

PATHWAYS



Welcome to Key Stage 4

Choose your path

You have come to a pivotal moment in your educational journey, when for the first time you have some choice about which subjects to study. This Key Stage 4 Pathways booklet is your guide through the diverse landscape of courses available to you, each a stepping stone towards your future aspirations. The choices you make now will open doors to new worlds of knowledge, challenge your thinking, and equip you with the tools to succeed in an ever-changing world. So, let your curiosity lead the way as you delve into the pages that follow and begin to envision the exciting possibilities that lie ahead.

How to decide

Choosing subjects is an exciting opportunity, but also an important responsibility. You should consider:

- ✓ **What do you enjoy?** Every week you will put in many hours studying each subject, so it's important to choose courses you find interesting. There are some options that you won't have studied before, like business and psychology, so be sure to read this booklet in detail to find out what they involve. Also speak to our Curriculum Leaders and teachers, who can tell you all about their subjects.
- ✓ **What are your strengths and talents?** While it's important to follow your interests, you must also consider your areas of strength. Students tend to thrive at the Academy and achieve excellent results when they study courses well-matched to their abilities. Check your latest Interim Report which shows your current performance in each Key Stage 3 subject.
- ✓ **Which type of learning and assessment suits you best?** Some subjects are best suited to students who enjoy writing, whereas others have practical elements. Some are entirely exam-based, and others have NEA (coursework) components which make up part of the final grade. Think about which combination of courses will be the best fit for you.

Choosing reserve options

Once we receive choices from all students, we will do our best to accommodate everyone's preferences. Please be mindful that there are constraints around timetabling, staffing, and class sizes, and often it isn't possible to give a student all their first choices. In some situations, we may also need to withdraw courses if there is low uptake or we have staffing changes. For this reason, please think very carefully about your reserve choice in each block.

Timeline

You have received this booklet well in advance to start thinking about your choices and raising any queries with the Curriculum Leaders. Key dates are:

- ✓ **18th March 2024** – Year 9 Pathways and Parent Consultation Evening
- ✓ **15th April 2024** – Deadline for submitting your option choices (we will share a form in due course)
- ✓ **Summer Term 2024** – We will let you know your final allocation of subjects

Our curriculum

Core subjects

At Key Stage 4, all students study:

- ✓ GCSE English Language
- ✓ GCSE English Literature
- ✓ GCSE Mathematics
- ✓ GCSE Combined Science (or Separate Sciences, if chosen as an option below)
- ✓ Wellbeing Active (Core PE)
- ✓ Wellbeing Inspire (PSHE)

Humanities

You can choose to study either History or Geography.

Option subjects

You should also choose a first choice and reserve option from each column:

Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
Art & Design: Photography Business Computer Science Drama Food Prep & Nutrition French Physical Education Psychology	Art & Design: 3D Design Art & Design: Fine Art Art & Design: Textile Design ASDAN Food Preparation & Nutrition French Psychology Religious Studies Separate Sciences Sociology Sport Studies	Business Art & Design: 3D Design Creative iMedia French Health & Social Care Music Sociology Statistics Religious Studies

It's up to you which subjects to study, with the following considerations:

- ✓ **We strongly encourage you to choose GCSE French.** By studying a modern foreign language as part of your Key Stage 4 curriculum, you will earn the 'EBacc' which is highly respected by higher education institutions and employers.
- ✓ **You can only choose one Art & Design subject.** All the Art & Design subjects are different routes to attain the same qualification, so it's only possible to choose one. The exception is Photography – you are allowed to choose this in addition to one other Art & Design subject.
- ✓ **Some subjects have entry criteria.** These are shown on the subject pages of this booklet. We strive to offer an inclusive curriculum open to everyone, and entry criteria only exist where they are absolutely necessary for students to access the demands of a particular course.

Careers

As part of our extensive careers education, all students attend a week of Work Experience in Year 10 and receive a 1:1 careers interview in Year 11.

GCSE English Language & GCSE English Literature

Curriculum Leader

Miss S Russell

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

English Language – 8700

English Literature – 8702

Why study this course?

GCSE English holds immense value for you as students, not only influencing your academic journey but also shaping your personal growth. This course places a strong emphasis on honing your communication skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – all crucial elements for success in your studies and future careers. The critical thinking required in GCSE English empowers you to analyse information thoughtfully, a skill applicable across various subjects and real-life scenarios. Additionally, studying literature exposes students to diverse cultures, perspectives, and historical contexts, fostering critical thinking and cultural awareness. In essence, GCSE English is not just a requirement; it's a pivotal aspect of your educational journey, equipping you with essential skills for a successful and fulfilling future.

Course content

English Language	English Literature
<p>A range of fiction and non-fiction texts are explored, providing students with the tools to demonstrate their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ comprehend unseen texts ✓ analyse language and structure ✓ evaluate ✓ summarise ✓ compare <p>Students will also be taught creative and transactional writing which is part of their exam.</p>	<p>Students have the opportunity to study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Macbeth ✓ A Christmas Carol ✓ An Inspector Calls ✓ poetry from the 'Power and Conflict' anthology ✓ unseen poetry

Assessment

English Language	English Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1h45) ✓ Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1h45) ✓ Spoken Language assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century (1h45) ✓ Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry (2h15)

Further study and careers

Students who enjoy English can move on to complete an A-Level in English. At our Academy, we deliver the Literature and Language combined course. There are many different careers you could follow from English. These include journalism, marketing, teaching, and law.

GCSE Mathematics

Curriculum Leader

Mr A Machin

Exam Board

Edexcel

Specification

1MA1

Why study this course?

