2025 - 26

GCSE

OPTIONS BOOKLET

STAR International School Al Twar

iSP International Schools Partnership

Guiding Stars to Bright Futures

WELCOME
MESSAGE

Mrs. Lisa Passante

Principal

Dear parents,

At Star International School, Al Twar, we provide the National Curriculum for England, which ensures a well-rounded education and preparation for the demands and rigour of study at GCSE and A-Level. From their time in primary school, through to Years 7, 8 and 9, we put in place the foundations of learning that each student needs, building sound comprehensive knowledge as well as developing a variety of skills.

At Year 9, students are able to make some choices of subjects to study alongside the core subjects, all of which are examined at the end of Year 11. In order that courses can be studied in sufficient depth, each is given a larger amount of lesson time than in previous years. Homework demands also increase as well as the level of responsibility a student needs to take for their own study.

Students will continue to work with their form tutors and Key Stage Leaders on the school's pastoral programme and we continue to emphasise the importance of extra-curricular commitment in developing skills and personalities.

Making the choice of GCSE subjects is very important and we want to ensure that both you and your child are fully supported in the option process.

In addition to the opportunities you and your child will have in the coming months to learn more about the options process, please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Best wishes,

Lisa Passante
Principal

MESSAGE FROM THE

HEAD OF SECONDARY

Mr. David Gill

Head of Secondary

Dear students,

A warm welcome to you, whether you are new to Star Al Twar, or an existing student choosing to progress into Key Stage 4.

We are excited to guide you through the next two years of your secondary education, in which we hope you continue to grow and develop whilst learning more about the subjects you enjoy.

You will find a range of subjects on offer that should meet your needs and interests and enable you to access the further education and the career choices that you desire.

All subjects at Key Stage 4 are taught by highly qualified subject specialists, with extensive knowledge in their area and outstanding teaching practice. This ensures all our students have the best opportunity to make better than expected progress and achieve their full potential.

You will receive extensive pastoral support to help you manage your studies over the next two years and guide you towards your final exams. We will support you in identifying the right career path to suit your interests, but for now, you should focus on choosing subjects that you enjoy learning and have a passion to study further.

I am excited to be working with all of you in the future and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries or questions.

Kind regards,

David Gill
Head of Secondary

MESSAGE FROM THE

HEAD OF KEY STAGE 4

Mrs. Melissa Coates

Head of Key Stage 4

Dear students,

It's an exciting time as we begin planning for the journey ahead in education and beyond! This booklet is designed to provide you with all the essential information to help you understand what to expect from the GCSE and BTEC courses you will be studying and support your option choices as you prepare to enter Year 10.

If you have any questions about your subject choices or the course details, please feel free to reach out to your tutor, subject teachers, or myself. We're here to support you every step of the way as you navigate through the options process.

We look forward to helping you make the best choices for your future.

Best wishes,

Melissa Coates
Head of Key Stage 4

GCSE

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

What are GCSE Subjects?

GCSEs are qualifications typically taken by students in Years 10 and 11 (ages 14-16). They mark an important stage in education, helping students build a foundation for future studies, training, or employment.

GCSEs are designed to assess knowledge, understanding, and skills in a range of subjects. Most students take a combination of core and optional subjects, which allows them to tailor their learning to their interests and future aspirations.

Structure of GCSEs

Core subjects: These include English Language, Mathematics, and Science (Combined or Separate Sciences). These are mandatory to ensure students gain essential skills.
Optional subjects: Students can choose from a variety of courses, such as History, Geography, Art, Computing, and DT among others. Schools offer different combinations, so students should review their options carefully.

Grading System

GCSEs are graded on a scale from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. This system replaced the previous A*-G grades. A grade 4 is considered a standard pass, and a grade 5 is a strong pass.

Assessment

GCSEs are assessed through:
Examinations: The majority of GCSE courses are assessed through written exams taken at the end of the two-year course.
Coursework/Practical Assessments: Some subjects, such as Art or Design and Technology, include coursework or practical components.

Why are GCSEs important?

GCSEs are a stepping stone to further education and career opportunities. They are often required for:

- Admission to sixth form, college, or apprenticeships.
- Progression to A-levels, vocational courses, or other post-16 qualifications.
- Meeting entry requirements for future employment or university study.

GCSEs are an opportunity for students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and prepare for the next stage of their education journey.

BTEC LEVEL 2

QUALIFICATIONS

What is a BTEC?

BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) qualifications are work-related courses designed to provide hands-on, practical learning alongside theoretical knowledge. They focus on skills and knowledge that prepare students for further education, training, or a specific career path.

BTECs are an excellent choice for students who thrive in coursework-based learning or have a clear interest in a vocational area. These qualifications are highly valued by employers, colleges, and universities.

Key Features of BTECs

Practical Learning: BTECs combine classroom study with practical, real-world applications. Students learn through tasks, projects, and assignments based on industry standards.

Range of Subjects: BTECs available at Star International School, Al Twar include IT, Sport and Business.
Assessment: BTECs are primarily assessed through coursework and projects, with some courses including exams or timed assessments. This continuous assessment can suit students who prefer not to rely solely on final exams.

Levels of Study
At Key Stage 4, students typically study BTEC Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications, equivalent to GCSEs:

BTEC Level 1: Introductory courses that build basic skills and confidence.

BTEC Level 2: More advanced courses, equivalent to 1 or 2 GCSEs, depending on the size of the course.

