



## YEAR 9 OPTIONS 2023

### Introduction

**Welcome to GCSE Options 2023.** The aim of this booklet and the meeting of the **Wednesday 22nd March 2023** is to provide you with all the information and guidance you need to make the right subject choices for the next part of your education.

We promote a love of learning at IRIS SCHOOL, encouraging you to take ownership of your choices, to be inquisitive, curious, and have a thirst for knowledge. You now have an opportunity to pursue your passions further and to develop a deeper understanding of the subjects you enjoy.

To support you in this we provide a broad and challenging curriculum coupled with an exciting array of extracurricular activities and enrichment opportunities. As well as the core curriculum of Mathematics, English Language and English Literature, a Modern Foreign Language, Religious Studies and the three Sciences; you will also choose a further three subjects. This provides a balanced programme of study that ensures that after GCSE you will still have the chance to study sciences, languages, humanities, creative subjects to A-Level.

This is the first time you will take responsibility for your subject choices and make decisions that will influence the next stages of your education and your future career. Therefore you need to think carefully about what you want to do. The key to choosing your options is to select subjects that play to your strengths and that you are inspired by and will enjoy.

This is the best guarantee that you will be prepared to apply yourself fully and thus succeed. This booklet should be your starting point for information; it provides you with a clear outline of all the subjects that are on offer, the aims of the course, examination requirements and coursework. Use this information as a guide to aid discussions with teachers and older students on the meeting. Students will be submitting their choices no later than **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023**.

Every effort is made to enable students to study the subjects that they prefer, but it should be noted the school reserves the right to remove a subject if it is undersubscribed and if there are staffing challenges. Should this situation arise, parents will be informed and students will be counselled about their choice of other options. Whilst the school endeavours to provide staffing for all the classes needed to accommodate our students' choices, changes after 21<sup>st</sup> April may be harder, or indeed impossible to accommodate.

It is important that students are confident about their choices by this date and understand that changes will not be possible beyond the deadline. Classes in GCSE subjects are run according to demand and if only a very small number choose a particular option it might not be viable. For these reasons we ask you to choose a reserve subject in case your preferred option is not available. The two years of preparation for GCSE examinations are the most significant and important to date, and GCSE grades are a key element in admission to university or employment. I wish you the best in making informed decisions which will serve you well for the future.

L. Saad (Head of secondary)

## Contents

GCSE Curriculum from September 2023 .....

GCSE Option Choices .....

### Creative Learning

Art and Design (Edexcel) .....

Art and Design: Textiles (Edexcel) .....

Drama (AQA) .....

Physical Education (AQA) .....

### Humanities

Geography (AQA) .....

History (AQA) .....

### Business Studies:

Business studies (AQA) .....

### Compulsory Subjects

Biology (AQA) .....

Chemistry (AQA) .....

English (AQA) .....

Mathematics (Edexcel) .....

Modern Foreign Languages (AQA) .....

Physics (AQA) .....

Religious Studies (AQA) .....

### GCSE Curriculum from September 2023

This booklet is to help students make their choices.

Read through the subjects' descriptions carefully, and go and talk to teachers or to students currently studying those GCSEs to find out more.

Please note the following important dates:

Thursday 22nd March 2023 - GCSE Options Meeting

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 - Parents' Meeting

Option Choice form – to be given in Reception by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> of April– Option Form hand-in deadline .

Students will study the following subjects in Year 10: Compulsory subjects English Language & English Literature Mathematics Biology, Chemistry & Physics Religious Studies Option subjects  
Students have a choice of FOUR option subjects. At least one of these must be a language.

Option 1 Compulsory Modern Foreign Language

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Reserve Option\*

PLEASE NOTE:

Only one Art & Design Subject may be chosen (either Art & Design or Art & Design: Textiles)

\* If any of your selections cannot be accommodated, this option will be selected for you.

Non examined courses Physical Education Character and Wellbeing (CWB)

## GCSE Option Choices

It is important that students choose their options carefully as decisions made now will affect their future pathway.

Students should ask themselves ...

- What subjects am I good at? – this is the key indicator for likely success in a subject
- What subjects do I enjoy most? - this is important as enjoyment and examination success often go hand in hand
- What are my skills and interests? – often these can help support students' subjects within school
- Do I know what I want to do in the future?