From the moment you get woken up in the morning by your alarm clock, to the traffic lights you sat at on the way to the Academy, mathematics plays an important role in even the most basic day-to-day events. Not only will you develop your numeracy skills, but mathematics also improves your problem solving and logical thinking, which is how these inventions came about in the first place. These are attributes that every employer looks for and are among the many reasons why a good mathematics result is highly sought after.

Course content

Mathematics is one of the best subjects to develop your analytical, research, and problem-solving skills. It gives you the knowledge to tackle scientific, mechanical, and abstract problems and it will help you develop logic to tackle everyday issues like planning projects, managing budgets, and even debating effectively.

Assessment

There are three exam papers at the end of Year 11:

- ✓ Paper 1 – non-calculator – 1h30
- ✓ Paper 2 – calculator – 1h30
- ✓ Paper 3 – calculator – 1h30

Further study and careers

There are many different careers you could follow from Mathematics, such as:

- ✓ accountant
- ✓ doctor
- ✓ architect
- ✓ engineer
- ✓ data analyst
- ✓ banker

It is also essential for many day-to-day tasks including putting petrol in the car, paying a builder, and understanding your wage.

GCSE Combined Science

Curriculum Leader

Miss L Smith

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8468 (Trilogy)

Why study this course?

You experience science all day, every day, from the food you eat at breakfast to the clothes you wear, the car you travel in, and the pen you use at the Academy. Science allows us to travel great distances in short periods of time, treat and cure diseases, and develop solutions to the world's energy problems.

Course content

Throughout the course, students will study a range of key concepts in biology, chemistry, and physics.

- ✓ **Biology:** cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis and response, inheritance and ecology
- ✓ **Chemistry:** atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, the rate and extent of chemical change, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere, and using resources
- ✓ **Physics:** energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure, forces, waves, magnetism, and electromagnetism

Assessment

All exams take place in the summer of Year 11. GCSE Combined Science students take a total of six papers, two for each subject. Each paper has a duration of 1h15. Papers 1 and 2 each cover half the content for the subject, with certain topics assigned to each paper.

Further study and careers

Science opens a huge range of career opportunities to you in scientific, manufacturing, engineering, medical, and technological industries. The skills you learn in science can also be applied to any other job – you will learn to work precisely, methodically, and logically to investigate causes and their effects, solving problems and identifying relationships.

Scientists don't all work in labs – here are some job roles you could take that involve science:

- ✓ engineer (physics/chemistry)
- ✓ doctor (physics/chemistry/biology)
- ✓ forensic scientist (physics/chemistry/biology)
- ✓ video game designer (physics)
- ✓ pharmacist (chemistry/biology)
- ✓ marine biologist (biology)
- ✓ geologist (chemistry)
- ✓ sound engineer (physics)

GCSE French

Curriculum Leader

Mr H Savadogo

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8658

Why study this course?

French is an official language of several countries around the globe. It's one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, spoken across five continents. If you're thinking about learning a language, French is an excellent choice for its global application, either in the working world or if you want to travel. More than 220 million people speak French. It's the second most widely learnt language, and the only language other than English which is taught in every country. 6% of the world speaks English as their first language, 12% of the world speaks English as their second language, and 82% of the world are relying on you to speak another language! There are over 262 million people over the age of 5 years old that speak more than one foreign language. Why would you want to give them the edge over you at interview? In a multicultural society it is imperative that we understand other ways of thinking and other cultures, as well as developing our communication skills.

Course content

The course allows students to develop their ability to communicate with French native speakers in both speech and writing. You will study across a variety of contexts and will also develop a greater awareness of culture of French-speaking communities and countries. Students will need to develop and use their knowledge and understanding of French grammar progressively through their course of study.

Assessment

Students take examinations in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each component is worth 25% of the overall GCSE grade.

Further study and careers

Some universities will only accept applicants who have studied at least one foreign language at GCSE level. Whilst you may not want to study French in the future, a GCSE in French may be your route to a successful academic future. Languages give you the edge because they're academically rigorous and challenging to learn and therefore not mastered by many. In applying ourselves to a second language, we improve our aptitude for study itself, especially our listening and communication abilities. Being able to speak another language is a useful life skill that can also open exciting career opportunities. Jobs in language are diverse, and you can follow a wide range of career paths depending on your interests and ambitions.

Possible job opportunities include: interpreter, secondary school teacher, translator, broadcast journalist, diplomatic services operational officer, English as a foreign language teacher, international aid/development worker, logistics and distribution manager, marketing executive, patent examiner, sales executive, and tour manager.

Making the right choice

All students who study two hours a week of French in Year 9 are welcome to choose this course.

You must choose French as one of your options to qualify for the prestigious EBacc qualification, which is highly respected by further education institutions and employers.

GCSE History

Curriculum Leader

Mr T Davies

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J411 (History B)

Why study this course?

“Those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it.” In a world that is increasingly confusing and uncertain, it is more important than ever that we learn the lessons of history. If you are interested in why the world is the way it is and how it came to be then history is the course for you. From the making of America and Germany under Hitler, through to public health and Elizabeth I, there is something to interest everyone.

Course content

In Year 10, students study ‘The People's Health 1250 - Present Day’ which looks at the historical key concept of change and continuity. They also do a depth study of ‘The Elizabethans 1580-1603’, looking at the second half of Elizabeth I’s reign, everything from daily life to the adventurers and explorers. Along with this, students study ‘History Around Us’ where they go and visit a site and learn how the site has changed over time.

