MERCHANT TAYLORS'
School

GCSE Subject Information For The Fourth Form

Guidance and Course Details

2023/2025

Innovation - Courage - Confidence - Inspiration - Joy

We are a community forged from innovation, courage, confidence, inspiration and joy

We inspire a life-long love of learning and provide academic excellence for pupils, staff and support staff. We have a culture of collaboration, coaching and challenge. We are courageous in our pursuit of excellence: progress is driven by innovation and reflection.

The co-curriculum supports and enriches the academic curriculum through clubs, societies, trips and publications. We celebrate and explore the relationship between academic excellence and co-curricular participation: at different points in a school career, the focus upon each element will vary. Similarly, we maintain the balance between our focus upon promoting excellence and wide participation. We provide co-curricular opportunities to develop the character of everyone in the school - pupils, staff and support staff. All aspire to become more well-rounded, charming, confident, enthusiastic and independent. We work as a team, creating lasting bonds within our community.

We care for each other in a civilised, collaborative and respectful manner. That spirit creates a safe, inspiring and inclusive environment that promotes self-esteem. Our focus is upon the individual and the community: knowing and caring for everyone in the school, whether pupil, staff or support staff, creates a place in which people feel they belong, have shared purpose and have a role to play. We use our strength to serve the wider community beyond the school.

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INTRODUCTION FOR BOYS IN THE FOURTH FORM

In the Spring Term of the Fourth Form, pupils decide which subjects to study for GCSE. Pupils move on to their GCSE curriculum early in the Summer Term of the Fourths. This booklet describes the courses from which pupils can choose. Any decisions made at this stage should be very carefully considered as moving to a different subject is not normally possible at a later date.

Pupils and parents should bear in mind that we cannot forecast with certainty the demand for the courses described in this booklet, thus we cannot absolutely guarantee that every optional course in the booklet will be offered, although we always endeavour to meet each pupil's choices.

Some subjects offer a GCSE course and others prefer the International GCSE (or IGCSE) courses. Both are recognized as being of equal value by universities and employers.

Compulsory and Optional Subjects

Each pupil has ten academic slots to fill in his timetable and he must fill all of them. There are a number of compulsory subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science must be taken by all pupils. Pupils must also opt for at least one modern foreign language from a choice of French, German or Spanish (it may be possible to pick up German or Spanish *ab initio* if there is sufficient demand). The remaining choices can be chosen freely from the final column of the following list, to total 10 subjects.

Compulsory	One of	One of	Three from
English Language	Triple Science (default option)	French	Art & Design
English Literature		German	Computer Science
Mathematics	Double Science (with a couple of lessons each week of Learning Enhancement in other GCSE subjects)	Spanish	Design & Technology
		German (ab initio)	Drama
		Spanish (ab initio)	French
			Geography
			German
			German (ab initio)
			Greek
			History
			Latin
			Music
			Religious Studies
			Spanish
			Spanish (ab initio)
			Sports Science (PE)
3 GCSEs in total	3 GCSEs (or 2 if Double Science)	1 GCSE	3 GCSEs in total

Timings for making decisions

During the Spring Term, Heads of Department and individual subject teachers have begun to talk to boys about the courses they offer at GCSE. Pupils will be asked to decide on their choices by the end of March and their Tutors will input those decisions into our systems for planning.

Pupils should seek advice as to their choices from a variety of sources. Tutors will, of course be vital, as will older members of their Tutor Group who have gone through the process. Pupils should talk to subject teachers and, very importantly, their parents.

Planning for the future

It is important to note that some of the decisions made now may, in some cases, restrict the range of choices available to a pupil in the future. Difficult as it is as this early stage, pupils should try to think of what university courses they are potentially considering and work backwards through the suitable A Level options to the subjects they will be taking in the Fifth Form and the Divisions.

The following questions may help with the above:

- Are there any areas of university study that particularly interest me at this stage of my academic career?

- Are there any specific entry requirements for those courses, which will necessitate my choosing a particular A Level course?

- Will my selection of GCSE choices allow me to have the right range of choices available at A Level?

It may even be helpful at this stage to consult university prospectuses and websites to ascertain degree entry requirements. Guidance and advice can also be sought from our excellent Careers Department.

Alongside these questions, pupils should also reflect on which subjects they most enjoy and which they would like to spend longer on over the coming years. In almost all cases, pupils tend to achieve better final outcomes in subjects they have enjoyed studying and in which they have a genuine interest. It is for this reason that we ask the boys to make their choices ***before*** their Fourth Form exams. Whilst indicative of progress, these exams only give one snapshot of attainment and the Grades from the whole year, together with their preferences, ought to bear more weight in the decision-making process.

As ever, do please speak to Tutors, Heads of Section, or me if you require any further advice or guidance.

Rob Garvey
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Checklist to aid the Decision Making Process

Complete box 7 with your choice of French, Spanish or German (incl. German/Spanish ab initio)

Complete boxes 8, 9 and 10 with any three from: Art & Design, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Drama, French, Geography, German, German (ab initio), Greek, History, Latin, Music, Religious Studies, Spanish, Spanish (ab initio), Sports Science (PE).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Subject Choices</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="2">English Language</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td colspan="2">English Literature</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td colspan="2">Mathematics</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Triple Science</td><td rowspan="3">Double Science

(With a couple of lessons each week of Learning Enhancement in other GCSE subjects)</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Triple Science</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Triple Science</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td colspan="2">Modern Language _____</td></tr>
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ENGLISH

English at GCSE is, to a degree, a continuation of what you have been used to in the past: you will be writing stories, discussing poetry and prose, reading plays, responding to a variety of texts, including non-fiction, debating, and presenting a point of view, both in written form and orally. You are studying for two separate qualifications, one called **GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**, the other **GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE.** Both are core subjects at MTS and lessons will focus on one or the other throughout each term of study. We use the AQA Exam Board for both qualifications.

As you will see from the outlines below, you will be encountering a considerable range of different skills and tasks in these courses. Perhaps the principal change you will come to recognise is the need to respond to what you read more *analytically*, and this might seem quite difficult at first. You must remember, though, that these are two-year courses, and that you are not expected to pick up everything at your first attempt. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask your English teacher.

