

WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS



ACHIEVING SUCCESS AT GCSE: A Parent's Guide

2026 - 2028

CONTENTS

Page No.

I	Introduction	1
II	Creating the Right Environment for Home Study	1
III	Music and Television	1
IV	Using the Computer	2
V	Effective Homework Routines	2-3
VI	The Student Planner	4
VII	Extra Advice for Helpful Parents	4-5
VIII	Subject Specific Topic and Coursework Guide	5
	• English Language	6 -7
	• English Literature	6-7
	• Mathematics	7-8
	• Further Mathematics	8-9
	• Biology	10-11
	• Chemistry	12-14
	• Physics	15-16
	• Art & Design (Fine Art)	17
	• Computer Science	18
	• D&T – Product Design	19-20
	• Economics	21-22
	• French, German, Spanish	23
	• Geography	24-26
	• Geology	27-28
	• History	29
	• Music	30-31
	• Physical Education	32
	• Religious Studies	33-34
	• Calendar of Coursework & Non-Examined Assessments .	35

I INTRODUCTION

It is a well-established fact that pupils make the most progress when they are actively supported in their personal and academic endeavours by their parents. Moreover, when schools work in partnership with parents, communicating clearly their expectations of pupils and precisely how these can be achieved, the chances of attaining the desired educational goals are greatly improved.

The aim of this booklet is to create a solid understanding between the School and its parent body of exactly what pupils must do if they are to reach their full potential at GCSE. With this in mind, the primary intention is to offer advice to parents about how to assist their sons that is both pragmatic and prescriptive, especially with regards to the establishment of rigorous home study routines and effective personal organisation. Crucial information outlining the syllabus content for each subject area is also provided, enabling parents to understand what topic areas are being studied on a term-by-term basis, as well as what Non-Examined Assessments are being undertaken and when during the School year they must be completed.

II CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR HOME STUDY

Maximum concentration and proper application to study is fully achieved in the absence of extraneous noise and distraction. This may not always be possible in a busy household but, as far as you reasonably can, you should try to provide your son with a permanent workspace in a quiet area of your home. In most instances this will probably be his bedroom. He will also need a decent sized desk or table on which to work and some form of book case or storage area for his text books, files etc. A cork notice board attached to the wall in front of the desk is also very useful for affixing essential information, especially planners and timetables.

Finally, it is very important to check that your son has plenty of stationery and that this is replenished throughout the year. His pencil case should be properly kitted out with the full panoply of functioning items and he should have a pot of pens and pencils on his desk as well as plenty of A4 lined paper. He may also find a set of folders and dividers for the orderly filing and storage of his revision notes for all the subject areas.

III MUSIC AND TELEVISION

It is a total fallacy to suggest that background noise is an aid to concentration. Pupils who make this claim have not yet learned to focus their minds fully and should be encouraged to do so. After all, the capacity to maintain concentration over protracted periods of time is not a skill they were born with but one that they must try to cultivate, particularly if they have aspirations to academic and examination success.

To this extent, listening to music or trying to watch television whilst at the same time engaging in serious study is a bad habit and a significant barrier to complete mental engagement. Unless there is an intolerable threat to familial harmony, therefore, parents should try to discourage their sons from using these items during study time.

IV USING THE COMPUTER

Computers, of course, can be equally distracting but have an ambivalent function in the sense that they can be an invaluable aid to study as well as an easy route to game playing and trivia. Both teachers and parents are no doubt familiar with the scenario in which a boy begins to use a computer in order to compose an essay or research a particular topic but soon finds the lure of social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter irresistible and so spends most of the evening looking busy but actually doing no work at all. In order to ensure that the computer is put to effective use during home study time, therefore, we recommend the following strategies:

- a) When your son is using the computer, disengage his access to the Internet during study periods. The capacity to word process, create spreadsheets etc. is essential in the production of homework and clearly your son will need to spend quite a lot of time at the computer console but, if you want to be sure that he is not endlessly and pointlessly clicking about in cyber space, you are advised to remove Internet access when study is being done.
- b) The Internet is, however, an excellent research tool when used properly and should certainly play a part in home study. Given the advice above, therefore, when it is useful for your son to use the Internet for research purposes, allow him the first ten to fifteen minutes of study time (no more) to find and print off the appropriate material and then disengage the facility for the remaining time.

Of course, if your son is already well-disciplined in this regard and uses the computer in the proper manner when he is working, there is probably no need to impose this kind of restraint. Unfortunately, there are a lot of boys who are not yet at that stage and will need extra support to keep focus on the important matter at hand.

V EFFECTIVE HOMEWORK ROUTINES

It is essential that both pupils and parents have a clear understanding of what home study or homework means at GCSE and how much time should be spent on it on an average weekly basis.

As a prerequisite to that understanding, it is important, initially, to appreciate that teachers cannot set homework at GCSE in the same way that they do in Key Stage 3. In the Lower School, teaching and learning are delivered to pupils in relatively small incremental stages and so, commensurately, the tasks that pupils are asked to do independently are broken down into easy 'bite-sized' pieces. It is a fairly straightforward matter under these conditions to set a homework assignment which can be completed in the allotted thirty-minute period.

Teaching and learning at GCSE, however, demands that pupils begin to engage with more extended work and, indeed, preparation for Non-Examined Assessment requires that pupils engage in very detailed research and meticulous planning of their responses before the final Assessment is undertaken. In these circumstances, teachers often give pupils in Key Stage 4 two or three weeks to prepare for an important piece of work, during which period they must themselves create sufficient time to ensure that the set task is completed to the highest possible standard. To a very large extent, therefore, pupils in Key stage 4 have to become much more self-governing since it is often the case that their teachers can no longer give them the kind of 'bite-sized' homework that they did in the past.

In addition to the demands of Non-Examined Assessment, pupils are also amassing a body of knowledge and a process of understanding across a wide range of subject areas over a two-year

period which will ultimately be tested in public examinations in Year 11. All that information and understanding needs to be ordered and internalised in a cumulative way and so it is expected that pupils will spend much of their home study time throughout the two-year period systematically reviewing and refining their notes or doing extra research and background reading.

In effect, there is an enormous amount of work that pupils must do, both for Non-Examined Assessment and in preparation for the final examinations and much of that work must be undertaken at the pupil's own initiative. Stating that there is nothing to do or that no homework has been set by the teacher is simply nonsensical and untrue. **No pupil studying for GCSE in this School should ever claim that there is no aspect of study he can usefully undertake and that he has no homework to do. Pupils and parents must be very clear about this.** The School promotes an initiative that helps pupils develop their study skills called *Revision for Learning (RfL)*. *RfL* encourages pupils to independently review their learning and revise new material throughout the two-year GCSE course using proven active techniques for helping learning to 'stick' - there are examples on pp.23-24 of your son's Student Planner. Times when there may be fewer formal homework assignments are perfect for practising *RfL* tasks.

So how much time should your son spend studying in order to maximise his chances of success at GCSE? We recommend the following weekly programme of study is adhered to by all the boys in Key Stage 4.