In Year 11, students study ‘Living Under Nazi Rule 1933-1945’ which is another depth study which looks at everything from the establishment of power to life in wartime Germany. The final topic is ‘Making of America 1789-1901’ which looks at the development of America as a nation to its growth as a world power by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Assessment

- ✓ Paper 1: British History – 1h45
- ✓ Paper 2: History Around Us – 1h
- ✓ Paper 3: World History – 1h45

Further study and careers

History is a fantastic subject to equip you with the skills required to go into several careers. These include:

- ✓ journalism
- ✓ academia
- ✓ politics
- ✓ broadcast media
- ✓ education/teaching
- ✓ museum curating
- ✓ civil service
- ✓ any career that requires you to analyse and evaluate a lot of information

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

To decide between history and geography, consider the attainment levels shown on your latest Interim Report, as well as which subject you prefer.

GCSE Geography

Curriculum Leader

Miss D Perkins

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8035

Why study this course?

Geography is a subject that investigates and links both the physical and human elements of our planet. It investigates our past and present and what our future is likely to be. For our students it will develop their sense of curiosity and knowledge of the world around them as well as enhance their employability due to the vast number of transferable skills that geography has to offer. Finally, there are opportunities to develop these skills both inside and outside of the classroom.

Course content

Geography will help you develop important skills such as independent thinking, discipline, and problem solving. It can also help you to gain understanding of the interactions between people and environments, develop and extend your competence in fieldwork, your knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes, and help you to be able to pick out the essential from the trivial and to understand the world we live in. Additionally, we hope to offer a range of extra-curricular opportunities to enhance your learning on the course.

Assessment

- ✓ Paper 1 – Living with the Physical Environment – 1h30
- ✓ Paper 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment – 1h30
- ✓ Paper 3 – Geographical Applications – 1h30

Further study and careers

Geography is a great subject to equip you with the skills required for several careers. These include:

- ✓ environmental sciences
- ✓ conservation studies
- ✓ journalism
- ✓ scientific investigation
- ✓ politics
- ✓ disaster management
- ✓ teaching
- ✓ civil service
- ✓ climate change management
- ✓ GIS
- ✓ resource management
- ✓ any career that requires you to analyse and evaluate data

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

To decide between history and geography, consider the attainment levels shown on your latest Interim Report, as well as which subject you prefer.

GCSE Art & Design: 3D Design

Curriculum Leader	Exam Board	Specification
Mrs S Leybourn	AQA	8205

Why study this course?

This qualification is intended for students who enjoy designing and making 3D products. It is aimed at those with a preference for the processes, equipment, and materials used in **Design & Technology** during Key Stage 3 (e.g. woods, metals, plastics, mechanisms, electronics, and 3D construction). Years 10 and 11 both involve short practical building activities, where new processes and skills will be explored and developed. Extended assignments also take place where more time is given for imaginative ideas to develop and making skills to be explored in greater depth.

Course content

Unit 1: Coursework Portfolio: Students will produce a portfolio of work demonstrating their skills working from a range of starting points focusing on skills used in three-dimensional design. They will be expected to design and create models and prototypes of consumer products and environments. Students will have the opportunity to work with resistant materials such as wood, plastic and metal as well as using CAD/CAM. They will study the work of relevant designers to assist with inspiring their own exciting ideas. Students will be encouraged to explore their own interests which could be traditional making techniques such as carpentry, jewellery design and architectural design.

Unit 2: Externally Set Task: Students will complete an externally set task from a choice of themes. They will select one theme and produce a body of work linked to their chosen question. The work will be completed over several weeks. The outcome is produced over a 10-hour period in controlled conditions. In essence, they will be expected to produce their own portfolio of work, showing evidence of research and planning and development which will support their final 3D outcome.

Assessment

- 60% portfolio – demonstrating your overall learning/skills in 3D Design, including one project
- 40% exam – externally set task, to include preparation and a timed practical exam
- Both units are internally assessed and externally moderated

Further study and careers

This course is an ideal starting point for further study at degree level or careers in product/industrial design, architecture and construction, jewellery, graphic design, theatrical design, engineering, technical support, and teaching.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course. You can choose a maximum of one Art & Design course, except for photography.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 DT lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Art & Design: Fine Art

Curriculum Leader

Miss M Jeanneret

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8202

Why study this course?

Studying fine art will provide students with the opportunity to explore new and exciting techniques and processes while building existing knowledge and strengths. Students will get the opportunity to work in a combination of areas such as:

- ✓ painting & drawing
- ✓ construction (card, mod-roc, paper, etc.)
- ✓ printmaking
- ✓ mixed media
- ✓ photography

Studying fine art will develop students' interest and enjoyment of art and design, allowing them to be introduced to a variety of experiences using a range of media, processes and techniques.

Course content

Students will respond to set themes exploring a vast range of techniques and processes. They will also be involved in looking at a variety of artists, craftspeople, and exhibitions to enhance their understanding and to gain inspiration. Students will create final pieces on varying scales, challenging themselves with both modern and traditional techniques.

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% externally set task – 10-hour examination

Further study and careers

Studying this course could lead you to careers such as:

- ✓ art curator
- ✓ art director/creative director
- ✓ artist/designer
- ✓ animator/illustrator
- ✓ architect
- ✓ art therapist

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course. You can choose a maximum of one Art & Design course, except for photography.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 art lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Art & Design: Photography

Curriculum Leader

Miss M Jeanneret

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8206

Why study this course?

Studying photography will provide students with the opportunity to explore new and exciting techniques and processes while building on existing knowledge and strengths. Students will get the opportunity to work in a combination of areas such as: camera skills, understanding digital imagery, working with software, particularly Photoshop, and using photographers and artists as a way of developing and understanding ideas. Students will undertake a series of projects, identifying strengths and weaknesses while investigating photographers and genres.

Course content

Students will get the opportunity to create their own work. Documentation is essential to the project work and is used at every opportunity to record ideas and to show the development of those ideas. Computers are now an integral part of research and students are encouraged to make full use of this facility. Annotation and evaluation will be an important aspect to document progress.