For post-16 education, students can progress to higher levels, including:

BTEC Level 3: Equivalent to A-levels, providing routes to university, higher apprenticeships, or work.

BTEC LEVEL 2

QUALIFICATIONS

Grading
BTEC qualifications are graded as:

Level 2: Distinction* (D*), Distinction (D), Merit (M), or Pass (P).
Level 1: Level 1 Pass (L1P).

Why Choose a BTEC?

- BTECs are ideal for students who:
- Enjoy practical and applied learning.
- Want to develop skills for a specific career or industry.
- Prefer coursework and continuous assessment over exams.
- Aspire to combine their studies with practical experience.

Pathways After BTECs
BTECs can lead to:

- Further education, such as BTEC Nationals (Level 3) or A-levels.
- Apprenticeships or training programs.
- Entry into the workplace or progression to university.

BTECs provide a unique opportunity to combine academic learning with real-world experience, setting students up for success in their next steps.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

When selecting their subjects

- A balance of subjects is preferred by colleges/universities in most countries, and by employers.
- A balance also allows you to have a wide choice of careers. The core curriculum in conjunction with the options generally gives you this balance.
- It is generally best to opt for the subjects that you enjoy. If you enjoy them you will work harder.
- Take your time in deciding. Talk to parents. Talk to your form tutor. Talk to your teachers.

Do not choose a subject simply because:

- A friend is doing it
- You like a teacher, as you may not get him/her
- You do not like it, but think it is needed for a career that appeals

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

For some GCSE subjects, 10% of the marks for each written paper are allocated to spelling, punctuation and grammar according to the following criteria:

- Threshold performance: students spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with reasonable accuracy; they use a limited range of specialist terms appropriately.
- Intermediate performance: students spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with reasonable accuracy; they use a wide range of specialist terms with purpose.
- High performance: students spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with almost faultless accuracy, using a range of grammatical constructions; they also use a wide range of specialist terms with purpose and precision.

Research, Revision, Assignments and Virtual Learning Environments

Star International School, Al Twar does not set traditional task based homework. More and more current research proves the impact of such is minimal. Instead Star Al Twar adopts a ‘research and revision’ model to provide flipped learning to students. Students will revise knowledge organisers and research key concepts prior to attending their lessons. This research and revision is supplemented with assignments and virtual learning environments that accelerate progress.

SELECTING OPTIONS

At Star Al Twar we allow students to select a bespoke combination of 4 subjects, with 2 subjects in reserve if those 4 subjects are not possible to facilitate in our timetable.

Compulsory subjects:

English Language
Maths
Combined Science (Worth 2 GCSEs)

Arabic A or B – not examined
Islamic Studies (for Muslim students) – not examined
Moral, Social and Cultural Studies – not examined
Core PE – not examined

Optional subjects:

Arabic Language
Art and Design
Biology
BTEC Business
BTEC IT
BTEC Sport
Business
Chemistry
Computer Science
Design and Technology
Economics
English Literature
Geography
History
ICT
Physics

Subject combinations that are not permitted:
ICT and Computer Science
Business BTEC with GCSE Business/Economics

Further guidance and recommendations:
Separate Sciences and Economics - applications are subject to a review of academic performance and ability.

Art and DT are recommended for students wishing to pursue a future pathway in architecture or design.

ARABIC A

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Arabic course will deepen students' linguistic skills developed in Key Stage 3 such as analytical reading and the ability to compare literary texts. It also requires the capability to write extended essays that use a wide range of vocabulary, grammar, and spelling rules.

FUTURE CAREER

Journalist International

Financier International

Banker Lawyer

Government Representative

COURSE CONTENT

This Arabic qualification develops more general analysis and communication skills, such as synthesis, inference and the ability to write long passages using complex structures and different grammar rules effectively.

Both papers will use a selection of different topics areas including: Youth matters, education, media, culture, sport and leisure, travel and tourism, business, work and employment, environment, health and technology.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Reading, Summary and Grammar

- Written examination: 2hrs and 15mins
- 75 marks (60% of the overall grade)

Paper 2: Writing

- Written examination: 1hr and 30 mins
- 50 marks (40% of the overall grade)

Link to Exam Specification: Arabic A

STUDENT QUOTE

The GCSE Arabic course has been a challenging but rewarding experience. I've particularly enjoyed exploring the rich literary tradition and practicing my speaking skills. This course has not only improved my language proficiency but has also broadened my cultural understanding.

ART AND DESIGN

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Cambridge

FUTURE CAREER

Fine Artist

Curator

Arts Writer

Interior Design & Architecture

Games Designer

Art Consultant Illustrator

Animator

COURSE OVERVIEW

Cambridge IGCSE Art & Design encourages a range of skills, stimulates aesthetic awareness, knowledge and critical understanding of art, and provides opportunities for learners to develop a range of skills. Crucially, a personal and independent perspective is encouraged at all times. The syllabus is designed to accommodate a wide range of abilities, materials and resources, and allows the different skills of the teaching staff to be fully used.

The syllabus appeals to learners who wish to explore practical work through a range of two- and/or three-dimensional processes and include new media and technologies in addition to traditional media and processes.

COURSE CONTENT

Cambridge IGCSE Art & Design has been designed to offer a broad choice of media and approaches so that candidates can produce a personal response and schools can play to their strengths in terms of staff expertise and interests. The broad areas of study are:

- Painting and related media
- Graphic communication
- Three-dimensional design
- Textiles and fashion
- Photography

Candidates can respond to either component using any of the media listed in the areas of study above.

