



ABINGDON



MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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WELCOME

from Head of Middle School, Andrew Crisp

The Middle School is an important part of your educational journey here at Abingdon. It's a time of significant development for you, both academically and socially. As you move through the Middle School, you'll also gain a greater awareness of your strengths and interests.



Academically, our curriculum gives you the chance to learn a wide range of subjects, helping you build a broad knowledge base. This will ultimately allow you to make informed decisions about which subjects you'll specialize in when you move into the Sixth Form. Regular assessments and end-of-year exams will help you develop your revision skills in preparation for your GCSE examinations, which take place at the end of your time in the Middle School.

The many Other Half opportunities will allow you to hone existing skills while enjoying new experiences and finding new interests. Regular sports fixtures, musical performances, or Middle School drama productions all offer you a chance to excel. Socially, you'll learn to work and collaborate with a large number of your peers through the many activities you'll be involved in during the school day. Some of the friendships you make at this time will last a lifetime.

As you navigate your teenage years, we offer you a wide range of pastoral support. In your PSHCE lessons, we aim to equip you to respond positively to the many issues that face young people today. Your tutors and Heads of House are key members of the pastoral team, offering you help and guidance. In addition, you'll be mentored by Peer Support Leads from the Sixth Form.

Thanks to the breadth of opportunities on offer in the Middle School, you'll be able to move on successfully to the next stage of your personal journey. There is no stereotypical Abingdon student, but we do ask everyone to work hard, set high standards for themselves, and be enthusiastic.

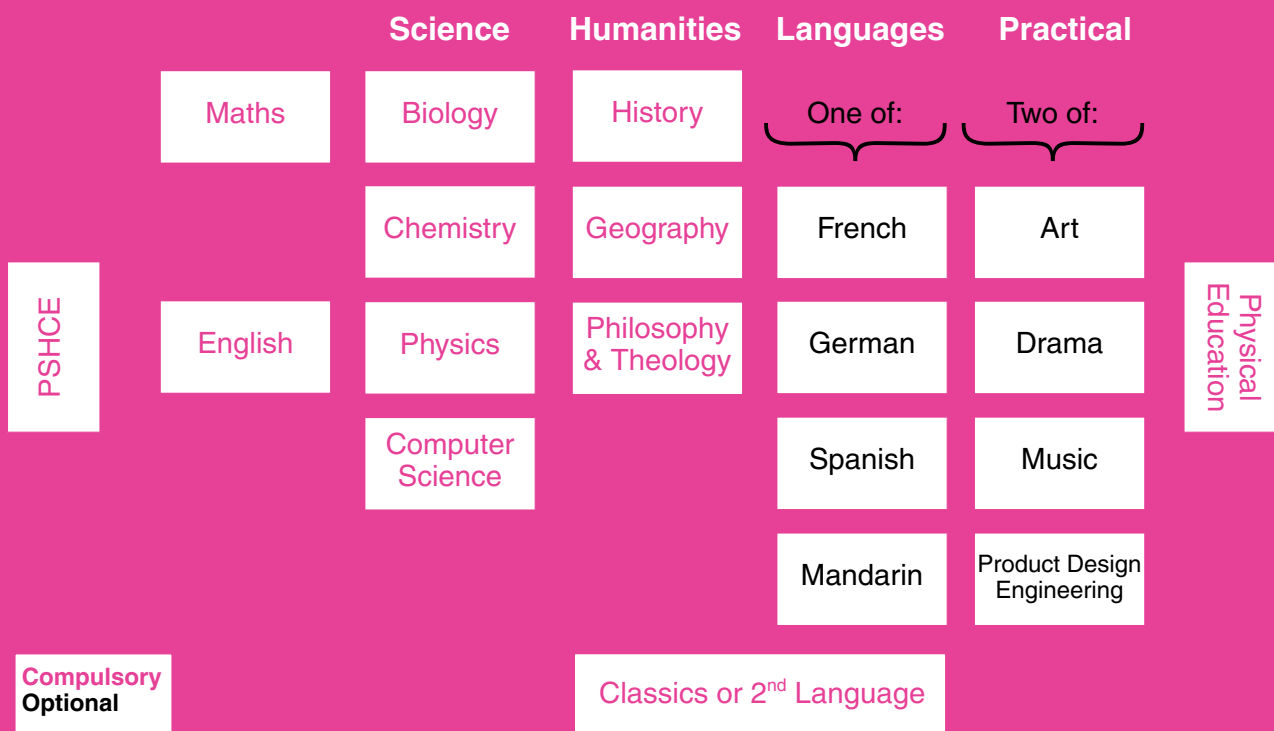
THIRD YEAR (YEAR 9)

In your Third Year, most subjects are compulsory, but you do have some choices.

You get to choose which modern foreign language (MFL) you want to study from French, German, Spanish, or Mandarin. However, you'll need to have studied the language before. If you don't have prior experience, you'll join a "starter" set in one of the four languages.

In addition, you'll choose two option subjects from Art, Drama, Music, and Product Design Engineering.

This runs alongside the PSHCE programme, which, together with tutor time, provides you with personal and social education. Some of you may also receive additional support from the Academic Support team. You'll also have a wide range of choice in co-curricular activities through our Other Half programme.



