POYNTON HIGH SCHOOL
and Performing Arts College

Key Stage 4 Curriculum
2026-2028

What Next?

YOUR NEXT STEP

Students who enter Year 10 at Poynton High School in September 2026 are growing up in an exciting and rapidly changing world. It is important to face this world with confidence. The choices made as our students enter Year 10 will influence their future personal, social and working lives, and they must therefore be made with great care. In this process the choice of a balanced curriculum for each individual is vital; our students must keep as many doors open as possible for their future career choices. Nevertheless, many students will now begin, within this balanced curriculum, to specialise in areas of particular interest or strength, which may subsequently lead to certain pathways at Advanced Level and Higher Education.

Our aim is to provide a curriculum to meet the individual needs of each student. In order to do this effectively, co-operation between students, parents and school is vital. In addition, we should always be aware of the needs of employers and Higher Education, being mindful that most students will be likely to change careers several times in their working lives and many will eventually live and work in Europe or beyond. Our students must be prepared accordingly for such global citizenship.

We hope that Years 10 and 11 will provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum so that students enjoy and benefit from their school experiences, preparing themselves purposefully for their futures.

Matthew Dean
Headteacher

Please note that the information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of going to press. However, the pace of change in education is fast moving so we will endeavour to keep you informed of any changes as they emerge. **We also reserve the right to withdraw a course if there is insufficient interest shown by students.** We ask students to state their preferences and will use this to help shape a curriculum to suit each student. It is really important that students think carefully about their preference order as we will use this in cases where there are too many students for opting for a certain course.

Miss W Ryder
Assistant Head Teacher

CONTENTS

MAKING KS4 SUBJECT PREFERENCES - THE PROCESS

Over the next few weeks you are going to be making important decisions that could affect your future career or higher education opportunities. It is essential that you take time to think carefully about the choices you are going to make.

Why options?

In Years 7, 8 and 9 you have followed a broad general curriculum. For the next two years leading up to GCSE that is no longer possible.

- GCSE subjects have to be studied in some depth. There is not enough time to continue with all the subjects you have taken so far.

- Options give you the opportunity to choose subjects that you enjoy and to concentrate on those which you do best. Choices based on your abilities and enjoyment are ones that are most likely to be successful.

Why are these choices important?

There are two main reasons why the choices you make in Year 9 are important.

- If you intend to go on to **Advanced Level** study in the Sixth Form or at college the choices made now may restrict the subjects you can study. This may then limit the opportunities open to you in **Higher Education** in 2030.

- Future **career** or **training opportunities** may depend on the choices you make now as some careers require particular subjects to have been studied to GCSE level.

Do some research, and ask for help, if you think that you might be affected in these ways.

Getting advice

There are plenty of people in school who can help you answer any questions you may have.

- Your Form Tutor and Year Team know you well.
- Ask Subject Teachers about their subject and whether they think it would be suitable.
- Miss Ryder is the person to ask about the options and how they work.
- For advice about university, the Russell Group's *Informed Choices* document will be helpful.
- The Careers Advisor, Mrs Green (Thursdays and Fridays in the main school library) will be available for a limited number of appointments on Year 9 Parents' Evening to discuss your young person's option choices.
- Mrs Hicketts, the Careers Lead.

Careers Advice

- To make good choices for your future you will need reliable, up to date information. To help you, school subscribes to a careers information platform Unifrog. You can access a wide range of information on Unifrog to help you plan for the next phase of your education.
- You created your log in details on Student Development Day in January. Go to https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in to explore further.

Things to remember when stating your preferences

- It is about **your future**. Do not pick a subject because your friends are taking it.
- Choose subjects that you enjoy.

- Choose subjects in which you are successful.
- The initial preferences are in the form of a list. We will then create the best fit for options boxes. This will be done to benefit the majority of students but some combinations may not be possible in the final options grid. We will not know that until students have opted.
- If a subject is oversubscribed then unfortunately some students will not be able to take the subject. The order of preferences will help us to decide which students are affected.
- If there are insufficient numbers to make a course viable then the course will not run. Your reserve subject will then be used.
- Above all you must aim to follow **as broad and balanced a range of courses in Years 10 and 11 as possible**. This will mean that **you will not shut the door on future education or career opportunities.**

Key Dates

To make sure that everything is ready to start the KS4 courses in September there is a very structured timetable.

Thursday 12th February 2026	Options talk for students period 5 in the Hall.
Thursday 12th February 2026	Options talk for Parents in the Hall 6pm.
Monday 3rd – Friday 13th March 2026	Subject Presentations in lessons
Thursday 26th February 2026	Student Development Day – Options Booklets issued to students
Thursday 5th March March 2026	Year 9 Parents Evening
Monday 16th March 2026	Option Forms to be submitted by this date online via Bromcom, My Child at School.

Form Tutors will go over your options with you and discuss your preferences. If they feel that there are any problems then the Year Team or Miss Ryder will be consulted and your parents will be contacted. We will ensure that you take the right subjects for you.

April 2026 First check by you that your choices have been processed correctly.

It will still be possible to change your options at this stage, although we hope that this will not be necessary. All requests for a change of subject must be made in writing by your parents to Miss Ryder. Changes will only be permitted if group sizes allow it.

July 2026 You will receive a final print out of option choices.

In September, if you are unhappy with your choices you will need to agree a change with the Head of Department concerned and a letter from your parents to Miss Ryder will be required. Option changes at this stage will be subject to group size.

29th September 2026 No changes allowed after this date.

OPTION PREFERENCES 2026- 2028

The Curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 is made up of two components: The **Core Curriculum** which includes English, Maths, Science, Statutory (& non examined) Religious Education, Personal, Social, & Health Education and Physical Education for all students and the **Options** which is where students can make choices about the additional subjects they wish to study. At Key Stage 4, students will study four option subjects additional to the core curriculum.

We offer a range of subjects and it is possible to follow pathways whilst trying to keep a balanced curriculum:

- A **Science** pathway can be followed by taking the three separate Sciences.

- **English Baccalaureate:** Within the subject choices available it is advised to select a **balanced pathway** choosing a humanities and modern foreign language alongside the core subjects. This allows students to follow an English Baccalaureate curriculum whilst retaining a wide range of options in preparation for entry into the Sixth Form or further education. The EBacc option is recommended for those looking to enter higher education after 2028. The subjects that are classed as EBacc subjects are facilitating subjects that will keep students' options open.

The government's ambition is to see 90% of students nationally studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2025.

- To ensure breadth you will not be able to study both Art & Design and Photography or both Textiles and Product Design or PE and CNAT Sport Studies

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

Keep a broad curriculum
For most students a broad curriculum, including a Humanities and a Modern Foreign Language, will be the right choice. This will keep lots of options open to you.

Look to the future
In 2026, 5 GCSEs (9 - 4), or equivalent, are required for entry to our Sixth Form. At least four must be GCSE and not alternative qualifications like CNAT. Other FE providers have similar requirements.

Universities are interested in 'facilitating subjects. This means subjects that are useful for the next step. Typically, these are traditional academic subjects.

Make sure your GCSEs will allow you to keep these subjects to A level should you decide.

What subjects do I enjoy?
You will study each option subject for 5 hours a fortnight so you must take subjects that you enjoy. Check that you will enjoy the content in Years 10 and 11.

Should I take a Cambridge National?
You could choose Cambridge Nationals in Sport Studies or Creative iMedia. These subjects are more practical based and have two units which are internally assessed units worth 60% of the marks. The third unit is assessed with an external written exam at the end of year 11 worth 40% of the marks.

Will I always get my first preference?
You are stating preferences which will be useful in helping you to build a curriculum that meets your needs. We will work with you to ensure that your final options meet your needs.

Please note that the equipment available and health and safety issues can limit numbers for some subjects. Equally if the numbers opting for a subject are too few we may decide not to run it. If either is the case we will discuss this with you.

If your form comes in after the deadline you are less likely to be given your preferences.

In addition to the core curriculum you will select **four** option subjects

Section A – Choice 1 You must select one subject from this section.

Geography
History
French
German

To follow an English Baccalaureate curriculum, you will need to select both a Language and a Humanities.