ASSESSMENT

All candidates take 2 components

Component 1

Coursework 50% 100 marks

Candidates research, develop and realise a project from one or more of the areas of study and should explore a theme.

There are two parts to the coursework:

- a portfolio and
- a final outcome.

ART AND DESIGN

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Cambridge

ASSESSMENT

Component 2 (8 hours)
Externally Set Assignment 50% 100 marks
Candidates respond to one starting point set by Cambridge International. Candidates may produce work from the same areas of study as Component 1, but they do not have to.

There are two parts to the assignment:

- supporting studies and
- a final outcome, produced during a supervised test of 8 hours' total duration.

Link to Exam Specification: Art and Design

FUTURE CAREER

Fine Artist

Curator

Arts Writer

Interior Design & Architecture

Games Designer

Art Consultant Illustrator

Animator

STUDENT QUOTE

I study GCSE Art, and it's undeniable that this subject encourages you to broaden your creative horizons by experimenting with various mediums, topics, and ideas. I believe that Art is unique in its ability to allow you to explore any concept or theme you desire, while also infusing your work with your personal style and originality.

BIOLOGY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

FUTURE CAREER

Doctor

Nurse

Pharmacist

Dentist

Biomedical Scientist

Microbiologist

Ecologist

Biotechnologist

Physiotherapist

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is offered for students who wish to study for three GCSEs in Science. It is well suited to students who have demonstrated a keen interest and an aptitude for the subject in KS3. It should be noted that it is not a pre-requisite for the study of A level Sciences. It aims to encourage students to explore, explain, theorise and model in Science, develops a critical approach to scientific evidence and helps to prepare them for further studies in Science. The course will include all of the elements from Combined Science (Trilogy) but in addition extra units in Biology are studied leading to Biology GCSE. Please note that students must take all three GCSEs if given this option.

COURSE CONTENT

GCSE study in Biology provides the foundations for understanding the material world. Biology is taught in progressively greater depth over the course of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. GCSE outcomes may reflect or build upon subject content which is typically taught at Key Stage 3.

Topics

1. Cell biology
2. Organisation
3. Infection and response
4. Bioenergetics
5. Homeostasis and response
6. Inheritance, variation and evolution
7. Ecology

ASSESSMENT

Candidates will sit two papers at the end of the course. Questions will be given in the following format: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 1

Topics 1–4: Cell biology; Organisation; Infection and response; and Bioenergetics

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

BIOLOGY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

ASSESSMENT

Paper 2
Topics 5–7: Homeostasis and response; Inheritance, variation and evolution; and Ecology.
Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
100 marks
50% of GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: Biology

FUTURE CAREER

Doctor
Nurse
Pharmacist
Dentist
Biomedical Scientist
Microbiologist
Ecologist
Biotechnologist
Physiotherapist

STUDENT QUOTE

Studying Biology GCSE has been a fantastic experience. It's opened my eyes to the wonders of the natural world and sparked my curiosity about the intricate workings of living organisms. The practical experiments and field trips were particularly enjoyable, and I've developed a strong foundation in scientific inquiry and data analysis. I believe this subject has equipped me with valuable skills for future studies and careers in science and medicine.

BTEC LEVEL 2 BUSINESS

Course: BTEC **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification is designed to support learners who are interested in learning about the business industry alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of courses at Level 3/pre-tertiary level, not necessarily in business related subjects. The qualification is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes other appropriate BTEC International Level 2 qualifications or International GCSEs.

COURSE CONTENT

At least six units, of which four are mandatory and assessed by a Pearson Set Assignment. Mandatory content (50%).
Mandatory units include:

1. Business Purposes
2. Business Organisations
3. Financial Forecasting for Business
4. The Marketing Plan

ASSESSMENT

All units in the sector are internally assessed and subject to external standards verification. For units where there is no Pearson Set Assignment, the centre selects the most appropriate assessment styles according to the learning set out in the unit. This ensures that learners are assessed using a variety of styles to help them develop a broad range of transferable skills. Learners could be given opportunities to:

- write up the findings of their own research
- use case studies to explore complex or unfamiliar situations
- carry out projects for which they have choice over the direction and outcomes
- demonstrate practical and technical skills using appropriate processes, etc.

Link to Exam Specification: BTEC Level 2 Business

FUTURE CAREER

Banker

Events Manager

Marketing Executive

Finance Analyst

Accountant

Business Reporter

STUDENT QUOTE

BTEC Business is a really engaging course, especially because it's largely project-based. This hands-on approach helps me learn more about the business world and gain a better understanding of how it works.

BTEC LEVEL 2
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Course: BTEC **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification is designed to support learners who are interested in learning about the information technology industry alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of courses at Level 3/pre-tertiary level, not necessarily in information technology-related subjects. The qualification is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes other appropriate BTEC International Level 2 qualifications or International GCSEs.

COURSE CONTENT

Four units, of which one is mandatory and assessed by a Pearson Set Assignment.
Mandatory content (25%). Mandatory unit consists of:

1. Using IT to Support Information and Communication in Organisations.

ASSESSMENT

All units in the sector are internally assessed and subject to external standards verification. For units where there is no Pearson Set Assignment, the centre selects the most appropriate assessment styles according to the learning set out in the unit. This ensures that learners are assessed using a variety of styles to help them develop a broad range of transferable skills. Learners could be given opportunities to:

- write up the findings of their own research
- use case studies to explore complex or unfamiliar situations
- carry out projects for which they have choice over the direction and outcomes
- demonstrate practical and technical skills using appropriate processes, etc.