- Pupils should be engaged in ten to twelve hours of study per week, evenly distributed across the working week and the weekend.
- Two hours of study should be undertaken on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, preferably between the hours of 6.00pm and 8.00pm. This will give your son a period of respite from work after a long day at School and he will still have perhaps a couple of hours left of the evening for other leisure pursuits after he has finished studying. If, for some reason, it is not possible to stick to these exact timings because of other important commitments, sports training for example, the period allocated for study can of course be moved to a more convenient space. However, it should not simply disappear.
- Friday evening can be used either as 'time off' after a tiring week or to catch up on any study time missed on Monday to Thursday.
- Two to four hours of study remain to be done over the weekend. It is strongly advised that this is undertaken in two-hour blocks from approximately 10.00am to 12.00am on Saturday and Sunday morning, leaving a good deal of time in the afternoon and evening for much needed rest and leisure activities.

This home study timetable or a very close version of it should create an effective and healthy balance between work and leisure for your son. Systematic and rigorous routines of work are crucial to his prospects of overall success, but they also take a great deal of the stress out of the GCSE experience because they force a properly controlled and manageable approach to the work whilst creating ample opportunity for very necessary rest and relaxation.

VI THE STUDENT PLANNER

The School regards the Student Planner as an extremely important aid to the development and maintenance of pupil organisational skills and this is certainly the case in Key Stage 4 where there is very careful oversight and monitoring of how the Planner is being used. Indeed, so important is the Planner regarded, that consistent failure to use it properly will incur sanctions.

To clarify, the School's expectation is that your son must write something in his Planner for each timetabled homework subject with a view to studying some useful aspect of that subject during his home study time. As has already been explained in this document, some of what he writes will have been specifically prescribed by his subject teacher for a particular homework slot but, if this is not the case, he must record a useful and relevant activity that he will undertake at home as part of his overall programme of study. So, for instance, he may record the fact that he has been preparing for a Non-Examined Assessment essay or project. Alternatively, he may record outline details of any relevant reading, or that he has been refining his class notes using *Revision for Learning* activities from pp.23-24, or that he has been reviewing and/or revising material covered previously, or that he has been undertaking research in preparation for a future project and so on. **Above all else, he should never write 'None Set' and he must not believe it is acceptable to say that there was nothing to do.**

For your own part, please examine the Student Planner each week and sign it to confirm that the work described has indeed been done. You should also feel free to use it as a quick means of communication with the Form Tutor or subject teachers if you have any questions regarding study matters and so on.

VII EXTRA ADVICE FOR HELPFUL PARENTS

- **Attendance and Punctuality** – As far as possible, it is essential that your son strives to optimise his attendance and that he is always punctual. These are, of course, important life skills but they are also vital to good scholarship. Frequent absenteeism and lateness creates confusion, diminished understanding and can result in conflict and alienation. Please do everything you can to divert your son from this scenario by always emphasising the need for good attendance and punctuality and by supporting the School's requirements in this regard. Parents should ensure that routine medical appointments do not conflict with the calendar of Non-Examined Assessments. Non-Examined Assessments are regulated by externally set rulings and, whilst sessions missed may be made up at lunchtimes or after School in consultation with Subject Teachers, frequent or protracted absence can cause unnecessary time constraints on a pupil. Where absence from School is unavoidable pupils must ensure that work missed is copied up promptly, and assistance sought from Subject Teachers where clarification is required.
- **Personal Organisation** – Make sure that your son is properly prepared for School and is ready for all his lessons. He needs to know what lessons he has every day and he must have all the necessary equipment to function effectively within those lessons. If your son has not managed to organise himself effectively by Year 10, do not give up. Implement organisational routines at home that will enable your son to be more efficient and effective.
- **Encouraging Effort and Achievement** – In a recent survey of pupils in Key Stage 4 at this School, it was found that the most important ingredient in motivating pupils to succeed is parental encouragement and praise. It follows, therefore, that you should take an active interest in your son's work: ask him about what he's doing; discuss the Non-Examined

Assessments with him; let him talk through his revision techniques and schedules with you, and so on. Equally, you should offer him praise when he is obviously making a real effort and has been rewarded in School with excellent grades or perhaps a Senior Commendation.

- **Constructive Criticism** – Obviously things do not always go to plan and your son may need to confront his difficulties honestly so that he can set things right again. Constructive criticism at this time is as valuable as praise might be at others. However you frame your response to your son's circumstances, make it clear that your ultimate objective is to provide support and, whenever possible, help him to find practical solutions and strategies to overcome problems.
- **Providing Enrichment** - This School offers a whole host of educational experiences and cultural opportunities in the Westcliff Diary and your son should be encouraged to attend a number of these each term. In addition to what is on offer here, parents can also play a crucial role in enriching and furthering their son's education. For instance, you can source interesting television dramas or documentaries; find relevant websites to extend or deepen subject knowledge; provide extra appropriate books, articles and DVDs; or take your son on trips to museums, exhibitions, the theatre and so on. The fact is that the more your son is immersed in the world of education and learning, the more engaged and confident he will begin to feel within it– and that is very likely to produce rewarding outcomes.
- Finally, if your son is experiencing particular problems, of either a personal or an academic kind, do not hesitate to contact the School to discuss your concerns. Remember, we are here to help and will do whatever we can to promote the best interests of your son at every level of his experience.

VIII SUBJECT SPECIFIC TOPIC AND COURSEWORK GUIDE

What follows has been produced by Heads of Department at WHSB and is a subject-specific summary of the key topic areas covered each term, as well as a guide to what Non-Examined Assessments must be done and when they must be completed. Parents can refer to this to stay abreast of what is being studied at any given point in any of the GCSE courses and may use the information here at home as a cue to provide extra enrichment opportunities relevant to particular areas of study.

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE and GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

(Specification Code 8700 and 8702)

Year 10	First Half-Term	Second Half-Term
Autumn/ Winter 2021	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> Literature Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19 th Century Novel (closed book)	Unseen Literary Fiction Descriptive Writing Language Paper 1 – Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing
Spring 2022	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Literature Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19 th Century Novel (closed book)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Literature Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19 th Century Novel (closed book)
Summer 2022	Anthology Conflict Poetry/Unseen Poetry Literature Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry	REVISION – ALL PAPERS TO DATE Year 10 Examinations including revision and diagnostic feedback: English Language Paper 1 – SECTIONS A and B English Literature Paper 1 – SECTION B English Literature Paper 2 – SECTION A Unseen Non-fiction and Literary Non-fiction Writing to Present a Viewpoint Language Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

Year 11	First Half-Term	Second Half-Term
Autumn/ Winter 2022	<i>The History Boys</i> Literature Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry (closed book)	<i>The History Boys</i> Literature Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry (closed book) Year 11 Trial Examinations including revision and diagnostic feedback: English Language Paper 2 – SECTIONS A and B English Literature Paper 1 - SECTION A English Literature Paper 2 – SECTIONS B and C
Spring 2023	Language Papers 1&2: Paper 1: Unseen Literary Fiction Descriptive Writing Language Paper 1 – Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing Paper 2: Unseen Non-fiction and Literary Non-fiction Writing to Present a Viewpoint Language Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	Unseen Poetry Literature Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry Departmental trial examinations including revision and diagnostic feedback: English Literature Paper 1 - SECTION A English Literature Paper 2 - SECTIONS B and C REVISION: Language papers
Summer 2023	REVISION – ALL PAPERS	FINAL EXAMINATIONS – FOUR PAPERS

GCSE English Language includes Spoken Language, a non-examination assessment which will be awarded a separate grading on the final GCSE English Language Certificate. Speaking and Listening has a 0% weighting and does not count towards the final GCSE English Language grade. Tasks will be spread out over the first five terms and are teacher-assessed in lessons. Tracking tasks are taken under timed conditions.