For students hoping to go to university, the Russell Group guide on making informed choices for post-16 education identifies 'facilitating subjects' at A-level. These are the subjects most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and ones that will keep the most options open. The subjects they identify are those included in the English – Mathematics, English, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History, Religious studies and Languages

- How will I be assessed in the subject?

Future Progression A-level subject criteria has been included to help students make their choices. Please note that this is subject to change.

Updated information will be given in the Sixth Form booklet which is amended each year and can be found on the school website.

# Art and Design (Edexcel)

## Subject Information

A GCSE in Art and Design develops students' ability to think creatively and in an independent manner.

During the two-year course, students will undertake three coursework projects, in addition to a further assignment set by the exam board. All projects allow students to develop their technical skills whilst encouraging students to develop their own ideas and interests.

The course encourages a wide range of media; these can include painting, print making, photography, sculpture, textiles, mixed media and many others.

## Assessment

Assessment for the GCSE course is currently 60% coursework and 40% Externally Set Assignment. There are 4 assessment objectives;

AO1. Develop ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources

AO2. Refine ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources

AO3. Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions in visual and/or other forms

AO4. Present a personal, informed and meaningful response

Related Careers / A-level progression

There is an increasing demand for creative and innovative people in industry and business; Art and Design students are such people. The number and variety of courses available to students wishing to continue their studies to degree standard is wide and exciting.

These include: Architecture, Interior Design, Photography, Printmaking, Film/TV/Audio Visual, Illustration, Fashion Design, Model Making for Film/TV, Special Effects and Animation, Textiles, Theatre Design, Jewellery Design, Exhibition/Gallery/Museum Display, Art History, Painting, Sculpture... to name but a few. Entry requirements for A-level Art and Design and Photography – grade 6 at GCSE.







# History (AQA)

## Subject Information

History spans all cultures, eras, seasons and environments and is an immovable factor that can be called upon for knowledge and insight into how the world got to the point it is at now and how it will continue to develop in future. It will fire your curiosity and imagination, moving and inspiring you with the dilemmas, choices and beliefs of people in the past. It helps you to ask and answer questions of the present by engaging with the past.

The AQA GCSE spans a 1000 year period and provides a varied and exciting course. The skills that you will develop over the 2 year course are valuable and transferable beyond the study of History. Your skills of analysis, debate and evaluation will all be developed, along with your ability to write coherently and convincingly. These skills are useful for a wide range of future areas of study and careers. Lesson activities are varied and include discussion, presentations and debate.

## Assessment

There are 3 papers which are all examined at the end of year 11:

1. Conflict and tension between East and West 1945-1972.

This paper is worth 30% of the qualification.

2- Early Elizabethan England 1558 - 88. Our British depth study looks at the challenges Elizabeth I faced including religious dissent, her cousin Mary Queen of Scots and possible Spanish invasion. We also explore Tudor society at the time and the voyages of discovery to the New World. This paper is worth 40% of the qualification.

3. Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day.

The Germany 1890 – 1945: Democracy and dictatorship

This paper is worth 30% of the qualification.

## Related Careers / A-level progression

The skills that you will develop over the 2 years course are valuable and very well respected by universities as a facilitating subject as many of the skills are transferrable and useful for a wide range of future careers. Many students study History and then go on to work in the legal field, accountancy, journalism, teaching, research and politics. To do A-level History you will need to achieve a grade 6 at GCSE.







## Business Studies (AQA):

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of two years course.

### Subject content

- 1. [Business in the real world](#)
- 2. [Influences on business](#)
- 3. [Business operations](#)
- 4. [Human resources](#)
- 5. [Marketing](#)
- 6. [Finance](#)

## Assessments

### Paper 1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity

#### What's assessed

- Business in the real world
- Influences on business
- Business operations
- Human resources

### Paper 2: Influences of marketing and finance on business activity

#### What's assessed

- Business in the real world
- Influences on business
- Marketing
- Finance

## Related Careers / A-level progression

The skills that you will develop over the 2 years course are valuable and very well respected by universities as a facilitating subject as many of the skills are transferrable and useful for a wide range of future careers. Many students study business and then go on to work in the bank, accountancy, journalism, teaching, research. To do A-level Business you will need to achieve a grade 6 at GCSE.