Link to Exam Specification: BTEC Level 2 Information Technology

FUTURE CAREER

IT Support Technician
Help Desk Analyst
Network Technician
Web Developer
Software Developer
Cybersecurity Specialist
Digital Marketing Specialist
Data Analyst

STUDENT QUOTE

The BTEC Level 2 in Information Technology course was a fantastic introduction to the world of technology. It equipped me with essential skills in computer hardware and software, networking, and digital literacy. I particularly enjoyed learning about cybersecurity and ethical hacking. This course has not only boosted my technical knowledge but has also prepared me for further studies and a career in the IT industry.

BTEC LEVEL 2
SPORT

Course: BTEC **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification is designed to support learners who want an introduction to the sector through applied learning and for whom an element of sport would be complementary. The qualification supports progression to further study at Level 3/pre-tertiary education as part of a programme of study that includes BTEC International Level 3 qualifications and/or International A levels.

FUTURE CAREER

Athlete

Sports Coach

Physiologist Sports

Therapist

Personal Trainer

Nutritionist

Sports Psychologist

Sports Analyst Sports

Management

COURSE CONTENT

Three units, of which one is mandatory and assessed by a Pearson Set Assignment. Mandatory content (75%).

1. Principles of Fitness and Fitness Testing
2. Practical Sport
3. Anatomy and Physiology for Sport

ASSESSMENT

All units in the sector are internally assessed and subject to external standards verification. For units where there is no Pearson Set Assignment, the centre selects the most appropriate assessment styles according to the learning set out in the unit. This ensures that learners are assessed using a variety of styles to help them develop a broad range of transferable skills. Learners could be given opportunities to:

- write up the findings of their own research
- use case studies to explore complex or unfamiliar situations
- carry out projects for which they have choice over the direction and outcomes
- demonstrate practical and technical skills using appropriate processes, etc.

Link to Exam Specification: BTEC Sport

STUDENT QUOTE

The BTEC Level 2 Sports course provided me with a solid foundation in sports science and coaching. I particularly enjoyed learning about sports psychology and injury prevention. The practical sessions were a great way to apply theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills. This course has helped me to develop a deeper understanding of sports and has prepared me for further study or a career in the sports industry.

BUSINESS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

COURSE OVERVIEW

The OxfordAQA International GCSE Business specification teaches learners real-world business planning and operations skills using international case studies and terminology to ensure it is relevant and motivating. The specification is an ideal vehicle to make studying business enjoyable and provide the right level of challenge for students who want to study and excel in business at GCSE and beyond.

The 'business planning' unit is designed to motivate students by giving them applicable real-world business skills, as well as providing excellent preparation for A-level.

It uses the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) terms and features globally relevant content, for example exchange rates, to secure engagement and help students to reach their potential.

Exams are accessible for international students. For example, they include appropriate reading time, multiple choice questions and themed papers which showcase internationally recognised brands, such as Toyota, to aid revision.

FUTURE CAREER

Banker

Events Manager

Marketing Executive

Finance Analyst

Accountant Business

Reporter

COURSE CONTENT

OxfordAQA International GCSE Business covers the following topics:

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

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1:

Influences of Operations and Human Resources on Business Activity:

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

Written exam: 2 hours – 90 marks, worth 50% of final GCSE

BUSINESS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

ASSESSMENT

Paper 2

Influences of Marketing and Finance on Business Activity:

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

Written exam: 2 hours – 90 marks, worth 50% of final GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: Business

FUTURE CAREER

Banker

Events Manager

Marketing Executive

Finance Analyst

Accountant Business

Reporter

STUDENT QUOTE

The iGCSE Business course provided me with a strong foundation in business principles and practices. It equipped me with essential skills such as financial analysis, marketing strategies, and business communication, which have been invaluable in my academic and professional pursuits.

CHEMISTRY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is offered for students who wish to study for three GCSEs in Science. It is well suited to students who have demonstrated a keen interest and an aptitude for the subject in KS3. It should be noted that it is not a pre-requisite for the study of A level Sciences. It aims to encourage students to explore, explain, theorise and model in Science, develops a critical approach to scientific evidence and helps to prepare them for further studies in Science. The course will include all of the elements from Combined Science (Trilogy) but in addition extra units in Chemistry are studied leading to Chemistry GCSE. Please note that students must take all three GCSEs if given this option.

COURSE CONTENT

GCSE study in Chemistry provides the foundations for understanding the material world. Chemistry is taught in progressively greater depth over the course of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. GCSE outcomes may reflect or build upon subject content which is typically taught at Key Stage 3.

Topics

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
3. Quantitative chemistry
4. Chemical changes
5. Energy changes
6. The rate and extent of chemical change
7. Organic chemistry
8. Chemical analysis
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere
10. Using resources

ASSESSMENT

Candidates will sit two papers at the end of the course. Questions will be given in the following format: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

FUTURE CAREER

Medicine and Dentistry

Pharmacy

Biochemistry

Chemical Engineering

Environmental Science

Food Science

Forensic Science

Materials Science

Teaching

Research

CHEMISTRY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

FUTURE CAREER

Medicine and Dentistry
Pharmacy
Biochemistry
Chemical Engineering
Environmental Science
Food Science
Forensic Science
Materials Science
Teaching
Research

ASSESSMENT

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.

