



Durham
Cathedral
Schools
Foundation



Durham School
GCSE Curriculum

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At Durham School,
we are ambitious
for pupils, staff and
the wider school
community.

GCSE Exam Results 2024

GCSE results 2024		Grades						Cumulative percentages		
Subject	Entries	9	8	7	6	5	4	9	8/9	7-9
Art & Design (Fine Art)	15	3	3	2	5	1	1	20.0	40.0	53.3
Art & Design: 3D Design	23	0	1	1	2	1	7	0.0	4.3	8.7
Art & Design: Graphs	11	1	2	1	0	1	3	9.1	27.3	36.4
Biology	18	8	9	1	0	0	0	44.4	94.4	100.0
Chemistry	18	14	4	0	0	0	0	77.8	100.0	100.0
Chinese	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	83.3	100.0	100.0
Classical Civilisation	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	25.0	50.0	75.0
Combined Science: Trilogy	110	11	15	21	30	19	9	10.0	23.6	42.7
Computer Science	23	2	5	4	2	6	3	8.7	30.4	47.8
Drama	13	1	2	3	3	2	1	7.7	23.1	46.2
English as a Second Language	6	0	0	0	1	1	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
English Language	67	15	8	19	15	9	1	22.4	34.3	62.7
English Literature	64	11	10	16	7	12	6	17.2	32.8	57.8
French	31	4	2	4	6	5	4	12.9	19.4	32.3
Further Mathematics	21	4	4	3	5	4	0	19.0	38.1	52.4
Geography	42	2	9	4	9	11	5	4.8	26.2	35.7
German	8	2	2	1	0	1	1	25.0	50.0	62.5
Greek	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.0	100.0	100.0
History	23	14	3	1	2	1	1	60.9	73.9	78.3
Latin	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mathematics	73	13	13	12	11	11	7	17.8	35.6	52.1
Music	6	1	0	4	0	1	0	16.7	16.7	83.3
Physical Education	20	0	0	1	6	6	3	0.0	0.0	5.0
Physics	18	11	7	0	0	0	0	61.1	100.0	100.0
Religious Studies	21	2	4	3	7	2	2	9.5	28.6	42.9
Spanish	20	4	2	2	3	3	2	20.0	30.0	40.0
Totals	666	133	108	104	114	97	58	20.0	36.2	51.8

Overview

The Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation was established in 2021 following the merger of Durham School and The Chorister School – two prestigious institutions which have educated children from Durham and beyond for more than 600 years.

We offer an independent day and boarding educational journey in the North East of England for children from 3–18. Our schools are tailored to reflect the needs of each age group and underpinned by our consistent values and commitment to see each child as an individual with unique skills, talents and potential.

With our highly talented and dedicated team of inspiring teachers, we aim to make learning exciting and stimulating for all our pupils and we pride ourselves on the quality of our academic teaching. This is evinced by our proud record of academic excellence and achievement.

We believe young people also learn through what they do outside the classroom, and the Foundation offers a huge variety of extra-curricular activities. Music and drama

play an integral role in everyday school life, particularly for our internationally renowned Durham Cathedral Choristers. We also enjoy a richly deserved reputation for sporting excellence with many of our alumni going on to compete at the highest levels. DCSF is privileged to welcome pupils from all over the world. We currently have pupils from more than 20 countries, and we greatly value the richness and diversity they bring to our community.

The School is fully co-educational and operates across three sites, all located centrally in the historic city of Durham close to the University and Cathedral. For day or boarding pupils we offer the best of both worlds: an exciting academic city, as well as room to breathe outdoors.

This booklet is designed as a guide, setting out the academic path over the next two years and to help make some important choices. The Durham School GCSE programme aims to build on the foundations laid down in earlier years. The choice of subjects is wide and the curriculum structure designed to allow you to opt for either breadth or greater specialisation. The GCSE programme normally leads to either 9 or 10 GCSEs, a sound platform for more specialist study at A Level.