FOURTH AND FIFTH YEAR

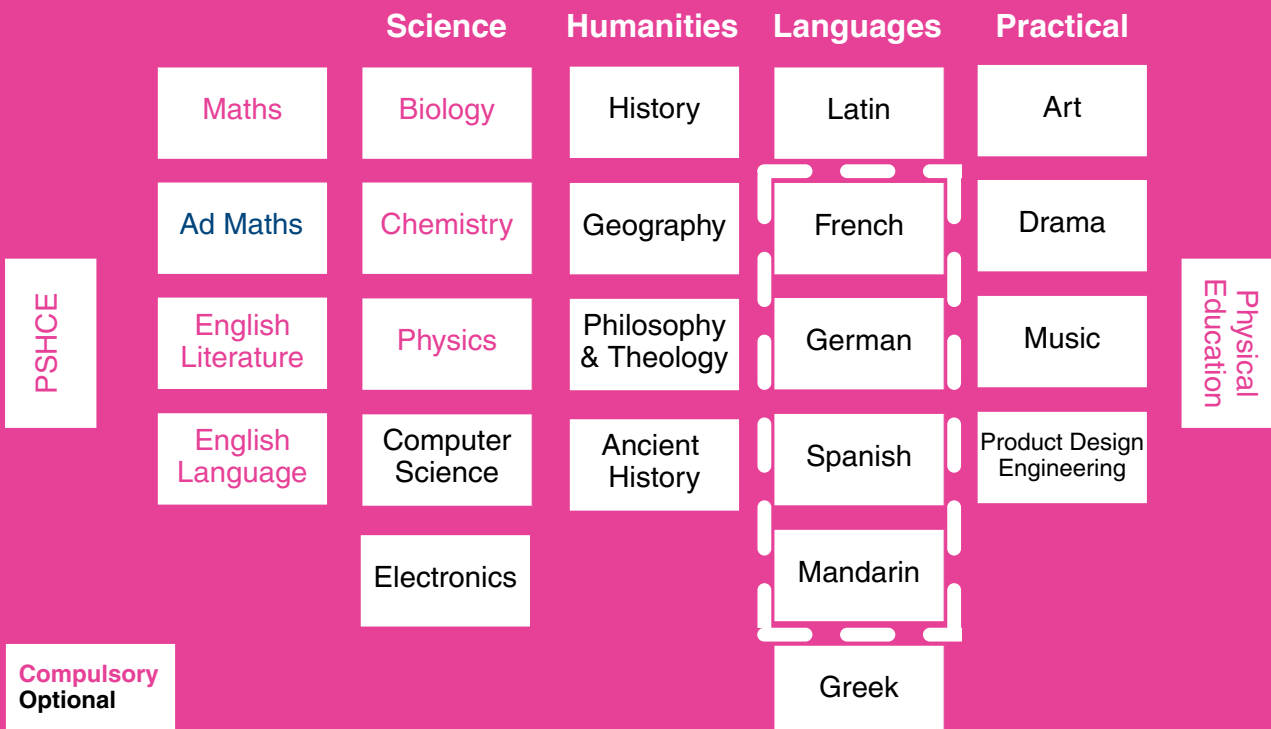
By your Fourth Year, fewer subjects are compulsory, and more options are available to you. You can usually take subjects other than languages without having studied them before. However, if you choose to study Music, you should have a minimum standard of ABRSM grade 3 or 4 on one instrument (or singing) at the start of the course.

You will study the compulsory subjects of Maths, English Language, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. On top of this, you will choose one modern foreign language and three further subject choices from the list of humanities, languages and practical subjects.

This academic program runs alongside your PSHCE programme, which, together with tutor time, provides you with personal and social education. Some of you may also receive additional support from the Academic Support team. You will also have a wide range of choice of co-curricular activities through our Other Half programme.

GCSE:

Students do six compulsory subjects, choose one modern foreign language and choose three optional subjects. NB students may choose either Computer Science or Electronics as an option but not both.





GCSE AND IGCSE GRADING

All GCSEs and IGCSEs are graded from 9 to 1. The chart shows the difference between the current and previous grading structures.

New grading structure	Previous grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	
6	B
5	
4	
3	D E F G
2	
1	
U	U

THE OTHER HALF



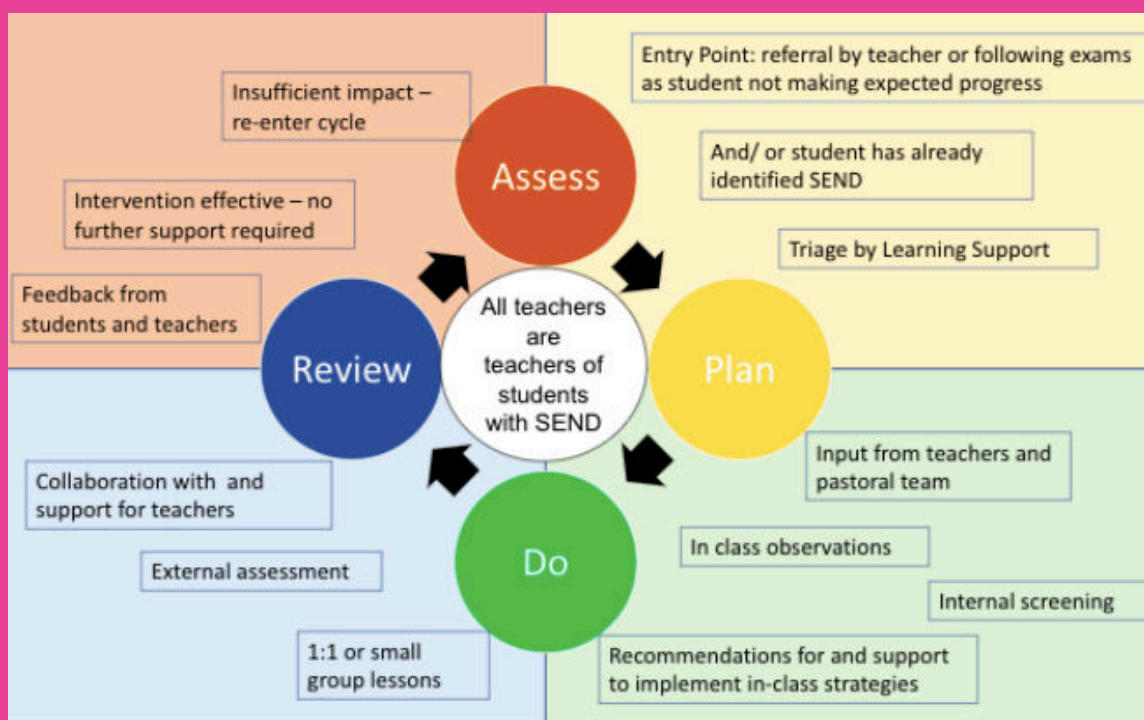
Integrated into the timetable, our enviable Other Half co-curricular programme provides you with an extensive variety of activities and subjects.