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
100 marks
50% of GCSE

Paper 2:
Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis, Chemistry of the atmosphere; and Using resources.
Questions in Paper 2 may draw on fundamental concepts and principles from topics 1 to 3.

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
100 marks
50% of GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: Chemistry

STUDENT QUOTE

The GCSE Chemistry course provided me with a solid foundation in scientific principles and practical skills. I particularly enjoyed the hands-on experiments and the opportunity to learn about real-world applications of chemistry. This course has not only deepened my understanding of the subject but has also equipped me with valuable problem-solving and analytical skills.

COMBINED SCIENCE

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

COURSE OVERVIEW

GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) is worth two GCSE grades. It builds on the Key stage 3 curriculum and covers the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Science at Key Stage 4. It encourages students to explore, explain, theorise and model in science and develops a critical approach to scientific evidence. Biology, Chemistry and Physics content is presented clearly, in a logical teaching order. There are 21 practicals in this course allowing skill building for planning, graphing, writing and mathematical skills. Students are awarded two grades based on their overall performance across all three disciplines. The combined science qualification does not have any impact on option choices at A-Level. Students taking the combined science qualification are able to take A-Level sciences.

COURSE CONTENT

GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) is taught as 3 subjects:

Biology

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

FUTURE CAREER

Dentist

Biochemist

Veterinarian

Ecologist

Chemical Engineer

Pharmaceutical Researcher

Forensic Scientist

Astronaut

AI in medicine

COMBINED SCIENCE

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

COURSE CONTENT

Physics

- 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. Questions will be given in the following format: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

- Each paper will be a written exam: 1 hour 15 mins
- Each paper will carry 70 marks and be worth 16.7% of the final GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: Combined Science

FUTURE CAREER

Dentist

Biochemist

Veterinarian

Ecologist

Chemical Engineer

Pharmaceutical Researcher

Forensic Scientist

Astronaut

AI in medicine

STUDENT QUOTE

Studying Combined Science GCSE has provided me with a solid foundation in scientific principles. The course has equipped me with essential problem-solving skills and a scientific approach to understanding the world around me. I'm confident that this knowledge will be invaluable as I progress to further studies and beyond.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification provides students with the opportunity to operate confidently in today's digital world, enabling students to apply computational thinking in context, across both written and practical examinations. Students will be encouraged repeatedly to design, implement and test programs that provide solutions to problems. They will apply their skills to produce robust programs and this will help them to progress to further/higher education where practical knowledge and experience will be required.

FUTURE CAREER

IT Consultant

Cyber Security

Consultant Information

Systems Manager

Database Administrator

Games Developer

COURSE CONTENT

This GCSE extends students' knowledge and understanding by broadening and deepening skills. For example, students will develop the ability to:

- apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms and data representation
- analyse problems in computational terms through practical problem-solving experience. This will include designing, writing and debugging programs
- think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- apply mathematical skills relevant to computer science

Students will study six topic areas:
Topic 1: Problem solving
Topic 2: Programming
Topic 3: Data
Topic 4: Computers
Topic 5: Communication and the internet
Topic 6: The bigger picture

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed through two externally-assessed papers, one of which is a practical assessment carried out on a computer system using a programing language of choice.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

FUTURE CAREER

IT Consultant

Cyber Security

Consultant Information

Systems Manager

Database Administrator

Games Developer

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1
Principles of Computer Science:
Written paper consisting of multiple-choice, short open-response, open-response and extended open-response answer questions.

2 hours

This paper is worth 80 marks and 50% of the final GCSE grade

Paper 2
Application of Computational Thinking:
Assessment is through a 3-hour practical examination. The task-based questions will be carried out using a computer system under supervision. All other questions requiring a written response will be answered in the paper. This paper is worth 80 marks and 50% of the final GCSE grade.

Link to Exam Specification: Computer Science

STUDENT QUOTE

The iGCSE Computer Science course provided me with a solid foundation in programming and problem-solving. It equipped me with essential skills such as logical thinking, critical analysis, and the ability to work effectively with technology. This course has been invaluable in preparing me for further studies and a career in the ever-evolving field of computer science.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

The study of design and technology seeks to prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. It helps students to be aware of, and learn from, wider influences on design and technology, including historical, social/cultural, environmental and economic factors.

COURSE CONTENT

Students will acquire subject knowledge in design and technology that builds on Key Stage 3, incorporating knowledge and understanding of different materials and manufacturing processes in order to design and make, with confidence, prototypes in response to issues, needs, problems and opportunities. Students learn how to take design risks, helping them to become resourceful, innovative and enterprising citizens. They should develop an awareness of practices from the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Through the critique of the outcomes of design and technology activity, both historic and present day, students should develop an understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world and understand that high-quality design and technology is important to the creativity, culture, sustainability, wealth and wellbeing of the nation and the global community.

ASSESSMENT

The Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Design and Technology consists of one externally-examined paper and one non-examined assessment component.

Component 1

- Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes
- 50% of the qualification
- 100 marks

FUTURE CAREER

Product Designer

Architect

Carpenter

Repair Technician

Fashion Designer

Electronic Engineer

Engineer

Designer Manufacturer

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

FUTURE CAREER

Product Designer

Architect

Carpenter

Repair Technician

Fashion Designer

Electronic Engineer

Engineer

Designer Manufacturer

ASSESSMENT

Component 2

Students will undertake a project based on a contextual challenge released by us a year before certification. The task will be internally assessed and externally moderated.

