

**GCSE  
CHOICES  
2023-2025**

***Westcliff High School  
for Boys***







# Westcliff High School for Boys

Designated Outstandingly Successful on four occasions (Ofsted)  
Headmaster: Mr M A Skelly, M.A.

March 2023

Dear Parent,

This booklet is intended to help your son to choose his options for the GCSE courses which he will begin in September 2023. I hope you will find that it sets out the information you require and is complemented by the Options presentation on Thursday 16 March 2023.

Decisions at 14+ are important but they are not issues about which either parents or pupils need to become anxious. The School has careful procedures for monitoring the choices of each pupil and you may be assured that if your son has made choices which do not suit his own particular circumstances, you will be informed. Moreover, as this booklet explains, for very sound educational reasons, we are seeking to offer an Options system which meets the individual needs of pupils and enables them to pursue a range of courses reflecting different interests, tastes and ambitions. A Grammar School education for pupils between 14 and 16 ought to have a substantial common core as well to enable pupils to pursue a greater or lesser number of subjects in accordance with their ability. Both these considerations are reflected in our arrangements.

I am sure you will wish to discuss this booklet with your son and to consider as well the perspectives offered on the Options Evening before completing together the Choices Form. I am very happy to give guidance myself in particular cases and Mr Williams (Deputy Headmaster), Mr Bleakley (Assistant Head) and Mr Lilley (Year 9 Progress Leader) and the team of Year 9 Form Tutors, will also be pleased to advise.

May I take this opportunity to extend to your son my very best wishes for success on the GCSE courses he will begin shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Headmaster

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## **SECTION A: WHAT WILL GCSE BE LIKE?**

Subjects offered will be graded on the 9-1 scale and we would expect all pupils to aim for a grade 7, 8 or 9.

While the acquisition of knowledge remains important, it is only one of the components assessed at GCSE. The examination is also concerned to test a range of skills, such as the ability to use evidence, to analyse and evaluate, to draw conclusions, and to understand concepts. Some of the skills tested are essentially practical and this is evident in Art and Design Technology. The nature of the examination makes it particularly important that pupils develop the ability to empathise with others, to think independently and to work alone or in groups under their own initiative. We recognise and actively seek to teach and develop these personal qualities in Years 10 and 11. Indeed, they are an integral part of the School's Learner Profile.

GCSE is a demanding examination not least because of the range of studies in different fields we ask pupils to pursue. Success requires character. GCSE is not an examination for the last-minute 'crammer'. Success will come to those who choose their subjects wisely and who work consistently. In some subjects, Non-Examination Assessment (NEA - formally known as coursework or controlled assessment) will form between 40% and 60% of the final mark, as indicated on pages 13 and 14 of this booklet. The NEA component in Art is 100%. Careful and methodical application throughout the course can be handsomely rewarded.

We are concerned to enable pupils to pursue courses at 14+ which provide the fullest opportunity for their future development. Accordingly, in Science and Languages we have diversified our programme to provide, as we believe, the best foundation for both GCSE and later Advanced Level study.

Over the next two years, it will be vitally important for home and School to work together ensuring that work schedules are adhered to and that the Student Planner is used consistently and efficiently. We will work with you to develop these relationships and we will provide for each pupil clear guidance on the work habits which will need to be developed and are a pre-condition for GCSE success. Your son will also be encouraged to build intellectual curiosity, communication skills and develop his ability to work both independently and collaboratively with his peers.

Additionally, lifelong learning attributes, such as self-confidence, resilience and the ability to overcome challenges, are also vital ingredients for GCSE success. All of these attributes form part of the School's Learner Profile. Academic and personal development can also be encouraged through your son's full participation in the School's broader corporate life. We hope he will respond and succeed.

## SECTION B: SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Time for Choice

This guide is intended to help pupils in Year 9 and their parents to choose the combination of subjects most appropriate to each pupil's aptitudes and long-term objectives.

The choices facing pupils are not, of course, entirely open. Some subjects are compulsory, others are optional. Naturally, we will offer guidance in areas of difficulty and draw attention to any choices we consider undesirable. We will also be happy to arrange for any pupil wishing to speak to sources outside the School about choices and the future to see a Careers Adviser. **We will be reluctant to allow a pupil to study a particular combination of subjects if we believe that it is not in his interests.**

### 2. Choice and the Future

One purpose of the Options Scheme is to enable pupils to delay decisions about longer term educational or career plans until after the GCSE examinations. Indeed, given the compulsory elements in the options we have arranged, most pupils will find their choices at 16 or 18 are not restricted by decisions made at 14. The School will, however, be pleased to give guidance on which Advanced Level courses are linked to particular opportunities in Higher Education.