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AQA

This is one of the core subjects of Key Stage 4 in the National Curriculum. The course is designed to educate you in the applied use of English language and therefore relevant not only in and of itself, but also to every other subject you take. Its aim is also to prepare you for life and to equip you in the skills of analysis and communication that you will need in your chosen career.

Paper 1 - Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

This paper takes 1 hour 45 minutes and counts for 50% of the GCSE.

The aim of the paper is to assess your skills of language and structural analysis, evaluation of a point of view about a text, and both narrative and descriptive writing capabilities.

Paper 2 - Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

This paper takes 1 hour 45 minutes and counts for 50% of the GCSE.

The aim of the paper is to assess your skills of summary and inference writing, language analysis, and a comparison of perspectives between chosen text extracts from two different time periods. You will also be assessed on your ability to construct an argument and convince the reader of a point of view.

There is a **separate speaking and listening qualification** that typically takes place in the Spring Term of Divisions. This will take the form of public speaking and you will deliver a 5-minute speech on a chosen topic, followed by a Q&A session with the class, for which you will be graded either a Pass, Merit or Distinction.

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE
AQA

GCSE English Literature introduces you to a range of texts from across the three main literary genres: poetry, prose and drama. You will explore the texts and their contexts, analysing them in close detail and looking at character and theme development across whole texts and, when it comes to poetry, across different texts. You will get to know the set texts well and be able to quote from them in the closed-book exams, though the papers will also print extracts from the set texts to allow you to delve closely into the writer's language.

There are two exam papers that you will sit at the end of the course:

- Paper 1 - Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel
- Paper 2 - Modern texts and poetry

Paper 1 - Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel

This paper takes 1 hour 45 minutes and counts for 40% of your GCSE.

The aim of this paper is to assess your understanding of the play and novel that you have studied. Marks are given for ability to use textual evidence, knowledge of the texts, close analysis of language, form and structure and evaluation of the role of context.

Section A - Shakespeare (34 marks)
You will answer one question on the play you have studied, writing in detail on an extract given then about the play as a whole. (4 of the 34 marks on offer here are for your spelling and grammar).

Section B - The 19th-century novel: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (30 marks)
You will answer one question on Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, writing in detail on an extract given then about the novel as a whole.

Paper 2 - Modern Texts and Poetry

This paper takes 2 hours 15 minutes and counts for 60% of your GCSE

The aim of this paper is to assess your understanding of the poetry and modern play that you have studied. Marks are given for ability to use textual evidence, knowledge of the texts, close analysis of language form and structure and evaluation of the role of context. As well as answering on poems you have studied, you will also be given unseen poetry to analyse and explore.

Section A - Modern texts: *An Inspector Calls* (34 marks)
You will answer one essay question from a choice of two. It will ask you to explore a theme or character from the play using your own knowledge of quotes and relevant context. (4 of the 34 marks on offer here are for your spelling and grammar).

Section B - Poetry Anthology: *Power and Conflict* (30 marks)
One of the poems from the anthology will be printed in the paper. You will write about this poem and chose another poem from the anthology for the purpose of comparison. You must know quotes from the poems and contextual information about them.

Section C - Unseen Poetry (32 marks)
You are given two unseen poems: you begin by writing an essay analysing the first (for 24 marks) before comparing it with the second unseen poem (for 8 marks).

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MATHEMATICS

Edexcel

Mathematics is a core subject in the National Curriculum and is studied by all pupils throughout the Fourth Form, Divisions and Fifth Form. The subject is taught in ability strands from the second half of the Autumn term in the Fourth Form based on two tests taken at the end of the first half term. It is then continually refined on the basis of progress, tests and examinations.

All our pupils follow the Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics syllabus. The examination is taken by a large number of Independent Schools and we consider it to be the best qualification that meets the needs of our highly academic students. It involves two written papers, for which calculators are permitted in both. There is no coursework, but in exchange there are a few extra topics (which provide better preparation for those thinking of taking Mathematics in the Sixth Form).

From November, pupils in the top four sets in the Divisions will be taught with the intention they sit exams in both Mathematics IGCSE and a more advanced Additional Mathematics course at the end of the Fifth Form; the remainder will sit the IGCSE only. All our pupils enter the Mathematics IGCSE at Higher Level, where grades 9-4 are available.

At all stages of the courses there is emphasis not only on the learning of typical skills and techniques but also on understanding gained through problem-solving. At the same time, open-ended and investigative work is fully integrated into the course. In addition, a wide variety of extra-curricular mathematics activities are available for all.

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SCIENCE

Edexcel

Science is studied by all pupils in the Middle School. Subject specialists teach Biology, Chemistry and Physics in the relevant Departments. We teach the Edexcel IGCSE syllabus. This specification offers the best opportunities for boys at Merchant Taylors' to study a broad curriculum that is relevant and challenging, and the Triple Award offers suitable preparation for the demands of A Level study. The material is stimulating, there is plenty of opportunity for practical work, and we use a range of multimedia publications that have been designed to complement work in the laboratory.

In the Fourth Form there will be a choice to either opt for Double Science or to study for the Triple Award. This choice will very much depend on future career aspirations, a genuine passion for the Science subjects and natural ability in the Sciences. The new Edexcel IGCSE specification, based on the 9-1 grading system, has been modified considerably. Our advice therefore is, if you are considering studying Biology, Chemistry or Physics at A Level, then Triple Science would be the best foundation IGCSE course.

At the start of the Divisions, these sets are decided largely on performance in the Fourth Form examinations, though work throughout the year is also taken into account. Pupils will normally remain in the same set, taught by the same teachers, throughout the Divisions and Fifth Form, but a change of set may be considered at the end of the Divisions year. This arrangement has proved to be the best way to enable boys to achieve the best grades possible, on the right programme for that success.