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% externally set task – 10-hour examination

Further study and careers

Studying this course could lead to careers in photography such as:

- ✓ portrait photographer
- ✓ industrial photographer
- ✓ graphic designer
- ✓ forensic/medical photographer
- ✓ freelance photographer
- ✓ media photographer
- ✓ curator

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 art lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Art & Design: Textile Design

Curriculum Leader

Miss M Jeanneret

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8204

Why study this course?

Studying textiles will provide students with the opportunity to explore new and exciting techniques and processes, exploring a range of textile media, including both traditional and new technologies. These include sewing and embellishing, printing, techniques such as batik and felting, dyeing materials, fabric construction, and manipulation. Students will explore a vast range of new techniques and processes in response to set themes. Students will also be involved in looking at a range of fashion designers and textile artists to investigate trends and styles on the catwalk. Students will construct final outcomes such as bags, dresses, cushions, and wall hangings, and build confidence using sewing machines and decorating fabrics.

Course content

Students will get the opportunity to create their own portfolio of work. Sketchbook work is essential to the project work and is used at every opportunity to record ideas and to show the development of those ideas. Computers are now an integral part of research and students are encouraged to make full use of this facility. Annotation and evaluation will be an important aspect to document progress.

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% externally set task – 10-hour examination

Further study and careers

Studying this course could lead to careers in:

- ✓ fashion design
- ✓ interior design
- ✓ stage design
- ✓ costume and prop design
- ✓ fashion photography
- ✓ designer
- ✓ fashion marketing
- ✓ fashion buyer
- ✓ fashion business

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course. You can choose a maximum of one Art & Design course, except for photography.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 art lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

ASDAN Personal & Social Development

Curriculum Leader

Miss S Merchant

Exam Board

ASDAN

Specification

PSD

Why study this course?

The Personal and Social Development qualification is a supportive pathway which offers imaginative ways of developing young people in:

- ✓ becoming confident individuals who are physically, emotionally and socially healthy;
- ✓ being responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society and embrace change;
- ✓ managing risk together with their own wellbeing; and
- ✓ introducing them to new activities and personal challenges.

Course content

The course involves:

- ✓ food safety in the home and community;
- ✓ healthy eating;
- ✓ identity and cultural diversity;
- ✓ managing money;
- ✓ managing social relationships;
- ✓ preparation for work; and
- ✓ individual rights and responsibilities.

Assessment

Students will need to:

- ✓ complete a number of assessment activities to demonstrate skills, knowledge, and understanding relevant to the units they are working towards;
- ✓ complete appropriate recording documents for each of the selected units, i.e. action plans and reviews (or equivalent); and
- ✓ provide additional evidence that meets the requirements of the selected units.

Further study and careers

This course can be a stepping stone to Level 2 qualifications and further education.

Making the right choice

The **entry requirement** for this course is a recommendation from Miss Merchant, our SENCO.

The ASDAN qualification is suited to students with special educational needs who would benefit from additional time spent on personal and social development and may not otherwise thrive on a full academic curriculum.

GCSE Biology, Chemistry, Physics (Separate Sciences)

Curriculum Leader

Miss L. Smith

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

Biology – 8461
Chemistry – 8462
Physics – 8463

Why study this course?

All students study science at Key Stage 4, but you can select to study separate sciences (also known as 'triple science') to take the subject to greater depths and gain three GCSEs rather than two. This choice is recommended but not essential if you are interested in pursuing A-Levels in the sciences or are considering pursuing a career that would need a science degree.

Course content

This course includes all the contents of Combined Science but dives deeper into many concepts and includes some new topics such as:

- ✓ **Biology:** culturing microorganisms; monoclonal antibodies; plant disease; the brain and eye; plant hormones; DNA; cloning; evolution; impact of environmental change; food production
- ✓ **Chemistry:** transition metals; nanoparticles; atom economy; concentrations of solutions; titrations; chemical cells and fuel cells; reactions of alkenes and alcohols; polymers; identifying ions; using materials; the Haber process and the use of NPK fertilisers
- ✓ **Physics:** static electricity; pressure in gases; hazards and uses of radioactive emissions and of background radiation; nuclear fission and fusion; moments, levers and gears; pressure and pressure differences in fluids; sound waves; lenses; black body radiation; space physics

Assessment

All students take a total of six papers, two for each subject. In Separate Sciences, each paper will have a duration of 1h45. Papers 1 and 2 each cover half the content for the subject, with certain topics assigned to each paper.

Further study and careers

The rigorous nature of this course is particularly beneficial for those considering A-Levels in scientific subjects or eyeing future careers in medicine, engineering, environmental science, or any field where a robust scientific background is advantageous. Achieving separate science GCSEs showcases a student's commitment and ability to excel in challenging subjects, potentially opening doors to prestigious courses and institutions. It's an investment in a student's academic foundation, providing them with the tools to question, analyse, and understand the world at an advanced level.

Making the right choice

The **entry requirement** is to be at least 'Expected' in science on your latest Interim Report.

All students who do not take this option will still study GCSE Combined Science, and this course requires a strong understanding of the subject for students to be successful.

GCSE Business

Subject Teachers

Ms M Nicklin, Miss S Rahim

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8132

Why study this course?

Business affects the daily lives of us all, as we work, save, shop, invest, travel and play. It's important that you can engage in business activity with confidence and understand the role it plays in our society, the opportunities it generates, the skills it requires, and the impact it can have on our own lives and on society, today and in the future. Business students usually have good awareness of the world around them, which is one of the most important qualities looked for by employers.

Course content

This course involves:

- ✓ business in the real world
- ✓ influences on business
- ✓ business operations
- ✓ human resources
- ✓ marketing
- ✓ finance

Assessment

There are two exams, each worth 50% of the qualification.