#### GCSE AND OTHER COURSES 2023-25

Subject	Compulsory	Optional	Non-Examination Course
Mathematics	*		
English Language	*		
English Literature	*		
Science	*		
A Foreign Language	* (1)		
A Second Language		*	
History		* (2)	
Geography		* (2)	
Geology		*	
Art		* (3)	
Music		* (3)	
Design & Technology		* (3)	
Computer Science		*	
Religious Studies		*	
Economics		*	
Physical Education		* (3)	
Games			*
RE & PSHEE/Citizenship			* (4)

- (1) A Modern Foreign Language is compulsory.
- (2) Each pupil must choose either Geography, History or both in order to meet the requirements of the English Baccalaureate.
- (3) Pupils are strongly encouraged to take at least one Arts, Sport or Technology-related subject.
- (4) Within the core curriculum, all pupils will have, independently of their other choices, a timetabled programme in RE (Religious Education) & PSHEE/Citizenship.

### 3. **How to Choose**

There are a number of factors you should consider in making your choices and we would particularly ask you:

- \* **To consider subjects which you enjoy.** If you enjoy a subject, you are far more likely to work and to achieve success.
- \* **To consider subjects at which you have been successful** (often the same as those you most enjoy). Be careful, however, not to judge your 'success' by one good term's work or one set of examination results. Your performance in a subject should be judged over time.
- \* **To remember that, in the end, it is your level of achievement which will matter most.** A grade 8 is better than a grade 6 (and certainly better than a grade 5 or 4). Do not choose a subject because someone says it will be 'useful' for you, if either you dislike it or you always do badly at it. A good qualification in Art will serve you better than a poor one in Economics. 8 and 9 grades are expected of able pupils. The average GCSE grade at the School is grade 8.
- \* **To be realistic about career ambitions.** There are many opportunities available in later life of which you are not conscious at the age of 14. Achieve the best grades and these will remain open to you.

## **SECTION C: THE OPTIONS SCHEME**

### 1. **The Need for a Flexible System**

We have 178 pupils in Year 9 and a wide range of interests, aptitudes and abilities. We have arranged the Options System to enable us to offer to each pupil a curriculum which has breadth and balance but we have also tried to build in sufficient flexibility to enable the distinctive needs of each pupil to be met. Hence, not all pupils will follow exactly the same number of GCSE courses and the Options System will enable relevant distinctions to be made between pupils of differing needs, aptitudes and abilities.

Some pupils will offer 11 GCSEs, but others may offer a more restricted range of subjects. Some decisions on the weighting for each pupil will be made at the time of choice while other decisions will be taken during the GCSE courses. The main decisions will be taken as follows:

- \* July 2024            Review of progress of pupils on each of their courses to determine adjustments which may be desirable for the final GCSE year.
  
- \* January 2025        Decisions on whether pupils in difficulty in the light of Trial Examinations should not proceed to examination in certain subjects.

## 2. **Fitting our Courses to the Abilities and Aptitudes of Pupils**

It matters that each pupil has the opportunity to complete his GCSE studies to the highest level of which he is capable. That means that our courses must be fitted to the abilities and aptitudes of pupils. **One size does not fit all.** Accordingly, we have provided flexibility within our options system.

## 3. **The Common Core**

The Common Core for all pupils consists of the following subjects:

English Language and Literature	8 periods of 50 minutes per fortnight
Mathematics	7 periods of 50 minutes per fortnight
Games	3 periods of 50 minutes per fortnight
Science	15 periods of 50 minutes per fortnight
RE & PSHEE/Citizenship	2 periods of 50 minutes per fortnight
<b>Total periods in the Core</b>	<b>35 periods per fortnight</b>

#### 4. GCSE Option Groups 2023-25

Each of Option Groups A-E below have a 5-period allocation. Pupils should make one choice in each Option A-E. The notes below the table should be read carefully before the Options Form is completed.

<b>Option A (5 periods)</b>	<b>Option B (5 periods)</b>	<b>Option C (5 periods)</b>
French	German	Spanish
Economics	Economics	Economics
History	History	History
Geography	Geography	Geography
Religious Studies	Computer Science	Religious Studies
Physical Education		Geology

<b>Option D (5 periods)</b>	<b>Option E (5 periods)</b>
History	History
Geography	Geography
Economics	Economics
Art	Art
Music	Music
Product Design	Product Design
Religious Studies	Computer Science
Geology	Physical Education

#### Notes:

- All pupils will study separate GCSEs in each of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Following Year 11 Trial Examinations, there will be a full review of pupil progress and, for those who are not progressing in line with our expectations, we will review their curriculum and may, in exceptional circumstances, place them on a GCSE Science Trilogy qualification (which examines around two-thirds of the curriculum of each of the separate disciplines) or make other arrangements.
- A Modern Foreign Language **must** be chosen by all pupils.
- Each pupil must choose either Geography or History: they may choose both.
- Each pupil must provide a reserve subject choice which can be any subject from Options A-E. This choice may be used in the event that particular subjects are over-subscribed.
- The School reserves the right:**
  - to withdraw a particular subject in the event of the numbers opting for it being insufficient to justify its provision;
  - to restrict access to a particular Option to the numbers we are able to accommodate;
  - to change the Options for any pupil in the light of what is known of the pupil's abilities and aptitudes at the point of choice.

