four areas of equal importance, which cover the: development of key skills that prove your aptitude in digital information technology; processes that underpin effective ways of working in digital information Technology; the attitudes that are considered most important in digital information technology, including personal management and communication and the knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, process and attitudes in the sector such as how different user interfaces meet user needs.

## Where can this course take me?

Completing this qualification in Key Stage 4 helps learners make informed choices for further study. Those achieving at Level 2 may opt for A Levels or a vocational qualification like a BTEC National in IT. For Level 1 achievers, progression to Level 2 post-16 in technical routes is recommended, leading to work, apprenticeships, or further study. The skills covered in this qualification, particularly in IT Support or Digital Technology, align with these pathways and can lead to employment in the digital sector for high-performing learners.

# GCSE Drama

GCSE

Exam board: Eduqas

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

GCSE drama is a fantastic opportunity to approach your learning differently, to develop as a collaborator and to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural world.

Employers, as well as colleges and universities, will look favourably upon anyone with a GCSE in Drama; it shows you are an effective communicator with a good level of interpersonal and creative skills. You will get the opportunity to create your own theatre piece as a group, perform characters from existing texts and get the chance to watch and analyse live theatre.

## What skills will I develop?

Students will learn about the techniques of key drama practitioners and implement them in their own work. There will be a study of classical and contemporary plays and how these can be performed in different settings through practical and theoretical sessions. GCSE drama students will also develop their critical thinking and analytical skills over the course of studying the qualification through the study of live theatre, film and television.

## Where can this course take me?

Any career that requires someone to be an effective communicator and positive team player or collaborator would benefit from a qualification in GCSE Drama. Many prominent figures in the fields of law and politics have cited the benefits of studying drama to aid their professional development. Those that have an aspiration to pursue a career in the arts world would be able to take their knowledge and skills accrued from GCSE Drama forward to help them with their next steps.

## How will I be assessed?

### Component 1 (40%)

Candidates devise and perform a piece of theatre from their response to a stimulus, write a portfolio of supporting evidence to explain the process of creating theatre and evaluate their success.

### Component 2: (20%)

Externally assessed by a visiting examiner. Candidates will perform two extracts from a play.

### Component 3: Interpreting Theatre (40%)

Written exam on one set text and a live theatre review.

# ESOL

Entry Level 1, 2 & 3

Exam board: Edexcel

Three Tier Entry

Grades: Pass

## What will I study?

ESOL qualifications give students the competence, confidence and opportunity to improve their English language knowledge and skills, achieve a nationally recognised qualification, develop personal growth and engagement in learning and acquire English skills for personal and employment-related application.

## What skills will I develop?

ESOL focuses on key language skills:

**Listening:** Understanding spoken instructions, conversations, and basic vocabulary.

**Speaking:** Communicating personal information, daily routines, and engaging in short conversations.

**Reading:** Identifying and understanding simple written information, common words, and basic vocabulary.

**Writing:** Forming simple sentences, writing short paragraphs, completing forms, and providing personal information.

**Grammar and Vocabulary:** Demonstrating understanding of basic grammar rules and using appropriate vocabulary.

**Functional Skills:** Applying language skills in practical, everyday situations, like asking for directions or making requests.

## Where can this course take me?

Completing an ESOL course opens lots of opportunities including moving on to higher-level courses including completing both English Language and English Literature GCSE. You could also pursue academic or vocational studies at 6th form college.

# GCSE Geography

GCSE

Exam board: OCR B

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The GCSE syllabus comprises both physical and human components, alongside the geographical enquiry. The course is designed to encourage learners to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of key events, and societies in a local, national and global context. Studying Geography provides the students with the opportunity to understand more about the world around them, the challenges they face and their place within it. It gives students the opportunity to become critical thinkers and to develop their own arguments.

## What skills will I develop?

Through classroom and outdoor learning, students will be able to extend their knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes, at a range of different scales.

**Our Natural World** - physical and human geography including global issues such as climate change, tectonic hazards, causes of global inequality and rapid urban growth.

**People & Society** - the human and physical geography of the UK. You'll look at local case studies, such as migration and urbanisation in Birmingham. You will also learn more about coastal and river processes and pressures.