Introduction



The Importance of GCSE

GCSEs are the first public examinations which have a significant impact on your future. Results at GCSE may determine which subjects can be chosen at A Level and may have a bearing on the university course and career path you take. In an increasingly competitive market, universities use GCSE results as a part of their selection process. For some of the most competitive courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Science, and Law, and some of the more competitive universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, applicants will be expected to have achieved a high number of top grades.

GCSE and A Level

All the subjects available at GCSE may also be studied at A Level in the Sixth Form, and in most cases, it is necessary to have taken the GCSE course if you wish to pursue the A Level course. This is not a problem because at Durham School we aim to keep the curriculum as broad as possible. This allows flexibility in the eventual choice of Sixth Form courses, for pupils' interests may change rapidly during these two formative years.

Entry Tiers

In some subjects there are two tiers, Higher and Foundation. The Higher tier is for able pupils who are likely to achieve the higher grades. Entry at this level means you will be challenged by the examination and will not have to spend as much time on elementary questions.

The Foundation Tier is for pupils who find some aspects of the subject difficult. This tier means that you will not have to struggle with questions which might otherwise be beyond you and you will be better able to show your capabilities in the subject.

At Durham School, the majority of pupils are entered at the Higher tier. Decisions regarding entry levels are made by the Head of Department during the course of Year 11.

Grading

All reformed GCSEs will be graded 9 – 1, with grades 9 – 7 the equivalent of grades A* – A.

Most pupils will complete either 9 or 10 GCSEs comprising a mixture of compulsory Core and Option subjects.

Curriculum

All pupils study the following Core Subjects

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
[Biology, Chemistry and Physics, or Science Trilogy]

Pupils study a further four Option Subjects from the following:

- Art & Design
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Design Technology: Graphic Communications
- Design Technology: Three Dimensional Design
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- Greek (in arrangement)
- History
- Latin
- French
- German or Spanish
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

Making Choices

Think carefully about your choices. Your choice of subjects should be made after consultation with your teachers, tutors, housemaster/housemistress and your parents.

Choose subjects you enjoy. You are more likely to find a subject easier and be more successful in it if you find it interesting. Make sure you understand the material that will be covered at GCSE.

Choose subjects that you are good at. This is often, but not always, linked to enjoyment. Remember that your teacher is often the best person to ask in this case.

Choose subjects that you need for further study and career. Remember, most subjects require study at GCSE for entry to A Level. If you have a particular career in mind, you should seek advice as to which subjects are essential.

Choose wisely. You should not allow yourself to be influenced by the choices made by your friends.

Parents will receive detailed information about course options from Mrs Melville, the Head of Year 9. Option choices will then be entered into our online system by the given deadline. Please note that all option subjects are offered conditional upon viable set size, staffing and other timetable constraints.



English Language Edexcel IGCSE Spec A

Introduction

English Language is a core subject. An understanding of how writers and speakers use language to create an effect, underpins all the elements of studying English Language. Edexcel English allows pupils to write, consider and redraft two pieces of coursework for a coursework portfolio. This consists of imaginative writing and analysis of poetry and prose. Imaginative writing may be in response to another piece of writing, a visual stimulus, or from the student's own writing practice.

The English Language examination focuses on an engaging and thought-provoking anthology of non-fiction extracts that are pre-taught, and an unseen piece of non-fiction that pupils encounter in the examination. Pupils write their own piece of non-fiction, for example a letter, speech, or article in the second half of the examination.

For GCSE English Language pupils should:

- read fluently, and with good understanding, a wide range
- of texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as reviews and journalism
- read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts
- summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts
- use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken Standard English effectively

Examination Board: Edexcel IGCSE

Paper 1: (60%) 2 hour and 15 minutes:
Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing

The contemporary non-fiction texts from Part 1 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology. Assessment

- Section A: Reading – a mixture of short- and long-answer questions related to a non-fiction text from Part 1 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology and one previously unseen extract. Total of 45 marks.
- Section B: Transactional Writing – one 45-mark writing task, from a choice of two involving a given audience, form or purpose

Paper 3: (40%) Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing Coursework

The poetry and prose texts from Part 2 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology. Assessment

- Assignment A: Poetry and prose texts – one 30-mark essay question based on any two poetry or prose texts from Part 2 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology
- Assignment B: Imaginative writing – one 30-mark imaginative writing task.

