

KING EDWARD VI ASTON SCHOOL

GCSE OPTIONS 2023-2025



**KING EDWARD VI
ASTON SCHOOL**

Educational excellence for our City

WWW.KEASTON.BHAM.SCH.UK/YEAR9OPTIONS

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HEADTEACHER'S COMMENT

The Year 9 options process is the first time in your life in which you start to focus on your career as an adult. It is totally conceivable that in the 21st century, you may pursue more than one career, yet this is the time to think about the importance of qualifications and how they might open up opportunities in the years ahead.

The options booklet is a great start to help you on your way. It is important that you use this information, along with advice gleaned from your teachers, parents, older siblings and your wider family. It's also important to strike a balance between what you're good at and what you enjoy. Our KS4 core curriculum is both broad and demanding and tests a variety of skills. Make sure that the options you choose complement this; it's worth considering that a curriculum which challenges you in different ways will allow you to explore a wider range of skills, experiences and learning methods. It's also important that you are aware that the government considers the English Baccalaureate an important component of your education at GCSE. In order to achieve this, options taken in a modern foreign language and history or geography are essential.

As a grammar school, we believe that all of the options to you at Aston are valuable and that there are no pre-conceived suite of subjects which is more prestigious than the next. As ever, if you have questions about the suitability of validity of a subject, don't hesitate to ask.



Matt Brady
Headteacher

KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is designed around a core curriculum made up of the following subjects:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

ENGLISH LITERATURE*

MATHEMATICS*

BIOLOGY*

CHEMISTRY*

PHYSICS*

PSHE

PE AND GAMES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORE

In the subjects marked * all students will study for a GCSE qualification.

In addition to the above subjects students will study for a GCSE qualification in

1. French or German or Mandarin
2. Geography or History or RE
3. Two of the following subjects:

ART & DESIGN (FINE ART) OR (DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY)

COMPUTER SCIENCE

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

FOOD AND NUTRITION

MUSIC

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A SECOND HUMANITY SUBJECT(GEOGRAPHY OR HISTORY OR RE)

A SECOND LANGUAGE SUBJECT (FRENCH OR GERMAN OR MANDARIN)

ASSESSMENT AT GCSE

All GCSEs are linear in nature. This means that all of the written papers will be taken in the summer of Year 11. The examination time table begins in early May and continues until the last week of June.

GCSEs have undergone major changes in subject grading : GCSEs have moved onto the grading system of 9 - 1. Please note that there is no direct correlation between the 9-1 and the more traditional A* - G grading system. Not only are there more grades, nine instead of eight, but they are also deliberately skewed towards the top end to allow greater differentiation between high-performing pupils and to meet the government's aim of more rigorous exams.

COURSEWORK / NON-EXAMINED ASSESSMENT

Details of these are provided by departments.

EXPECTATIONS AT GCSE

Undertaking a number of GCSE courses requires good organisation, keeping notes in good order and completing work on time are prerequisites to success in two years time. It is also essential that students catch up any work missed due to their absence.



INTERNAL EXAMS

To prepare students for external GCSE exams, they will sit end of year internal exams Summer term of Year 10 and Autumn term of Year 11. This will give them invaluable experience of revising for a set of exams in a small time period as well as familiarising them with the formal exam procedures. The results from these exam periods will be used to monitor the progress made by students.

MOVING INTO THE SIXTH FORM

Although this may seem a long way off at the moment, when choosing subjects students need to give some thought as to how GCSE choices may impact on A level choices. All A Levels also follow linear courses. You should also be aware that the school has in place entry criteria for the Sixth Form. More information regarding Sixth Form entry criteria is available on <https://www.keaston.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form-admissions>.

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING YOUR OPTIONS

1. Students are highly recommended to follow a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 10 & 11 to widen the scope of their future career choices. So students are strongly encouraged to make at least one of your two free choices Art (Fine or Photography), Computer Science, Design and Technology, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Music or Physical Education.
2. As a result of this options structure choice as advised in bullet 1, all students will have the opportunity to achieve the English Baccalaureate.
3. In Fine Art, Photography, Music, Design & technology and Food and nutrition, there will be limited numbers of students allowed to choose each subject. Students will not be allowed to study both subjects and in the case of over-subscription performance in Year 9 assessment will be used as the discriminating factor.
4. Students considering studying languages at university are strongly encouraged to study two languages

Students make their option choices via SIMS student app. All students MUST choose three options choices. Please note that a student cannot pick both Fine Art and Photography or Design Technology and Food & Nutrition in their choices. Students will be given more information about this process via an assembly delivered by Mr Smart in school. Students also have the ability to leave any comments about their choices but this is not compulsory. In addition, parents can e-mail Mr Smart if they wish to add any further comments to the option process. Please e-mail Mr Smart on d.smart@keaston.bham.sch.uk

Please note the deadline for choosing GCSE options is
Friday 24th March, 2023

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

- Unless you are certain about your future career path you should continue to follow a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 10 & 11.
- Students considering studying languages at university are strongly encouraged to study French, German and Mandarin
- Your 'reserve' option must be a subject that you are prepared to study. It is not always possible to give all students their first three subject choices and when such instances occur parents will be informed.

These are some good reasons to choose a subject to study for GCSE:

- You like it or find it interesting.
- You are good at it.
- You need it or it is useful for your future career.
- You can develop new skills by doing it.
- You think you will do well in it.
- It will give you satisfaction.
- Your teachers think it is a suitable choice for you.
- It will combine well with other subjects and help your general education.
- You like the method of assessment and teaching.
- It's a subject you would like to become good at.