## SECTION D: THE COMPULSORY CURRICULUM

### 1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE and ENGLISH LITERATURE

Pupils will study a wide variety of both literary and non-literary texts, and participate in a variety of oral activities. Pupils will be expected to gain an increasingly assured understanding of how writers achieve their effects and to be able to express themselves, in writing and in speech, with growing fluency.

**English Language:** There are two papers, where Papers 1 and 2 are terminal examinations at the end of the two-year course. In addition, there is a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) unit on Spoken Language which is separately certificated.

**Paper 1** (*Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing*) is an examination of 105 minutes' duration. In Section A, candidates answer a series of questions on an unprepared extract from a piece of literary fiction. In Section B, candidates answer an extended descriptive or narrative writing task. **This paper represents 50% of the final grade awarded.**

**Paper 2** (*Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives*) also tests reading and writing and is an examination of 105 minutes in duration. The paper consists of two sections. Section A presents two non-fiction texts which are linked by theme; the second will be a 19<sup>th</sup> Century text. Candidates will answer a series of questions to analyse how both writers present particular viewpoints and perspectives. Section B consists of one extended writing question which requires candidates to present a viewpoint, writing for a particular audience and purpose. **This paper represents 50% of the final grade awarded.**

**Non-Examined Assessment** (Spoken Language) tests candidates' skills in presenting, responding to questions and feedback, and the use of Standard English. Tasks will be conducted by class teachers to support learning in other areas of the English curriculum. **Marks for this unit will not count towards the final GCSE grade.**

**English Literature:** There are two papers.

**Paper 1** (Shakespeare and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel) is a 105-minute examination and is worth **40% of the total English Literature mark**. There are two sections to this examination. Section A involves the study of a Shakespearean drama text, such as *Romeo and Juliet*. Section B involves the study of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century novel such as Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. For each text, candidates will be required to write in detail about an extract from the text and then to write about the text as a whole. Texts may not be taken into the examination.

**Paper 2** (Modern Texts and Poetry) is a 135-minute examination and is worth **60% of the total English Literature mark**. The paper has three sections. In Section A, candidates have a choice of two questions on a modern drama text, such as Winsome Pinnock's *Leave Taking*.

In Section B, candidates will answer one comparative question on a named poem which they will be required to match with one other from a pre-prepared anthology of poetry on the theme of *Power and Conflict*. In Section C, candidates will answer one question on an unseen poem and one question comparing this first text with a second unseen poem.

Pupils and parents should note that these two subjects yield two separate GCSE certificates. However, due to Examination Board requirements, pupils are obliged to complete both courses in order to fully certificate in either. English Literature should therefore be considered part of the core curriculum.

## 2. **MATHEMATICS and FURTHER MATHEMATICS**

The Mathematics course builds on the work completed in Years 7, 8 and 9 and goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. The broad topic areas are number, algebra, shape and space, statistics and ratio and proportion.

The examination is made up of three written papers and the first of these is a non-calculator paper. Each paper is 1½ hours long and worth 80 marks. All pupils at WHSB will take the Higher Tier papers and thus be eligible for the GCSE grades 3-9. The expectation is that most pupils will gain grades 7, 8 and 9.

More able pupils will develop their studies in Mathematics through taking an additional qualification in GCSE Further Mathematics. This course explores ideas and techniques not covered in GCSE Mathematics and includes some of the content of Advanced Level Mathematics. It is taught within timetabled Mathematics lessons and access to the course is by selection only. To be eligible for the Further Mathematics course, pupils will need to be ranked in the top 50% of the cohort for Mathematics, judged by attainment in lessons, on tests, homework tasks, end-of-year examinations and teacher recommendations. Pupils struggling with the workload of both Mathematics and Further Mathematics may not be entered for the Further Mathematics GCSE in order to focus their attention towards attaining a higher grade in their Mathematics examination. More information about this will be provided as the pupils enter Year 11.

## 3. **SCIENCE**

Pupils at WHSB will study separate GCSEs in each of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

Pupils will undertake core practicals during the entire GCSE course which will then be assessed in the written papers. The course is intended to be a rigorous and appropriate preparation for Advanced Level studies. There are eight core practicals in Chemistry and ten in both Biology and Physics.

