

KS4 Options Booklet



The
Gryphon
School

2026-
2028

Contents

- 3. Welcome
- 4. Making your choices
- 5. Important Dates
- 6. FAQs

Subjects

- 7. Art & Design GCSE (3D Design)
- 8. Art & Design GCSE (Fine Art)
- 9. Art & Design GCSE (Photography)
- 10. Business GCSE
- 11. Computer Science GCSE
- 12. Creative iMedia (Level 1 & Level 2 Award)
- 13. Drama GCSE
- 14. Economics GCSE
- 15. English Language & Literature GCSEs
- 16. Film Studies GCSE
- 17. French GCSE
- 18. Geography GCSE
- 19. History GCSE
- 20. Hospitality & Catering (Level 1 & Level 2 Award)
- 21. Mathematics GCSE
- 22. Music GCSE
- 23. Religious Studies GCSE
- 24. Science GCSE
- 25. Spanish GCSE
- 26. Sport BTEC
- 27. Statistics GCSE and L2 Further Maths

Welcome

The Gryphon School - Year 9 Options

At the heart of The Gryphon School is our determination that our community experiences “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

Introduction

This is an exciting time for you. It is the first opportunity that students and parents decide what subjects and qualifications they would like to take forward, into Years 10 and 11.

At the Gryphon School we aim to try and provide as a wider choice of options for our GCSE students as possible and provide courses that we know stand students in a good position for their future options. We are committed to ensuring that you excel with us, and the curriculum and your choices will enable you to build knowledge, develop skills and apply your learning in many different contexts. We encourage students to make preferences that are ‘broad and balanced’ to ensure future pathways are kept open. Although career direction and particular interests are important, students are more likely to succeed by taking ownership of their studies, whilst also following subjects they enjoy and are interested in. Students should also think about in which ways they learn best and any post 16 A level requirements.

This booklet contains all you need to know about the courses available to you. Some subjects are compulsory e.g., English, some are directed e.g., Languages (but still open to all), and some are optional. The government has recently outlined new proposals for breadth of study at Key Stage 4, and we have endeavoured to make this reflective in our option process.

To start this process, we ask students which combination of subjects they would like to study, before then creating the option blocks to create the timetable for all students. This does not always work perfectly for all students, roughly about 10 students a year do not get their first-choice courses. However, we therefore ensure students also pick a reserve choice so that there is a backup if needed. We will always communicate this to both parents and students if a student will need to take a reserve choice.

Whichever subjects you indicate a preference for, the learning that takes place at Key Stage 4 will enable you to grow as an individual, achieve fantastic results and make a positive contribution to the wider community - thus ensuring all students can live life in all its fullness.

For parents

Please be aware that students should not pick subjects depending on their friends’ choices, or because they like a teacher in Year 9. Due to the size of our school students are unlikely to be grouped with their friends or with the teacher they currently have. Students should pick their choices based on the subject, and what is right for them.

Subjects which have not been studied before are not easier subjects. All subjects are demanding at Key Stage 4, and students will have to work hard to gain a qualification.

Finally, subjects have changed over time. So, what you studied at school, might be very different now to your daughters/sons’ experience. Share your experience but please keep an open mind about students’ preferences.

Choices

Although the English Baccalaureate has been replaced, a lot of the emphasis is similar. Most of our students will study a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language, which you should have received a letter about outlining this for your son/daughter. We feel this is an appropriate aspiration for most of our students at the Gryphon School.

So all students will study:

English Language, English Literature, Maths and either Combined (2 GCSEs) or Separate Sciences (3 GCSEs)

Students will then choose between a GCSE in History or Geography - students can pick the other one in one of their free choice options

Students then make 3 further choices, so students will gain 9 or 10 qualifications.

- We will be strongly recommending most students to take a MFL subject
- For any student not studying a Language GCSE, they will have to study a Creative subject: **Art, Craft and Design, Photography, Art 3D, Music, Drama, Film Studies, Creative iMedia, Hospitality and Catering**

Once students have chosen their courses, should any student not end up with the subjects they first pick we will meet with them and discuss with parents. Similarly, if students have picked courses that we feel are not suitable for them, given the progress they have made, then we will similarly be discussing this with you. We will also look at students' attendance to ensure that the courses are suitable. Students will not be allowed to take subjects with a heavy coursework element if their attendance has been poor because they will not be able to keep up with the demands of the course.

Students will select their choices online. Following the Year 9 parents evening, parents will be sent a Option form for students to select their preferred options. This needs to be completed by the 13th March.

Combination rules

We also do not allow, because of the common content of courses, certain combinations of subjects as below.

1 - You can only do one of Art (Fine Art), Art (3D Design) and Art (Photography).

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

3 - You can only do 1 of Computer Science GCSE & Creative iMedia.

Please note, Hospitality and Catering will have a limit on the number of students that are able to study the course due to a finite space and facilities.

Nurture Pathway

We are anticipating that the Nurture pathway will be taken by around 10 students

Students taking this pathway will do 6 GCSEs.

- English Language and English Literature GCSEs
- Mathematics GCSE
- Combined Science GCSE - a "double" GCSE - leading to the award of 2 GCSEs
- Geography GCSE
- Kings Trust Level 2 Award in Personal Development and Employability
- One option choice

So, overall students on this pathway will get 8 qualifications in school and take part in Core PE.

Important Dates

Friday 23rd January - You and your parents will be receive a letter outlining the process, and whether we recommend your daughter/son to study at least one language.

Tuesday 3rd February Assembly - Mr O'Donnell will explain the option process to students.

Tuesday 3rd February Parent Forum - Mr O'Donnell will explain the option process to parents and students. You will also have the chance to listen to the Heads of Departments of the following subjects.

- Business GCSE
- Economics GCSE
- Film Studies GCSE
- Sport BTEC

Week beginning 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 - 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 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. Following this we will send a link where students will select their preferred subjects.

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. If we feel that your choices need further discussion your tutor will let you know. Your parents, Mr Reid, the Learning Support Team, Mr O'Donnell, and Mrs West may be involved at this stage.

Up to the 27th 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.