Section B

Your remaining 3 subjects (choices 2,3,4) will come from the list below **and you will also select** a reserve subject

You **cannot** study both of the following subjects together: Art & Design and Photography **or** both Textiles and Product Design **or** PE and CNAT Sport Studies

Art & Design **OR** Photography
Business
Computer Science
CNAT Creative iMedia
Dance
Drama
Examined Religious Studies
Food Preparation & Nutrition
French
German
Geography
History
Music
Product Design **OR** Textiles
Physical Education **OR** CNAT Sport Studies *
Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics). You will study three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics over 14 hours

You will then list your subjects in your order of preference (1= first choice).

Choice 1
Preferred Choice 2.
Preferred Choice 3.
Preferred Choice 4.
Three Reserve Choices

Options form to be submitted online via Bromcom, My Child at School. Deadline Monday 16th March. If you have not already signed-up, please click on the link self sign up for instructions.

GCSES

This Guidance is adapted from the gov.uk website

See more information about this Guidance
(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform)

New GCSEs were introduced from September 2015.

What new GCSEs look like

The main features of the new GCSEs are:

1. A grading scale of 9 to 1, with 9 being the top grade. This will allow greater differentiation between students and will help distinguish the new GCSEs from previous versions.

2. Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.

3. There is new, more demanding content, which has been developed by government and the exam boards.

4. Courses will be designed for two years of study – they will no longer be divided into different modules and students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.

5. Exams can only be split into 'foundation tier' and 'higher tier' if one exam paper does not give all students the opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.

6. Resit opportunities will only be available each November in English Language and Maths.

Department for Education

Grading new GCSEs from 2017

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	B
5 STRONG PASS	
4 STANDARD PASS	C
3	D
	E
2	
	F
1	
	G
U	U

SOME TERMS EXPLAINED

Key Stage 4:	Years 10 and 11 in secondary education
Core Curriculum:	Those subjects in Years 10 and 11 that are taken by all students at Poynton High School as an entitlement at KS4.
Core Subjects:	Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, statutory Religious Education, Personal, Social, Health & Economic Studies, Physical Education and Science – the subjects' students are required to study in Years 10 and 11 under the National Curriculum.
CNAT	Cambridge National qualification
GCSE:	The General Certificate of Secondary Education.
AQA, OCR, Pearson, Eduqas:	The examination boards whose GCSE courses are followed in the school.
Syllabus / Specification:	The programme of study students follow in a subject.
Non-Exam Assessments: (NEA)	These are pieces of work completed during the two-year GCSE course which are marked and graded internally by teachers and count towards the final examination grade. Most GCSEs are assessed by examination rather than Non-Exam Assessment.
The EBacc	The EBacc is made up of English, Mathematics, the Sciences, History and/or Geography and Modern Foreign Languages. To follow the EBacc curriculum students need to take both a humanity subject and a language. The government's ambition is to see 90% of students studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2025.

Entry to the Sixth Form requires students to have gained good qualifications in a range of subjects. Currently, a minimum of five subjects at GCSE, or equivalent, at grade 9 - 4 are required, with at least four being GCSEs. This ensures that students have a successful background in a range of academic subjects. Individual subjects may have their own entry requirement. Entry criteria may change over time.

THE CORE CURRICULUM

This section contains details of those elements of the Year 10 and Year 11 curriculum which all students follow.

The English, Mathematics and Science teams wish to remind parents that they will be beginning important aspects of the GCSE courses in Year 9. Students who are taken out of school for family holidays at this time will be disadvantaged.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:
Paper 1 - Reading fiction and creative writing
1 hour 45 minutes – 50%
Paper 2 - Reading non-fiction and transactional writing
1 hour 45 minutes - 50%
Speaking and listening: non-examination assessment

Staff contact: Mr J Hogben / Ms R Spencer

Year 10
Term 1: Investigating language and structure. You learn about writers' use of these methods in fiction and non-fiction, using the concepts and terminology specific to GCSE English Language.
Term 2: Genre. You investigate how writers use genre to create meaning, with a particular focus on science fiction and dystopian writing. You also learn how to structure a narrative opening.
Term 3: Spoken Language and 'shared read'. During this term you will study a whole novel as a 'shared read.' You will also write and deliver a speech on a chosen topic, followed by a question-and-answer session with an audience. The AQA Spoken Language Endorsement is a compulsory component of the GCSE English Language (8700) qualification.

Year 11
Term 1: Perspectives on gender and class. You read a range of texts linked thematically with the texts you study in literature to develop deeper understanding of context, whilst improving the skills which are tested in Paper 2.
Term 2 and 3: Exam preparation. In the final stages of the course, you spend an increasing amount of time learning how to demonstrate your knowledge and skills in examinations.

Student Performance
In 2025, 80% of students achieved grade 4 or above.

Student Progression
Progression from GCSE to GCE A Levels in English Language, English Literature and Media Studies is strong with many students opting to continue their studies into Sixth Form and beyond.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:
Paper 1 - T*he Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by R.L Stevenson / *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare – 1 hour 30 minutes - 40%
Paper 2 - *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley
Power and Conflict poetry
Unseen poetry
2 hours 15 minutes - 60%

Staff contact: Mr J Hogben / Ms R Spencer

GCSE English Literature tests your knowledge and critical understanding of literary texts. All exams are closed book.

***Macbeth* by William Shakespeare**
Shakespeare's iconic tragedy, set in 10th Century Scotland, deals with the rise and downfall of the play's eponymous hero. Tempted by magical prophecies, driven on by a burning ambition shared with his wife, he seizes power. You will read, watch, and study the play in its entirety, learning to appreciate a captivating story and ensuring you are ready to write about it in your exams.

***An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley**
The year is 1912 and the Birling family are celebrating. Little do they know that by the end of the evening, their lives will have changed, following the visit of the mysterious Inspector Goole.

T*he Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by R.L Stevenson
A curious tale of hidden secrets in 19th Century London, Stevenson's novella gives a fascinating insight into the anxieties of the Victorian era.

Poetry
The AQA Power and Conflict collection gives you an interesting and entertaining journey through poetry from Blake's '*London'*, an unvarnished depiction and critique of late 18th Century England, through to contemporary poetry. As you study the fifteen poems you build on the skills and knowledge you've developed in the past three years, ready to tackle unseen poetry in your Paper 2 examination,

Student Performance
In 2025, 75% of students achieved grade 4 or above.

Student Progression
Progression from GCSE to GCE A Levels in English Language, English Literature and Media Studies is strong with many students opting to continue their studies into Sixth Form and beyond.

MATHEMATICS

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment: Examination

Staff contact: Mrs J Bland

Course Description

Throughout Years 10 and 11 you will study key elements of mathematics to provide you with a strong foundation for future work or study. The GCSE mathematics curriculum is spilt into several strands, namely; number, algebra, ratio and proportion, shape and space and data handling. All students will sit three examinations at the end of the course; one non-calculator examination and two calculator examinations.

There are two tiers of entry for Mathematics GCSE; higher tier and foundation tier. The higher tier allows you to achieve grades ranging from 9 – 3, and the foundation tier 5 – 1. The initial tier of study will be based on your progress in Key Stage 3 mathematics. You will be assessed regularly throughout Year 10 and 11 to ensure that you are studying the content that will allow you to achieve your maximum potential at the end of Year 11.

Learning Method

Mathematics lessons at GCSE will be challenging and stimulating, with opportunities to practice and apply new skills. You will see exam style questions throughout the course and regularly use your knowledge and understanding to solve problems.

Student Performance

In 2025, 84% of students achieved 9-4 grades, with 24% achieving 9-7. These results were significantly better than the national average.

Student Progression

Mathematics is an important part of all aspects of life, irrespective of whether you choose to study Mathematics beyond GCSE. Most employers and further education establishments will require a grade 4 or above at GCSE.

A-level Mathematics and Further Mathematics are both popular A-level courses and students who take them go on to study a range of courses at university, such as; medicine, engineering, computer science, accountancy, economics and teaching.

Mathematics GCSE also supports students in their study of other A-levels, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography and Psychology. Some students will go on to study Core Maths alongside these subjects which deepens their understanding of Maths in the real world.

SCIENCE

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment: Examination

Staff Contact: Mr D. Tarmey

Course Description

The Science curriculum at Key Stage 4 offers 2 pathways.

