OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE KNOCK

Year 10 GCSE Options Booklet

Careers Department

2026/2027

FOREWORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Student,

This GCSE Options Booklet has been produced to help you choose the subjects you may wish to study during Years 11 and 12. Key Stage 4 is equally as important as your final years in the College studying AS and A-Levels, and it is vital that you now make every effort to choose your subjects wisely, so that you don't have any regrets later on and you get the grades you deserve. Many universities base their offers on your GCSE profile and your choice of subjects. Your GCSE subjects over the next two years will open, or close, potential career paths and aspirations.

The College's curriculum is divided into compulsory and optional GCSE subjects. The compulsory GCSE subjects include English, English Literature, Learning for Life and Work, Mathematics and Religious Studies and every student is required to study these.

There is an extensive range of optional GCSE subjects from which you may choose five or six subjects. I strongly recommend that you choose at least one science subject and one modern language so that you have a broad and balanced curriculum at 16 years of age. This will mean that you are not closing off too many career opportunities at an early stage.

In order to cater for the needs of all of our Key Stage 4 students, we will be collaborating with neighbouring schools in line with Department of Education recommendations to increase our curriculum. This may allow us to expand the number of GCSE courses available to our students.

It is our expectation that each student will obtain at least a Grade B in each subject studied. This is part of our target setting and, with your help and cooperation, we will do our level best to ensure you achieve high grades.

It is a good time to remind you that standards are on the increase and that in a competitive educational environment you need to attain high grades to be able to cope with the demands of A-Levels and university entrance.

I know that most of you will set even higher targets for yourselves. However, our expectation is that you do your best academically and still leave time to participate in extra-curricular activities. We want you to really enjoy the experience of being a senior student in Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock and I think that the information in this booklet will help you make an informed subject choice. Please discuss its contents with your family, friends and teachers and then carefully make the choices that will help you prepare for your next two years at Knock.

I wish you every success in your decision-making.

Deborah McLaughlin
Principal

GCSE SUBJECT CHOICE, GENDER STEREOTYPING AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

What is gender stereotyping*?*

It is making assumptions that men and women play different roles in society. Such assumptions restrict individual choice, which leads to wasted talent and unfulfilled potential, to skills gaps and to lower pay, especially for those jobs which are seen as 'women's work'. In short, gender stereotyping results in discrimination against both women and men.

So you think inequality is a thing of the past?

The mean gender pay gap for full-time UK employees in 2022 was 4.5%. However, at the higher pay grades the hourly pay rate is 10.1% higher for men in comparison to woman.

In some parts of Northern Ireland, industries that were traditionally dominated by men simply don't exist anymore. But the new jobs that are being created, such as those in the service sector, are not seen as 'men's' jobs' so male unemployment persists.

Some GCSE and A-level courses are filled predominantly by girls, others by boys. For example:

- GCSE Art Entries in NI Grammar Schools (Summer 2022): 73% girls and 27% boys.
- GCSE Physical Education Entries in NI Grammar Schools (Summer 2022): 36% girls and 64% boys.

Perhaps girls and boys need to think more broadly about their subject choices.

How can it be challenged?

Year 10 students should consider **all** of the available GCSE subject choices and career options and should not limit their opportunities because they are male or female. Are you really picking optional subjects that you like and are good at, or are you simply following the crowd? For example, if you are a boy, are you refusing to choose Food and Nutrition because you think that it's a 'girls' subject? If you are a girl, have you decided not to choose Technology and Design because you see it as a 'boys' subject? Remember that you are unlikely to fulfil your potential unless you consider **all** of the options!

Parents are the single most important influence on students' GCSE subject choices. They should encourage their sons and daughters to widen their subject choices at school and beyond, and provide a home environment where girls and boys are encouraged to share all tasks equally,

Teachers and Careers advisers at Knock also have a duty to present unbiased information and to support those students who step beyond traditional GCSE subject and career choices.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THE WORLD OF WORK – STUDY A MODERN LANGUAGE!

"Young people from the UK are at a disadvantage in the recruitment market. The UK workforce suffers from a chronic shortage of people at all levels with usable language skills. Companies increasingly need personnel with technical or professional skills plus another language, and often their only option is to recruit native speakers of other languages."

Source: Nuffield Languages Enquiry

"70% of British companies conduct business in other countries."

Source: Survey in Professional Manager Journal

"90% of jobs involving languages are in sectors such as sales, marketing and finance and not in translating, teaching."

Source: Observer Newspaper

"We would not now recruit graduates who have not spent a period of time in another country."

Source: Personnel Director, Volkswagen

"Graduates with foreign language skills can expect to earn at least 10% more than those without."

Source: Reed Recruitment

It is expected that every pupil will study a modern language at GCSE. If you are considering not doing so, you and your parents must seek advice from your two language teachers and a Careers teacher at the Options morning.

GUIDANCE FOR YEAR 10 STUDENTS AND PARENTS

What is GCSE?

GCSE stands for the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Who are GCSE subjects for?

You! They are designed as two-year courses of study for students primarily in Years 11 and 12. At Key Stage 4, GCSE is the main means of assessing attainment.

Why do I need to take GCSE subjects?

Sixteen is a turning point in every young person's life. It is a time of change. Some of you may leave school and take a job or start on a training placement. However, you must first complete another two years of compulsory education, either at Our Lady and St Patrick's or elsewhere. This will enable you to improve your range of skills and qualifications. For some the aim will be to take further examinations, like A-Levels, and perhaps go on to university or a college of higher education. For all, GCSE offers an opportunity to assess your skills and abilities and help you to decide how these may be sharpened and directed along more specific career lines.

What makes the GCSE different from examinations in the past?

GCSEs are designed to relate to students' everyday lives. For example, specifications address economic, political, social and environmental matters, where these are appropriate and relevant to the particular subject. They are also expected to provide opportunities for the appropriate use of Information Technology, to complement and reinforce work done in that particular subject.

Some GCSE courses include Controlled Assessment – that's work that you do during the two years; and the marks for your Controlled Assessment count towards your final result.

How are GCSEs graded?

GCSE certificates are awarded for achievement at grades A* - G. Grades A*, A, B, C* and C are regarded as the 'pass' grades that students must aim for in order to consider studying them at A-Level study. To study a subject at A-Level in Our Lady and St. Patrick's, a pass at grade A*, A or B is usually required. Examiners decide the grade boundaries for the award of grades A, C and F. The remaining grades are then awarded on an arithmetical basis. (For Physical Education and Computer Science, the grading system is 9 – 1, where a 9 is equivalent to an A* and a 4 is equivalent to a C.)

Will I lose marks for bad spelling?

Good spelling, punctuation and grammar will improve your chances of getting a better grade. Some marks depend on them, so make sure you have taken time to check this area.

What is Controlled Assessment?

Controlled Assessment is a type of internal assessment. Parents will be provided with information about Controlled Assessment at the **Year 11 Parents Information Evening** in Term 1. Controlled Assessment is work that is integral to the course. It is mostly done in class and is supervised by teachers. It can take various forms such as assignments to research and write in supervised conditions.

How to Choose the Right Subjects?

Because young people frequently change their career ideas at this stage, most schools have put some restrictions on their choice of subjects. We do try to ensure that you keep your options open by not specializing too narrowly at an early stage.

How should you set about choosing? Briefly, you should take account of:

a. The Colleges subject requirements - see the GCSE Options Form;
b. Subjects that you like;
c. Subjects that you are good at;
d. Subjects that you may need for your career;
e. Subjects that keep your options open;
f. What your teachers say;
g. What parents and friends say

What Questions Should I Ask My Teachers?

Your teachers will see it as part of their responsibility to see that you are entered for the most appropriate subjects and specifications available. So, before opting for, or committing yourself to any course, make sure that you ask each subject teacher:

- *How much reading is involved?*
- *How much writing is involved?*
- *How much Controlled Assessment is involved?*
- *Is there the option of different tiers of assessment?*
- *Is there an oral test?*
- *Will I have to gather information for myself?*
- *Are projects involved?*
- *What practical skills are involved?*
- *How much laboratory or fieldwork is involved?*

Armed with this information, you should be well placed to begin to make your GCSE decisions.

CAREERS STAFF

Mrs M McPolin	10-1
Mr F Priestly	10-2
Mr S Hughes	10-3
Ms O Mezza	10-4
Mr S Kelly	10-5
Mr S Hughes	10-6
Mr J Shields	10-7
Mrs K Branagan	10-8

Other Careers Staff: Mr J Davey, Mr N Boyle, Mrs R Martin and Ms B Moley.

If you or your parents need specific help or advice, you are welcome to talk things over with a Careers teacher.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION (YEAR 11 2026/27)

The Year 11 Curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and is designed to give you as much choice as possible while conforming to statutory requirements. You may study between 10 and 12 GCSE courses in Years 11 and 12. You should aim for breadth and balance in your curriculum so that career opportunities are not closed off too early. We have divided the curriculum into two parts – **compulsory core subjects** and **optional subjects**.

Compulsory GCSE Subjects

All students must study the following core subjects:

English Language	Mathematics	Learning for Life and Work
English Literature	Religious Education	

Other compulsory core subjects (Non-Examination)

All students will take courses in Careers Education, Physical Education and the College Personal Development Programme.

Optional GCSE Subjects

These are listed within their respective Learning Areas:

The Arts:	Drama, Music and Art & Design
Environment and Society:	Business Studies, Geography, History and Food & Nutrition
Modern Languages:	French, German, Irish and Spanish
Science and Technology:	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Science: Double Award, Technology & Design, Digital Technology and Computer Science
Other Optional Subjects:	Physical Education and Health and Social Care

It is strongly recommended that you choose at least one Science course from Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Science Double Award; and a Modern Language from French, German, Irish or Spanish. If you are not proposing to choose either a Science or Modern Language course, you must first seek advice from your Careers teachers.

Further Mathematics

GCSE Further Mathematics is tailored for students who have an above average mathematical ability, a positive can-do attitude and enjoy problem-solving. The opportunity to complete GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 followed by GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12 will be offered to those students who achieve a high standard in their Year 10 summer exam. This offer will be made formally by letter shortly after the exam has been marked. **The College requires all students to sit a Mathematics examination (Mathematics or Further Mathematics) at the end of Year 12.**

Music – One-Year Course

Music may be chosen as an extra GCSE subject. This is in addition to the subjects studied on the main timetable. The one-year course is taught over three lunch periods and students take the GCSE Music examination at the end of Year 11.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STEM IN THE CURRICULUM

The future prosperity of the UK is, to a large extent, dependent on young people choosing STEM-related subjects. Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects are vital to the country's economic and social development. The role of STEM skills is to help improve the quality of people's everyday lives and find solutions to global challenges, such as sustainable economic development.

Recent research highlights the shortfall in the number of people choosing to study STEM subjects, as well as the need to double the supply of skilled workers in STEM-related jobs in the next seven to ten years.

It is expected that the UK will need to fill around three-quarters of a million extra jobs requiring highly numerate, analytical people with STEM skills. Yet currently, six out of ten (59%) firms employing STEM-skilled staff say they are having difficulty recruiting. The low take-up of STEM subjects at university is a large part of the problem and there has been a 15% fall in engineering and technology graduates (23,300 to 19,700) over the past decade. Young people build up their knowledge and understanding of science and maths on a gradual basis. Once dropped, maths and physical science subjects are much harder to return to later. Young people can cut themselves off from a whole range of careers by not continuing their STEM education.

It is expected that every pupil will study a Science at GCSE. If you are considering not doing so, you and your parents must seek advice from your Science teachers and a Careers teacher at the Options morning.