NEA: Spoken Language assessments through pupil presentation. Accredited with pass, merit, distinction in addition to 9-1 grading

Head of Department: Mrs F Swan

English Literature

Introduction

We follow Cambridge International Examinations' Literature in English IGCSE. This enjoyable and stimulating course builds on pupils' reading from Key Stage 3. Pupils develop an understanding of literal meaning, relevant contexts and how to explore the deeper implications of themes or attitudes that may be expressed. Responses are examined the traditional essay format either by considering the whole text or an extract. Through the course pupils engage with poetry, prose and drama texts. These texts are often set from the traditional canon; however, the international aspect of the syllabus also encourages the exploration of wider issues and an understanding of the world around us.

Course Content

We study three set texts for IGCSE Literature: a drama text; a prose text; and a collection of poetry. We also explore unseen poems and prose in preparation for the unseen examination.

Assessments

Examination Board: CIE (IGCSE)

Paper 12: Poetry and Prose (1 hour 30 minutes). Closed book

Paper 3: Drama (45 minutes). Open book

Paper 4: Unseen (1 hour 15 minutes)

Preparation for A Level and beyond

GCSE Literature is excellent preparation for many A Level subjects. Through the study of interesting texts pupils formulate ideas about many areas of life. The specific analysis of writers' effects engages analytical skills and essay writing develops pupils' abilities to structure and develop their arguments. As academic A Levels, both the Literature and Language A Level course and the Literature A Level that we offer, are highly sought after for those wishing to pursue a Law degree. They are also extremely well regarded in terms of application for further study in humanities, science and related degree courses.

Head of Department: Mrs F Swan



Mathematics

Introduction

Mathematics aims to develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, as well as to acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems. It also aims to get pupils to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions as well as to comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Pupils will either sit Higher (levels 4 – 9) or Foundation (levels 1 – 5).

Course Content

In the Mathematics course pupils complete work on number skills, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, probability, and reasoning.

Assessment

Examination Board: Edexcel IGCSE

All written examination (50% weighting each)

Paper 1 Calculator (2 hours)

Paper 2 Calculator (2 hours)

Preparation for A Level and beyond

To be able to study A Level Mathematics you need to get Grade 7+ in Mathematics. It underpins the sciences and is widely respected by employers.

Head of Department: Mr T N Middleton



Science

Introduction

A GCSE in Science aims to develop knowledge, investigative skills, and application of scientific methods and concepts as well as to acquire techniques to solve complex problems. It also aims to get pupils to reason, make deductions and analyse data. Pupils will be able to scrutinise information without bias and analyse in a logical and scientific way. Pupils will also get ample opportunity for practical investigation to support the theoretical part of the course.

Most pupils will enter the AQA Combined Science option (Trilogy), awarding them two GCSE grades.

Pupils will either sit Foundation (levels 1 – 5) or Higher (levels 4 – 9).

Pupils making excellent progress will get the opportunity to study GCSEs in the three Separate Sciences from Year 11 (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

Course Content

Pupils will study all three Sciences with specialist teachers. Biology studies topics such as Cells, Infection, Inheritance and Ecology. Chemistry studies topics such as The Atom, Bonding and Quantitative Chemistry, while Physics includes Forces, Energy and Electricity.

A large aspect of the courses' practical work and the final examinations will see pupils having questions to answer on the practical investigations studied in lessons.

Assessments

Assessment Examination Board: AQA

GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy (2 GCSEs)

All three sciences have two written papers each (16.7% weighting each paper) All papers have 70 marks and are 1 hour 15 minutes.

Questions will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer and open response 17-point grading scale, from 9-9, 9-8 through to 2-1, 1-1.

GCSE Separate Science (3 GCSEs)

All three sciences have two written papers each (50% weighting each) All papers have 100 marks and are 1 hour 45 minutes. Questions will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer and open response.

