



ASPIRE
INTERNATIONAL

GCSE / iGCSE

Options Booklet



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Introduction

Welcome to your iGCSE Options Booklet.

This is the first really big decision you have to make about what to study. This is where you are able to choose which subjects you want to study and which you will drop.

Choosing subjects for GCSE allows you to:

- Choose courses and subjects that match your interests, abilities and talents
- Choose courses that will help you prepare for your chosen career
- Take new subjects

There are subjects that you must study and you will gain iGCSEs in these:

English Language

Mathematics

Science

Portuguese

In addition to your examined subjects, you will also study the following without a final exam:

Life Skills

Physical Education (PE)

You will then have 4 option subjects.



Who can help me decide?

Talk to your parents, your teachers and older students who have opted for these courses. We will hold meetings to help you find out more about subjects and for you and your parents to ask questions.

What should I consider?

Choose options that you know that you will enjoy or that you feel passionate about;

You are more likely to succeed if you enjoy what you're doing.

Don't do subjects just because the teachers or your parents say you should. Of course, you should listen to what they have to say but make your own decisions. After all, you will be the one who has to do the work!

And don't do subjects just because your friends are doing them! You will have plenty of time to socialise outside the lessons and having your best friend next to you in class can sometimes make it difficult to concentrate.

Choosing your GCSE subjects is an exciting step in your academic journey. This booklet will guide you through the options available, helping you make informed decisions about your future studies.

What is a GCSE?

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an internationally recognized qualification typically taken by students aged 14 to 16 in schools following the English National Curriculum. GCSEs provide a strong foundation for further education, including A-Levels, the International Baccalaureate (IB), and vocational qualifications. They are widely accepted by universities and employers around the world.

GCSE vs. IGCSE

Many international schools, including ours, offer a mix of GCSEs and International GCSEs (IGCSEs). While both qualifications assess similar knowledge and skills, there are some key differences:

- **International Focus:** The IGCSE is designed for a global audience, making it suitable for students in international schools. It often avoids UK-specific content, making it more accessible to students from diverse educational backgrounds.
- **Assessment Methods:** Some traditional GCSEs might include coursework and practical assessments in some subjects, whereas IGCSEs rely more on final exams, making them suitable for students in different educational settings. GCSE subjects will sit the exams for the course at the end of the 3 years, IGCSEs will take a more modular approach, with exams taken throughout the 3 years. With the IGCSEs we can then build the students grades up over the GCSE years through re-sitting of exams to give them the best opportunity to achieve their optimal grade.
- **Recognition:** Both qualifications are equally respected by universities and employers worldwide. In some cases, the IGCSE is considered more rigorous due to its broad international approach.

At our school, we carefully select GCSE and IGCSE subjects to provide the best learning experience for our students, ensuring they are well-prepared for their future academic and career paths.

This booklet will help you explore your options and make choices that align with your interests and ambitions.

GCSE Grading System

The GCSE grading system in England changed in 2017, replacing the traditional A-G* grades with a 9-1 system. This new structure provides more differentiation at the top end of the scale, allowing for greater recognition of high-achieving students.

Key Changes:

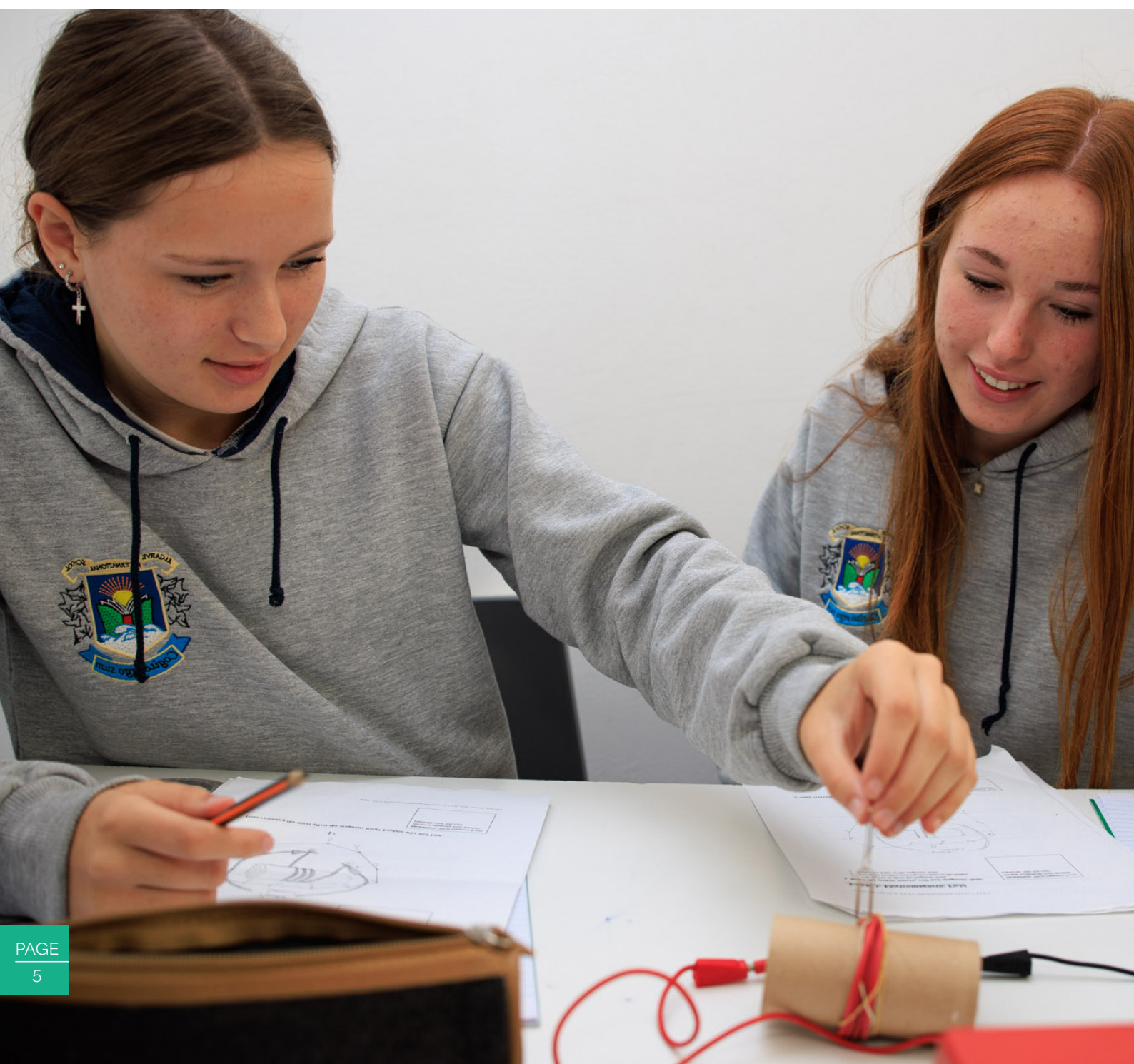
- Grades 9-1 replaced A-G*, with 9 being the highest grade.
- A 4 is considered a 'standard pass,' while a 5 is a 'strong pass.'
- The new system aims to reflect a more challenging curriculum and higher academic standards.

Below is a comparison between the old and new grading systems:

Old Grade (A-G)*	Old Grade (A-G)*	Description
9	A*	High A* (Top achievers)
8	A* - A	A* and strong A
7	A	Standard A
6	B	Strong B
5	C - B	Strong C or low B (strong pass)
4	C	Standard C (standard pass)
3	D - E	D or high E
2	E - F	Low E or high F
1	G	Low G
U	U	Ungraded (Fail)

Understanding the new system

- Grade 9 is higher than the old A* and is awarded to the top-performing students nationally.
- Grades 7-9 cover the old A and A* grades, providing more distinction between top students.
- Universities and employers recognize grade 4 as a pass, but some prefer a grade 5 or higher.
- This new system ensures that GCSEs remain rigorous and internationally competitive while helping students demonstrate their full potential.