Try not to pick GCSE subjects based on these reasons:

- Your friends are doing it.
- You think you should do it; even if you do not want to.
- Your parents think it is a good idea but you do not.
- You know someone who has done it and they say it is great.
- It's thought of as a 'cool' subject by most people.
- You cannot think of anything else to choose.
- You think it will be easy.
- It sounds good even though you have not found out about it.
- You really like the teacher you have got now.
- You think it will impress people now or later on.

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

EXAMINED SUBJECTS

Biology

Chemistry

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Physics

NON-EXAMINED SUBJECTS

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE)

PE and Games

Religious Education Core

BIOLOGY

The aims of the course are: to build on the understanding of biological concepts first met during lower school Biology and Science lessons. During the course of the GCSE greater depth of treatment is given to topics covered and many new areas are also encountered. Students will be able to develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other. They will have opportunities to develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods and develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem solving skills. The course will also expect students to gain understanding of how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and other parts of day to day lives.

The department would like to nurture students' interest and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Paper 1	Topics 1 – 4: Cell biology; Organisation; Infection and response; and Bioenergetics.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response 100 marks, 50% of GCSE
Paper 2	Topics 5 – 7: Homeostasis and response; Inheritance, variation and evolution; and Ecology.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response 100 marks, 50% of GCSE



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Students who study Biology are able to take the subject at A Level. Students who wish to pursue a career in a science based field, such as medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, optometry, veterinary science and also in the rapidly expanding fields of biotechnology and genetic engineering.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

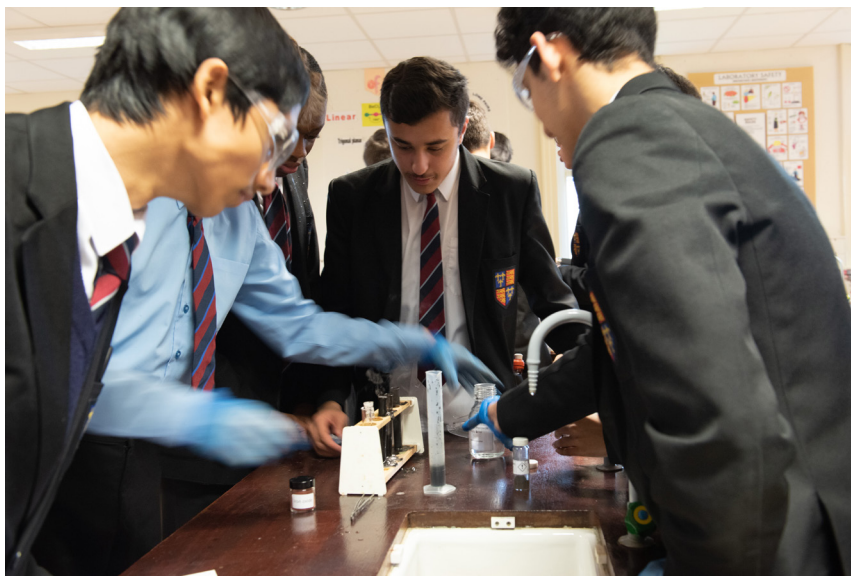
Students may have opportunities to attend activities at the University of Birmingham

CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry course aims to inspire and challenge students of all abilities. It looks at Chemistry in a range of contexts and looks to give real world hands-on view of why Chemistry and the associated skills are important in the modern world. There is a focus on the application of mathematics to chemical calculations and in the development of practical skills.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
One	Topics 1–5: Atomic structure and the periodic table; Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; Quantitative chemistry, Chemical changes; and Energy changes.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.		
Two	Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis, Chemistry of the atmosphere; and Using resources.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.		



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Chemistry is a key component of many fields of study. At A level it links well into pursuing any science based qualification. At university Chemistry is key in many degree courses, those related to the medical profession and the chemical sciences and is highly thought of for entry into other subjects.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Various trips and competitions to explore Chemistry outside of the classroom. These include trips to master classes at universities and the option to partake in competitions run by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

ENGLISH

The overall aims of the English language and literature courses are to ensure both subjects are enjoyable, engaging and rewarding.

In the English language GCSE, students are taught to read fluently and write effectively. The course will enable students to demonstrate confidence in their control of Standard English as well as endow them with the ability to write grammatically correct sentences, employ linguistic techniques effectively and analyse texts perceptively.

In the English literature GCSE, students will encounter a wide range of stimulating texts by writers including Shakespeare, Robert Louis Stevenson, J. B. Priestley and poets as diverse as Wordsworth and John Agard; the ideas explored by these writers will challenge and stretch students as well as inculcate a life-long love of English literature.

In both courses, students will hone essay writing skills, including how to write effective introductions and conclusions as well as how to structure the main body of their responses to develop ideas and arguments successfully. Pupils will develop higher thinking skills such as how to analyse the effect of form, structure and language by discussing how meaning is created as well as the impact on the reader. Pupils will learn to synthesise ideas and evaluate the various methods employed by writers. Moreover, the department aims to instil resilience in students so that they can meet the demands of the rigorous curriculum and cultivate a growth mind-set so that students strive to improve and act on barriers to learning.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Language paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	Section A: Reading – one literature fiction text and four questions Section B: Writing – descriptive or narrative writing	1 hour 45 mins examination, 50% of GCSE
Language paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	Section A: Reading – one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text Section B: Writing – writing to present a viewpoint	1 hour 45 mins examination, 50% of GCSE
Literature paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel	Students study Macbeth and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.	Two essays, one on each text. The examination is 1 hour and 45 mins and is worth 40% of the overall GCSE.
Literature paper 2: Modern texts and poetry	Students study An Inspector Calls, a selection of poems from either the Love and Relationships or Power and Conflict sections of AQA's anthology and they also learn how to analyse unseen poems.	Three essays. 2 hour 15 mins examination. 60% of the overall GCSE.
Spoken language endorsement (formally, the speaking and listening assessment)	Students will give a speech on a topic of interest and participate in a debate with other candidate. A sample assessment of students' work will be recorded and sent to the examination board for moderation.	The spoken language endorsement will not contribute to the result of the GCSE English Language qualification. This endorsement will be reported as a separate grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified)