Preparation for A Level and beyond

To be able to study A Level Biology, Chemistry or Physics you will need to get a 9 – 7 in the specific Science GCSE. You will also require a good level of mathematical skills, so a grade 9 -7 or higher in GCSE Mathematics is desirable.

Head of Department: Mrs T L Moore

Art & Design (Fine Art)

Introduction

This is a broad-based course exploring practical and critical/contextual work in one or more areas including drawing and painting, mixed media, sculpture, installation, print-making, and photography. Pupils' work will show the development of personal ideas expressed in a visual form, from initial research to the completion of a final piece or pieces.

Course Content

Portfolio of work

In order to meet the assessment criteria, pupils are required to submit a portfolio of work that they have produced including a sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme task or brief, evidencing a journey from initial starting point to realisation of intentions, and a selection of further work resulting from activities such as trials, experiments, workshops and gallery visits.

Work produced must cover all assessment objectives and show an understanding of their inter-relationships.

Externally Set Assignment

Pupils will be given their examination papers in January of their second year. They then have a number of weeks to prepare for the controlled test which normally takes place in March. During this period pupils will be given guidance by the staff. The preparatory work will then be the basis of the 10-hour unaided examination. Work produced during the examination combined with preparatory studies will be worth 40%.

Assessments

Examination Board: AQA Specification 8202.

Paper 1 (60%) Portfolio of work

Paper 2 (40%) Externally set task

All work uses four assessment objectives, each worth 25% of the total mark:

1. Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
2. Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
3. Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
4. Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language

Preparation for A Level and beyond

This course will provide pupils with a wide range of creative, exciting and stimulating opportunities to explore their interest in art and design. Many pupils choose to take the subject at A Level. Degree courses chosen by past pupils include Fine Art, Three Dimensional Design, Graphic Design, Illustration, Multi-media Design, and more.

Head of Department: Mrs L E Thompson

Classical Civilisation

Introduction

Classical Civilisation gives pupils the opportunity to engage with literature dating from the dawn of Western civilisation and which has captured the imagination of authors and Hollywood producers alike.

The subject combines aspects of English Literature and History, partly set in the mythical world of gods, monsters and heroes and partly set in the ancient civilisation which has heavily influenced the cultural and political life of the Western world. Parallels between ancient and modern are a focus of the course, as are the divine beings, the people and the places which bring the ancient world to life thousands of years after its peak. Two very different cultures are examined while an epic poem by Homer, one of the founding pieces of Western culture's literature, is the focus of the literature component.

Course Content

The emphasis is on learning about a variety of aspects of ancient life and society through the literature, in English translations, of the time. Source analysis and essay writing skills are fundamental to this course, as is creativity and an interest in trying to get into the minds of a people so removed in time from ourselves. Topics to be covered are: myth and religion in both the Greek and Roman worlds – their gods, the mythological stories and the festivals and practices associated with them; five books from Homer's *Odyssey*, a poem about Odysseus' encounters with all sorts of gods and monsters as he tries to return home. Themes and characterisation are to be studied but so are aspects of Mycenaean culture through surviving architecture and artefacts, providing a context for the literature.

Assessment

Assessment Examination Board: OCR

Paper 1 (50%)
Myth and Religion
(1hr30) – 90 marks

Paper 2 (50%)
The Homeric World – Homer's *Odyssey*
and Mycenaean archaeology
(1 hr30) – 90 marks

Preparation for A Level and beyond

Study of Classics at GCSE can be good preparation for taking it at A Level but this is not essential. As an academic A Level it is favoured in university applications and is a very employable option due to the strong analytic skills, critical interpretation, source analysis and information assimilation that pupils develop throughout the course. A Classical Civilisation A Level gives pupils access to all sorts of degrees and professions including Journalism, Public Relations and Marketing.

Head of Department: Mr C J Hope

Computer Science

Introduction

Computers pervade every aspect of modern life and modern society simply could not function without computers. Computing Science at GCSE gives pupils a general grounding in computing, including an understanding of computer systems, the principles of programming, and the solving of problems.