**Assessment:**

There are two Papers per Science: each Paper will assess knowledge and understanding from different topics. The questions (which will include multiple-choice, structured and extended response) use clear and simple language to assess pupils on their scientific ability.

**Chemistry:**

**Paper 1:** Topics 1–5: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table; Bonding, Structure, and the Properties of Matter; Quantitative Chemistry; Chemical Changes; and Energy Changes.

**Paper 2:** Topics 6–10: The Rate and Extent of Chemical Change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere and using Resources.

**Biology:**

**Paper 1:** Topics 1–4: Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and Response and Bioenergetics.

**Paper 2:** Topics 5–7: Homeostasis and Response; Inheritance, Variation and Evolution and Ecology.

**Physics:**

**Paper 1:** Topics 2, 4, 6, 7: Energy, Electricity, Particle Model of Matter, Atomic Structure.

**Paper 2:** Topics 1, 3, 5, 8: Forces, Waves, Magnetism and Electromagnetism, Space Physics

#### 4. **WORK-RELATED LEARNING (WRL)**

An important range of workplace key skills in literacy, numeracy, computing and the analysis and evaluation of evidence will be acquired through GCSE studies. In addition, pupils will benefit from the following arrangements which, across the two years of GCSE study, will see pupils taken off their normal timetables for a diverse programme.

**Work Experience**

All pupils will be encouraged to undertake a minimum of five days' Work Experience placement after their GCSE examinations. This should be self-sourced although the WHSB Careers Advisor & WRL Co-ordinator will be able to offer some support. A session on preparing for Work Experience, including employer expectations and Health & Safety at Work, is completed prior to undertaking the placements. A review of the learning gained during Work Experience will be undertaken at the beginning of Year 12 in the Autumn Term.

**Careers Advice**

Careers and options advice is available to all pupils from the School's Careers & Work-Related Learning Advisor throughout the year. In addition, Year 11 pupils will all be offered an interview with the Careers' Service Personal Advisor (Independent Careers Advisor) to discuss post-16 plans.

5. **PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education), Citizenship and RE (Religious Education)**

PSHEE, Citizenship and Religious Education will be taught two periods per fortnight to students in Year 10 and 11. Our aim is to inspire and challenge students with a broad, coherent, and worthwhile course of study. Students will develop as rounded individuals and contributors to society, the economy, and the environment. We will explore the challenges and opportunities that spiritual, moral, social, cultural, political, and economic issues pose in contemporary society. This will include helping students to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Britain.

The PSHEE, Citizenship and RE programme will be tailored to our particular circumstances. Students will continue to address the issues of personal responsibility, development of character, decision making, healthy lifestyles, financial capability, and relationships with others both as individuals and as members of a cohesive community.

School Assemblies, the Form Period Tutorial Programme and Enrichment Days will also provide stimulus for further discussion and understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension. The timetabled PSHEE course will be delivered on a carousel-basis and taught by specialist staff, Religious and World issues also forming part of this carousel.

6. **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Pupils follow courses designed to develop skills, abilities and knowledge of tactics, strategy and responsibilities within different physical activities. Health-related exercises are undertaken and emphasis is placed on providing a high level of activity in which all participants feel confident and competent. An extensive extra-curricular programme exists and competition with other schools in all major sports is an important part of life in the GCSE years.

**SECTION E:  
THE OPTIONAL CURRICULUM**  
(Subjects are listed in alphabetical order)

1. **ART AND DESIGN (FINE ART)**

This GCSE qualification is designed to cover Fine Art disciplines, which includes painting and drawing, printmaking, sculpture and alternative media. Work produced for this qualification should demonstrate the use of formal written elements using Art specialist vocabulary and evidence of creative practical skills. GCSE Art and Design (Fine Art) consists of two assessments. Unit 1 is a personal portfolio and Unit 2 is an externally set assignment. The personal portfolio comprises 60% of the overall grade while the externally set assignment comprises the remaining 40%.

## GCSE COURSES

	Subject	Examination Board	Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)	Examination	Practical / Oral
1	English Language	AQA	★	100%	
2	English Literature	AQA		100%	
3	Mathematics	EDEXCEL		100%	
4	Further Mathematics	AQA		100%	
5	Biology	AQA		100%	
6	Physics	AQA		100%	
7	Chemistry	AQA		100%	
8	Art	AQA	100%		
9	Computer Science	OCR		100%	
10	D&T (Product Design)	AQA	50%	50%	
11	Economics	OCR		100%	
12	French	AQA		100%	✓
13	Geography	AQA		100%	
14	Geology	EDUQAS		100%	
15	German	AQA		100%	✓
16	History	AQA		100%	
17	Music	EDEXCEL	60%	40%	
18	Physical Education	EDUQAS	40%	60%	
19	Religious Studies	OCR		100%	
20	Spanish	AQA		100%	✓