Pupils entered for the Double Award will sit a Core paper examination for each of the Sciences, and be awarded two IGCSE grades. Pupils entered for the Triple Award will take an additional Extension in each subject and be awarded separate IGCSEs in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

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BIOLOGY

The Biology GCSE course follows the Edexcel International GCSE (IGCSE) specification (4BI1). Though demanding, the course provides students with an applied, practical and engaging snap-shot of basic mammalian physiology, ecology and plant science whilst also providing a solid foundation for further study of Biology at A Level.

The course is terminally examined and all students sit either one (for Double Award scientists) or two GCSE examinations in the summer term of the Fifth Form.

Paper 1 (110 marks) 2 hours
Paper 2 (70 marks) 1 hour and 15 minutes

There is no coursework component to the syllabus as such, though examination questions on both written papers will draw on candidates' knowledge and understanding of various core practical skills. Broadly speaking, questions on both written papers assess the candidate's knowledge and understanding of theory and investigative skills. Candidates will be assessed by a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

Topics covered are included below:

Nature and variety of living organisms	Structures and functions in living organisms	Reproduction and inheritance	Ecology and the environment	Use of biological resources
• Characteristics of living organisms • Variety of living organisms	• Organisation • Cell Structure • Biological molecules • Movement in & out of cells • Nutrition • Respiration • Gas exchange • Transport • Excretion • Co-ordination & response	• Reproduction • Inheritance	• Organisms in the environment • Feeding relationships • Cycles within ecosystems • Human influences on the environment	• Food production • Selective breeding • Genetic modification • Cloning

The IGCSE course runs for three years, starting in the Fourth Form. Although, partially hierarchical, the syllabus is topic based and work covered in the early part of the course is commonly repeated in the extensive revision sessions that occupy the last 'spare' weeks of the Fifth Form.

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CHEMISTRY

The course in Chemistry follows the Edexcel IGCSE specification. Although this is a demanding course, it covers a wide variety of material, and is an excellent preparation for A Level study.

Topics studied include: Atomic Structure, Reactivity, Chemical Equilibria, Rates of Reaction, Organic Chemistry, and Chemical Analysis.

Whilst there is no coursework element, practical work forms a major part of the course, and 20% of the written examinations tests candidates' practical understanding.

Two exams are set at the end of the Fifth Form:

Paper 1 tests core topics and, taken alongside papers in Biology and Physics, leads to an IGCSE Double Award in Science.

Paper 2 tests extension topics and candidates taking papers 1 and 2 qualify for an IGCSE in Chemistry.

We strongly advise anyone thinking of studying for an A Level in Chemistry to opt for Triple Science at IGCSE as this provides the best foundation for further study.

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PHYSICS

Studying Physics encourages you to look at the world around you with an inquiring and open mind, to explain why physical phenomena happen. Problem solving, experimental work and forming explanations are key parts of the study of Physics. You will develop your ability to apply your understanding to unfamiliar situations, a useful skill for life in general.

The Edexcel IGCSE Physics course introduces all the fundamental topics which you need in order to understand the subject and then develops these by further study and investigation. You will apply Physics to many everyday situations such as keeping your home heating bills low or using electricity safely. There are many tougher areas too, such as understanding what makes a nuclear reactor work and the principles on which an electrical generator works.

The examination consists of a two-hour and a one-hour paper which are taken during the Summer Term of the Fifth Form. Both of these papers include questions on the practical aspects of the subject and there is no coursework. Candidates aiming for Double Award Science only sit the first paper.

The topic sections are: Forces and Motion; Electricity; Waves; Energy Resources and Energy Transfer; Solids, liquids and Gases; Magnetism and Electromagnetism; Radioactivity and Particles and Astrophysics. Most of the topics will be examined in paper 1; the sub-topics which are not in paper 1 are specified in the syllabus. Questions in paper 2 may assess any area in the whole syllabus.

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MODERN LANGUAGES

Edexcel

Modern Languages are core subjects for GCSE/IGCSE in all leading Independent Schools in the UK. At Merchant Taylors' we lay considerable importance on the necessity to reach at least a competent level in a minimum of one foreign language. In addition to language skills, you will acquire knowledge of contemporary issues gleaned through the study of multimedia resources and short literary extracts and you will gain a study skillset that is different to all other subjects taught in the school. Furthermore, many Russell Group universities either require or recommend a GCSE/IGCSE language qualification as a minimum entrance requirement for their courses. Recent government initiatives have also sought to counteract the desperate shortage of linguists in the UK and, needless to say, your university and career prospects are considerably enhanced with a language qualification. If you have enjoyed your Fourth Form introduction to German or Spanish, you are already very well-placed to explore a second language further and acquire a second, increasingly valuable, qualification.

At Merchant Taylors' you will study the IGCSE syllabus (we currently use Edexcel) which we consider to be a better preparation for Sixth Form study and beyond. This syllabus is now followed by a large number of Independent Schools in the country. This requires candidates to demonstrate competence in the four linguistic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. We use the same syllabus for all three main languages so that you have the security of following the same exam syllabus: you can concentrate on the language rather than on a different set of skills and papers. The speaking is tested by your teacher at the end of the course and the test involves the discussion of a picture prepared in advance and a discussion of specified conversation topics covered during the course. The other three skills are tested in individual papers at the end of the course in a very similar format to your 13+ examination or your forthcoming end-of-year examination.

We use a mixture of authentic materials (texts, films, video clips, short literary extracts) and textbook materials that are directly relevant to the syllabus and there are opportunities for film analysis, acting, film-making, fiction reading and debating. In the Fifth Form and often in the Divisions Year, a language assistant provides conversation practice in small groups.

We organise numerous trips and exchanges to France, Germany, Austria and Spain and we also run excursions into London and host regular Panglossia (the MFL Society) events, which you are most welcome to attend.

By the end of the IGCSE course, you should be in a position to cope with everyday situations with confidence. The emphasis placed on speaking and listening activities facilitates the process of language acquisition and encourages self-expression, as well as the ability to understand the gist of what is said by native speakers. Reading is another important feature of the course and a wide range of materials is made available. You will learn how to extract relevant pieces of information, a skill which will continue to be of practical use later in life.