You will have the opportunity to become more proficient in an existing interest, learn a new skill, mentor younger peers and lend your support within the wider community. In turn, this will help you to develop important life skills including societal awareness, leadership, independence, perseverance, resilience, empathy, patience and kindness.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Our specialist teachers see a considerable number of students during their time in the Middle School, whether or not they have a formally identified neurodivergence. Lessons, either 1:1 or small groups, are provided on a rotational basis in the Third Year. In the Fourth and Fifth Years, you come to us in one of your Other Half sessions to minimise the impact on your academic studies. In the sessions, we target areas specifically related to your learning difference, such as literacy and organisational skills. With all students, we also look at techniques that can be applied across curriculum subjects including workload management, revision strategies and study skills. Lessons can also provide an opportunity to reinforce particular topics or concepts.

Support can be requested either by you or through your Head of House, tutor or academic subject teachers. We work closely with your academic teachers and the pastoral team to ensure you can thrive academically.



As external exams approach, we are involved in screening for and approving exam access arrangements. The procedure for granting these is tightly controlled by regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and these are strictly adhered to. We carry out preliminary screening and ask for feedback on academic work. If it seems appropriate, we may refer you for an external assessment. If exam access arrangements are granted as a result of this, it is important you use the arrangement in internal tests and exams to demonstrate it is your normal way of working; such arrangements are also monitored by the Academic Support team and their effectiveness reviewed.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) SUPPORT



Katy Lee: Head of EAL

Approximately 150 of our students have English as a second or even a third language. Most do not need extra support, but help is available for those who need it.

In Middle School, the focus is on supporting the students as they prepare for GCSE English exams. All our students take First Language English GCSE in both Language and Literature.

Some students may not have studied poetry, Shakespeare or language analysis techniques before. Our department is well placed to help students learn the analytical skills they need to decode literature and write about it. We work closely with the student's main English teacher to make sure our lessons are relevant to what is being taught in class. We may use the lesson time to improve upon classwork, or prepare ahead of the next English lesson.

Our initial entrance tests are a good indicator of those students who may benefit from support. In addition, teachers in the English and History departments will often make referrals if they notice a student is struggling with English. Some students self-refer because they want to build their confidence in speaking and writing English. It is usual to have one lesson a week and lessons are normally one-to-one. We work hard to fit the lessons into lunch or after school slots, to make sure the students are not missing class.

EAL lessons are charged to the student's bill, unless the student is on a reduced timetable.

Which GCSE subjects will I need to then go on and take that subject at A Level?

When choosing which GCSE subjects to study, you might like to consider which A Levels you might ultimately take. It is important to understand what GCSEs are:

- required to access the A Level course
- recommended to access the A Level course (ideally the GCSE would have been taken with a high grade achieved)
- useful to access the A Level course (the GCSE supports the Sixth Form course through transferable skills).

This table provides guidance on the link between GCSE and A Level subjects. Subjects without a GCSE equivalent in Abingdon's curriculum are indicated with an asterisk.

A Level	GCSE subject	Note
Ancient History	Useful: Ancient History, English Language, English Literature, History	
Art	Required: Art Useful: Design and Technology	In very particular circumstances, students who have not taken GCSE Art may be permitted to take A Level Art and should speak to the Head of Department.
Biology	Required: Maths, Biology	
Business*	Useful: English Language, English Literature, Maths, History, Geography	The ability to analyse and produce fluent, sustained writing are key skills, coupled with a strong level of numeracy.
Chemistry	Required: Maths, Chemistry	
Computer Science	Required: Maths Useful: Computer Science	Students who have not done Computer Science GCSE should speak to the Head of Department as some catch-up programming may be needed.

A Level	GCSE subject	Note
Drama	<p>Recommended: Drama</p> <p>Useful: Art, English Language, English Literature, History, Music</p>	
Economics*	<p>Recommended: Maths</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, Additional Maths</p>	Achievement in certain Maths skills is useful but so is the ability to produce fluent, sustained writing. Geography also covers useful, relevant skills and knowledge.
English Literature	<p>Recommended: English Language, English Literature</p> <p>Useful: Ancient History, Drama, History</p>	
French	<p>Required: French</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Any other Modern Foreign Language, Latin</p>	
Geography	<p>Required: Geography (see note)</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Biology</p>	In very particular circumstances, students who haven't done the GCSE may be permitted to take the A Level and you should speak to the Head of Department.
German	<p>Required: German</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Latin, Any other Modern Foreign Language</p>	

A Level	GCSE subject	Note
Government and Politics*	Useful: English Language, English Literature, History	The ability to analyse and produce lengthy sustained writing are key skills for this subject.
Greek	Required: Greek Useful: Other Ancient or Modern Languages	
History	Required: History Useful: Ancient History, English Language, English Literature, Geography, Philosophy & Theology	In very particular circumstances, students who haven't done the GCSE may be permitted to take the A Level and you should speak to the Head of Department. A strong performance in English would be expected.
Latin	Required: Latin Useful: Other Ancient or Modern Languages	
Maths	Required: Maths Useful: Additional Maths	Students need to be good at algebra as this underpins much of the A Level course. A thorough understanding of all topics at GCSE is helpful.
Further Maths	Required: Maths at grade 8 or above Recommended: Additional Maths	Students who have not done Additional Maths will be expected to work on Maths over the summer holiday before starting the A Level course. This is a fast paced subject and students need to be particularly strong in algebra.
Music	Required: Music	In very particular circumstances, students who haven't done the GCSE may be permitted to take the A Level and you should speak to the Head of Department.

A Level	GCSE subject	Note
Philosophy*	<p>Recommended: Either Philosophy & Theology (RS) or History</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Maths</p>	Philosophy is about thinking in a logical and metaphysical manner. Candidates should have a strong set of GCSE grades in essay based subjects, and be able to tackle logical problems such as those found in Maths.
Physics	<p>Required: Maths, Physics</p> <p>Useful: Additional Maths, Design and Technology, Electronics, Computer Science</p>	Whilst possible, it is not recommended that Physics A Level is studied without A Level Maths, as the omission of Maths means students cannot generally go on to study Physics or Engineering at university.
Product Design and Engineering	<p>Required: Maths</p> <p>Recommended: Design and Technology</p> <p>Useful: Art, Electronics, Computer Science, English Language, English Literature, Geography, Physics</p>	The A Level builds on the GCSE so students who have not done Design and Technology GCSE may be at a disadvantage but can still be successful if they have the right approach.
Psychology*	<p>Recommended: Maths</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Biology</p>	The ability to analyse and produce fluent, sustained writing are key skills, coupled with a strong level of numeracy.
Religious Studies	<p>Recommended: Religious Studies</p> <p>Useful: Ancient History, English Language, English Literature, Geography, History</p>	An ability to argue effectively and analyse arguments is required. You should also show competence in structured and extended writing through good GCSE grades in relevant subjects.
Spanish	<p>Required: Spanish</p> <p>Useful: English Language, English Literature, Any other Modern Foreign Language, Latin</p>	

ANCIENT HISTORY

Exam board: OCR Ancient History J198



What will I study?

