

KS4 Options

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KS4 Options Booklet



Choices

We have roughly 240 students making 4 choices each.

This means there are 960 choices.

Usually

- 230 students get all 4 of their choices but about 10 only get 3 of their choices.
- Therefore 950 out of 960 choices are usually satisfied.
- This is 99%.

So, because of the possibility that a student won't get all of their options, we will be asking for a reserve choice on the options form.

If we have to use the reserve choice or need a further reserve choice we will communicate this to parents.

School Performance

Schools are compared according to different measures:

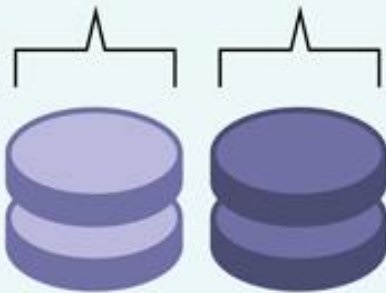
- *Percentage of pupils achieving a “good” grade in English and maths*
- *Progress across 8 subjects – broader structure than the English Baccalaureate*
- *Attainment across the same 8 subjects.*

Therefore, the Gryphon School, as with other schools, has to structure its curriculum offer around these government requirements.

Progress 8

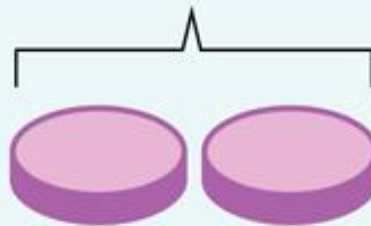
Progress 8 and Attainment 8 proposal

English Maths

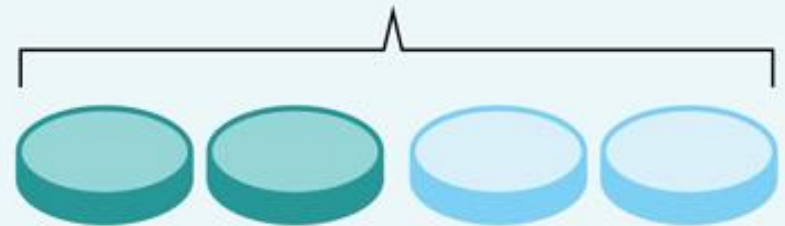


The English and Maths slots are double-weighted. In the English slot, a pupil must take both English Literature and English Language for the higher grade to be double-weighted. The lower grade can count in a breadth slot.

Science



Breadth



At least two breadth slots must include subjects from 2 of the following 3 categories:

- Humanities
- Creative subjects
- Languages

We're interested in the sector's views as to whether there should be a 4th science category which also includes computer science

Languages reform

In 2024, there were government changes to make the subjects more accessible and attractive for students, and boost take up by making it clearer what they need to know.

In the updated GCSEs, first examined this year, students will be assessed on **the most common vocabulary** used in conversations and writing, as well as grammar and pronunciation, increasing clarity for teachers and improving the practical benefits for students.

Research shows that a focus on these 'building blocks' enables students to more clearly see progress in their ability to understand and use the language, and in turn grow in confidence and motivation.

I have written to you outlining whether your daughter/son should study a Language GCSE.



Creative subjects

- **Art, Craft and Design**
- **Photography**
- **Art 3D**
- **Music**
- **Drama**
- **Film Studies**
- **Creative iMedia**
- **Hospitality and Catering**

What this means for Options

All our students study either, or both
Geography and History

Most of our students will study a Language at
GCSE

Those who do not study a Language will need
to pick at least one Creative subject

Prohibited Combinations

1- You can only do one of Art, Craft & Design, Art 3D and Photography

2 – You can only do 1 of Business GCSE and Economics GCSE.

3 – You can only do 1 of Computer Science GCSE and the Creative iMedia.

You can choose 2 Languages, and you can choose to study both Geography and History.