Core subjects

MATHEMATICS

Compulsory

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 2 - 3 years

Method of Assessment:

End of course exams are chosen between two tiers to provide the best possible outcomes for the individual student.

1. Foundation tier grade 1-5

2 x 2 hour exams covering all aspects of Mathematics at foundation level.

2. Higher tier grade 4-9

2 x 2 hour exams covering all aspects of Mathematics at Higher level.

Why study Mathematics?

You will:

- encounter new techniques to solve problems, becoming confident in a range of approaches to find solutions;
- discuss ideas with peers and develop more rigorous language to communicate thoughts across a range of media;
- approach real life and abstract situations in a more logical manner, using evidence and knowledge as a foundation to build answers;
- develop skills that are used across a wide spectrum of subjects and prepare for the future in an increasingly numerate world.

Core subjects

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Compulsory

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 1.5 - 2.5 years

Method of Assessment:

1. Examination worth 60% of final grade.

Section A - Reading Skills (non-fiction)

Section B - Writing Skills (non-fiction)

2. Examination/Coursework worth 40% of final grade

Assignment A - Essay on two texts (short stories, extracts, poems) from an anthology supplied by Edexcel

Assignment B - Creative Writing

Why study English Language?

You will:

- read a wide range of texts fluently and with good understanding;
- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing;
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately;
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately;
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary.

In almost any field that you choose to study or job that you would like to do at the end of your studies, good skills in reading comprehension and an ability to write clearly and expressively will be a prerequisite.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Optional

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 1.5 years

Pupils who are able to complete the compulsory English Language course with a grade 6 or higher in November of Year 10 will progress to English Literature.

Method of Assessment:

1. Examination worth 60% of final grade

Section A - Unseen Poetry

Section B - Anthology Poetry

Section C - Novel

2. Examination / coursework worth 40% of final grade

Section A - Modern Drama

Section B - Heritage Drama

Core subjects

SCIENCES

Compulsory/Optional *

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 3 years

All students will study all 3 sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Method of Assessment:

All students will study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

Depending on their ability, students will be entered for one of the following qualifications:

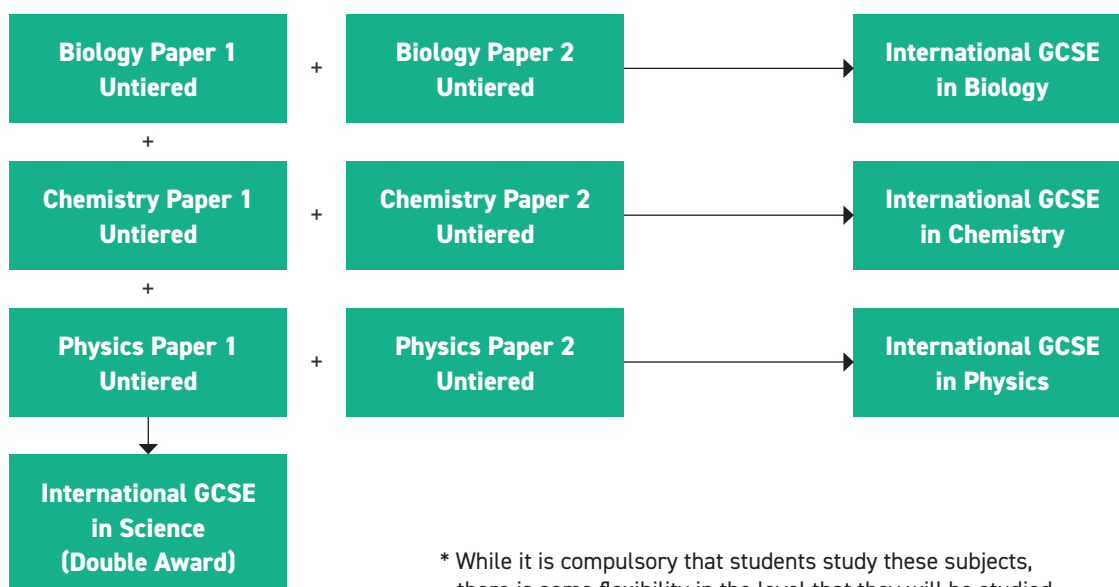
- **Triple Science**
(GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics)
- **Double Award Science**
(equivalent to two GCSEs)
- **Single Award Science**
(equivalent to one GCSE)

The academic standard remains the same across all three options; the difference lies in the amount of content covered.

