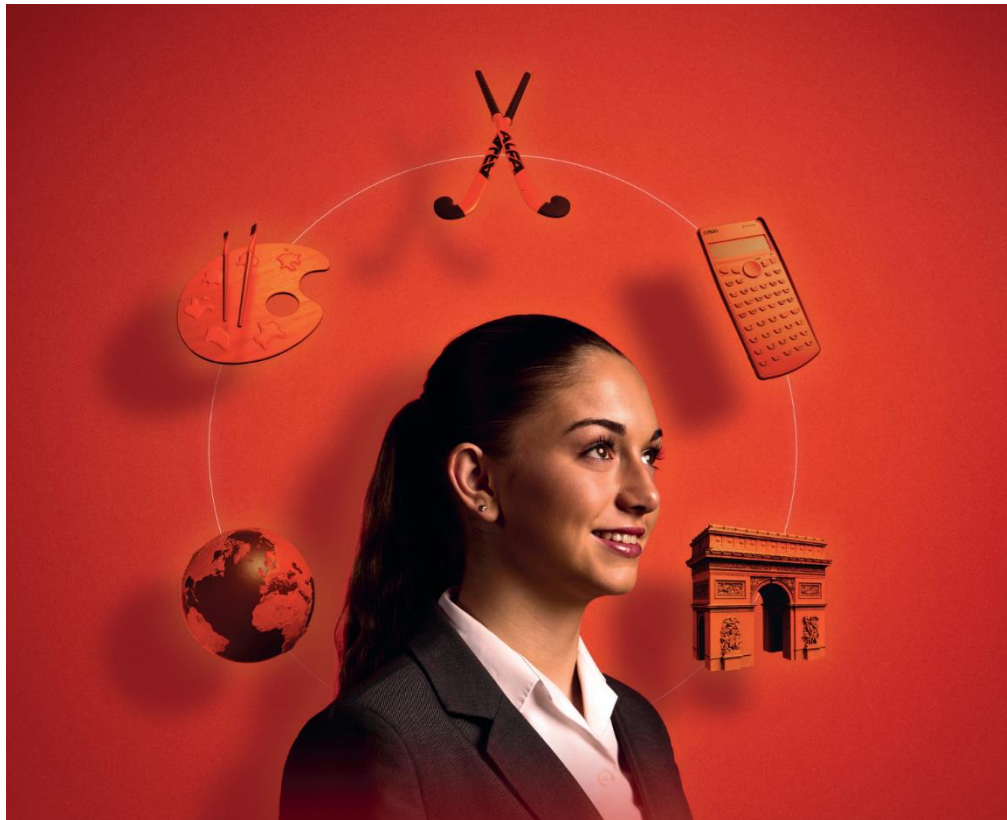




NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL



Year 9 GCSE Options 2026-28

GCSE CURRICULUM 2026-28

Introduction

Your child is now approaching Year 10 and preparing for the next stage of their academic journey with us at NULS. They will shortly need to choose the option subjects they wish to pursue for GCSE. We look forward to working closely with students and parents in making these choices, as well as supporting students to achieve their full aspirations at GCSE, in preparation for entry into the Sixth Form.

GCSE Grading System

GCSEs have gone through a significant period of reform with subject specifications being re-written to be more rigorous, coursework (non-examined assessment) in many subjects being reduced or removed altogether, and the grading scale of 9-1 in all subjects. This latter change was made to allow for greater differentiation between pupils at the higher grades, as well as raising the bar as to what a good pass is; under the old system a good pass was a C, but the Department for Education has made a clear distinction between a standard (4) and strong (5) pass under this new grading scale.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
	5 STRONG PASS
	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

GCSE Subject Choices

At NULS, pupils will take English, English Literature, Mathematics and a **further 6 subjects** to GCSE. Included within these six choices will be a balanced course in Science. Pupils will need to decide whether to take **GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy**, or the three separate sciences: **GCSE Biology**, **GCSE Chemistry** and **GCSE Physics**.

Pupils choosing **Combined Science** will select **four options** from the remaining option subjects, and pupils choosing **GCSE Biology**, **GCSE Chemistry** and **GCSE Physics** will only select **three options**.

The School strongly advises pupils to choose a Humanity subject and a Modern Foreign Language as part of their option choices. This will provide pupils with a balanced, academic profile of GCSE subjects, in preparation for both Sixth Form and Higher Education study. However, we recognise that all children have their own diverse academic strengths, and potential exceptions can be discussed further if it is considered to be in the best interests of the individual pupil.

Option Subjects Currently Offered

Humanities	Modern Foreign Languages	Others
Geography	French	Art or Ceramics
History	German	Business
Religious Studies	Spanish	Computer Science
		Drama
		Design & Technology
		Music
		Physical Education
		Textiles

Choosing the Right Subjects

It is important that pupils make the right choices at GCSE, for the right reasons.

