KING EDWARD VI ASTON



GCSE OPTIONS 2024-2026



A MESSAGE FROM The headteacher

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.

With warmest wishes.

MATT BRADY | HEADTEACHER

CONTENTS

Assessment At GCSE	4
Some Points To Consider	5
Choosing a Subject	6
COMPULSORY SUBJECTS	8
Biology	10
Chemistry	11
English Language and Literature	12
Mathematics	14
Physics	15
OPTIONAL SUBJECTS	16
Art & Design	
Computer Science	
Chinese	
Design & Technology	
French	24
Food Preparation and Nutrition	25
Geography	
German	
History	
Music	
PE	
Religious Education	

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

The subjects marked with * will be studied by all students for a GCSE qualification. In addition to the above subjects students will study for a GCSE qualification in

- 1 French or German or Chinese
- 2 Geography or History or RE 3. Two of the following subjects:
 - ART & DESIGN (FINE ART)
 - 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)

The subjects marked with ** may have limited number of places available based on number of classes allocated to the subject due to timetable constraints.

KING EDWARD VI ASTON GCSE INFORMATION

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. GCSE qualifications follow 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 in the Summer term of Year 10 and Autumn term of Year 11.

This will give them invaluable experience in revising for a set of exams in a short 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 at **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 and 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 Wednesday, 10th April 2024.

KING EDWARD VI ASTON 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.

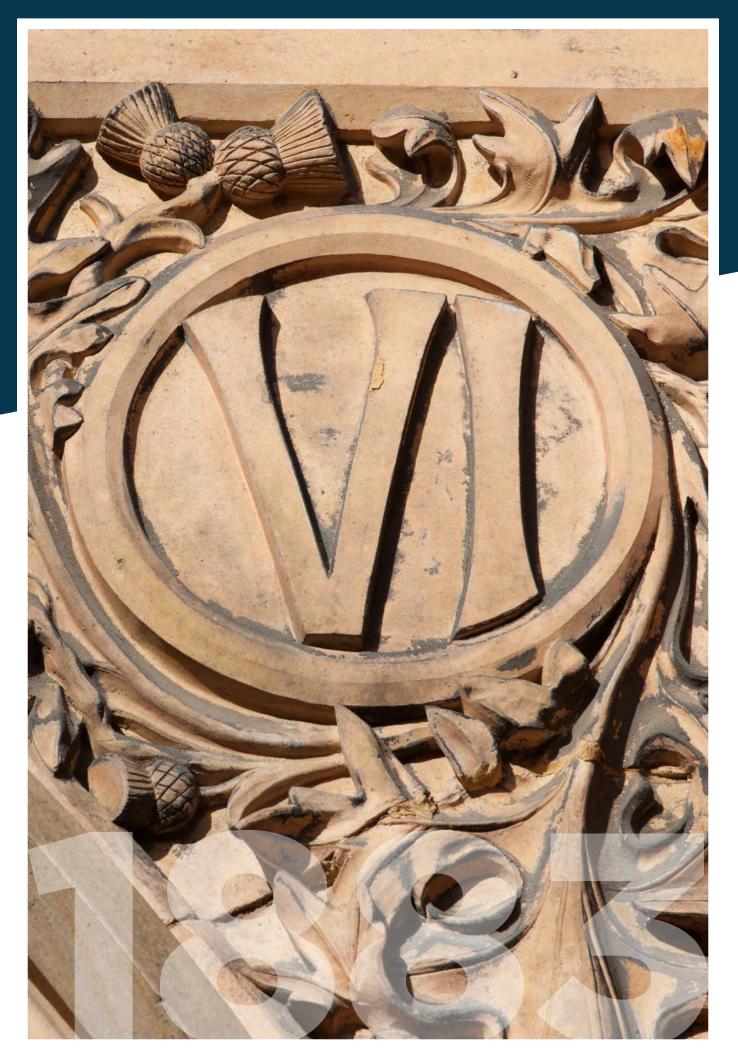
Students considering studying languages at university are strongly encouraged to study French, German and Mandarin. Your 'reserve' option must be a subject that you are prepared to study. It is not always possible to give all students their first three subject choices and when such instances occur parents 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 is 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 is 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 at the moment.
- You think it will impress people now or later.



KING EDWARD VI ASTON 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

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marks, 50% of GCSE

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Mrs J Dhillon

COMPULSORY COURSE BIOLOGY

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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 GCSE course, 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.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

Students who study GCSE Biology can take the subject at A Level. A level Biology enables students to pursue degree courses 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.