Your choices you make online will then be forwarded to Mr O'Donnell who makes decisions about the curriculum based on the decisions you have made. Please note that (1) not every student will get every single one of their choices (2) that subjects attracting only a small number of applicants may not run.

We will try as hard as possible to accommodate your wishes, but the Options form is an expression of your preferences rather than a cast-iron guarantee of the choices you will end up doing. It is therefore 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 classes you will be taught in. It is perfectly possible that students making the same choices will end up in different classes. Please make your choices based on the subjects you want to do rather than for social reasons.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Core GCSEs

English Language and Literature	9 periods a fortnight
Mathematics	7 periods a fortnight
Science (either Combined or Separate)	10 periods a fortnight
Language	5 periods a fortnight
Humanities (Geography or History)	5 periods a fortnight
Other option subjects including MFL	5 periods a fortnight
Core PE (non-examined)	4 periods a fortnight

FAQs

What is Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 begins at the start of Year 10 and is two years worth of study leading to GCSE, BTEC or equivalent qualifications. They form the basis for qualifications which enable students to go onto the Sixth Form, college or apprenticeships.

What is a BTEC?

BTECs are an alternative qualification to GCSE that are equally as challenging but offer a different approach to learning. The final qualification, if passed at Level 2, is equivalent to a grade 4 at GCSE. However, a Level 2 Merit, Distinction, and Distinction star, is even higher. BTECs are usually more coursework based, so there is not a 100% examined element like most GCSEs (except the Art based subjects)

Can students take a language they have not studied in Year 9?

Unfortunately not. Students need to have had experience of the language prior to commencing their GCSEs as there is an expected level that students should be at.

What if students change their mind?

There will be opportunities throughout Year 9 for students to speak to staff if necessary. Once submitted parents should contact Mr O'Donnell with a formal request. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. It will not always be possible due to the timetable and class sizes.

What A levels require certain GCSEs?

Please look at the Sixth form page of the Gryphon website for more information on Key Stage 5 entry requirements.

What if a student does not know what they want to do when they leave school?

This is completely normal. All our GCSEs provide a secure foundation for future study. Ultimately students should pick subjects they enjoy and are interested in because this will lead to better outcomes, giving them more opportunities in the future.

Art & Design GCSE (3D Design)

Reasons for studying

This 3D Design course is a continuation of the Creative Design course studied during Year 9 and involves developing a sketchbook of ideas including rigorous drawing, researching the work of designers to inform your ideas, experimentation with various materials, prototyping and evaluating as you progress, leading to constructing a model of your final design.

We need to explain that this course is NOT a traditional woodwork or metalwork GCSE - students will not be constructing full size tables, chairs or welding pieces of a motorcycle together. The focus of this course is on training students to be designers.

What will I be studying?

This course consists of coursework projects and an externally set examination task and you will follow the same format throughout the course in completing the work required to fulfil these elements. For example you may design a new piece of architecture and so mind map ideas, research famous designers and create inspirational mood boards, you will sketch lots of design ideas and develop rapid prototypes using card, blue foam, clay and balsa wood, evaluate your work and make changes to your prototypes



until you end up with a final scale model of your intended design. Drawing forms a crucial component of this course and you can expect to do lots of it. You will also use Photoshop and CAD software.

How will I learn?

You will work upon two projects during the first two terms of Year 10, rapidly developing your skillset, completing a quality sketchbook of ideas and investigation (all underpinned with rigorous drawing), exploring materials and techniques/processes, building model prototypes and creating finished scale models. In term three, you will begin your major sustained project which runs until December of Year 11 and leads to a 10hr mock examination, when you will create your final piece for this project. This completes your coursework and you will then begin your Exam Board set external task. Commitment and independence by making progress outside lessons is crucial and a minimum of 1-2 hours a week is required, with after school studio support time available each week to help facilitate this, alongside completing tasks at home.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE has 60% of marks for coursework done and 40% for the 10 hour final exam. Your 'coursework' will include your sketchbook, your prototypes and completed scale models. You will need to show rigorous development of ideas, investigation into famous designers, lots of drawing in traditional and digital media, prototyping using a range of materials and refined finished scale models.

The 'Externally set assignment' is a 3D design topic set by the Exam Board which you begin in January of Year 11 and following a three month preparation period you have a 10hr examination supervised by invigilators. This task follows the same format of working as the previous coursework projects and students will be well versed in procedures by this stage.

Art & Design GCSE (Fine Art)

What you will be studying

Fine Art develops visual awareness, observation and the expression of creative thought through the disciplines of drawing, painting and sculpture. You will gain practical experience and refinement in the use of colour, tone, line, pattern, shape, texture and form, as well as gaining knowledge of important historical and contemporary artists.

Students who study Fine Art, quickly heighten their observational skills and sensitivity to their surroundings, whilst building an impressive portfolio of work.

What you will be studying

You will study topics such as: natural forms; still life; portraiture; landscape; assemblage; sculpture, etc, whilst developing skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography, print-making, journal-style collage and use of found material. There is a requirement to complete critical written studies and sketchbook annotation throughout both the coursework and exam. You will develop a wide range of skills throughout the course progressing using drawing as a core foundation skill, you will also be required to use a camera to collect evidence relevant to your studies.

The Fine Art Department encourages:

- Weekly homework and independent study (minimum of 2 hours homework per week)
- Curiosity, imagination, exploration and discovery
- Experimentation, problem solving and understanding of materials
- Art history/Cultural Studies/Contemporary art research
- Strive to produce rigorous quality work from the beginning

How will I learn?

You will be expected to work independently both in and out of lessons, researching a subject, learning about it through drawing with a variety of materials and tools, showing evidence of study and personal expression. The basic skills of drawing, painting, sculpting and printmaking will be taught as the core activities. It is an essential element of the course to study artists in order to develop your own work. Much of this work will involve developing ideas in a sketchbook as well as written work. Homework/independent study is an essential part of GCSE Fine Art. This extra work can be completed during lunchtimes or during the after school catch-up which takes place three times per week.

How will I be assessed?

Portfolio (60% of final GCSE mark).