Good reasons for choosing a subject	Bad reasons for choosing a subject
You like it and find it interesting.	Your friends are doing it.
You are good at it and think you will do well in it.	You think you should do it; even if you do not want to.
You need it for your future career aspirations.	Your parents like it, but you do not.
You can develop new skills by doing it.	It is thought of as a 'cool' subject by people.
It will give you satisfaction.	You cannot think of anything else to choose.
Your teachers think it is a suitable choice for you.	You think it will be easy.
It will combine well with other subjects you have chosen.	It sounds good even though you have not found out about it.
You like the method of teaching and assessment.	You really like the teacher you have got now.

The GCSE Options Process

Date	Event
13 January	Year 9 Options Evening
21 January	Year 9 Parents' Evening
30 January	GCSE 'option choices' to be confirmed
2 - 12 February	Selected Year 9 discussions with SMT to finalise option choices

I will explain this process in more detail during the Year 9 Options Evening on 13 January. I am always available to speak to parents who have any further questions, and can be contacted at the school to speak over the phone or arrange a meeting.

I would encourage your children to speak to their subject teachers and tutors over the coming weeks to help them in making these important decisions. As parents, you will also have the opportunity to speak to subject teachers during the Year 9 Parents' Evening on 21 January.

Students will need to submit their GCSE choices on Friday 30 January. A member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) will arrange discussions with any Year 9 students who are unsure and require further guidance to finalise their option choices before the February half term holiday.

Ian Dicksee
Deputy Head (Academic)
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Please note:

Following the return of completed options forms, students' choices will be blocked together for timetable purposes. This will be done in such a way as to accommodate as many requested subject combinations as possible. Please note, however, that the School cannot guarantee that all combinations of subjects will be available. Courses are also offered, subject to demand. The School reserves the right to withdraw the availability of any subject where numbers opting are insufficient.

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The Biology GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 follows on from the work covered in Year 9; it is a 3 year course. Pupils interested in the study of living organisms will benefit by undertaking over 45 minutes extra Biology practice each week, compared to those opting for Combined Science. In addition, the Biology course covers fascinating and rapidly developing areas of research including: monoclonal antibodies, the brain, kidney dialysis and transplantation, protein synthesis, gene expression and mutation, and adult cell cloning.

Course Content

Year 9 topics already covered: Cell structure and transport, cell division, organisation and the digestive system, and organising animals and plants.

Year 10 topics: Communicable diseases, preventing and treating disease, non-communicable diseases, photosynthesis, respiration, the human nervous system, hormonal co-ordination, and homeostasis in action.

Year 11 topics: Reproduction, variation and evolution, adaptations, interdependence and competition, organising an ecosystem, and biodiversity and ecosystems.

Assessment

Two written papers, each 1 hour 45 minutes.

Papers taken are either Foundation or Higher Tier.

Each paper = 100 marks and is 50% of the GCSE.

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

How is the course delivered?

The broad aim of the course is to cover the biological content in ways that will increase pupils' understanding of living organisms and life processes and will encourage scientific thinking. A wide range of practical investigations will be undertaken in addition to the ten required practicals, discussion work will be prominent and pupils will have opportunities to work both in a team and independently on projects and research. Mathematical skills will be incorporated throughout as these constitute 10% of the examination paper. Kerboodle resources and assessments will be employed as further learning tools.

Additional Information

Year 10 participate in the Biology Challenge Competition organised by the Royal Society of Biology.

Mrs A Martin
Head of Biology
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Business (EDEXCEL)

GCSE Business is designed to introduce you to the fast moving, dynamic world of Business. It is a challenging and rewarding learning experience, aiming to reflect the way in which business operates in a modern society. You will develop a broad overview of the dynamics of business activity and how business decision making is affected by, and responds to, the ever-changing market place and needs of consumers. GCSE Business focuses on how the business world actually works and the key corporate functional areas: Marketing, Operations, Human Resource Management and Finance. You will also learn how the economic world impacts on the firm in both positive and negative ways.

Course Content

The course is split into two themes:

Unit 1. Investigating Small Business: You will be introduced to local and national business environments and will develop an understanding of how these environments impact business behaviour and decisions.

Topics include: Enterprise and entrepreneurship, spotting a business opportunity, putting a business idea into practice, making the business effective, and understanding external influences on business.

Unit 2. Building a Business: You will develop an understanding of the interdependent nature of business activity as well as the relationship between the business and the environment in which it operates.

Topics include: Growing the business, making marketing decisions, making operational decisions, making financial decisions, and making human resource decisions.

Assessment

Unit 1. Investigating Small Business: 1 hr 45 mins - Written Exam (50%)

Unit 2. Building a Business: 1 hr 45 mins - Written Exam (50%)

How is the course delivered?

Students will be given opportunities in the lessons to:

Apply knowledge and understanding to contemporary business issues and to different types and sizes of businesses in local, national and global contexts;

Develop as enterprising individuals with the ability to think commercially and creatively to demonstrate business acumen, and draw on evidence to make informed business decisions and solve business problems;

Develop as effective and independent students, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;

Investigate and analyse real business opportunities and issues to construct well-argued, well-evidenced, balanced and structured arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of business;

Develop and apply quantitative skills relevant to business, including using and interpreting data.