Course Content

OCR Computer Science encourages pupils to develop life-long skills, including:

- Systems Architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns
- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Assessments

Examination Board: OCR Computer Science (9-1) J276

Paper 1: [50% of GCSE] Computer Systems written paper
1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 2: [50% of GCSE] Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming (O2) written paper
1 hour 30 minutes

Programming Project: 20 timetabled hours.
Consolidates the learning across the specification through practical activity

Preparation for A Level and beyond

The GCSE Computer Science course provides pupils with the opportunity to develop their problem-solving skills using computers and thus supports study in many subjects across the curriculum. This qualification also provides a useful starting point to future study in both Computing and Engineering.

Head of Department: Mrs L Fox

Design Technology: Graphic Communications

The GCSE in Graphic Communication introduces pupils to a visual way of communicating information and ideas using a range of graphic media, processes and techniques. Pupils will conduct primary and secondary investigations during their design development, and explore traditional and/or new technologies. They will also consider the use of signs and symbols, and the balance between aesthetic and commercial considerations. Pupils will understand that Graphic Design practitioners often work within a small group or as freelance designers.

The Graphic Communication course is offered as an endorsement of Art and Design.

Course Content

Pupils should develop work in at least one of the following areas of study:

- Advertising
- Communication graphics including corporate identity
- Design for print
- Illustration
- Interactive design
- Multi-media design
- Packaging design
- Signage
- Typography

Pupils must submit the following work for assessment:

Portfolio of Work

To fulfil the assessment criteria, pupils are required to submit a portfolio of work that they have produced during the two year course. This must include a sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief.

Externally Set Assignment

Pupils will receive their examination papers in January of their second year. They then have a number of weeks to prepare for the controlled test which will take place in May of the second year.

During this period, pupils will be given guidance by staff. The preparatory work will then be the basis of the 10-hour unaided examination.

Assessments

Assessment Examination Board: EDEXCEL (IGCO)

Paper 1 Personal Portfolio (60%)

Paper 2 Externally Set Assignment (40%)

Preparation for A Level and beyond

Pupils will develop both practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding that will prepare them for the 'Design Realisation' course we offer at A Level. Those undertaking this course can go on to study graphic and multimedia design, interactive design and architecture and more.

Head of Department: Mrs L E Thompson

Design Technology: Three-Dimensional Design

The GCSE in Three-dimensional Design is concerned with the designing, prototyping, modelling and/or making of functional and aesthetic consumer products interiors and architectures. Pupils will engage with appropriate processes, materials and construction techniques, using maquettes, models and working drawings to help take their initial ideas through to realisation. Pupils will understand that three-dimensional design practitioners often work within a small team environment or as freelance designers.

The Three-Dimensional Design course is offered as an endorsement of Art and Design.

Course Content

Pupils should develop work in at least one of the following areas of study:

- Architectural design
- Interior design
- Product design
- Ceramic design

Pupils must submit the following work for assessment

Portfolio of Work

To fulfil the assessment criteria, pupils are required to submit a portfolio of work that they have produced during the two year course. This must include a sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief.

Externally Set Assignment

Pupils will receive their examination papers in January of their second year. They will then have a number of weeks to prepare for the controlled test which will take place in May of the second year.

During this period, pupils will be given guidance by staff. The preparatory work will be the basis of the 10-hour unaided examination.

Assessments

Assessment: Examination Board: EDEXCEL (1TDO)

Paper 1 Personal Portfolio (60%)

Paper 2 Externally Set Assignment (40%)

Preparation for A Level and beyond

Pupils will develop both practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding that will prepare them for the Pre. U Sixth Form course offered in Design Technology. Those undertaking this course can go on to study product design, interior design, interactive design and architecture.

Head of Department: Mrs L E Thompson

Drama

Introduction

Drama is one of the oldest and most profound of human activities. Its rich potential for developing confidence, expression and team work is obvious. Perhaps less obvious, and of even greater value, is its capacity to represent and explore real-life issues and events.

The study of Drama at GCSE gives pupils the platform to become confident performers and designers as they learn the skills necessary to craft performances for an audience and study the makings of theatre.