Two period studies, one on the rise of Persia, focussed on the influence and achievements of the first four Achaemenid kings, the other on the foundation and early history of Rome, including the period under the kings beginning with Romulus and the early Republic - a time of memorable characters and huge social unrest.

Two depth studies with greater focus on the source material: the life and achievement of Alexander the Great in his conquest of the Persian Empire, and Cleopatra's life in power as pharaoh of Egypt. In particular as part of these two topics you will look at how the viewpoint of the author might affect the accuracy of the source.

What skills will I acquire?

- Constructing a written argument
- Analysing the accuracy of a variety of sources
- Reading and understanding difficult texts (in translation)
- Summarising and selecting the most important details
- Cultural appreciation of very different cultures
- Understanding key historical processes: cause, consequence, change and continuity

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Trips: Overseas Classics trip and British Museum trip
- Lectures on parts of the course

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
01 (Greece and Persia)	2 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 marks worth of questions devoted to the period study, including a 25-mark essay and two questions focused on a short passage of ancient text (in translation). • 45 marks worth of questions devoted to the depth study, including a 20-mark essay and two questions focused on a a short passage of ancient text (in translation).
02 (Rome and her neighbours)	2 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 marks worth of questions devoted to the period study, including a 25-mark essay and two questions focused on a short passage of ancient text (in translation). • 45 marks worth of questions devoted to the depth study, including a 20-mark essay and two questions focused on a a short passage of ancient text (in translation).

ART

Exam board: Edexcel Fine Art 1FA0



What will I study?

The Fine Arts course is exciting and fun. You will learn to appreciate the visual world and express your own ideas thoughts and feelings. We have students who learn Fine Art and specialise in disciplines such as Textiles/Illustration/Architecture/Concept Art/Game Design, Painting etc. You will work with skilled teachers and artists to build up a professional portfolio of work. This will enable you to study this subject at a higher level or gain employment in the creative industries.

What skills will I acquire?

- Painting, drawing / photography
- Printmaking / textiles
- Mixed Media
- Using CAD / Procreate
- Critically responding to artists' work
- Building up a portfolio

Do you offer any extension activities?

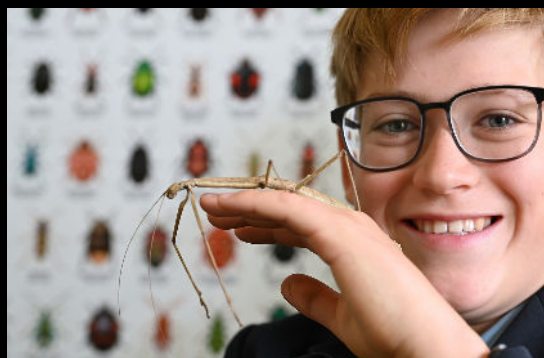
- Gallery trips to London
- Access to workshops and clubs to build your knowledge and skills
- Lectures, and speakers from visiting industry professionals
- Working with artists and visiting practitioners
- One to one feedback and group critiques

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Coursework (60%)	There is no coursework examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students create a personal portfolio of work that demonstrates their knowledge, understanding and skills.• It will be on a theme developed between you and the teacher.
Exam (40%)	10 hour exam at the end of the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exam project aims to test the skills and knowledge that you have learnt over the first year, You will respond to an exam board topic or theme Your final piece or outcome will be created in a 10-hour test.• Over this period you will receive guidance and advice from your teachers to help you achieve success.

BIOLOGY

Exam board: Edexcel iGCSE 4BI1



What will I study?

Students will gain an understanding of how the natural world works and how our interactions can affect it. It covers fundamental principles that give a good understanding for A level study if needed. Topics include Stem Cells, Ecology, Genetics, Human Biology and Ecology.

What skills will I acquire?

- Problem solving techniques
- Data analysis
- Practical and experimental skills
- Research skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- The International Biology Challenge
- Talks at Science Live!
- Internal extension prizes on topics such as Antimicrobial Resistance
- Writing for local scientific journals

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1	2 hour written exam	This paper assesses the topics below, including areas of overlap between them. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nature and variety of living organisms• Structures and functions in living organisms• Reproduction and inheritance• Ecology and the environment• Use of biological resources
Paper 2	1 hour 15 minute written exam	Assesses all the content from both years of study. Questions may come from any topic area across the specification with some sub-topics in greater depth.

CHEMISTRY

Exam board: Edexcel Chemistry 4CH1



What will I study?

You'll learn about fundamental chemistry topics, starting with Principles of Chemistry, including states of matter, atomic structure, and the periodic table. The course covers both Inorganic Chemistry, such as chemical bonding, electrolysis, and the chemistry of metals, acids, and gases, and Physical Chemistry, which explores energetics, rates of reaction, and equilibria. You'll also study Organic Chemistry, focusing on crude oil, hydrocarbons, and various organic functional groups.

What skills will I acquire?

- An understanding of fundamental chemical concepts
- Practical skills and problem-solving techniques
- Mathematical modelling
- Visualisation of chemical and physical processes
- Creating logical explanations and communication skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Projects Club and Chemistry Practical Masterclasses in the Other Half
- RSC Chemistry Challenge, RSC Top of the Bench Competition, OX14 Chemistry competition
- Chemistry Live (Science Live) lecture series

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (61.1%)	2 hour written exam	Core material only
Paper 2 (38.9%)	1 hour 15 minute written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core and extended material.• The extended material that is only assessed in Paper 2C includes metallic bonding, some salt preparations, titrations, equilibria and the chemistry of alcohols, carboxylic acids and esters.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Exam board: AQA GCSE 8525



What will I study?