GCSE MATHEMATICS

The GCSE Mathematics course at WHSB builds on the work completed in Years 7, 8 and 9 and goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The examination board our pupils follow is Pearson Edexcel and the specification title is 'Pearson Edexcel GCSE Mathematics (9-1)' from 2015. There is no Non-Examined Assessment in GCSE Mathematics. The examination consists of three written papers of one hour thirty minutes each, with only the first paper being non-calculator. Our expectation is that all pupils will be entered for the Higher Tier (Grades 3-9) examination.

Pupils studying Mathematics will follow the Pearson Edexcel GCSE Maths Higher textbook (ISBN 9780198351511), supplemented with the use of Dr Frost Maths (www.drfrust.org), an interactive online learning platform.

Week	Date	Year 10 Mathematics	Year 11 Mathematics
1	31/08/26	Unit 1 - Quadratics	Year 10 Catchup & Review
2	07/09/26		Unit 1 - Bearings, Loci and Transformations.
3	14/09/26		
4	21/09/26		
5	28/09/26	Unit 2 - Congruence and Similarity	Year 11 Formative Examinations
6	05/10/26		Unit 2 - Rec Dec, Indices and Surds
7	12/10/26		Unit 3 - Real-Life Graphs and Travel Graphs
8	19/10/26	Synoptic Test 1	
Autumn Half-Term Holiday			
9	02/11/26	Unit 3 - Probability	Unit 4 - Algebraic Proof, Sequences and Proportion
10	09/11/26		
11	16/11/26	Unit 4 - Data Handling	Year 11 Trial Examinations & Examination Feedback
12	23/11/26		
13	30/11/26		
14	07/12/26	Unit 5 - Vectors	Unit 5 - Further Equations
15	14/12/26		
Christmas Holiday			
16	04/01/27	Unit 6 - Circle Theorems	Unit 6 - Inequalities
17	11/01/27		
18	18/01/27		
19	25/01/27		
20	01/02/27	Synoptic Test 3	Unit 7 - Formulae, Iteration and Ratio
21	08/02/27	Unit 7 - Algebraic Fractions	
Spring Half-Term Holiday			
22	22/02/27		Unit 8 - Functions and Graph Transformations
23	01/03/27		Year 11 Second Trial Examinations
24	08/03/27		
25	15/03/27	Unit 8 - Graphs	Revision, Study Leave and Examinations
26	22/03/27		
Easter Holiday			
27	12/04/27	Unit 9 - Area and Volume	Revision, Study Leave and Examinations
28	19/04/27		
29	26/04/27		
30	03/05/27		
31	10/05/27		
32	17/05/27		
33	24/05/27	Catchup and Revision for Year 10 Exams	
Summer Half-term Holiday			
34	07/06/27	Year 10 End of Year Exams & Feedback	Revision, Study Leave and Examinations
35	14/06/27		
36	21/06/27		
37	28/06/27	Unit 10 - Advanced Trigonometry	
38	05/07/27		
39	12/07/27		
40	19/07/27		

GCSE FURTHER MATHEMATICS

The course is taught within the usual timetabled Mathematics lessons, alongside the GCSE Mathematics course and access to the course is by invitation only. The examination board pupils will be following is AQA and the specification title is 'Level 2 Further Mathematics (8365)'. There is no Non-Examined Assessment in GCSE Further Mathematics. The examination consists of two written papers of one hour forty-five minutes each, with only the first paper being non-calculator. Please note that, pupils studying GCSE Further Mathematics will also sit their GCSE Mathematics examination.

Pupils studying GCSE Further Mathematics will follow the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics textbook (ISBN 9781510446939), in addition to the Edexcel GCSE Maths Higher textbook (ISBN 9780198351511).

Week	Date	Year 10 Further Mathematics	Year 11 Further Mathematics
1	31/08/26	Unit 1 - GCSE Algebra I	<i>Year 10 Catchup & Review</i>
2	07/09/26		Unit 1 - Coordinate Geometry
3	14/09/26		
4	21/09/26	Unit 2 - GCSE Shape, Space and Measure I	Unit 2 - Geometry I
5	28/09/26		Year 11 Formative Examinations
6	05/10/26		
7	12/10/26	Unit 3 - GCSE Shape, Space, Measure II	Unit 3 - Geometry II
8	19/10/26	Synoptic Test 1	
Autumn Half-Term Holiday			
9	02/11/26	Unit 4 - GCSE Probability and Data Handling	<i>Catchup and Revision for Trial Exams</i>
10	09/11/26		Year 11 Trial Examinations & Examination Feedback
11	16/11/26		
12	23/11/26		
13	30/11/26		Unit 5 - GCSE Algebra II
14	07/12/26		
15	14/12/26		
Christmas Holiday			
16	04/01/27	Unit 6 - Number & Algebra I	
17	11/01/27		Unit 5 - Calculus
18	18/01/27		
19	25/01/27		
20	01/02/27		Unit 6 - Matrices
21	08/02/27		
Spring Half-Term Holiday			
22	22/02/27	Unit 8 - Algebra III	
23	01/03/27		Year 11 Second Trial Examinations
24	08/03/27		
25	15/03/27		
26	22/03/27	<i>Revision, Study Leave and Examinations</i>	
Easter Holiday			
27	12/04/27	Unit 9 - Algebra IV (a)	<i>Revision, Study Leave and Examinations</i>
28	19/04/27		
29	26/04/27		
30	03/05/27		
31	10/05/27		
32	17/05/27		
33	24/05/27		
Summer Half-term Holiday			
34	07/06/27	Year 10 End of Year Exams & Feedback	<i>Revision, Study Leave and Examinations</i>
35	14/06/27		
36	21/06/27		
37	28/06/27	Unit 10 - Algebra IV (b)	
38	05/07/27		
39	12/07/27		
40	19/07/27		

AQA GCSE BIOLOGY

The Department is following the AQA GCSE in Biology specification which is assessed by two externally assessed papers. Each paper lasts for one hour and forty five minutes and is worth one hundred marks. The two papers will examine different material, with Paper 1 assessing topics 1-4 of the specification and Paper 2 assessing topics 5-7 of the specification. There is no coursework component to the GCSE Biology. As part of the course, pupils are required to carry out ten practicals which are assessed in the two written papers. The specification can be viewed in full at <http://www.aqa.org.uk> and the following is a brief summary.

Section 1: Cell Biology

This section explores how structural differences between types of cells enables them to perform specific functions within the organism. Pupils learn that these differences in cells are controlled by genes in the nucleus and mitosis is required for growth.

Section 2: Organisation

Pupils learn about the human digestive system which provides the body with nutrients and the respiratory system that provides it with oxygen and removes carbon dioxide. Pupils also learn how the plant's transport system is dependent on environmental conditions to ensure that leaf cells are provided with the water and carbon dioxide that they need for photosynthesis.

Section 3: Infection and Response

Pupils are taught within this section that pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses and bacteria that cause infectious diseases in animals and plants. They will learn that pathogens depend on their host to provide the conditions and nutrients that they need to grow and reproduce and that they frequently produce toxins that damage tissues and make us feel ill.

Section 4: Bioenergetics

In this section pupils will explore how plants harness the Sun's energy in photosynthesis in order to make food. Pupils will be taught that both animals and plants use oxygen to oxidise food in a process called aerobic respiration which transfers the energy that the organism needs to perform its functions.