# 1) Biology (AQA)

## Subject Information

Having a deep understanding of Biology is becoming increasingly important as students develop into active global citizens. The rise of issues such as antibiotic resistance, climate change and food security all serve to show how the knowledge and skills that students learn will help them to shape their futures.

Over the course of the three years of study students will look at a range of units relating to the living world, allowing them to explain the environment in which they live and the impact that humans have upon it.

This course is suitable for students of all abilities, whether they intend to further their biological studies or not. It can open doors to future careers in Medicine and Life Sciences as well as broadening understanding of the world around us.

The course that students will study is compulsory and lasts for 2 years, starting in Year 10.

Students will receive a grade ranging from 1 to 9.

GCSE Biology (8461) gives students the opportunity to gain a good understanding of a range of topics from cell biology to bioenergetics and organisation to ecology.

## Assessment

Paper 1 Written paper: 1 hour 45 minutes. 100 marks – 50% Topics – Cell biology, Organisation, Infection and response and Bioenergetics. Questions - Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response

Paper 2 Written paper: 1 hour 45 minutes. 100 marks – 50% Topics - Homeostasis and response, Inheritance, variation and evolution and Ecology. Questions - Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response. Related Careers / A-level progression

The skills that you develop as a Biologist are invaluable in helping you to deduce logical arguments, relate observations to conclusions and evaluate and improve on tasks.

The huge variety of potential careers within Biology are too numerous to include here, so here are some of the more popular career fields.

The Medical Field - Physician, Nurse, Chiropractor, Podiatrist, Exercise Physiologist, Nutritionist, Dietician, Pharmacist, Lab technician, Coroner, Forensic Scientist, Pathologist, Emergency Medical Technician, Pharmacologist, Toxicologist, Biologist.

Animal Science - Veterinarian, Vet Assistant, Zoologist, Marine Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, Fisheries Biologist, Animal Trainer.

Plant Life - Agricultural Research, Botanist, Forest Service, Soil Scientist, Horticulturist

For further details please go to [www.futuremorph.org](http://www.futuremorph.org)

A-level entry requirements

- Students must gain grade 7 or above to take Biology at A-level.

Need more information? Please speak to your current Biology teacher or any of the other Biology teachers. Talk to any students in years above you, though you will be undertaking a slightly different course, many of the concepts and skills will be the same.

## 2) Chemistry (AQA)

### Subject Information

GCSE Chemistry is a compulsory subject taken by every student from Year 10 to Year 11, with the 2 year course starting in Year 10. Students will receive a grade ranging from 1 to 9 grade.

GCSE Chemistry (8462) gives students the opportunity to gain a good understanding of:

the nature of substances and how they react together how Chemistry is used in business and industry how our use of raw materials in fuels and manufacturing can affect the global and local environment

The specification is structured in a way that starts with the fundamental ideas in Chemistry, putting the building blocks in place. This enables students to develop an understanding of topics such as chemical structures and their properties, chemical reactions and how to analyse substances.

### Assessment

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course. There are two papers each worth 50% of the final mark. Both papers are assessed by a mixture of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

Each paper is 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 100 marks.

Paper 1 (Topics 1-5): Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table Bonding, Structure and the Properties of Matter Quantitative Chemistry Chemical Changes Energy Changes Paper 2 (Topics 6-10): The Rate and extent of Chemical Changes Organic Chemistry Chemical Analysis Chemistry of the Atmosphere Using resources There is no longer any coursework.

Instead the Science GCSE papers will contain a number of different types of question which will assess students' practical skills and their understanding of practical techniques.

### Related Careers / A-level progression

A chemistry qualification opens the door to a wide range of careers options, both in and out of the lab. There are endless interesting and rewarding science-based jobs available – these can be in research, outdoors or in other industries students might not considered.

**Job possibilities:** Medicine Veterinary Science Chemical engineering Research Environmental Invent new products and materials, including cosmetics, paints, food and drink, plastics and much more. Solve crime using forensic analysis Inspire others through teaching chemistry.