You will need to show rigorous development of ideas, investigation into famous artists, lots of drawing, painting, making in traditional and new media, experimenting using a range of materials and refined finished artworks. Your sketchbook should show process of your journey towards a final piece.

Externally Set Task (40% of final GCSE mark).

The 'Externally set assignment' is a Fine Art topic set by AQA Exam Board which you begin in January of Year 11 and following a three month preparation period developing a new sketchbook leading towards a 10hr examination supervised by invigilators.



Art & Design GCSE (Photography)

Reasons for studying Photography

Photography develops visual awareness, creative skills and aesthetic judgement. You will gain practical experience in communicating meanings, ideas and intentions through the medium of photography, exploring colour, line, tone, texture, shape, pattern, composition, scale, sequence, surface, contrast as well as gaining knowledge of important photographers.

Photography is an important subject for future careers in Art & Design, Media, Fashion, TV and Film, Teaching etc. It also provides ideas and skills for creative leisure.

What you will be studying

Your studies will cover all aspects of photography (primarily digital), allowing a breadth of exploration of image making techniques.

How you will learn

You will work in one or more area(s) of photography, such as; portraiture, location photography, studio photography, experimental imagery, installation, documentary photography, photo-journalism, moving image: film, video and animation, fashion photography. You will be required to study the work of Photographers in order to develop your own work further. Much of this work will involve experimentation of techniques and developing ideas in a sketchbook.

How you will be assessed

Portfolio (60%).

- Completed photographic briefs with rigorous supporting study to show the development of ideas leading to the final outcome(s)
- Sketchbooks/ workbooks on a theme/ subject showing detailed studies/ ideas for future developments including in-depth critical study of the work of Photographers
- Investigation of a visual concept or theme e.g. The Formal elements: colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture to further skills, knowledge and understanding

Externally set assignment (40%)

Task paper issued by AQA from 2nd January of year of examination with unlimited preparation time and 10hrs supervised time.



Business Studies GCSE

Why choose Business?

Do you have an interest in business and/or enterprise? Do you want to know what makes a great entrepreneur and how people go about setting up their own businesses? Do you want to get a better understanding of the world around you?

This course is both active and enjoyable. You need to be good at communicating and explaining your ideas, and not afraid of learning new things and working with numbers to solve business problems. You will learn how to be a creative thinker and how to make decisions. What's more, you will also learn about the world of business through research and investigation, as well as through practical tasks.

What will I learn?

Theme 1 - Investigating Small Business

- Concentrates on the key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small business
- It provides a framework for students to explore core concepts through the lens of an entrepreneur setting up a business



Theme 2 - Building a Business

- Examines how a business develops beyond the start-up phase
- It focuses on the key business concepts, issues and decisions used to grow a business, with an emphasis on aspects of marketing, operations, finance and human resources
- It also considers the impact of the wider world on the decisions a business makes as it grows

How will I be assessed?

For each of the above Themes you will take a 105 minute written examination at the end of Year 11. Each paper will contain a combination of multiple-choice, short and extended answer questions. Each is worth 50% of the GCSE grade.

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

What can I do after I've completed the course?

GCSE Business can help you prepare for A Level courses as well as BTECs and NVQs in many different subjects. Many jobs you do will involve working for a business and a GCSE Business course could lead to work in a business-related profession such as accountancy, law, marketing or the leisure and tourism industry.

Computer Science GCSE

Overview

Technology has made the world better, faster, and more connected and we arrived here thanks to the brilliant minds of computer scientists. GCSE Computer Science is a relevant, challenging and sought-after qualification, which will teach you the skills you need to be part of the digital revolution.

Computer Science is both a practical and theoretical subject where learners can apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world problems. It is a subject that involves problem solving, invention, excitement and commitment. The course is also ideally suited to students considering computing or maths or science at A level.

What will I study?

Unit 1 - Computer Systems

This component will introduce learners to the Central Processing Unit (CPU), computer memory, storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security, system software and data representation.

Unit 2 - Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

In this unit learners are introduced to algorithms and programming, computational logic, translators and facilities of computing languages. Learners will also become familiar with computing related mathematics.

Practical Programming

Throughout this course you will also have the opportunity to undertake a variety of practical programming tasks to solve real world computing problems. These programming challenges will help to further develop your understanding of the theory behind computer algorithms, which is covered in Unit 1 of the course. All programming elements will be taught and completed using the Python programming language.

How will it be assessed?

Assessment for this course is entirely exam based and you will be assessed by two written exams at the end of year 11 each worth 50% of the final GCSE grade. You will still have the opportunity to complete some practical programming tasks, but these will not form part of your final assessment.

Unit 1 - Computer Systems

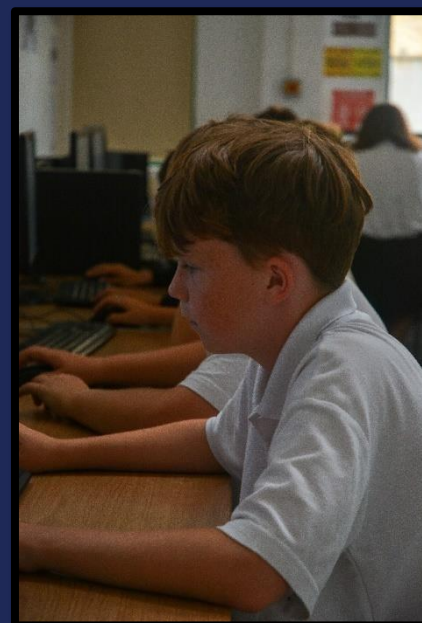
This unit is assessed through a 1hr 30-minute written examination which accounts for 50% of the GCSE

Unit 2 - Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

This unit is assessed through a 1hr 30-minute written examination which accounts for 50% of the GCSE

Is it for me?

GCSE Computer Science is a technical and challenging course which requires high levels of numeracy, literacy and independent problem solving. You will be expected to demonstrate your awareness of the theoretical aspects of the subject whilst also displaying the practical ability to design and create complex computer programs. At the same time it is an exciting, rewarding and highly regarded qualification which is sought after by both employers and universities.