Section 5: Homeostasis and Response

Within this section, pupils will learn that cells in the body require a constant temperature and pH as well as a constant supply of dissolved food and water. In order to do this the body requires control systems that constantly monitor and adjust the composition of the blood and tissues. Pupils will explore the structure and function of the nervous system and how it can bring about fast responses.

Section 6: Inheritance, Variation and Evolution

Pupils will discover how the number of chromosomes are halved during meiosis and then combined with new genes from the sexual partner to produce unique offspring. Pupils will be taught that variation generated by mutations and sexual reproduction is the basis for natural selection.

Section 7: Ecology

In this section pupils will be taught that the Sun is a source of energy that passes through ecosystems and that materials including carbon and water are continually recycled by the living world. Pupils will learn that all species live in ecosystems composed of complex communities of animals and plants dependent on each other and that are adapted to particular conditions.

Section 8: Key Ideas

In this section, pupils are taught about a number of key ideas in biology that are used to describe the complex and diverse phenomena of the natural world.

AQA GCSE CHEMISTRY

The AQA GCSE in Chemistry is a challenging but rewarding programme that provides a broad insight into the discipline. There are ten topics in the course and several chapters make up each section. Given below are brief summaries of these ten topics.

The full specification is available online, scan the QR code below to take you to the website.



The AQA GCSE in Chemistry is assessed by two externally assessed papers. Both papers are 1 hour and 45 minutes in duration and worth 100 marks. The two papers will examine different material and cover 5 topics each, 1-5 and 6-10. Pupils are not assessed through coursework but must complete 8 Required Practicals. These will be examined in the two papers sat at the end of the course. Pupils will study the topics in the order as presented in the specification and the AQA textbook, pupils have been issued a copy of this textbook.

By the end of Year 10, pupils will have completed topics 1 – 7.

Pupils are expected to make use of their textbooks at home and should be encouraged to read the chapters within. All pupils are in a *Microsoft Team* group, within this group, pupils can find answers to the textbook including other useful resources. The department arranges mentoring support, but this is usually first offered to those who are struggling the most. Targeted mentoring is allocated based on report data.

Topic 1: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table (AQA Textbook Chapter 1 & 2)

The periodic table provides chemists with a structured organisation of the known chemical elements from which they can make sense of their physical and chemical properties. The historical development of the periodic table and models of atomic structure provide good examples of how scientific ideas and explanations develop over time as new evidence emerges. The arrangement of elements in the modern periodic table can be explained in terms of atomic structure which provides evidence for the model of a nuclear atom with electrons in energy levels.

Topic 2: Bonding and Structure (AQA Textbook Chapter 3)

Chemists use theories of structure and bonding to explain the physical and chemical properties of materials. Analysis of structures shows that atoms can be arranged in a variety of ways, some of which are molecular while others are giant structures. Theories of bonding explain how atoms are held together in these structures. Scientists use this knowledge of structure and bonding to engineer new materials with desirable properties. The properties of these materials may offer new applications in a range of different technologies.

Topic 3: Quantitative Chemistry (AQA Textbook Chapter 4)

Chemists use quantitative analysis to determine the formulae of compounds and the equations for reactions. Given this information, analysts can then use quantitative methods to determine the purity of chemical samples and to monitor the yield from chemical reactions. Chemical reactions can be classified in various ways. Identifying different types of chemical reaction allows chemists to make sense of how different chemicals react together, to establish patterns and to make predictions about the behaviour of other chemicals. Chemical equations provide a means of representing chemical reactions and are a key way for chemists to communicate chemical ideas.

Topic 4: Chemical Changes (AQA Textbook Chapter 5 & 6)

Understanding of chemical changes began when people began experimenting with chemical reactions in a systematic way and organising their results logically. Knowing about these different chemical changes meant that scientists could begin to predict exactly what new substances would be formed and use this knowledge to develop a wide range of different materials and processes. It also helped biochemists to understand the complex reactions that take place in living organisms. The extraction of important resources from the Earth makes use of the way that some elements and compounds react with each other and how easily they can be 'pulled apart'.

Topic 5: Energy Changes (AQA Textbook Chapter 7)

Energy changes are an important part of chemical reactions. The interaction of particles often involves transfers of energy due to the breaking and formation of bonds. Reactions in which energy is released to the surroundings are exothermic reactions, while those that take in thermal energy are endothermic. These interactions between particles can produce heating or cooling effects that are used in a range of everyday applications. Some interactions between ions in an electrolyte result in the production of electricity. Cells and batteries use these chemical reactions to provide electricity. Electricity can also be used to decompose ionic substances and is a useful means of producing elements that are too expensive to extract any other way.

Topic 6: The rate and extent of chemical change (AQA Textbook Chapter 8)

Chemical reactions can occur at vastly different rates. Whilst the reactivity of chemicals is a significant factor in how fast chemical reactions proceed, there are many variables that can be manipulated in order to speed them up or slow them down. Chemical reactions may also be reversible and therefore the effect of different variables needs to be established in order to identify how to maximise the yield of desired product. Understanding energy changes that accompany chemical reactions is important for this process. In industry, chemists and chemical engineers determine the effect of different variables on reaction rate and yield of product. Whilst there may be compromises to be made, they carry out optimisation processes to ensure that enough product is produced within a sufficient time, and in an energy-efficient way.

Topic 7: Organic Chemistry (AQA Textbook Chapter 9 - 11)

The chemistry of carbon compounds is so important that it forms a separate branch of chemistry. A great variety of carbon compounds is possible because carbon atoms can form chains and rings linked by C-C bonds. This branch of chemistry gets its name from the fact that the main sources of organic compounds are living, or once-living materials from plants and animals. These sources include fossil fuels which are a major source of feedstock for the petrochemical industry. Chemists are able to take organic molecules and modify them in many ways to make new and useful materials such as polymers, pharmaceuticals, perfumes and flavourings, dyes and detergents.

Topic 8: Chemical Analysis (AQA Textbook Chapter 12)

Analysts have developed a range of qualitative tests to detect specific chemicals. The tests are based on reactions that produce a gas with distinctive properties, or a colour change or an insoluble solid that appears as a precipitate. Instrumental methods provide fast, sensitive and accurate means of analysing chemicals, and are particularly useful when the amount of chemical being analysed is small. Forensic scientists and drug control scientists rely on such instrumental methods in their work.

Topic 9: Chemistry of the Atmosphere (AQA Textbook Chapter 13)

The Earth's atmosphere is dynamic and forever changing. The causes of these changes are sometimes man-made and sometimes part of many natural cycles. Scientists use very complex software to predict weather and climate change as there are many variables that can influence this. The problems caused by increased levels of air pollutants require scientists and engineers to develop solutions that help to reduce the impact of human activity.

Topic 10: Using Resources (AQA Textbook Chapter 14 & 15)

Industries use the Earth's natural resources to manufacture useful products. In order to operate sustainably, chemists seek to minimise the use of limited resources, use of energy, waste and environmental impact in the manufacture of these products. Chemists also aim to develop ways of disposing of products at the end of their useful life in ways that ensure that materials and stored energy are utilised. Pollution, disposal of waste products and changing land use has a significant effect on the environment, and environmental chemists study how human activity has affected the Earth's natural cycles, and how damaging effects can be minimised.