## Where can this course take me?

Geography enables young people to become environmentally informed, thoughtful and enquiring citizens. Geography is seen by universities and sixth form providers as a 'facilitating' subject. These facilitating subjects, like Geography, provide you with literacy, analytical and problem-solving skills required in many colleges, university degrees or work. There is a wide range of careers that can be pursued within Geography. Those who progress further with geography end up in a wide range of careers including disaster response, charity sector, town planning, tourism, business and banking, law, international aid, teaching, renewable energy, engineering, architecture and more!

**Geographical Exploration** - Apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches appropriately and creatively to real world contexts, including fieldwork, and to contemporary situations and issues; and develop well-evidenced arguments drawing on their geographical knowledge and understanding.

## How will I be assessed?

The course follows an outline of three terminal exams. These include:

**Paper 1: Our Natural World**

*1 hour 15 minutes (35%) 70 marks*

**Paper 2: People and Society**

*1 hour 15 minutes (35%) 70 marks*

**Paper 3: Geography Exploration**

*1 hour 30 minutes (30%) 60 marks*

# BTEC Health and Social Care

BTEC Level 1 & 2

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades: Pass,  
Merit, Distinction

## What will I study?

The aims of this course of study are to give learners the opportunity to gain a broad understanding and knowledge of the health and social care sector. Give learners a more focused understanding of health and social care through the selection of optional specialist units. Learners will be given the opportunity to develop a range of personal skills and techniques, through the selection of units that are essential for successful performance in working life.

## What skills will I develop?

**Unit 1: Human Lifespan Development** – this unit explores human growth and development across life stages, as well as the factors that affect human growth and development, and how they are interrelated.

**Unit 2: Health and Social Care Values** – this unit explores the different types of health and social care services and barriers to accessing them, and the skills, attributes and values required to give care.

**Unit 3: Promoting Health and Wellbeing** – this unit explores the factors that affect health and wellbeing, learning about physiological and lifestyle indicators, and how to design a health and wellbeing improvement plan.

## Where can this course take me?

This course supports progression into a more specialised level 3 vocational or academic course or into an apprenticeship. Career Paths like nursing, midwifery and healthcare assistants. This course can support you if you do T level Vocational Studies or apprenticeships based on employment in the Early Years sector or move forward to complete a Degree in Health & Social Care.

# GCSE History

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

History is the study of the past events. Continuing your History study up to GCSE level will equip you with skills to interpret the world, understand cause and effect and to develop persuasive and informed written arguments. You will study a range of European and British history, all with relevance and impact to the lives we live today. Throughout the course you'll develop an understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods study.

## What skills will I develop?

The study of history is crucial for understanding the past, shaping the future, and interpreting the present. GCSE History explores key historical events, providing students with insights into British and global history, fostering critical analysis and interpretation skills. Students enjoy the diverse curriculum, which empowers them to construct arguments, communicate effectively, and develop cultural awareness. History uniquely allows students to voice their ideas through discussion and debate, cultivating skills sought by employers and enhancing their understanding of societal changes influenced by migration and cultural interactions.

## Where can this course take me?

GCSE history is the best foundation for students who wish to study A level history. It also develops a range of key skills that will serve you well in future study, work and life in general.

Students who complete this course will develop their skills of research, evaluation, interpretation and analysis. History is well regarded by colleges, universities and employers. The topics studied and analytical skills gained make it a great choice for anyone interested in law, politics, humanities or social sciences.

## How will I be assessed?

GCSE History is 100% assessed by examination and will consist of three written papers.

**Paper One:**  
**Thematic study and historic environment 30%**  
Medicine Through Time c1250-present

**Paper Two:**  
**Period study and British depth study 40%**  
Superpower relations and the Cold War 1941-1991  
Early Elizabethan England 1558-88

**Paper Three:**  
**Modern depth study 30%**  
The USA, Conflict at home and abroad 1954-1975

# BTEC Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2

BTEC Level 1 & 2

Exam board: WJEC

One Tier Entry

Grades: Pass, Merit, Distinction

## What will I study?

**Unit 1:** The Hospitality and Catering Industry. Learn about the hospitality and catering industry, the types of hospitality and catering providers and about working in the industry. Learn about health and safety, and food safety in hospitality and catering, as well as food related causes of ill health.