EXAMINATION (YEAR 11)

GCSE candidates will have the opportunity to sit an external exam in a number of their chosen subjects in the summer of Year 11. They will also be completing coursework or controlled assessment in many of their subjects and these must be carried out in line with JCQ regulations. There will be an Information Evening for all Year 11 Parents in October 2026 to explain the examination process.

OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE KNOCK

CHOICE OF GCSE SUBJECTS FOR YEAR 11 STUDENTS

Senior School students may study **10, 11 or 12** GCSE examination subjects.

All students must take a core of **five** GCSE subjects: **English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Religious Education and Learning for Life & Work.**

It is strongly recommended that students choose **at least one science** option from Group 1.

It is strongly recommended that students choose **a modern language** from Group 2.

GCSE Further Mathematics is tailored for students who have an above average mathematical ability, a positive can-do attitude and enjoy problem-solving. Students are asked to indicate their interest to study GCSE Further Mathematics by ticking the box on their GCSE Option Form. The opportunity to complete GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 followed by GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12 will be offered to those students who achieve a high standard in their Year 10 summer exam. This offer will be made formally by letter shortly after the exam has been marked. The College requires all students to sit a Mathematics examination at the end of Year 12.

In addition to GCSE subjects, **Careers Education, non-exam Physical Education and the College Personal Development Programme** are compulsory for all students.

GCSE SUBJECT CHOICE OPTIONS

Five GCSE subjects must be selected. Please tick 5 choices in the table below.

Group 1	**Group 2**	**Group 3**	
Science Double Award (Two GCSEs)	French	Art & Design	Food & Nutrition
Biology	German	Business Studies	Digital Technology
Chemistry	Irish	Computer Science	Music
Physics	Spanish	Drama	Physical Education
		Geography	Technology & Design
		History	Health and Social Care

Year 11 lunch-time GCSE subject (a possible sixth GCSE choice)	Music

YEAR 10 SAMPLE OPTIONS FORM 2026/27

- Year 11 students can study 10, 11 or 12 GCSE examination courses.
- All students must study **a core of five GCSE courses**: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Learning for Life & Work and Religious Studies.
- Year 10 students will sit an internally marked Mathematics exam in late May. The highest ranked students in this examination will be offered the opportunity to fast track through GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 and take GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12. All other students will study GCSE Mathematics over two years, Year 11 and 12.
- In addition to GCSE examination courses, non-examination Careers Education, Physical Education and the College Personal Development Programme are compulsory for all students.

OPTIONAL GCSE COURSES

1. Choose **five GCSE courses** from Groups 1, 2 and 3 (Science Double Award is equivalent to two courses).
2. It is strongly recommended that you **choose at least one science course from Group 1**. Any combination of the separate sciences can be chosen. If you choose Science Double Award you cannot choose the separate sciences. If you choose Science Double Award you have three choices left from Groups 2 and/or 3.
3. It is strongly recommended that you **choose a modern language from Group 2**. You may choose more than one modern language.
4. **Group 3** contains the other **optional courses**.
5. **Music** may be taken as a **one-year** course during three **lunch periods** in Year 11 **in addition** to your five other course choices. Students must consult with the Head of Music, Mrs McCanny, before selecting this option. Music students can only mark one Music box, either the one-year or the two-year course.
6. You can select either **Digital Technology** or **Computer Science** but not both.
7. Students proposing **not** to study a **science or language** course **must** consult with their subject teachers and Careers staff.

Place an X in the box before the GCSE course you wish to choose:

	Group 1			**Group 3**
	Science Double Award (equivalent of two choices)			Art and Design
	Biology			Business Studies
	Chemistry			Computer Science
	Physics			Digital Technology
	Group 2			Drama
	French			Food and Nutrition
	German			Geography
	Irish			History
	Spanish			Music (two-year course)
	Additional Course			Physical Education
	Music (one-year course)			Technology and Design
				Health and Social Care

Please tick the box to indicate that you are interested in studying GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12: ☐
Every effort will be made to accommodate your choice of courses after taking account of the demand for the courses and timetable arrangements. We require a minimum of 10 students for a class to be viable.

If a course is oversubscribed, students will be selected according to their attainment in the relevant Year 10 course.

Student's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)_____ Tutor Group _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature_____ Date _____ Tel. _____

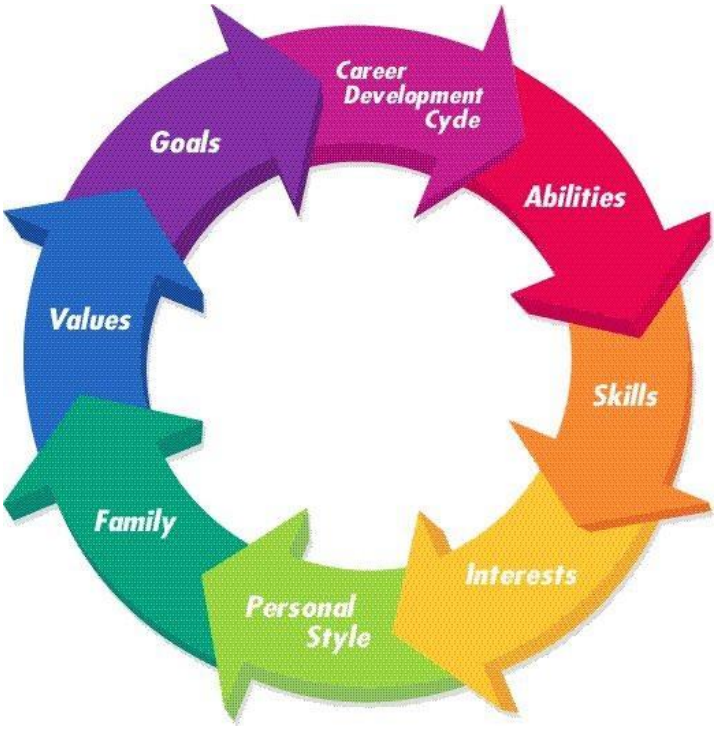
*** Please return this form to your Tutor on or before Monday 23rd February 2026.**

*** If you require further information, please contact Ms Michaela Collins (Vice Principal) or your Careers Teacher.**

GCSE SUBJECT STUDENT GUIDES

Student Guide.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Art and Design
Student Guide.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Biology
Student Guide.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Business Studies
Student Guide_0.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Chemistry
OCR Computer Science	Com Sci
Student Guide_12.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Double Award Science
Student Guide.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Digital Technology
Student Guide_2.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Drama
Student Guide_0.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	English Language
Student Guide_5.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	English Literature
Student Guide_6.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Food and Nutrition
Student Guide_0.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	French
Student Guide_7.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Further Maths
Student Guide_4.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	German
Student Guide_2.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Geography
Student Guide HSC	Health and Social Care
Student Guide_4.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	History
Student Guide_8.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Irish
Student Guide_1.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Learning for Life and Work
Student Guide_17.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Maths
Student Guide_5.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Music
EDUQAS Physical Education	PE
Student Guide_16.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Physics
GCSE Religious Studies Student Guide.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Religious Studies
Student Guide_5.PDF (ccea.org.uk)	Spanish
Student Guide_9.pdf (ccea.org.uk)	Technology and Design

GCSE COURSES OFFERED



GCSE ART AND DESIGN

The GCSE Art and Design course develops students' understanding of how meanings, ideas and intentions can be communicated through visual and tactile language. Students learn how to use different media and technologies to realise their intentions. They develop their understanding of the creative and cultural industries and refine their work through experimentation. It offers a broad and flexible content, allowing students to pursue a range of creative pathways.

AIMS

Actively engage in the creative process of art, craft and design to develop as effective and independent learners.
Become critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.
Develop creative, imaginative, and intuitive capabilities:
Become confident in taking risks and learn from experience when working with ideas.
Develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, and expressive skills.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT

A positive attitude and enthusiasm for the subject matter are very important. A love and talent for the subject are good starting points. To be success in GCSE Art and Design you need to be creative and have a keen eye for detail and to come up with new ideas to develop your own style. However, creative flair alone is not enough. Working independently is very important. Throughout the course you will develop excellent communication and teamwork skills.

Maintaining deadlines and completing all work is essential throughout the course. Coming to class prepared with the correct equipment is paramount. You will be given expertise guidance by your teacher in class and students must continue their learning at home to achieve the highest of grade.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

Component 1 - Part A and B (60%)
Part A: Exploratory Portfolio Part B: Investigating the Creative and Cultural Industries
The focus of Part A is to encourage students to develop their ability to experiment in the disciplines within The Elements of Art (Line, Colour, Tone etc..). Students learn through practical exploration of practitioners, the contexts they work in, and the processes they use.
The focus in Part B students develop their own ideas by responding creatively to others' work and taking into consideration the work they completed in Part A. They must explore different disciplines and develop their strengths and interests.

Component 2 (40%)
Component 2 is an externally set assignment and is a stimulus paper released at the beginning of January in Year 12. Students follow a theme set by CCEA (example of previous years' themes: Play, Pattern) students follow the same procedures set out in Component 1 Part B.

The course comprises of 2 components.

GCSE BUSINESS STUDIES

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

No specific subject background or previous experience is required for entry into a GCSE Business Studies class. However, candidates would be expected to have developed competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT in order to study at this level. Entrants will also be expected to have a genuine interest in business affairs.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

We follow the CCEA GCSE Business Studies specification which covers the main topic areas and activities of business:
Unit 1: Starting a Business: Creating a Business, Marketing and Business Operations **Unit 2**: Developing a Business: Human Resources, Business Growth and Finance The course will be delivered using case studies, investigations and simulations.

Simulation

Students will be involved in assuming different roles which are presented in business situations. Students will have opportunities to analyse and suggest solutions to a problem which may arise within the business environment.

Investigation

This involves students in the setting of aims; collecting, organising and analysing data; and in the presentation of findings and recommendations. Investigations could include activities which involve classroom research, questionnaires, interviews and field study.

Case Study

This will involve studying an account of events or a problem which may arise in a business. For example, students may be asked to examine a case study which outlines the steps taken by someone to start a business. Through the case study, students will have opportunities to identify the skills and attributes required by the entrepreneur.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Students will be expected to work consistently throughout the course and enthusiastically involve themselves in practical and theory-based activities. They should have a genuine interest in the business world and current affairs and be prepared to work both as individuals and as team members.
Throughout the course they will be encouraged to:

- Demonstrate their knowledge of the business world.
- Express ideas in words, figures and graphs
- how their understanding of business theory and themes
- Solve business problems.

EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment Weightings

Assessment Component	Nature of Assessment	A01 %	A02 %	A03 %	Component	Duration / Length	Assessment Schedule
Paper 1	External written exam. Format: structured questions.	15	13	12	**40**	1 hour 30 mins	End of Year 11
Paper 2	External written exam. Format: Three structured questions with an incline of difficulty. *Synoptic	15	13	12	**40**	1 hour 30 mins	End of Year 12
Controlled assessment	Students complete the following: • Booklet A: Planning; and • Booklet B: Communicate Findings. (Formal Exam)	5	9	6	**20**	Booklet A:12 hours Booklet B: 1 Hour Exam	To be completed during Year 12
Totals		35	35	30	**100**		

Assessment Objectives:

A01: Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding of concepts, issues and terminology
A02: Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks
A03: Analyse and evaluate evidence, makes reasoned judgements and present appropriate conclusions

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact any of the following members of staff who will be pleased to give you further information:
Mrs S McColgan, Head of Department (3BS3)
Mrs K Branagan
Mrs F Cassidy

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is the study of how computer systems work and how they are constructed and programmed. Students learn logical reasoning, algorithmic thinking and structured problem solving. Computer Science is suited to students with a good mathematical background who can think logically. Within the course there is great emphasis on programming – a skill which largely appeals to students with an interest and aptitude for STEM subjects.