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FRENCH

Have you noticed that you have French words 'Dieu et mon droit' and the England motto 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' on the cover of your UK passport? Do you know that French is the second most commonly studied foreign language in the world after English (*Source: www.diplomatie.gouv.fr 2019*)? Did you know that according to a UN Organisation, the World Population Prospect, the number of Francophones in the world will reach more than 1 billion in 2050?

French is a very popular subject at Merchant Taylors' - not only is it an integral part of our national heritage and culture but it also provides an excellent basis for acquiring another modern language, either during your time at Merchant Taylors' or in later life. In the 2018 CBI survey of business managers, 54% of firms rated French as the top language useful to their business just above German, which currently has the strongest economy in Europe.

In French we follow the Edexcel syllabus as in other languages and this will allow double linguists to transfer skills and techniques between languages. The subject is taught in sets from the beginning of the Fourth Form with some resetting at the end of the year. The aim is to produce highly competent students with very strong ability across all four skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening).

The IGCSE course is a strong foundation for success at future French study in the Sixth Form. Indeed, France is the country that has won the most Literature Nobel Prizes and France comes second (behind the USA) for Fields Medals (the 'Nobel Prize' for Mathematics).

The IGCSE is a great stepping stone to French at A Level and alongside a boy's other chosen subjects, makes a powerful and sensible combination. French is especially useful to those with an interest in Economics, English, Fine Arts, History, Law, Mathematics and Engineering, Medicine, and Music.

For the IGCSE course you will also have access to multimedia learning in the form of personalised internet subscriptions to interactive language sites, regular use of the language labs and you will be given an introduction to French culture in the form of film extracts, video clips, songs or short stories.

We are now able to restart our linguistic and cultural programme in the coming months which includes a joint exchange initiative with the highly academic *Ecole Alsacienne* in Paris. There will also be various private exchange opportunities, holiday courses and work experience opportunities. As Central London is just a few miles away, you will be given regular opportunities to go to the Institut Français to attend events such as films. You are very much encouraged to avail yourself of these opportunities to experience French culture and language first-hand.

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Head of French

GERMAN

Studying German to IGCSE level gives students the opportunity to explore a language closely related to English. Speaking German is desired not only by some employers, but it should also be viewed as a skill which a well-rounded and educated individual offers. Germany is a highly modern and advanced country which recognises the value of those outside its borders who speak its language. It should also be remembered that German is an official language in no fewer than seven countries as well as a second language for much of Eastern Europe. As German is related to English, learning German represents an excellent chance to gain a solid grounding in a more straightforward language, the skills of which might be applied to the learning of other more complex languages later in life.

Our Edexcel IGCSE course in German is an accelerated one, based on the fact that much of the generic language-learning skills have been covered in the French course. Boys have the chance to work equally on their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills, and this will prepare them appropriately to make those initial visits to German-speaking countries, be it on exchange or some other form of travel.

Our students soon become confident in using complex linguistic structures, and by the end of the IGCSE German course pupils should be in a position to talk and write about a variety of everyday situations, whether it be their hometown, a film they have seen, topical issues such as the environment, or their future plans and career choices. They can offer opinions on a variety of issues and communicate meaningfully with another German speaker.

The IGCSE course is a strong foundation for success at future German study in the Sixth Form. It is important that the study of German be viewed as complementary to a boy's other chosen subjects, and not necessarily as a means to an end; German is especially useful to those with an interest in mathematics and engineering, economics, medicine, history, the law, the fine arts and music. The German Government readily makes funds available to students who wish to pursue their studies in Germany.

The German Department organises an annual exchange programme for boys in the Divisions and the Fifth Form with a grammar school in northern Germany as well as the chance to complete work-experience in Klagenfurt, Austria. The Department also facilitates German language courses in Austria over part of the summer. Such opportunities are clearly only open to boys who study German.

Looking further ahead, the German Department has, in recent years, seen a rise in students choosing to study purely German as well as the language alongside another degree, e.g. International Business and German. More UK companies than ever need German-speaking graduates (CBI Survey 'Learning to Grow', 2018) and with Brexit now complete, it could be argued that now is the most important time in recent decades to be learning German as the UK seeks to re-position itself amongst the EU's big players. Becoming a competent speaker of German is an achievable and desirable skill which can only make our students stand out more from the pack.

It may also be possible, depending on sufficient numbers, for proven linguists who have not studied German in the Fourth Form to choose it as an *ab initio* IGCSE option. Those who do so will be taught in a small separate class to their peers, until they have caught up with the rest of the cohort (normally by the end of the Divisions).

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SPANISH

Why bother learning a foreign language now that the UK has left the EU and we can translate everything on our phones? Whilst technology has an important place in our lives, most of us would agree that face-to-face interaction and interpersonal skills are indispensable (think virtual learning vs. classroom learning). One thing about Brexit is certain, we are going to have to work a lot harder in future to do business abroad. If you have a decent command of a foreign language, you will be more marketable and have more career choices than your monolingual counterpart.

In terms of number of native speakers, Spanish is number two language in the world, ahead of English. Recent CBI surveys indicate that Spanish is also one of the most valued languages for UK businesses, not just to trade with Spain, but also with the emerging markets of South America, so there is certain to be an increased need for good Hispanists in future job markets.

The Spanish Edexcel IGCSE course gives candidates the oral and aural skills necessary to cope with a variety of everyday situations in Spanish and enables pupils to read simple literary and non-literary texts for pleasure. Without the ability to communicate and understand a culture on its own terms, true access to that culture is impossible. Alongside the course we aim to provide a snapshot of Hispanic culture via films and articles and videos on music, sport and general current affairs.

Spanish is generally used in the classroom and a range of activities is maintained right up to IGCSE. We organise an exchange with a Spanish school in Málaga for Divisions, Fifth Form and Sixth Form pupils and this has proved extremely popular and successful. Those who participate in this trip find it a motivating experience which brings to life the language they have learned in school in a real context. In addition, we employ a native speaker for conversation practice and you will have the benefit of oral exam practice in small groups in the Divisions and Fifth Form during some of your lesson time.