Qualifications in chemistry offer a variety of career paths ranging from research to teaching to business and finance for further details please go to

<http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/careers/whatchemistsdo/careers.html> A-level entry requirements- Students must gain grade 7 or above to take Chemistry at A-level.

### 3) English (AQA)

#### Subject Information

GCSE English Language and English Literature are compulsory subjects taken by every student from Year 9 to Year 11, with the 2 year course starting in Year 10. Students will receive a numerical grade ranging from 1 to 9 where 8 and 9 equates to an A\* grade, 7 an A grade, 6 a B grade and 5 a C grade. The English Literature and English Language GCSEs have been redesigned to encourage students to be more creative and analytical thinkers.

The course now incorporates the exclusive study of British writers and enables students to develop and hone the necessary skills of synthesis and evaluation.

The Language exam will consist of Reading and Writing Units to check comprehension and creative writing skills. The course will give students the necessary skills to facilitate learning and develop ideas across a range of different subjects like History, Classical Civilisation and Geography.

#### **Assessment:**

Each subject will be assessed through two written exams.

English Literature: Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel: 1 hour, 45 minutes-64 marks (40% of Lit GCSE)

Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry Written examination: 2 hours, 15 minutes- 96 marks (60% of Lit GCSE) English Language:

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing: 1 hour, 45 minutes- 80 marks (50% of Lang GCSE)

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives: 1 hour, 45 minutes- 80 marks (50% of Lang GCSE)

**Related Careers / A-level progression** Careers that students can go into include Journalism, Teaching, Law, Speech and Language Therapy, Publishing, Copywriting, Advertising, Public Relations, Civil Service, Police and Armed Forces. A-level entry requirements: Students must gain grade 6 or above to take English Language or English Literature at A-level.

Need more information? Please speak with your English teacher

## 4) Mathematics (Edexcel)

Subject Information GCSE Mathematics is a compulsory subject taken by every student from Year 10 to Year 11, with the 2 years course starting in Year 10. Students will receive a numerical grade ranging from 1 to 9 where 8 and 9 equates to an A\* grade, 7 an A grade, 6 a B grade and 5 a C grade.

The Mathematics GCSE has been redesigned to encourage students to be able to apply Mathematics in a more rigorous fashion. The course now incorporates new topics not previously covered such as Venn Diagrams in Probability and Sequences such as the Fibonacci sequence and Geometric Progressions. Students will cover a variety of topics including Number, Algebra, Ratio proportion and rates of change, Geometry and measures, Probability and Statistics.

The course will give students the necessary skills to facilitate learning and develop ideas across a range of different subjects.

### Assessment

3 Written papers sat in the final summer.

1-Non – Calculator Paper 1 hr 30 mins (33.33% of total mark)

2-Calculator Paper 1 1 hr 30 mins (33.33% of total mark)

3-Calculator Paper 2 1 hr 30 mins (33.33% of total mark)

### Related Careers / A-level progression

Careers that students can go into include; Engineering, Architecture, Finance, Insurance, Software Design, Computer Programming, Scientific Research and Armed Forces. A-level entry requirements: Students must gain grade 7 or above to take Mathematics at A-level and a grade 8 or 9 to take Further Mathematics. (An entrance assessment is also required) Need more information? Please speak to your Mathematics teacher

## 5) Modern Foreign Languages (AQA)

Options Available: French, Arabic & Farsi

Subject Information

A GCSE course in Modern Languages allows students to develop their ability to understand the spoken and written language and express themselves both orally and in writing.

The topics studied include: Identity and culture; local, national, international and global areas of interest; current and future studies and employment. Students' skills will be developed through a variety of activities, including giving presentations, group work, independent research, pair work, and the use of ICT.

Students will need to be prepared to develop their active and passive vocabularies and their knowledge, understanding and application of grammar. There is also an opportunity to participate in trips organised by the department to countries where the target languages are spoken.

## Assessment

Paper 1: Listening Exam – Understanding and responding to different types of spoken language (25%). Questions are answered in both English and the Target Language.

Paper 2: Speaking Exam – Communicating and interacting effectively in speech for a variety of purposes (25%)

Paper 3: Reading Exam – Understanding and responded to different types of written language (25%). Questions are answered in both English and the Target Language.