Any pupils who have an interest in watching live theatre, performing, and the workings of theatre, (such as lighting or sound design) have the potential to succeed at GCSE.

Candidates are given the option to be assessed as either a performer or designer (lighting, sound, set, costume, puppetry etc) and will also undertake preparation for the written examination through live theatre visits and the study of at least one set text.

Course Content

GCSE Drama has three main components: Understanding Drama; Devising Drama; Texts in Practice.

Assessments

Examination Board: AQA

Unit 1 Understanding Drama (40%) – Written examination

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of one set play
- Analysis and evaluation of live theatre seen

Unit 2 Devising Drama – Practical (40%)

- The process of creating original drama for performance to an audience (assessed via a portfolio)
- A performance of devised drama (either as a performer or designer)
- Analysis and evaluation of own work

Unit 3 Texts in Practice – Practical (20%) – assessed by the exam board. Performance of two extracts from a play (either as a performer or designer)

Head of Department: Mrs A V Brownlee



Geography

Introduction

The study of Geography allows us to investigate issues affecting people, places and environments around the world. With growing interest in issues such as earth hazards, global climate changes and resource use, there has never been a more important time to study Geography. Whatever your interest in the world, from fascinating landscapes to how people use them, Geography will provide you with the understanding and skills that will reward you personally and advance you academically.

Course Content

In Year 10, we study 'Physical Landscapes' looking at rivers and coasts in the UK and how they are managed, 'Human Landscapes' which explores population and settlements in the UK, and 'Resource Management' which investigates the how resources are managed towards sustainable futures.

In Year 11, we study 'Ecosystems' investigating human management of natural environments. Our final topic is 'Weather Hazards' including Climate Change, and 'Global Development' in our globalised world. The remainder of the year is spent developing Geographical skills such as mapwork, statistical analysis and geographical decision-making. At appropriate times in the course, fieldwork will take place for example visiting Hamsterley Forest, High Force and Newcastle, to collect data for the 'Geographical Investigations' unit.

Assessments

Examination Board: Edexcel A

Paper 1: The Physical Environment 37.5% of total assessment marks

Paper 2: The Human Environment 37.5% of total assessment marks

Paper 3: Geographical Investigations and Fieldwork 25% of total assessment marks

Preparation for A Level and beyond

Geography is an excellent A Level to study as it is considered to be one of the most desirable qualifications for top flight university application. It is seen by both universities and employers as a solid indicator of academic prowess. Geography combines well with other subjects across the sixth form curriculum, complementing subjects in both arts and science. With growing focus on the global nature of society, Geography is seen as being both practical and relevant to understanding our contemporary world.

Head of Department: Dr C H Scott-Warburton

History

Introduction

History is a subject that will appeal to anyone with curiosity, an open mind and good language skills. The appeal of History as a subject is far-reaching because it is not just about the past. History is about why we are who we are. The study of GCSE History fosters an objective approach to enquiry and research while challenging each pupil to be deductive, perceptive and imaginative in the use of factual knowledge. Through in-depth study of the following 20th century topics, the GCSE historian is well prepared to understand and face the problems of our present and future world.

Course Content

The IGCSE History course focuses on the modern era. In Year 10 we study the USSR from the death of Lenin (1924) to the death of Stalin (1953), during which time the USSR underwent a remarkable transformation – but at vast human cost. This is followed by an examination of the Cold War, which helps pupils to understand the clash of ideologies and superpowers that dominated the second half of the Twentieth Century. In the second year of the course we study the origins and course of the First World War, analysing sources and evaluating interpretations of the main events in great power relations from the turn of the century until 1918. The final topic is a 'breadth study' of the Arab-Jewish/Israeli conflict in Palestine from the early 20th Century to the present day. This is an opportunity to discuss the competing historical and religious claims to the most fiercely contested region on earth, as well as evaluating the role played by Britain during the Mandate and, in the Cold War era, the USA and USSR.

Assessments

Examination Board: Edexcel International GCSE History (4HI1)
Assessment is by two written examination papers. These papers are weighted equally (50%) and are 1hr 30 minutes long.