As with any language, Spanish will require a willingness to acquire vocabulary and master grammar but with regular and consistent application, you will find the demands of the course well within your capabilities.

Spanish can be combined successfully with many subjects to IGCSE and beyond. As a language it offers a different skillset and approach and, besides degree courses in Modern Languages, some of our best Hispanists have gone on to read Medicine, Law, Business/Economics as well as many of the other Humanities.

It may also be possible, depending on sufficient numbers, for proven linguists who have not studied Spanish in the Fourth Form to choose it as an *ab initio* IGCSE option. Those who do so will be taught in a small separate class to their peers, until they have caught up with the rest of the cohort (normally by the end of the Divisions).

R P Bailey
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ART & DESIGN

OCR

Introduction

GCSE Art & Design offers a wonderful opportunity for those fascinated by the visual world to expand and develop their understanding. There is ample opportunity for highly personal production with an emphasis on self-motivation.

Rationale

We promote and develop *transferable skills* applicable to any artistic discipline: imagination, creativity, lateral thinking and invention are all prized assets of the artist. These skills are first developed and encouraged through a structured, non-assessed course in the autumn term of the Divisions, in which you will learn all the essentials of drawing, painting, Photoshop, and sculpture – the skills needed for your GCSE coursework. This course is accompanied by weekly homework. From then on, pupils choose their own projects, deciding for themselves what to do in each lesson and for their homework. This independence continues throughout the Fifth Form, when the majority of coursework is undertaken.

Contents

The course contains two units, or projects, which are essentially extended sketchbooks of preparatory work leading up to a 'final piece'. One project is the coursework (60%), while the second is the exam (40%). There are lots of options available within the course, as once coursework begins in the Divisions, pupil choose their own themes to explore, setting their own classwork and homework. This means you can encounter painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking and photography throughout. In all cases boys direct their work in accordance with *their* personal motivations and enthusiasms.

The culminating Summer Show is a chance to exhibit the best of boys' productions to an invited audience. The unique environment of the Life Class (working from the figure) provides a forum for serious and sophisticated young artists to engage with a long established discipline.

Beyond the Course

The course offers a unique experience in itself by making a rich and imaginative contribution to your studies, but it is an *essential requirement* for those wishing to pursue the subject into the Sixth Form and beyond. Artists have a vast number of options and the number of courses on offer is phenomenal reflecting the growth of an image conscious world – it is imperative that we have intelligent and talented people leading the way. For example, Architecture or Product Design provides a genuinely interesting blend of the creative, visual, and mathematical, to help shape the way we live; Art is the preferred way of evidencing creative thinking in applicant portfolios for most of those subjects.

GCSE Art & Design is a hugely rewarding subject, the sense of engagement and wonder that boys enjoy from making Art is the antidote to the time and effort required to secure a top grade. The best advice is this: to study Art at GCSE level you must really enjoy it. If you have any further queries, do speak to me or to your teacher – we will be happy to show you some examples of GCSE work.

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CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

LATIN

OCR

In 19BC, the greatest Roman poet, Virgil, died, with his greatest work, the *Aeneid*, almost completed. He left instructions in his will that it had to be burned. The Emperor Augustus intervened, and saved the work. For GCSE Latin, you will read Virgil's very words.

Reading Latin literature – some of the greatest poetry, oratory, and historical writing ever created – is where your study of Latin has been leading for the past few years. You will spend the first half of the Divisions year consolidating your understanding of the language, and becoming acquainted with all of the features of the language that are needed for the GCSE. Most of these features have been covered by the end of the Fourth Form.

You will then begin to explore the poetry and prose written by the likes of Caesar, Cicero and Ovid, before studying in real depth the passages that are set for the GCSE exam. Your study of the set texts will continue through the Fifth Form. One of these texts will be a section of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the tale of Aeneas' journey from Troy to Italy, and the consequent beginnings of the Roman race.

The GCSE involves three exams: one language exam – that is, translation and comprehension – and two literature exams. You will have studied the texts for the literature exam in detail in the course of class. The exam requires you to answer questions on these texts and to translate sections.

There have been trips for GCSE Latinists to Italy, Sicily, and Greece in recent years, and it is expected that these will continue to run. Such trips provide the opportunity to see Classical remains in their defiant splendour, and we shall look to resume them as soon as we are able.

In the course of your lessons, you will make discoveries about the history, art and everyday life of the Roman world, and behold its legacy through frequent digressions into later Western literature, art and politics. Latin is highly-regarded by universities and employers, and has been a crucial part of the school syllabus for hundreds of years. It is now available at a dwindling number of schools, but continues to flourish at Merchant Taylors'.

GREEK

OCR

The epic poems of Homer are often regarded as the cornerstone of Western literature. In the course of Greek GCSE, you will discover why this is. You will be studying canonical texts, which have been studied for over two thousand years, and which have formed the minds and shaped the culture of Europe.

Before beginning the study of this literature, you will strengthen the understanding of the language that you developed during the Fourth Form. By the end of the Divisions, you will have covered all of the GCSE language work, and so can begin to focus on the set texts.

The study of Greek literature in the Fifth Form provides an exciting challenge, and a true insight into the Classical world: after only two years of learning the language, you can read some of the finest

literature ever written. The authors vary from year to year, but recent texts have included courtroom speeches declaimed in the Athenian courts about murder and adultery, as the account of the capture of Babylon by the Father of History, Herodotus. You will also read Homer or Euripides. Reading Homeric Greek, magnificent and dignified, and enjoyed for the last two and a half thousand years, is an experience available to few nowadays, and is an experience that will prove memorable and rewarding. Reading Euripides, who created some of the most terrifying yet humane characters in literature, will allow you to encounter one of the world's great tragedies.

In the course of the study of literature, you will come to see why these works are regarded as masterpieces. The literature exam makes up 50% of the GCSE, and through your answers to questions you will demonstrate your understanding and appreciation of the texts.

The remaining 50% of the exam is translation of Greek into English, and comprehension questions on a passage of Greek.