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

The ability to read thoughtfully and analytically as well as to write fluently and speak confidently are skills required in all subject areas and all walks of life. A good GCSE in English language and literature will indicate a student's ability to express themselves effectively which makes them an ideal candidate for A level courses. Universities will also look favourably on candidates attaining high grades in English language and literature because students with these qualifications will possess the qualities to tackle the rigours of degree level. Moreover, employers in all sectors will be interested in people who have demonstrated the communication skills necessary to gain top GCSEs in English.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The English department offers a range of enrichment opportunities such as participating in debating competitions, creative writing workshops, book clubs as well as attending trips to events such as Poetry Live and theatre performances in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Students also have the opportunity to earn achievement points by taking on the reading challenge to review the department's recommended books.

MATHEMATICS

The aims of the course are to

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts.
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems.
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions.
- Comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

During this course students will learn how to solve problems and to break tasks down into steps of working, enabling pupils to think logically. A greater emphasis will be given to solving problems in familiar and unfamiliar context in GCSE questions. Students will sit three exam papers at the higher tier. Each paper will be 1½ hours long and will be equally weighted. One paper will be non-calculator whilst the other two will be calculator papers, each will be of similar difficulty. There will be no coursework.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Students can be assessed on any content from years 7-11 in all three papers. These topics fall into four strands: Algebra, Number, Data and Shapes.

Paper	Method of assessment
Non-calculator	Written examination. 90 minutes. 80 marks, equal weighting.
Calculator 1	Written examination. 90 minutes. 80 marks, equal weighting.
Calculator 2	Written examination. 90 minutes. 80 marks, equal weighting.

WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Mathematics, Science degree

Actuarial work

Support subject for most other degrees (eg engineering, medicine, physics, geography etc)

Teaching

Risk management

Finance/accountancy, Statistician



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Broader aspects of study are an essential feature of Mathematics at Aston and students are encouraged to participate in a range of activities such as involvement in UKMT Challenges and other competitions, Mathematical Activity Days in School and visits to 'Popular' Mathematics lectures at the University and elsewhere.

PHYSICS

The GCSE Physics course involves investigating how the natural world works and are designed to engage students' interest at every level by providing relevant in inspiring academic content, practical opportunities to undertake scientific enquiry and learn about the scientific process. Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Knowledge and understanding to pose, define and solve scientific questions and problems.
- An understanding of the continuously evolving relationship between science and society
- Communication, literacy and numeracy skills in a scientific context
- Planning skills, including the management of risk Investigative skills, including the collection selecting, processing and analysing of secondary data to provide evidence.

The content is taught to a higher level and bridges the gap between GCSE and A level, extending students understanding of the scientific world and challenging students to make synoptic links between topics.

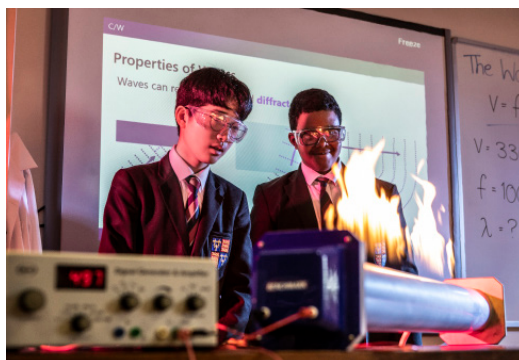
Lessons are a mixture of practical work to develop understanding of the topic areas, developing skills to question and investigate scientific principles and ideas, literacy activities to demonstrate student understanding and engaging activities to support learning and progress.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Paper 1	Topics 1-4: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter; and Atomic structure.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Paper 2	Topics 5-8: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism; and Space physics.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE

WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

AQA GCSE Physics (Higher Tier) provide opportunities for progression. It is rigorous and provides students with a good grounding for taking Physics further in the Sixth Form. There is a good balance between practical work and theory in this course, and students can apply the transferable skills in other disciplines.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

In addition to the regular course of studies, a number of students choose to become involved in extra-curricular activities such as mentoring younger students within the school, Mastery and Leadership awards and visiting local and national universities for talks and seminars.

The department also encourages participation in the British Physics Olympiad and a number of students attend extra classes to help prepare for this event; these classes also prove popular with those students looking to apply to top universities for their undergraduate studies.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

You need to select three of the following subjects to study at GCSE level:

Art & Design (Fine Art) or (Digital Photography)

Computer Science

Design & Technology

Food preparation and Nutrition

French

Geography

German

History

Mandarin

Music

Physical Education

Religious Studies



ART & DESIGN

The aims of the course are:

ART

- To enable pupils to express themselves through various creative mediums.
- To look at the work of others to inform your own artistic style.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- To enable pupils to express themselves through a digital platform.
- To master photoshop and have some core experience within the darkroom.

Art & Photography will also develop personal skills such as self-management, time management, organisation, presentation skills, critical analysis and enabling pupils to question what they see and develop as a learner beyond the subject itself.