Paper 1: Depth studies

Pupils will study the following depth studies:

- 5 Dictatorship and conflict in the USSR, 1924–53
- 6 A world divided: superpower relations, 1943–72

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth studies

Pupils will study the following historical investigation:

- A1 Origins and course of the First World War, 1905–18

Pupils will study the following breadth study:

- B7 Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1917–2012

Preparation for A Level and beyond

History is regarded as a 'gold standard' subject. The leading universities consistently place History among the top five subjects that they regard as the best indicators of academic prowess. History demands analytical judgments about documents, and historians test theories based on the weight of evidence. History promotes the ability to write a sustained passage of analysis or explanation. People use such skills every day in business and the more rewarding careers. For this reason, a pupil choosing History needs to have a strong command of literacy and enjoy using these skills. While a History GCSE is well respected in every field of endeavour, it is particularly useful for those considering careers in law, journalism, politics, and education.

Head of Department: Mr S P Wright

Latin

Introduction

Latin develops pupils' linguistic capabilities whilst also requiring its pupils to think logically. One of the challenges relished by most choosing it is how to tackle a language which effectively presents itself in the form of a linguistic puzzle: the key to unlocking a sentence's meaning lies in the identification of patterns and the unravelling of its sense.

Latin's relevance to the modern day in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structure, as well as Western thought and culture, means it remains vibrant still to this day as well as thought-provoking.

Course Content

The emphasis is on translation and comprehension skills in the longer language paper, with a prescribed word list provided. The passages for this course concentrates on mythological and historical stories from Greece and Rome, thereby being informative and instructive yet intriguing and inspiring in equal measure. A small part of the paper also tests the ability to construe three short English sentences into Latin.

Paper two is based on passages of both poetry and prose, centred around a theme (2024–2026 will be Romans in the Countryside), in conjunction with a selection of visual sources, such as mosaics and sculptures. Questions focus on the understanding of the literature as well as an appreciation of its style. The sections are long enough to give pupils a taste of the literature but short enough not to be daunting. The last paper is based on reading a continuous passage of Latin (either prose or poetry), knowledge of the text as well as analysis of style will be tested. Alternatively, a topic of Roman Civilisation can be studied for this paper.

Head of Department: Mr C J Hope

Assessments

Examination Board: EDUQAS

Paper 1: (50%) Latin Translation/Comprehension – Myth or History – plus translation from English into Latin (1hr30) – 100 marks

Paper 2: (30%) Latin Prose and Verse Literature with sources (1hr15) – 60 marks

Paper 3: (20%) Latin Literature (Prose or Verse) or Roman Civilisation (1hr) – 40 marks

Preparation for A Level and beyond

The GCSE course dovetails very neatly with the AS/A2 material, covering much of the language work and introducing genuine Latin literature in manageable chunks.

The study of Latin is highly thought of by educational establishments and employers alike since it develops skills such as attention to detail, problem solving and logical thinking: all are key attributes necessary for success in the modern world. It is also links in well with a variety of other degree subjects including Law, Accountancy and Modern Languages.

Classical Greek

The department is now able to offer Greek off-timetable as an option for interested pupils in the form of a club for Year 9; study for the GCSE can be completed, also off-timetable, in Years 10 and 11. It offers all the challenge and fun of Latin but with the added bonus of a different alphabet!

Modern Foreign Languages: French, German, Spanish

Introduction

French, German and Spanish are GCSE courses which offer challenge and enjoyment alongside the practical ability to speak another language. The courses acknowledge the need for pupils to be able to communicate effectively and clearly in the language as well as understand a wide range of spoken and written material.

Course Content

The GCSE Modern Languages courses follow the themes of People and Lifestyle, Popular Culture and Communication and the World Around Us. Within these themes, pupils learn to understand written and spoken information as well as to communicate their own ideas and experiences in speech and writing.