There have been trips for GCSE Classicists to Italy, Sicily, and Greece in recent years, and it is expected that these will continue to run. Such trips provide the opportunity to see Classical remains in their defiant splendour, and we shall look to resume them as soon as we are able.

Greek has been studied at Merchant Taylors' since its foundation, and the School has produced many distinguished Classicists. It is a highly-respected subject, which is generally regarded as a serious and rigorous academic discipline. If you have enjoyed your study of Greek so far, and wish to understand and to appreciate the Classical world in a setting that will encourage discussion and independent thought, then GCSE Greek will prove an enjoyable and a rewarding undertaking.

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COMPUTER SCIENCE

AQA

The Computing Department offers a GCSE course over two years in Computer Science from AQA (8525).

Computer Science is about problem solving and making things work. There is a mixture of the theoretical and the practical, it is a subject which appeals to those who enjoy working out new solutions for themselves - and also like to see that thinking come to life. The course includes specific modules covering programming in C#, the analysis of complex systems, algorithms, Boolean logic and explores how computer devices actually work in some detail, looking at the full range of hardware and software in use today. The course is examined in two written papers at the end of the two years and there is no course work. A study of Computer Science at GCSE will provide a solid introduction to current and future technology, problem-solving and computer programming, which is becoming increasingly important for those who go on to study art, science, engineering and computing at A Level and beyond.

Computer Science includes the study of:

- Problem solving: algorithm design, problem-solving, structure diagrams, flow charts, pseudo-code, testing
- Programming in C#: sequence, selection, repetition, subroutines, data structures; the second examination includes pre-release material and questions released in advance
- Data representation: binary, hexadecimal, logic gates, error detection, data compression
- Databases: tables, keys and SQL queries
- Communication and internet technologies: data transmission, security, HTML & CSS
- Hardware and software: logic gates, computer architecture, the fetch-execute cycle, input and output devices, storage devices, operating systems, computer languages
- Security: data corruption, passwords, firewalls, SSL, encryption, hacking
- Ethics: copyright, plagiarism, licensing, malware

If you choose Computer Science GCSE you will develop your programming and problem-solving skills and learn more about how computers work. Programming and computation are important skills in many mathematical, engineering scientific, technical and computing courses and careers. Computer Science GCSE will prepare you very well for Computing A Level.

Examinations

The Computer Science course has two written examinations and no coursework. Paper 1 (2 hours) covers problem solving and programming (50% of the total marks). Paper 2 (1 hour 45 minutes) covers theory (50% of the total marks).

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DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

AQA

Design and Technology gives young people the skills and abilities to engage positively with the designed and made world and to harness the benefits of technology. They learn how products and systems are designed and manufactured. They learn how to be innovative. They learn how to make creative use of a variety of resources including digital technologies. Hopefully they will understand how they can improve the world around them.

Our GCSE course centres on user-driven design, offering boys the opportunity to work on a range of projects from those that build on practical and computer based skills to ones relating to evaluation and response to 'real world' problems.

The first two terms of the Divisions year build on the core knowledge covered in the Fourth Form. Boys undertake a workshop and CAD based focused practical in the first half term and a mini design challenge in the second. These projects help to build confidence in the workshops and on the software we use, as well as supporting decision making, time management and independent working skills. In the Spring Term, boys undertake an independent, context driven, design and make project which works on their creativity and presentation. This second project also offers a small scale practice run for the GCSE Non Examined Assessment that boys start in the summer term and is worth 50% of their final GCSE grade.

The other 50% of the final GCSE mark comes from a single written examination, the content of which is covered throughout the GCSE course in the form of theory lessons. The theory side of the course supports the boy's practical exploration as well as providing them with an insight into material properties and uses, commercial manufacturing processes, history of design, sustainability, the impact of technical innovations and also mechanical devices to name only a few areas. Boys will also be required to use applied mathematics over the course as all D&T exams must contain at least 15% mathematic content in them, highlighting once again the link between D&T and other STEM subjects.

Career wise, given its breadth and depth, D&T has much to offer across a wide range of career paths in engineering, manufacturing and the creative industries. In addition to learning about designing and making processes, materials technology and programmable systems and control, D&T contributes to the development of important life skills and personal qualities. These include; independence, team working, resilience, resourcefulness, risk taking and entrepreneurship.

No prior knowledge is necessary when choosing D&T and boys who joined MTS in the Fourth Form should feel confident in their ability to succeed due to the support of our fantastic staff and facilities. The Department will however expect boys who opt for D&T to be both good at organising their time and be self-motivated.

Should you have any further queries about Design and Technology at GCSE feel free to talk to either your Design or Technology teacher or to me directly.

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DRAMA

AQA

Students follow the AQA GCSE Drama course (8261). 70% of the final grade is assessed through **written work**. 30% of the final grade is assessed through **practical work.**

Why study the subject?

Drama offers students the opportunity to explore a range of creative and critical thinking skills. They are encouraged to become imaginative and confident performers. The subject enables students to develop key skills applicable to a variety of careers as they learn to present themselves in public with confidence. They also learn to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, to think analytically and evaluate effectively. Whatever the future holds, a GCSE Drama student will emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills invaluable for study at University and in the workplace. Drama students have gone on to pursue careers in Politics, Media, Medicine, Events Management, Teaching, as well as in the Entertainment Industry.

Aims of the Course

- To encourage exploration and active engagement in a wide range of creative and stimulating activities
- To promote independent learning and critical, reflective enquiry
- To develop a range of practical, creative and performance skills
- To facilitate imaginative and contemporary work in a collaborative context

Course Content

The course offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. Students will be introduced to key practitioners, theoretical influences and influential playwrights whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills. The content for GCSE Drama is divided into three components:

1. Understanding drama (written examination)
2. Devising drama (practical process/performance and written coursework portfolio)
3. Texts in practice (practical performance)

Method(s) of Assessment

Component 1 (40%) consists of the written paper – an open book exam of 1¾ hours
Section A: multiple choice questions on knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre (4 marks)
Section B: four questions on a given extract from the set play (chosen from a choice of six) (46 marks)
Section C: one question on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production (30 marks)

Component 2 (40%) consists of creating and performing devised drama (20 marks). Students will analyse and evaluate their own work with the creation and development of a written coursework portfolio (60 marks).