ASSESSMENT

The examination board is OCR which issues GCSE grades 9-1 instead of A*- G. All components will be assessed in Year 12 as this is a linear qualification, thereby eliminating the possibility of re-sitting any components in Year 12.

Component	Weighting	Date
01 – Computer Systems	50% of GCSE	Year 12 Summer
02 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming	50% of GCSE	Year 12 Summer

TEACHING & ASSESSMENT

Students will study Computer Science for five periods per week. Homework and classroom practical tasks are integral to learning in Computer Science as there are many skills to practice and refine. In line with internal data tracking processes, students will complete class tests and assessed homework tasks throughout the year.

ADMISSIONS

We offer 2 subject pathways in the department with a view to enabling all GCSE students to have a digital skills qualification that best fits their aptitudes:

- GCSE Computer Science
- GCSE Digital Technology

Computer Science requires a high degree of mathematical ability and may not be an appropriate choice for candidates who have found the Year 10 Mathematics course challenging. Students who lack the mathematical confidence required for Computer Science are encouraged to consider GCSE Digital Technology as an alternative option. It develops practical skills in web design and database system construction. GCSE Digital Technology also offers a pathway to studying introductory programming in A-Level Digital Technology whilst avoiding the intensive challenge of programming at GCSE level.

EXPECTATIONS

A positive attitude and enthusiasm for the subject matter are very important, as is a sense of commitment to overcoming the challenges presented by Computer Science. Students will be encouraged to broaden their perspective and keep informed of current developments in Computer Science. With two examinations to complete at the end of Year 12, there will be theory teaching throughout both years of the course, and full cooperation with all deadlines is expected as standard.

PROGRESSION ROUTES

Students undertaking GCSE Computer Science can progress to:

- A-Level Computer Science
- A-Level Digital Technology

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Computer systems are everywhere. The need to maintain existing systems and create new ones is raising demand for "digital makers" – those who have the skills to do more than simply use apps. Career opportunities include web design, game development, data processing, software engineering, network management, systems analysis and teaching. However, computational thinking skills are also highly transferable and would benefit those entering careers in the sciences, mathematical or technological/engineering disciplines. Universities and employers perceive Computer Science very favourably due to its rigorous academic nature, and it can complement seemingly unrelated formal disciplines such as law, management and philosophy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Students may seek further details from the Computer Science & Digital Technology Department teaching staff:

- Ms Sullivan in 3IT1 (Head of Department)
- Mrs Madden in 3IT3

GCSE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

GCSE Digital Technology affords the learner opportunities to study a wide range of contemporary technologies. Unlike Computer Science, the emphasis in Digital Technology is on breadth of knowledge. Learners develop knowledge and skills in Internet, database and multimedia technologies as well as studying their implications for how we live.

GRADING

Grades awarded are in the range A* - G in line with other GCSE courses assessed by CCEA in Northern Ireland. The specification offers 2 routes to a GCSE qualification and the route offered in OLSPCK is known as "Route A: Multimedia". The specification describes an alternative route known as "Route B: Programming" where computer programming is the key focus, but this is not offered due to overlap with OCR GCSE Computer Science. If students wish to undertake a GCSE course where programming is taught as the key focus then they should look in detail at GCSE Computer Science.

The core theory unit (Unit 1) looks at digital technologies along with issues relating to maintaining the security of data and the legislation that governs its use. Students are entered for the Unit 1 examination at the end of Year 11, affording them the opportunity to re-sit in Year 12 if desired. The other 2 units are interconnected and teaching will commence in Year 12. Students will complete a Controlled Assessment task (Unit 3) where they will develop both a database system and a website, but they will also sit a theory examination (Unit 2) that will assess their understanding of the concepts taught throughout the Controlled Assessment. The majority of the marks are awarded for the theory papers, underlining the need for a consistently diligent approach to the subject.

TEACHING & ASSESSMENT

Digital Technology students follow the CCEA examination board. Students will study Digital Technology for five periods per week, developing websites using Dreamweaver and databases using Microsoft Access during class time in Year 12. Homework and classroom practical tasks are integral to learning in Digital Technology as there are many practical skills to teach and then follow up with written examination practice. The table below summarises the structure of the course:

Content	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
Unit 1 Digital Technology	1 hour external exam	30%	Summer of Year 11
Unit 2 Digital Development Concepts	1½ hour external exam	40%	Summer of Year 12 (*linked to Unit 3*)
Unit 3 Digital Development Practice	Controlled Assessment	30%	Throughout Year 12

The practical element of the course will give students hands-on experience enabling them to display a wide variety of skills including formal data handling in a relational database and creative multimedia asset development (graphic, sound, text and video editing).

ADMISSIONS

We offer 2 subject pathways in the department with a view to enabling all GCSE students to have a digital skills qualification that best fits their aptitudes:

- GCSE Digital Technology
- GCSE Computer Science

There are no formal entry requirements for GCSE Digital Technology in terms of prior background in Key Stage 3 ICT or any other subject.

EXPECTATIONS

A positive attitude and enthusiasm for the subject matter are very important, as is a sense of commitment to overcoming the challenges presented by new topics. It will be our pleasure as teachers to guide and assist students through these challenges, but ultimately the effort will have to come from the learner. Students will be encouraged to broaden their perspective and stay informed of current technological developments. With two examinations to complete, there will be theory teaching throughout both years of the course, and full cooperation with all deadlines is expected as standard.

PROGRESSION ROUTES

Students undertaking GCSE Digital Technology can progress to:

- A-Level Digital Technology

Admission to A-Level Computer Science at OLSPCK will not be possible as not enough of a foundation of programming content will have been formally taught.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Nowadays, we are all "digital citizens" who encounter technology regularly in everyday life. More and more of us are now "digital workers" who have to embrace technology in the workplace and in the home to shop, exercise, access services and obtain information. The increased use of computers in industry means that careers in this field encompass a wide variety of jobs, many of which do not even exist yet but will start to emerge on the job market in years to come. Career opportunities include web design, game development, data processing, software engineering, network management, systems analysis and teaching.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Students may seek further details from teaching staff in the Computer Science & Digital Technology Department

- Ms Sullivan in 3IT1 (Head of Department)
- Mrs Madden in 3IT3

GCSE DRAMA

EXAMINATION COMPONENTS

We follow the CCEA specification and offer it over five periods per week. The table below summarises the structure of the course:

Content	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
Component 1: **Devised Performance**	Controlled Assessment In response to a stimulus, students either: • devise and present a group performance; or • devise and give a design presentation All students submit a student log. Teachers submit a recording of every student's performance or presentation. Teachers mark the tasks, and CCEA moderate the results.	25%	Summer only
Component 2: **Scripted Performance** **Compulsory element:** Scripted Performance **and** Students select one element from the following five choices: • Devised Performance; • Improvisation; • Dance Drama; • Mime, or • Design Support	Controlled Assessment Using a published play script, students either: • present a group performance; or • give a design presentation Teachers mark the tasks, and CCEA moderate the results.	35%	Summer only

Component 3: Knowledge and Understanding of Drama	External written examination 1 hour 30 minutes Students answer three questions using one set text. Open book exam. For 2024/25, our set text will be Willy Russell's 'Blood Brothers'.	40%	Summer only

WHY STUDY GCSE DRAMA?

Students who have strengths in thinking creatively, working with others, and want to develop the confidence to perform do well in GCSE Drama. The majority of the work is practical and involves preparing for, participating in and evaluating performance.

If these skills are your strengths, if you are interested in exploring different perspectives and points of view, if you get on with a wide range of people and you have a commitment or enthusiasm for performing, then you will do well in the subject.

We are also increasingly able to offer places for students who want to pursue an interest in the technical side of theatre - see Miss Jackson if this is the case.

CAREERS

Drama is an essential subject for careers that involve public speaking, presentation, leading teams and managing short to long term projects. Students who go on to successful careers in Law, Medicine, finance, management and leadership will testify that the study of Drama enabled them to communicate across a range of different professional settings. GCSE Drama is often the first step into a career in the Performing Arts and the many related industries.

Anna Hughes, Head Girl 2003 - 2004

Anna is one of the many Drama students who went on to study Law at university. She obtained a first class honours degree from St Catherine's College, Cambridge and is now a practising barrister in the Inner Temple, London.

'Day to day in my job as a Barrister I undertake a variety of different cases, but the skills I employ are always the same. I have to empathise with people, understand things from a different point of view, present my case in a clear, persuasive and believable manner and I have to appear calm at all times. All those skills were developed and honed throughout my A-Level Drama course. I think it would be fair to say that, of all the subjects I studied at school, Drama was the one that best equipped me for life at the Bar.'

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A DRAMA STUDENT?

The Drama student must come to class eager to participate in all aspects of practical drama. Collaboration is an integral part of Drama.

You should come ready to share your ideas and to build on the ideas of others, and not to either dominate or fade into the background. The ability to develop and justify an original point of view is essential.

You should be prepared to rehearse after school hours when necessary, and will be expected to participate in trips to the theatre on occasional evenings or weekends.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Miss Jackson (Head of Department) or Mrs Collins

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OUTLINE OF COURSE

The course you will follow comes from the CCEA GCSE Specification in English Language. The specification provides a range of opportunities for students to develop and practice core reading, writing and oral skills and to apply these skills in a variety of real life contexts. It also complements the skills assessed in the GCSE English Literature specification. (GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature are taught together in seven periods per week.)

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

You will sit the CCEA English Language External Examination worth 60% and complete Controlled Assessment tasks worth 40%. The course has four units outlined below.

Content	Assessment	Weighting
Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media Texts Section A: Writing for a Purpose and Audience Section B: Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media texts	**External Examination** **1 hour 40 minutes**	**30%**
Unit 2: Speaking and Listening Task 1: Individual Presentation and Interaction Task 2: Discussion Task 3: Role play	**Controlled Assessment**	**20%**
Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language Task 1: The Study of Written Language Task 2: The Study of Spoken Language	**Controlled Assessment**	**20%**
Unit 4: Personal or Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-Fiction Texts Section A: Personal or Creative Writing Section B: Reading Literary and non-Fiction Text	**External Examination** **1 hour 40 minutes**	**30%**

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

You will have to always work steadily and conscientiously. The amount of homework will vary depending on the task, but you can expect some kind of homework after each English Language class. You will need to be prepared to manage your English file where you will keep notes made in class, handouts, homework etc. Preparation for Controlled Assessment is expected to be of the highest standard. In preparing for the examination, you are expected to pay careful attention to teacher feedback on practice tasks and conduct regular independent timed exam practice using past papers.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

GCSE English Language helps you to develop independent study skills that will enable you to prepare for further study or employment. An A or B grade in English Language GCSE is often stipulated as an entry requirement to a range of A-Level subject choices. By being able to select and adapt speech and writing to different situations and audiences you will be more confident when writing job applications and in job interviews; you will also be able to show more sophistication when giving presentations and speeches.

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

OUTLINE OF COURSE

The course you will follow comes from the CCEA GCSE Specification in English Literature. The course is designed to give students the opportunity to study a range of writing from a mix of local and modern writers giving the variety to suit a range of readers. There is a carefully selected variety of poems across three themed poetry anthologies to appeal to different interests. Students are encouraged to visit local theatres to experience the magic of live performance.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

You will sit the higher tier of the CCEA English Literature External Assessment worth 80% and complete a Controlled Assessment Unit worth 20%. The course has three units outlined below.