- ✓ Paper 1 (1h45): Influences of Operations and Human Resource Management on business activity
- ✓ Paper 2 (1h45): Influences of Marketing and Finance on Business Activity

Further study and careers

This course builds a strong foundation for those who wish to move on to further study and training in specialised business areas. It also provides skills if you wish to apply for an apprenticeship.

You will gain knowledge and skills that are relevant in different walks of life. Studying business can support many choices of career. You will learn about different types of businesses, and we will support you if you decide to set up your own business in the future.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It involves a substantial amount of reading, writing, and mathematics, so may be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in Key Stage 3 English and maths.

GCSE Computer Science

Curriculum Leader

Mrs Y Smith

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J277

Why study this course?

The computing industry is very diverse with many topics including networking, cybersecurity and programming among others. It is of enormous importance to the economy and as well as computer science as a discipline on its own, it is also an 'underpinning' subject for many science and engineering based projects. Computer technology continues to advance rapidly and the way that technology has evolved exponentially, especially with the growth of mobile devices and web-based technologies, has resulted in new challenges for the individual, employers and governments, not least because there is a global shortage of computer professionals.

Course content

Computer systems	Computational thinking, algorithms, and programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ systems architecture ✓ memory and storage ✓ computer networks, connections and protocols ✓ network security ✓ systems software ✓ ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ algorithms ✓ programming fundamentals ✓ producing robust programs ✓ Boolean logic ✓ programming languages and integrated development environments

Assessment

There are two 90-minute exams, each worth 50% of the grade:

- ✓ Paper 1: Computer systems
- ✓ Paper 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Further study and careers

The course can lead to further study at A-Level studying Computer Science. There is a global shortage of computer professionals. Careers can include but are not limited to:

- ✓ computer analyst
- ✓ computer programmer
- ✓ networking engineer
- ✓ database
- ✓ cybersecurity

Making the right choice

The **entry requirement** is to be at least 'Expected' in computing on your latest Interim Report.

This is a rigorous academic subject, and students should also consider the Creative iMedia course which does not have entry requirements and teaches valuable IT skills through a vocational approach.

Level 2 Certificate in Creative iMedia

Curriculum Leader

Mrs Y Smith

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J834

Why study this course?

Digital media is a key part of many areas of our everyday lives and vital to the UK economy. Everywhere you look you see creative and digital media, in magazines, on advertising posters, game covers, logo design, etc. Production of digital media products is a requirement of almost every business, so there is huge demand for a skilled and digitally literate workforce. The Creative iMedia qualification will help you develop specific and transferable skills such as research, planning, review of yours and others work, working with others and communicating creative concepts to set audiences like adults, teenagers, elderly, and children. The course allows you a hands-on approach to production with 60% of the course completing creative digital tasks set by the exam board.

Course content

Creative iMedia is a very practical course allowing you to create digital products to demonstrate your media skills along with understanding the different needs of clients. You will gain essential knowledge of the global media industry and create a range of digital graphics to given client requirements.

Assessment

1 exam:

- ✓ R093 Creative iMedia in the media industry – 40% (1h30)

2 coursework units:

- ✓ R094 Visual identity and digital graphics – 25%
- ✓ One optional unit – 35%

Further study and careers

This course can lead to A-Level courses in graphic design, video and sound editing, animation, and games development. Careers include but are not limited to:

- ✓ graphic designer
- ✓ video editor
- ✓ animator
- ✓ sound editor
- ✓ games development
- ✓ marketing

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 computing lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Drama

Curriculum Leader

Mrs L Karim

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J316

Why study this course?

Drama offers the unique ability to explore themes, issues and the world around us in a creative and imaginative way. It develops a vast array of essential life skills such as empathy, communication, self-confidence, problem-solving, leadership and interpersonal skills. As part of the course, you will have the opportunity to create performances as an individual, as part of small and large groups and there is also the option to work as a designer exploring lighting, sound, set and costume. You will have the opportunity to develop and perform original drama and published scripts as part of the course assessment.

The course will enable you to widen your theatrical experiences and interests, learn new performance styles, and build upon negotiating and leadership skills. You will have numerous opportunities to perform to a range of audiences such as your peers, external assessors and invited audiences. You will also have opportunities to see live professional performances.

Course content

- ✓ Research and explore a stimulus and create an original piece of devised drama.
- ✓ Develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design by presenting a showcase of two extracts from a performance text to a visiting examiner.
- ✓ Learn about a performance text that we will have practically explored in lessons.

Assessment

- ✓ Component 1/2: Devising Drama – a devised performance/design realisation to an invited audience and a written portfolio explaining your creative journey and evaluating the final performance. Marked out of 60 and worth 30% of the GCSE.
- ✓ Component 3: Presenting and Performing Texts – two scripted performances/design realisations to a visiting examiner and a written concept to explain your creative choices to the examiner. Marked out of 60 and worth 30% of the GCSE.
- ✓ Component 4: Performance and Response – written paper (1h30) taken in Year 11, marked out of 80 and worth 40% of the GCSE.

Further study and careers

By studying drama, you will develop transferable creative skills that will support a wide range of further education and career choices. Directly the course is a great foundation for Key Stage 5 drama and performing arts courses. The course provides an insight into many careers within the performing arts industry including playwrights, performers, directors, theatrical designers (set, lighting, costume and sound), front of house, and backstage management.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course, although please note that you must be prepared to perform in front of an audience and participate in trips to see live theatre as part of your studies.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 drama lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition

Curriculum Leader

Mrs S Leybourn

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8585

Why study this course?

This is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills. The course will ensure students develop an understanding of nutrition and health, food science, safety, food choice, food provenance, and the working characteristics of food materials. Students will also learn about British and international culinary traditions, food security, and food safety. At the heart of the qualification is a focus on developing practical cookery skills and a robust understanding of nutrition.