The GCSE would suit students who have an aptitude towards art or photography and have achieved highly over their KS3 curriculum within all areas. It also suits students who can work independently and investigate their own source imagery. Photography would suit pupils who are very artistic, have achieved highly within the subject but core drawing is the weakest area. In art you will explore many materials and processes especially drawing and painting. You will be taught how to manipulate acrylics and be confident to work on a large scale. Photoshop is used within the photography course to manipulate images and as a spring board to develop in-depth ideas in preparation for final art work.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Component	Content
1 Portfolio	<p>Students produce a portfolio of practical work showing their personal response to a set starting point, brief, scenario or stimulus. The portfolio may be presented in appropriate formats for the specification title they are following and chosen area of study, including sketchbooks, digital presentations, mounted sheets, maquettes, prototypes, animated work, scale models or illustrated written work.</p> <p>The portfolio must provide evidence that the student has met all four assessment objectives.</p> <p>120 marks - 60%</p>
2 Externally set task	<p>Students respond to one of five themes, each with a range of written and visual starting points and stimuli. Students research, plan and develop ideas for their response to the option they have chosen, which they must then realise within the ten-hour supervised time period.</p> <p>80 marks - 10 hours - 40%</p>



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

A level Art/Photography

Any A levels that are creative such as DT/ceramics/

Foundation course in art

Some jobs you could move into include:

- Advertising
- Architecture
- Art therapist
- Art valuer
- Automotive design
- Conservator
- Court room artist
- Creative director
- Fashion
- Film
- Game designer
- Illustrator
- Journalism
- Landscape architect
- Medical photographer
- Print maker
- Teaching



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Dark room
- Lunch club each week

COMPUTER SCIENCE

The aims of the course are for students to:

- Understand how computers work: the role of components in a computer and how computers can be networked together. Students can then decide the most appropriate equipment and setup for different situations.
- Develop the skills required to write and correct computer programs. Students will understand best practices when coding which ensures their code will be easy to maintain and reduce the chance of errors occurring.
- Consider the impact of technology. This includes how technology affects the environment, how social media and artificial intelligence affects society and the laws that govern computer use
- Understand how data is stored on a Computer. This allows students to calculate the size of files and know how to change files to reduce the file size.

The GCSE would suit students who...

- are interested in how computers are used for solving problems.
- want to develop or improve a fundamental way of thinking and problem solving, which is called “Computational Thinking”.
- enjoy challenge and want to study a logical and a creative subject at the same time.
- have an acute attention for detail. This is beneficial when understanding the specific role of components and finding errors within computer code.

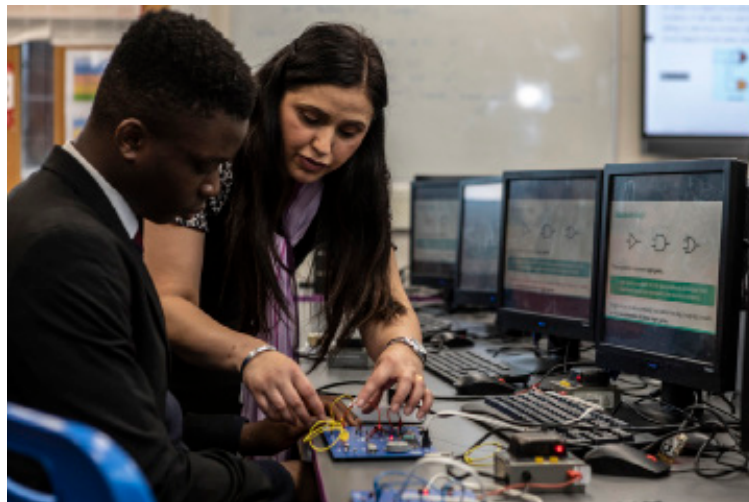
COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Unit 01 - Computer Systems	Computer systems Systems Architecture ; Memory and Storage ; Wired and wireless networks; Network topologies, protocols and layers, System security ; System software; Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns	Written Paper 1hr 30 mins 80 marks 50% of the qualification
Unit 02 – Computational thinking, algorithms and programming	Computational thinking, algorithms and programming Algorithms; Programming techniques ; Producing robust programs; Computational logic ; Translators and facilities of languages	Written Paper 1hr 30 mins 80 marks 50% of the qualification



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

This course gives students a real, in-depth understanding of how Computer technology works and provides excellent preparation for higher study and employment in Computer Science. Studying Computing helps in developing problem solving skills such as the ability to think logically, algorithmically and recursively which are considered very useful skills to have if you wish to pursue a career in Programming, Software engineering, Data analysis, Gaming industry, Mathematics, Science, Economics, Art and Design & Technology field.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

BEBRAS and Oxford University Computing Competition
The Perse Coding Team Challenge
Visit to National Museum of Computing

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

The aims of the course are:

- To give pupils a practical set of skills working with a variety of materials.
- To build pupils knowledge of the Iterative Design process, using design and modelling to explore their ideas.
- To develop pupils knowledge of Design and the importance of its role within society.
- To build pupil's confidence and ability to take creative risks.
- To teach pupils how to use industry standard CAD/CAM effectively to assist in the development of their ideas.
- To prepare pupils for a possible career in Design, Engineering or the Creative sector

The GCSE would suit students who

- Have an aptitude in Design and Technology already and enjoy the subject.
- Have enjoyed the pace of Year 9's Iterative Design project and are keen to push themselves further.
- Are confident working independently, solving problems and looking for information themselves.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Paper 1	Core technical principles Specialist technical principles Designing and making principles	Written exam: 2 hours 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Non-exam assessment (NEA)	Practical application of: Core technical principles Specialist technical principles Designing and making principles Substantial design and make task Assessment criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and investigating design possibilities • Producing a design brief and specification • Generating design ideas • Developing design ideas • Realising design ideas • Analysing & evaluating 	Non-exam assessment (NEA): 30–35 hours approx 100 marks 50% of GCSE



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

A GCSE in Design and Technology will provide students with more than just a route into Product Design or Engineering. The subject instils numerous transferable skills through the various challenges that pupils will face and overcome and will make every pupil a desirable candidate to potential future employers. In particular, the ability to communicate well, think critically and innovate are all skills that modern employers are looking for.