Computers and devices are everywhere today. An understanding of how they work, and how to solve problems using them, will give you the potential to shape our modern world. A computer scientist undertakes a creative role which connects the very fast but very rigid calculating power of a machine with a myriad of interesting human problems, from science and engineering to art. If you have an interest in logic puzzles, and a persistent approach to problem-solving, you should take to programming. This will be in Python, a high-level language which has many applications beyond the classroom.

NB: In order to ensure a breadth of subject types at GCSE we only allow students to take one of Computer Science and Electronics at GCSE level.

What skills will I acquire?

- Python programming
- Problem solving skills
- Mathematical skills (Boolean logic, Binary / hexadecimal numbers, algorithmic thinking).

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Programming projects
- Hardware development
- AI development
- Programming in other languages

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (50%)	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundamentals of algorithms• Programming
Paper 2 (50%)	1 hour 45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundamentals of data representation• Computer systems• Fundamentals of computer networks• Cyber security• Relational databases and structured query language (SQL)• Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology on wider society, including issues of privacy

DRAMA

Exam board: Edexcel Drama 9Dr01



What will I study?

You will study in depth how to create, perform and respond to a range of theatrical styles and contexts. You will cover a range of play texts and practitioners, and learn how to create, direct and design theatre from the perspective of different performers. You will also learn analytical and evaluative skills around performance.

What skills will I acquire?

- Creative skills in making theatre
- Skills in writing about drama and theatre from the perspective of different theatre makers
- Analytical and evaluative skills about performance
- Performance skills across a range of theatrical styles and genres
- Transferable skills in teamwork, creative thinking, problem solving and ensemble

Do you offer any extension activities?

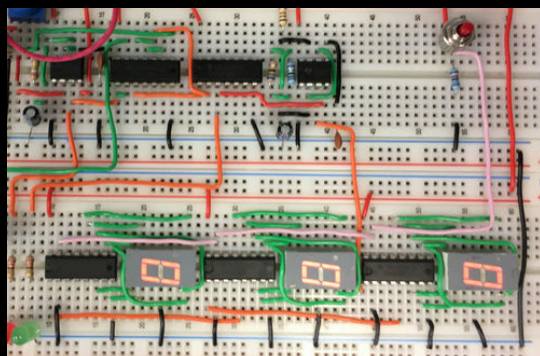
- Theatre trips to various pieces of theatre
- Masterclass workshops with theatre practitioners
- Live Theatre streamings

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Devising (40%)	Devised practical piece, portfolio. Internally assessed, externally moderated	Devising – In groups of 3 – 6, Centre choice of a piece of stimulus. A 1500 word portfolio on the creation and performance of the devised piece.
Scripted performance (20%)	Practical exam, externally assessed	A group performance of two key extracts from a text (2 – 4 people, 10-20 minutes).
Written paper (40%)	1 hour 45 minutes written exam, externally assessed	Section A - Interpreting a performance text – Study and interpretation of a text (45 marks) Section B – Live Theatre Evaluation (15 marks)

ELECTRONICS

Exam board: WJEC Eduqas Electronics C490P1



What will I study?

Learning theory and building various subsystems which can then be connected together to design and build input-process-output systems. Input subsystems include: switching units, light sensing units and temperature sensing units. Processing subsystems include: logic gates, timers, counters, amplifiers. Output subsystems include: 7 segment LED displays, filament bulbs, speakers.

NB: In order to ensure a breadth of subject types at GCSE we only allow students to take one of Computer Science and Electronics at GCSE level.

What skills will I acquire?

- Problem solving and analytical abilities
- Resilience and independence
- Design and build skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Coursework extension for Fifth Year

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Discovering electronics (40%)	Written paper 90 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic systems and subsystems • Circuit concepts • Resistive components in circuits • Switching circuits • Applications of diodes • Combinational logic systems
Application of electronics (40%)	Written paper 90 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational amplifiers • Timing circuits • Sequential systems • Interfacing digital to analogue circuits • Control circuits
Extended system design and realisation task (20%)	Non exam assessment task	10 week project that ends before Lent half term holidays. Students design and build a system on their breadboard that meets their design brief. The system is fully tested and students record their progress from design to completion.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Exam board: Edexcel IGCSE 4EA1



What will I study?

In this compulsory subject you will study poetry, prose fiction and non-fiction and learn to hone your written expression and essay-writing skills. We also cover how to compose various forms of fiction and non-fiction writing, from short stories to speeches.

What skills will I acquire?

- Reading and interpreting
- Analytical skills
- Discussing and debating ideas
- Communicating effectively
- Writing skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- English Plus revision sessions for Fifth Year
- Words and That creative writing publication
- The Martlet school newspaper, Abingdon School's multiple Shine Media Award-winning flagship publication.

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing (90 marks)	2 hours 15 minute written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section A (1 hour 30 minutes; 45 marks): five questions on a non-fiction text from Part 1 of the Anthology and an unseen passage; open book• Section B (45 minutes; 45 marks): one writing task from a choice of two, involving a given audience, form or purpose
Paper 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing (60 marks)	1 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section A (45 minutes; 30 marks): one question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the Anthology; open book• Section B (45 minutes; 30 marks): one imaginative writing task from a choice of three

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Exam board: Edexcel IGCSE 4ET1



What will I study?

prose and drama texts. You will learn to appreciate and interpret literary works, including a range of poetry, a modern play, a Shakespeare play and a novel.

What skills will I acquire?

- Reading and interpreting
- Analytical skills
- Discussing and debating ideas
- Articulating complex and persuasive arguments
- Evaluation skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- 5th Year students benefit from the English Plus revision sessions
- Screenings and theatre trips for set texts, e.g. Macbeth
- Abingdon Litsoc (literary society)
- Guest lectures, e.g. on National Poetry Day

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1: Poetry and modern prose (90 marks)	2 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A (35 minutes; 20 marks): One question on an unseen poem • Section B (40 minutes; 30 marks): One question from a choice of two, comparing two poems from Part 3 of the Anthology; open book • Section C (45 minutes; 40 marks): One essay question on the Modern Prose text, Things Fall Apart; closed book
Paper 2: Modern drama and literary heritage (60 marks)	1 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section A (45 minutes; 30 marks): One question on the Modern Drama text, An Inspector Calls, from a choice of two; open book • Section B (45 minutes; 30 marks): One question on the Literary Heritage text, Macbeth, from a choice of two; open book

FRENCH

Exam board: Cambridge IGCSE (9-1) 7156



What will I study?