★ Denotes this component will not count towards the final GCSE grade

## 2023-2025

No of Papers	First Paper		Second Paper		Third Paper		Fourth Paper		
	Time	%	Time	%	Time	%	Time	%	
2	105	50%	105	50%					1
2	105	40%	135	60%					2
3	90	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	90	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	90	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %			3
2	105	50%	105	50%					4
2	105	50%	105	50%					5
2	105	50%	105	50%					6
2	105	50%	105	50%					7
1	600	40%							8
2	90	50%	90	50%					9
1	120	50%							10
2	90	50%	90	50%					11
4	45	25%	12	25%	60	25%	75	25%	12
3	90	35%	90	35%	75	30%			13
2	75	50%	90	50%					14
4	45	25%	12	25%	60	25%	75	25%	15
2	105	50%	105	50%					16
1	105	40%							17
1	120	60%							18
3	60	25%	60	25%	120	50%			19
4	45	25%	12	25%	60	25%	75	25%	20

The examination is a practical examination which takes place in the Art rooms, there is no written examination. All coursework will comprise of sketchbooks and larger pieces of artwork. The four areas to be assessed on are:

- Developing ideas linking to artists and context;
- Exploration of media and technique;
- Recording ideas through drawing and photography;
- Realising an intention through an outcome/final piece.

## 2. **COMPUTER SCIENCE**

This course will give pupils an in-depth understanding of how to use computer programming to solve problems. They will also learn how technology works and examine what goes on 'behind the scenes'. The course programming language is primarily *Java* or *Python* but pupils are allowed to use *C*, *C#* and *JavaScript* in lessons.

Through the study of computer programming, the course will help pupils develop critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills. For many, it will be an interesting way to develop these skills, which can be transferred to other subjects and applied in day-to-day life. The course offers an excellent preparation for those who wish to study or work in areas that demand these skills, especially where they are applied to technical problems, e.g. in Engineering, Financial & Resource Management, Science or Medicine.

This course currently consists of both theory topics and practical application of programming skills. This is assessed through two written papers:

- Paper 1 primarily focusses on a range of core concepts and theory topics;
- Paper 2 includes some theory topics but is focussed on assessing the understanding of the programming activities covered in the practical activities along with the broader use of algorithms and computational thinking.

Topics covered include:

- Algorithm design and programming;
- Computational thinking;
- Computational logic;
- System security;
- Data representation;
- Networking;
- Systems architecture.

The question papers will feature both short and essay-style questions. The specification is currently under review and changes to the assessment structure may be introduced.

### 3. **DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY**

GCSE Design & Technology will prepare pupils to participate confidently and successfully with an increasingly technological world. Pupils will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing, making and applying technical and practical expertise. Pupils will be enthused and challenged by the range of practical activities possible.

The course consists of three main areas of study:

- **Core Technical Principles**

In order to make effective design choices, pupils will need a breadth of core technical knowledge and understanding that consists of: New and Emerging Technologies; Energy Generation and Storage; Developments in new Materials; Systems Design; Mechanical Devices and Materials and their Working Properties.

- **Specialist Technical Principles**

Pupils will need to gain an in-depth knowledge about sourcing, shaping, processing and finishing materials. They will need to study at least one area from: Paper and Boards, Timbers, Metals, Polymers, Textiles or Electronic and Mechanical Systems.

- **Designing and Making Principles**

Pupils will need to demonstrate skill and implementation of the design process. They should use design strategies to communicate ideas through sketches, technical drawings and models. Manufacturing of their ideas will need to be realised with accuracy using a range of processes.

**Assessment:**

Pupils are assessed from two components. The examination lasts for two hours and is out of 100 marks, representing 50% of the final grade. The Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) involves approximately 35 to 40 hours of work and accounts for 50% of the marks available. This part of the course makes significant organisational demands on pupils and requires them to be punctual with deadlines.

### 4. **ECONOMICS**

The OCR GCSE Economics course allows pupils to gain an understanding of how markets and economies work. This understanding will help pupils to develop an economic awareness to benefit them personally and professionally in the future. In lessons, there are lots of opportunities to talk about today's economic issues as well as develop communication, critical thinking and analytical skills. These issues range from strategies to cut the budget deficit to weighing up the pros and cons of

inflation or being part of free trade areas such as the European Union. The GCSE Economics course is also an excellent preparation for those pupils who may wish to continue their study of Economics at Advanced Level.

The course is comprised of four parts, each of which is externally assessed.