Pathway 1
Combined Science - Trilogy GCSE
Students will gain a qualification the equivalent of 2 GCSEs in Science

Pathway 2
Separate Sciences: GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry, GCSE Physics
Students will gain 3 GCSE's one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics

In Year 9 students have started their bridging units into the GCSE and this builds on their knowledge and skills developed during Years 7 and 8. The material studied in Years 10 and 11 explores many scientific concepts building on the fundamentals developed in KS3. Students will also learn how Science is important in everyday life and technological applications of Science. The course develops skills to evaluate the personal, social, economic and environmental implications of scientific developments in the real world and helps them to develop the skills they need to think critically about the many Science reports we see in the media. This helps students to make decisions based on the evaluation of evidence and arguments. The course places an emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of scientific principles and practical skills which will be assessed via written examinations.

Science topics studied at GCSE include:

- **Biology**: cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis and response, inheritance, variation and evolution and ecology
- **Chemistry**: atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding, structure and the properties of matter, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, the rate and extent of chemical change, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere
- **Physics**: energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure, forces, waves, magnetism and electromagnetism, Space (Separate Sciences only).

Learning Method

Students learn through a mixture of practical work, investigation, discussion, self-assessment, peer assessment, modelling and research. We expect students to gradually become more independent learners and to be able to start taking a greater responsibility for their progress.

Student Performance

The Science Department has achieved excellent GCSE results over the past years both in terms of percentage, attainment and progress. In 2025, 100% achieved 2 GCSE passes in Combined Science with 75% achieving a grade 4 or above, this is 17% above the national average! Within the Separate science courses 98% of students achieved a grade 4 or above in Chemistry, in Biology and in Physics 96% of students achieved a grade 4 or above. The figures in the Separate Science courses are even more impressive when considering grades 7+. 63% of students in Biology, 57% of students in Physics and 60% of students in Chemistry achieved a grade 7 or above all well above the national average.

Student Progression

Our A level science courses are very popular and may be accessed through the study of Combined Science or from studying the separate GCSE Biology, Chemistry or Physics courses. Students choose to study science at Advanced level if they wish to pursue careers in Science based fields such as medicine, veterinary medicine, nursing, pharmacy, engineering/chemical engineering, teaching or scientific research. Some students choose the Advanced level sciences just because they enjoy them and they use their qualifications to study marketing, advertising, the retail industry, the law and sport. A high percentage of our students go on to study at university and we feel that the skills they learn in science equip them very well for the challenge of university life. The 'Working Scientifically' skills developed in Key Stage 4 help students who choose to study Psychology at Advanced level.

To study Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Advanced level students are required to achieve at least 2 grade 6 GCSEs in Science subjects. Students can only achieve these grades if they sit higher papers. The selection of entry tier is not an option but is decided by how the students perform on unit tests and mock examinations. It is essential that any student wishing to pursue science A levels at Poynton High School demonstrates attainment at a high grade from the very beginning of the course in Year 10.

STATUTORY & NON EXAMINED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All students will study Religious Education (Society, Religion and Identity otherwise known as SRI). This is a core subject and ensures all students meet the legal requirement to study statutory Religious Education. Some students will choose to follow the additional full course GCSE in Religious Studies which is a different course and compliments the SRI

Religious Education provides students with a unique opportunity to understand plurality, values and futures. It also provides a space to explore their own identity, to learn to respect others, and to understand their own and others' rights and responsibilities. Throughout all of this, students have the opportunity to discuss and debate a wide variety of ethical and social issues, enabling them to develop key oracy skills and the ability to form a valid argument. The SRI course is an engaging and exciting introduction to controversial moral dilemmas that students do not always have the opportunity to discuss.

Students will consider different religious and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They will be aware of different perspectives on the issues studied, within and between religions, as well as non-religious views.

- Relationships and families
- Religion and life
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment
- Religion, human rights and social justice

Learning Method
Students will experience varied and interactive learning methods in Religious Education. This will include individual and group work and opportunities to debate current affairs and controversial issues. Students will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills.

Student Performance
This is a non-examined subject.

Student Progression
Knowledge of other cultures and world religious beliefs is useful in many jobs where you are working with the public or communities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Course Description

PSHE is part of the core curriculum for all students. This is a non-examination course and provides students with their statutory entitlement.

Students study three core aspects of PSHE:
- Health and wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in modern Britain and the wider world

Topics studied are:
- Government and Politics
- Toxic Behaviours
- Cosmetic and Medical Choices
- Online Literacy and Resilience
- Careers
- Finance
- Dilemmas: Health, Relationships and Sex

Learning Method
Students will experience varied and interactive learning methods. They will participate in group work, complete individual research tasks and debate current affairs in the media. Students will be encouraged to develop their skills of independent enquiry and to be reflective about their own learning.

Student Progression
PSHE contributes to personal development by helping students to build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem, and to identify and manage risk, make informed choices and understand what influences their decisions.

It enables them to recognise, accept and shape their identities, to understand and accommodate difference and change, to manage emotions and to communicate constructively in a variety of settings. Developing an understanding of themselves, empathy and the ability to work with others will help students to form and maintain healthy relationships and develop the essential skills for future employability.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examination Board: Non-examination course

Assessment: Internally assessed to support learning

Staff Contact: Mr M Henderson

Course Description

Every child will continue with their PE lessons during Key Stage 4. Students are expected to further develop their knowledge and understanding of a variety of sports whilst also developing their personal fitness and being involved in an active, healthy lifestyle.

All students will follow a curriculum map and will work on a wide variety of physical activities including Invasion Games, Alternative Activities, Net / Wall Games, OAA and Fitness. During Key Stage 4 PE, students will also develop their leadership skills and officiating skills.

At KS4, we aim for students to following a healthy, active lifestyle and understand the importance of leading a physically active lifestyle. This is promoted through Core PE lessons and the extra-curricular activities available at both lunch time and after-school.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

The information in the pages that follow deals with those subjects which are OPTIONS. Particular attention needs to be paid to:

1. Details of the specification, to ensure that the content covered is one you will enjoy and can cope with.

2. Assessment methods. How the final grade is reached varies between subjects. Some methods of assessment will suit an individual more than others, and this may be an important factor when opting.

3. Your future plans. If you are considering university it is recommended that you choose EBacc subjects. These are Humanities (History and/or Geography) and a Modern Foreign Language.

DANCE

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:

Examination: external assessment:

Written Paper	1 hour 30 minutes	40%

Non-Exam Assessment: internally marked and externally moderated:

	Performance 40 marks	30%
	Choreography 40 marks	30%

Staff contact: Mrs C Hardicre

Course Description

If you enjoy being creative, physically active and would like to build on your dance skills learned during Key Stage 3, then this could be the course for you!

The GCSE Dance course is 60% practical and 4 out of 5 lessons will focus on technique, choreography and performance. Exam style questions will also be taught through practical activity. Technique sessions will develop and enhance strength, flexibility and posture. In choreography classes, you will learn how to structure and develop your own dances using interesting and exciting starting points. You will learn how to improve your expressive and physical skills, including focus, projection and extension. In theory lessons you will watch professional dance works and learn how to analyse and appreciate what makes a good dance performance as well as learning about your own practice.

All practical elements (60% of the assessment) will be completed by March of Year 11, which allows you to focus on your written GCSE exams in the summer term of Year 11.

Learning Method

Workshops and lessons will focus on movement phrases or choreographic skills. You will be creating and performing work in most lessons either individually or in groups, so teamwork is an essential part of this course. Some lessons will be theory lessons looking at professional dance works, but the majority of lessons will be practical. There is a lower percentage of written work, but practical and theoretical home learning will be set regularly. At times rehearsals will also be necessary at lunch times or after school.

As a GCSE Dance student, you will be invited to perform in our annual Dance Showcase as well as the opportunity to perform at other events. You will also have the option to assist with lower school Dance Clubs.

Moreover you will have the opportunity to audition for Cheshire Youth Dance Company and the CAT scheme who offer regular classes, training and performance opportunities.

Students continue to achieve good grades in Dance.

92% of our students gained 9-4 grades in 2024 with 42% of those attaining a 9-7.