The focus of the IGCSE course is on authentic communication and grammatical accuracy. Over two years, students will learn how to speak with confidence about their own experiences and to navigate the modern world of public transport, travel and tourism, and discuss social issues. All four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) are given equal emphasis in our teaching and there are opportunities to go beyond the course content for IGCSE.

The content of each paper is drawn from five topic areas covering everyday activities, personal and social life, the world around us, the world of work and the international world.

What skills will I acquire?

- Listening (decoding spoken French on a variety of the topics covered)
- Reading (decoding written French on a variety of the topics covered)
- Speaking (role play followed by two conversations on the topics covered)
- Writing (a short form followed by a 90 word and 140 word writing task)

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Fourth Year IGCSE study trip to Lyon
- Microstories competition
- Stephen Spender translation prize
- Anthea Bell translation prize

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (25%)	Listening (50 minutes)	Candidates listen to a number of recordings and answer multiple-choice and matching questions.
Paper 2 (25%)	Reading (1 hour)	Candidates read a number of texts and answer multiple-choice and matching questions as well as questions requiring short answers.
Paper 3 (25%)	Speaking (10 minutes)	Candidates complete one role play and conversations on two topics.
Paper 4 (25%)	Writing (1 hour)	Candidates complete one form-filling task, one directed writing task and one task in the format of an email/letter or article/blog.

GEOGRAPHY

Exam board: Edexcel IGCSE 4GE1



What will I study?

Geography aims to cultivate students' interest in the wider world and encourage them to think like a global citizen. The IGCSE includes contemporary topics and geography is uniquely placed to give pupils an insight into the issues that will affect them in the future. The course helps students to draw links between and evaluate the significance of different topics and concepts. The Department integrates GIS (Geographical Information Systems) into lessons to enable students to see the real world impact of current global issues with their own eyes. Fieldwork is an integral part of the IGCSE and time is dedicated to learning essential fieldwork skills. Students complete two pieces of fieldwork during the course: one physical geography and one human geography which are examined in their respective examination papers. Fieldwork is undertaken in Abingdon and Oxford but there is no need to complete any formal project for submission and assessment.

What skills will I acquire?

- Geo-spatial mapping skills
- Evaluative writing skills
- Geographical fieldwork skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Geographical Association lecture series
- Royal Geographical Society lecture series
- Royal Geographic Society essay competition
- Iceland residential trip
- Writing for the Geog Blog

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 - Physical Geography (40%)	1 hour 10 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• River environments• Hazardous environments• River environments fieldwork
Paper 2 - Human Interactions (60%)	1 hour 45 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic activity and energy• Urban environments• Urban environments fieldwork• Global Issues (Development and human welfare)

GERMAN

Exam board: Cambridge IGCSE German 7159



What will I study?

This course enables pupils to communicate effectively in both written and spoken German in a range of situations. Pupils will learn both practical language, such as buying tickets and asking for directions, as well as vocabulary relating to modern social issues such as environmental problems. The four skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening are equally weighted, with accurate use of grammar underpinning them all. There are regular opportunities in the course for pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the German-speaking world.

What skills will I acquire?

- Listening: understanding spoken German in a variety of contexts
- Reading: comprehension of both shorter and longer texts in German
- Speaking: conversational and transaction language as well as expressing opinions on both personal and more global topics.
- Writing: producing accurate written German in a range of tenses.

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Fourth Year Exchange to our partner school Ratsgymnasium in Bielefeld
- Annual Filmabend in partnership with local schools
- Microstories competition
- Stephen Spender translation prize
- Anthea Bell translation prize
- Oxford German Network competition

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (25%)	Listening (50 minutes)	Candidates listen to a number of recordings and answer multiple-choice and matching questions.
Paper 2 (25%)	Reading (1 hour)	Candidates read a number of texts and answer multiple-choice and matching questions as well as questions requiring short answers.
Paper 3 (25%)	10 minutes	Candidates complete one role play and conversations on two topics.
Paper 4 (25%)	1 hour	Candidates complete one form-filling task, one directed writing task and one task in the format of an email/letter or article/blog.

GREEK

Exam board: OCR Classical Greek J292



What will I study?

Greek language for unseen translation and comprehension. One Verse set text (usually from a play by Euripides) of about 110 lines. Short excerpts from Prose authors or roughly equivalent length, including the background and context of the text.

What skills will I acquire?

- Reading and appreciating a text in a different language
- Grammatical and linguistic understanding of both Latin and English
- Precision of thought in a multi-step process
- An understanding of how to discuss literary merit and style
- Cultural appreciation of a very different culture

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Lectures on the set-texts
- Trip to the Ashmolean to see the remains there
- Classical Association reading competition
- Overseas Classics trip

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Language	1 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehension• Unseen• Choice between grammatical questions and simple English-to-Latin sentences
Prose set text	1 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions on short parts of the set-text• An 8-marker passage analysis• A 10-marker short essay-style question on an aspect of the text
Verse set text	1 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions on short parts of the set-text• An 8-marker passage analysis• A 10-marker short essay-style question on an aspect of the text

HISTORY

Exam board: Edexcel IGCSE 4HI1



What will I study?

The course focuses on key events and societies of the 20th century. It covers the development of dictatorship in Germany between 1918–1945; superpower relations between 1943-1972; Russia and the Soviet Union between 1905-1924; and conflict, crisis and change in the Middle East from 1917-2012.

What skills will I acquire?

- The ability to place current affairs into their (international) context
- The ability to write coherent arguments that are well evidenced and logically structured
- The ability to work through historical sources

Do you offer any extension activities?