Cambridge National in Creative iMedia

Reasons for studying Creative iMedia

Creative iMedia will give you the opportunity to explore the more creative aspects of IT and also provides the experience of working with a variety of different multimedia software products. The qualification has been designed to nurture digital literacy and provides a largely practical and hands-on approach to the subject. Creative iMedia will provide you with the up-to-date, practical IT skills that are needed to be able to create a variety of exciting multimedia products. These are skills, which are highly relevant in industry and could lead to a variety of IT or media related career paths.

What you will be studying?

During the course, you will cover 3 units of work:

Unit R093: Creative iMedia in the media industry - In this unit you will learn about the sectors, products and job roles that form the media industry. You will learn the legal and ethical issues considered and the processes used to plan and create digital media products. Finally, you will learn how media codes are used within the creation of media products to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences.

Unit R094: Visual identity and digital graphics - This unit will cover the basics of digital graphics editing using software such as Photoshop. Students will learn where and why digital graphics are used and what techniques are involved in their creation. Students will then apply the concepts of graphic design to create original digital graphics to engage a target audience.

Unit R097: Interactive digital media - This unit will cover the purpose and properties of interactive multimedia products. Students will design and create an interactive multimedia product to a client's requirements.

Students will learn to select, edit and repurpose multimedia content of different kinds to include in their products and create the structure and interactive elements necessary for an effective user experience.

How is the course assessed?

There are three units of study, one of which is a written exam (R093), while the other two units are assessment-based coursework.

R093 - This unit is assessed by a 1 hour 30 minute written examination, which is worth 40% of the qualification. Students will have one opportunity to undertake this exam at the end of year 11.

R094 and R097 - These two coursework units account for the remaining 60% of the qualification and students will produce this work in lessons, with various assessment points throughout years 10 and 11.

Is it for me?

Students looking to join this course should have an interest in IT, media or technology and a desire to discover how IT software tools can be used to create multimedia products. The qualification has been developed to reflect the increasing use of creative digital media in everyday life, with greater emphasis on the design and development of different products. As a result the Creative iMedia qualification could lead to opportunities for work in the IT, media and technology industries or in supporting roles within a variety of other industries.



Drama GCSE

Reasons for studying Drama

You will gain an understanding of a range of Drama and Theatre experiences. It will give you an increased confidence in communication skills and an important qualification valued by employers and in Further Education. You will develop self and group awareness, imaginative, creative and social skills.

What you will be studying

The GCSE course content will allow you the opportunity to study and perform published plays, devise and perform your own performance pieces, watch professional theatre as well as explore production roles such as directors and designers. You will learn the skill of acting, directing and design as well as developing key skills such as team work, confidence and creativity.



How you will learn

The course is mainly practical, allowing students to develop their creativity. Working in groups is essential for drama and will be expected within all components of the GCSE. You will have the opportunities to see a variety of live professional or non-professional theatre and learn to make informed critical responses to what you see. A cost will be involved for all theatre visits averaging £30.00 per visit.

How you will be assessed

Assessment is split into 3 Components.

Component 1: Devising Theatre (40% of the GCSE). Throughout this component students will work in groups to create their own devised performance using either the techniques of a recognised theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by the exam board (Eduqas). Students will be able to take on the role of either an actor or designer within this component and present their piece to a live audience. Students will also be expected to create a written portfolio of supporting evidence as well as an evaluation on the final performance.

Component 2: Performing from a Text (20% of the GCSE). Throughout this component students will work in groups to participate in a performance from a text. Students will be able to take on the role of either an actor or designer within this component and present their piece to a live audience.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre (40% of the GCSE). Throughout this component students will be expected to complete a written exam focused on one set text as well as an analysis and evaluation of a piece of live theatre they have seen. Students will study the set text as an actor, director and designer.

Economics GCSE

Reasons for studying Economics

Economics is the super power of the social science subjects. It is relevant and interesting to lots and lots of decisions made in business, in our own lives and by governments. It seeks to explain the world we live in but also provide solutions for the problems we face. So it is subject that is real and useful. It is also a highly academic subject and prized by top universities across the land. This GCSE leads on to Economics A-level which has absolutely outstanding results. We regularly get students into top universities like Oxford and Cambridge to study Economics and related courses.

Economics fits well with other humanities like History and Geography and can lead to highly paid careers. Investment banking is one of the best jobs available and students leaving university can start on £50,000. Past students have gone into management consultancy, banking, accountancy and a variety of other careers.

What you will be studying

This course is challenging and students choosing it do need to be comfortable with maths and diagrams as Economics has lots of these in it.

Microeconomics looks at individual issues such as why prices rise or fall, whether it be oil prices or house prices. Big areas we focus on are how to prevent pollution, congestion and inequality and so the subject examines real problems and looks at the role of government, firms and individuals in solving them. For example there is a shortage of suitable housing now - how can we solve this? Or how can we reduce energy prices in the UK? Macroeconomics looks at the sorts of things you might see on the news each night. We would perhaps look at the causes of and cures for inflation and the cost of living crisis, the causes of economic growth and what affects our trade with other countries. Brexit is a good example of a macroeconomic topic. It is however a problem solving subject where students need to consider possible solutions to real world problems and evaluate which solutions are likely to work best.

How you will learn

There's no coursework. Lessons will include discussions and videos about current issues, structured exercises and practice of exam questions. Being interested in current news and being willing to form opinions about what governments are doing is a great advantage.



How you will be assessed

The course has 2 exams each of which is 1 hour 45 minutes long. 80 marks each. Each exam has two sections as below:

Section A: 10 multiple choice questions followed by a range of calculations, short 2 or 3 marks and 6 mark questions) and extended response questions.

Section B: five questions based on a case study involving a mix of calculations, short and one longer answer question.

English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE

English is one of the core subjects and it is compulsory for all students to follow a course which will lead to two GCSE qualifications.

To be able to communicate well, both in speech and writing, is an essential skill for life outside school; you will need good English skills in almost every job, and most Further and Higher Education courses require a certain level of English ability.

How you will learn

The courses will enable you to read and understand both fiction and non-fiction texts, from the 19th century to the modern day. You will also work towards a 'Spoken Language' certificate that rewards effective communication skills.