GCSE Design and Technology does prepare you for a career in Design or Engineering, and opens up pathways that could take you to A-Levels and a University Degree or could help you to find an apprenticeship, gaining 'on-the-job' experience. There are a wealth of career routes in the Design and Engineering sectors, lots of information about these routes can be found on the noticeboard opposite A3 (or come and have a chat with Mr Hodgkinson).

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Opportunity to use CAD/CAM in lunchtimes
- Various competitions entered throughout the year
- Specific DT enrichment course
- Jaguar Land Rover trip (Yr11)



FRENCH

The aims of the course are:

- To develop further students' communication skills learned over years 7-9
- To build on the grammatical foundations learnt at KS3
- To enhance students' understanding of French society, culture and traditions
- To be able to write and speak accurately across a range of topics
- To be able to understand French presented to them in written or aural form through a variety of topics

GCSE French supports our students to be successful in a globalised world. Graduates, who have some knowledge of an additional language, are highly rated and, as a facilitating subject, French is part of the English Baccalaureate. The top 24 leading universities highly value languages and if you are planning on studying at a Russell Group University, French will support your application not only for future careers in banking, law, accounting, engineering, advertising, finance, teaching and interpreting but in a host of other sectors.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Speaking	Theme 1 - Identity and Culture	25% final exam
Listening	Theme 2 - Local, national, international, and global areas of interest	25% final exam
Reading	Theme 3 - Current and future study and employment	25% final exam
Writing		25% final exam

Speaking exam is 12 - 15 minutes long and conducted internally by your French teacher, usually it takes place one or two weeks before all other GCSE exams begin.



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Previous Aston students have gone on to study French with such subjects as Engineering, Maths, Business, Linguistics, Law, Accounting amongst others. In a global economy, graduates who can also offer a foreign language are always in demand.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Enrichment opportunities:
- Film material to support an authentic impression of life in the French speaking world
- Trip to Paris
- Careers advice through external speakers
- Drop in sessions to aid understanding

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

The aims of the course are:

To prepare pupils for possible careers in dietetics, nutrition, health, food science and hospitality

- To equip pupils with a diverse skill set using a range of ingredients
- To develop pupils' understandings of health, nutrition, personal needs and how these impact our daily lives
- To enable students to undertake food science experiments, better understanding the properties and functions of ingredients
- To empower pupils to make good food choices by equipping them with an in-depth knowledge of nutrition, health and food provenance

This GCSE would suit students who:

- Have a genuine interest in food, food science and nutritional wellbeing and the theory behind these topics
- Enjoy challenges and working both independently as well as in a team

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Paper 1: Food preparation and nutrition	Food nutrition and health Food science Food safety Food choice Food provenance	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Non-examined assessment (NEA)	Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks) Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks)	Task 1: Report (1,500 – 2,000 words) including photographic evidence of practical investigation Task 2: Portfolio of evidence including photographic evidence of three final dishes



Where could this subject take you?

A GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition will empower students with the theoretical and practical knowledge to pursue further studies in the fields of nutrition, health, dietetics and food science. Opportunities to study the subject at A-level or through vocational routes with other educational providers are available, and students will be well-prepared to explore careers in health, nutrition, product development and hospitality.

GEOGRAPHY

The GCSE Geography programme of study at Aston is designed to excite our students' minds, challenge perception and stimulate their investigative and analytical skills.

Through the study of geography students will travel the world from the classroom, exploring examples in the UK, higher income countries, emerging economies and lower income countries. Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes. A residential trip to Shropshire, as well as day trips, will enhance the learning that takes place in school.

GCSE Geography would suit students who wish to learn more about the world we live in today. Geography will provide you with knowledge and transferable skills that will reward you personally and advance you professionally. No doors are closed in Geography, making it the ideal subject to choose if you wish to develop essential skills such as problem solving, decision making, synthesising ideas, identifying issues and communicating findings.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Our Natural World	Global Hazards	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes. 70 marks 35% of GCSE.
	Changing Climate	
	Distinctive Landscapes	
	Sustaining Ecosystems	
People and Society	Urban Futures	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes. 70 marks 35% of GCSE.
	Dynamic Development	
	UK in the 21st Century	
	Resource Reliance	
Geographical Exploration	Synoptic assessment of topics linked to both human and physical Geography. Geographical skills. Decision Making Exercise	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 60 marks 30% of GCSE



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Geography closes no doors. Due to the many skills involved, it sits perfectly alongside almost every subject at GCSE and A-level. Of course, your studies and enjoyment of the subject could lead to Geography at degree level and beyond.

For future careers, Geography is great for any kind of career that involves the environment, planning, or collecting and interpreting data. Popular careers for people with geography qualifications include: town or transport planning, surveying, conservation, sustainability, waste and water management, environmental planning, tourism, and weather forecasting.

The army, police, government, research organisations, law and business world also significantly value the practical research skills that geographers develop.

As geographers learn about human and population development, geography can be highly useful for jobs in charity and international relations too.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

As part of the course, we will be undertaking a minimum of 2 days of fieldwork. We also hope to offer additional a non-compulsory residential visit.

GERMAN

The aims of the course are:

- To consolidate and build upon German grammar learned over years 7-9
- To better understand German culture, traditions and society
- To be able to write and speak accurately from memory across a range of topics
- To be able to recognise language across a range of topics in listening & reading

GCSE German will support the enjoyment of

- flair for languages
- learning about other cultures
- problem-solving
- learning broad curriculum

If you are planning on studying at a Russell Group University, German is a facilitating subject and is part of English Baccalaureate, which is highly valued by the top 24 leading universities.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Listening exam 25%	THEME 1: IDENTITY AND CULTURE	45 minutes
Reading exam 25%		1 hour
Writing exam 25%	THEME 2: LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL AREAS OF INTEREST	1 hour 20 minutes
Speaking exam 25%		12-15 minutes (conducted internally by your German teacher, usually a week or two before Year 11 study leave begins)
	THEME 3: CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT	

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- KS4 visit to Germany
- Opportunity to mentor/support KS3 students through a “Lernen durch Lehren” program (learning through teaching)



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

“Students able to speak a second language have better listening skills, sharper memories, are more creative, are better at solving complex problems, and exhibit greater cognitive flexibility.”