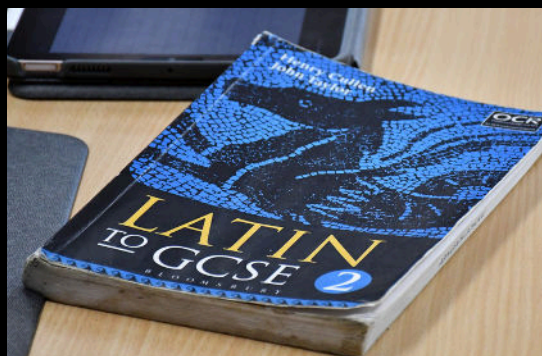
- History trip to Berlin linked to the Germany 1918-45 and Cold War 1943-72 units
- Trip to the Imperial War Museum, London
- Talk by a Holocaust Survivor
- History and Politics Society

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1:	Exam (45 minutes)	Superpower relations: The Cold War between the USA and USSR, 1943-1972 including the Berlin Blockade, Korean War, Berlin Wall and Cuban Missile Crisis
Paper 1:	Exam (45 minutes)	Germany: development of dictatorship 1918-45, covering the Weimar democracy through to the rise of the Nazi regime and World War Two.
Paper 2:	Exam (45 minutes)	Russia and the Soviet Union: The decline of Tsar Nicholas II's regime and revolutions. It concludes with a study of the Russian Civil War and death of Lenin
Paper 2:	Exam (45 minutes)	The Middle East conflict, crisis and change 1917-2012 covering British rule in Palestine at the end of the Great War and the subsequent decline in relations between Jews, Zionists, Palestinians and Arabs up to 2012.

LATIN

Exam board: OCR Latin J282



What will I study?

Latin language for unseen translation and comprehension. One Verse set text (usually from Vergil's Aeneid) of about 110 lines. Short excerpts from Prose authors or roughly equivalent length, including the background and context of the text.

What skills will I acquire?

- Reading and appreciating a text in a different language
- Grammatical and linguistic understanding of both Latin and English
- Precision of thought in a multi-step process
- An understanding of how to discuss literary merit and style
- Appreciation of a very different culture

Do you offer any extension activities?

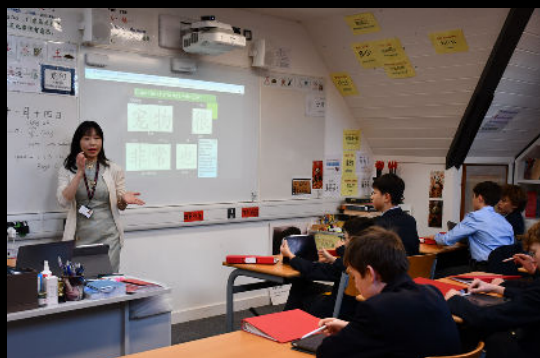
- Lectures on the set-texts
- Classical Association reading competition
- Overseas Classics trip

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
01 (Language)	1 hour 30 minutes written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehension• Unseen• Choice between grammatical questions and simple English-to-Latin sentences
03 (Prose set-text)	1 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions on short parts of the set-text• An 8-marker passage analysis• A 10-marker short essay-style question on an aspect of the text
05 (Verse set-text)	1 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions on short parts of the set-text• An 8-marker passage analysis• A 10-marker short essay-style question on an aspect of the text

MANDARIN

Exam board: AQA GCSE Chinese 8673



What will I study?

This is an exciting course that brings language learning to life. You'll discover the vibrant world of Chinese language and culture by exploring themes that resonate with your life and broaden your global perspective. From Identity and Culture to Local, National, International, and Global Areas of Interest, as well as Current and Future Study and Employment, you'll not only share your own experiences but also connect with the rich stories of people and communities where Chinese is spoken.

What skills will I acquire?

- Communicating and interacting effectively both in speech and writing for a variety of purposes
- Understanding and responding to different types of written and spoken language

Do you offer any extension activities?

- A wide range of cultural activities
- Trips to China, the British Museum and Chinatown
- Mandarin cultural experiences with visual arts
- Online public talks and annual essay competitions on Chinese economy, literature and culture

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Listening (25%)	Written exam 45 minutes (Higher Tier)	Listen to Mandarin texts, with questions and answers in English.
Speaking (25%)	Non exam assessment 10-12 minutes (Higher Tier), plus 12 minutes preparation time	Includes 3 parts: role-play, photo card, and general conversation.
Reading (25%)	Written exam 1 hour (Higher Tier)	Read Chinese texts, with questions and answers in English. Translation from Chinese into English.
Writing (25%)	Written exam 1 hour 15 minutes (Higher Tier)	Two writing tasks, with a choice of two options for each task. Translation from English into Chinese.

MATHS

Exam board: Edexcel IGCSE Maths A 4MA1



What will I study?

As well as enabling each student to achieve their potential in examinations, the course is designed to give everyone the opportunity to develop their ability to think through problems, and develop the mathematical skills and understanding which will support work in other scientific subjects, in the social sciences, and for later employment and adult life. You will build on the number, algebra, shape and data work from earlier years, honing your skills and learning new ones too. The ability to apply your knowledge to multi-step questions and problems will be key to success.

What skills will I acquire?

- Logical and systematic working
- An ability to think through problems
- Develop mathematical understanding that will help in other subjects
- Become more numerate so you can deal confidently with numbers in life

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Set 1 pupils are entered for the UKMT Maths Challenges
- Participation in the Maths Feast team competition
- The Cartwright Group

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1	2 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof• Algebra• Trigonometry• Calculus• Vectors
Paper 2	2 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof• Algebra• Trigonometry• Calculus• Vectors
Paper 3 (33%)	2 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statistics - statistical sampling, data representation and probability• Mechanics - modelling the motion of objects and forces acting on them

MUSIC

Exam board: Edexcel 1MUO



What will I study?

You will study performing, composing, and appraising music. The course focuses on developing musical knowledge and understanding through the four areas of study: Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, and Fusions. You will also compose two musical pieces and perform either a solo or in an ensemble.

What skills will I acquire?