Course content

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition specification sets out the knowledge, understanding, and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition, and healthy eating. The topics are broken down into the following areas:

- ✓ food, nutrition, and health
- ✓ food science
- ✓ food safety
- ✓ food choice
- ✓ food provenance

Assessment

There will be one exam for this qualification, which will assess your knowledge of the theory behind food preparation and nutrition. The exam will be 1 hour 45 minutes long. The second part of the assessment will be non-examination assessment and will consist of two tasks, involving practical work.

Further study and careers

Food Preparation and Nutrition can lead to several careers and can also help to support applications to a wide range of further education courses such as food science, product development, food and nutrition, sports science, midwifery and nursing, catering and hospitality, food styling and photography, food retail, environmental health, and the Food Standards Agency.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 food lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

Level 2 Certificate in Health & Social Care

Curriculum Leader

Mrs S Khanam

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J835

Why study this course?

This is an ideal course for those interested in a career in the care sector. Careers in health and social care are thriving with a growing need for well-qualified staff in education, hospitals, residential care, and private homes. Employment in care is one of the most satisfying careers available with great career prospects. Many learners go on to do Level 3 courses which can lead to gaining a place on a course at university. You will develop a range of skills such as organisation, being independent and working as part of a team which will support you in further education as well as the world of work.

Course content

This course consists of:

- ✓ R032 Principles of care in health and social care settings (exam) – Learn about the key topics that are important when caring for and protecting people in health and social care.
- ✓ R033 Supporting individuals through life events (NEA) – Learn about growth and development through the life stages, and how to understand the needs of individuals who have been affected by life events and recommend support to meet their needs.
- ✓ R034 Creative and therapeutic activities – Research therapies and learn about how they can benefit people. You will also learn about the benefits of creative activities, and you will plan and deliver a creative activity to a group or individual.
- ✓ R035 Health promotion campaigns – Research health promotion campaigns and learn about their benefits to society. You will also plan and deliver your own health promotion campaign.

Assessment

- ✓ One examination for this qualification which is 1h15 and worth 40%
- ✓ Two non-examined assessments units worth 60%

Further study and careers

Health and social care can lead to several careers and supports a range of further education courses such as A-Levels in biology, sociology, and psychology. Alongside this, it can lead to apprenticeships in dental nursing, maternity and paediatric support, healthcare science assistant, and much more.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It involves a significant amount of written work, so may be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in written subjects at Key Stage 3. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Music

Curriculum Leader

Mr B Sassons

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J536

Why study this course?

By studying music, you will be developing musicianship, a skill that will support a wide range of further education and career choices. As part of the course, you will have opportunities to develop performances as a soloist and as an ensemble and will compose and perform using music technology and recording equipment in our recording studio.

Course content

The course will enable you to broaden your musical experiences and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity. You will have numerous opportunities to perform to audiences ranging from your peers, assessors and invited audiences. The music department offers many extra-curricular opportunities to support your studies including a Christmas production, choir, band, trips and visits. As a GCSE student you have the opportunity to work with peripatetic music professionals with skills on a wide range of instruments to support your learning further.

Assessment

- ✓ Listening and appraising exam (1h30): 40%
- ✓ Composition: one free choice and one composition to a brief: 30%
- ✓ Performance: one solo performance and one group performance: 30%

Further study and careers

A GCSE in music can open the door to a diverse range of careers, both directly within the music industry and in fields outside of the industry. One of the most obvious paths is that of a professional musician, whether as a solo artist, a member of a band or orchestra, or as a session musician. This career choice can lead to performing, touring, and recording music across various genres. Other career paths include, music production, composing soundtracks for films and video games, managing a band, career or event, and many more.

Music also develops skills that are cross-curricular and an asset for a plethora of careers. Studying music engenders qualities such as perseverance, tenacity, and collaboration. Students studying our GCSE course hone attributes that boost their general employability especially creativity, people skills, and performance confidence.

Making the right choice

The **entry requirement** is to be able to perform a piece of music vocally or using any instrument. If you are interested in this course, please contact Mr Sassons to arrange an audition.

GCSE Physical Education

Curriculum Leader

Mrs L Halford

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8582

Why study this course?

GCSE PE is targeted at students who have a real passion for sport and who regularly play or take part at a competitive standard, in at least one sport, outside of the Academy. This is an essential requirement of the course as students will be assessed in three different practical activities from a set list specified by the exam board; one team, one individual and a final which is either team based or individual. There is also a large theoretical aspect to the course so a passion for the physiology and psychology behind sport is essential, along with a willingness to learn how we train and lead a healthy lifestyle, as well as an interest in current issues relating to sport.

Course content

Students will cover a range of theoretical topics that relate to sport and physical activity including body systems, training methods, movement analysis, sport psychology, socio-cultural and contemporary sporting issues and health, fitness and wellbeing. Students will also be assessed in a range of sporting activities and complete a written piece of coursework analysing their own performance in their main sport.

Assessment

- ✓ 30% of marks from practical – one individual sport, one team sport and the third either individual or team from a set list specified by the exam board.
- ✓ 10% coursework written task – analysis of performance and development of a training plan for chosen sport.
- ✓ 30% written exam (1h15) – the human body and movement in physical activity and sport
- ✓ 30% written exam (1h15) – socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.

Further study and careers

If you have an interest in pursuing a career relating to sport for example in areas such as teaching, coaching, physiotherapy, psychology or sport development and management.

Making the right choice

The **entry requirement** is to play at least one sport outside the Academy at competitive club level.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 Wellbeing Active lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

This is a rigorous academic subject, and students should also consider the Sport Studies course which does not have entry requirements and teaches valuable PE skills through a vocational approach.