Part 1: Introduction to Economics

Part 2: The Role of Markets and Money

Part 3: Economic Objectives and the Role of Government

Part 4: International Trade and the Global Economy

### **Assessment:**

**Paper 1: Introduction to Economics**

**Paper 2: National and International Economics**

Each paper will be 1½ hours in length and will be worth 80 marks. Each paper will be worth 50% of the final GCSE grade.

Each paper will have two sections:

Section A will have 20 multiple-choice questions.

Section B will have three data-response questions. Each data-response question will be worth 20 marks, broken down into various parts.

## 5. **GEOGRAPHY**

The AQA GCSE Geography is an exciting and relevant course studying Geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigating the link between them. Pupils will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), Higher Income Countries (HICs), Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) and Lower Income Countries (LICs). Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Pupils are also encouraged to understand their role in society by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes. Upon completion of this two-year course, pupils will have the skills and experience to progress onto Advanced Level and beyond having developed a range of skills invaluable for further study or employment.

The AQA specification consists of three papers:

### **Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment**

- The Challenge of Natural Hazards (earthquakes, volcanoes and weather hazards);
- The Living World (tropical rainforests and cold environments);
- Physical Landscapes in the UK (coastal and river landscapes);
- Geographical Skills.

**Assessment:**

A written examination of 1 hour 30 minutes. There are 88 marks counting for 35% of the GCSE. Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

**Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment**

- Urban Issues and Challenges (urban growth in richer and poorer parts of the world);
- The Changing Economic World (development issues and the global economy);
- The Challenge of Resource Management (with a particular focus on food management);
- Geographical Skills.

**Assessment:**

A written examination of 1 hour 30 minutes. There are 88 marks counting for 35% of the GCSE. Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

**Paper 3: Geographical Applications**

- Issue Evaluation;
- Fieldwork;
- Geographical Skills.

**Assessment:**

A written examination of 1 hour 15 minutes. There are 76 marks counting for 30% of the GCSE.

The first section is based on information released 12 weeks prior to the examination so there is plenty of lesson time for preparation. Pupils will be given questions based on the data to demonstrate their geographical understanding of the theme. The remainder is based upon fieldwork undertaken outside School and on geographical skills, such as map-reading and drawing graphs. Pupils undertake two days of fieldwork, most likely a coastal study at Walton-on-the-Naze and an urban study in London.

Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the world is fast-changing, exciting and dynamic and GCSE Geography enables you to gain a better understanding of the processes that make it that way and your place in it.

## 6. GEOLOGY

Geology provides the foundations for understanding the science of how the Earth works, its structure, evolution and dynamics and its mineral and energy resources. In addition, learners following the course will appreciate that the understanding and application of Earth science is vital to the future quality of life for the world's population: from supplying the ever-growing demand for mineral, energy and water resources to mitigation of natural hazards (for example volcanoes and

earthquakes) by improved engineering and prediction techniques. Throughout these studies emphasis is placed on relating theory to practical work. The practical element includes the hand-analysis of minerals, rocks, fossils and mapwork.

The course includes:

- The origin and identification of minerals and rocks within the context of the Earth's resources. Overall this study includes coal, oil, ore minerals and underground water supplies. These topics are examined in the context of exploration methods, environmental considerations and the demand of a modern industrialised society;
- The study of the Earth, incorporating global plate movements and mountain-building. The modification of these landscapes by humans (e.g. quarrying and mining);
- Earth processes, including the characteristics, prediction and hazards of volcanoes and earthquakes, weathering and erosion agents as well as the formation of sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks;
- The fossil record is studied in terms of the origin and development of life, the identification of invertebrates, vertebrates (including dinosaurs), corals, plants and their uses in the dating of rocks;
- Global climate change. The evidence for global climate change through geological time is examined by studying rock types formed at different latitudes e.g. desert sandstones at the tropics. Anthropogenic consequences of climate change are also studied;
- Planetary geology. There are links between the natural processes on Earth and those on other planetary bodies within the Solar System such as Mars and Earth's Moon. The evidence is examined using meteorites, space imagery and maps;
- Earth resources and engineering. The extraction of the Earth's resources requires geologists to use a variety of geophysical and geochemical techniques in order to search for oil and gas, minerals and underground water resources in an environmentally sensitive way. Geological engineering investigates the siting of reservoirs, dam, tunnels and road cuttings.

In terms of assessment, there are two Components. Component 1 is an on-screen examination, lasting 75 minutes and accounts for 50% of the qualification. This on-screen assessment consists of data and stimulus response questions which require short and extended writing answers as well as multiple choice answers. Component 2 is a written examination, lasting 90 minutes and accounts for 50% of the qualification. Again, data and stimulus response questions are set. However, the focus of this Component will be to investigate, problem-solve and analyse an area shown on a geological map. This will test many of the practical skills incorporated into the two-year course including the practical study of minerals, rocks, fossils and mapwork as well as investigative field studies.