Why study the Sciences?

You will:

- acquire knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, terminology, concepts, principles and practical techniques;
- appreciate the practical nature of science, developing experimental and investigative skills based on correct and safe laboratory techniques;
- analyse, interpret and evaluate data and experimental methods, drawing conclusions that are consistent with evidence from experimental activities and suggesting possible improvements and further investigations;
- recognise the importance of accurate experimental work and reporting scientific methods in science;
- select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically using appropriate vocabulary, definitions and conventions;
- develop a logical approach to problem solving in a wider context.



* While it is compulsory that students study these subjects, there is some flexibility in the level that they will be studied.



PSYCHOLOGY

Optional

Edexcel GCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1 – 55% of the course

- Development – how do we develop from babies to adults?
- Memory – how do we make and recall memories?
- Psychological problems – how do mental health issues affect people?
- The brain & neuropsychology – how does our brain affect how we act?
- Social influence – how do others affect how we act?

Paper 2 – 45% of the course

Research methods – how do we carry out research in psychology?

And 2 options:

- Criminal psychology – why do some people become criminals?
- The self – what makes you who you are?
- Perception – how do you interpret what you see?
- Sleep & dreaming – why do you need to sleep & dream?
- Language, thought & communication – how do we communicate with others?

Is psychology the right choice for you?

An ideal psychology student is interested in understanding why people behave like they do. It will give you a wider understanding of yourselves and the world you live in. It will help you develop critical thinking skills and ask questions about why we behave as we do.

SOCIOLOGY

Optional

Cambridge International iGCSE - graded A+ - G

Length of Course: 2 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1 – Research Methods, Identity and Inequality - 2hrs - worth 50% of the total grade

Research methods

How do sociologists approach the study of society?
What types of data and evidence do sociologists use? How do sociologists investigate society?

Identity: self and society

How do we learn our identity? How does society control us? What influences our social identity?

Social stratification and inequality

What is social stratification?, What attempts have been made to reduce social inequalities?
How has globalisation affected inequalities between societies?

Paper 2 – Family, Education and Crime - 1hr 45mins - worth 50% of the total grade

You will cover 2 of the following 3 topics:

Family

What are the different types of families?
What is the role of the family for the individual and society?, How is family life changing?

Education

What is education and schooling? What are the roles and functions of education? What factors help to explain differences in educational achievement and experience?

Crime, deviance and social control

What are crime, deviance and social control?
What are the patterns of and explanations for crime and deviance? How is crime dealt with in different societies?

Why study Sociology?

Within GCSE Sociology learners explore aspects of social relationships, processes and structures and develop a greater understanding of human societies and the role of continuity and change in social life.

The course:

- develops learners' critical evaluation of different social, economic and political structures
- builds understanding of sociological research methods
- develops learners' ability to assess different forms of information and evidence
- can be related to schools' local context, enabling learners to use the knowledge and understanding acquired to analyse their own lives.

ECONOMICS

Optional

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Examination paper 1 worth 50% of final grade (1hr 30 min)

Paper 1: Microeconomics and Business Economics

The Market System

- The economic problem (scarcity, choice, opportunity cost)
- Demand, supply and market equilibrium
- Elasticity
- The mixed economy
- Externalities
- Business Economics
- Production and productivity
- Division of labour
- Business costs, revenue and profit
- Competition
- The labour market
- Government intervention

Examination paper 2 worth 50% of final grade (1hr 30 mins)

Macroeconomics and the Global Economy

Government and the Economy

- Macroeconomic objectives (growth, inflation, unemployment, balance of payments)
- Fiscal, monetary and supply-side policies
- Relationships between objectives and policies

The Global Economy

- Globalisation
- International trade
- Exchange rates

This paper explores how whole economies function and interact globally

Why study Economics?