Component 3 (20%) consists of an exploration and performance of two extracts from a play (40 marks in total)

All practical examination assessment will be in the form of Acting. There are likely to be opportunities to work on design and technical aspects of production during the course although this will not be part of the formal examination assessment.

Students taking GCSE Drama have the opportunity to take part in a range of exciting theatre visits in the West End. In recent years, students have also enjoyed excellent practical workshops with internationally renowned theatre companies including Frantic Assembly. GCSE Drama students also often audition for roles in our major School Productions. The department supports students preparing for National Youth Theatre auditions.

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GEOGRAPHY

AQA

Do you have an inquisitive mind and are you fascinated by the world around you? Geography is part of everyday life: urban change, quality of life, flooding, volcanic eruptions, deforestation, globalisation and energy provision. These are all issues that make headline news regularly and form part of our GCSE course. We teach the AQA specification and you will take three exam papers which will assess Human and Physical Geography as well as a range of geographical skills including fieldwork experience. Our teaching team is fully committed to supporting you throughout your course to ensure you both enjoy it, and are ultimately successful in your exams. Now the department is fully settled into the new Geography building, there has never been a more exciting time to continue the subject.

All students will be able to enjoy exploring Geography in the real world through fieldwork trips to the Olympic Park in Stratford and the River Chess near Amersham, as well as optional expeditions abroad at some stage in their GCSE or A level careers. The current Fourth Form students have already started their GCSE course by studying the 'Challenge of Natural Hazards' topic, and so should be aware of the engaging lesson activities, interesting contemporary content, and wide range of revision and exam technique support available on Teams.

The course is split roughly into 50% Human Geography and 50% Physical Geography. In Year 10 students will build on their knowledge and understanding from the Natural Hazards Topic studied in Year 9 and will start the year studying Urban Issues and Challenges before moving on to the Physical Landscapes of the UK and the Changing Economic World modules. Towards the end of Year 10, students will begin work on the fieldwork preparation which will include visits to the River Chess and Stratford Olympic Park. The modules studied in year 10 focus on human interaction with their natural and built environment as well as consider ways in which to manage society and landscape. The focus for Year 11 is on geography as a tool for sustainable management of global and regional issues. Students will start the year focusing on the Living World module and then move on to Challenge of Resource Management before completing the Geographical Skills and Applications module in preparation for Paper 3. Further details on the course components can be found here:

https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/specifications/AQA-8035-SP-2016.PDF

At the end of Year 11, all students will sit three papers. Paper 1 is worth 35% of the total marks and will assess students' knowledge and understanding of the physical modules (Natural Hazards, Living World and Physical landscapes in the UK). Paper 2 will assess the human geography modules (Urban Issues, Economic World and Resource Management). This is also worth 35% of the total mark. The remaining 30% is assessed in Paper 3 which will draw on students' geographical skills and will include a problem-solving activity based on pre-released material provided by the exam board. It will also ask questions relating to fieldwork, both generally and in relation to two individual studies. Candidates will also be assessed on a range of practical skills including basic numeracy, data interpretation, and map skills.

Geography provides a strong bridge between Arts and Sciences and it is a respected and popular choice at A Level, should you opt to continue with it. It complements many other subjects and allows for a degree of individualism in answers to examination questions. It is particularly useful in supporting subjects like Economics and Politics at A Level. It also provides the analytical, numerical,

literacy and ICT skills that employees look for and this is why Geographers are known to be highly employable.

Our expanded programme of expeditions will provide you with the opportunity to experience geographical processes and landforms first-hand in such locations as Iceland, Switzerland, California, Morocco, China and the Azores. We had a joint trip with Politics to Israel and Palestine, and a new trip planned to Morocco.

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HISTORY

Cambridge International

IGCSE History will enable you to:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of the periods studied - International Relations 1919-1989 and Germany 1918-1945.
- Investigate key historical events, changes, people and issues from this period.
- Develop an understanding of how the period has been represented and interpreted.
- Explore historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference.
- Use historical sources, both primary and secondary, critically in their historical context.
- Organise and communicate your knowledge and understanding of the period.
- Draw conclusions and appreciate that these and other historical conclusions are liable to reassessment in the light of new or reinterpreted evidence.
- Develop an interest in and enthusiasm for History.

You will consider the following historical questions:

- Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Was the Weimar Republic doomed from the start?
- Why was Hitler able to dominate Germany by 1934?
- How effectively did the Nazis control Germany, 1933–45?
- What was it like to live in Nazi Germany?
- Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?

In 2025, you will sit:

Component 1 = 40% (2 hours)
Written paper - Candidates answer three questions, split into three parts: (a: 4 marks), (b: 6 marks) and (c: 10 marks). (60 marks)

Component 2 = 33% (2 hours)
Written paper - Candidates answer six questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content. There is a range of source material relating to each topic. (50 marks)

Component 3 = 27% (8 lessons + homework)
One piece of extended writing, up to 2000 words in length, based on the Germany Depth Study. (40 marks)

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MUSIC

Edexcel

Musicians have long-enjoyed the benefits of bringing together a wide range of inter-related and transferable skills and abilities forged through active and progressive music-making. This course is aimed at those who are interested in expanding their musical knowledge, understanding and skills, and in forming personal and meaningful relationships with music, while also fostering their creativity and imagination, developing their self-belief and confidence, nurturing an ability to communicate expressively, and simply learning to learn.

Edexcel's GCSE Music is a practical course which gives you credit for your performing and involvement in music, but one which also encourages you to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music, to develop an understanding of the place of music in different cultures and contexts, and to reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities. During this course you will study music by composers spanning nearly 400 years, from Bach and Beethoven to Queen and John Williams (Star Wars).