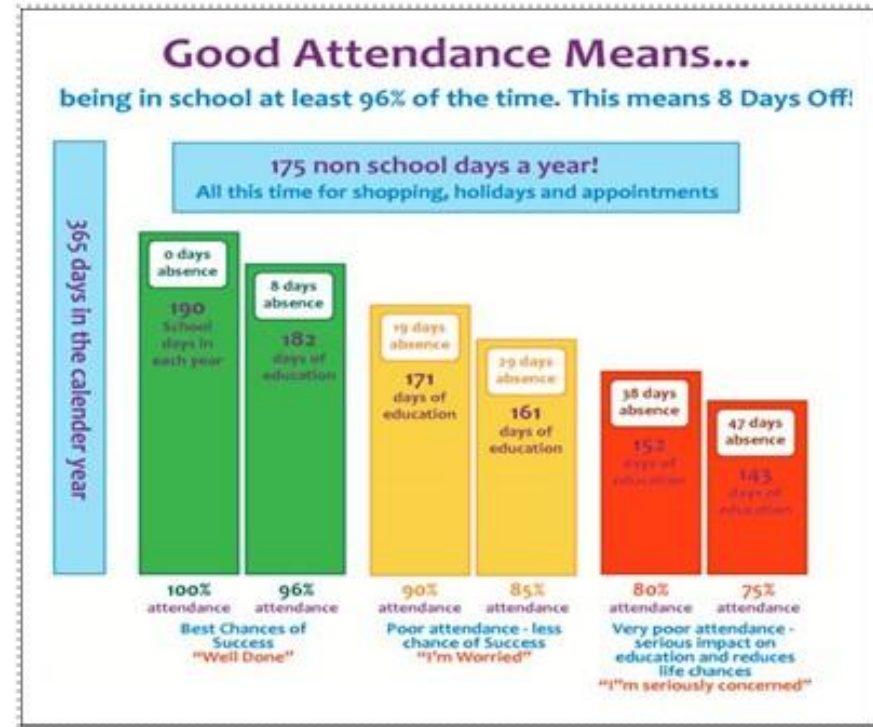
Attendance

⇒ Attendance makes such a critical difference to student progress and outcomes. It is the most important factor to how well they do.

⇒ This is important for all subjects, but even more so for coursework based subjects because every lesson is part of your overall assessment

⇒ Photography, Art, Art 3D, Film, BTEC Sport, iMedia, Hospitality

⇒ Therefore, we will look at your attendance alongside your options. If your attendance is low, we will make sure that your options are appropriate so that you have the best chance of success.



September 2026 start

GCSEs

No modules for GCSEs – all exams at the end of Year 11.

But note that there are some exams as you go along in BTECs etc.

Every course graded 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest).

No “coursework” (controlled assessments) in :

- Maths
- English Language
- English Literature
- History GCSE
- Geography GCSE
- Economics GCSE
- Business GCSE

Most courses have moved to more exams and less controlled assessments.

September 2028 start

A-levels

Students do A-levels at the end of Year 13.

Students do internal exams at the end of Year 12 in order to progress into Year 13.

Types of Qualification

GCSEs

- ⇒ Usually more exams than coursework or controlled assessment
- ⇒ Graded 9 (highest) to 1(lowest)
- ⇒ Suitable whatever you want to do next ... give access to A-levels at the Gryphon School and then university but equally are often necessary for College courses and Apprenticeships

But some qualifications – (1) Art, Craft and Design (2) 3D design and (3) Photography have:

- ⇒ 60% Portfolio completed over the course
- ⇒ 40% Ten Hour Exam which you prepare for after Christmas in Year 11 (the exam is more practical than written)

Types of Qualification

BTECs

Available in:

- Sport

⇒ **More coursework than exams**

⇒ **All have outcomes at Level 2 (equivalent to a high GCSE grade of 4 to 9)**

Vocational Courses

Available in:

- Creative iMedia
- Hospitality and Catering

⇒ **Some have outcomes at Level 1 (equivalent to a low GCSE grade of 1 to 3)**

⇒ **BTEC Sport, Hospitality and Catering and Creative iMedia are graded as L1P, L1M, L1D, L2P, L2M, L2D or L2D*.**

⇒ **Can lead onto A-levels and Level 3 BTECs in the Gryphon 6th form and subsequently university**

What **career**
do I want to follow in
future?

Do I need particular
qualifications for this
career?

Do I want to go to
university?

Are there particular
GCSEs I will need to
get in?

Or should I just pick a
broad range
of qualifications and
make decisions later?