- Non-examined assessment
- 50% of the qualification
- 100 marks

Link to Exam Specification: Design and Technology

STUDENT QUOTE

The Design and Technology course was a fantastic opportunity to develop my creativity and problem-solving skills. I enjoyed learning about product design, engineering principles, and the importance of sustainable design. The practical projects allowed me to apply my knowledge and develop a range of technical skills, which will be invaluable in my future studies and career.

ECONOMICS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification engages students in exploring key economic theories and concepts within a global context. Students investigate how economies function and analyse real-world economic issues, applying their knowledge to case studies. This course develops critical thinking, data analysis, and problem-solving skills. It also provides a solid understanding of the impact of economic decisions on individuals, businesses, and governments.

FUTURE CAREER

Economist

Financial

Risk Analyst

Data Analyst Financial

Planner Accountant

Investment Analyst

COURSE CONTENT

Students will explore real-world economic issues and consider perspectives on how individuals, businesses, and governments interact within the economy. They will engage with primary and secondary data sources, analyse economic trends, and propose solutions to problems. This course builds on foundational knowledge of basic economic principles such as scarcity, supply and demand, and government intervention, while strengthening numeracy skills through data interpretation.

Units studied consist of:
Unit 1.1: The Market System
Unit 1.2: Business Economics
Unit 2.1: Government and the Economy
Unit 2.2: The Global Economy

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1
Microeconomics and Business Economics:

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes, 80 marks, and 50% of the International GCSE.

ECONOMICS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

ASSESSMENT

Paper 2
Macroeconomics and the Global Economy:

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes, 80 marks, and 50% of the International GCSE.

Each paper consists of four compulsory questions, including multiple-choice, short-answer, data response, and open-ended questions.

Link to Exam Specification: Economics

FUTURE CAREER

Economist

Financial

Risk Analyst

Data Analyst Financial

Planner Accountant

Investment Analyst

STUDENT QUOTE

I enjoy studying Economics because it helps me understand how the world works—from how businesses operate to the decisions governments make. It's fascinating to see how numbers, policies, and behaviour come together to shape our daily lives. Plus, it challenges me to think critically and solve real-world problems.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

FUTURE CAREER

Digital Copywriter

Editor

Journalist

Social Media Manager

Publisher

Content Manager

Language Researcher

Public Relations Manager

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification enables students to develop specific skills in inference, exploration, language analysis and deduction, alongside the more general skills of selection, synthesis and organisation.

COURSE CONTENT

Literary non-fiction and composition

Section A

The passages for the reading section on Paper 1 will be literary non-fiction eg autobiography, biography, letters, memoir and travel/adventure writing.

Section B

The writing section will consist of three tasks from which students choose one: descriptive/imaginative/argumentative or discursive.

Source-based reading and directed writing

Section A

The reading texts for Paper 2 will relate to modern world themes and issues. Some of the texts may be brief or solely visual. Texts may be fiction or non-fiction.

Section B

The focus of the writing task will be writing for audience and purpose, which could be both multiple and diverse. The most successful responses will demonstrate the students' ability to respond to this demand.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1

Literary Non-Fiction and Composition:

Section A – Literary Non-Fiction

Section B – Composition

Students answer all questions from Section A and one question from Section B

2 hours

80 marks

60% of GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

ASSESSMENT

Paper 2
Source-based Reading and Directed Writing:
Section A – Reading
Section B – Writing
Students answer all questions from Section A and one question from Section B
2 hours
80 marks
40% of GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: English Language

FUTURE CAREER

Digital Copywriter
Editor
Journalist
Social Media Manager
Publisher
Content Manager
Language Researcher
Public Relations Manager

STUDENT QUOTE

I enjoy studying English Language because it helps me express myself clearly and creatively. I love analysing how words and ideas shape meaning, and it's exciting to explore different styles of communication. It is a skill I can use in everyday life and future opportunities.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

FUTURE CAREER

Author

Editor

Freelance Writer

Journalist

Marketing Specialist

Literary Agent

Speech Writer

Film and Theatre Critic

Communications Director

COURSE OVERVIEW

OxfordAQA International GCSE English Literature provides opportunities for students to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Through literature, students have a chance to develop culturally and acquire knowledge of the best that has been thought and written. This qualification offers students the opportunity to read a wide range of literature fluently, critically and with good understanding, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas in detail and appreciate the depth and power of literary texts. Studying International GCSE English Literature should encourage students to read widely for pleasure, and be a strong preparation for studying literature at a higher level.

COURSE CONTENT

Prose and Drama

Prose fiction

Students will study one novel from the list of set texts. Students should study the whole text.

- Kazuo Ishiguro: Never Let Me Go

3.1.2 Drama

Students will study one play from the list of set texts. Students should study the whole text.

- J B Priestley: An Inspector Calls

Poetry and unseen texts

Poetry

Students will study the OxfordAQA Exams Poetry Anthology People and Places. The 20 poems in this anthology are thematically linked in a variety of ways, allowing students to study a range of connected and linked ideas and themes from poets and poetry from different times and contexts.

Unseen poetry

In preparing for the unseen poetry section of the examination students should experience a wide range of poetry in order to develop their ability to closely analyse poems. They should be able to analyse and compare key features such as their content, theme, structure and use of language.