AQA GCSE PHYSICS

The Department is following the AQA GCSE in Physics specification. The assessment of this course consists of two externally assessed papers. Both papers last for one hundred and five minutes and are worth one hundred marks. The two papers will examine different material. Paper 1 covers Energy, Electricity, the Particle Model of Matter and Atomic Structure. Paper 2 covers Forces, Waves, Magnetism and Electromagnetism and Space Physics. There is no coursework component to the AQA GCSE in Physics. The specification can be viewed in full at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/> and the following is a brief summary. Mr Dalby has recorded videos of lessons for the whole course, which can be viewed on YouTube using the QR code here.



Energy

The concept of energy emerged in the 19th century. The idea was used to explain the work output of steam engines and then generalised to understand other heat engines. It also became a key tool for understanding chemical reactions and biological systems. Limits to the use of fossil fuels and global warming are critical problems for this century. Physics and engineers are working hard to identify ways to reduce our energy usage.

Electricity

Electric charge is a fundamental property of matter everywhere. Understanding the difference in the microstructure of conductors, semiconductors and insulators makes it possible to design components and build electric circuits. Many circuits are powered with mains electricity, but portable electrical devices must use batteries of some kind. Electrical power fills the modern world with artificial light and sound, information and entertainment, remote sensing and control. The fundamentals of electromagnetism were worked out by scientists of the 19th Century.

Particle Model of Matter

The particle model is widely used to predict the behaviour of solids, liquids and gases and this has many applications in everyday life. It helps us to explain a wide range of observations and engineers use these principles when designing vessels to withstand high pressures and temperatures, such as submarines and spacecraft. It also explains why it is difficult to make a good cup of tea high up a mountain.

Atomic Structure

Ionising radiation is hazardous but can be very useful. Although radioactivity was discovered over a century ago, it took many nuclear physicists several decades to understand the structure of atoms, nuclear forces and stability. Early researchers suffered from their exposure to ionising radiation. Rules for radiological protection were first introduced in the 1930s and subsequently improved. Today radioactive materials are widely used in medicine, industry, agriculture and electrical power generation.

Forces

Engineers analyse forces when designing a great variety of machines and instruments, from road bridges and fairground rides to atomic force microscopes. Anything mechanical can be analysed in this way. Recent developments in artificial limbs use the analysis of forces to make movement possible.

Waves

Wave behaviour is common in both natural and man-made systems. Waves carry energy from one place to another and can also carry information. Designing comfortable and safe structures such as bridges, houses and music performance halls requires an understanding of mechanical waves. Modern technologies such as imaging and communication systems show how we can make the most of electromagnetic waves.

Magnetism and Electromagnetism

Electromagnetic effects are used in a wide variety of devices. Engineers make use of the fact that a magnet moving in a coil can produce electric current and also that when current flows around a magnet it can produce movement. It means that systems that involve control or communications can take full advantage of this.

Space Physics

Questions about where we are, and where we came from, have been asked for thousands of years. In the past century, astronomers and astrophysicists have made remarkable progress in understanding the scale and structure of the universe, its evolution and ours. New questions have emerged recently. 'Dark matter', which bends light and holds galaxies together but does not emit electromagnetic radiation, is everywhere – what is it? And what is causing the universe to expand ever faster?

GCSE ART & DESIGN: FINE ART

The examination board for Art and Design at WHSB is AQA. Pupils can visit www.aqa.org.uk for the subject specification. GCSE Art and Design (Fine Art) is intended for pupils who have proven practical skills using fine art processes and media. Pupils will create art works including some or all of the following; Painting and Drawing, Sculpture, and Printmaking.

The Full Course GCSE is made up of:-

- Paper 1 *A Personal Portfolio, consisting of one or two units of coursework. This must have a complete sketchbook and four outcomes to support each unit.*
- Paper 2 *Externally Set Assignment. Titles set by the Exam board. A full sketchbook plus supporting studies and one ten hour outcome.*

In both UNITS all Assessment Objectives must be met.

Assessment Objectives

A01	Developing ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding.	25%
A02	Refining ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes.	25%
A03	Recording ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions in visual and/or other forms.	25%
A04	Presenting a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. Realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements.	25%

COURSEWORK

TIMETABLE	TOPIC	ASSESSMENT	WEIGHTING
September 2026 – January 2028 Coursework	3 themes: 1. <i>“Identity”</i> 2. <i>“Land & Sea”</i> 3. <i>A trial examination (8 weeks preparation, 10 hour examination)</i>	- Internally set - Internally marked - Externally moderated - Must include Sketchbook for each Theme May 2028	60%

EXAM UNIT

TIMETABLE	TOPIC	ASSESSMENT	WEIGHTING
January 2028 Externally Set Assignment (Preparatory Period of Eight to Ten School Weeks)	<i>Themes set by AQA</i>	- Externally set - Internally marked - Externally moderated - Must include Sketchbooks	40%
April 2028 Externally Set Assignment (Timed Test 10 Hours)		May - June 2028	

GCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE (J276 from 2016)

The examination board is OCR. The specification is called "OCR GCSE in Computer Science J277". Full details can be obtained from www.ocr.org.uk.

This course will give pupils an in-depth understanding into how computer technology works and a look at what goes on "behind the scenes." As part of this, pupils will investigate computer programming and problem solving.

This course is made up of two units assessed through written examinations and a requirement to take part in a range of programming activities, not formally assessed. Both written papers are 1 hour 30 minutes long and are completed in normal examination conditions. The question papers will feature short and essay style questions along with the opportunity to demonstrate programming concepts via pseudocode.

The pupils are required to be given the opportunity to program a range of tasks using a typed programming language. This will be covered using the Python3 programming language, primarily through the online IDE repl.it.com.

Term	Theory 01 - Computer Systems	Theory 02 - Computational thinking, algorithms and programming	Programming Activities
1		Algorithms Programming techniques	Python review of prior knowledge and search algorithms
2	Hardware Binary representation of data Von Neumann Architecture	Producing robust programs Units of storage	Conversion between bases (Bin, Dec, Hex)
3	System security System software IDEs	Computational logic Testing program code	Control Systems Sorting Algorithms
4	User Interfaces Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns	Translators and facilities of languages	Run Length Encoding
5	Revision	Revision	Past paper based practical activities

GCSE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

The examination board for Design & Technology is AQA. Pupils can visit www.aqa.org.uk for the subject specification and past papers. GCSE textbooks, computer software and coursework booklets are available in School for pupil use.

GCSE Design & Technology is intended for pupils who have chosen to specialise in designing and making using a range of materials and processes. Pupils will design and make contemporary products to meet a variety of needs that reflect lifestyle and society. Creativity is a big part of this course; pupils are required to solve practical problems that should be both easily manufactured and aesthetically pleasing.

UNIT 1: Written Paper

2 hours - 100 marks

50% of the total marks

Questions will cover three key areas:

- Core technical principles (building on knowledge across all areas of the Design & Technology curriculum at KS3).
- Specialist technical principles (in depth knowledge of at least two material groups from timbers, metals, polymers, textiles, paper & boards or electronic and mechanical devices).
- Design & making principles (theoretical principles of how to design and make a product).

UNIT 2: Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Design and Make Portfolio – 100 marks

50% of the total marks

Contextual challenges will be released annually by AQA on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of the NEA these will suit a variety of material areas.

Pupils would be required to produce a concise design folder and/or appropriate ICT evidence and the development of a made outcome.