PAPER	CONTENT	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



R. Giubertoni

COMPULSORY COURSE CHEMISTRY

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

Chemistry is the study of the matter around us, its interactions and properties. Through an understanding of these properties chemistry has found a vast number of uses in the modern world and underpins many aspects of scientific development and industry that have helped to forge the modern world we live in today. At King Edward VI Aston School, we aim to enable students to gain a full and deep understanding of chemistry and be able to use it to inform their views on the world around them.

The GCSE specification at King Edward VI Aston School covers all the content of the exam board specification but looks to produce able and enquiring chemists who are ready both for further chemistry study and to apply their knowledge to the world around them.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

Studying chemistry can open up a wide range of opportunities and career paths. Pursuing chemistry can take you into the medical profession, the pharmaceutical industry, the oil and petrochemical industry, the Food and Beverage industry, Forensics Science, Materials Science and Chemical engineering.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Trips to universities to experience chemistry at a higher level through the Salters experience days. Opportunities to take part in competitions such as the Royal Society of Chemistry Top of the Bench competition.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Paper 1	 Atomic structure and the periodic table Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter Quantitative chemistry Chemical changes Energy changes 	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE
Paper 2	 The rate and extent of chemical change Organic chemistry Chemical analysis Chemistry of the atmosphere Using resources 	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE



LANGUAGE LITERATURE Mr C. Laverty

COMPULSORY COURSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE / LITERATURE

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

To get into a good sixth form, students are required to attain a Grade 5 or, in many cases, a Grade 6 in GCSE English.

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 Birmingham and Stratford-Upon-Avon.

Students also have the opportunity to earn achievement points by taking on reading challenges to review the department's recommended books.

PAPER	PAPER CONTENT	
English Language Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing. Paper 1 Section A – Four questions in response to a fiction text Section B – Creative extended writing task		End of Year 11 external examination – 1 hour 45 minutes
English Language Paper 2	Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives. Section A – Four questions in response to two non-fiction texts Section B – Persuade and argue extended writing task	End of Year 11 external examination – 1 hour 45 minutes
Spoken Language endorsement	Students research, write and deliver a three to five minute speech on a topic of their choice. They will also respond to questions posed by peers and teachers following the speech.	Year 10 internal examination
English Literature Paper 1	Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel. Students will write two essays, one on <i>Macbeth</i> and the other on <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> .	End of Year 11 external examination – 1 hour 45 minutes
English Literature Paper 2	Literature paper 2: Modern texts and poetry. Students will write four responses (three extended and one brief) on An Inspector Calls, a selection of Power and Conflict anthology poems and two unseen poems.	End of Year 11 external examination – 2 hours 15 minutes



Mrs Boyce

COMPULSORY COURSE MATHEMATICS

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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 be assessed on five strands: Number, Algebra, Geometry & Measure, Probability and Statistics.

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..

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

- A degree in the field of Science or Mathematics, or any other subject you may be interested in studying at a higher level
- Actuarial, accountancy and other financial services
- Teaching
- Risk management

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.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Non-calculator	All content outlined on the specification can be assessed in each of the papers	Written examination 90 minutes, 80 marks All papers equally weighted
Calculator 1	All content outlined on the specification can be assessed in each of the papers	Written examination 90 minutes, 80 marks All papers equally weighted
Calculator 2	All content outlined on the specification can be assessed in each of the papers	Written examination 90 minutes, 80 marks All papers equally weighted



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Mr. Kumar

COMPULSORY COURSE PHYSICS

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

The GCSE Physics course involves investigating how the natural world works and is designed to engage students' interest at every level by providing relevant 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.

Propertie

Waves

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.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

AQA GCSE Physics (Higher Tier) provides 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.



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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.

PAPER	CONTENT	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

KING EDWARD VI ASTON OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

YOU NEED TO SELECT THREE OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS TO STUDY AT GCSE LEVEL:

- Art & Design (Fine Art)
- Computer Science
- Chinese
- Design & Technology
- Food preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

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Miss Moore

OPTIONAL COURSE ART & DESIGN

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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



This course 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.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

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. This course will allow students to explore many materials and processes especially drawing and painting. Students will be taught how to manipulate acrylics and be confident to work on a large scale.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

- A level Art
- Any A levels that are creative such as DT / ceramics / Foundation course in art
- Advertising, Architecture, Art therapist, Art valuer, Automotive, Design Conservator, Court room artist, Creative director, Fashion, Journalism, Game designer, Landscape architect, Film /Medical photographer, Illustrator, Print maker, Teaching.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Dark room lunch club.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
1. Portfolio	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. The portfolio must provide evidence that the student has met all four assessment objectives.	120 marks 60%
2. Externally set task	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.	80 marks 10 hours 40%

Mr Russell

OPTIONAL COURSE COMPUTER SCIENCE

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- 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 affect 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.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES 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..