How you will be assessed

TWO related GCSEs: English Language and English Literature. These are each worth ONE whole GCSE, and they must BOTH be taken. Both of the courses are 100% examination and have a single tier of entry. Exams are closed book which means you will be given unseen texts or short extracts from the texts you have studied.

GCSE English Language:

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 mins, 50% of GCSE.

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Section A: four questions on analysing an unseen fiction text.

Section B: one descriptive or narrative writing task.

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 mins, 50% of GCSE.

Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

Section A: Reading - one unseen non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text

Section B: Writing - one writing to present a viewpoint task.

GCSE English Literature:

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 mins 40% of GCSE

Section A: Shakespeare

Section B: 19th century novel

Paper 2: 2 hours 15 mins 60% of GCSE

Section A: Modern Texts

Section B: Poetry

Section C: Unseen Poetry



Film Studies GCSE

Why Study Film?

Film Studies GCSE is an exciting course open to all students but it will be of particular interest to those who enjoy watching, discussing and writing about film as well as learning new practical skills such as screenplay writing or storyboarding. The course is designed to help you to understand how films are constructed and made, how different audiences understand them and the effects they can have upon our world. It will also introduce new types of cinema to you as well as broadening your understanding and enjoyment of both film and the film industry. Film Studies can take you in many different career directions such as journalism, costume designer, actor, set designer, Cinematographer, director, photographer, sound artist and many more.

What you will learn?

During the course, you will have the opportunity to study at least six different types of film. You will study the “language” and style of film by watching contemporary British films such as *Attack The Block* (2011) and will analyse narrative and characters in *District 9* (2009). You will also explore how foreign language films represent modern life through their plots and characters. For this, you will study *The Wave* (2006). You will also compare old and new Hollywood through an exploration of vampire films: *Dracula* (1930) and *The Lost Boys* (1987), as well as looking at Independent US films such as *Juno* (2007).

You will explore and analyse each film in detail, often comparing them with others. For your coursework, you will be asked to either make a two minute extract from a film of your own design or to write the opening of a screenplay for a film idea that you develop.

How will you be assessed?

The course is assessed through:

- One piece of coursework (30%)
- Two examinations (70%).

Being a good film student

It is important to be keen, organised and determined in order to succeed in Film Studies. You should enjoy watching films and try to keep up to date with what is new and current. Film Studies is a creative, engaging and fun subject. It is also highly analytical and requires its students to apply their English Literature skills to a wide range of films and ideas.

If you think you have these qualities, then you will find this course enjoyable and rewarding.



French GCSE

You cannot take a language at GCSE that you did not do in Year 9.

Why study French?

French is the language of our closest European neighbours. It is spoken in many other parts of Europe and the world including Canada and many countries in Africa. By opting to study French, you will be able to communicate more confidently and accurately with French speakers and you will learn more about the lifestyle and culture of this vibrant and influential country.

Foreign language skills are essential for many jobs and school leavers with a GCSE in a foreign language are highly sought after by employers. A recent survey of UK companies has found that a quarter of those operating internationally have lost business because employees do not have sufficient foreign language skills. It is no longer enough to just speak English. "If you address someone in their native tongue, they are 10 times more likely to buy from you - whatever their competence in English". Therefore, if you can communicate in a foreign language - even at GCSE level - you immediately become a more interesting prospect for potential employers.

What you will learn

If you've studied French at Key Stage 3, you're well prepared to do a GCSE course in this language! You already know a lot of the vocabulary and grammar you'll need for GCSE, and you will already be used to doing varied listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks, as well as taking part in class games and activities. You'll build on these topics at GCSE as well as learning how to translate. You will also be taught the skills needed to understand authentic texts in French such as restaurant menus, train timetables and leaflets, so that if you find yourself in France or any other French speaking country one day, you'll understand all that is going on around you will have the confidence to speak in French to native French speakers.

There are 3 main themes at GCSE:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Identity and relationships with others, Healthy living and lifestyle, Education and work

- Theme 2: Popular culture

Free time activities, Customs, festivals, and celebrations, Celebrity culture

- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Travel and tourism, including places of interest, Media and technology, The environment and where people live

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed on your understanding and response to written and spoken language as well as use of grammar and vocabulary in the four skills:

- 25% Listening
- 25% Reading
- 25% Writing
- 25% Speaking



Geography GCSE

Reasons for studying Geography

Geography studies the interaction of the physical and human world. In order for people to understand the impact people have on the world, it is vital that we understand the natural world so we can see what is changing and the impact that this is having. It is a contemporary subject, that as well as highlighting key global issues students will also pick up skills that will stand them in good stead for a variety of other subjects. You will learn about a variety of global issues which are likely to affect people's lives now and in the future. It is an extremely analytical subject where students will learn to think about a range of factors that affect specific issues, which make it such a valued subject.

The course will help you to develop a knowledge and understanding of local, national and global concerns which are in the news. You will gain a number of key skills such as map reading, photo interpretation, GIS, analysis of information, debating and problem solving.

What you will be studying

Edexcel A: There are three major themes:

Unit 1— The Physical Environment Coastal Landscapes, River Landscapes, Weather Hazards and Climate Change and Ecosystems

Through all these physical processes we also look at how humans influence these natural processes and can manage them effectively

Unit 2— The Human Environment Changing Cities, Global Development and Resource Management

In these topics we use case studies to build up a good level of knowledge on how certain human environments have changed over time and the impact of that. A large element is focused on how we can help to improve peoples' quality of life.

Unit 3—Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges You will respond to questions based on the fieldwork you conducted on physical and human geography. Challenges to be studied are the causes, effects and responses to climate change and how we can become more sustainable.



Fieldwork

You will have two days of fieldwork over the course; a physical fieldwork day to Chesil Beach and a human fieldwork day in Bristol. This will cover a range of data collection and analysis skills.

How you will be assessed

37.5% Physical Environment examination

37.5% Human Environment examination

25% Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges examination

History GCSE

Reasons for studying History

History is so much more than just learning about the past. The subject provides endless opportunities to practice your skills of analysis. It is the ability of the history student to successfully evaluate; manipulate and understand complex information that makes it such a vital and valuable subject. The study of History generates transferable skills that mean all students are capable of any and every job opportunity. This is combined with fascinating stories and topics which help to explain the world today as well as in the past. Choosing History is not only exciting, but it will be useful throughout your time at school and in your future life.