Mr A Sparks
Teacher in Charge of GCSE Business
asparks@nuls.org.uk

Three Dimensional Design (AQA)

The AQA syllabus studied at GCSE level encourages a broad approach, allowing pupils to enhance their skills to develop a sound understanding of the nature of the subject. The department offers a highly creative course that will allow pupils to develop their work in a choice of formats, media's, and scale, such as jewellery, body adornment, sculpture, ceramics and architecture.

Course Content

Component 1: Portfolio

Each pupil must select and present a portfolio representative of their course of study. The coursework portfolio of work contributes towards 60% of the overall GCSE. The portfolio must include both:

1. A sustained project developed in response to a subject or theme evidencing the journey from initial engagement with an idea to the realisation of intentions.
2. A selection of further work resulting from activities such as trials and experiments, responses to gallery and museum visits, work placements, and other mini projects.

Component 2: Externally set assignment

AQA will provide an externally set assignment, with seven different starting points. Students must select and respond to one starting point for their chosen title. This assignment begins in January of Year 11 and culminates in a 10-hour supervised period in the department in May, contributing 40% of the GCSE.

How is the course delivered?

The course is delivered through an introductory project that builds on previous skills learnt, allowing students the understanding of the assessment objectives. This is further refined and developed by a second project of work chosen by students from several starting points, addressing all four assessment objectives. The course allows pupils to experience a wide range of skills with focus on creating a personal progression of ideas and outcomes.

Additional Information

Achieving excellent examination results, the department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside lesson. Students will be able to attend workshops and gallery visits to help inform their ideas and contribute towards their GCSE as part of the course.

For further information about the syllabus visit:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/three-dimensional-design>

Miss K Lea
Head of Art
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Chemistry at Newcastle-under-Lyme School is a very popular subject. As a core subject, universities and employers are aware of the intellectual rigour and breadth of skills developed during GCSE Chemistry and the broader skills it develops in pupils. The course is linear with both exams taken at the end of Year 11.

Course Content

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.

How it is assessed -100 marks (50% of GCSE)

- Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Foundation and Higher Tier papers
- Questions - multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 2: Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; and Using resources.

How it is assessed -100 marks (50% of GCSE)

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Foundation and Higher Tier papers
- Questions - multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

How is the course delivered?

Pupils receive four periods of each science, taught by subject specialists, per week. Students taking Chemistry will be taught by the same teacher for both years. Many double periods include practicals and there may also be longer pieces of mini-project work. During the course there are required practicals, which are examined within the written examination papers. There is no longer a coursework element of the GCSE course. Group work and presentations will be used for theory heavy topics. Modelling will also be used by pupils to envisage and understand abstract concepts.

Additional Information

Pupils in the GCSE years will have the chance to take part in the RSC Top of the Bench competition, and those competitors will be chosen by departmental staff. Enrichment and challenge material is available in all laboratories and on the department's Firefly pages. After the GCSE course, a Chemistry qualification at A Level provides the necessary skills to follow any science-related degree course or profession. In most cases, Chemistry is an essential subject for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, pharmacy, chemical engineering and some biological sciences. It is a qualification that is also accepted for non-science careers such as accountancy and law.

Dr P Thomson
Head of Chemistry
pthomson@nuls.org.uk

Combined Science Trilogy (AQA)

Pupils selecting this subject will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics and will be taught each of the components by a subject specialist over eight periods per week. At the end of Year 11, pupils will obtain two GCSE grades in Science. This course is available at both Higher and Foundation Tier level.

Course Content

Biology topics: Cell Biology; organisation; infection and response; bioenergetics; homeostasis and response; inheritance, variation and evolution; and ecology.

Chemistry topics: Atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; quantitative Chemistry; chemical changes and energy changes; the rate and extent of chemical change; organic Chemistry; chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; and using resources.

Physics topics: Energy; electricity; particle model of matter; atomic structure; forces; waves; magnetism and electromagnetism.

Assessment

There are six papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Each paper will be:

- A written examination - 1 hour 15 minutes
- 70 marks
- 16.7% of GCSE
- including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions

How is the course delivered?

The teaching of GCSE Combined Science starts in Year 9, the content of which is common to both the Trilogy course and the Separate Sciences courses. This allows pupils to continue with Trilogy in Year 10 or select the individual sciences through their option choices.

Additional Information

This qualification will give pupils that achieve grades 6 or above the opportunity to progress to A Levels in any of the Sciences.

Mrs V Aspinall-O'Dea
Teacher in Charge of Science
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Computer Science (OCR)

Computer Science encourages students to think creatively, logically and critically and to develop advanced problem-solving skills. With the growth of computing technology, and a rapid expansion of the jobs market in areas such as Data Analytics and Cyber Security, the knowledge and skills developed during the course are very much in demand.