Paper 4: Writing Exam – Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes (25%)

## Related Careers / A-level progression

To continue studying a language at A-level, students need to have a grade 6 or above at GCSE. Languages are “facilitating subjects” as recommended by the Russell Group of Universities. This means they are highly regarded and are therefore helpful in getting places at good universities.

Additionally, language knowledge is relevant to a number of degree courses, including history, literature, politics, law and music. Careers which use languages include those in Business, Finance, Law, Sales and Marketing, Engineering, Tourism, Leisure, Public Sector, International Institutions, Teaching (Primary and Secondary), Translating, Interpreting and the Media. Need more information?

Speak to the language teacher.

## 6) Physics (AQA)

Subject Information GCSE Physics is a compulsory subject taken by every student from Year 10 to Year 11, with the 2 years course starting in Year 10. Students will receive a grade ranging from 1 to 9 grade.

GCSE Physics (8463) encourages students to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of physics
- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on physics through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The specification is designed to give students the tools and concepts they need to be able to construct a scientific approach to solving problems. Students will learn to ask and answer questions about the fundamental laws that govern natural phenomena.

## Assessment

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

There are two papers each worth 50% of the final mark. Both papers are assessed by a mixture of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

Each paper is 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 100 marks.

Paper 1: Energy Electricity Particle model of matter Atomic structure

Paper 2: Forces Waves Magnetism and electromagnetism Space physics There is no coursework instead there are required practicals and the examination will contain a number of different types of question which will assess students' practical skills and their understanding of practical techniques.

1. Questions that require a knowledge and understanding of a specific required practical procedure.
2. Questions that require a knowledge and understanding of apparatus and techniques from the list but do not relate to a specific required practical
3. Questions set in a practical context where students require an understanding of the science rather than direct experience of the practical activity.

## Related Careers / A-level

progression Future career paths include within science careers in Astronomy; Education; Engineering; Medicine; Meteorology and climate change; Nanotechnology; Oil and gas; Renewable energy; Scientific research; Space exploration industries and Telecommunications to name a few of the possible areas. Physics graduates are particularly attractive to companies outside the scientific industries because of their skills in analysing information and solving complex problems, and their high levels of numeracy and computer literacy. Well paid careers can be found in the banking, insurance and accountancy sectors, as well as the software, computing and consultancy industries.

Currently, nearly 20% of physics graduates go into business and finance professions, making it a very popular career path. Qualifications in Physics offer a variety of career paths ranging from research to teaching to business and finance for further details please go to <http://www.iop.org/careers/directions/index.html> A-level entry requirements- Students must gain grade 7 or above to take Physics at A-level. Need more information? Please speak to your Physics teacher

## 7) Religious Studies (Eduqas)

Subject Information Religious Studies is the study of religious beliefs, behaviours and ethics. It helps you answer questions about the meaning of life, moral dilemmas, why religious faith is important to many people. It also examines how religion has impacted up the world throughout history and its relevance and influence in the world today. The skills you will develop over the course will help you understand the world today and develop your knowledge and understanding of motives, beliefs and ethical decision making.

Different faith perspectives are examined including the atheist perspective.

No religious affiliation is necessary as this is an academic and objective examination of the issues. Your analytic and evaluative skills will however be developed. Learning is through group discussion, presentations, video clips and philosophical enquiry.

## **Assessment**

There are 3 sections to the course:

1. Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern world 50% Key topics are relationships, Life and death, good and evil and human rights
2. Christianity 25% This includes beliefs, teachings and practices
3. Islam 25% This includes beliefs, teachings and practices

## **Related Careers / A-level progression**

The skills that you will develop over the 2 year course are valuable and very well respected by universities as an excellent grounding for any Arts, social science or humanities course. It enables students to develop skills that enhances their study in other subjects such as critical analysis and evaluation and understanding other viewpoints within an issue.

The ability to articulate ideas and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses is transferable and highly applicable to any career which involves communication including Law, Public Relations, Education, Advertising, Marketing, Journalism and the Media. To do A-level Philosophy and Ethics you will need to achieve a grade 6 at GCSE.