What you will be studying

Theme of development - Crime and Punishment in Britain from AD1250-present day

This Unit looks at the changing nature of crime and punishment in Britain since the early Mediaeval Period. Topics include the treatment of vagabonds, smuggling, poaching and the use of the death penalty; the impact of the Industrial Revolution on crime with the growth of cities, transportation, the development of the police force and the prison system.

Depth study - Germany 1933—1945

This looks at the history of Germany from the rise of Hitler to the end of the Second World War in 1939. Topics include life in Nazi Germany with particular reference to the young, women and the Jews. Students will also examine the way in which the Nazis used terror and propaganda to control people. Life in occupied France and Poland will also be studied.

Period study - The Making of the USA 1830—1900

This looks at key developments in the development of the USA including; the Plains Indians and their way of life, migration West and the Gold Rush, the development of cattle ranching, the Indian Wars and the Battle of Little Big Horn and the massacre at Wounded Knee.

British depth study - Norman England

This covers a key moment in English History when England was invaded and taken over by a foreign power. The reasons for the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings will be studied. Students will then look at the ways in which the Normans tried to control the English through the use of castles, feudalism and the Church, as well as the resistance the English offered to the Normans.

History Around Us

This involves looking at how historians can use the physical evidence from sites to understand the past. This will involve examining the evidence of the secret police prison in East Berlin, how prisoners were dealt with and how we can learn this from the physical remains at the site. Students will study representations of the prison in maps, photographs and films. This unit develops skills in research and investigation. In year 10, there is an opportunity to visit Berlin with the school.

Assessment

All 5 modules are assessed by hour long exams at the end of year 11.

Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering (Technical Award) Level 1 and 2

Reasons for studying

This course has been designed to give students an introduction to Hospitality industry and to build practical skills which will be useful for life. The Hospitality industry is one of largest employers in the UK and this course will give you an overview of this evolving and exciting industry.

If you enjoy working with food, preparing balanced nutritional meals to a budget, in a safe way, then you will be interested in Hospitality and Catering.

What you will be studying

The course will concentrate on the main areas of Food Production, Nutrition and the Hospitality industry so that students can gain a full understanding of:

The Food and Catering Industry, Food preparation, Food science, Food presentation and costing, Food and beverage service, Current food and diet related health Issues, Nutrition and meal planning, Food terminology, Safe food preparation and hygiene, Food Commodities, Safety at work, Kitchen equipment and design, Technological developments, Legislation and consumerism and Customer care

How is the course assessed?

Assessment for Unit 1: The Hospitality and Catering Industry is a 90 minutes external exam worth 40% of the overall marks. It covers all the areas above in a linked way so you may have to suggest a catering facility for a theme park or explain how to prevent a food poisoning outbreak in a hospital.

Assessment for Unit 2: Hospitality and Catering in Action comprises of a practical test - think Masterchef - and the planning and evaluation work for the test. This is 60% of the final grade and is internally assessed. We have looked at takeaway dishes, fine dining dishes, afternoon tea dishes and gastro pub style dishes over the past years.

You will have four lessons over the two week timetable and two of these will be practical work - you will build a wide range of practical skills and the associated organisational, independence, resilience skills that come from creating your own dishes.

Please note that, there is a maximum number of students that we can enter for Hospitality and Catering due to the space and facilities required.



Mathematics GCSE

All students will be studying the GCSE Edexcel Mathematics (1MA1). Students will study either the Foundation or Higher but a final decision on their tier of entry will be made in Year 11. The grades span 1-5 at Foundation and 4-9 at Higher.

Reasons for studying this subject

GCSE Maths is used in many other subjects and a firm understanding of basic Mathematics is essential. This course will help to train students to be logical and systematic thinkers. You will be given opportunities to develop your communication and IT skills with a variety of tools. All of these skills are looked for by all employers and are extremely useful to take to further and higher education.



Maths is an important subject for all students and is a required GCSE to continue to sixth form and colleges. Mathematics is also used by employers as a measure of how well you have achieved at school. You need to be prepared to work and think hard in lessons as you will be expected to cope with not knowing answers to problems immediately. It's for this reason most employers consider the subject to be an important part of their working environment.

What you will be studying

The areas of study are number, algebra, ratio/proportion and rates of change, geometry and measure, probability and statistics.

Students will have met many skills in Y7, 8 and 9 but we will explore these topics and several new topics at a much greater depth than ever before to meet the demands of this GCSE. The course is designed to enable students to develop fluent knowledge and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, as well as to apply methods and techniques to problem solve and draw conclusions.

How you will be assessed

Students will sit three equally weighted papers at the end of the course, each out of 80 marks. Paper one is non-calculator and paper two and three are calculator. Topics from the whole specification can be tested on any of the three papers. The length of each exam is 90 minutes for both Foundation and Higher tier papers.

Approximately 40-50% of the assessment will focus on use and application of standard techniques, 25-30% on reasoning, interpreting and communicating and 25-30% on solving problems and evaluating methods used.

Recommended Resources

All students will be signed up to Dr Frost Maths (drfrostmaths.com) with a school account. This can be used at any time to help students develop skills in their preparation for exams.

We recommend that all students have a scientific calculator. The Casio fx-83GTX calculator is the best for GCSE use. For those who would like access to advanced functions and/or are thinking of pursuing maths at A-level we recommend a Casio fx-991EX. These are available for purchase from the library, along with other essential maths equipment, at a reduced cost in comparison to retailers.

Music GCSE

Reasons for studying

You may be surprised to know that if you enjoy singing or have been playing an instrument for 2 or 3 years, you may *already* be of a suitable standard to do well in the 'Performing' aspects of the GCSE course. Throughout Key Stage 3 you have *already* had experience of 'Composing' using music technology, 'Performing' and 'Listening/ Appraising' quite a wide range of different musical styles / genres.