GCSE Psychology

Subject Teacher

Miss M Benning

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8182

Why study this course?

By studying psychology and gaining subject-specific knowledge, you will receive an insider perspective of the mind, brain and human behaviour. You will learn about a wide range of topics that all help you develop a detailed understanding of human behaviour.

Course content

Cognition and behaviour

- ✓ memory
- ✓ perception
- ✓ development
- ✓ research methods

Social context and behaviour

- ✓ social influence
- ✓ language, thought, and communication
- ✓ brain and neuropsychology
- ✓ psychological problems

Assessment

There are two exam papers, each worth 50% of the qualification:

- ✓ Paper 1 (Cognition and behaviour) – 1h45
- ✓ Paper 2 (Social context and behaviour) – 1h45

Further study and careers

Studying psychology opens the door to a multitude of career paths, as it lays the groundwork for understanding human behaviour and mental processes. Students can look forward to opportunities in clinical, educational, forensic, and sports psychology, or branch into roles such as human resources, market research analysis, and advertising, where psychological insights are highly valued. Those with a passion for helping others may pursue careers in counselling, social work, or various healthcare professions. Additionally, a solid foundation in psychology can lead to academic careers in research and teaching, contributing to the advancement of the field and educating future psychologists.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

GCSE Psychology involves extensive and detailed study of mental health conditions, depression, and addiction. These topics may cause upset or distress to some. Students and parents/carers should consider carefully whether it is an appropriate choice, especially for students struggling with their own or a family member's mental health.

It involves a significant amount of written work, so may be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in written subjects at Key Stage 3.

GCSE Religious Studies

Curriculum Leader

Ms H Colley

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8192

Why study this course?

Religion has been deep-rooted within mankind for as long as historical accounts can tell us. It has had a huge impact on all cultures, history and current events across the globe, and by learning the depths of the subject, you can broaden your knowledge of the world and how people work. The GCSE is not limited to learning about religion, you will be studying philosophy and ethics with an emphasis on critical analysis of all three areas. It is an engaging, relevant subject which many students at Q3 Academy Great Barr choose as their option and enjoy the course.

If you have an interest in the following topics then RS at GCSE is the right subject for you: Is the death penalty an effective punishment? Should euthanasia be legalised in the UK? What are the most meaningful ways religious people can show their faith to God? Is the influence of religion declining? The heart of RS is debate and discussion about key topics, this is what makes RS stand out from other subjects; sharing your view and experience is encouraged in lessons.

Course content

- ✓ Crime and punishment
- ✓ Human rights and social justice
- ✓ In-depth study into the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam
- ✓ Relationships and the family
- ✓ Religion and life

Assessment

Students will sit two exams at the end of Year 11 that each last 1 hour 45 minutes. Each exam paper tests similar exam skills which include explanation, analysis and evaluation:

- ✓ Paper 1 – In-depth Study into Christianity and Islam
- ✓ Paper 2 – Thematic studies: religion, philosophy and ethics

Further study and careers

The subject is regarded highly by universities as it gives students a well-rounded informed view of the world around them. It is specifically useful to anyone looking to study medicine, social work, teaching, and jobs in the police.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 RS lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject.

GCSE Sociology

Curriculum Leader

Ms H Colley

Exam Board

AQA

Specification

8192

Why study this course?

Sociology is the study of human society that focuses on social interactions, social patterns, and social human behaviour. In short, it examines and researches using empirical evidence 'why is society the way it is?', 'why do some groups continually succeed, and others are unable to achieve the same success?'. The course equips students with the ability to critically examine the world, hierarchies, and everyday interactions and social patterns.

Sociology will help you to think about society in a new and critical light, questioning the status quo and developing a sophisticated understanding of the real issues that affect the society we live in. It is an excellent subject for showing you how society works and for making you aware of the range of conditions that individuals within society experience. Students often comment that they didn't realise how varied the human experience can be and how powerfully group identity shapes a person's future.

Course content

The course consists of five topics. Three topics are taught in Year 10 and two in Year 11. They include:

- ✓ the sociology of crime and deviance
- ✓ the sociology of education
- ✓ the sociology of families
- ✓ social stratification – how social characteristics like gender, class and ethnicity impact a groups experience and their opportunities in life
- ✓ research methods

Assessment

Students will sit two exams at the end of Year 11 that each last 1 hour 45 minutes. Each exam paper tests similar exam skills which include explanation, analysis and evaluation:

- ✓ Paper 1 – Sociology of families, education and research methods
- ✓ Paper 2 – Sociology of crime and deviance, social stratification and research methods

Further study and careers

Studying sociology can lead to a variety of careers and degree courses particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Critical thinking skills learnt in sociology provide excellent preparation for university in general and for career paths such as law, the police, medicine, criminology and journalism. Developing an awareness of different groups of people in society and their needs is valuable for professions in education, healthcare, social work and business functions such as marketing.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It involves a significant amount of written work, so may be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in written subjects at Key Stage 3.

Level 2 Certificate in Sport Studies

Curriculum Leader

Mrs L Halford

Exam Board

OCR

Specification

J829

Why study this course?

Students may be interested in this if they want an engaging qualification where they will use their learning in practical, real-life situations. If you have a keen interest and enthusiasm for sport and prefer a course with an element of written coursework.

Course content

- ✓ Understanding contemporary issues in sport and how they impact on different sporting activities
- ✓ Applying your skills as both a performer in two different sporting activities and as a leader in one sporting activity
- ✓ How to be a sports leader, through using your initiative to solve problems and making decisions when dealing with rapidly changing conditions and situations
- ✓ Understanding the relationship between sport and the media and applying this to real life examples
- ✓ How to evaluate and interpret the different ways in which sport is represented by the media

Assessment

Students will complete three units:

- ✓ One externally assessed unit (exam) titled Contemporary Issues in Sport
- ✓ One centre-assessed unit (NEA) titled Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities
- ✓ One centre-assessed unit (NEA) titled Sport and the Media

Further study and careers

Students can progress onto other related study, such as qualifications in Sports, Physical Education, Social Science or Media.