There was a smaller cohort in 2025 with where 70% of our students gained 9-4 of those 40% attaining 9-7.

Student Progression

GCSE Dance nurtures talent and develops numerous skills for aspiring dancers, performers, choreographers and managers. However, many students who enjoy dance, but are not interested in a career in dance, find that the course builds their confidence and teaches them transferable skills that are extremely useful for any career. During the course students are required to speak and perform in front of an audience, work as part of a team and teach each other.

After GCSE Dance, some students choose to study Dance in further education or audition for training places at vocational dance schools. In the past few years Poynton High School students have gained places to study Dance degrees at a range of universities. However many students who have achieved in GCSE Dance go on to use the many transferable skills learnt and go on to study a range of different A Levels and University courses such as: Biomedical Sciences, Business, Maths and many more.

DRAMA

Examination Board: Eduqas

Assessment:

Component 1: Devising Theatre
Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated
40% of qualification

Component 2: Performing from a Text
Non-exam assessment: externally assessed by a visiting examiner
20% of qualification

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
40% of qualification

Staff contact: Mr C Kelly

Course Description

The course will be taught primarily through a series of practical workshops developing student's performance, presentation and design skills. This will be underpinned with regular practice in documenting ideas, researching professional work and planning for writing about theatre.
The course will stimulate political and philosophical thought around modern and historical drama, its application and relevance.
Students will discover and explore their own creative artistry, and gain confidence in their vision.
The course will also promote different ways to solve problems creatively and with imagination and resilience. There will be a combination of solo and group work.
Students will be given access to a wealth of live drama and theatre during the course and will experiment with working methods of established practitioners and theatre companies.

Assessment Details

Component 1: Devising Theatre 40%
Learners will be assessed on either **acting** or **design**. They will participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by Eduqas.
Learners must produce:

- a realisation of their piece of devised theatre
- a portfolio of supporting evidence
- an evaluation of the final performance or design.

Component 2: Performing from a Text 20%

Learners will be assessed on either **acting** or **design**. They will study two extracts from a published script chosen by the centre. They will then participate in one production using sections of text from both extracts.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre 40%
Set Text and Live Theatre analysis/ evaluation

Learners will complete a written examination in two parts based on their practical exploration of the set text and also on a theatre trip (or online theatre production)

Section A: A series of questions on one set text:
'Find Me' - Olwen Wymark

Section B: Theatre analysis
One question, from a choice of two, requiring analysis and evaluation of a given aspect of a live theatre production seen during the course.

Student Performance
In 2025, 92% of students achieved grade 4 or above

Student Progression

Whether students pursue artistic, academic or practical paths in the future, GCSE Drama is a memorable experience. The subject nurtures key practical presentation and team-working skills. It encourages the learner to ask profound and challenging questions of the world around them. Students are able to go to study Theatre and Drama at further or higher education both at Poynton and in other highly regarded institutions. However, many students later find the skills developed whilst studying GCSE Drama to be a crucial asset when applying for work in a variety of fields. It is hard to conceive of a career path where the analytical and interpersonal skills learnt and honed through GCSE Drama will not be called upon.

'The UK creative industries are a huge success story… Music, television, film, games, fashion, design and architecture have been notably strong at developing content, products, services and talent for overseas markets'
*(*www.gov.uk)

'*Even those who have no ambitions to enter the profession often discover through the drama GCSE that there is a real difference between performing and seeing a performance and simply studying a play as a text in the classroom. The skills learned are transferable. Drama GCSE is not seen as irrelevant by thousands of employers who have discovered that a school leaver who has taken the qualification is likely to know how to communicate and also work as part of a team and can think creatively*'
(Lyn Gardner The Guardian)

MUSIC

Examination Board: AQA

Entry Requirements: The ability to play a musical instrument or sing.

Assessment: Students will be assessed in three components.

Staff contact: Mr C Western

Course Description

The GCSE specification is built around three components:

Understanding music (Listening Skills) - 40%
Performing music - 30%
Composing music - 30%

Understanding music
This unit is based on four areas of study (AoS), and within each AoS there are four topic areas.

The four AoS are:

AoS1 Western Classical tradition, 1650-1910
AoS2 Popular music
AoS3 Traditional music
AoS4 Western Classical tradition since 1910

The student will be tested in a written examination scenario with audio broadcasted to the whole GCSE class at the same time as they go through the examination paper. It is divided into two sections.

The first section contains questions on unfamiliar musical tracks and the second section contains questions on the set study pieces. This current year group will be studying the following Study Pieces:

- Beethoven: Symphony No.1 Movement 1 adagio molto Allegro con brio
- Queen: Bohemian Rhapsody, The Seven Seas of Rhye and Love of my life

The examination is one and a half hours long and is completed in examination conditions listening to a CD throughout and is marked by AQA.

Performing music
You have to perform twice, once as a soloist and once as part of an ensemble or group, and your combined performances must last a minimum of four minutes in total. At least one minute of this must be your ensemble performance. You can perform on an instrument such as a piano, guitar, saxophone, keyboard or drum kit or you can sing. You can choose any piece of

music but you should discuss and perform several times with your teacher over the two year course. Your performance will be recorded onto a CD, your teacher will mark it and then it will be moderated by AQA.

Composing music

You will compose two different pieces of music. One will be written in response to a brief sent out by AQA during September of your final year of the GCSE course. There will be four briefs and you can choose any one of them. One or more of them might be accompanied by a picture, a photograph, a poem or a piece of text. The other piece will be a free composition - your choice!

You can perform the music yourself or with others; you can get other people to perform your music for you or the performance can be produced via technology, perhaps using music software such as Sibelius, Studio One or GarageBand to record and edit your music, and also to produce a score. Your recordings will be recorded onto CD, marked by your teacher and then sent to an AQA moderator.

Learning Method – What will happen in the lessons?

If you have enjoyed Music in Years 7, 8 and 9 you will enjoy the subject at GCSE. Your teachers are passionate about music and will really enjoy working with you in lessons and as part of the extra-curricular programme. Through practical activities you will develop your performance skills and learn more about how to compose music. You will develop an understanding of how and why music is created and constructed by listening to and analysing a variety of music from different musical traditions.

Student Performance

In 2025 – 40% achieved a Level 5 and above, 73% achieved a Level 7 and above.

Student Progression – why choose it?

By studying GCSE Music you will develop a wealth of skills including: creativity; project-management; attention to detail; forming and expressing opinions; group-work; independent study; practising and refining; presentation skills; building confidence and resilience; interpersonal skills; listening and analysing. These skills are considered very important by potential employers across a range of occupations. The course is also excellent preparation for further musical study such as A level Music, Music Technology and BTEC courses.

MFL – French/German

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:

There are two tiers of entry – Foundation (grades 1-5) / Higher (grades 4-9)

Paper 1	Listening	25% of total mark
Paper 2	Speaking	25% of total mark
Paper 3	Reading	25% of total mark
Paper 4	Writing	25% of total mark

Staff Contact: Mr S Farrell

Course Description

The course encourages you to express yourself, your likes, dislikes, ideas and opinions and develops your self-confidence in German or French. You will cover three main themes during the course which deal with topics such as: family and relationships, healthy living, education and work, free time and hobbies, festivals, celebrity culture, travel and tourism, media and technology and town and the environment. Exam preparation is ongoing through Year 10 and 11 in all four skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing - at both Foundation and Higher Level. All examinations will be external and at the end of the course.

Learning Method

There are five hours per two-week timetable cycle. For each topic the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are given equal focus in class. During the course you will develop each of these skills through a variety of activities such as interviews, role-plays, magazines, questionnaires, email contact and a range of listening and reading materials. There will be a greater emphasis on making students confident with spontaneous speaking and writing but also in translating from the target language into English and vice versa.

You will have the opportunity to participate in one of our exchanges or study trips where there will be an opportunity to take a leading role as well as to participate.