Unseen prose

In preparing for the unseen prose section of the examination students should experience a wide range of prose texts in order to develop their ability to closely analyse the variety of ways writers create meanings and influence the reader.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Oxford AQA

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1 – Prose and Drama:
Section A – Prose Fiction
Section B – Drama

- Students answer one question from each section
- Closed-book exam
- 1 hour 30 minutes
- 60 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Paper 2 – Poetry and Unseen Texts:
Section A – Poetry
Section B – Unseen Poetry
Section C – Unseen Prose

- Students answer one question from each section
- Open-book exam
- 2 hours 15 minutes
- 90 marks
- 60% of GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: English Literature

FUTURE CAREER

Author
Editor
Freelance Writer
Journalist
Marketing Specialist
Literary Agent
Speech Writer
Film and Theatre Critic
Communications Director

STUDENT QUOTE

I love studying English Literature because it allows me to explore different perspectives and cultures through stories and poems. It helps me think critically, express my ideas creatively, and connect with timeless themes that are still relevant today.

GEOGRAPHY

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

Students will develop the knowledge and skills learned during Key Stage 3. These include locational knowledge of the world, comparative skills between contrasting places, knowledge of how Physical and Human Geography influence our world, and geographical skills of interpreting maps, photographs and fieldwork data.

FUTURE CAREER

Engineer

Geologist

Lawyer

Town Planner Journalist

Documentary Creator

Architect Developer

COURSE CONTENT

Physical Geography

Topic 1: River environments – features of the global hydrological cycle (including drainage basins), the physical processes that give rise to distinct river landforms and detailed case studies of river management in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

Topic 2: Coastal environments – the processes that give rise to characteristic coastal landforms, threats facing coastal ecosystems and detailed case studies of coastal management in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

Topic 3: Hazardous environments – the characteristics and distribution of different types of natural hazard, the measurement and impacts of hazards and detailed case studies of the management of an earthquake in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

Human Geography

Topic 4: Economic activity and energy – variations in economic activity over time and spatially, the relationship between population and resources and detailed case studies of energy resource management in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

Topic 5: Rural environments – distribution, characteristics and human activities taking place in rural environments, the changes in contrasting rural environments and detailed case studies of rural environments in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

Topic 6: Urban environments – trends, characteristics and problems associated with urban environments, the challenges facing contrasting urban environments and detailed case studies of urban environments in a developed and a developing or emerging country.

GEOGRAPHY

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

ASSESSMENT

Component 1: Physical Geography - 40% of the qualification
Written examination: 1 hour and 10 minutes

Component 2: Human Geography – 60% of the qualification
Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Exams consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, data response, and open ended questions.

Link to Exam Specification: Geography

FUTURE CAREER

Engineer

Geologist

Lawyer

Town Planner Journalist

Documentary Creator

Architect Developer

STUDENT QUOTE

Studying Geography at GCSE level has broadened my understanding of the world. I've developed strong analytical skills and learned to think critically about complex global issues. The course has equipped me with valuable knowledge and skills that will benefit me in my future studies and career.

HISTORY

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

In IGCSE History, students will:

- gain knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of historical periods
- develop skills to analyse and evaluate historical interpretations in the context of historical events studied
- develop skills to explain, analyse and make judgements about historical events and periods studied, using second-order historical concepts.
- learn how to use a range of source material to comprehend, interpret and cross-reference sources

FUTURE CAREER

Historian Archaeologist

Journalist

Politician

Lawyer

Archivist

Political Scientist

COURSE CONTENT

Paper 1: Depth Studies

Students must study at least two depth studies:

1. Germany: development of dictatorship, 1918–45
2. A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945–74

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

Students must study one historical investigation:

1. The origins and course of the First World War, 1905–18

Students must study one breadth study in change:

1. Changes in medicine, c1848–c1948

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: 50% of the qualification
Written exam: 1 hour and 30 mins
Paper 2: 50% of the qualification
Written exam: 1 hour and 30 mins

Link to Exam Specification: History

STUDENT QUOTE

Studying History is incredibly fascinating and versatile. It allows us to delve into the past, understanding our origins and the events that have shaped the world we live in today. I'm particularly captivated by the topics of Nazi Germany and the Civil Rights Movement in my GCSE studies. These subjects offer a sobering look at the struggles of humanity and their lasting impact on modern society.

ICT

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE OVERVIEW

This qualification provides students with the opportunity of operating confidently in today's digital world. It is a useful, practical qualification which will provide skills needed in further education and work. Students will learn about topics ranging from digital devices and connectivity, safe and responsible practice, and understand the impact of internet on the way that organisations do business. They will be also be encouraged to practice using software applications effectively.

COURSE CONTENT

Paper 1: Written Paper

Students must study all of the following topics:
Topic 1: Digital Devices
Topic 2: Connectivity
Topic 3: Operating Online
Topic 4: Online Goods and Services.
Students will:

- gain knowledge and understanding of Information and Communication Technology
- develop skills to apply knowledge and understanding to produce ICT-based solutions
- develop skills of analysis and evaluation, making reasoned judgements and presenting conclusions.

Paper 2: Practical Paper

Students must study both of the following topics:
Topic 5: Applying Information and Communication Technology
Topic 6: Software Skills
Students will:

- gain knowledge and understanding of Information and Communication Technology
- develop skills to apply the knowledge and understanding they acquire in all topics (1–6) to produce ICT-based solutions
- develop skills of analysis and evaluation, making reasoned judgements and presenting conclusions.