**Unit 2:** Hospitality and Catering in action. Learn about the importance of nutrition and how cooking methods can impact nutritional value. Learn how to plan nutritious menus as well as factors which affect menu planning. You will learn the skills and techniques needed to prepare, cook and present dishes as well as learning how to review your work effectively.

Within the theory lessons students will be learning Hospitality and Catering subject content ready for the examination at the end of the academic year. Students will learn the information for the course through discussions, revision, note taking and answering questions based on the lesson. At the end of each topic they will have an assessment to see how well they have learnt that topic.

## Where can this course take me?

The diverse careers in the hospitality industry include roles like chef de partie, commis chef, executive chef, front of house manager, head waiter, maître d'hôte, pastry chef, sous chef, nutritionist, and restaurant owner.

# GCSE Media Studies

GCSE

Exam board: Eduqas

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The GCSE Media Studies course offers the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of key issues and the ability to debate important questions about the media. It introduces a theoretical framework for analysing the media, which also underpins study of the media at AS and A level. The specification focuses predominantly on the contemporary media but this is contextualised and enhanced through the exploration of significant products from different historical periods. Through studying both established and evolving media forms, learners will gain a real awareness of the role of the media in society and culture. The study of a range of rich and stimulating media products is central to this subject, working from the product outwards to develop appreciation and understanding of the media.

## What skills will I develop?

In GCSE Media Studies, you'll analyse how media products use elements like images, sounds, language, and representations to convey meaning. You'll explore the impact of the industry on product creation, investigate diverse audiences, and study various media forms such as television, online media, advertising, film marketing, and more. The course includes practical work where you can apply your knowledge by creating music videos, magazines, TV programmes, advertisements, and other media products.

## How will I be assessed?

This course is assessed 70% through two written examinations and 30% through coursework. The examination for Component 1 (Exploring the Media) accounts for 40% of the qualification. The examination for Component 2 (Understanding Media Forms and Products) accounts for 30% of the qualification. The remaining 30% of the course is assessed through a non-exam assessment: internally assessed and externally moderated by the exam board.

## Where can this course take me?

GCSE Media equips you with skills applicable to A Level study, benefiting subjects like Film, English, Humanities, and Social Sciences. This qualification opens pathways to over one hundred UK universities offering courses in Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies. Whether pursuing higher education or exploring diverse career opportunities in TV, film, advertising, journalism, and more, GCSE Media provides a strong foundation. The growing media industry offers ample prospects, making it an ideal starting point for those interested in technical production, special effects, web design, post-production, and other dynamic fields. Becoming a Media Studies student has never been more opportune.

# GCSE Music

GCSE

Exam board: Eduqas

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Music as a discipline encompasses academia and creativity. We each have a unique musical identity that is informed by our life experience, background and social situation. GCSE Music is an exciting, inspiring yet challenging course that would appeal to students with a strong interest in music. Taking music as a GCSE enables students to develop self-expression, evaluate how music makes them feel and its impact on the world around them, and build listening, performance and composition skills.

Through music, we can learn so much about different cultures and historical contexts, as music represents the ever-changing societal landscapes in our world. This therefore allows music lessons to play an integral part in the development of students' cultural capital. Why Study GCSE Music? At St Paul's Academy, the Music department offers a superb package for GCSE students

## What skills will I develop?

In our GCSE Music course, students delve into a vibrant mix of music, from timeless classics to modern genres like DJing, beatboxing and rap. We balance both the practical and academic sides of music, ensuring a well-rounded education. Students explore global music traditions, develop skills in composition and performance, and learn about music theory in a variety of contexts. Each student receives individual music tuition, tailored to their interests and strengths. Students studying GCSE music benefit from access to our purpose built studio facilities for practising, recording and editing their music. This course not only nurtures musical talent but also develops critical thinking and creativity, preparing students for a bright future in both music and academics.

## How will I be assessed?

The course is divided into three areas:

**Component 1: Performing (30%)** - Students are required to record 2 performances, one solo and one as part of an ensemble.

**Component 2: Composing (30%)** - Students are required to compose 2 compositions under controlled conditions in the Editing Suite.

**Component 3: Appraising (40%)** - Students are required to sit a written listening paper (1hr 45min) at the end of their course.

## Where can this course take me?

This course leads well into creative arts A-Levels including, of course, music. Students who wish to continue musical study often use their qualifications and skills in radio, television, the film industry, theatre, education and independent content creation.