WHERE CAN 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.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- BEBRAS and Oxford University Computing Competition
- The Perse Coding Team Challenge
- The British Informatics Olympiad
- Visit to the National Museum of Computing

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Unit 01 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	50% of the qualification Written Paper, 80 marks 1hr 30 mins
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	50% of the qualification Written Paper, 80 marks 1hr 30 mins



Mrs Lui

OPTIONAL COURSE Chinese

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- To develop students' 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 knowledge about how language works and enrich vocabulary in order 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 pupils for further language study and use in school, higher education or employment.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

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. GCSE Mandarin Chinese 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, Mandarin 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, Mandarin 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.

WHERE CAN 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

- Trip to China/Singapore
- China Town visit
- Chinese culture visits to London.
- Competitions with pupils from other Swire Chinese Language centres in the UK.
- Lunch club every week.

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	ASSESSMENT
Theme 1 Identity and culture	 Me, my family and friends Technology in everyday life Free time activities Customs and festivals in Chinese-speaking countries/communities 	Paper 1 – Listening (25%) Paper 2 – Speaking (25%) Paper 3 – Reading (25%) Paper 4 – Writing (25%)
Theme 2 Local, national, international and global areas of interest	 Home, town, neighbourhood and region Social issues Global issues Travel and tourism 	
Theme 3	 My studies 	

Current and future study and employment

My studies Life at school/college

- Education post-16
- Jobs career choices and ambitions



OPTIONAL COURSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- To give pupils a practical set of skills working with a variety of materials.
- To build pupils knowledge of the Iterative Design process and the importance of its role within society, using design and modelling to explore their ideas.
- To build pupils' confidence and ability to take creative risks.
- To teach pupils how to use industry standard software and machinery effectively to assist in the development of their ideas.
- To inspire pupils to pursue further study in the Design, Engineering or Creative sectors.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

- Enjoyed and demonstrated aptitude in Design and Technology throughout Years 7-9.
- Have an interest in Design, Engineering and how it has and continues to shape the world around us.
- Enjoy fast-paced projects, problem-solving and opportunities to work both independently and within groups.
- Want to develop their knowledge outside the classroom environment, taking ownership of their learning and actively looking for information.
- Take pride in their work and enjoy demonstrating what they are really capable of!

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

A GCSE in Design and Technology is more than just a route into A-level Product Design or Cambridge Technical Level 3 Engineering (although those are both excellent options!), it is an opportunity to develop key transferable skills that will are invaluable as students move to the next stage of their educational career.

Students will leave Design and Technology as critical thinkers, problem-solvers, calculated risk-takers, innovators and confident communicators – these skills are all highly desirable in both education and industry.

At the end of Year 11 students will be in a prime position to continue the subject at A-level or to look for apprenticeships in Design and Engineering vocations. The top-performing students will be invited to apply for Arkwright scholarships that offer sponsorship to students studying STEM subjects at A-level and are committed to continuing that path at university.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Involvement in EDT Industrial Cadets Silver programme (including a half-term residential opportunity that students can apply for).
- Weekly lunchtime workshop access to allow students to further develop skills
- Entry into national competitions where viable (we have previously won an Industrial Cadets People's Choice award, the Bougues Future Cities challenge and two national Architecture into Education Awards).
- Support with Arkwright Scholarship applications.
- We aim to offer students one fieldtrip to an industrial experience during the course, for example, a visit to the Silverstone Museum and Innovation Centre.

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Core technical principles	Written examination:
A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions	2 hours
assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.	100 marks 50% of GCSE grade
Specialist technical principles	Ū
Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.	
Designing and making principles A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.	
 Substantial design and make task Contextual challenges to be released annually by AQA on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of the NEA Students will produce a prototype and a portfolio of evidence 	NEA: 30-35 hours (approximately) 100 marks 50% of GCSE grade
	 Core technical principles A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding. Specialist technical principles Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles. Designing and making principles A mixture of short answer and extended response questions. Substantial design and make task Contextual challenges to be released annually by AQA



OPTIONAL COURSE French

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- To develop further students' communication skills and grammatical foundations learned over years 7-9 and enhance their 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 the students in written or aural form through a variety of topics.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

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.