Student Performance

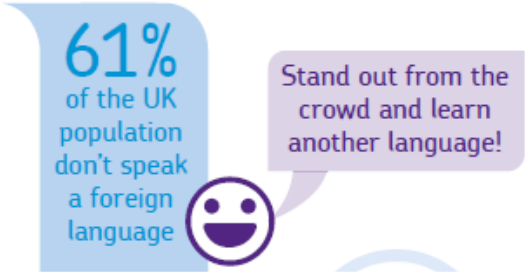
Students achieving grade 4+ in past exam years:

German	2025 – 93%	2024 – 90%
French	2025 – 75%	2022 – 86%

Student Progression

Languages are not just for people who want to become language teachers and translators! Many of our students go on to study an A level in a Modern Foreign Language and universities look favourably on those students who have chosen to continue with a language at GCSE level. In fact, some universities even ask for this as an entry requirement. Learning another language can enhance your employment and mobility prospects, whatever your chosen career. The transferrable skills students acquire studying languages are invaluable and employers often look for candidates who are confident communicators, risk takers and adaptable in challenging situations. Many people today are using skills they have developed in language lessons for their jobs as journalists, tour managers, lawyers, event organisers or business people in a variety of international organisations.

<u>Remember:</u> a linguist's brain is quicker, nimbler and more resistant to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia!




French trip in Normandy


German Exchange in Kassel

BUSINESS

Examination Board: EDUQAS

Assessment:	Examination:	2 x external examinations taken at the end of Year 11

Staff Contact: Miss L Novacki

Course Description

GCSE Business helps students understand how businesses make key decisions that affect us as consumers, as employees and as members of the community. They will understand more about the complex and ever-changing commercial world in which they live.

The course is divided into six units. They are:
1. Business Activity
2. Influences on business
3. Business operations
4. Human resources
5. Marketing
6. Finance

Students will sit two examinations. Business Dynamics which is 2 hours and 62.5% of the qualification marks (100 marks) and Business Considerations which is 1 hour 30 minutes and 37.5% of the qualification marks (60 marks).

GCSE Business can open up a wide range of opportunities for further learning. As well as developing students' knowledge and understanding of the world of business, this course helps students develop a range of skills such as decision-making, interpreting and managing information and devising solutions to problems and issues.

Learning Method

The course uses a wide range of study techniques. In the classroom, students can expect note-taking, group work, discussions and project work. Due to the nature of this subject, business case studies play an important role.

Students will have the opportunity to visit both local and national businesses to deepen their understanding.

As computers play a vital role in business life today, students should expect lessons to make full use of the school's ICT facilities. This will involve word processing and spreadsheet packages together with accessing business information on the internet.

Student Performance

In 2024, 65% of students achieved Grade 4 or above and 12% of students achieved a Grade 7 or above.

In 2025, 90% of students achieved Grade 4 or above and 25% of students achieved a Grade 7 or above.

Student Progression

Business is a successful and popular GCSE subject and leads naturally to A level / BTEC Level 3 Business or A Level Economics. At Advanced level, the subject is chosen by students considering professional careers in Accountancy, Banking, Insurance, Management Consultancy, General Management, Hotel Management and Tourism. Many of our students go on to take degree courses in a business-related course or begin Higher or Advanced Apprenticeships with local employers.

GEOGRAPHY

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:

Examination	Unit 1: Living with the Physical Environment	- 1½ hours	- 35%
	Unit 2: Challenges in the Human Environment	- 1½ hours	- 35%
	Unit 3: Geographical Applications	- 1½ hours	- 30%

Staff contact: Mrs C Hardman

Course Description

This Geography GCSE highlights the importance of Geography for understanding the world and for stimulating an interest in places. It will inspire students to become global citizens by exploring their place in the world, their values and their responsibilities to other people and to the environment.

The course is split into three units:

a) Unit 1 – Living with the Physical Environment
- Natural Hazards – Tectonic, Weather and Climate Change
- The Living World – Ecosystems, Tropical Rainforests and Hot Deserts
- Physical Landscapes in the UK – River Landscapes and Coastal Landscapes

b) Unit 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment
- Urban Issues and Challenges
- The Changing Economic World
- The Challenge of Resource Management – Food, Water and Energy

c) Unit 3 – Geographical Applications
- Issue Evaluation
- Fieldwork – Human (In Poynton) and Physical (Goyt valley river study) two full days of fieldwork

Students will be required to develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills throughout the course; including cartographic, graphical, numerical, literacy, statistical and enquiry skills.

Learning Method
If you have enjoyed Geography in Years 7, 8 and 9 you will enjoy the subject at GCSE. Teachers are proud of their passion for the subject and pride themselves on their ability to enthuse students though a wide variety of teaching and learning methods. The many methods include textbooks, worksheets, use of maps, photographs, videos and role play. As Geography is a contemporary subject, we are able to use ICT and the internet to research

the most up to date information to help us with our studies. Geography is also a very practical subject. We run fieldtrips in the local area.

Student Performance

In 2025 79% of students achieved a grade 4 - 9 with an impressive **41%** achieving a Grade 7 or above.

Student Progression

A really pleasing aspect of the GCSE course for us as a department is the number of students who take A level Geography. Numbers have risen over the last few years and this is a reflection of the enjoyment at GCSE.

As well as increasing your knowledge and understanding of contemporary geographical issues, the subject also develops a wide range of skills which are highly sought after by employers and Higher Education. Geographers show they can offer opinions, recall facts, show an awareness of current affairs, be computer literate, develop numeracy skills and assimilate information. All of these are very important skills.

Geography is often referred to as a 'bridge' subject. This means it is suited to those people interested in Arts subjects (English, History, Languages etc.) as well as those interested in Science subjects (Maths, Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics).

If you are interested in PLACES, PEOPLE and THE WORLD AROUND YOU – GEOGRAPHY IS FOR YOU.

** Remember you are nowhere without GEOGRAPHY**

HISTORY

Examination Board:	Edexcel
Assessment:	
1. Examination: 100%	Unit 1: Medicine in Britain, c1250-present and the British sector of the Western Front, 1914-18: injuries, treatment and the trenches Unit 2: The Reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189-1216 Unit 3: The American West, 1835-95 Unit 4: The USA, 1954-75: conflict at home and abroad
Staff contact:	Mrs C Hall

Course Description

You will study four units:

1 **Medicine in Britain** – the history of medicine from Medieval times to the present. We look at how and why medicine changed covering themes like Public Health, Surgery and the Cause and Cure of Disease. You will look at the Western Front in WWI as a case study of developments in medicine.

2 **The Reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189-1216** – this fascinating unit looks at how Medieval kings ruled, the Crusades, the Civil War between the notorious King John and the Barons and the Magna Carta.

3 The American West, 1835-95 - this is the study of the expansion of the USA to understand how America became the country we know today. You will study the lives of the Indigenous people of the Plains, who settled in the west and conflicts in settling the West.

4 **The USA, 1954-75: conflict at home and abroad** – this unit focuses on a pivotal time in American History. You will study the discrimination Black Americans faced and the Civil Rights Movement before looking at the Vietnam War.

Assessed by Examination:	Paper 1 – Medicine in Britain Paper 2 – The Reigns of King Richard I and King John **and** the American West Paper 3 – The USA, 1954-75

Learning Method

You will be taught using a variety of methods; discussions, source work, group work and documentaries.

Student Performance

Our students perform very well in GCSE. We consistently achieve well above the national average with a high percentage of students gaining a grade 8 or 9. In 2025 91% of students achieved a grade 4-9 with 51% gaining a grade 7 or higher.

Student Progression

For almost any career, History GCSE is a valuable asset and universities and employers rate it highly. History is all about communication. In any profession it is vital that ideas are expressed clearly and succinctly, both orally and in writing. History teaches you how to balance arguments, discriminate between different types of source material and arrange ideas in a logical sequence. History also has great career potential. It opens the way for jobs in Law, Teaching, Business, Politics and the Media and is an essential part of the Tourist Industry. History is viewed by our top universities as a facilitating subject.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:
Written Examinations: 2 x 1 hour 45 minutes examinations (each examination is 50% of the GCSE)

Staff Contact: Miss R Long

Course Description

Students will study two units:

Component 1 The Study of Religions: beliefs, teachings and practices

Component 2 Thematic Studies (ethics)

Religious Studies provides students with a unique opportunity to understand plurality, values and futures. It also provides a space to explore their own identity, to learn to respect others, and to understand their own and others' rights and responsibilities. Throughout all of this, students have the opportunity to discuss and debate a wide variety of ethical and social issues, enabling them to develop key oracy skills and the ability to form a valid argument. The GCSE course is an engaging and exciting introduction to controversial, philosophical and moral dilemmas that students do not always have the opportunity to discuss.