# GCSE Physical Education

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

The GCSE in Physical Education equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values for enhanced performance in physical activities, covering theoretical foundations, physiological and psychological influences, effective participation, analysis for improvement, recognition of health benefits, and understanding socio-cultural influences in physical activity and sport.

## What skills will I develop?

Students who opt for Physical Education will focus on four key components. These are:

**Component 1:** Fitness and Body Systems

**Component 2:** Health and Performance

**Component 3:** Practical Performance

**Component 4:** Personalised Exercise Programme (PEP)

### Unit 1 - The Theory of Physical Education

Overview of content:

**Component 1:** Fitness and Body Systems (36%)

**Component 2:** Health and Performance (24%)

**Component 3:** Personal Exercise Programme (10%)

### Unit 2 - Performance in Physical Education

Overview of content: Practical performance (30%)

## How will I be assessed?

**Unit 1** is assessed through two externally set examinations:

Component (1) 1 hour and 45 minutes

**Unit 2** is assessed under controlled conditions. This unit is externally moderated. Students will be assessed on their sporting performance

**Component (2)** 1 hour and 15 minutes. Both examination papers include multiple-choice, short-answer, and long-answer questions.

## Where can this course take me?

This course is an excellent foundation for those who wish to study sport at post 16 or for entry level roles within the sector. Achievement of this GCSE course provides a suitable foundation for further study, such as A Level PE or BTEC Sport Level 3 at a school sixth form/college. Many of the skills you will develop as part of this course are highly transferable, including teamwork, people and communication skills.

# GCSE Spanish

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Higher / Foundation Tier Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Being able to speak a foreign language will open doors for you. This course will equip you with language to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence, from having informal conversations and making friends to using the language in a business environment.

In Spanish GCSE, you will build on language skills and vocabulary you have learnt in KS3, and will learn how to express more ideas in greater detail. You will broaden your horizons, enjoy developing an understanding of other cultures and other ways of seeing the world, and making links with other languages, making it easier to learn another one in the future.

You will also develop a set of skills you can make use of in your adult life such as analytical thinking, creativity, memorisation techniques, effective communication and active listening.

## What skills will I develop?

You will improve your linguistic competence and develop Spanish speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across a range of interesting themes, such as:

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

You will learn to apply your skills in new contexts, express your opinions and discuss current issues confidently.

## How will I be assessed?

GCSE Spanish is 100% assessed by examination and will consist of four papers.

- Paper 1: Speaking** 50 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Paper 2: Listening** 50 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Paper 3: Reading** 50 marks, 25% of GCSE
- Paper 4: Writing** 50 marks, 25% of GCSE

## Where can this course take me?

Learning a language at GCSE will help you in almost any career and will open up many opportunities in the future.

You might want to use your language skills to pursue a career in a related field, such as translator, interpreter or diplomatic service officer. However, many other fields like marketing, finance or aviation make use of language skills, so having a GCSE in a language would put you at an advantage over other candidates.

Top universities expect students to have studied a language at GCSE level. With a GCSE in a language, you can continue your language studies at sixth form by taking an A Level or International Baccalaureate. Alternatively, you could also take an A Level at a later date at higher education level to combine with other subjects.

# BTEC Sport

BTEC

Exam board: Edexcel

One Tier Entry

Grades: Pass, Merit, Distinction

## What will I study?

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Sport is designed for Key Stage 4 learners seeking sector-specific knowledge and skills in sports. It involves exploring different aspects of sport and physical activity, including equipment and technology, participant types and needs, and anatomy and physiology. Practical sessions focus on planning and delivering sports activities, enhancing skills such as sport analysis and sports leadership. The qualification emphasises practical, skills-based learning and assessment, fostering communication, planning, time management, and teamwork. Recognizing the value of vocational attributes, it complements GCSEs and broadens learners' understanding of progression options available to them.

## What skills will I develop?

The course consists of three modules:

### Module 1: Participant Preparation

*Explore diverse sports and activities, Identify participation barriers and strategies, Research equipment and technological advances, learn body preparation for sports and activities.*

### Module 2: Active Participation and Performance Enhancement

*Investigate fitness components and their impact, Engage in practical sports activities, Examine sports officials' role, Apply methods to enhance others' performance.*

**Module 3: Fitness Development** (Understand fitness significance, Explore crucial fitness types, Gain knowledge of body and fitness testing techniques)

## How will I be assessed?

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Sport has:

Total Qualification Time: 149 hours

Guided Learning Hours: 120 hours.