Content	Assessment	Weighting
Unit 1: The Study of Prose Section A: Novel Section B: Unseen Prose	**External Written Examination** Section A: Closed book (1 Hour) Section B: Extract (45 Minutes)	**30%**
Unit 2: The Study of Drama and Poetry Section A: Drama Section B: Poetry	**External Written Examination** Section A: Open Book (1 Hour) Section B: Open Book (1 Hour)	**50%** **(25%)** **(25%)**
Unit 3: The Study of Shakespeare	**Controlled Assessment** (2 hours)	**20%**

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

You will have to always work steadily and conscientiously. The amount of homework will vary depending on the task, but you can expect some kind of homework after each class. The study of Literature involves close analysis of the set texts as well as learning quotations. You also need to be prepared to manage your English Literature file where you will keep notes made in class, handouts, homework etc. Exam practice essays will be completed regularly, and you will be expected to use feedback as a basis for improvement in future work.

The Study of Shakespeare Controlled Assessment is a key aspect of the course and you are expected to keep personalized notes and prepare thoroughly for this extended piece of writing.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

The skills and disciplines involved in the study of English Literature make it directly relevant to a number of careers. The close study of how words create effects and convey ideas provides excellent preparation for any career where communication skills are important. Former English Literature students have pursued careers in journalism, law, broadcasting, advertising, marketing and management.

The emphasis in the study of Literature on people, their relationships and problems, has led other students into careers in the social services, politics and local government, teaching, personnel work, speech therapy, the theatre, libraries and publishing.

GCSE FOOD AND NUTRITION

The study of Food and Nutrition prepares students for the various challenges of life in a fast moving, consumer orientated, technologically demanding world. The curriculum is built upon the core values of long-term health and quality of life. The course seeks to encourage students to think critically, make informed choices, develop practical food skills and manage resources so they are enabled to lead effective lives as individuals, family members and as members of the global community.

The course is designed to promote continuity, coherence and progression within the study of Food and Nutrition and understanding of human needs in a multicultural society. It seeks to consolidate and extend the knowledge, understanding and skills developed through studying Home Economics at Key Stage 3.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- A keen interest in food and the study of nutrition.
- A very good standard of practical cookery skills.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

Examining Body – CCEA
There are two components: one externally assessed (50%) and one internally assessed (50%).

Component 1 – Food and Nutrition

External examination, 2 hours.

In this unit, students learn about the nutritional content of food and how to meet the specific nutritional and dietary needs of different groups of people. To do this they modify recipes and plan, prepare and cook dishes that reflect current government nutritional guidelines. They also study how to be an effective consumer in relation to food choice, food safety and managing resources.

Topics:

- Food provenance
- Food processing and production
- Food and nutrition for good health
- Energy and nutrients
- Nutrition and dietary needs throughout the life cycle
- Priority health issues.
- Being an effective consumer when shopping for food
- Factors effecting food choice
- Food safety
- Resource management
- Food preparation, cooking and presentation skills.

Component 2 – Practical Food and Nutrition

Controlled assessment: practical activity and a written element

In this unit, students carry out a task that develops unique transferable skills. They research the given task title and various viewpoints on it. They choose and justify a practical activity using a range of criteria. They complete the practical activity in a single session and evaluate all parts of the task.

Specification at a Glance

Content	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
Component 1: Food and Nutrition	External assessment. 2 hours 120 marks The written paper includes multiple choice questions. Short and structured questions. Questions requiring extended writing.	50%	This is a linear qualification. Assessment is available each summer at the end of Year 12
Component 2: Practical Food and Nutrition	Controlled assessment To be completed in Year 12 120 marks Students complete ONE task that involves the following • Research and viewpoints • Justification of choice • Planning • Practical activity • Evaluation Students present the written report on the task in the required format. Teachers mark the task, and CCEA moderate the results.	50%	The titles of the task will be issued on 1st Sept of the academic year in which the reward is to be made.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Food and Nutrition provides a basis for those seeking employment in a wide range of careers in Dietetics, Health Care, Hospitality, Agri-Food, Business and Marketing. It is a recognised and accepted qualification for entry to more advanced courses in Higher and Further Education.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details regarding GCSE Food and Nutrition contact:

Mrs Morgan (Head of Department)

Mrs Gallagher

Miss Caughey

GCSE FRENCH

OUTLINE OF COURSE

The specification followed is that of CCEA. The course will build on the language and skills acquired in the first three years of French and should offer students across the ability range success and pleasure in learning the language. Attention will focus on developing the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, each worth 25%. There are five periods of French per week.

There are three contexts for learning:

1: Identity, Lifestyle and Culture

Students' lives, families, homes and interests, and those of others in French-speaking countries and communities:

- Myself, my family, relationships and choices
- Social media and new technology
- Free time, leisure and daily routine
- Culture, customs, festivals and celebrations

2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest

Students' lifestyle and attitudes to environmental, social and global issues, and those of others in French-speaking countries and communities

- My local area and the wider environment
- Community Involvement
- Social and global issues
- Travel and tourism

3: School Life, Studies and the World of Work

Education and employment issues in students' own country or community and in French-speaking countries and communities

- Studies and school life
- Extra-curricular activities
- Part-time jobs and money management
- Future plans and career

Important Information

As Year 10 French provides the foundation for studying this subject at GCSE, we strongly recommend that any student who wishes to study GCSE French should have attained a high standard across all Year 10 formal assessments, including their Year 10 summer examination. Please note that GCSE French is a linear specification: there will be no controlled assessment throughout the two-year course and pupils will therefore complete all units of assessment at the end of Year 12.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Dr. M Beirne, Head of French.

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

WHY SHOULD YOU STUDY GCSE GEOGRAPHY?

Geography is the study of where places are, what they are like, what life is like in those places and how places are changing.

Geography is a flexible subject about the real world outside the classroom. It integrates many other subject areas such as Biology, Economics, History, English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Environmental Sciences and information Technology. Geography has been identified as a "facilitating subject" or an "open doors" subject. These are preferred subjects that the Russell Group of Universities have identified as opening up a wide range of options for university study. It is a subject, which can be studied at university (as a science, arts or economics degree) or in conjunction with a multitude of other subjects.

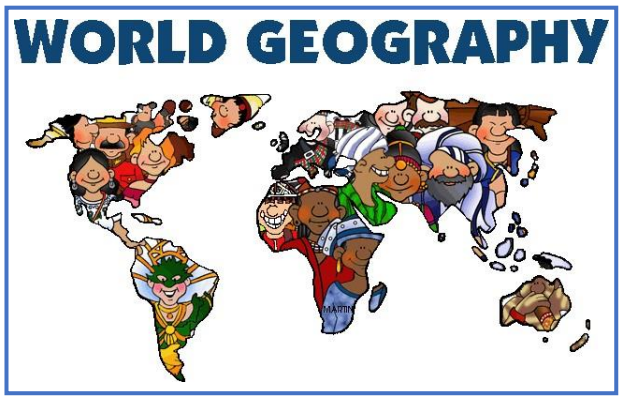
Geography is a 'living' subject, happening everywhere, and a successful subject for investigating the past, present and the future. Geography can lead to a wide and varied number of careers or to broaden your understanding of the world, its environments and its peoples.

WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

The course is based on the Modular CCEA Specification which is divided into three units;

Unit 1 Understanding Our Natural World.
You will study four themes:

- Theme A: River Environments
- Theme B: Coastal Environments
- Theme C: Our Changing weather and Climate
- Theme D: The Restless Earth (earthquakes)



Unit 2 Living in Our World
You will study four themes:

- Theme A: Population and Migration
- Theme B: Changing Urban Areas
- Theme C: Contrasts in World Development
- Theme D: Managing Our Environment

Unit 3 Fieldwork : In this unit, students become actively involved in collecting geographical data first-hand through fieldwork. Fieldwork is an essential aspect of Geography. It involves applying specific geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to a particular and real out-of-class context.

HOW IS THE COURSE ASSESSED?

The course is assessed through a combination of three examination papers:

Unit 1:	Understanding Our Natural World	(1 hr 30 mins)
Unit 2:	Living in Our World	(1 hr 30 mins)
Unit 3:	Fieldwork	(1 hr)

Opportunities for further international travel to gain firsthand geographical experiences are available to Year 11-14 Geography students with studies in the past focusing on Travel, Leisure & Tourism and Tectonic Activity. International excursions included China, Finland, Iceland and Tenerife.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Ms Heathwood (Head of Department)

GERMAN GCSE

OUTLINE OF COURSE

- The specification followed is that of CCEA Board. The course will build on the language and skills acquired at Key Stage 3.
- Attention will focus on developing the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing (25% each).
- All exams are completed at the end of Year 12 i.e no coursework or modular exams.

There are three contexts for learning:

1: Identity, Lifestyle and Culture

- Myself, my family, relationships and choices
- Social media and new technology
- Free time, leisure and daily routine
- Culture, customs, festivals and celebrations

2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest

- My local area and the wider environment
- Community Involvement
- Social and global issues
- Travel and tourism

3: School Life, Studies and the World of Work

- Studies and school life;
- Extra-curricular activities
- Part-time jobs and money management
- Future plans and career

CAREER IMPLICATIONS – WHY STUDY GERMAN?

- German is highly sought after by employers; employers prize the skills of analysis, communication and critical thinking.
- Universities look for 'A' level languages in candidates in all subjects.
- There is a huge shortage of native English speakers who speak German.
- Germany is the UK's biggest trading partner.
- German is the first language of over 100 million Europeans.
- German culture is at the heart of Europe.
- German can be combined with over 60 subjects at degree level.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Ms Mezza (Head of Department)

GCSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

CCEA GCSE Health and Social Care provides opportunity to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of what is required for working in the health, social care and early years sectors.

You will learn about:

- Human development through the main life stages and age ranges;
- Factors affecting health and development, including behavioural, environmental, physical and socio-economic factors;
- How relationships influence social and emotional development;
- How a range of factors influence self-concept;
- Major life changes and sources of support;
- How health and social care services meet a range of service users' needs;
- Barriers to health and social care services and how they can be overcome;
- Job roles of a range of practitioners and how they apply the values of care in their day-to-day work; and
- The importance of safeguarding in health, social care and early years settings.

This qualification links to Learning for Life and Work and Science and Technology Areas of Learning at Key Stage 4. The specification has two units:

- **Unit 1: Personal Development, Health and Well-Being**
- **Unit 2: Working in the Health, Social Care and Early Years Sectors.**

2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of this GCSE course.

Content	Assessment	Weightings
Unit 1: Personal Development, Health and Well-Being	External written examination 1 hour 30 mins 100 marks Students answer **three** questions that require short responses and extended writing.	50%
Unit 2: Working in the Health, Social Care and Early Years Sectors	Controlled assessment 100 marks Students complete the controlled assessment task. Teachers mark the task and we moderate the results.	50%

CEAIG: This GCSE is relevant to any careers in the Health and Education Sector such as Nursing, Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Social Work and Teaching. You should only consider it if you are interested in a vocational career path. It complements GCSE LLW, Biology, Double Award Science, PE and Food and Nutrition.

If you are interested in GCSE Health and Social Care, please speak to Miss Emer Caughey (1HE3).

GCSE HISTORY

At GCSE, the examination board used by the History Department is CCEA. Content is outlined below:

CCEA

Unit 1	Modern World Studies in Depth	Option 1 Life in Nazi Germany 1933-45
Unit 2	Outline Study	Internal Relations 1945-2003

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT – CCEA

Unit 1 **NB Students sit this exam at the end of Year 11 (60%)**	Modern World Studies	1 hr 45 minutes (60%)
Unit 2	Outline Study	1hr 15 minutes (40%)

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

In Year 11 students will be formally assessed twice in the first term, twice in the second term and once in the third term. All Year 11 students will complete a mock examination in January. In addition, students will be assessed by regular homeworks and class tests. Students must summarise and independently maintain a body of notes.