This qualification encourages students to:

- Understand the physical components of computers and computer networks
- Learn how computers use 1s and 0s to do every possible task;
- Learn how to write complex computer programs using Python, an industry standard programming language
- Analyse problems through practical experience, including designing solutions, writing and debugging programs.
- Understand the impact of digital technology to the individual and to wider society;

Course Content

Component 01: Computer Systems

Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes / 50% of total GCSE 80 marks.

1. Systems architecture 2. Memory and storage 3. Computer networks, connections and protocols 4. Network security 5. System software 6. Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology.

Component 02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes / 50% of total GCSE 80 marks.

1. Algorithms 2. Programming fundamentals 3. Producing robust programs 4. Boolean logic 5. Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments.

How is the course delivered?

The GCSE course builds on knowledge acquired in Years 7-9, particularly in the main taught programming language, Python, as this lends itself to many practical applications. Students continue to using Bit-Byte-Bit as their learning platform that they are familiar with. They will also receive a course book that complements the online learning platform. Students also gain hands on experience of working with computer hardware and network components.

Additional Information

This GCSE is excellent preparation for students looking to take Computer Science studies at A Level, or for anyone considering any kind of career in Computer Science. In School, students can attend the Computing Club and use the practical computing area of the main computer room to work on personal projects.

Mr T Wright
Head of Computer Science
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Design and Technology (EDEXCEL)

The GCSE in Design and Technology enables pupils to understand and apply iterative design processes through which they explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes. The qualification allows pupils to use creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes (together with evidence of modelling to develop and prove product concept and function) that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. It gives pupils opportunities to apply knowledge from other disciplines, including Mathematics, Science, Art, Computer Science and the Humanities.

Course Content

Component 1- Examination (50% of the overall grade): A 1 hour 45 minutes examination consisting of a core element of Design and Technology principles which accounts for 40% of component 1. The additional 60% is achieved through a specialism choice of Electronic Systems or Timber Products. There is also a mathematical element within the core and specialist area which accounts for 15% of the examined mark.

Component 2 – Non-Examined Assessment (50% of the overall grade): Pupils will undertake a project as part of their non-examined assessment. The project will test pupils' skills in investigating, designing, making and evaluating a prototype of a product. Pupils are required to analyse a given contextual challenge from a range of three, developing a range of potential ideas to then realise one through practical making activities. The project must allow pupils to apply knowledge and understanding in a product development process to investigate, design, make and evaluate their prototype.

How is the course delivered?

Design and Technology is a subject which allows pupils to develop their design and practical skills. We endeavour to deliver as much learning as possible through practical experience, but as there will be a written examination, 50% of the lessons will be theory based, ensuring notes and practice material are carried out in preparation.

Additional Information

The department participates in the National Greenpower Electric Car race series; developing the car and applying the skills of the workshop, allows co-curricular involvement in a different context. The pupils also attend a visit to the Jaguar Land Rover engine manufacturing plant at Wolverhampton.

The department offers Product Design as an A level. The learning process through the GCSE syllabus is an excellent grounding and will allow pupils to have a good base knowledge for the understanding of materials, their manipulation and the design process.

Mr D J Lambert
Head of Design & Technology
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GCSE Drama is an active, engaging and exciting course, which allows you to explore the theatrical process from the point of view of actor, designer and audience member. You will be introduced to a wide range of theatrical styles and texts, mostly through practical exploration, in preparation for two performance components and a written examination.

Course Content

Component 1: Devising Theatre. *40% (Internally assessed, externally moderated)*

This is a predominantly practical unit, where we will be exploring different performance styles before choosing one to develop into a completely original piece of theatre in response to a stimulus provided by the exam board. Working as either an actor or a designer (lighting; sound; set; costume), you will work in a small group to produce a polished piece of performance work showcasing the talents and creativity of all group members. Your performance will be assessed and a recording of the event / copies of your portfolio will be sent to the examination board.

Component 2: Performing from a Text. *20% (Externally assessed by a visiting examiner)*

You will explore two extracts from the same text and prepare a performance of these as an actor or designer. There is no written element to this aspect of the course, although designers will have to complete the relevant cue sheets / stage plans / costume plots necessary to allow them to carry out their role effectively. In the Spring term of Year 11, an examiner will visit the school to assess your performance.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre. *40% (Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes)*

You will undertake a practical study of a set text and undertake live theatre visits to prepare you for the written examination. In the first part of the examination, you will focus on how you would bring a text to life as an actor, director or designer. In the second, you will explore the ways in which other theatrical professionals have brought a text to life in performance.

How is the course delivered?

Most of the GCSE course will be delivered through practical workshop sessions, supported by notes made about the experience of exploring text, as participant or audience member. Although there will be a requirement for careful study of the text, the philosophy behind the course is that students should understand theatre as a performance art.