The qualification is split into 60% coursework and 40% exam. The three main components are:

- Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity (36 Hours, 30% of final grade)
- Taking Part and Improving Other Participants Sporting Performance (36 hours, 30% of final grade)
- Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants Performance in Sport and Physical Activity (48 Hours, 40% final grade)

## Where can this course take me?

Level 2 achievers at Key Stage 4 may consider advancing to A Levels or vocational qualifications like BTEC National in Sport or Sport and Exercise Science for higher education or employment. Level 1 achievers can explore Level 2 post-16 technical routes or a technical qualification like Pearson BTEC Level 2 Technical Diploma in Sport and Activity Leaders, providing a potential pathway to employment in the sports sector.

# GCSE Textiles

GCSE

Exam board: OCR

Tier Entry

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

GCSE Textile Design involves creating designs and products for various fabrics with a focus on fibres, yarns, and fabrics. Learners explore and develop skills in their chosen area(s), drawing inspiration from historical and contemporary designers.

The course encompasses various Textile Design areas, including constructed textiles, digital textiles, dyed fabrics, printed fabrics, fashion design, installed textiles, soft furnishings, and stitched or embellished textiles. Techniques such as weaving, surface printing, pattern making, embroidery, knitting, batik, appliqué, and collage are creatively applied in the chosen area(s) of study.

## What skills will I develop?

Learners will:

- Develop ideas through critical analysis of sources
- Apply relevant textile design practices
- Refine ideas through research, construction, and presentation
- Record ideas in ways appropriate to Textile Design, such as for printed fabric or constructed garments
- Use drawing skills, including stitch, collage, and pattern creation
- Realise personal intentions in Textile Design through sustained application of the design process.

## Where can this course take me?

Product Design/Development, Architecture, Interior Design, Surface Design, Fashion Design, Automotive Design, Computer Aided Design, Furniture Design, Clothing/Textile Technology, Material Science, Shoe Design, Costume Design, Textile Designer, Retail Buyer, Conservator, Embroiderer.

# GCSE Triple Science

GCSE

Exam board: AQA

Higher / Foundation Tier

Grades 9-1

## What will I study?

Undertaking Separate Science will build on the core knowledge you will learn in Combined Science and develop your understanding of the scientific world. By choosing Separate Science you will gain a GCSE in each of the scientific disciplines separately. This gives you an opportunity to further develop your scientific understanding whilst also broadening your knowledge of the scientific content.

Undertaking the separate sciences is suitable for those who enjoy the hard work and intellectual demand involved in the study of science. Studying separate sciences at GCSE will allow you to unpick how the world around you works and consider how advances in science have led to some incredible breakthroughs. The implications and impact on our world of scientific advances will also be studied.

## What skills will I develop?

Studying separate sciences will help you to develop essential key skills that will serve you well in many A Level subjects and as the foundation for a wide range of careers. These skills include analysing data, evaluating information, conducting fair research and the ability to recall and apply facts to new situations. The skills you are taught are embedded whilst learning new content across a wide range of topics that build on the combined science content and so in addition you will also learn about: Biology: Culturing microorganisms, monoclonal antibodies, plant defences, the brain, the eye, and the homeostatic control of our bodies. Chemistry: Transition metals, nanoparticles, atom economy, titrations, alcohols, carboxylic acids, and esters, testing for elements, corrosion and NPK fertilisers. Physics: Pressure in gases, radiation, moments, levers, lenses, loudspeakers, waves, microphones, transformers, and the solar system.

## How will I be assessed?

The course consists of six externally examined assessments which contain a mixture of different question styles, including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

**Two written papers – Biology**

**Two written papers – Chemistry**

**Two written papers – Physics**

*(Exam time for each paper is 1 hour, 45 minutes)*

## Where can this course take me?

This course leads well onto all science A level courses and careers in a wide range of sectors including biomedical science, chemical engineering, pharmacy, radiology, dentistry, medicine, midwifery; nursing; nuclear engineering, petroleum chemistry, psychology and clinical or laboratory based research.



Abundance Achievement Ambition



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