Students will be expected to set a target grade for History GCSE which will be negotiated with their teacher. Throughout the year, students and teachers will discuss success criteria to work towards achieving the target grade. Students will be encouraged to complete self-assessment of their progress and to work independently to attain their goal.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

The vital skills are an enquiring mind, an appetite for reading, a willingness to contribute to class discussion and ability to write clearly and concisely. From past experience it has been shown that if a student is organised and willing to follow the instructions of the teacher then a good GCSE grade is comfortably within his/her reach. As so much of the work entails the written word it is important that the pupil develops reading and extended writing skills. The written examination papers consist of source-based questions and written, structured questions and extended (essay) type questions. The ability to deal with course material and to be able to extract comparisons and analysis from the sources are key skills.

During the two years of GCSE we encourage and develop class discussion and the opinion of individual students on specific topics under study. There is no doubt that the skills developed during this approach (i.e. skills of analysis, perception, comprehension) are transferable and will benefit students not only in other areas of academic study but in the world of work.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

In a world where communication skills are so important GCSE History provides an ideal grounding for helping students to become competent in both the oral and written mediums. It proves to employers and higher education institutions that the important skills of constructive discussion, analysis of written, visual and oral material and the ability to form opinions based on facts have been developed. Graduates in History pursue a range of different Law, Journalism, Marketing, Sales, Public Relations, Advertising, Bank Manager, General Management, Personnel Officer, Health Service, Teaching, Lecturing, Accountancy, Insurance, Researcher, Social Work, Retail Business, Property & Estate Management. Higher Education Careers Service (CSU) 2018.

History; Accounting; Business; Criminology and Social Policy; Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging; Finance; Government; International Relations and Economics; Law; Mathematics; Medicine; Politics; Philosophy; PPE; Physiotherapy; Software Engineering; Screen Production; Spanish and International Relations; Sport and Exercise Science and Teaching.

Our 2024 Leavers have gone on to read a range of diverse subjects at University including:

Architecture, Computer Science, Criminology, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Law, Law with French/Spanish/Politics and International Relations, History and Politics and Sport and Exercise Studies.

In the last five years History A-Level students have also gone on to:

Higher Level Apprenticeships with the Deloitte Bright Start Programme, PWC and Danske Bank.

Degrees in Actuarial and Financial Studies; Accounting; Art and Design; Business; Chemical Engineering; Computer Forensics and Security; Criminology and Social Policy; Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging; Environmental Planning & Development; Finance; Football Coaching and Management; French; Government; International Relations and Economics/Conflict Studies Law; Mathematics; Medicine; Nursing; Pharmacy; Politics; Philosophy; PPE; Physiotherapy; Software Engineering; Screen Production; Spanish and International Relations; Sport and Exercise Science and Teaching.

We currently have THREE students reading History in their first, second and third year at the University of Cambridge!

A-Level History students also currently attend:

The Queen's University of Belfast; The University of Ulster; St Mary's University College; Trinity College Dublin; UCD; Galway and Limerick.

The University of Oxford; Durham; King's College, London; Manchester; Bristol; Keele; Durham; Leeds; Liverpool; Loughborough and Newcastle.

Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; St Andrew's and Strathclyde.

Swansea University.

Internationally, Elé Donegan of the class of 2021 is in Yale, USA and Shannon Melbourne of the class of 2022 in the University of Queensland.

A number of our History past students have also stood for election for local government.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details on GCSE History ask your Year 10 teacher.

10-1 Ms B Moley
10-2 Dr K McCormick
10-3 Mr JB Moran
10-4 Mr S Kelly
10-5 Ms B Moley
10-6 Ms S McGirr
10-7 Mrs E McGlone
10-8 Ms S McGirr

GCSE IRISH

Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam –

A country without a language is a country without a soul.

Pádraig Mac Piarais

AIMS:

The following are our chief aims in teaching the Irish language in Years 11 and 12:

1. To develop in our students, the ability to use Irish freely and confidently for purposes of practical communication.
2. To encourage students to regard the Irish language as their own and to use it as a normal means of communication.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

In Years 11 and 12 we aim to develop the following skills in our students: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. There are five classes in Irish each week. By the end of Year 12 students should be able to confidently use the four skills in such topic areas as Self, Family and Friends, Travel and Tourism, Health, School, Future Plans etc.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

Students sitting for the CCEA GCSE examination will be tested in listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking and writing.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Students in Years 11 and 12 are assessed twice in the Christmas term. In the Easter term Year 11 is assessed once and Years 11 and 12 sit Mock GCSE examinations. Students will be given homework each week. Homework may involve writing or learning or a combination of both. Our students are strongly encouraged to attend courses in the Donegal Gaeltacht.

WHY STUDY IRISH?

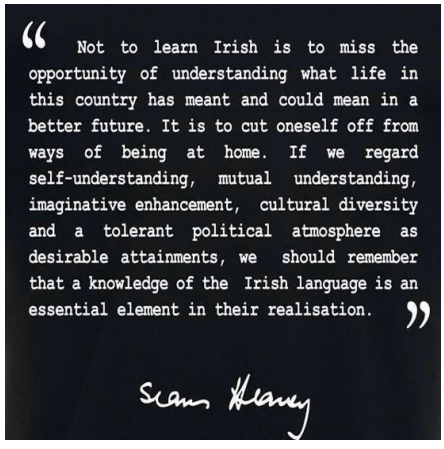
Irish has been spoken in this country for almost 2,000 years. Irish is by no means solely concerned with the past, however. It is a living language with a vibrant modern literature and one of the official languages of the European Union. There are currently almost 6,000 children in Irish-medium schools in the North. It is therefore simply incorrect to think of it as dead or dying, rather it is a living network that we want to allow our students to tap into.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Irish stands alongside all other subjects as a matriculation subject for Third Level Education and as a GCE subject equivalent to all others as an entrance requirement. In effect a very wide range of Third Level courses are available to students of our language. Irish is a very valuable asset, particularly in teaching, broadcasting, journalism, and the Civil Service in both jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

From the point of view of both the general education and development of the student, we believe that Irish is a hugely important subject. By learning Irish, the students will have a better appreciation of both their heritage and their identity.



GCSE LEARNING FOR LIFE AND WORK

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

This GCSE is compulsory. The specification naturally progresses from the study of Local and Global Citizenship, Personal Development and Employability at Key Stage 3 and offers the opportunity to build on the skills and capabilities developed through the delivery of the Key Stage 3 curriculum in NI.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

The GCSE is unitised. There are three areas of study – Local and Global Citizenship, Personal Development and Employability. There are three written exams (20% each) that assess all three areas of study. There is one controlled assessment task (40%). The examining board for Learning for Life and Work is CCEA. The latest version of the specification can be viewed and downloaded for the CCEA website at **www.ccea.org.uk**.

CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT

LLW GCSE is a vocational GCSE and so has 40% Controlled Assessment. Students complete one task worth 40%. The task is started in October of Year 12 and usually completed by February mid-term.

Students find task setting and taking very demanding and so it is essential that they attend class during planning, preparation and writing. Students are allowed to complete research outside the classroom but must complete the actual task under high level supervision. This requires skills of self-management and prioritisation.

Please note it is essential that students are present in class during completion of Controlled Assessment and must prioritise all extra-curricular activities during this time.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Throughout the course the progress of students is closely monitored. This policy of continuous assessment involves regular homework and class tests. Self-assessment and peer assessment will also be a common feature alongside group work, case studies, and short-answer, structured, stimulus response and free response questions.

Students will be expected to set a target grade for LLW GCSE which will be negotiated with their teacher. Throughout the year, students and teachers will discuss success criteria to work towards achieving the target grade. Students will be encouraged to complete self-assessment of their progress and to work independently to attain their goal.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Dedication and serious application to work by students is essential. In addition to study of set texts and notes, it is advised that students remain aware of current affairs. Interest in newspapers, magazines and documentary television and radio programmes is highly recommended.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

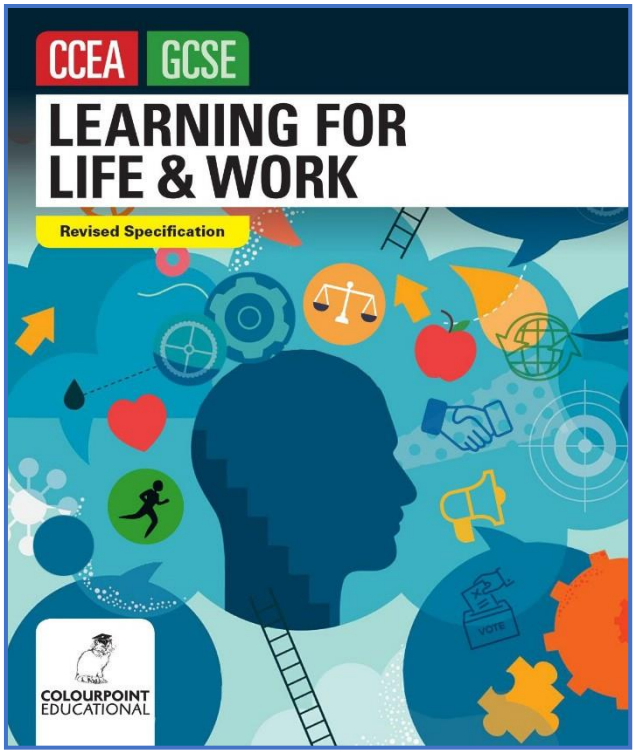
The study of Learning for Life and Work provides opportunities for the application of knowledge, understanding and skills through a range of theoretical and practical contexts. The GCSE will help young people to develop as contributors to society, the economy and the environment. Through the study of real life situations and scenarios students are provided with opportunities to explore and express their own values and attitudes concerning human rights, social and economic responsibilities and develop an appreciation of the needs and perspectives of others.

The specification is designed to enable students to develop their understanding of the challenges and opportunities of cultural, political, economic, personal and social issues in contemporary society and the skills associated with critical evaluation, choices, informed decision making and action. This specification is designed to allow focus on contexts and themes relevant to Northern Ireland. As a basis for further study there are strong links with courses in History, Government and Politics and Home Economics.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact:

Ms A McGowan (Head of LLW)



GCSE MATHEMATICS

AIMS OF THE COURSE

GCSE Mathematics aims to encourage students to develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts and to use their mathematical knowledge to make logical and reasoned decisions in solving problems.

GCSE Mathematics is required to enter almost any area of work but is particularly suitable for: accounting, medicine, engineering, forensic pathology, finance, business, consultancy, teaching, IT, games development, scientific research, programming, the civil service, design, construction, astrophysics and many other careers.

PATHWAYS FOR STUDYING MATHEMATICS AT GCSE

All students must study GCSE Mathematics however there are 2 pathways available depending on your mathematical ability:

1. Students with a greater flair for Mathematics study GCSE Mathematics in Year 11 (Fast Track) and GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12 (2 GCSEs awarded)
2. Other students study GCSE Mathematics throughout Year 11 and Year 12

Through careful consideration of performance in junior school examinations the Mathematics Department will issue a recommendation in early June on the appropriate pathway. This will indicate which modules should be studied in Year 11.

There are three options:

Option	Y11 Modules	Maximum Y11 Grade	Y12 Modules	Maximum Y12 Grade
Fast Track	M4 and M8	A*	Further Mathematics	A*
M4	M4	A	M8 or M7	A* (M8), A (M7)
M3	M3	B	M7 or M6	B (M7 or M6)

The Fast Track option is a demanding course which is appropriate for those students who displayed a aptitude for the subject in Year 10 Mathematics. Students will be expected to handle a faster pace and to practice independently. Following completion of GCSE Mathematics, students will study GCSE Further Mathematics in Year 12.