Further, each pupil must undertake fieldwork studies including a directed investigation to answer a geological problem; this will be required for the preparation of the Component 2 assessment. Also, in more general terms, geology fieldwork provides the context in which geological theories are tested and

has long been an attractive aspect of the subject. The fieldwork is covered within a field-week based in Swanage, Dorset during Year 10.

## 7. HISTORY

What links the following people? Documentary maker Louis Theroux, millionaire businessman Gerald Corbett, Sony Corporation Chairman Sir Howard Stringer, BBC journalist Jeremy Bowen, top lawyers Michael Mansfield QC and Michael Briggs QC, former US Presidents John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush, former Prime Minister David Cameron, presenter Jonathan Ross, controversial novelist Salman Rushdie and Prince Charles? They all studied History at university. Whether you want to become a journalist, a banker, a lawyer or a world leader, the study of History will give you the skills to sift through the evidence, analyse the trends and make the informed judgments you need. It is quite rightly seen by universities and employers as one of the top academic disciplines, alongside subjects like Mathematics, English and Science.

History is interesting too and we have chosen topics at GCSE that will inform you about the world you live in. In Year 10, we look at 1,000 years of British history to understand the people we live amongst – where have we all come from and why are we all here, at this time and in this place? As an island race, much of our history involves ships, from the Viking longboats to the Empire fleet to the HMS Windrush, and we look closely at the people on those ships, what they took away and what they brought back.

We also focus in depth on the Norman period, a time when some argue England was changed so much, that it has taken 1,000 years to undo those changes. We also follow English and British explorers all around the world to learn about Empire, Revolution and the Pirates of the Caribbean.

In Year 11, we move into World History. We start with a study of Weimar and Nazi Germany, when we study to understand the reasons why Adolf Hitler came to power and the consequences of what he did. We then move on to the Cold War between America and Russia – the period that followed the Second World War in 1945, and a time of espionage, tension, crises and James Bond. Rich academic skills, Vikings, pirates, invaders, Nazis, espionage and war – an exciting journey is in prospect.

Paper	Topic 1	Topic 2
Paper 1	2C Britain: Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day	Norman England, c1066–c1100
Paper 2	1B Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship	Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

## 8. **MODERN LANGUAGES: FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH**

All pupils in Year 10 are required to take at least one Language to GCSE as part of the core of their curriculum. We would encourage pupils to take two Languages if they are able to do so' we strongly recommend top set students to continue with both languages to GCSE.

The purpose of GCSE studies in Modern Languages is to enable pupils to understand, speak and write a widely-spoken and published European language. In all three Languages, pupils draw on a range of materials and they are given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with aspects of French, German or Spanish society and culture. Pupils build up their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and have regular conversation lessons with the Language Assistants to increase their competence in the spoken language in Year 11.

The Language Laboratory gives pupils the opportunity to work independently on listening texts, developing comprehension; it is the only facility of its kind in the local area. Over the two years, pupils increase the range of topics studied and the complexity of language learned so that they can discuss issues such as global sustainability or customs and traditions.

A key feature is the expression of own ideas and opinions, and to aid this, an interest in the culture and current affairs in countries where the languages are spoken is useful. The course at WHSB provides a strong foundation for Advanced Level studies.

In all languages, pupils are assessed through terminal examinations in Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing in the Summer Term of Year 11. The oral examination consists of role-play, describing a picture in a photo card and general conversation. More information, including digital resources, can be found on the AQA website.

In selecting which language(s) to study at GCSE level, consideration should be given to levels of performance in Year 9. Some pupils will have the aptitude and skills to excel in the study of two languages at GCSE and this is to be encouraged. Pupils should speak to both of their MFL teachers if they are unsure about whether to take two languages or are not sure about which language to take at GCSE.

## 9. **MUSIC**

The course has three components: Appraising, Composing and Performing.

The Music GCSE covers four areas of study:

- Instrumental Music 1700-1820;
- Vocal Music;
- Music for Stage and Screen;
- Fusions.

These four topics are covered with particular reference to eight 'set works', two from each area of study. They include Beethoven's *Piano Sonata no. 8 (Pathétique)*, Queen's *Killer Queen*, and John Williams' *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* soundtrack. The 'Listening & Appraising' examination, which is worth 40% of the GCSE, tests a pupil's knowledge of the set works and of their key features.

During the course, pupils will undertake short composition exercises based on ideas from each of the set works. In Year 11, candidates will take **two** of these exercises and expand them into finished compositions, together worth 30% of the GCSE total.

The use of *Sibelius Software* will be integral to all composition work at GCSE. Pupils are expected to be musically literate. Those pupils who need help improving their theory can attend weekly Theory Club.