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 Wellbeing Active lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject. There is a substantial coursework component, which means excellent attendance (above 97%) is essential.

GCSE Statistics

Curriculum Leader

Mr A Machin

Exam Board

Edexcel

Specification

1ST0

Why study this course?

If you are an aspiring mathematician who intends on continuing studying mathematics after Year 11 then this may be the course for you. It gives you greater depth into many statistical concepts introduced in GCSE Maths as well as challenging you further. It will help to improve your statistic work as well as supporting your studies in other subjects such as psychology and geography and forms the foundations of statistics at A-Level Mathematics. It helps to develop problem solving skills and rigorous argument.

Course content

Statistics offers an opportunity to explore and develop ideas in the subject which underpin understanding in GCSE Mathematics. You will be given opportunity to tackle challenging problems which develops logical thinking. You will make many links between maths and the real world we live in and give context to many problems. You will develop resilience and perseverance whilst also improving the knowledge and problem-solving skills you need for GCSE Mathematics.

Assessment

2 Exam papers at the end of Year 11:

- ✓ Paper 1 – calculator – 1 hour and 30 minutes (50%)
- ✓ Paper 2 – calculator – 1 hour and 30 minutes (50%)

Further study and careers

There are many different careers you could follow from statistics, such as:

- ✓ Data analyst
- ✓ Finance analyst
- ✓ Meteorologist
- ✓ Doctor
- ✓ Accountancy
- ✓ Market research analyst

Making the right choice

All students are welcome to choose this course.

It builds on what you have learnt in Key Stage 3 maths lessons, so will be a good choice if you have been actively engaged, interested, and successful in this subject.

Wellbeing Active (Core PE)

Curriculum Leader

Mrs L Halford

Why study this course?

Physical education inspires students to succeed and even excel in competitive sport and it is important that students tackle complex and demanding physical activities. Through sport and physical activity key values such as respect, tolerance, resilience and determination will be instilled. Students should also get involved in a range of activities that develop personal fitness and promote lifelong healthy, active lifestyles.

Course content

Students have developed skills and techniques in Key Stage 3 and are given opportunities to apply these to different sports and physical activities.

Students will participate in a range of physical activities during lesson time designed to develop:

- ✓ competence and confidence to excel in a range of activities
- ✓ opportunities to be physically active for a sustained period of time
- ✓ knowledge and tools to lead a healthy, active lifestyle
- ✓ opportunities to participate in competitive situations, both individually and as part of a team

Wellbeing Inspire (PSHE)

Head of Year

Miss B Smith

Why study this course?

Wellbeing Inspire is the name we give to our PSHE Curriculum. It teaches students life skills and gives them knowledge of non-educational topics which support them in becoming well-rounded and well-informed members of society. Through Wellbeing Inspire, students will develop their Fundamental British Values, as well as useful skills such as sharing their opinions and developing the ability to respect another person's point of view.

Course content

The course is made up of a mixture of individual work, group tasks, written ideas, and oral debates. Students will cover topics including the following:

- ✓ positive relationships
- ✓ working together
- ✓ accepting differences
- ✓ bullying
- ✓ discrimination and tolerance
- ✓ mental health
- ✓ self-confidence and self esteem
- ✓ sexual health
- ✓ financial awareness
- ✓ our environment

Next steps

Start making your choices

Having read all the information in this booklet, start deciding which subjects you might choose.

- ✓ Think about what you **enjoy**.
- ✓ Consider your **current performance** in each subject, which is shown on your Interim Report.
- ✓ As well as your first choices, think carefully about your **reserves** – these must be subjects you'd be happy to study, as we may not be able to allocate all your first choices.
- ✓ Check the **entry criteria** for each subject. You cannot select a subject as a first choice or reserve if you do not meet its requirements.

Walsall Studio School

Alongside our Key Stage 4 pathways, we are also pleased to be able to signpost you to an alternative pathway from within our own family at The Mercian Trust. If your child is passionate about creative subjects and is considering a career in the performing arts, music, or creative media industries, they may want to find out more about the options available at Walsall Studio School & Sixth.

Enclosed in this booklet, you will find an insert with an overview, course information, and application details for Walsall Studio School & Sixth. We also strongly encourage you to attend their next open evening on Monday 5th February 2024, 5pm-7pm to find out more. You can also visit their website at www.studioschoolandsixth.org or follow them on Instagram or Facebook @studioschoolandsixth.

If you are unsure about the idea of leaving Q3 Academy Great Barr to take up a new pathway, then please speak to Miss Smith or Mr McGeough to find out more about the pros and cons of following a specialised pathway in terms of career prospects and transition support.

Get in touch if you have any queries

Your first point of contact is always your Personal Tutor, who can give you advice and guidance about your options. Their name is shown at the top of your recent Interim Report.

You can also contact our Curriculum Leaders, who are named on each of the subject pages. They will be able to provide specialist advice about each course.

Students are welcome to talk to staff whenever they see them around the Academy, or can get in contact by email. All staff emails have the format: initial.lastname@GBR.merciantrust.org.uk

Attend our Year 9 Pathways Evening

Our Pathways Evening is on **Monday 18th March 2024**. All teachers attend this event, so it will be a great opportunity for you and your parents/carers to get feedback from your current teachers as well as discussing Key Stage 4 courses. There will also be a presentation from the Deputy Headteacher.



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