The M4 and M3 options form the traditional pathway to a GCSE Mathematics grade and will allow students to realise their potential at a more suitable pace. Whilst the M3 option carries a maximum grade of B, the content is less challenging than M4.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The College requires all students to sit a Mathematics examination at the end of Year 12.

If you wish to study **A-Level Mathematics**, GCSE students are required to achieve:

- a minimum grade B in GCSE Further Mathematics, if studied

OR

- a minimum grade A in GCSE Mathematics from Assessment Units M4 and M8
- In addition to the grade requirements, it is essential that parents and students consider the raw exam paper scores achieved in GCSE Mathematics. The department **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** students considering AS Mathematics achieve **a raw exam score of at least 60%** in Assessment Units M4 and M8.

If you wish to study **A-Level Further Mathematics**, GCSE students are required to achieve:

- a grade A* in GCSE Mathematics

AND

- a grade A* in GCSE Further Mathematics

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GCSE FURTHER MATHEMATICS

GCSE Further Mathematics is considered a natural steppingstone between GCSE and A-Level Mathematics. It is specifically designed for students who have an above average mathematical ability, enjoy problem-solving and who wish to extend their knowledge of Mathematics.

Students are asked to **indicate their interest** in studying Fast Track Mathematics and therefore GCSE Further Mathematics **by ticking the box in their GCSE Option form**.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Mr O'Sullivan (Head of Department) or please speak to your Mathematics teacher.

GCSE MUSIC

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students considering GCSE Music must have achieved a minimum ABRSM Grade 2 standard in Voice or Instrument and should be performing at Grade 5 standard for the April of their examination year. Grade 2 Theory of Music is strongly advised and theory grades should continue in line with practical examinations. Students must be an active member of a group, such as Orchestra or Choir, in school or outside but preferably both.

PROGRESSION TO A-LEVEL

Please note that if students are planning to progress to A-level Music following their study of GCSE Music, they will be expected to have completed Grade 5 Theory and be performing at Grade 6 standard.

Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of this GCSE course:

Content	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
Component 1: Composing	**Component 1: Composing and appraising (controlled assessment)** Candidates create **two** compositions. One is in response to a pre-release stimulus; one is free choice. The composition portfolio's length should be 3 -6 minutes in total. This **controlled assessment task** is marked by the teacher and CCEA moderate the results.	30%	This is a linear qualification. Assessment is available each summer.
Component 2: Performing and Appraising	**Component 2: Performing and appraising (controlled assessment)** Candidates must present **one** solo and **one** ensemble performance. Performance last no longer than **6** minutes in total. Candidates discuss and evaluate performances with the visiting examiner. Discussion lasts approximately **3** minutes.	35% Performances: 30% Discussion: 5%	Summer only

Component 3: Listening and Appraising

Content	Assessment	Weighting	Availability
Component 3: Listening and Appraising	**Component 3: Listening and appraising (external assessment)** External Written Examination **1 hour 30mins** Students answer questions based on familiar and unfamiliar music relating to Areas of Study. **I. Western Classical Music 1600 – 1910** **II. Film Music** **III. Musical Traditions of Ireland** **IV. Popular Music 1980 – Present Day**	35%	Summer only

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT (CCEA)

Of the three activities, Listening and Performing are assessed by examination at the end of each term. For composition you will need to compose 2 pieces to be presented by Easter of Year 12. The listening test will last 1 hour 30 mins and here you will identify pieces of music you have studied, answer questions on instruments playing, themes and their varied appearances and other aspects of the music. You will be asked to comment on music from different periods and of various styles, and to compare and contrast different versions or performances of the same piece of music.

For performance many of you will want to know what level or grade is required on your instrument. Well, you need not necessarily have passed any particular grade to do GCSE; but you should be aiming for Grade 5 standard by the end of the course. At this level you can achieve the highest marks possible for the performance component.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

In the College examinations we will aim to tell you how you are coping with the work so far covered. So, you will have a listening test on the music studied to date; you will be given an assessment mark for your progress at composition; and you will play two pieces on your instrument.

HOMEWORK

Regular work is expected at each of the three activities:

- **Listening:** You will be given recordings of all music to be studied and will be expected to listen to them regularly. This will require at least 2 hours weekly listening.

- **Composing:** You will be set composition work weekly. Guidance will be given during Music class. You will need to spend about 2 hours per week on this work at home.
- **Performance:** If you are having a weekly lesson on your instrument outside or through school you should find you will cover the requirements automatically. Of course the GCSE practical exam will be further incentive for you to practise daily!

If you are studying an instrument by yourself, e.g. guitar or drums, you will be guided as to the most appropriate songs or pieces to practise and perform. It is of course advisable to have lessons with an experienced tutor to help you through this part of the examination.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

This question has been partly answered in previous sections. At least you should now have a clear idea of what the work will be like, what standards you are aiming for and how much time you need to allow in the week for your music studies.

However, have you ever stopped to think what it means to be a music student? Certainly this involves producing homework and practising regularly. But there is more to it than that. I assume that if you choose to study GCSE music you like and enjoy music – that it is something of a hobby to you. So, to help your studies and to open the door to many hours of pleasure I will expect you to join one of the college choirs, orchestras or folk groups.

In addition, it will be helpful to:

- Go to public concerts (we may go to one or two as a Group);
- Listen to the radio – especially Radio 3, Classic FM, and Jazz and Folk on other stations;
- Join your local library to make use of any records, scores and books on music they have; (remember that students may borrow CDs from the school library)
- Form partnerships with friends to make music, e.g. if you play flute or violin, join with a pianist to play duets.
- Visit the many music and arts websites on the Internet.

It is my experience that those students who are prepared to take part in such activities make the most successful candidates and, perhaps more importantly, enjoy their music-making as a stimulating and rewarding hobby.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

You will be aware of the careers for which a music qualification is a necessary passport. These include:

- Music Therapy
- Teaching Music – both class music and instrumental tuition;
- Music Performance – singing or instrumental career, member of orchestra or band;
- Sound-recording - which could include work in a recording studio or broadcasting company.
- Music Retail Trade – selling/demonstrating instruments and equipment.

But here are some careers for which music qualifications can prove surprisingly valuable:

- Primary Teaching – Primary schools where music is now a compulsory subject are always keen to accept musically qualified candidates to help with music in school and co-ordinate music on the curriculum; many of them employ a full-time music specialist.

- Arts Administration – there are many full and part –time posts locally and with the Arts Council dealing with the organisation of concerts, theatre and other arts events.

- Librarianship – many branch libraries will have arts and music sections; librarians often have links with educational and social projects involving performance arts.

In addition, many people have in the past, used a higher music qualification as a passport to employment in the Civil Service, business and other spheres.
It has long been recognised that the discipline necessary for the study of music is a valuable training for the application to other practical and academic skills. For example, studies in Hungary have shown that placing music in the centre of the curriculum enhances literacy and numeracy skills

So, do not think that the only reason for studying GCSE Music is to enter the music profession; there are a thousand good reasons for taking such a course – and most of them are to do with your development as a balanced and complete person.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Mrs McCanny, Miss McErlane and Mrs Magee have studied music at tertiary level, so feel free to ask them about degree courses.

They also have first-hand knowledge of such issues as composing, performance, computers and music, music with maths, music with languages and music education. In addition, our part-time instrumental teachers have great experience of performing, peripatetic teaching, working with Education and Library Boards and other matters.

Please feel free to ask advice from any of these staff, full or part-time; you will find that they will be delighted to help you.

GCSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

EDUQAS GCSE Physical Education offers an exciting opportunity for students who love being active and are eager to deepen their understanding of the science and theory behind sport and exercise.

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

This course is for students who:

- Are actively involved in at least **two sports** on a regular basis or represent a **club in two sports**.
- Have a keen interest in learning about the **theoretical aspects of sport**, including anatomy, fitness, training principles, sports psychology and socio-cultural issues in sport.
- Have demonstrated **commitment, dedication, and enthusiasm** for the PE programme during their time in junior school.

WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

The GCSE PE course combines **practical performance** with **theoretical knowledge**, covering areas such as:

- How the body works during exercise (e.g., muscular, skeletal, and cardiovascular systems).
- The importance of fitness, training, and diet for peak performance.
- The psychology behind sports performance and motivation.
- Key issues in sport, including ethics, technology, and participation.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

Students will be assessed on both their **practical skills** and their understanding of **sports theory**, which includes 1 written exam and a piece of coursework (more information below). You'll also have the chance to apply your learning to your own sporting performance.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

GCSE PE can lead to A-level courses, university degrees in sport science, physiotherapy, or teaching and careers in coaching, fitness, or professional sports.

HOW ARE YOU ASSESSED?

The course is assessed through a combination of a written exam, practical performance in 3 activities, and a piece of coursework:

1. **Written Examination: 2 hours, 120 marks (worth 60% of GCSE grade)**
    - One paper sat at the end of Year 12, testing theoretical knowledge on topics such as anatomy, fitness, psychology, and socio-cultural issues in sport.

2. **Practical Assessment: 3 sports from the EDUQAS Specification (30%)**

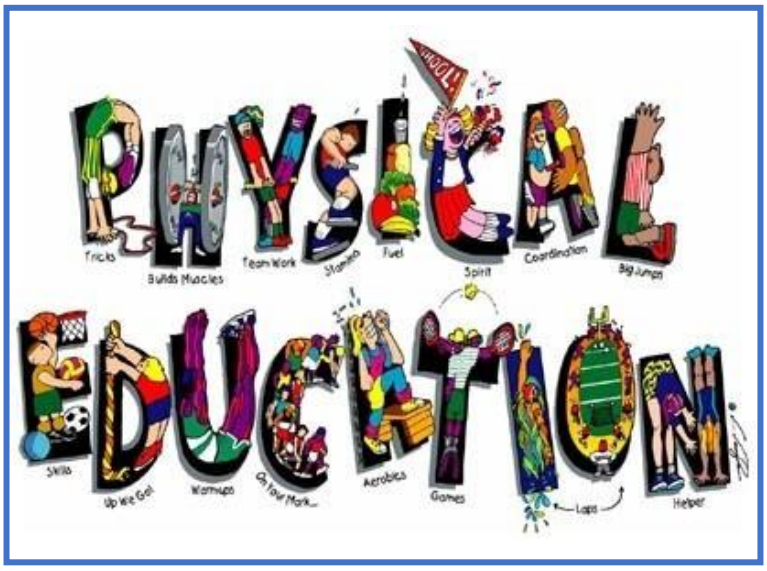
- Students are assessed in **three sports**, with each activity worth **10%** of the overall grade.
- Students must select:
  - **Two team sports** and **one individual sport** *or*
  - **One team sport** and **two individual sports**.
- Assessments are conducted through **internal standardisation** and **external moderation** to ensure fairness and accuracy of marking.
- ***Students must only select the sporting activities which are outlined clearly in the EDUQAS specification. Students should study this closely before making a decision to proceed as not all sports are included for assessment. This can be found on the following link:*** GCSE Specification Template

3. **Coursework: Analysis and Evaluation of Performance (10%)**

- Students will design, analyse performance, and create a training programme using their theoretical knowledge. This component allows students to apply their understanding in a practical and analytical way.

In total, **40% of the course is considered non-exam assessment** (practical performance and coursework). **Grades will be offered through numbers 9-1.**

If you have any questions regarding the EDUQAS GCSE course, please see Mr McGaharan or Miss McGourty.