Religious Studies is an academic subject and involves philosophical thinking, social understanding and the skills of analysis and reasoning as well as developing core skills of literacy.

Students are taught the specification from a Buddhist and Christian perspective with a consideration of secular views where appropriate.

The Study of Religions: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices
(Buddhism and Christianity)
- Beliefs, teachings and practices
- Worship and festivals
- Sources of wisdom and authority
- The influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies

Thematic Studies
Students will consider different religious and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They will be aware of different perspectives on the issues studied, within and between religions, as well as non-religious views.
- Relationships and families
- Religion and life
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment

- Religion, human rights and social justice

Learning Method
Students will experience varied and interactive learning methods in Religious Studies.
This will include individual and group research tasks and opportunities to debate current affairs and controversial issues. Students will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills.

Student Performance
This is a new Full Course GCSE optional subject and therefore no prior data is available.

Student Progression
Knowledge of other cultures and world religious beliefs is useful in many jobs where you are working with the public or communities. These include social services, marketing, advertising, catering and hospitality, journalism, education, medicine and nursing, and many more. You will gain problem solving skills, patience, communication and analytical skills – all of which are skills employers look for in a candidate.

Ultimately, Religious Studies can lead you anywhere.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Examining Board: OCR

Assessment: Computer Systems - 1 hour 30 minutes written exam (50%)
Computational Thinking - 1 hour 30 minutes written exam (50%)

Staff Contact: Mr L Bemowski

Course Description

This exciting GCSE course provides students with a stimulating and motivating study of Computer Science fit for the 21st century. The course will provide an excellent opportunity to investigate how computers work and how they are used to develop computer programming and problem-solving. Computer Science is a technical subject, with links to Mathematics and logical thinking. Students should have demonstrated good mathematical ability in Year 9 in order to take this course.

Through this qualification students will:

- develop knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science
- develop their understanding of current and emerging technologies and how they work
- develop their understanding and apply computational thinking skills to analyse problems and design solutions across a range of contexts
- acquire and apply creative and technical skills, knowledge and understanding of IT in a range of contexts
- develop computer programs to solve problems
- evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs / solutions and the impact of computer technology in society
- develop awareness of current and emerging trends in computing technologies.

Learning Method

Students will have the opportunity to develop new skills and techniques in IT and will also develop the background knowledge required to function in the 21st Century.

Student Performance

In 2025, 75% of students successfully gained a grade between 4 and 9 at GCSE.

Learning Method

Students will have the opportunity to develop new skills and techniques in IT and will also develop the background knowledge required to function in the 21st Century. The new 2020 Specification sees a couple of refinements from the current 2016 specification most notably the removal of the NEA.

- **Component 01: Computer systems 50%**

Introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.

- **Component 02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming 50%**
  Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 01. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.

- **Practical programming**
  Students are to be given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s) during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular component 02 (section B).

Student Progression

Computer Science is an exciting GCSE subject and the depth of coverage means that it will provide a solid foundation for either the study of A level Computer Science, BTEC IT or employment. At Advanced level, the subject is chosen by students considering a range of professional careers and is highly regarded by Russell Group universities. Computing opens up an incredible world of opportunities for work both in the technology industries and in supporting roles within other industries.

CAMBRIDGE NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN CREATIVE IMEDIA

Examining Board: OCR

Assessment:

Examination – Creative iMedia in the media industry	40%
Centre Assessed Task – Visual identity and digital graphics	25%
Centre Assessed Task – Interactive Digital Media	35%

Staff Contact: Mr L Bemowski

Course Description

Digital Media is a key part of many areas of our everyday lives and vital to the UK economy. Production of digital media products is a requirement of almost every business so there is huge demand for a skilled and digitally literate workforce. This qualification will help you develop specific and transferable skills such as research, planning, and review, working with others and communicating creative concepts. The qualification's hands-on approach has strong relevance to the way young people use the technology required in creative media.

This exciting qualification gives you fantastic opportunities to work with a variety of technologies and offers you choices such as animation, video editing, multimedia, and graphics creation and manipulation, making it engaging and enjoyable to study. The qualification has been designed to nurture digital literacy and provide you with up-to-date skills, knowledge and understanding of the rapidly developing digital world.

This course will

- Improve your confidence in a wide range of multimedia applications such as Adobe Premiere, Animate, Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Illustrator
- Improve your understanding of what is required to plan and design a product for a client
- Develop pre-production skills
- Provide opportunities to visit and explore businesses and organisations in this field
- Improve your understanding of social networking and its impacts
- Enable you to keep up to date with IT and digital developments, at home and in the outside world
- Explain how IT can help improve your career options
- Provide you with IT skills that you can use to solve practical problems
- Allow you to develop technical skills which will give you a foundation for achieving beyond school.

The mandatory units of creative iMedia in the media industry and visual identity and digital underpin the qualification and reflect key industry skills.

The wide range of optional units cover different media disciplines allowing you to experience a course that will motivate and appeal to a range of learning styles and allow you to demonstrate your ability and passion. Each optional unit is assessed through a practical task-based assessment with OCR-set tasks to support you in producing assessment evidence.

The centre assessed task aims to broaden and enhance your IT skills and capability. You will work with a range of digital tools and techniques to produce effective IT solutions in a range of contexts.

Learning Method

The lessons will be practical in nature building on the computing skills developed at Key Stage 3. You will have the opportunity to develop new skills and techniques in IT and will also develop the background knowledge required to function in the 21st Century.

Student Performance

In 2025 – 71% of students successfully achieved a grade between 4 and 9.

Student Progression

Creative iMedia is an exciting subject and the depth of coverage mean that it will provide a solid foundation for other IT and computing courses.

Creative iMedia opens up an incredible world of opportunities for work both in the technology industries and in supporting roles within other industries. IT people not only need technical skills and knowledge but also other characteristics such as an ability to communicate clearly to all levels within an organisation.

IT qualifications open doors to diverse career paths such as games design, web and animation development, network management, network security, digital forensics, social media, cyber security and mobile application development.

IT is an exciting subject and the depth of coverage means that it will provide a solid foundation for either further study or employment.

CAMBRIDGE NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN SPORT STUDIES

Examination Board: OCR

Assessment: Unit 1 - Written examination – Contemporary issues in sport 40%
Unit 2 – Performance and leadership in Sports activities 40%
Unit 3 – Sport and the Media 20%

Staff Contact: Mr J Wrench

Course Description

The Cambridge National in Sport Studies is equivalent to a GCSE. The course is aimed at those who have a strong interest in sport and enjoy participating in, and finding out about, physical activity. It is essential to be motivated and organised as assessment is continuous throughout the course. An enjoyment in being physically active is essential. Assessment is done by a series of assignments set during each of the units of work. Some of these will be written and some will be assessed by carrying out practical tasks. Although there is practical work involved please be aware that a number of lessons will be classroom based. The course units are likely to include:

- Contemporary Issues in Sport
- Performance and leadership in Sports activities
- Sport and the Media

Learning Method

Practical and classroom methods of learning are used. A number of assignments are produced by researching topics whilst others will be carried out practically either performing or leading others. One unit is assessed via a written exam

Student Performance

Year Group	% of students gaining Level 2 Distinction – Level 2 Pass (9-4 Grade)
2024	64%
2025	76%

Student Progression

Students wishing to continue with this subject follow A-Level Physical Education or BTEC Level 3 in the Sixth Form. This can lead to a range of possible career opportunities including; marketing, sports agent, PE teacher, professional performer/player/official, sports research, physiotherapy, sports development, technical producer developer, sports sales, sports coaching, sports administration, groundsman, sports turf management/development, performance analysis, sports lecturing - FE and HE and sports journalist.

Additional Information
A background and interest in physical education is essential. Regular, ongoing participation in the practical work is also essential to achieve success. There is also a vocational experience available to help with the students' understanding of the wider world of sport.