Year 10 Term 1

Single Lesson	- Unit 1 – New and emerging technologies - Unit 2 - Energy generation and storage
Double Lesson	- Design and making skills project; Skills Box

Year 10 Term 2

Single Lesson	- Unit 3 – Materials and their working properties - Unit 4 – Common specialist technical principles
Double Lesson	- Design and making skills project; Angle-Poise Desk Lamp

Year 10 Term 3

Single Lesson	- Unit 6 – Designing Principles
Double Lesson	- NEA – Researching, Investigating, Designing

Year 11 Term 1

Single Lesson	- Unit 7 – Making Principles
Double Lesson	- NEA – design development of prototypes

Year 11 Term 2

Single Lesson	- Unit 5 – Specialist Technical Principles
Double Lesson	- NEA – manufacturing prototypes and evaluating

GCSE ECONOMICS

Examining Body: OCR

Website Address: www.ocr.org.uk

Subject Codes: J205/01: Introduction to Economics
J205/02: National & International Economics

Assessment: J205/01: 1½ hours written paper (50% of total grade)
J205/02: 1½ hours written paper (50% of total grade)

Textbook: OCR GCSE (9-1) Economics

Recommended reading: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business

The GCSE Examination comprises of two papers: Paper 1, Introduction to Economics and Paper 2, National & International Economics.

Papers 1 and 2 are worth 80 marks each and are both made up of two sections. Section A assesses Knowledge with 20 multiple-choice questions. Section B comprises two main questions with sub components assessing Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation.

Year 10 pupils are regularly tested with a particular focus, on Knowledge using questions sourced from the Core Knowledge booklet distributed in September. Skills testing on Application, Analysis and Evaluation is gradually introduced towards the end of the Autumn Term.

Year 11 pupils are regularly tested with a greater focus on Skills. Test papers comprise two sections: Core Knowledge and Skills. Core Knowledge questions are sourced from the Core Knowledge booklet and Skills questions (Analyse and Evaluate) are based on similar materials taught and practised in lessons.

YEAR 10

AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
First half term	First half term	First half term
- Main economic groups and factors of production - The basic economic problem - The role of markets	- Price - Competition	- The role of money - Financial markets
Second half term	Second half term	Second half term
- Demand - Supply	- Production - The labour market	- Economic growth - Low unemployment - EXAMS

YEAR 11

AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
First half term	First half term	First half term
• Fair distribution of income • Price stability • Fiscal policy	• Limitations of markets • Importance of international trade	• Globalisation • Revision
Second half term	Second half term	Second half term
• Monetary policy • Supply side policy • TRIAL EXAMS	• Balance of payments • Exchange rates	• EXAMINATIONS

GCSE FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

At WHSB, all pupils continue with the study of at least one language to GCSE, and many choose to continue with both of their languages. By the end of the GCSE course, pupils should be able to converse fluently, confidently and spontaneously on a wide range of topics. A 2016 survey (*) by the CBI employers and Pearson showed that the languages most in demand by UK businesses are French, German and Spanish, and with declining numbers of people proficient in these languages in the UK, a strong GCSE which could lead to an A Level in at least one of these languages is an asset for our pupils.

Pupils follow the Pearson Edexcel GCSE Languages course for Years 10 and 11 to prepare them for the examinations in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each skill is worth 25% of the final examination grade and there is no coursework. In all languages, the topics studied are split into six broad themes:

- Theme 1 – My personal world
- Theme 2 – Lifestyle and wellbeing
- Theme 3 – My neighbourhood
- Theme 4 – Media and technology
- Theme 5 – Studying and my future
- Theme 6 – Travel and tourism

Further information can be found in the specifications, and we recommend that pupils familiarise themselves with the information and practice materials, all of which are available on the Pearson Edexcel website.

As a Department, we are fortunate to have access to a large bank of resources, some of which we have bought, but some of which we have created for the pupils at this school in order to provide stretch and challenge. Pupils will be provided with a new textbook in the relevant language, along with a speaking booklet which pupils complete as we work through the topics.

In all three languages, our teachers are supported by our Foreign Language Assistants who meet with our Year 10 and 11 pupils in small groups to provide extra assistance with preparation for the speaking examination. These lessons (as well as the majority of all MFL lessons) are conducted mainly in the target language. Mentoring at lunchtimes is available for pupils who wish to have extra support, whilst Language Leaders in Years 10 and 11 are encouraged to take part in organising and supporting extra-curricular activities in MFL, as well as becoming mentors to pupils in younger years.

To achieve success at GCSE, motivation is key and pupils must increase the amount of independent work they do; they must start to take an interest in the countries where their studied languages are spoken. In their independent work, as well as time spent consolidating vocabulary, learning new structures and practising grammar, we recommend that pupils make sensible use of the huge amount of material on the Internet. We particularly recommend languagesonline.org.uk, conjuguemos.com and Quizlet. In addition, we recommend that pupils spend time outside of lessons watching films and TV, reading books and magazines, finding articles online and listening to music in the various languages.

* CBI (2016) THE RIGHT COMBINATION CBI/PEARSON EDUCATION AND SKILLS SURVEY 2016

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

We follow the AQA specification. The course comprises of three examinations: physical geography, human geography and an issue evaluation. The specification can be found online at: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035>.

Paper 1 is 'Living with the physical environment' and covers physical geography. The paper is made up of 3 sections: A) the challenge of natural hazards, B) the living world and C) physical landscapes in the UK. Geographical skills are also tested in this unit. The paper is 90 minutes long and is worth 88 marks. 3 of those marks are given for SPaG on longer questions. Section A is worth 33 marks, Section B is worth 25 marks and Section C is worth 30 marks. The question type includes single-mark multiple choice questions, data response questions, and longer response questions worth 4 to 9 marks. The paper is worth 35% of the GCSE.

Paper 2 is 'Challenges in the human environment' and covers human geography. The paper is made up of 3 sections: A) urban issues and challenges, B) the changing economic world and C) the challenge of resource management (including an optional topic on food). Geographical skills are also tested in this unit. The paper is 90 minutes long and is worth 88 marks. 3 of those marks are given for SPaG on longer questions. Section A is worth 33 marks, Section B is worth 30 marks and Section C is worth 25 marks. The question type includes single-mark multiple choice questions, data response questions, and longer response questions worth 4 to 9 marks. The paper is worth 35% of the GCSE.

Both Papers 1 and 2 contain option modules where the Department has been able to select the units felt to most interest the pupils from a list of possibilities. It is important that the boys pay attention to the rubric on the front of the examination papers and select the correct options to answer.

Paper 3 is called 'Geographical applications' and ordinarily covers three aspects of Geography: fieldwork, geographical skills and an issue evaluation. It is mandatory for pupils to complete two days of fieldwork: at WHSB this is usually a physical day at Walton-on-the-Naze and a human day in an urban setting. Questions will be asked in the exam related to fieldwork data collection, data presentation and analysis strategies. The paper is made up of two sections: A) issue evaluation (37 marks) and B) fieldwork (39 marks). The paper is 90 minutes long and worth 76 marks (30%) of the GCSE.

The preparation for the fieldwork skills section will be completed throughout the course. The issue evaluation is based around pre-released material covering topics from Papers 1 and 2. The material is released in March of Year 11; pupils are permitted a copy of the material to write on and prepare with, but this copy cannot be taken into the exam hall. On the day a fresh, non-annotated copy will be supplied.