How do I learn best?

Do **exams,**
coursework or
practical
learning work best for
me?

Decisions

Discussions
with parents

Year 9 Levels



Tutors'
opinions

Teachers'
opinions

Options

All students follow a non-examined course in RE though PSHRE; an examined course is available as a choice for those who want to do this.

All students will study the Core subjects of English, Maths and Science

- English Language and English Literature GCSEs
- Mathematics GCSE

Students then study science:

- Combined Science GCSE – a “double” GCSE – leading to the award of 2 GCSEs
- Or Separate Sciences (3 GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

Decisions will be made about which course students will study towards the end of Year 9 when we have more information about their progress in Science this year

Students then have to choose a humanity GCSE:

- A GCSE in History or Geography. They can study both.

Students then make 3 Choices on their other subjects, with the majority of students picking at least one of these as a language.

Those who do not study a language will need to study a Creative subject



Combined Science

- Students study all three sciences with separate teachers for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- They will sit 6 Science papers and get two grades showing their average Science performance, e.g. 5,5 or 7,6.
- The highest possible grade is 9,9 – two grade 9s.
- Students can (and do) go on to study Science A levels from Combined Science (6,6 entry requirement).

Separate Sciences

- A small number of students will be chosen to take separate science GCSEs.
- They will cover extra topics to allow them to get 3 GCSE grades.

Option subjects



New subjects

- Most subjects that students can choose, they have had some experience of studying between Year 7 and 9
- New subjects, does not mean easy subjects
- Coursework subjects have got harder over time, and mean there is a constant demand to keep up with the work

BTEC Sport Tech Award

- BTEC Sport Lessons are in addition to normal PE lessons
- 2-year course that is worth exactly the same as any other GCSE Course
- 5 lessons per fortnight with a dedicated teacher
- A mixture of coursework-based assessments and an exam

Component 1 - Preparing participants to take part in sport and physical activity	Component 2 - Taking part and improving other participants sporting performance	Component 3 - Developing fitness to improve other participants performance in sport and physical activity
- Coursework based assessment - A combination of written tasks and video-based evidence of pupils leading a warm-up	- Coursework based assessment - A combination of written tasks and video-based evidence of pupils demonstrating key skills in sport and leading a full session	- Examination – 1 hour 30 mins - Focussed on fitness and training in the sports industry - Takes place at the end of Year 11

- Predominantly classroom based with some practical opportunities to reinforce learning
- Students can achieve the following grades:

Level 2 Distinction *	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Pass	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Pass
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GCSE Film Studies

It's not just watching films!



70% Exam
30% Coursework

What is it?

It's a bit like English literature, but instead of analysing books, poetry and plays, we analyse films.

What will I study?

We watch lots of different types of films and then write about them, thinking about where they come from, how they are made, what they tell us about society and how different audiences might respond to them.



Would I enjoy it?

An interest in film
An interest in the world around you
Good written communication
Strong analytical skills
Curiosity
Creativity

Where could it take me?

A levels, university, the film industry, acting, media, journalism, advertising, design, creative arts, writing...through studying film you will develop a wide range of transferable skills to take you into further education, the world of work and life!

AQA GCSE Photography

What students do:

- Explore digital photography
- Develop creative ideas through research and experimentation
- Build a professional-style portfolio

No written exam Assessed
on practical work and creative process

Assessment methods (100% coursework):

- Component 1: Portfolio (60%) – sustained project and selection of work
- Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)



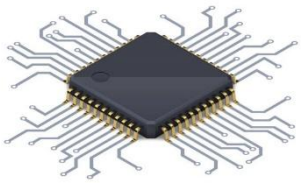
Gryphon Photography

See the everyday differently

Why choose Photography over other art options:

- Develops technical skills with cameras and editing software
- Highly relevant to modern creative industries
- Supports careers in media, design, marketing, and journalism
- Combines creativity with digital literacy
- Appeals to students who prefer practical, hands-on learning





Computer Science / iMedia



Computer Science

Computer science is the study of computational theory, hardware and software and how computers can be programmed to perform a variety of tasks.

Students will perform practical programming tasks in lessons and develop complex algorithms to solve a variety of real-world problems.