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

OUTLINE OF COURSE

All students are entered for the CCEA Religious Studies examination. Students follow a modular course over two years which is made up of two sections:

- The Christian Church (CCEA Unit 2) – assessed in the summer of Year 11
- An Introduction to Christian Ethics (CCEA Unit 6) – assessed in the summer of Year 12

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

The scheme of assessment will comprise of **two externally assessed written papers**, one paper on each of the above sections. Each examination paper is of 1 hour 30 minutes' duration and carries 50% of the total marks. Throughout the written papers, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills. There is no internal assessment as in the form of Controlled Assessment or Coursework.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment is on-going and is comprised of:

- Regular homework (there will be one main piece of work each week)
- Formal assessments focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Such a student should have an enquiring mind, a desire to see and study life at a deeper level and sensitivity to the views of others. Religious Studies seeks to promote a deeper understanding and awareness of the Christian faith and to see the relevance of it in the lives of its adherents and wider society. At the same time, it seeks to promote an awareness of and respect for the sincerely held beliefs of others.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

GCSE Religious Studies requires the ability to examine important questions with an open mind, to weigh up arguments and arrive at reasoned conclusions. A significant part of the external assessment is evaluation which requires students to weigh up issues by examining diverse interpretations and then offering informed judgement. Such skills as these, and attitudes they promote, are of course relevant to the many jobs which require an ability to analyse issues, evaluate situations, develop an understanding of the viewpoints of others and the ability to relate to people of different backgrounds.

These are key transferrable skills which equip students well in terms of adapting to the challenges of A-Level. GCSE Religious Studies is well placed to contribute to any career path. A significant number of students do move from GCSE to the study of Religion at GCE level with these students moving onto careers in Medicine, Veterinary Science, Law, Teaching, Food Science, Economics, Business Management, Computing, Journalism, Engineering, Sports Studies, Accountancy, Physiotherapy and Psychology as well as a range of other disciplines.

The quality of the product offered at both GCSE Religious Studies and A-Level Religious Studies in the College is well known and respected.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If any student requires further information on GCSE Religious Studies they should speak to their RE teacher. Parents who wish to discuss GCSE Religious Studies are welcome to do so at the Options Day.

SCIENCE: GCSE DOUBLE AWARD

OUTLINE OF COURSE **Board: CCEA**

The GCSE Double Award specification is delivered by three specialist teachers in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It is called Double Award Science because it leads to a double GCSE grade. Students will be able to receive two different grades in their Double Award Science qualification, such as A* A*, A*A, AB, etc. **Choosing Double Award Science will gain you a qualification in all 3 Sciences by only using 2 of your GCSE options, giving you more choice in the other subjects you study at GCSE level. You can progress to A Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics if you achieve good enough results in Double Award Science.**

Double Award Science is delivered in 10 periods per week and consists of SIX externally assessed modules. Three of these modules (one from each Science subject) will be completed at the end of Year 11. The remaining three modules will be completed at the end of Year 12 when practical skills will also be externally assessed.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

Year 11 Specification at a glance

Unit	Weighting	Availability
Biology Unit 1: Cells, Living Processes and Biodiversity	11%	Summer & November
Chemistry Unit 2: Structures, Trends, Chemical Reactions, Quantitative Chemistry and Analysis	11%	Summer & November
Physics Unit 1: Motion, Force, Moments, Energy, Density, Kinetic Theory, Radioactivity, Nuclear Fission and Fusion	11%	Summer & November

Year 12 Specification at a glance

Unit	Weighting	Availability
Biology Unit 2: Body Systems, Genetics, Micro-organisms and Health	14%	Summer only
Chemistry Unit 2: Further Chemical Reactions, Rates and Equilibrium, Calculations and Organic Chemistry	14%	Summer only
Physics Unit 2: Waves, Light, Electricity, Magnetism, Electromagnetism and Space Physics.	14%	Summer only

External Assessment of Practical Skills	Weighting	Availability
Booklet A Students carry out three pre-release practical activities, (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) in the final year of study and these are externally marked by CCEA. There are two tiers of entry.	7.5%	December 1st to May 1st of Year 12
Booklet B External written examination. Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations, all set in a practical context for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. There are two tiers of entry.	17.5%	Summer only

Assessment of Practical Skills

*S*tudents are expected to have completed 18 prescribed practicals (six in each discipline) over the two-year course. Their knowledge of these will be assessed in a separate practical paper. It will consist of questions about planning and carrying out any of the prescribed practical activities, analysis and evaluation, together with more general questions about any practical situation that arises from the specification.

TIER OF ENTRY

There are two tiers of entry in GCSE Double Award Science, Higher and Foundation.
Further details on tier of entry will be made available to parents and students during term 2 of Year 11 and 12.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Our College policy of continuous assessment involves, open and closed questioning, class presentations, homework, submission of practical reports and frequent class tests. Students will be expected to complete these to the highest standard and progress will be closely monitored by all three specialist teachers throughout the course.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Students of GCSE Double Award Science should be prepared to work hard throughout the two-year course. They will be provided with information in a variety of formats and will experience a wide range of teaching approaches. Students will be expected to develop their study skills and will be encouraged to utilise all available resources. The level of success experienced will ultimately be determined by the attitude and dedication of the student.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Double Award Science GCSE is a good choice if you are unsure about your future career and would like to keep your options open. A course based on this specification should help to facilitate the study of Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and related subjects at a more advanced level, for example Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Physics, Chemistry, and Biology.
The higher GCSE M4 and M8 Maths papers will be a requirement for those pursuing AS Physics due to the demanding mathematical content of the course.

For those progressing directly into employment, a GCSE in Double Award Science is relevant, not only to the fields of science and engineering, but also to areas of commerce and public service that value problem-solving and practical skills.

FURTHER INFORMATION

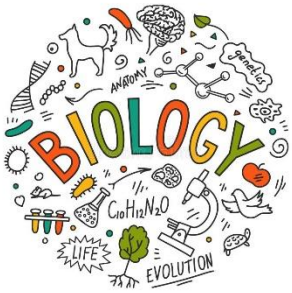
Double Award Science is a very popular GCSE in the College and we consistently achieve high grades:

If any student requires further information on GSCE Double Award Science they should speak to their Year 10 teachers or any of the Science teachers listed below. They will be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you may have.

Miss L McCluskey (Head of Biology)
Dr N Browne (Head of Physics)
Mr J McAuley (DA Science Coordinator)
Mr C Hamill (Head of Chemistry)
Mrs A Walker
Ms K Mulgrew
Ms R Laverty
Mr H Thompson
Miss E O'Donnell

Mr J Davey (Head of Careers)
Mrs P Bolger
Mr H Lynn
Mr N Boyle
Mr C McGonnell
Mr N Begley (Head of Junior Science)
Ms U Maguire
Miss C Race

Or visit **http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications**, to obtain a Students Guide for the GCSE Double Award Science Course



GCSE BIOLOGY

OUTLINE OF COURSE Exam Board: CCEA

The course is delivered in five periods per week and consists of three externally assessed modules.

- Unit 1 will be completed at the end of Year 11.
- Unit 2 and Unit 3 will be completed at the end of Year 12

This specification encourages students to be inspired, motivated and challenged by following a broad, coherent course of study with a strong practical element. It allows them to develop their curiosity about the living world and provides an insight into and experience of how science works. It enables students to engage with Biology in their everyday lives and to make informed choices about further study in Biology related disciplines and other associated careers.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

Specification at a glance - https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/Support/General/2019/Snapshot.pdf
Student guide - https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/Support/General/2020/Student%20Guide.pdf

Unit	Weighting	Availability
Unit 1: Cells, Living Processes and Biodiversity	35%	Summer only
Unit 2: Body systems, Genetics, Micro-organisms and Health	40%	Summer only
Unit 3: Practical skills	25%	Summer only

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Our College policy of continuous assessment involves open and closed questioning, homework, class presentations, submission of practical reports and frequent class tests using past paper questions. Students will be expected to complete these to the highest standard and progress will be closely monitored throughout the course.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Students of GCSE Biology should be prepared to work hard throughout the two- year course. They will be provided with information in a variety of formats and will experience a wide range of teaching approaches. Students will be expected to develop their study skills and will be encouraged to utilise all available resources. The level of success experienced will ultimately be determined by the attitude and dedication of the student.

Students should appreciate that the course is extensive in terms of content, and they will be expected to learn material in considerable detail to achieve a top grade. It is also important to note that students will be completing several prescribed practical tasks throughout the year so a high level of attendance will be essential.

GCSE Biology is very popular in the College and our students consistently achieve high grades. For more information, please feel free to talk to any of the Biology staff;

Miss L McCluskey (Head of Biology), Mrs F. Knight (Senior leader) Mr N Boyle (Health and Wellbeing coordinator and Assistant to head of Careers), Mr J Davey (Head of Careers) Mrs U Maguire (communications officer, PR and Yearbook coordinator), Miss R Laverty (RSE coordinator)

GCSE CHEMISTRY

OUTLINE OF COURSE **Exam Board: CCEA**

We study the CCEA GCSE Chemistry specification. It is delivered in five periods per week and consists of two externally assessed modules:

- Unit 1 will be examined at the end of Year 11.
- Unit 2 will be examined at the end of Year 12 when practical skills will also be externally assessed.

This specification encourages students to be inspired, motivated and challenged by following a broad, coherent course of study with a strong practical element. It allows them to develop their curiosity about the material world and provides an insight into and experience of how science works. It enables students to engage with Chemistry in their everyday lives and to make informed choices about further study in Chemistry related disciplines and other associated careers.

Progression from GCSE to AS/A2 Chemistry

GCSE Chemistry (as a separate science) is a superior preparation for A-Level than the Chemistry section of Double Award Science. While Double Award is acceptable for entry to premium courses, students from a Double Award background sometimes struggle with the demands of A-Level Chemistry. AS/A2 Chemistry is a challenging course and many students find the mathematical content particularly demanding. **The higher GCSE M4 and M8 Mathematics papers will be a requirement for those pursuing AS Chemistry.** Although not an entry requirement, it is helpful if students have studied Further Mathematics. Furthermore, those students studying Mathematics at AS level find it supports the skills required in AS Chemistry.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

Specification at a glance

Unit	Weighting	Availability
Unit 1: Structures, Trends, Chemical reactions / Quantitative Chemistry and Analysis.	35%	Every Summer
Unit 2: Further chemical reactions, rates and equilibrium, calculations and organic chemistry.	40%	Every Summer
Unit 3: Practical skills	25%	Year 12 Terms 2 & 3

External Assessment of Practical Skills	Weighting	Availability
Booklet A Students carry out two pre-release practical activities in the final year of study which are externally assessed by CCEA. There are two tiers of entry.	7.5%	Year 12 Term 2
Booklet B Students complete an external written exam where they answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry.	17.5%	Year 12 Term 3

Assessment of Practical Skills

Students are expected to have completed 12 prescribed practicals over the two-year course. Their knowledge of these practicals will be assessed in a separate practical paper. It will consist of questions about planning and carrying out any of the prescribed practical activities, analysis and evaluation, together with more general questions about any practical situation that arises from the specification.