Additional Information

GCSE Drama is not only valuable to those intending to go on to study theatre at a more advanced level, but offers a wide range of transferable skills of great benefit to other courses and occupations. Skills developed include communication, presentation/public speaking, group and leadership skills, problem solving, time management, initiative and the ability to work to a deadline and get it right first time.

Mrs J Betts-Nicholson
Director of Drama
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English Language (Edexcel)

We deliver the IGCSE Specification A which allows our pupils to access a wide range of engaging and challenging literary non-fiction.

Course Content

Paper 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing

This examined paper assesses 60% of the total for English Language and covers both Reading and Writing skills. Pupils study a variety of challenging non-fiction texts in preparation to respond to unseen extracts, and to compose their own transactional writing pieces.

Paper 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing

Pupils write two coursework assignments which form 40% of the total for English Language. One piece of writing responds to two poetry or prose texts from an anthology; the second is a piece of imaginative writing.

Spoken Language Endorsement

Pupils demonstrate their presentation skills in a formal setting, listen and respond to feedback, and use spoken language effectively. They are awarded a separate certificate with a grade of Distinction, Merit or Pass.

How is the course delivered?

The course is currently delivered alongside English Literature in six lessons per week, usually taught by one teacher. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills, particularly through the coursework modules and the preparation for exploring unseen material.

Additional Information

Both English Language and English Literature are recognised as core subjects which help to develop key skills across the curriculum. The IGCSE specification prepares pupils well for the rigours of A Level study; texts are challenging and we use analytical terminology which can be applied across many subjects. The coursework modules help pupils to make the transition to the coursework demands at A Level.

Mrs K R Saunders
Head of English
ksaunders@nuls.org.uk

English Literature (Edexcel)

We deliver the IGCSE Specification which offers a diverse and popular range of set texts across the three genres of poetry, prose and drama.

Course Content

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose

This examined paper assesses 60% of the total for English Literature. Pupils study a section of the Edexcel Anthology which covers poems from different cultures and periods of Literature alongside a modern novel which is currently "Of Mice and Men". Pupils also develop their analytical skills when preparing to explore unseen poetry.

Paper 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Pupils write two coursework assignments which form 40% of the total for English Literature. One piece of writing responds to a Shakespeare play and the second to a modern play. Pupils study whole texts and learn to explore the ways in which writers use language, form and structure to shape dramatic effects.

How is the course delivered?

The course is currently delivered alongside English Language in six lessons per week, usually taught by one teacher. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills, particularly through the coursework modules and the preparation for exploring unseen material.

Additional Information

In preparation for A Level, it is important that pupils study the Literary Heritage texts and we particularly value the opportunity to study a whole Shakespeare play. Coursework modules also allow our pupils to develop their independent learning skills, to edit their work, and to organise their arguments effectively. When possible, we arrange trips to the cinema for live screenings or to the theatre.

Mrs K R Saunders
Head of English
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The syllabus studied at GCSE level encourages a broad approach, allowing pupils to enhance their skills to develop a sound understanding of the nature of the subject, whilst engendering a mature and personal response in some depth.

The department offers a dynamic and vibrant course which will allow each pupil the freedom to develop their work in a choice of format, media, and scale.

Course Content

Component 1: Portfolio

Each pupil must select and present a portfolio representative of their course of study. The portfolio contributes towards 60% of the GCSE. The portfolio must include both:

1. A sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief evidencing the journey from initial engagement with an idea to realisation of intentions.
2. A selection of further work resulting from activities such as trails and experiments, responses to gallery and museum visits, work placements, and other mini projects.

Component 2: Externally set assignment

AQA will provide a separate externally set assignment for each title, each with seven different starting points. Students must select and respond to one starting point for their chosen title. This is worth 40% of the GCSE and starts in January of Year 11, culminating in a 10 hour supervised period within the department in May.

How is the course delivered?

The course allows pupils to work in a truly independent and unique way, by creating a personal progression of ideas through a wide range of mark making processes and techniques within the discipline they have chosen.

Additional Information

Achieving excellent examination results, the department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside lesson times and to help ensure that they meet all four assessment objectives at a high level.

For further information about the syllabus visit:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/fine-art>

Miss K Lea
Head of Art
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250 million people in 53 countries on every continent in the world speak French, and, after the USA, France is the second most visited tourist destination in the world. More than 1,200 French companies have subsidiaries in the UK. 50% of English vocabulary originates from French, so what's not to love? All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for French as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

- Topic 1: Free-time activities
- Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 2: Media and technology
- Topic 3: The environment and where people live

How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in French with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our French speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

Additional Information

We organise regular trips abroad and have recently visited the Normandy area of France, giving pupils an opportunity to increase their cultural and historical understanding of the French way of life. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised.