You will:

- develop an understanding of economic concepts and apply these concepts to real-life situations;
- develop an awareness of economic change and its impact on developing and developed economies;
- understand economic issues, problems and possible solutions that affect mixed economies;
- calculate, interpret and evaluate economic data in order to make reasoned arguments and informed judgements.

Is Economics the right choice for you?

The ideal economics student is interested in the world around them and how resources are shared among households, firms and nations.

GEOGRAPHY

Optional

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1: Physical Geography 40% of the course

Section A – Candidates choose two out of three questions on:

- river environments,
- coastal environments,
- hazardous environments.

Section B – Candidates choose one out of three fieldwork-related questions on the above topics.

Paper 2: Human Geography 60% of the course

Section A – Candidates choose two out of three questions on:

- economic activity and energy,
- rural environments,
- urban environments.

Section B – Candidates choose one out of three fieldwork-related questions on the same three topics as section A.

Section C – Candidates choose one out of three questions on:

- fragile environments and climate change,
- globalisation and migration,
- development and human welfare.

Why study Geography?

Geography encourages you as a student to investigate key topics such as Climate Change, Globalisation, Urban and Rural environments in the Human Geography paper. The study of Physical Geography teaches you about the structure and construction of the environment around you, how dramatic weather systems bring about disasters as well as historically, the new geographical layout of the world.

HISTORY

Optional

Modular Available

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1: Depth Studies, 1 hour 30 mins, 60 marks

You answer two questions, one on each of the depth studies you have studied.

Covers a variety of topics, e.g.: Apartheid in South Africa, the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the French Revolution, Unification of Italy

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies, 1 hour 30 mins, 60 marks

Section A – you will study one area and answer one question.

Some of the areas covered are World War One, its origin and course, Russia and the Soviet Union, The USA from 1918-41

Section B – you will study one area and answer one question.

Some of the topics are Change in Medicine 1848-1948, the Changing role of international organisations: The League & UN 1919-2011.

Why study History?

You will:

- read and analyse a wide variety of resources, developing critical thinking skills as you assess bias and reliability;
- develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context;
- develop skills to explain, analyse and make judgements about historical events and periods studied;
- develop an awareness that different interpretations of historical events have been constructed by different people and how and why;
- organise and communicate your historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions.



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Examination: worth 100% of final grade

Section A – Community Project

Section B & C – will both combine any two of the following themes

- Politics and Governance
- Economic Development and the Environment
- Culture and Community
- Technology

Assessment includes sources and a combination of multiple-choice, short and longer written answers.

Section D – Synoptic essay
(bringing together all the strands of the course in one question)

Why study Global Citizenship?

Global Citizenship introduces students to key issues and changes affecting societies around the globe while developing skills of enquiry, analysis and evaluation.

Students will explore global issues they are interested in and passionate about while growing in their understanding of how communities interact locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Students are also enabled to lead and participate in local community-based activity through a community citizenship action project of their own design.

FRENCH

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

The exam has 3 papers:

Paper 1: Listening skills (25%)

Paper 2: Reading and writing (50%)

Paper 3: Speaking (25%)

Why study French?

You will:

- understand and use written and spoken forms of French, in a range of familiar and practical contexts, and for a variety of purposes;
- be able to communicate effectively in French through the written and spoken word, using a range of vocabulary and structures;
- have a knowledge and understanding of French grammar and its practical application;
- have a knowledge and understanding of French speaking countries and communities;
- develop positive attitudes towards modern foreign language learning.

Topic areas

- Home and abroad
- Education and employment
- Personal life and relationships
- The world around us
- Social activities
- Fitness and health

GERMAN

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

The exam has 3 papers:

Paper 1: Listening skills (25%)

Paper 2: Reading and writing (50%)

Paper 3: Speaking (25%)

Why study German?