Learning to code can be fun and rewarding but also requires some resilience and problem-solving skills.

Computer Science does not include gaming or learning to program games.

Assessed through 2 Written Exams

Paper 1 - Computer Systems (50%)

Paper 2 - Algorithms and Programming (50%)

Creative iMedia

Creative iMedia explores aspects of the media industry and creative elements of IT software. The course is largely practical and offers a hands-on approach.

Students will learn the practical IT skills that are needed to be able to create a variety of products including: Graphics, Images, Video, Presentations and Websites.

Students will get to experience working with a variety of multimedia software.

iMedia does not teach coding. iMedia does not include creating 3D graphics or animation.

Assessed through coursework and an exam

2 Units of Coursework (60%)

1 Written Exam (40%)

GCSE Business Studies

Topics covered:

- What is business?
- Enterprise skills
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting an idea into practice
- Making a business effective
- Understanding external influences

Y10

- Growing a business
- Making marketing decisions
- Making operational decisions
- Making financial decisions
- Making human resource decisions

Y11

"challenging but
interesting and
informative"

The assessment:

- 2 exams – each worth 50%, each 1hr 45 long, worth 90 marks each...
- Mixture of questions – MCQ to 12 mark essays
- 2 case studies in each paper (with following questions based on info in each case study – students have to change answers depending on what is in the case study)
- 2 maths/calculation question in each paper

What it is	What it isn't...
Different from KS3 options	An easy option
Based on real life scenarios	Just running your own business
Can have a variety of correct answers	All multiple choice or short-answer questions
Looks at lots of different parts/aspects of business	Coursework type of assessment
Regular written homework	

GCSE Economics



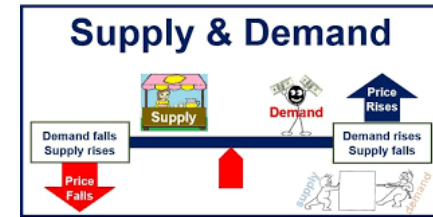
2.1 Subject content

How markets work:

1. [Economic foundations](#) (page 9)
2. [Resource allocation](#) (page 10)
3. [How prices are determined](#) (page 11)
4. [Production, costs, revenue and profit](#) (page 14)
5. [Competitive and concentrated markets](#) (page 15)
6. [Market failure](#) (page 16)

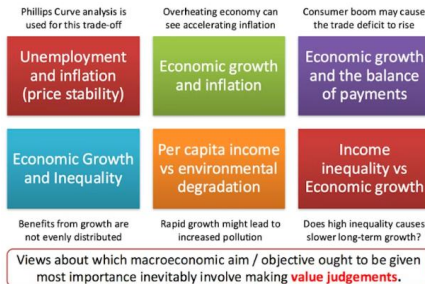
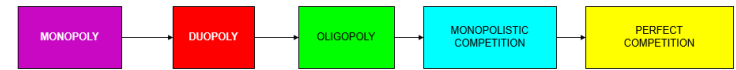
How the economy works:

7. [Introduction to the national economy](#) (page 17)
8. [Government objectives](#) (page 18)
9. [How the government manages the economy](#) (page 20)
10. [International trade and the global economy](#) (page 21)
11. [The role of money and financial markets](#) (page 23)



Spectrum of competition

= the range of different market structures, each with different characteristics



The assessment:

- 2 exams – each worth 50%, each 1hr 45 long, worth 80 marks each...
- Mixture of questions – MCQ to 15 mark essay
- Case study based questions (some)
- 2 maths/calculation question in each paper (but also some maths based MCQs)

Business Studies vs Economics



More about 'getting hands dirty' – i.e. activities/decisions being made by managers/owners

Fewer MCQs, more written Qs

More case study based – answers will need to completely change...

Questions will (in general) be about specific businesses



More conceptual/theoretical – about how the economy works and overall management of it

More use of economic graphs/diagrams and curves

More use of economic graphs/diagrams and curves – conceptual understanding needed

Questions will (in general) be about the overall economy

Key Dates

Tuesday 3rd February – Year 9 Parent Forum

Monday 2nd February - Your teachers in subjects you already do such as Geography and Music will talk to you about GCSE courses in their subject.