The remaining 30% of the GCSE examination is assessed by the recording of **two** performances, one solo and one ensemble. All GCSE pupils are eligible for subsidised or free instrumental tuition provided by the School to help them with their performance unit. It is expected that pupils studying GCSE Music will make a strong contribution to the extra-curricular musical life of the School.

Additionally, it is expected for pupils taking GCSE music to be at Grade 4 standard in an instrument or in voice by Year 11. It is not necessary for pupils to have actually taken the Grade 4 examination.

## 10. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The course consists of two main elements.

- a) **Theory:** 60% of the allocated marks covering five areas of study:
- Health, training and exercise: Health and physical fitness, fitness testing, methods and principles of training and the importance of diet and nutrition;
  - Exercise physiology: Muscular-skeletal system, cardio-respiratory and vascular system, aerobic and anaerobic exercise and short and long term effects of exercise;
  - Movement analysis: Muscle contractions, the lever system, planes and axes of movement and sports technology;

- Psychology of sport and physical activity: Goal setting, information processing, guidance, mental preparation, motivation classification of skills and types of practice;
- Socio-cultural issues in sport and physical activity: Participation, strategies to improve participation in sport and physical activity, provision, and the commercialisation of sport and how it is linked to the media.

All of the subject content is assessed in Unit 1 as part of the written examination and in Unit 2 as part of the personal fitness programme.

Unit 1 and 2 require pupils to demonstrate an understanding of how both quantitative and qualitative data are collected. Pupils are required to analyse and evaluate data. In Unit 2, pupils have to present data as part of the personal exercise programme.

- b) **Practical Performance:** 40% in total from three different activities in the role of performer.

The three activities must consist of at least one as an individual activity, one in a team activity and the other as either team or individual activity. Within their main chosen sport, pupils complete the coursework element where they evaluate and improve their performance through application of the theoretical content that they cover in the course. This piece of coursework accounts for 10% of the 40% with each of the three other activities contributing 10% each.

The course is suited to those who are able sportsmen across a range of disciplines. Pupils should have a genuine interest in the application of theoretical principles to their own practical performance as theory makes up a greater proportion of the marks. While some of the course will be undertaken in a practical environment, those who take this subject must be aware that a significant amount of time will also be spent within the classroom underpinning the theoretical content that will be examined but also used to improve their understanding of their performance. Pupils will need to show commitment to refining their performance across their chosen sports and attendance at extra-curricular practices is essential, whilst participation in representative sport is beneficial.

It is expected that the pupils attend every lunchtime practice for their chosen activities. Where possible pupils will be expected to attend before-School and after-School clubs. This is in addition to representing the School in fixtures both during the week and on Saturdays.

## 11. **RELIGIOUS STUDIES - Study of Christianity and one other Religion**

The specification for Religious Studies provides an excellent grounding for those who wish to pursue their studies at Advanced Level. It is a subtle blend of Theology and Philosophy, with an introduction to ethical themes in Year 11.

There is no Non-Examination Assessment (NEA). The course is examined by three papers at the end of Year 11, and the subject content is summarised as follows:

- **Beliefs and Teachings & Practices** (Two separate one-hour papers)

This aspect comprises two investigations, one in Buddhism and another in Christianity. It builds on work covered in Years 8 and 9, and seeks to address issues relating to the nature of God – One and Three, alongside certain beliefs about Jesus. We will consider the problem of evil and suffering, Salvation, and the role of the Church in the World. In addition, the origins of the universe and life, alongside beliefs about life after death are explored from a variety of perspectives.

The Buddhism Unit will recap and develop Year 9 studies, on the life and teaching of the Buddha, human personality and destiny. Similar to the above, the role of the Sangha and Buddhist community are explored, and their role in worship and celebration of festivals.

- **Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World** (One two-hour paper)

This longer paper encompasses within it a variety of philosophical and ethical themes arising out of our studies in Buddhism and Christianity. They include the Existence of God, and how God may be experienced. There is a significant Unit devoted to matters of relationships and family life, the roles of men and women, and religious understandings of equality. The problems of violence and conflict are considered, alongside notions of pacifism and non-violence. This raises difficult issues surrounding forgiveness and reconciliation between communities torn apart by violence. Challenges to religious belief are proposed from secular and humanist perspectives and inter-religious dialogue.

This course has a strong international aspect, and interacts significantly with many aspects of the School's Learner Profile. It will challenge pupils who have a commitment to religious belief, and those who seek to deepen their awareness of how religious teachings inform how people live their lives today. This course will provide a significant academic challenge irrespective of the pupils' backgrounds and Religious Studies is highly sought after by employers in Britain's diverse community.