(National Educational Association, 8th Feb 2019)

With 120 million native speakers, German is Europe’s most widely spoken mother tongue. Add to that the fact that it is the second most spoken second language in Europe (behind English), it is important that we study German. It is the language of academia, of commerce, of science and of invention. Unfortunately, there is a declining number of students opting to study this language across the UK, which means that you will be in high-demand in the workplace, if you are proficient in the language.

One of the reasons why German has such a high standing in the science community is the fact that Germany’s universities have an excellent international reputation and are free for everyone (even non-Germans). In the year 2011, the country was the fourth most popular destination for students from abroad with more than a quarter of a million foreigners being enrolled in German schools. What’s more, the German system for higher education boasts a number of universities with a very low or non-existent tuition fee. You could study there for free!

Speakers of foreign languages are always in high demand, across the world and in all different sectors, so there really is no



HISTORY

‘The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.’ - Theodore Roosevelt

Choosing History at GCSE will provide you with plenty of opportunities for further progression.

History is considered to be an academically rigorous subject by universities across the country and is therefore very highly regarded no matter what career path you wish to pursue in the future. In fact, a recent Telegraph survey placed only the options MFL and History in the top ten of graduate subjects leading to employment.

History is much more than an effective stepping stone to a successful career; it is an enthralling, engaging and dynamic subject. Through the study of History, you will gain vital key skills such as problem-solving, analysis of evidence, empathy and teamwork. These skills are essential, not only for history and other subjects in school but for any career. Therefore, History can gain you entry into a wide range of careers, including television, radio, journalism, the police force, social work and the civil service. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of History helps us improve the world we live in, and hopefully, preventing us from replicating the mistakes of the past.

History at Aston follows the AQA GCSE History Syllabus, which enables students to study different aspects of the past, so they can engage with key issues such as conflict, what drives change and how the past influences the present.

The GCSE would suit students who...

- Have an interest in understanding why current events happen in the way they do
- Have an interest in understanding the modern world and how it got to be like this
- Like asking questions such as “why?” and “what if...”
- Like handling, interpreting and sorting information
- Like making arguments and having debates
- Are interested in people’s stories

Students who choose to study History also need to be very active learners as there is a lot of discussion that takes place in lessons. Students should be prepared for a considerable amount of writing, as many of the exam questions are extended essays and answers.

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Students will sit two exam papers at the end of Year 11, each lasting 2 hours, both worth 50% of the total grade. There will be no separate coursework or controlled assessment; this is built into the second paper (see below). In both papers, students will be asked to apply their knowledge to evaluate historical sources and challenge historical interpretations.

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Paper 1: Understanding the modern world	Section A – Period study: Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship Section B - Wider world depth studies - Conflict and tension, 1918–1939	Written exam: 2 hours 84 marks (including 4 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar) 50% of GCSE
Paper 2: Shaping the nation	Section A - Thematic studies - Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day. Section B - British depth studies - Norman England, c1066–c1100.	Written exam: 2 hours 84 marks (including 4 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar) 50% of GCSE

Paper 1 Section A – Period study: Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship

Students will study the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of these two developments and the role ideas played in influencing change. They will also look at the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and the impact the developments had on them.

Paper 1 Section B - Wider world depth studies: Conflict and tension, 1918–1939

This wider world depth study enables students to understand the complex and diverse interests of different individuals and states including the Great Powers. It looks at concepts such as national self-determination, ideas of internationalism and the challenges of revising the peace settlement.

Paper 2 Section A - Thematic studies: Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day.

This is a unit that is covered in the first year of most medical degrees, and therefore gives students interested in the medical profession an excellent head start. Students will gain an understanding of how medicine and public health developed in Britain over a long period of time. They will consider the causes, scale, nature and consequences of short- and long-term developments, their impact on British society and how they were related to the key features and characteristics of the periods during which they took place.

Paper 2 Section B - British depth studies: Norman England, c1066–c1100

This option allows students to study in depth the arrival of the Normans and the establishment of their rule. The depth study will focus on major aspects of Norman rule, considered from economic, religious, political, social and cultural standpoints of this period and arising contemporary and historical controversies.

WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

History is a subject that complements a wide range of other choices, and is considered invaluable in gaining access to many professions. The ability to work and research independently and present a closely detailed argument are skills valued in all professional walks of life; many History students develop careers in law, journalism, broadcasting, politics, social work and public services.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

The department runs a History day in Year 11 to support students in their understanding of Unit 2. This includes a visiting speaker and a session on the environment study.

MANDARIN

China has a booming economy and as Chinese becomes one of the dominant language and cultural force for the 21st century, learning Mandarin provides a unique and exciting opportunity for our students who will have a competitive advantage in the world of business. We want our students to understand the value of these communication skills in the job market place and the importance of working hard to achieve results.

We strive to provide the best opportunities for our students to immerse themselves in the culture, language, traditions and history of China during their study of Mandarin. We also expect students to develop the skills needed to become active independent learners and to have the confidence to consider themselves as 'World Citizens' who belong to a multicultural, mutually respectful world.