Practical Sports that students get assessed in, must be from the following list:

Team	**Individual**
Acrobatic Gymnastics	Amateur boxing
Association Football	Athletics
Badminton	Badminton
Basketball	Canoeing
Camogie	Cross Country Running
Cricket	Cycling (Track / Road / BMX racing)
Dance	Dance
Figure Skating	Diving
Futsal	Golf
Gaelic football	Gymnastics
Handball	Equestrian
Hockey	Figure Skating
Hurling	Kayaking
Ice Hockey	Rock climbing
Inline roller Hockey	Sailing
Lacrosse	Sculling
Netball	Skiing
Rowing	Snowboarding
Rugby League	Squash
Rugby Union	Swimming
Sailing	Table Tennis
Sculling	Tennis
Squash	Trampolining
Table Tennis	Windsurfing
Tennis	
Volleyball	
Water Polo	
Specialist Activities	
Blind cricket	Boccia
Goal ball	Polybat
Powerchair football	
Table cricket	
Wheelchair basketball	
Wheelchair rugby	

GCSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examination Board: OCR

Assessment: Written examination 60%

Practical Performance & Analysis & Evaluation
Non-Exam Assessment – 40%

Staff Contact: Mr M Henderson

Course Description
The course examines how the body works, looking at the movement of the muscles, bones and joints and how they relate to physical activity. We will look at the changes that occur during exercise and how the body regulates this. We will examine the relationship between health and fitness. The numerous factors that affect performance will be studied and the various components that make up skills. We will determine the factors important in training and how they may be regulated. We will focus on a wide variety of social aspects of sport such as barriers to participation and sport psychology.
Students get assessed in their practical skills in 3 sports (1 team, 1 individual and a 3rd sport). This is approx. 30% of the final mark and approx. 10% is for analysis and evaluation of performance, which is a controlled assessment.

Learning Method
Practical and classroom-based methods of learning are used. Practical performance will be continuously assessed during the two years of the course with a selected list of sports and activities studied. The theory aspects are taught both in the classroom and practically to help develop understanding. Our students complete regular interleaving tests to ensure they are well prepared to answer exam style questions in both Paper 1 and Paper 2. There is also an opportunity for our students to analyse and evaluate their own performance in their chosen sport for their NEA coursework.

Student Performance
Most students have achieved their guidance grades or better in Physical Education. By joining clubs at school or out of school they are able to boost their practical performance. The percentage of students gaining 9-4 grades can be seen in the table below:

Year Group	% of students
2024	69% students achieved Grade 4-9
2025	100% student pass rate

Student Progression
Students wishing to continue with this subject follow A level Physical Education or BTEC Level 3 in the Sixth Form. This can lead to a range of possible career opportunities including; marketing, sports agent, PE teacher, professional performer/player/official, sports research, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, sports development, technical producer developer, sports sales, sports coaching, sports administration, groundsman, sports turf management/development, performance analysis, sports lecturing - FE and HE and sports journalist.

Practical Sports that students get assessed in, must be from the following list and include 1 team, 1 individual and a third:

Team	**Individual**
Acrobatic Gymnastics	Amateur boxing
Association Football	Athletics
Badminton	Badminton
Basketball	Canoeing
Camogie	Cross Country Running
Cricket	Cycling (Track / Road / BMX racing)
Dance	Dance
Figure Skating	Diving
Futsal	Golf
Gaelic football	Gymnastics
Handball	Equestrian
Hockey	Figure Skating
Hurling	Kayaking
Ice Hockey	Rock climbing
Inline roller Hockey	Sailing
Lacrosse	Sculling
Netball	Skiing
Rowing	Snowboarding
Rugby League	Squash
Rugby Union	Swimming
Sailing	Table Tennis
Sculling	Tennis
Squash	Trampolining
Table Tennis	Windsurfing
Tennis	
Volleyball	
Water Polo	
Specialist Activities	
Blind cricket	Boccia
Goal ball	Polybat
Powerchair football	
Table cricket	
Wheelchair basketball	
Wheelchair rugby	

ART AND DESIGN

Examination Board:	AQA	
Assessment:	Coursework Portfolio: Externally Set Task:	60% of total mark 40% of total mark
Staff contact:	Mrs K Spinola	

Course Description

You will have the opportunity to investigate a range of artists, techniques and media, such as painting, drawing, printing, 3D construction and photography. The department's programme of study is taught by one of our experienced specialist staff who will lead you through the course.

You will complete two coursework projects during Year 10 and 11. Natural World, Portraits and Animals are some examples of the themes that are studied. In the second term of Year 11, you will complete a third project set by AQA, which is called the Externally Set Task. The coursework portfolio and Externally Set Task are assessed by our Art Department. All of the portfolio work that you produce will contribute towards your final GCSE grade.

Learning Method

The GCSE Art course is entirely practical. You will learn a variety of techniques and processes as well as how to develop your own ideas in a creative and meaningful way. Home learning tasks will require you to undertake some independent research and present work smartly in your sketchbooks. The department provides lunchtime and after school clubs for students to work in the studios.

Student Performance

Art is a popular choice at GCSE with students achieving excellent results. In 2025, 87% of all candidates received a Grade 4 or higher and 50% received a Grade 6 or higher.

Student Progression

By studying GCSE Art & Design, you will develop your creativity and ability to handle a range of media. In the UK, creative industries are one of the largest sectors of the economy. Our course offers students the opportunity to develop skills that will enable them to be part of this success in the future. Many students continue with their studies by taking our A level Fine Art or Photography course.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment: Coursework Portfolio: 60% of total mark
Externally Set Task: 40% of total mark

Staff contact: Mrs K Spinola

Course Description

The aim of this course is to develop personal creativity and practical skills in using lens based and light-based media, as well as to increase appreciation and understanding of the visual arts.

You will have the opportunity to learn:

- How to take photographs successfully using the school's cameras and lighting equipment. A range of photographic techniques and processes, for example lighting patterns, viewpoint, aperture, depth of field, shutter speed and compositional rules.
- How to refine your photographs using Photoshop and other software.
- How to work collaboratively to plan photoshoots and create contact sheets to help you to develop your ideas.
- How sources relate to historical, contemporary, social, cultural and issues-based contexts and external considerations such as those associated with the cultural industries and client-oriented requirements.
- How ideas, themes, subjects and feelings can inspire creative responses informed by different styles, genres and aesthetic considerations and/or an individual's distinctive view of the world.

You will complete 3-4 coursework projects during Year 10 and 11. Distorted Portraits and Street Photography are some examples of the themes which are studied. In the second term of Year 11, you will complete an additional project set by AQA, which is called the Externally Set Task. All of the portfolio work that you produce will contribute towards your final GCSE grade.

Learning Method

The course is entirely practical. The department will provide all photography equipment required for the course and students will often work collaboratively to plan and complete their photoshoots. Portfolios are developed online and so students will often work in our computer suites to develop their coursework. Home learning tasks will require you to undertake some independent research and present work smartly in your portfolio. The department provides lunchtime and after school clubs for students to work in the studios.

Student Performance

The department have enjoyed examination success over several years. It is a popular choice at GCSE with students achieving excellent results. In 2025, 95% of all candidates received a Grade 4 or higher and 35% received a Grade 6 or higher.

Student Progression

By studying GCSE Photography, you will develop your creative thinking, teamwork and problem-solving skills – all skills that are prized by employers and which young people need. Many students continue with their studies by taking our A level Photography course or attend other specialist courses available at colleges locally and nationally.

Career Paths

Photojournalism, Forensic photography, Wildlife photography, Portrait and Wedding photography, Fine Art, Architectural, Photo researcher, Curator, Sports Filmmaking, Animation, Special effects, Teacher, Editorial photographer, Digital artist, Media

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

Examination Board:	OCR	
Assessment: Unit 1 -	One written paper – 1 ½ hours	50% of total mark
Unit 2 -	NEA (coursework) – 2 pieces	50% of total mark
	Task 1 is worth 15% - Food investigation	
	Task 2 is worth 35% - Food preparation task	
Staff contact:	Mrs K Mottram	

Course Description

This course is ideal if you enjoy practical food preparation and want to further develop your skills and if you wish to develop a good understanding of nutrition. It is useful as a preparation for life or for jobs and careers which demand good organisational skills, initiative and the ability to relate practical experience to theoretical knowledge.