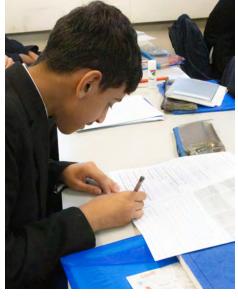
WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

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. 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

- Film material to support an authentic impression of life in the French speaking world
- Trip to Paris
- Drop-in sessions to aid understanding

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENTS:



PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Theme 1	My personal world	Paper 1: Speaking exam (25%), Internally conducted and externally
Theme 2	Lifestyle and wellbeing	assessed and it includes a read aloud task, a role play task, a picture
Theme 3	My neighbourhood	task and a conversation.
Theme 4	Media and technology	
Theme 5	Studying and my future	Paper 2: Listening and understanding, written exam(25%), it includes
Theme 6	Travel and tourism	 Section A: guestions and answers in English
		- Section B: dictation

Paper 3: Reading and understanding, written exam(25%), it includes – Section A: questions and answers in English

Section B: translation into English

Paper 4: Writing, written exam(25%) Final written examination

- Section A: 80-90-word piece of writing
- Section B: 130-150-word piece of writing
- Section C: translation into French

OPTIONAL COURSE FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- To continue developing pupils' love of recipe creation and execution.
- 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 COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

- Have an interest in food, food science, nutrition and wellbeing and the theory that underpins these topics
- Enjoy taking creative risks with dishes, evaluating their successes and looking for ways to improve
- Recognise the role that good food preparation and nutrition play in society, and want to understand better how they can play a part in this
- Enjoy a challenge both independently and when working as a team.

WHERE CAN 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.

Regardless of whether students choose to pursue the subject as A-level or apprenticeship post GCSE, they will have an in-depth knowledge of the key relationship that exists between food, nutrition and health. This crucial skill's importance extends far beyond the classroom and is something they will be able to apply no matter what they choose to do in life after GCSE.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- All students are encouraged to enter the annual House cooking competitions to showcase their skills
- Masterclasses run by external professional chefs when viable

PAPER CONTENT		ASSESSMENT	
Written examination: Food Preparation and Nutrition	 Food, nutrition and health Food science Food safety Food choice Food provenance Multiple choice questions (20 marks) Five questions each with a number of sub questions (80 marks) 	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks 50% of GCSE 30 marks)	
Non-examined assessment (NEA)	Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks) Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Assessed through: written or electronic report (1,500–2,000 words) including photographic evidence of the practical investigation.	Non-examined assessment: 100 marks 50% of GCSE	
	Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks) Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task		

of nutrition related to the chosen task. Students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours, planning in advance how this will be achieved. Assessed through: Written or electronic portfolio including photographic evidence. Photographic evidence of the three final

dishes must be included.



Miss R Walsh

OPTIONAL COURSE GEOGRAPHY

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

The GCSE Geography programme of study at Aston is designed to excite our students' minds, challenge perception and stimulate their investigative and analytical skills. It aims to produce global citizens ready for the challenges of work in the 21st century.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

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.

WHERE CAN 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 noncompulsory residential visit. In recent years, we have taken students to Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii on a tour of the Bay of Naples.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Paper 1 Our Natural World	Global Hazards Changing Climate Distinctive Landscapes Sustaining Ecosystems	1 exam – 1hr 15 minutes 70 marks – 35% of the GCSE
Paper 2 People and Society	Urban Futures Dynamic Development UK in the 21st Century Resource Reliance	1 exam – 1hr 15 minutes 70 marks – 35% of the GCSE
Paper 3 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

OPTIONAL COURSE GERMAN

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

- To consolidate and build upon German vocabulary and grammar learned over years 7-9 and enhance their understanding of 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.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

GCSE German will support the enjoyment of a student who has a flair for learning languages and enjoys learning about other cultures.



Speakers of 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).

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

If you are planning on studying at a Russell Group University, German is a facilitating subject and is part of the English Baccalaureate. German is highly valued by the top 24 leading universities as numbers of students with a German GCSE qualification have unfortunately decreased and it will therefore not only support your application well, but you will also 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). You could study there for free!