The aims of the course are:

- To develop their ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in speech and writing.
- To express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently.
- To deepen their knowledge about how language works and enrich their vocabulary in order for them to increase their independent use and understanding of extended language in a wide range of contexts
- To develop awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where the language is spoken
- To make appropriate links to other areas of the curriculum to enable bilingual and deeper learning, where the language may become a medium for constructing and applying knowledge To develop language-learning skills both for immediate use and to prepare them for further language study and use in school, higher education or employment.

The GCSE Mandarin course is designed to enable students of all abilities to develop their Chinese (Mandarin) language skills to their full potential, equipping them with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.

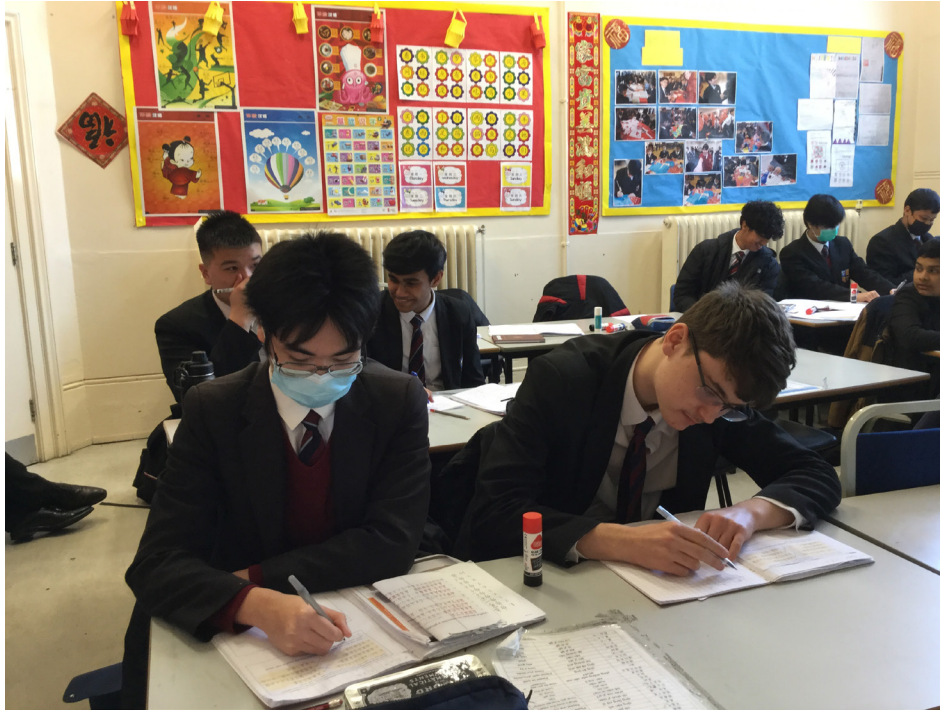
This is an ideal option for students who have an interest in a future career in banking, law, accounting, engineering, advertising, finance, teaching, interpreting and in many other sectors. We live in a global world and graduates who have

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Listening/reading exam	THEME 1: IDENTITY AND CULTURE	Written exam 25%+25% of GCSE
Writing exam		Written exam 25% of GCSE
Speaking exam	THEME 2: LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL AREAS OF INTEREST	Conducted internally by your teacher 25% of GCSE
	THEME 3: CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT	

PLEASE NOTE:

MANDARIN GCSE IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE STUDIED THE LANGUAGE IN YEARS 8 AND 9.



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

China has a booming economy and is a global superpower. Through opening itself up to the world, China has welcomed foreign investment and economic cooperation. As such, there is a massive demand for people who are able to bridge the gap between this new China and the wider world. As Chinese becomes the dominant language and cultural force for the 21st century, learning Mandarin provides a unique and exciting opportunity for our students who will have a competitive advantage in the world of business. We want our students to understand the value of these communication skills in the job market place and the importance of working hard to achieve results.



ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Chinese restaurant visit.
- Chinese culture visit to London.
- Competitions with pupils from other Swire Chinese Language centres in the UK.
- Lunch club every week.

MUSIC

Music at Aston follows the Eduquas GCSE Music syllabus which enables students to explore three core areas of Performing, Composing and Listening. Students who choose to study music must already have a passion for performing on either an instrument or voice. Performing and Composing make up 60% of a music GCSE in coursework, leaving one Listening paper worth 40% of your final mark.

GCSE Music would suit students who

- Already play a musical instrument or confidently sings and have the commitment to reach grade 3 in year 11 to achieve maximum performance marks.
- Play in an ensemble either in school or out of school
- Who enjoy composition and want to explore this further
- Are prepared to work hard and listen to a wide range of musical styles and develop a much deeper understanding

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Component 1: Performing Total duration of performances: 4-6 minutes	A minimum of two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance of at least one minute duration. The other piece(s) may be either solo and/or ensemble.	Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification
Component 2: Composing Total duration of compositions: 3-6 minutes	Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief set by WJEC. The second composition is a free composition for which learners set their own brief.	Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification
Component 3: Appraising	This component is assessed via a listening examination based on learning from four areas of study. 1: Musical Forms and Devices 2: Music for Ensemble 3: Film Music 4: Popular Music	Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes 40% of qualification

Where could this subject take you?

Studying music has the ability to enhance all learning skills as it is the only subject where you use all parts of the brain. It develops communication skills, creativity, teamwork, discipline, cultural awareness, respect for others, and self esteem through personal accomplishment. It is also a powerful way to relieve stress, lift our mood and relax. At GCSE level it is more important to choose subjects you enjoy and excel at. If you are aiming to apply to study at a top university you need to think beyond academic achievement, you will need to demonstrate your commitment to a whole range of extra-curricular activities and life-enhancing skills. So, this subject can take you anywhere you aspire to!



○ ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

The music department is a very lively place to be with a whole range of extra-curricular activities in Key Stage 4 & 5 to choose from.