Mrs E Kozlowski
Teacher in Charge of French
ekozlowski@nuls.org.uk

Geography GCSE (AQA)

AQA GCSE Geography is a qualification that is engaging and relevant to today's geographers; a qualification that enables pupils to explore the world, the challenges it faces and their own place in it, and to help prepare them to succeed in their chosen pathway as Geography develops a multitude of desirable, transferable skills. This GCSE course will deepen understanding of geographical processes, illuminate the impact of change and of complex people-environment interactions, highlight the dynamic links and inter-relationships between places and environments at different scales, and develop pupils' competence in using a wide range of geographical investigative skills and approaches. Geography enables young people to become globally and environmentally informed and thoughtful, enquiring citizens.

Course Content

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes (35% of the qualification).

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

Section B: The living world

Section C: Physical landscapes in the UK (options chosen: rivers and coasts)

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes (35% of the qualification)

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: Urban issues and challenges

Section B: The changing economic world

Section C: The challenge of resource management (option chosen: water)

Paper 3: Geographical applications

Written examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes (30% of the qualification).

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: Issue Evaluation

Section B: Fieldwork

How is the course delivered?

Content is taught in line with the structure of the examination papers to aid the development of pupils' geographical understanding whilst integrating geographical skills and fieldwork at the appropriate points of the content delivery from Paper 1 and Paper 2. Two fieldwork studies must be undertaken which helps develop and apply their theory to the real world. Fieldwork is examined in Paper 3 alongside an Issue Evaluation.

Additional Information

Where will Geography take me? Apart from the proposed Iceland visit and fieldwork adventures, Geography could lead you to exciting career prospects, with careers ranging from journalism and law to weather forecasting and architecture. According to the Royal Geographical Society, Geography graduates have some of the highest rates of graduate employment.

Mr D P Sherratt
Head of Geography
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Boasting the highest population in the EU, Germany is widely recognised as the European powerhouse of finance, engineering, science and technology and aeronautics as well as in the political arena, and is the recommended language of the UK STEM Network. All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for German as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

- Topic 1: Free-time activities
- Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 2: Media and technology
- Topic 3: The environment and where people live

How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in German with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our German speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

Additional Information

We organise regular trips abroad and have recently visited the Rhine/Moselle area of Germany, giving pupils the chance to learn about various aspects of German culture and many opportunities to use the language. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised.

Mrs M T Holmes
Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Teacher in Charge of German
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History (Edexcel)

The GCSE specification (Edexcel) takes a sweeping approach to various aspects of world history. There is no coursework component or controlled assessment. The GCSE History course is very exciting, accessible and includes a selection of modules covering medieval, early modern and modern periods. This will ensure that our pupils develop into well rounded historians.

Course Content

Paper 1: Thematic Study and Historic Environment (1h 20 minutes)

Victorian Whitechapel and the Jack the Ripper murders

Crime and Punishment, 1000 AD to the present

Paper 2: Period Study and British Depth Study (1h 50 minutes)

Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91

Henry VIII and his Ministers, 1509-40

Paper 3: Modern Depth Study (1h 30 minutes)

Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939

How is the course delivered?

The course is taught through a combination of engaging activities, traditional note making (in a range of styles and formats) and essay writing, class-based discussion and debate, individual research, and watching documentaries, films and docu-dramas on the various areas of the course.

By the end of the course, you will have learned how to evaluate and analyse information; to form complex judgements, to craft structured answers and to understand people and events.

Additional Information

The Edexcel GCSE History specification is challenging, and yet accessible, and offers an excellent preparation for pupils considering more advanced study of History, Politics and other related subjects in the Sixth Form.

The skills developed through this qualification are recognised and valued by employers and universities. History provides an excellent basis for careers in Law, Politics, Civil Service, Journalism, Accountancy, Business Management, Advertising, Teaching and Medicine.

Miss L Wilson
Head of History
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Mathematics (Edexcel)

Pupils will study the Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A). The majority of pupils will be entered for the Higher Tier, but it may be beneficial for a small number of pupils to be entered for the Foundation Tier. The level of entry will be discussed with individual pupils and parents before any decision is made.

Course Content

Externally assessed examination papers:

Higher Tier: Two papers - 3H and 4H. Each paper is 50% of the total marks.

Foundation Tier: Two papers - 1F and 2F. Each paper is 50% of the total marks.

Overview of content:

Number, Algebra, Geometry and Statistics

Overview of assessment:

- Each paper is assessed through a two-hour examination set and marked by Edexcel.
- The total number of marks for each paper is 100.
- Each paper will have approximately equal marks available for each of the targeted grades.
- Each Higher paper will assess the full range of targeted grades at Higher Tier (Questions will also assume knowledge from the Foundation Tier subject content).
- Each Foundation paper will assess the full range of targeted grades at Foundation Tier.
- There will be some common questions targeted at grades 4 and 5, across papers 3H and 1F and papers 4H and 2F, to aid standardisation and comparability of award between tiers.

How is the course delivered?

In Years 10 and 11 all pupils have five 35 minute lessons a week. These lessons will focus on learning mathematical skills, techniques and concepts and how to use them to solve problems.

Additional Information

The Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) qualification enables students to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques;
- Acquire a foundation of mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas;
- Enjoy using and applying mathematical techniques and concepts, and become confident to use mathematics to solve problems;
- Appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study.