TIER OF ENTRY

There are two tiers of entry in GCSE Chemistry: Higher and Foundation.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

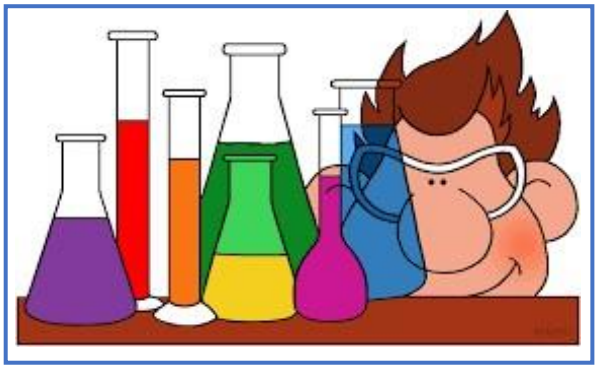
Our College policy of continuous assessment involves frequent class tests, homework, class presentations and submission of practical reports. Students will be expected to complete these to the highest standard and progress will be closely monitored throughout the course.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

GCSE Chemistry is an extremely challenging subject. The entry profile of this examination is almost exclusively from grammar schools and the standard is exceptionally high. Students should appreciate that the course is extensive in terms of content and they will be expected to learn material in considerable detail in order to achieve a top grade. However, learning alone will not ensure a high grade is achieved. High level problem-solving of complex concepts and manipulation of quantitative data are standard skills required in GCSE Chemistry.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Chemistry is essential if you wish to study medicine, veterinary, dentistry, pharmacy and some engineering courses. Choosing chemistry as a degree can provide career opportunities that are both stimulating and rewarding. Graduate jobs related to chemistry include: analytical chemist, biomedical scientist, colour technologist, research scientist, materials engineer, quality assurance officer, forensic scientist, patent agent, scientific journalist, toxicologist, teacher or lecturer. Chemists are frequently employed in management, commerce and industry.



FURTHER INFORMATION

GCSE Chemistry is very popular in the College and our students consistently achieve high results. For more information, please feel free to talk to any of the Chemistry staff. They are:

Mr C Hamill (Head of Department)
Mr Begley (Head of Junior Science)
Mr J McAuley (Double Award Coordinator)
Mr McGonnell
Miss O' Donnell
Mrs Walker

or visit **http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications** to obtain a Students Guide for the GCSE Chemistry course.

GCSE PHYSICS

OUTLINE OF COURSE **Exam Board: CCEA**

The Revision GCSE Physics specification will be delivered in five periods per week and consists of three externally assessed modules including the practical aspect of the course;

- Unit 1 will be completed at the end of Year 11.
- Unit 2 will be completed at the end of Year 12 when the Unit 3 practical work will also be assessed.

There is no overlap in content between the Year 11 and 12 modules so students should aim to optimise their performance in the Year 11 Physics exam. This specification encourages students to be inspired, motivated and challenged by following a broad, coherent course of study with a strong practical element.

Progression from GCSE to AS/A2 Physics

Physics is the study of Matter and Energy and students are involved in a lot of practical work. The nature of the subject also allows for discussion and research. It is a challenging subject and students are often required to manipulate mathematical equations. **The higher GCSE M4 and M8 Maths papers will be a requirement for those pursuing AS Physics due to the demanding mathematical content of the course.** Those students studying Mathematics at AS level find it a great help to their proficiency skills required for Physics. **Mathematics at A-Level is often a requirement for studying Physics / Engineering at third level.**

Physics encourages students to develop their curiosity about the physical world and provides insight into and experience of how science works. The course enables students to apply their knowledge and skills in everyday situations and to make informed choices about further study in Physics related disciplines and other associated careers.

EXAMINATION BOARD ASSESSMENT

Specification at a glance

Unit	Weighting	Availability
Unit 1: Motion, Force, Moments, Energy, Density, Kinetic Theory, Radioactivity, Nuclear Fission and Fusion	37.5 %	Every Summer
Unit 2: Waves, Light, Electricity, Magnetism, Electromagnetism and Space Physics.	37.5 %	Every Summer
Unit 3: Practical Skills	25%	Summer Terminal

Unit 3 - External Assessment of Practical Skills	Weighting	Availability
Booklet A Students carry out two pre-release practical activities in the final year of study which are externally assessed by CCEA. There are two tiers of entry.	7.5%	Term 2
Booklet B Students complete an external written exam where they answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations There are two tiers of entry.	17.5%	Each summer

TIER OF ENTRY

There are two tiers of entry in GCSE Physics, Higher and Foundation. Further details on tier of entry will be made available to parents and students during term 2 of Year 11 and 12.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Our College policy of continuous assessment involves open and closed questioning, homework, class presentations, submission of practical reports and frequent class tests using past paper questions. Students will be expected to complete these to the highest standard and progress will be closely monitored throughout the course.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Students of GCSE Physics should be prepared to work hard throughout the two-year course. They will be provided with information in a variety of formats and will experience a wide range of teaching approaches. Students will be expected to develop their study skills and will be encouraged to utilise all available resources. The level of success experienced will ultimately be determined by the attitude and dedication of the student.

Students should appreciate that the course is extensive in terms of content and they will be expected to learn material in considerable detail and be able to apply their knowledge to any given situation in order to achieve a top grade. It is also important to note that students will be completing practice assessment tasks throughout the year so a high level of attendance will be essential.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

Through the study of Physics, you will gain a variety of skills including the ability to:

- Analyse and evaluate evidence;
- Think and plan logically;
- Work effectively with data;
- Support arguments;
- Appreciate the wider effects that Science has on many aspects of our lives.

These skills are directly transferable to a wide range of careers, but those students planning to study dentistry, medicine or engineering should be aware that they will require some study of Physics at GCSE level, either as part of Double Award Science or taken separately. GCSE Physics provides an excellent foundation for A-Level Physics.

Physics is a good choice of subject if students wish to continue studies in Engineering, Medicine, Industrial Research and Development, Information Technology, Scientific Research and Analysis, Laboratory Investigator and Technology Analyst. Other opportunities include Business and Finance, Management, Teaching, Lecturing and Further Study - MSc or PhD.

FURTHER INFORMATION

GCSE Physics is very popular in the College and our students consistently achieve high results. For more information, please feel free to talk to any of the Physics staff;

Dr Browne (Head of Physics)
Mrs P Bolger
Ms K Mulgrew
Ms C Race
Mr H Thompson

Or visit **http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications** to obtain a Students Guide for the GCSE Physics course and www.UCAS.com for entry requirements for particular courses.

GCSE SPANISH

The syllabus/specification followed is that of CCEA Board. The course will build on the language and skills acquired in the first three years of Spanish and should offer students across the ability range success and pleasure in learning the language. In keeping with the GCSE specification, attention will focus on developing the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

There are three contexts for learning:

1: Identity, Lifestyle and Culture

Students' lives, families, homes and interests, and those of others in Spanish-speaking countries and communities:

- Myself, my family, relationships and choices
- Social media and new technology
- Free time, leisure and daily routine
- Culture, customs, festivals and celebrations

2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest

Students' lifestyle and attitudes to environmental, social and global issues, and those of others in Spanish-speaking countries and communities

- My local area and the wider environment
- Community Involvement
- Social and global issues
- Travel and tourism

3: School Life, Studies and the World of Work

Education and employment issues in students' own country or community and in Spanish-speaking countries and communities

- Studies and school life;
- Extra-curricular activities
- Part-time jobs and money management
- Future plans and careers.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Year 10 Spanish provides the foundation for studying this subject at GCSE level, we therefore **strongly recommend** that any student planning to study GCSE Spanish should have attained a high standard across all Year 10 formal assessments including their Year 10 Summer examination.
Please note that GCSE Spanish is a linear specification, this means there will be **no opportunity** to complete a component in Year 11 or re-sit in Year 12.
There will be **no controlled assessment** throughout the two-year course, students will therefore complete all units of assessment in the summer of Year 12.

GCSE TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The course will consist of theory and practical sessions. It is important that the student has a good mathematics and science background (especially physics). The subject also requires an ability to communicate ideas through various technical and graphical means. If the subject is oversubscribed, selection will be based upon Year 10 end of year assessment.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

The specification outlines a comprehensive approach to technology education, focusing on design, creativity, and problem-solving. Key areas include:

1. **Design and Creativity**: Encourage imaginative thinking and analysis of existing solutions.
2. **Communication**: Develop skills to express design ideas using various media.
3. **Hands-On Skills**: Engage with diverse materials and technologies to create high-quality prototypes.
4. **Multi-Dimensional Considerations**: Address aesthetic, technical, economic, environmental, ethical, and social implications in design.
5. **Cost Awareness**: Understand the financial aspects of product development.
6. **Health and Safety**: Promote safe working practices.
7. **Product Analysis**: Encourage critical analysis of existing products and solutions that enhance quality of life.
8. **Decision-Making Skills**: Foster individual and collaborative decision-making.
9. **Terminology**: Ensure familiarity with relevant technological terms.
10. **Cultural Reflection**: Explore how design influences society and lifestyles.
11. **Integration of Skills**: Combine practical skills with theoretical knowledge to produce quality products.
12. Overall, this specification aims to develop responsible, innovative technologists equipped to address real-world needs while considering ethical and environmental impacts.

CCEA Examination Board Assessment Overview

Unit 1: Technology and Design Core Content

This compulsory unit covers designing, manufacturing, electronics, mechanical control systems, computer control systems, and pneumatic systems.

Unit 2: Optional Areas of Study

Students can choose Option B: Mechanical and Pneumatic Control Systems. This unit includes synoptic assessment, building on knowledge from Unit 1 to enhance overall understanding.

Unit 3: Design and Manufacturing Project

This compulsory unit accounts for 50% of the qualification and involves approximately 40 hours of work. Students must design and manufacture a product based on one of two themes provided by CCEA each May.

- **Design Portfolio (30%)**:
  - Maximum of ten A3 sheets (one side only) or equivalent, with text in size 12 and a word count of 10,000.
  - Titles must not exceed size 16.
  - Can be presented electronically, requiring skills in CAD, hand graphics, analysis, report writing, and self-regulation.

- **Manufacturing (20%)**:
  - The manufactured product must be functional and well-presented.

- Students must show creativity throughout the non-linear design process, utilizing both hand and CNC manufacturing skills in creating models and the final prototype.

REPORTING AND GRADING

CCEA awards GCSE qualifications on a grade scale from A* to G, with A* as the highest. Students who do not achieve at least a grade G are reported as unclassified (U). This specification allows students to develop and provide evidence for skills in; Independent learning, Communication through a design portfolio, Creative design and problem-solving, Design and making capabilities, Analytical and evaluative skills related to processes, products, and solutions
It builds on Key Stage 3 experiences and aligns with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, supporting the development of Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 4.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

The College Policy of continuous assessment is applied. This includes homework assignments, class tests, research and practical work and College examinations. These will either be knowledge based or aspects of controlled assessment. The practical element of the course will give students hands-on experience enabling them to display a wide variety of skills.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT?

Students are expected to show initiative, commitment, and a strong interest in the design and manufacture of products or systems. The course is practical, utilizing specialist equipment like computers and machines, requiring the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge. Students must demonstrate competence in written and graphical work, as well as strong organizational and time management skills, especially during controlled assessments, which significantly impact overall evaluation.

CAREER IMPLICATIONS

This course prepares students for advanced studies in technology and design-related fields, such as Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Technology and Design. It helps develop transferable skills beneficial for vocational training and employment. The specification encourages a broad and engaging study, offering insights into sectors like manufacturing and engineering. Studying technology is valued by employers and colleges, and the practical experience gained will build confidence in utilizing technology in future educational and career pursuits.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following teachers are involved in GCSE Technology & Design:
Mr P McGlade, Mr H Austin, Mrs E Wilson will be happy to answer any queries that students or parents may have.

Link to CCEA website - https://ccea.org.uk/key-stage-4/gcse/subjects/gcse-technology-and-design-2017

UNIVERSITY ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

All university entry requirements for 2026 can be found on the following website:

www.ucas.com

Specific entry requirements for Queens University Belfast and Ulster University can be found on the following websites:

www.qub.ac.uk

www.ulster.ac.uk