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- KS4 visit to Germany
- Film material to support an authentic impression of life in the German speaking world
- Drop-in sessions to aid understanding

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENTS:

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Theme 1 Theme 2	My personal world Lifestyle and wellbeing	Paper 1: Speaking exam (25%), Internally conducted and externally assessed and it includes a read aloud task, a role play task, a picture
Theme 3	My neighbourhood	task and a conversation.
Theme 4	Media and technology	
Theme 5	Studying and my future	Paper 2: Listening and understanding, written exam(25%), it includes
Theme 6	Travel and tourism	 Section A: questions and answers in English
		- Section B: dictation
		Paper 3: Reading and understanding, written exam(25%), it includes
		 Section A: guestions and answers in English

Section A: questions and answers in Eng
 Section B: translation into English

Paper 4: Writing, written exam(25%) Final written examination

- Section A: 80-90-word piece of writing
- Section B: 130-150-word piece of writing
- Section C: translation into German

Mrs C Cresswell

OPTIONAL COURSE HISTORY

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

The GCSE History course at Aston is designed to follow naturally on from the students' KS3 studies and enables them to study different aspects of the past.

They are encouraged to engage with key issues such as conflict, understand what drives change and be aware of how the past influences the present.

The curriculum aims to resonate with students, helping them gain new insights into the world around them.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES 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.

WHERE CAN 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.

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.

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.

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	ASSESSMENT
Paper 1	Section A – Germany, 1890–1945:	Written exam: 2 hours
Understanding	Democracy and Dictatorship	84 marks (including 4 marks
the modern world	Section B - Wider world depth studies	for spelling, punctuation
	Conflict and Tension, 1918–1939	and grammar)
Paper 2	Section A - Britain: Health and the people:	Written exam: 2 hours
Shaping the nation	c1000 to the present day.	84 marks (including 4 marks
	Section B – Norman England	for spelling, punctuation
	1066-1100	and grammar)



EDUQUAS

CLICK HERE

Mrs Mackereth

OPTIONAL COURSE MUSIC

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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 the final mark.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

- Already play a musical instrument or confidently sing 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.

WHERE CAN 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 offer 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.



PAPER	CONTENT	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



Mr Wright-Smith

OPTIONAL COURSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

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.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

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 programme 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 programme, 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.

WHERE CAN THIS SUBJECT TAKE YOU:

Going beyond year 11, GCSE PE complements A Level subjects such as; PE, 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 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.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Paper 1	Applied anatomy and physiology	Written examination
The human body and	Movement analysis	1hr15 mins
physiology	Physical training	78 marks
	Use of data	30%
Paper 2	Sports psychology	Written examination
Socio-cultural influences	Socio-cultural influences	1hr15 mins
and well-being in physical	Health,fitness and well-being	78 marks
activity and sport	Use of data	30%
Paper 3	Practical performance in three different physical activities in the	Internally assessed
NEA – Practical	role of the player/performer (one team, one individual and a third	Externally moderated by
performance in physical	in either a team or individual activity)	AQA
activity and sport	Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about	100 marks
	improvement	40%



M Wilcock

OPTIONAL COURSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE OVERVIEW AND AIMS:

The aims of this GCSE 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 practices of two major world religions – Christianity and Islam.

Those students who do not elect to study RS at GCSE will still study our Core RS course – one period a week of RS where students study the historical development of the major religions around the world, before applying these studies to big social and philosophical questions later in the course. Students will study the 'Big 6' religions as well as diverse ideas including Baha'i, Daoism, Jainism, and many more belief systems both in class and independently at home.

Those who choose to study the GCSE course will also attend the core lessons once a week – these two courses are designed to complement one another, and students will develop a detailed and rich understanding of religious belief and history, philosophy, and social issues if they elect to study both.

THIS GCSE COURSE WOULD SUIT CANDIDATES WHO:

... are interested in delving into the worldviews of diverse groups of people around the world, those who are interested in debating and discussing deep questions and critically thinking about key issues in today's society and systems of belief, are interested in exploring key ethical issues relevant to contemporary British life and those students seeking to develop a greater understanding of the philosophies of the diverse people they are sure to encounter in their futures.

WHERE CAN 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 Panpsycast Podcast. Feedback from students involved has been universally positive each year. In Year11, 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 University of Birmingham.

PAPER	CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Component 1	Christianity beliefs, teachings and practices. Islam beliefs, teachings and practices.	50%, Written exam 1 hr 45 mins
Component 2	The existence of God and revelation Religion and life Human rights and social justice Religion, crime and punishment	50%, Written exam 1 hr 45 mins





KEY STAGE 4 PASTORAL TEAM

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YEAR LEADERS

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