By studying *GCSE Music* you will gain a deeper understanding of both familiar and unfamiliar music, have opportunities to compose your *own* music and to perform pieces that you know and enjoy.

N.B: You do not need to already be learning an instrument to consider taking GCSE music - although this certainly support your progress and eventual attainment.

What you will study on the Music course (*Eduqas*):

You will study a wide range of contrasting styles & genres within 4 'Areas of Study': **Popular Music / Film Music / Music for Ensemble / Structures & Devices**. The 'Dimensions of Music' *already introduced* at Key Stage 3 will form the basis of your GCSE studies, ie: **Rhythm & Metre, Harmony & Tonality, Melody & Texture, Sonority & Dynamics, Structure & Form**

There are **TWO** 'Set Works' to be learned during the course: 'AFRICA' by Toto (related to Popular Music) and 'BADINERIE' by J.S. Bach (related to Structures & Devices)

Styles / Genres of music to be covered during the course include **Pop Ballads, Rock, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Fusions & Bhangra, Film & Computer Gaming, and Western Classical Music (Baroque, Classical & Romantic**

How you will learn and be assessed:

UNDERSTANDING (40%): you will develop your Listening skills, knowledge and understanding of musical concepts, stylistic conventions and the related terminology over the course through studying exemplar pieces of music through listening development exercises.

COMPOSING (30%): you will compose **two** coursework compositions in any style/genre using Logic Pro9 music technology. This will total a minimum of 3 minutes in combined length, **one** 'FREE' comp in Year 10 based on a brief/starting point of your choosing; **one** set 'BRIEF' comp in Year 11 chosen from four briefs on offer both these compositions require a **written log** to evaluate intentions / actions

PERFORMING (30%): you will perform one piece as a member of a group (ensemble) and another as either a soloist or within another ensemble: totalling a minimum of 4 minutes combined (6 minutes max.), **pieces can be in any style/genre** and by any

DJ-ing, Rapping & Beat-Boxing performance options available for less-confident singers/instrumentalists) although a standard **equivalent to grade 4 or 5** is desirable by the end of Year 11 you do **NOT** need to have taken or passed a music grade exam. Ideally, you should take instrumental / singing lessons once you have decided to take GCSE music to support both your progress and attainment.



Religious Studies GCSE

Religious Studies at GCSE offers you the chance to engage with some of the most significant philosophical and ethical questions in the world today. We will discuss important ethical issues ranging from ‘is it acceptable to genetically modify animals?’ to ‘should countries be allowed to possess nuclear weapons?’ And consider philosophical debates such as the ‘problem of evil’ and ‘why is there something rather than nothing?’ You will explore these and more through the consideration of Christianity, Hinduism and your own views (religious or non-religious).

GCSE RS is a great subject for anyone who is interested in people’s beliefs and values, fascinated by the nature and impact of religion, and willing to develop critical thinking. It is an opportunity for you to express an opinion and to learn about other’s views, but also to learn how to effectively create reasoned and logical arguments. Religious Studies forms an essential part of your broader education. It allows you to deal with the philosophical ideas and the ethical decision-making processes that underpin many of the issues that increasingly affect society today. It also allows you the opportunity to develop and explore the religious, spiritual, moral and philosophical side of your personality within a wider context.

Reasons for studying RE

A GCSE in Religious Studies is increasingly valued by employers because it shows that you have developed the skills needed to examine and appraise the values and beliefs which shape human attitudes and behaviour. You will develop the ability to debate articulately, to understand different viewpoints and to reflect critically on how difficult choices are made. The quality that you need to do well in this subject is an open mind; a mind prepared to question and reason. This qualification would be useful for anyone considering a career in medicine, teaching, journalism, public relations, public services, law and politics and any job that involves working with others.

What you will be studying?

Students will be following the AQA Religious Studies A Specification. This will be comprised of:

- Beliefs, Teachings and Practices - Christianity and the Hindu tradition.
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world, including:
 - Relationships and Families - which includes: The roles of men and women, marriage, adultery, divorce, sexual relationships and issues of equality such as gender roles.
 - Religion and life - which includes: Issues related to Abortion, Euthanasia, Animal Testing, Pollution and The environment.
 - Religion, crime and punishment - which includes: The Death Penalty, Punishment, Reasons for crime
 - Religion, human rights and social justice - which includes: Prejudice & Discrimination, Charity, People trafficking, Uses of Wealth & Human Rights.



Science GCSE

What you will be studying

All students will have 10 periods of Science per fortnight which will be shared between three teachers to cover Biology, Physics and Chemistry.

Topics to be studied include:

Biology

- Cells and DNA
- Genetics
- Health, Disease and Medicines
- Plant and Animal Physiology
- Ecosystems

Chemistry

- Atomic Structure and the Periodic table
- Mole theory and Chemical calculations
- Acids and Metals
- Reaction speed
- Energy from Reactions

Physics

- Forces and the laws of Motion
- Waves
- Radioactivity
- Energy
- Electrical circuits and their Behaviour



There are also a range of core practicals for each science that are a key part of the specification.

How you will be assessed

This course is examined by 6 exams (two for each subject) at the end of year 11 and will provide students with two GCSE grades in Combined Science.

Each exam is 70 minutes long and will be worth 16.7% of a student's final grade. They will contain a variety of questions ranging from multiple choice and short answers, to calculations and longer written answers.

Students can be entered for foundation level, where they can achieve grades between 1 and 5, or higher level, where they can score grades between 4 and 9.

A small number of students will also cover additional topics to allow them to be entered for separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Spanish GCSE

You cannot take a language at GCSE that you did not do in Year 9.

Why study Spanish?

Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages across the world, with an estimated 486 million who have Spanish as their native language. By studying Spanish, you will be improving your ability to communicate with a huge number of people globally, including in Spain and many Central and South American countries. By opting to study Spanish, you will be able to communicate more confidently and accurately with Spanish speakers and you will learn about the lifestyle and culture of Spanish speaking countries.