- Performance skills
- Technical control
- Expression and interpretation of performance
- Listening, appraising and written skills

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Concert trip once a year
- Composition masterclasses each term
- Regular performance opportunities alongside masterclass provision
- Wide ensemble provision enabling every student to be involved in at least 1 ensemble
- Advanced theory grades on offer to relevant students

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Performance (30%)	Internally recorded and assessed; externally moderated	Total performance submission must last at least 4 minutes with two recordings (completed in the Fifth Year).
Composition (30%)	Internally recorded and assessed; externally moderated	Two compositions to be composed with one to a brief and one in a style of the candidate's choice; must total 3 minutes combined.
Listening and Appraising (40%)	Exam in Summer of Fifth Year; Paper is comprised of a series of listening questions, both seen and unseen, short dictation exercise and comparative essay	Instrumental Music - Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 and Beethoven <i>Pathetique Sonata</i> . Vocal Music - Purcell <i>Aria Music for a While</i> and <i>Killer Queen</i> by Queen. Music for Stage and Screen - <i>Defying Gravity</i> from <i>Wicked</i> and <i>Rebel Blockade Theme</i> from <i>Star Wars</i> . Fusions - <i>Samba em preludio</i> by Esperanza Spalding and <i>Release</i> by Afro Celt Sound System.

PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY

Exam board: Edexcel Religious Studies 1RB0



What will I study?

The course gives students the opportunity to apply a wide range of concepts, allowing them to confidently analyse contextualise and interpret religious thought and other world views they study. Our areas of focus are key questions surrounding ethics, philosophy and theology, looked at through the lense of both religious traditions and secularism. The topics we study include, but are not limited to, medical ethics, crime and punishment, divergent views on life after death and the way in which religious people live their lives. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity in the 21st century alongside either Judaism or Islam, enabling them to understand and articulate their own and others' beliefs, values and commitments.

What skills will I acquire?

- Critical thinking
- Appreciation of divergent perspectives
- Literacy skills
- Skills of analysis and integration
- The ability to work with abstract ideas
- Research skills
- Appreciation of the impact of religion and secularism on the world today

Do you offer any extension activities?

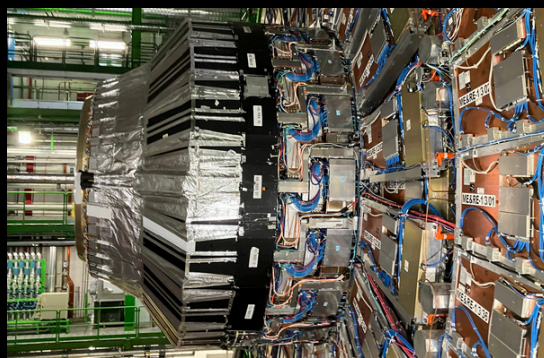
- Trips
- Lectures from The Edmund Society

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
1RB0/1	1 hour 45 minute written exam	Religion and ethics
1RB0/2	1 hour 45 minute written exam	Religion, peace and conflict

PHYSICS

Exam board: Edexcel Physics 4PH1



What will I study?

Students will explore the fascinating world of physics, from the forces that shape our universe to the energy that powers our daily lives. Through hands-on experiments and problem-solving, they'll gain a deeper understanding of key concepts like motion, electricity, waves, and energy transfer. The course is designed to develop both practical skills and theoretical knowledge, providing a solid foundation for further studies in science and engineering.

What skills will I acquire?

- Problem solving
- Applying mathematical reasoning in context
- Graphing skills
- Practical techniques and investigative techniques
- Analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Residential trip to Munich
- BPhO Physics challenges
- Trips to Diamond Light Source and Culham Fusion Centre
- Science Live! lectures

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (61.1%)	2 hour written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forces and motion• Electricity• Waves• Energy resources and energy transfers• Solids, liquids and gases• Magnetism and electromagnetism• Radioactivity and particles• Astrophysics
Paper 2 (38.9%)	1 hour 15 minute written exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moments• Momentum• Static charge• Sound• Energy resources• Changes of state• Electromagnets and transformers• Cosmology

PRODUCT DESIGN & ENGINEERING

Exam board: AQA Design & Technology (9-1)



What will I study?

The course aims to encourage students to develop and sustain their own innovation, creativity and product design capability. The GCSE course will suit those who are problem solvers, enjoy challenges and working with materials and machinery. It suits those students who have the motivation to work consistently throughout the design and manufacture of their coursework piece. Students will need excellent time management skills to excel in the coursework and there is also a maths content that is assessed in the written paper.

What skills will I acquire?

- Project management
- Creative problem solving skills
- An awareness of material properties
- The ability to realise ideas in 3d dimensions
- Confidence and competency in a practical environment
- Digital design skills: CAD and Rapid Prototyping

Do you offer any extension activities?

- Appropriate students are supported through the application process for the Arkwright Scholarship
- The department is always accessible for students to pursue their own practical development and work through their NEA task

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
8552/C (NEA)	Non-examined assessment unit (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students design, model and manufacture a physical 3D prototype from a range of AQA set contexts • Students create a supporting design folio containing research, generation of ideas, design development, and manufacturing specification with ongoing analysis and evaluation of their work
8552/W	Written examination (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical principles • Specialist technical principles • Designing and making principles

SPANISH

Exam board: Cambridge IGCSE Spanish 7160



What will I study?

The focus of the IGCSE course is on authentic communication and grammatical accuracy. Students learn how to speak with confidence about their own lives and experiences as well as about more general social issues such as travel and environment. The four skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening are equally weighted, with an accurate use of grammar underpinning them all. There are also opportunities to go beyond the course content. The content of each paper is drawn from topics covering everyday activities, personal and social life, the world around us, the world of work and the international world.

What skills will I acquire?

- Listening (decoding spoken Spanish on a variety of the topics covered)
- Reading (decoding written Spanish on a variety of the topics covered)
- Speaking (role play followed by two conversations on the topics covered)
- Writing (a short form followed by a 90 word and 140 word writing task)

Do you offer any extension activities?

- IGCSE study trip to Malaga or Seville
- Film and tapas evenings
- Microstories competition
- Stephen Spender translation prize
- Anthea Bell translation prize

How will I be examined?

Component	Assessment	Content
Paper 1 (25%)	Listening 50 minutes	Candidates listen to a number of recordings and answer multiple-choice and matching questions.
Paper 2 (25%)	Reading 1 hour	Candidates read a number of texts and answer multiple-choice and matching questions as well as questions requiring short answers.
Paper 3 (25%)	Speaking 10 minutes	Candidates complete one role play and conversations on two topics.
Paper 4 (25%)	Writing 1 hour	Candidates complete one form-filling task, one short directed writing task and one longer task in the format of an email/letter or article/blog.



ABINGDON

Last updated: June 2026