At present, the top set also cover the AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics. Both the International GCSE and the Level 2 Further Mathematics examinations are taken at the end of Year 11.

Miss J Griffiths
Head of Mathematics
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Music (Edexcel)

Music is all around us, from the music we listen to on a daily basis to the atmospheres created through music for film and TV; it plays an important accompaniment to life events and celebrations. Through study of GCSE Music, students learn about the purposes and contexts that lead to music being created, and about how musical elements are controlled and shaped to create meaning.

GCSE Music is quite different to learning an instrument or having knowledge of music theory. Rather, it brings together the strands of playing music, composing music and listening to music to build a detailed understanding of how music 'works'. This knowledge then enhances learners' experience of learning to sing or play an instrument and informs their own creative composition work.

Course Content

Performing (30%) - Students will develop and extend their performance skills on an instrument or instruments of their choice. They will use their instrument and classroom resources to explore musical concepts. By the end, they will submit two performances: a solo performance and an ensemble performance (NEA).

Composing (30%) - Students learn about a variety of composition methods and apply these to their own work. They complete short composition tasks, before designing their own briefs for extended that meet their personal goals as musicians, whether this be Western classical music, Indian-inspired fusion or a song from a musical: anything goes! They will submit two compositions at the end of the course. (NEA).

Listening and Appraising (40%) - Students will learn about eight set works, from Baroque music to film music, and alternative rock to EDM-Celtic-African fusion! They will discover how features of the music create moods, convey characters and reflect time and place. At the end of the course, they will sit one listening exam (1 hour 45 minutes) where they will demonstrate their understanding of the set works and make observations about similar unfamiliar music, applying their knowledge of musical elements.

How is the course delivered?

There is a strong practical focus as students explore musical elements and set works through performance and composition tasks. They use instruments and explore music technology (Sibelius and Band Lab software) as they learn how to create their own music. They will develop or extend their ability to read and use music notation through practical work and study of set works. They will discuss their responses to the music they discover, developing their critical analysis skills and self-expression.

Additional Information

As a GCSE Music student, you will be interested in developing your musical ability (instrument or voice) to an advanced level of performance. You will have a desire to learn how to create your own music and be open-minded to different musical traditions. You will be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities to become a well-rounded musician. Learning in GCSE Music develops invaluable transferrable skills, communication, independent learning, self-motivation, perseverance, attention to detail, listening skills and empathy amongst them. GCSE Music could be the next step on your journey to a career in the music industry – from being a performer or music creative to music management or teaching – or a subject you study because you wish to enhance your enjoyment and appreciation of music.

Miss S Burns (Director of Music)
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Physical Education (OCR)

Studying GCSE Physical Education will open candidates' eyes to the amazing world of sports performance. Not only will candidates have the chance to perform in three different sports through the non-exam assessment component, they will also develop wide ranging knowledge into the how and why of physical activity and sport.

The combination of the physical performance and academic challenge provides an exciting opportunity for pupils. Candidates can perform, and then through the academic study learn how to improve their performance through application of the theory. Physical Education is learned about through a range of different contexts and the impact it has on people's everyday lives. Candidates will learn the reasons why we do things, and why some people out-perform others, mentally and physically. They will also delve into the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs, and gain an understanding of the consequences of inactivity and poor diet.

Physical Education pupils will be able to apply their theoretical study to support the improvement in their own practical performance and build upon their expertise in extra-curricular sporting activities.

Course Content

The two year GCSE course encompasses two units of theoretical study (60% of course marks). The practical performance and analysis of three sporting activities (40% of course marks) is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Theory Paper 1: Physical Factors (30%)

This unit requires pupils to study anatomy and physiology with detail on the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Exercise Physiology focuses on how this is applied to the principles and methods of training, diet and nutrition.

Theory Paper 2: Socio-Cultural Issues (30%)

Pupils investigate how skills are learnt and taught, how practice affects performance and information processing relates to skill acquisition. Sports Psychology concentrates upon individual differences in personality and group dynamics. There is a focus on health, fitness and well-being.

Practical Performance (40%)

Pupils select THREE activities of their choice for practical performance. Analysis of performance requires knowledge of the rules, tactics and training in a sport, and video analysis of a pupil's performance:

- Performance in a team sport;
- Performance in an individual activity;
- Additional performance in either team or individual selected sport;
- Analysis of performance.

Mrs R Lea
Teacher in Charge of GCSE PE
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Physics is one of the fundamental sciences that all pupils study as part of their GCSEs. It helps you to understand the world around you; from the motion of galaxies to the structure of atoms. In recent years, major new discoveries such as exoplanets and gravitational waves highlight that Physics is very much alive. Physics is making cutting edge technology possible, such as quantum computing, and is set to be a growth subject in the future.

You will have already made a good start to the GCSE course during Year 9 Physics lessons, covering large parts of topics 6, 3, 4 and 8. Pupils wishing to carry on with Physics into the Sixth Form will follow the AQA Advanced Level.