Foreign language skills are essential for many jobs and school leavers with a GCSE in a foreign language are highly sought after by employers. A recent survey of UK companies has found that a quarter of those operating internationally have lost business because employees do not have sufficient foreign language skills. It is no longer enough to just speak English. "If you address someone in their native tongue, they are 10 times more likely to buy from you - whatever their competence in English". Therefore, if you can communicate in a foreign language - even at GCSE level - you immediately become a more interesting prospect for potential employers.

What you will learn

If you've studied Spanish at Key Stage 3, you're well prepared to do a GCSE course in this language! You already know a lot of the vocabulary and grammar you'll need for GCSE, and you will already be used to doing varied listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks, as well as taking part in class games and activities. You'll build on these topics at GCSE as well as learning how to translate. You will also be taught the skills needed to understand authentic texts in Spanish such as restaurant menus, train timetables and leaflets, so that if you find yourself in Spain or any other Spanish speaking country one day, you'll understand all that is going on around you will have the confidence to speak in Spanish to native Spanish speakers.

There are 3 main themes at GCSE:

- Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Identity and relationships with others, Healthy living and lifestyle, Education and work

- Theme 2: Popular culture

Free time activities, Customs, festivals, and celebrations, Celebrity culture,

- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Travel and tourism, including places of interest, Media and technology, The environment and where people live

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed on your understanding and response to written and spoken language as well as use of grammar and vocabulary in the four skills:

- 25% Listening
- 25% Reading
- 25% Writing
- 25% Speaking



Sport BTEC

The GCSE equivalent course will take 5 lessons a fortnight. These are additional to your 2 core PE lessons a week. This course is for students who have sport as one of a range of areas they are interested in and who are considering a future linked to sport, such as working in the leisure industry or going on to further study such as A-Level PE or BTEC Sport Level 3 in the 6th Form.

The BTEC Tech Award in Sport is a new Qualification which allows pupils to study sport related concepts and apply them to practical scenarios.

The Course is Split into 3 parts:

- Component 1 - Preparing Participants to Take Part in Sport and Physical Activity (Coursework worth 30%)
Pupils will need to design and lead a warm-up to other students. This will need to be recorded on video and enable pupils to prepare the body for exercise.
- Component 2 - Taking Part and Improving Others Participants' Sporting Performance (Coursework worth 30%)
Pupils will need plan and lead a sports session to other pupils. They will have to video the session and also demonstrate their own sporting ability in one sport on camera. This will incorporate skills and techniques used in practice and in a competition or match.
- Component 3 - Developing Fitness to Improve Other Participants' Performance in Sport and Physical Activity (Written exam worth 40%)
Pupils will be assessed in an exam which tests their understanding of fitness and how you can improve an individual's fitness through training.

By the end of the course, you will have an understanding of:

- The different types of sport and activity available and what might stop people taking part
- Different technology used in sport
- How to safely prepare to take part in sport
- The components of fitness and how they have an effect on our performance
- How to take part in sport, preparing drills and activities to demonstrate skills and techniques
- The roles of an official
- How to prepare and take part in fitness testing to improve performance
- How the body responds to exercise

Pupils will be predominantly based in the classroom but will be expected to take part in practical based lessons to reinforce the theory they are learning about.

You can achieve a variety of grades as shown below:

- Level 1 Pass - Approximately GCSE Grade 1
- Level 1 Merit - Approximately GCSE Grade 2
- Level 1 Distinction - Approximately GCSE Grade 3
- Level 2 Pass - Approximately GCSE Grade 4
- Level 2 Merit - Approximately GCSE Grade 5/6
- Level 2 Distinction - Approximately GCSE Grade 7/8
- Level 2 Distinction* - Approximately GCSE Grade 9

Grades are subject to total points achieved throughout the course and within all 3 components.

Pupils will not have the opportunity to simply play sport during their BTEC Sport lessons.



GCSE Statistics & Level 2 Further Mathematics

Choosing this option block provides a powerful mathematical foundation, combining the practical application of Edexcel GCSE Statistics with the advanced algebraic challenge of AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics.

Course Structure

To ensure a balanced workload, the two subjects are integrated across Key Stage 4:

- Year 10 Focus: Most of the GCSE Statistics curriculum is delivered.
- Year 11 Focus: Transition to the Further Maths content.

Why Choose This Double-Award Option?

This course is a practical and relevant qualification that teaches you how to understand, analyse, and question data—a skill increasingly vital in modern life. By adding Further Mathematics, you bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level Mathematics.

This block is an excellent choice if you:

- Enjoy working with complex data, charts, and graphs.
- Like solving real-life problems and justifying decisions using evidence.
- Are interested in science, geography, psychology, business, economics, or PE.
- Plan to study A-level Mathematics or Further Mathematics, as this course reinforces core skills and introduces higher-level concepts early.

What Will You Study?

The curriculum focuses on real-world contexts and advanced mathematical theory.

Statistics Content:

- Investigations: Planning and choosing data collection methods while understanding bias.
- Data Representation: Advanced tables, cumulative frequency, and histograms.
- Analysis: Measures of average and spread, including interquartile range.
- Probability: Exploring both experimental and theoretical models.

Further Maths Content:

- Calculus: An introduction to differentiation.
- Algebra: Functions, complex factorization, and algebraic proof.
- Geometry: Coordinate geometry, trigonometry, and circle theorems.
- Matrices: Transformations and basic matrix arithmetic.

Assessment Overview

Students will sit separate examinations for both qualifications at the end of Year 11.

Edexcel GCSE Statistics

Assessment consists of two written papers, both of which allow the use of a calculator:

- Foundation Tier: Grades 1-5 available.
- Higher Tier: Grades 4-9 available.
- Format: Two 90-minute papers (80 marks each) focusing on application and reasoning.

AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics

- Paper 1: Non-calculator.
- Paper 2: Calculator allowed.
- Grades: Students can achieve grades 5-9

Recommended Resources and Equipment

Because this course involves advanced calculations, having the correct tools is essential.

- Essential: A scientific calculator, such as the Casio fx-83GTX.
- Recommended: Students are strongly encouraged to use the Casio fx-991EX+ (Classwiz), as its advanced functions are specifically beneficial for Further Maths and A-level transition.
- Support: All essential equipment can be purchased from the library at a reduced cost.