You will:

- understand and use written and spoken forms of German, in a range of familiar and practical contexts, and for a variety of purposes;
- be able to communicate effectively in German through the written and spoken word, using a range of vocabulary and structures;
- have a knowledge and understanding of German grammar and its practical application;
- have a knowledge and understanding of German speaking countries and communities.

Topic areas

- Home and abroad
- Education and employment
- Personal life and relationships
- The world around us
- Social activities
- Fitness and health

PORTUGUESE

Compulsory/Optional *

Edexcel GCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 1 - 3 years

Method of Assessment:

The exam has 4 papers:

Paper 1: Listening (25%)

Paper 2: Speaking (25%)

Paper 3: Reading (25%)

Paper 4: Writing (25%)

There is also an option available to study iGCSE Portuguese as a first or native language.

Why study Portuguese?

You will:

- develop your ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in speech and writing, conveying what you want to say with increasing accuracy;
- express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently;
- listen to and understand clearly articulated, standard speech at near normal speed;
- deepen your knowledge about how language works and enrich their vocabulary;
- acquire new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking;
- develop language-learning skills both for immediate use and to prepare you for further language study and use in school, higher education or employment.

It's the language of the country in which you live!

Topic areas

- Identity and culture
- Local area, holiday, travel
- School
- Future aspirations, study and work
- International and global dimension.

* While it is compulsory that students study these subjects, there is some flexibility in the level that they will be studied.

SPANISH

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

The exam has 3 papers:

Paper 1: Listening skills (25%)

Paper 2: Reading and writing (50%)

Paper 3: Speaking (25%)

Why study Spanish?

You will:

- understand and use written and spoken forms of Spanish, in a range of familiar and practical contexts, and for a variety of purposes;
- be able to communicate effectively in Spanish through the written and spoken word, using a range of vocabulary and structures;
- have a knowledge and understanding of Spanish grammar and its practical application;
- have a knowledge and understanding of Spanish-speaking countries, communities and cultures;
- develop positive attitudes towards modern foreign language learning.

Topic areas

- Home and abroad
- Education and employment
- Personal life and relationships
- The world around us
- Social activities
- Fitness and health

ART & DESIGN

Fine Art / Textile Design /
Three-dimensional Design

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Component 1: Personal Portfolio 50%

Internally Set - Externally Marked.

Students create a personal portfolio of artwork that demonstrates knowledge, understanding and skills in a chosen topic.

Component 2: Externally-set Assignment 50%

Externally Set - Externally Marked.

A portfolio of development work based on the externally-set assignment and 10- hour sustained focus period under examination conditions (to take place over multiple sessions)

Fine Art: Includes drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, or mixed media.

Graphic Communication: Includes typography, illustration, advertising, or packaging design.

Photography: Includes lens-based, digital, or film photography or image manipulation.

Textile Design: Includes constructed, dyed, printed, or woven fabrics, or fashion design.

Three-dimensional Design: Includes product design, sculpture, ceramics, or architectural design.

Why study Art & Design?

You will:

- actively engage in the creative process of art, craft and design in order to develop as an effective and independent thinker;
- develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, practical and technical study;
- learn from experience when exploring and experimenting with ideas, processes, media, materials and techniques;
- develop work in at least one of the following areas of study: drawing, painting, mixed media, printing, sculpture, constructed textiles, textile design, fashion design, soft furnishings, stitching and fabric embellishment, architecture, interior design, product design, environmental/landscape design, theatrical design, ceramics and jewellery.

DRAMA

Optional

Edexcel GCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Component 1 – Devising

40% of final grade

Create and perform/design a devised piece from a stimulus.

Component 2 – Performance from Text

20% of final grade

Students will either perform in and/or design for two key extracts from a performance text.

Component 3 – Theatre Makers in Practice

40% of final grade

Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.

Live theatre evaluation

Why study Drama?

You will:

- explore performance texts, understanding their social, cultural and historical context including the theatrical conventions of the period in which they were created;
- develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to create performances;
- work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas;
- develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective students able to make informed choices in process and performance;
- contribute as an individual to a theatrical performance.