FUTURE CAREER

Software Developer
Systems Analyst
Business Analyst
IT Support Analyst
Network Engineer
IT Consultant
Sales Representative

ICT

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: 50% of the qualification
Written paper: 1 hour and 30 mins
The examination comprises a mixture of multiple-choice, short- and long-answer questions.

Paper 2: 50% of the qualification
Practical paper: 3 hour practical examination

Link to Exam Specification: ICT

FUTURE CAREER

Software Developer
Systems Analyst
Business Analyst
IT Support Analyst
Network Engineer
IT Consultant
Sales Representative

STUDENT QUOTE

The ICT course was both challenging and rewarding. It helped me to develop my creativity, problem-solving skills, and ability to work independently. I am confident that the skills I learned will be beneficial to me in my future studies and career.

MATHEMATICS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

FUTURE CAREER

Accountant

Data Analyst

Data Scientist

Investment Analyst

Research Scientist

Software Engineer

Statistician

Animation

COURSE OVERVIEW

The IGCSE in Mathematics 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 in using mathematics to solve problems
- appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study.

COURSE CONTENT

The IGCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) requires students to demonstrate application and understanding of the following:

Number

- Use numerical skills in a purely mathematical way and in real-life situations.

Algebra

- Use letters as equivalent to numbers and as variables.
- Understand the distinction between expressions, equations and formulae.
- Use algebra to set up and solve problems.
- Demonstrate manipulative skills.
- Construct and use graphs.

Geometry

- Use properties of angles.
- Understand a range of transformations.
- Work within the metric system.
- Understand ideas of space and shape.
- Use ruler, compasses and protractor appropriately.

Statistics

- Understand basic ideas of statistical averages.
- Use a range of statistical techniques.
- Use basic ideas of probability.

Students should be able to demonstrate problem-solving skills by translating problems in mathematical or non-mathematical contexts into a process or a series of mathematical processes.

MATHEMATICS

Course: IGCSE **Exam Board:** Pearson Edexcel

COURSE CONTENT

Students should be able to demonstrate mathematical reasoning skills by: making deductions and drawing conclusions from mathematical information

- constructing chains of reasoning
- presenting arguments and proofs
- interpreting and communicating information accurately.

ASSESSMENT

Two tiers are available: Foundation and Higher (content is defined for each tier). Each student is permitted to take two written examination papers in either the Foundation tier or the Higher tier. The qualification will be graded and certificated on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total mark across all two papers where 9 is the highest grade.
Foundation tier: students can achieve grades 1 to 5.
Higher tier: students can achieve grades 4 to 9 (grade 3 allowed).

Paper 1: 50% of the Qualification/100 marks/2 hours
Paper 2: 50% of the Qualification/100 marks/2 hours

Link to Exam Specification: Mathematics

FUTURE CAREER

Accountant

Data Analyst

Data Scientist

Investment Analyst

Research Scientist

Software Engineer

Statistician

Animation

STUDENT QUOTE

I've always had a natural aptitude for maths and find it incredibly rewarding to understand complex concepts. The thrill of solving a problem and arriving at the correct answer is truly motivating. Maths is a vast and fascinating subject, and I'm eager to delve deeper into its intricacies.

PHYSICS

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is offered for students who wish to study for three GCSEs in Science. It is well suited to students who have demonstrated a keen interest and an aptitude for the subject in KS3. It should be noted that it is not a pre-requisite for the study of A level Sciences. It aims to encourage you to explore, explain, theorise and model in Science, develops a critical approach to scientific evidence and helps to prepare you for further studies in Science. The course will include all of the elements from Combined Science (Trilogy) but in addition extra units in Physics are studied leading to Physics GCSE. Please note that students must take all three GCSEs if given this option.

COURSE CONTENT

GCSE study in physics provides the foundations for understanding the material world. Physics is taught in progressively greater depth over the course of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. GCSE outcomes may reflect or build upon subject content which is typically taught at Key Stage 3.

Topics

1. Energy
2. Electricity
3. Particle model of matter
4. Atomic structure
5. Forces
6. Waves
7. Magnetism and electromagnetism
8. Space physics (physics only)

FUTURE CAREER

Architecture

Astrophysicist

Engineering

Science and Research

Robotics Specialist

Renewable Energy Specialist

Meteorologist

PHYSICS

Course: GCSE **Exam Board:** AQA

FUTURE CAREER

Architecture

Astrophysicist

Engineering

Science and Research

Robotics Specialist

Renewable Energy Specialist

Meteorologist

ASSESSMENT

Assessment

Candidates will sit two papers at the end of the course. Questions will be given in the following format: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 1: Topics 1–4: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter; and Atomic structure.

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Paper 2: Topics 5–8: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism; and Space physics.

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

100 marks

50% of GCSE

Link to Exam Specification: Physics

STUDENT QUOTE

I am fascinated by physics because it explains the world around us. Quantum physics, in particular, is incredibly intriguing, delving into the smallest particles. I'm equally captivated by astrophysics, exploring the vastness of the universe. I find physics most enjoyable when I can visualise concepts through animations or drawings. This approach helps me grasp complex ideas and will undoubtedly benefit me in future studies, whether it's engineering, piloting, or further academic pursuits.

#BrightFutures

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