Course Content

Topics taught over three years:

1. Energy
2. Electricity
3. Particle model of matter
4. Atomic structure
5. Forces, their interactions, and motion
6. Waves
7. Magnetism and electromagnetism
8. Space physics

There is plenty of mathematics in the Physics course, including rearranging equations and explaining how variables are related to one another, so it suits pupils who are strong in mathematics.

The assessment at the end of Year 11 consists of two 1 hour 45 minute written papers. Paper 1 covers topics 1 to 4 and Paper 2 topics 5 to 8. The papers will include multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

How is the course delivered?

Lessons will be a mixture of theory, demonstrations, practical experiments and practice exercises. Although there is no coursework, there is practical work to help develop an understanding of how experiments are carried out and how to handle data. These skills will be examined in the final papers. Over the three years you will cover a number of compulsory experiments that will bring the theory to life.

Additional Information

If you are really interested in Physics and good at it too, then opting for GCSE Physics means you will be taught about 30% extra material compared to the Combined Science Trilogy Award. You will go into the topics in more depth, which while being more demanding, will give you a greater insight into the subject.

Mr N Migallo
Head of Physics
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Religious Studies (AQA)

GCSE Religious Studies enables pupils to acquire key academic skills in addition to developing their understanding of our world and the diversity of people within it. Pupils will learn how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture and they will be required to both understand and critically reflect upon the various ideas and practices that will be explored in the course of study. In so doing, pupils will better understand the national and global context which they are a part of, and will further develop their skills of empathy and evaluation. In gaining a GCSE in this subject, pupils will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues.

Course Content

Paper 1: The study of religions (50% of GCSE)

Beliefs, teachings and practices of **two** of the world religions listed below:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Sikhism
- Hinduism
- Judaism

Paper 2: Thematic studies: philosophy and ethics (50% of GCSE)

Any **four** religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes from the list below:

- Relationships and families
- Religion and life
- The existence of God and revelation
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment
- Religion, human rights and social justice

Each set of questions included in both papers has a common structure of one five-part question of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks. Each theme is marked out of 24 and there are two themes per religion (beliefs and practices) for Paper 1, and a set of questions for each of the four ethical themes selected in Paper 2.

How is the course delivered?

A variety of learning techniques are utilised and employed to enable pupils to successfully negotiate the core content of the course. Discussion and debate feature heavily in lessons, in addition to film and documentary about the lives of religious believers.

Additional Information

There are clear links between GCSE Religious Studies and A-level Philosophy, however many of the key skills gained through the course of study are transferable to other A-level subjects, and indeed beyond.

Mr J Preston
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Spanish is the most popular Modern Foreign Language learned in the UK and is the second most widely spoken language in the world after Mandarin Chinese. In addition, Latin America is rapidly gaining the world's attention because of its bright economic potential. Spanish culture and tradition is colourful, varied and vibrant with something for everyone! All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for Spanish as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

- Topic 1: Free-time activities
- Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 2: Media and technology
- Topic 3: The environment and where people live

How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in Spanish with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our Spanish speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

Additional Information

We recently visited Bilbao in northern Spain. We maintain contacts with two schools from the area and our pupils have the opportunity to communicate with their students to further their linguistic skills and enjoyment in the subject. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised. Many students continue their Spanish studies at university and beyond.

Mrs M Isherwood
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Studying Textiles at GCSE provides the opportunity to work creatively and develop skills and ideas in your own personal investigation as the course progresses.

The course allows you to embark on a chosen area of textile design, including constructed textiles, digital textiles, dyed and printed fabrics, fashion design and stitched and embellished textiles. Students will explore a wide range of skills from free machine embroidery, applique, weaving and textile embellishment, to pattern design, screen-printing and digital textile design, allowing an individual and unique approach to Textiles within the art and design sector.

Course Content

Component 01 - Portfolio

Pupils must produce a portfolio of work consisting of a major project and supporting studies covering all four assessment objectives. The project work is produced in response to a set starting point or brief.

This component is a non-examined assessment and contributes 60% to the overall weighting of AQA's GCSE (9–1) in Art and Design.

Component 02 - Externally set task

AQA will provide pupils with seven themes in January of Year 11, each with written starting points. Pupils will select and respond to **one** starting point for their controlled assessment, consisting of 10 hours of supervised time (typically in May of Year 11). This contributes 40% to the overall weighting of the course.

How is the course delivered?

The course is delivered through a structured project ensuring all four assessment objectives are met. Project work can be personally set, teacher led or in response to a starting point. It allows individuals to work in a truly individual and unique way, by creating a personal progression of ideas through a wide range of skills and techniques within Textile design.

Additional Information

During your study, you will have the opportunity to enter competitions, as well as attend gallery and museum visits to provide a wealth of inspiration. The department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside of lesson times and to help ensure that they meet all four assessment objectives at a high level.

For further information about the syllabus, visit:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206/subject-content/textile-design>



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