MUSIC

Optional

Edexcel GCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Component 1 – Performance

30% of final grade

Pupils will perform one solo and one ensemble piece which will be internally marked and sent for external moderation.

Component 2 – Composition

30% of final grade

Students create two compositions, of at least a combined 3 minute duration, one according to a brief set by the exam board and the other a free composition.

Component 3 – Appraising

40% of final grade

Exam appraising music consisting of both set and new pieces.

Why study Music?

You will:

- develop performing skills individually and in groups;
- develop composing skills;
- recognise links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising;
- broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster;
- develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds;
- engage with and appreciate the diverse heritage of music, in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.



BUSINESS

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Examination paper 1 worth 50% of final grade

- Investigating small businesses
- 4 compulsory questions of 20 marks each

Examination paper 2 worth 50% of final grade

- Investigating large businesses
- 4 compulsory questions of 20 marks each

Why study Business?

You will:

- develop an interest in and enthusiasm for the study of business;
- develop an understanding of business concepts, business terminology, business objectives and the integrated nature of business activity;
- understand how the main types of business are organised, financed and operated;
- develop and apply knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary business issues in a wide range of businesses from small enterprises to large multinational.

Is Business the right choice for you?

The ideal business student is interested in all forms of real-life business, including those who exist for reasons other than profit-maximisation.

TECHNOLOGY Computing

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1 – 50% | 2hrs

This paper will primarily assess knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of computer science, including some coverage of how these principles are applied when solving problems that relate to a particular situation.

The paper consists of multiple-choice, short open-response, open-response and extended open-response answer questions.

Paper 2 – 50% | 3hrs

This is a practical examination, primarily assessing the application of computational thinking, whereby learners will create, use and adapt existing algorithms to solve problems in a particular situation. The task-based questions will be carried out using a computer system under supervision. A choice of three programming languages will be available (Python, C# or Java)

Why study Computing?

This course is for the technically minded student that seeks to enhance their knowledge of software development with:

- Logical Problem Solving (Algorithms),
- Programming (Python, Java),
- Digital Data (Storage and Encryption), Computer
- Structures (Hardware electronics) and Networking.

The skills acquired can be used further in higher academic studies or as the foundation for careers in Software Development or Computer Engineering.

TECHNOLOGY

Optional

Edexcel iGCSE - graded 9 - 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Method of Assessment:

Paper 1 - 50% | 90 mins

The examination comprises a mixture of multiple-choice, short- and long-answer questions.

Paper 2 - 50% | 3 hrs

This is a practical examination, set and marked by Pearson Edexcel (includes printing time).

Why study ICT?

This course focuses on a generalist study of ICT covering its many uses and applications:

- Digital Devices (Electronics),
- Networking (Communications),
- Operating Online (Ethics),
- Online Goods and services (Business Solutions)
- Software Skills (DB Management, Graphics Presentations plus Web Development).

The knowledge and skills acquired can be used further in both business and higher academic environments or as the foundation for careers in Software Development or Computer Engineering.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Compulsory/Optional *

Edexcel iGCSE – graded 9 – 1

Length of Course: 3 years

Content Overview	Assessment	% of grade
Fitness and Body Systems Applied anatomy and physiology Movement analysis Physical training Use of Data	Written exam	36%
Health and Performance Health, fitness and well-being Sport Psychology Socio-cultural Use of data	Written exam	24%
Practical Performance Skills during specific activities General performance skills	3 physical activities	30%
Personal Exercise Programme (PEP) Aim and planning analysis Carrying out and monitoring the PEP Evaluation of PEP	Production, analysis and evaluation of PEP	10%

Why study Physical Education?

- A fun, mainly practical course.
- Improve your physical fitness and practical performance in a number of activities.
- Improve your knowledge and understanding of many social and scientific aspects of taking part in physical activity.
- Develop skills for life!!

* While it is compulsory that students study these subjects, there is some flexibility in the level that they will be studied.