There are three components to this course:

Component 1: Performing (30%)

This is a coursework element worth 30% of the total mark. You will have ample opportunities to perform at school, and in the second year of the course **you will record two performances** for submission: **one as a soloist** and **one as part of an ensemble**. Full marks in this component are possible for anyone who performs at Grade 4 standard or above. Don't worry if you are not already part of an established ensemble at school – there will be time to choose appropriate repertoire and form the necessary ensembles to rehearse with during the first year of the course.

Component 2: Composing (30%)

This is also a coursework element, and is worth a further 30% of the total mark. You will **compose two pieces of music**, one to a brief of your own devising agreed with your teacher, and one to a brief set by the exam board. You will develop your composing skills through regular assignments that form part of the research phase for each piece. Scores and recordings of each composition are then produced under the supervision of the teacher during a 6 hour time allocation at School.

All coursework submissions are internally assessed by music staff and moderated by the exam board.

Component 3: Listening and Appraising (40%)

This is a written paper which you will sit in the summer exam session at the end of the course and is worth the remaining 40% of the total mark. You will study music across a wide variety of styles and genres grouped into four Areas of Study, each of which contains two set works. In the paper you will respond to questions on recorded extracts of music taken from these set works, as well as unfamiliar but related music, and also answer one extended response question comparing musical features between a set work and another unfamiliar extract.

The four Areas of Study cover a wide range of musical styles and genres, each featuring two set works:

AOS1 Instrumental Music 1700–1820

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 by J. S. Bach
Piano Sonata Op. 13 No. 8, 'Pathetique' by Beethoven

AOS2 Vocal Music

Music for a While by Henry Purcell
Killer Queen by Queen

AOS3 Music for Stage and Screen

Defying Gravity from the Broadway Musical Wicked by Stephen Schwartz
Music from Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope by John Williams

AOS4 Fusions

Release by the Afro Celt Sound System
Samba em Prelúdio by Esperanza Spalding

Those who opt for GCSE Music will be taking instrumental or singing lessons either at School or privately and will continue these lessons throughout the course. All pupils will be expected to participate in as much music as possible at School, to perform, and take every opportunity to listen to both live and recorded performances.

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religion, philosophy and ethics, through the eyes of two major world religions

Edexcel RS B

How do we know right from wrong? How does religion affect the world we live in today? How should we approach weapons of mass destruction? Why would an all-powerful, all-loving God allow the Holocaust to happen?

If you find these questions interesting, then read on. Consideration of ethical issues and stances is of vital importance in today's world. Every day, the media alerts us to the latest ethical debates and dilemmas; from euthanasia to abortion, from going to war to fighting poverty, from free speech to publishing cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. How should we decide what to do? For many, there are no clear-cut answers. For this reason, it is important to discuss these issues with others and attempt to understand the views of those in the world around us.

Religious Studies GCSE is not just about religion – approximately half the course is on important ethical and philosophical questions. This makes RS a relevant qualification for any job which involves working with other people – so that's all jobs! RS compliments humanities, arts and science subjects. It is open to all, regardless of religious (or non-religious) practice or persuasion. The course is also an excellent basis for progressing to either the Religious Studies or Philosophy A Levels. It helps develop key skills such as communication, presentation, reasoning, questioning, creativity, analysis, and critical thinking… all of which are incredibly sought after at university and in future employment.

GCSE RS students explore both Christian and Muslim beliefs and lives in relation to some of the fundamental questions of human existence and what it means to be religious. In doing so, students learn how to interpret and evaluate information, and communicate and apply their knowledge of Christianity and Islam to real world issues. First and foremost, the course develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills. To this end, discussions and debates are a key component of the learning process. You will be encouraged to form your own opinions on these issues and to consider why people may disagree with you.

The course consists of two units, each examined in a one hour and 45 minute paper:

Unit 1RBO/3: Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice through Christianity
(Christian Beliefs, Philosophy of Religion, Living the Christian Life, Equality)

Unit 1RBO/2: Religion, Peace and Conflict through Islam
(Muslim Beliefs, Crime & Punishment, Living the Muslim Life, Peace and Conflict)

Each individual unit represents 50% of the total GCSE marks. There is no coursework requirement. All questions require candidates to describe, explain and analyse with the use of evidence and reasoned argument.

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SPORTS SCIENCE (PHYSICAL EDUCATION)

AQA

The course is aimed at any boy who has a keen love for sport. It is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to provide a route to further study within Sports Science. It is not necessary to have studied Sports Science in the Fourths to access this course.

The course addresses a wide range of topics that relate to optimising performance in sport including: what to eat and when, injury prevention, the different components of fitness and how we can improve them. It also focuses on the cultural aspects of sport that influence an individual's involvement in healthy physical activities including: the role of the media, the establishment of the National Curriculum and its aims for school sport as well as social factors that influence sporting participation.

Subject Content

1. Applied anatomy and physiology
2. Movement analysis
3. Physical training
4. Use of data
5. Sports psychology
6. Socio-cultural influences
7. Health, fitness and well-being

The theory part of the course makes up 60% of the GCSE. This is tested through two written exams. The rest of the marks available are made up from practical assessments (40%) in <u>three</u> sporting activities as well as an analysis and evaluation task. (Please see the assessment break down on the next page)

Pupils are assessed in three sports made up of at least one individual sport and one team-based sport. As a guide, pupils should be proficient in at least 2 sports and pupils with a comprehensive level of competence in a variety of sports (from the specification) tend to perform well in this part of the course. Sports pursued outside of school (e.g. skiing, rock climbing etc) can contribute to the overall marks as well. We would recommend that students choose sports that they are playing regularly in or out of school. It will be very important for the boys to maintain their performance levels outside of the GCSE lessons (through games activities or clubs). Practical assessment for GCSE will be conducted in late spring/early summer term in the Fifth Form. In the Divisions, the boys will all sit a mock paper based on topics covered, as well as mock practical assessments to get the boys used to the moderation procedure.

The course is ideal for anyone who wants to learn more about how the body works and to look at how they can improve their own personal performance in sports. The course will complement anyone looking to do Biology, Psychology and of course, Sports Science at A Level.

If anyone is unsure about their suitability for the course then please do speak to me at your earliest convenience.

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