Thursday 12th February - The **Year 9 Parents' Evening** is the key opportunity to make an appointment with relevant subject staff. Staff from new subjects you might choose, as well as subjects you do now, will be available to make appointments with online. This evening will also be an opportunity to talk to Mr O'Donnell about potential subjects which have been recommended for your son/daughter. You will be able to book appointments online. After this evening the options forms will be sent to round.

Friday 13th March Year 9 Options form deadline. All Options Forms must be completed. Students who miss this deadline will have a lower chance of getting their choices. Your parents, Mr Reid, the Learning Support Team, Mr O'Donnell, and Mrs West may be involved at this stage.

Up to the 26th March - Selected students in year 9 will be interviewed by a senior member of staff to discuss their choices. The focus of this interview will be to ensure students are choosing options that they will succeed in and which support their future ambitions.



GCSE Options Submission Form 2025

To review the GCSE options booklet, click here: <https://www.gryphon.dorset.sch.uk/parent-guardian-zone/>

Now follow the instructions below to complete your GCSE choices. Please note: your parent/carer should be present when you submit your choices. They will be emailed with your final choices once you submit.

Hi, Paul. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

* Required

1. Please select whether you would like to study Geography or History. * 

☐ Geography

☒ History

2. Please select your THREE GCSE options. * 

Please select 3 options.

☐ Art (Fine Art)

☐ Art (3D Design)

☐ Business Studies

3. Please select ONE reserve choice. * 

- ☐ Art (Fine Art)
- ☐ Art (3D Design)
- ☐ Business Studies
- ☐ Computer Science
- ☐ Catering
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Economics
- ☐ Film Studies
- ☐ French
- ☐ Geography
- ☐ History
- ☐ iMedia
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Religious Education
- ☐ Spanish

- To complete the Options Form, you will need to follow the link that we send you after Year 9 Parents Evening. This will go directly to students
- Once they have submitted the form we will then email parents with confirmation of what they have chosen.
- Any changes we, or the students ask about making, will be discussed with parents/guardians and students.

Caveats

It is possible that we won't be able to accommodate some combinations of subject choices; if this happens we will talk individually to your son/daughter and ask them to choose from the final menu available.

Also note that **The Options Form** enables you to choose the subjects you wish to do but not the sets you will be taught in. It is perfectly possible that students choosing the same options will end up in different classes. Please make your choices on the basis of the subjects you want to do rather than for social reasons.

Hospitality and Catering – we only have space on the timetable for 2 small classes for this.

Ways forward



The Oxbridge Candidate

Izzy's ambition is to go to Oxford to do Politics, Philosophy and Economics. She would like to be Prime Minister. If this doesn't work out her broad range of choices means she has kept her options open.

CASE STUDY 1



IZZY

4 Choice Pathway

Category	Example choice
Humanities Choice	History
Choice 1	French
Choice 2	Economics
Choice 3	Music

The Medic

Hanifa's ambition is to go to do Medicine at UCL. She would like to specialise in sports medicine. Again her choices are broad enough to support a change of heart at a later stage.



CASE STUDY 2

4 Choice Pathway

Category	Example choice
Humanities Choice	Geography
Choice 1	French
Choice 2	Economics
Choice 3	BTEC Sport

The journalist

Jenny's ambition is to go to do a degree in Multimedia Journalism at Bournemouth University. She would like to report on environmental issues across the world.



JENNY

CASE STUDY 3

4 Choice Pathway

Category	Example choice
Humanities Choice	History
Choice 1	Spanish
Choice 2	Creative iMedia
Choice 3	Film Studies

The Apprentice

Damon's ambition is to start as an apprentice builder and work up to having his own firm. His back up plan is win Master Chef and then set up his own gourmet restaurant.



DAMON

CASE STUDY 5

3 Choice Pathway

Category	Example choice
Humanities Choice	Geography
Choice 1	Hospitality and Catering
Choice 2	Art (3D)
Option 3	Computer Science

The businessman

Olly's ambition is to go to do a Foundation degree in Information Technology at University College, Yeovil. He is then interested in setting up his own business.



CASE STUDY 4

Category	Example choice
Humanities choice	History
Choice 1	Photography
Choice 2	Business Studies
Choice 3	BTEC Sport