- Orchestra
- Jazz Band
- String Ensemble
- Guitar Ensemble
- Senior choir
- Percussion Ensemble
- Brass Ensemble

In addition to the above, we have 16 visiting instrumental teachers who teach all instruments as well as offering specialist chamber music coaching. There are further opportunities for students to form their own ensembles, small jazz groups and rock bands. And finally, as part of the course you have your instrumental lessons subsidised by the school.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GCSE PE is a brilliant introduction into the academic aspect of PE and sport. It is an academically rigorous subject that concentrates on sports science while also crossing over into many other fields of study. Within sports science students develop an understanding of the human body and its reaction to exercise, the psychology of sport, biomechanics of how we move, how we learn skills and develop our abilities and what happens during a performance. GCSE PE introduces students to the wider world of sport, including how commercialisation affects sport and factors affecting participation. GCSE PE also delves into the ethical considerations around drugs, aggression, violence and cheating in sport. It teaches students about the impact sport and PE has on the wider society and the importance of sport both as a business and to the health of the nation.

GCSE PE would suit students who currently have a good level of attainment in core PE and Games as the practical element of the course requires students to continue participating in sport beyond their lesson time. GCSE PE Students are expected to continue to contribute to the extra-curricular program and representing the school in a range of sports. GCSE PE is a largely theory course with a practical element. It is very different to our core PE and Games offer where students work on their practical skills and students should expect to be in the theory classroom for over 80% of the course.

Entry Requirements

1. Students need to be actively engaged with the PE and Games program, and preferably the wider extra-curricular program, with attitude of at least “good” in PE in year 9.
2. They should have represented the school in any sport during either or both of year 8 and 9.
3. They should be at least “inline” overall in PE in year 9
4. They should be at least “above” in at least 2 specific areas of the year 9 core PE or Games curriculum.
5. Students must be prepared to continue playing multiple sports both for the school and or for a local club once they have started year 10.

Your son's PE teacher can advise if they meet the entry requirements if you are unsure

COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
1 - The human body and physiology	Applied anatomy and physiology Movement analysis Physical training Use of data	Written exam, 1hr 15 mins 78 marks 30%
2 - Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.	Sports psychology Socio-cultural influences Health, fitness and well-being Use of data	Written exam, 1hr 15 mins 78 marks 30%
NEA - Practical performance in physical activity and sport	Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of the player/performer (one team, one individual and a third in either a team or individual activity) Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.	Assessed by teachers Moderated by AQA 100 marks 40%



WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Going beyond year 11, GCSE PE complements A Level subjects such as; Biology, Psychology, Economics, History, Physics, and Sociology.

Beyond A Level it can lead onto careers in: Medicine, Sports Medicine, Physiotherapy, Sports Science, Exercise Physiology, Biomedical Sciences, Sports Marketing, Journalism, Sports Psychology, Sports Engineering, Sports Technology, Data Analysis, Sports History and many more.

The breadth of the course covers material which is expanded further at A-Level - Links really strongly with several A level courses such as biology (anatomy and physiology) Physics (biomechanics) Psychology (sports psychology), to name a few.

Universities appreciate GCSE PE as it shows that a student has a breadth of knowledge has also played sport to a high level therefore it shows the ability to commit to teams and long-term goals. As well as an indicator of them having developed the ability in the “softer skills” such as communication which are required to be successful.

There are clear links to numerous future careers such as :

- Sport science
- Physiotherapy
- Sports therapy
- Fitness industry
- Sports management & development

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- Lots of opportunities to play sport within school in their Games programme
- Opportunities for leadership experience through the sports partnership links.
- Annual year 10 visit to a local university to access their sports facilities.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The aims of this course are to ask big philosophical questions about various topics related to religion. In religion and life we ask: what gives life its value, and how might this impact our decisions about medical ethics? In religion, crime and punishment, we ask: should the death penalty be abolished, and what is the role of forgiveness in criminal justice? In religion, human rights and social justice, we question: do we currently live in a just society? Are there any limits to freedom of expression or belief? And with revelation and the existence of God, we explore if revelation is to be believed, what we know about God, and if there are any reasons for doubting revelation, does this mean such a God cannot exist? As well as exploring these questions, we learn in depth about the faith, beliefs and practises of two major world religions – Christianity and Islam.



COURSE CONTENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Paper	Content	Method of assessment
Component 1	Christianity Beliefs, Teachings and Practices. Islam Beliefs, Teachings and practices.	50% 1hr 45min written exam
Component 2	The Existence of God and Revelation Religion and Life Human Rights and Social Justice Religion, Crime and punishment	50% 1hr 45min written exam

WHERE COULD THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU?

Of course, those who enjoy the course are encouraged to consider A-level Philosophy, but beyond the specific subject knowledge of Christianity and Islam, Religious Studies gives you skills not only in detailed explanation of complex ideas, but in critical analysis and evaluation of ideas and arguments, as well as close textual analysis. Such skills are transferrable to a range of subjects and future degrees/careers from law, to engineering, to computer science, to politics, to economics, to mathematics, to medicine.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Each year the seven best philosophers in each form in year 10 are entered into our annual House Philosophy competition and Philosophy Morning. In the past this has been run with guests from Warwick University, York University and the Panpsychic Podcast. Feedback from students involved has been universally positive each year. In Year 11, we participate in the inter-school Philosophy competition between King Edwards School called the Philosopher's Stone Competition, and we also participate in the Philosothon, a philosophy competition between King Edwards Schools.

As well as encouraging wider reading through our reading lists and study packs, we also try to get Religious Studies students involved in as many Religious Studies/Philosophy conferences/ guest speakers as possible. Past visits have included Oxford University and Birmingham University.