YEAR 10

AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
First half term	First half term	First half term
PHYSICAL SECTION B - Ecosystems - Tropical rainforests - Cold environments	PHYSICAL SECTION C - UK landscapes - UK coastal landscapes - UK river landscapes	HUMAN SECTION A UK urban challenges
Second half term	Second half term	Second half term
HUMAN SECTION C Resource management	HUMAN SECTION A Global urban patterns	END OF YEAR EXAMINATIONS FIELDWORK

• Food	• Urban challenges in poorer countries	• Preparation and write-up
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YEAR 11

AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
First half term	First half term	First half term
PHYSICAL SECTION A • Distribution of hazards • Tectonic hazards FIELDWORK • Preparation and write-up	HUMAN SECTION B • Global development and economic change	ISSUE EVALUATION PREP REVISION OF COURSE Tailored to the specific strengths and weaknesses of your son's class.
Second half term	Second half term	Second half term
PHYSICAL SECTION A • Weather & climate hazards GCSE TRIAL EXAMINATIONS	HUMAN SECTION B • Global trade • Growth of NICs • UK Economy ISSUE EVALUATION PREP	EXAMINATIONS

WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION

Pupils are issued by the Geography Department with a 'Course guide and revision booklet'. This contains essential information and advice for fulfilling potential in GCSE Geography. It contains a wealth of tasks for helping your son to review and revise the course from the very start of Year 10, following the School's *Revision for Learning* scheme. Using this booklet will help pupils to learn the course material in depth. The booklet also contains many past paper questions so pupils can apply their knowledge and understanding and prepare for tests.

The pupils are also issued with a textbook – Oxford AQA GCSE Geography. BBC GCSE Bitesize is a good source of information and has short revision quizzes the pupils can use to test their knowledge. Your son's Geography teacher will be able to recommend other specific sources for each topic. Some pupils find revision guides useful and the Geography Department recommends those published by CGP. Additionally, in Year 11 we issue all students with a pre-examination Geography revision booklet.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

Parents are strongly encouraged to look through the course guide with their son and to familiarise themselves with its contents. The booklet should be used throughout the two-year course and is designed to be 'dipped into' frequently as a way of consolidating learning.

During each unit, pupils will complete a set of practice exam questions, based on the styles of questions found in the actual papers. These will be used both in class and as homework tasks. At the end of each unit pupils will complete a timed, closed-book test, again based on the paper format. Talking to your son about his mark, his technique and what he needs to do to improve his answers is a valuable reflective tool and will help him to make rapid progress.

The course is fast-paced and it is vital that homework tasks are submitted on time and fully completed. Pupils should make revision notes (whether in a small exercise book, folder or index cards) as they go, rather than leaving all the revision preparation until later in Year 11. Early and repeated preparation is a lot more successful than a last-minute rush.

GCSE GEOLOGY

Your child is studying the WJEC Eduqas GCSE Geology course. Geology is the study of the Earth, including rocks, fossils, natural hazards, resources and the processes that have shaped our planet over billions of years. The course develops scientific knowledge, analytical skills and an understanding of some of the key environmental and resource challenges facing society today.

GCSE GEOLOGY	Year 10	Year 11
	<i>Foundations of Rocks</i>	<i>Earth Systems Through Time</i>
	1.1 Minerals 1.2 Igneous Rocks & Processes	2.3 Geochronology 2.5 Evolution of Life
Autumn 1		
Autumn 2	1.3 Sedimentary Rocks & Fossils	2.4 Climate & Sea Level 3.1 Planetary Geology
	<i>Rock Cycle & Change</i>	<i>Earth Hazards & Resources</i>
Spring 1	1.4 Metamorphic Rocks & Processes	4.1 Earth Hazards & Mitigation
Spring 2	1.5 Deformational Structures	4.2 Earth Resources & Engineering
	<i>The Dynamic Earth</i>	
Summer 1	2.1 Rock Cycle	
Summer 2	2.2 Plate Tectonics	

How Will Students Be Assessed?

The GCSE is assessed through two written examination components, each worth 50% of the final GCSE grade. There is no coursework.

Component 1: Geological Principles

- **1 hour 15 minutes**
- On-screen examination
- Covers the full breadth of geological knowledge from the specification.
- Questions include:
 - Multiple-choice questions
 - Short-answer questions
 - Structured questions
 - Extended writing questions
- Students use a geology data sheet during the examination.

Component 2: Investigative Geology

- **1 hour 30 minutes**
- Written examination
- Based on interpreting the geology of an area shown on a simplified geological map.
- Questions include:
 - Multiple-choice questions
 - Short-answer questions

- Structured questions
- Extended writing questions
- Students use a geology data sheet during the examination.

Throughout Years 10 and 11, students also complete:

- End-of-topic assessments
- Mock examinations
- Retrieval quizzes and knowledge checks
- Practice questions using past examination papers

These assessments allow students to monitor their progress and identify areas requiring further revision.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an important part of geology. Students will undertake two fieldwork day trips during the course. These experiences help students develop practical geological skills and deepen their understanding of rocks, geological structures and Earth processes.

Achieving Success in Geology

Parents can play a vital role in helping students succeed. The most successful geology students typically:

1. Learn Key Vocabulary

Geology contains specialist terminology. Encourage your child to create flashcards and regularly test themselves on definitions and geological processes.

2. Revise Little and Often

Short, regular revision sessions are far more effective than cramming before tests. Revisiting topics each week helps students retain important knowledge.

3. Practise Exam Questions

Students should regularly attempt past-paper questions to become familiar with command words.

4. Use Diagrams and Visual Learning

Many geological processes are easier to remember through labelled diagrams, cross-sections and flow charts. Redrawing these from memory is an excellent revision technique.

5. Follow Current Geological Events

Natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides frequently appear in the news. Discussing these events helps students link their learning to real-world examples.

6. Attend and Engage in Fieldwork

Fieldwork provides valuable context for classroom learning. Taking photographs, making observations and asking questions during visits helps reinforce understanding.

Recommended Resources

Eduqas GCSE Geology

Official specification, past papers and support materials:

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/geology-gcse/>

Useful Websites

- United States Geological Survey (USGS): <https://www.usgs.gov>
- British Geological Survey (BGS): <https://www.bgs.gov>
- Geological Society: <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk>

Published Materials

- **Understanding Geology** by Webster (student textbook)
- **Down to Earth** magazine (available in the WHSB Library)
- **Geology Today** magazine (available in the WHSB Library)

AQA HISTORY GCSE

Key skills to be assessed:

- Narrative recollection and account writing
- Explanation of causation and consequence
- Comparison of time periods
- Assessment of the significance of events
- Explanation of change and continuity
- Explanation of problems
- Evaluation of sources and interpretations

Pupils will sit two 120-minute examination papers, which contain questions requiring written answers of varying lengths. There is no coursework or Non-Examined Assessment.

Year 10 Paper 2	Britain: Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day <i>Pupils look at virtually the entire history of England, with a particular focus on migration to and from the country. This includes Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, Normans, Western exploration and early empire building, the relationship with America and the Caribbean, the development of empires in India and Africa and 20th century Britain.</i> Norman England, c1066–c1100 <i>Pupils consider the impact of the Norman Conquest on England over the immediate, short and long term. This includes analysis of the original Conquest, an exploration of Norman methods of control, a study of the Norman Church and monasticism and a Norman Heritage Site case study.</i>
Year 11 Paper 1	Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship <i>This course examines three key periods of German History – the latter stages of the Kaiserreich, the success and failures of the Weimar Government and the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party. The focus here is on interpretations, together with some wider second order conceptual questions.</i> Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972 <i>This unit explores the conflict between East and West known as the Cold War, from its early stages through the Cuban Missile Crisis and the later reduction of tensions.</i>

GCSE MUSIC

Three skills are examined in the GCSE Music course:

1. **Performance (30%):** Students are required to record two performances: a solo performance and an ensemble performance. Combined, the minimum time should add up to 4 minutes. If the performances fall under the time limit, marks will be deducted. The ensemble piece can be performed with a teacher or one or more pupils.
2. **Composition (30%):** Two compositions are required for GCSE pupils. One will be a free choice composition, and the other will be based on a set brief, released at the beginning of Year 11. Combined, the minimum time should add up to 3 minutes.
3. **Listening (40%):** Pupils are examined on 8 pieces of music that they study during the course.