The course consists of modules on:

1. Nutrition
2. Food – food provenance and food choice
3. Cooking and food preparation
4. Skill requirements – preparation and cooking techniques

Coursework involves two non-exam assessment tasks, which are completed in lesson time and for homework. Students select assignments from lists provided by the examination board. The work involves planning, research, practical tasks and evaluation.
You will learn to meet food needs that take into account nutritional guidelines, enjoyment, constraints of time, energy and available resources, personal lifestyle and eating patterns in modern society.

Practical food assignments require you to provide ingredients once a week. Do not choose this subject if you are unable to meet this requirement of the course or if you have regularly not brought ingredients during Year 9. You will carry out a variety of practical processes and provide dishes to meet a wide range of meal planning situations.

Learning Method

A variety of teaching and learning methods are used. Staff set clear targets and have high expectations.

Student Performance
In 2025, 70% achieved a Grade 4 or higher.

Student Progression

The course provides useful experience for careers in Food Science, Product Development, Nutrition and Dietetics, Catering and Sport Science. It is an excellent foundation for Advanced level courses in Food and Health.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (PRODUCT DESIGN)

Examination Board: Pearson (Edexcel)

Assessment:

1. Non-Exam Assessment - 50% (35 hours)
2. Written Exam - 50% (1 hr 45min)

Staff contact: Head of Department - Mrs A Teasdale
Teacher of Product Design – Miss V Cronshaw

Course Description

1. Students will be required to build their knowledge, understanding and skills required to undertake the Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) which is an iterative design process of exploring, creating and evaluating:
   This will consist of an investigation into a contextual challenge; defining the needs and wants of the user; relevant research to formulate a design specification; design ideas with flair and creativity developed to formulate a final design solution (including modelling and CAD); manufacturing specification; creating a final prototype that is fit for purpose and a final evaluation.
2. The paper consists of two sections.
   a. Section A is assessed on the core content and is worth 40% of the examination.
   b. Section B is assessed on the chosen material category which will be 'Timbers' and is worth 60% of the examination.

Learning Method

Students will learn through a wide range of short design and practical tasks, Skills and techniques will be built during Year 10, as well as knowledge through theory taught in class and learnt through research and investigation at home.

Year 11 will consist of the creation of a design folder to show a 'real life' problem solved. This portfolio will also showcase an innovative product being manufactured, tested by the target market and then evaluated.

Students are required to use a range of ICT software as well as other drafting methods to present work/designs. Using Computer Aided Design software such as 2D Design and SketchUp will help raise the final grade. CAD/CAM should also be used in the form of our Laser Cutter. Students are expected to build research and evaluative skills, graphical skills and creativity as well as practical skills in the workshop.

Student Performance

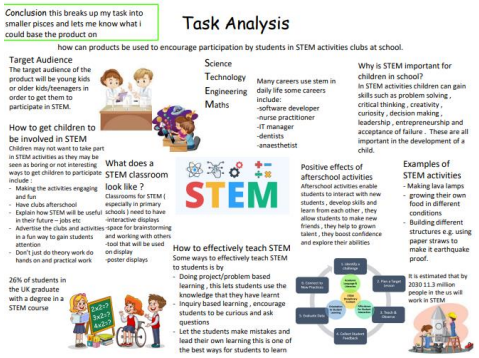
Product Design prides itself on impressive results with students making good progress; 50% of students in the 2025 examinations achieved between grade 4 – 9.

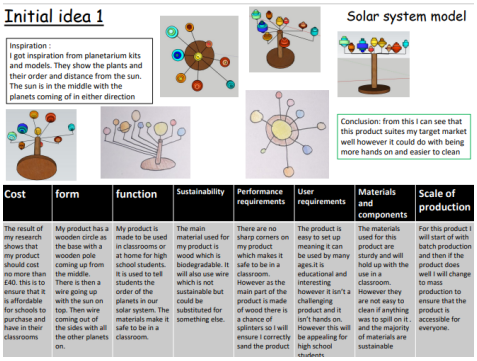
Student Progression

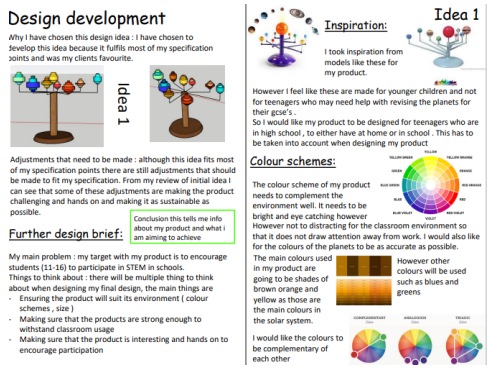
Students studying Product Design, or design-based subjects at GCSE can go on to study Product Design at A level. A range of university courses are also available leading to careers in areas such as; Architecture, Industrial Design, Product Design, Interior Design and Engineering.

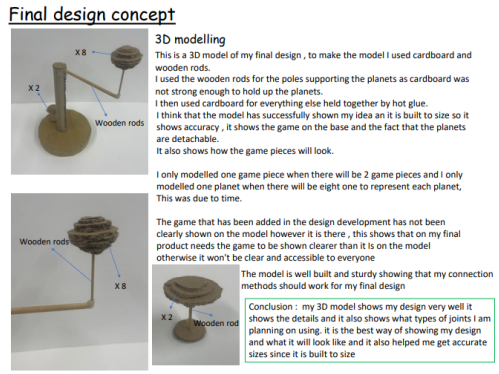
Product designers work in many business areas including the design of electronic products, sports equipment, medical products and the automotive industry. Many product designers work directly for large and small businesses. Others work for independent consultancies both in the UK and abroad. The skills learnt in Product Design also make many other careers a possibility. Over the last five years individuals trained in product design have established many of the most successful new creative businesses in the UK.

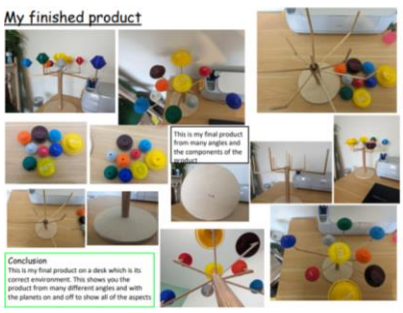
Here is an example of part of an NEA which was produced last year. Here is shown the task analysis, one design idea, development into the final design and has shown the product in Situ.











DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (TEXTILES)

Examination Board: AQA

Assessment:

1. Non-Exam Assessment - 50% (35 hours)
2. Written Exam - 50% (2 hours)

Staff contact: Mrs K Mottram

Course Description

If you enjoy fashion, designing your own clothes or accessories and interior design, then this could be the course for you. This course gives you the chance to develop your practical skills and contribute to manufacturing and textile design. This course helps you to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in Design and Technology.

1. Students will be required to build their knowledge, understanding and skills required to undertake the non-exam assessment which is a design process of exploring, creating and evaluating:
    a. This will consist of a summary of research into your contextual challenge, including the needs and wants of the intended users and the design brief. Relevant research to formulate a design specification; design ideas with flair and creativity developed to formulate a final design (including a prototype); manufacturing specification; creating a final prototype that is fit for purpose and a final evaluation.
2. The written examination has three sections:
    a. Core Technical Principles (20 marks): this assesses a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding (mainly multiple choice answers).
    b. Specialist technical principles (30 marks): short answer questions and one extended response to assess knowledge of technical principles of a certain materials area in depth.
    c. Designing and making principles (50 marks): a mixture of short answers and extended response questions including a 12 mark design question.

Learning Method

Students will learn through a wide range of short design and practical tasks, Skills and techniques will be taught during Year 10, as well as knowledge through theory taught in class and learnt through research and investigation at home.

Year 11 will consist of the creation of a design folder. This portfolio will also showcase an innovative garment or product being manufactured, tested by the target market and then evaluated.

Student Performance

Overall 75% of students gained a grade 4 or above in the 2025 examinations, with 25% of students gaining a grade 7 or above.

Student Progression

Students studying Design and Technology (Textiles) can go on to study it at A level. A range of university courses are also available leading to careers in Textiles such as; Textile Designers, (interiors or fabrics for clothing), Clothing/ Textile Technologist, Fashion Designer, Teacher, Production Designer (theatre/television/film), Technical Textiles (Fabric or Fibre Technologist).