Assessment

Examination Board: AQA Specifications French 8652 / German 8662 / Spanish 8692

Paper 1 [25%] Listening Examination

Paper 2 [25%] Speaking Examination

Paper 3 [25%] Reading Examination

Paper 4 [25%] Written Examination

Preparation for A Level and beyond

The GCSE in French, German, or Spanish is a well-respected qualification regarded highly by universities and employers alike, and forms part of the EBacc certificate. Study of the subject at GCSE is essential preparation for the A Level courses, and seeks to introduce the key grammatical concepts and language.

Head of Department: Mrs K L Wilkinson

Music

Introduction

Any pupil who can play an instrument (or sing), is prepared to be enthusiastic, and who has a willingness to learn about a very wide variety of musical styles is capable of success.

Whilst it is not a requirement to take private instrumental lessons, those pupils who do so will be at a distinct advantage and it will not be possible to achieve the highest grades if candidates do not spend some time outside the classroom on instrumental development through tuition.

Pupils should be of at least Grade 3 level at the start of the course and having (or being prepared to take) Grade 5 theory is desirable. The ability to read staff notation is essential to achieve the higher grades.

Course Content

GCSE music comprises of three components: performing; composing; and appraising. Performing and composing are coursework, to be completed by the end of March in Year 11.



Assessments

Examination Board: Edexcel Specification (1MU0)

Paper 1: [30%] Performing
One solo performance
One ensemble performance
At least four minutes' combined duration

Paper 2: [30%] Composing
Two compositions, of at least three minutes' combined duration. One to a brief set by Edexcel, the other a free composition.

Paper 3: [40%] Appraising
A written paper lasting 1 hour 45 minutes relating to:
Study of eight set works in a number of different genres.
Questions on an unfamiliar piece of music.

Preparation for A Level and beyond

The course is excellent preparation for further musical study and provides a firm foundation for A Level Music. It enables learners to engage actively in the study of music and develop their musical skills and interests, including the ability to make music individually and in groups.

Head of Department: Mr S R Bowler

Physical Education

Introduction

The course is 60% theoretical and 40% practical. It is ideal for keen and talented sporting pupils who want to improve their sporting ability as well as develop a greater in-depth knowledge of the subject area.

The course is suited to pupils who are part of school teams or pursue sport to a high level, and those considering Academic PE should be aware of this and seek further guidance if unsure.

Specification: OCR J587 Syllabus breakdown.

Unit 1: 30% of the total GCSE marks 1 hour written paper
Applied anatomy & physiology, Physical Training

Unit 2: 30% of the total GCSE marks 1 hour written paper
Socio-cultural influences Sports psychology
Health, fitness & well-being

Unit 3: 40% of the total GCSE marks Practical assessment of 3 sports
Evaluating and analysing performance

For the practical assessment, candidates will be required to pick three sports from two approved lists. Sports are chosen on negotiation with the Head of Department and will not necessarily be the pupil's 'most liked' sports.

The subject will be taught as a mixed ability subject. GCSE PE is not an essential requirement for A Level Physical Education. However, those who have studied GCSE prior to the A-level course will be at a slight advantage.

Head of Department: Mrs K L Rochester



Religious Studies

Introduction

Scarcely a day goes by without us hearing about something that is happening in the world that is influenced by religious faith. Politics, history, literature, psychology and current affairs are frequently all interlinked with religion in some way. As well as this, ethical and philosophical issues such as crime and punishment, abortion, euthanasia and animal rights are often discussed and understood through the lens of religion. In the light of this, the study of religion and its influences is as vital today as it has ever been.

Course Content

Paper 1: The study of the beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions (Christianity and one other).

Paper 2: Thematic Studies e.g., 'crime and punishment', 'peace and conflict', 'relationships and families', 'human rights and social justice'

Assessments

Examination Board: AQA Assessment
2 exams (each 1hr 45mins and worth 50% of the GCSE)

Preparation for A Level and beyond

A Level Religious Studies (including Philosophy and Ethics) is well respected and looked on favourably by the top universities. The GCSE exam is good preparation for this as well as other essay subjects. There is also a focus on building good quality arguments and developing critical thinking skills that is very good preparation for business. As well as this, the study of ethics is of obvious benefit for those who wish to pursue careers in Medicine and Law.

Head of Department: Fr S A McMurtary





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