Performance

Pupils are expected to be having individual private lessons on an instrument. Practice will form part of their music homework and they are expected to belong to a school ensemble if it is appropriate. The two exam pieces can be recorded at any time during the exam year. The solo recording must be finished by the end of the Autumn Term in Year 11. The ensemble recording must be done by the end of the Spring Term in Year 11.

Composition

Many pupils find composition difficult so they must be willing to put time and effort into this work. Much of the homework will be composition exercises and it is helpful if pupils have a copy of Sibelius First software so that they can work at home. Otherwise, the work must be done in the Music Department during lunchtimes or after School. Pupils will be completing a portfolio of compositions in lesson time across Year 10 and Year 11. The two examination pieces will be selected from these and will be completed under Non-Examined Assessment conditions. The first will be done in the Autumn Term of Year 11, the second in the following Spring. Pupils will be given advice on composition writing in class. Helpful materials for composition can be found in the M12 store cupboard.

Listening

There are four areas of study and each one takes approximately one term to learn. Each area has two pieces that are studied in detail. Pupils need to learn the main features of each piece, getting to know both how they sound and how they appear in the written score. In the examination they will have to recognize and describe these features. In addition to the set works, pupils will also be played extracts from unfamiliar music relating to the areas of study in the exam. As such they should aim to listen around the subject, engaging with other composers and performers who produced music of the same style as those studied in set works. Pupils can find recordings of each of the set works on YouTube or other music streaming sites. These recordings should be regularly listened to ensure that they are familiar with the works. Helpful materials for improving listening can be found in the M12 store.

The 8 Set Works

Area of Study 1 Instrumental Music 1700-1820	Area of Study 2 Vocal Music	Area of Study 3 Music for Stage and Screen	Area of Study 4 Fusions
J.S Bach: <i>Brandenburg Concerto No.5 in D major, movement III</i> Beethoven: <i>Piano Sonata Op.13 No.8 in C minor 'Pathétique,' movement I</i>	Purcell <i>'Music for a While'</i> Queen <i>'Killer Queen' from Sheer Heart Attack</i>	S Schwartz <i>'Defying Gravity' from Wicked</i> J Williams <i>'Main Title/Rebel Blockade Runner' from Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope</i>	Afro Celt Sound System <i>Release</i> Esperanza Spalding <i>Samba Em Prelúdio</i>

Homework will include listening to the set works and annotating the scores; working on composition (either on paper or on Sibelius); practising for performances (at least 20 minutes practice, five times a week); learning the technical terms and definitions used in music; researching musical styles and genres.

GCSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Physical Education pupils follow the EDUQAS course. Through studying GCSE Physical Education learners will acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness and well-being. Learners will develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge to improve performance. Learners will perform in different physical activities. They will develop skills and techniques, select and use tactics, strategies and compositional ideas. Learners will develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance in physical activity and sport.

For the practical element pupils are required to offer 3 practical activities, worth 30%, comprising both team and individual sports. They will also complete a written analysis of performance worth 10%, each element contributing to a mark out of 80. For the theoretical component pupils will complete a two-hour written examination out of 120 marks, making up the remaining 60% of the course.

Main Topic Areas	Sub-Topics
1. Health, Training and Exercise	• Health, fitness and well-being • The contribution physical activity makes to health and fitness • Consequences of a sedentary lifestyle • Diet and Nutrition • Components of fitness • Measuring health and fitness • Methods of training • Training Zones • Principles of training and exercising • Warm up and cool down • Data Analysis
2. Exercise Physiology	• Muscular-skeletal system • Cardiovascular and respiratory systems • Aerobic and Anaerobic exercise • Short and long term effects of exercise • Data analysis
3. Movement Analysis	• Muscle contractions • Lever systems • Planes and axis of movement • Sports technology • Data analysis
4. Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity	• Goal setting • Information processing • Guidance • Mental preparation • Motivation • Characteristics of a skilled performance • Classification of skills • Types of practice • Data analysis
5. Socio-Cultural Issues in Physical Activity and Sport	• Participation • Provision • Performance • Data analysis

OCR GCSE (J625) RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In Religious Studies, pupils follow the OCR specification. This encourages pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to engage in debate and discussion about life in a modern pluralistic society. This includes developing an understanding of non-religious beliefs. Pupils will be encouraged to develop and understand personal values and beliefs, with an emphasis on critical analysis and the ability to construct balanced and informed arguments within the context of religious, philosophical and ethical awareness. Pupils have 5 lessons a fortnight, and they study Component 1 (Beliefs and teachings & Practices: Buddhism and Christianity) in Year 10, and Component 2 (Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world from a religious perspective) in Year 11. There are two one-hour examinations on Component 1, and a two-hour examination on Component 2.

Component 1: Beliefs and teachings & Practices

Our chosen religions are Buddhism and Christianity

Beliefs and teachings

Pupils should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the area of study and its importance for the chosen religions' belief, teaching and practice
- analyse, evaluate and discuss the issues raised by the area of study and their importance for individuals, communities and societies in the chosen religions
- include any relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate
- consider significant common and divergent views within our chosen religions.

Practices

Pupils should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of our chosen religions' practices and their importance for individuals, communities and societies
- analyse, evaluate and discuss the issues surrounding our chosen religions' practices
- reference any relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate
- consider significant common and divergent views about our chosen religions' practices

Component 2: Religion philosophy and ethics in the modern world from the religious perspective of Christianity

Pupils study four themes:

- Relationships and families
- The existence of God, gods and the ultimate reality
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

Pupils should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different philosophical and ethical arguments relating to the areas of study
- analyse, evaluate and discuss the issues raised by the areas of study for Christianity and individuals, communities and societies

- demonstrate the depth of their understanding of Christianity by referring to teachings, beliefs, views, attitudes and values, supported by reference to relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate consider significant common and divergent views within their chosen religion
- refer, where appropriate, to different philosophical, ethical or religious perspectives in support of explanations or arguments
- consider the issues raised for Christianity in Great Britain. Know and understand that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main Christian but they are also diverse and include other religious and non-religious beliefs.

CALENDAR OF COURSEWORK AND NON-EXAMINED ASSESSMENTS 2024/2026

	Year 10											Year 11									
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Art	Continuous Personal Portfolio and Sketchbook															Preparation for Final Examination					
	'Natural Forms and Manmade'					'Identity, my space, my place'					Trial Examination / Complete Coursework										
Computer Science					Non-Examined Assessment																
D&T: Product Design								Continuous Design, Making and Evaluation of the Project													
English	Speaking and Listening Coursework Assessment is continuous.																				
Music										Initial Performance assessment		Performance 1 Composition first draft					Performance 2 Composition final draft				
PE								Non-Examined Assessment													