



THE NORTON
KNATCHBULL
SCHOOL

The Norton Knatchbull School

GCSE Options Booklet

2025

Things done well make the best memories

SIR NORTON KNATCHBULL - 1637

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GCSE Options – Your Questions Answered



What do I need to do?

The Year 9 Options Evening is on 24th April, where you will have the opportunity to speak to subject staff about their GCSE courses.

This will be followed up with the Year 9 Parents' Evening on 8th May.

You then need to finalise your GCSE options.

- Students will be sent a form to their school email account.
- Students must remain logged into their Office 365 account to complete their form.

The form will be made available on 24th April

The deadline for the option form to be completed is 15th May.

Will I get my choices?

We aim to satisfy all choices, but it is inevitable that certain combinations will not work for a limited number of students. Therefore, we ask for a *reserve* option should one of your first choices not be possible. Similarly, we aim to run all of the subjects that we offer; however, on occasion the number of students selecting a course can be too small to make running the course viable. If there is a problem with any of your options, we may use your reserve choice. Should issues arise you will be contacted as soon as possible. If we do not contact you, you can assume we are able to accommodate your option choices.

Can I change my mind after I have submitted my online options form?

If your parents write to request a change, giving the reason, then we shall do our best to make the change. It is important that they write as soon as possible. You will not be allowed to change to an option group which is already full.



Your Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Over the next two years you will study and prepare for important public examinations. Most students' curriculum will consist of:

- Core subjects
- EBacc subjects
- Optional subjects
- Core non-examined subjects

Core Subjects

These subjects are compulsory for all students:

English Language and English Literature	GCSE qualifications in: English Language English Literature
Mathematics	GCSE qualification in Mathematics
Science	GCSE study of Biology, Chemistry and Physics

EBacc

In addition to English, Mathematics and Science, Modern Languages (the language students studied in Y7-9) and a Humanities subject (History or Geography) combine to form the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of qualifications. The EBacc subjects keep options open for progression to a wide range of options with further study and future careers. Whilst our expectation remains that the large majority of students should continue to study a language and a Humanities subject, the EBacc is not compulsory. Where students and parents believe that future plans would be better served by not following the EBacc we will be happy to arrange a meeting to discuss this.

Other Subjects

The wide range of other subjects available allows all students to personalise their learning and pursue their own strengths, interests and aspirations for the future.

Art and Design: Fine Art	History
Business Studies	Music
Classical Civilisation	Physical Education
Computer Science	Product Design
Drama	Religious Studies
Geography	Sociology

Core Non-Examined Subjects

All students will also study 2 non-examined subjects:

Personal Development
Core Physical Education

Tips on Choosing Your Options



Read the information in this booklet carefully before making your option choices.

- Consider where your strengths and interests lie. It is important to do well at GCSE Level, so choose subjects you genuinely enjoy and are good at. These are the main examination results that will be available to you when you are applying for entrance to the sixth form, college or an apprenticeship. GCSE results will also be taken into account when you are applying to universities.
- Research what GCSEs you may need in the future if you have a particular career in mind. For some careers it will be essential that you have an A Level in a subject, and you might need a GCSE in that subject to gain entry into the A Level course. If you do not have a clear career path in mind aim to choose subjects that give you breadth and balance.
- Find out as much as you can about the different options by talking to students already taking the subjects you are considering and talk to your teachers and Form Tutor.
- Do not choose an option just because your friend has chosen it or because you like the teacher. There is no guarantee that you will end up in the same set as your friend or the one taught by a particular teacher.
- You should also talk to Mrs Vernon, the Careers Advisor, if you have any questions about future careers and the subjects that you should take.



Delivered as part of the Personal Development Curriculum and with support from our in-house Careers Advisor

You will have spent time looking at possible future career aspirations with a view to considering what options to take. All students have attended dedicated lessons delivered via personal development with support from Mrs Vernon on option choices at GCSE.

As part of these lessons, you have explored routes post-16 and 18 with regard to options selected at GCSE; you will also have completed the Morrisby careers profile which is a careers programme that helps match a person's strengths and interests to various careers that may be suitable. These activities should have started to help you make initial decisions about option choices and possible future career choices. You also have access to *Unifrog* and *Prospects* to explore career paths further.

Links to the attached career-based programmes are below:

[Unifrog - The universal destinations platform](#)

[Careers Advice & Guidance Online Platform - Morrisby](#)

[Prospects.ac.uk](#)

[GCSE choices: Practical ways to guide students | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

Throughout KS4 you will receive further support, advice and guidance about future pathways. In addition, there will be a range of activities you will participate in such as Mock Interview and Work Experience alongside this there will also be an opportunity to attend a range of different information talks delivered by local and national employers and our alumni.

If you have a specific career in mind and would like further information, please feel free to see Mrs Vernon. All students and parents/guardians are welcome to request a 1-2-1 guidance meeting with further support offered as required.

Help and Support

There are many people in school that can support you if you are having problems with your academic studies or in your personal life. The first point of contact is your Form Tutor. However, there are other members of staff who are ready and willing to help. Below is a reminder of who you can contact:

Head of Year 9:

Mr T Snare

Student Support Manager Year 9:

Mr R Adams

Careers Lead:

Mrs H Vernon

Inclusion Department:

Mr P Utin

English Language and English Literature



Exam Board

All students will follow the **AQA** specification in both English Language and in English Literature. Though often taught by one teacher, the course leads to the award of **two separate** GCSE qualifications.

Course Content:

In **GCSE English Language**, students will encounter a wide range of texts which will give them a chance to stretch their creative muscles, writing fictional pieces—both narrative and descriptive—and writing non-fiction texts where they can rant, argue and convince. Alongside this, they will read and explore a huge range of texts, with extracts from novels, speeches, letters, diaries, and even more modern media such as blogs. Topics cover everything from ghosts with a hatred of children to apocalyptic societies reduced to ash; from speeches by some of the greatest humans who've ever lived to intimate, personal letters. And don't forget the giant shark...

For those who love to argue, the Spoken Language endorsement gives students a chance to set out an argument about a topic of their choice and then debate it, defending their position and exploring the nuances.

The course aims to enable students to use English effectively in its spoken and written forms. Students should be able to respond to and understand the speech and writing of others in both literary and non-literary forms. They should read, enjoy and respond to literature in a variety of ways: both as a means of emotional and intellectual growth and to develop an appreciation of the writer's craft.

In **GCSE English Literature**, students will explore tales of manipulation, murder and Machiavellianism as they go on a journey to a remote island in *The Tempest* or watch as witches plot, bloodshed unfolds and vengeance is sought at all costs in *Macbeth*.

Next, students will be thrilled and entertained by the supernatural events of *A Christmas Carol* with its renowned hero/anti-hero Scrooge, intrigued by who exactly *Jane Eyre's* future husband is hiding in his attic, or appalled and horrified at the savagery just below the surface in all of us as they read *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Moving through 15 varied, exciting and emotive poems on the theme of Power and Conflict, you will emerge in the modern world (post 1914). Here, you will join a group of boys on an isolated island after nuclear war and watch in fascination as they descend into barbarism (*Lord of the Flies*) or see a mysterious, ghostly Inspector hold a mirror up to a wealthy family (and indeed the audience) as he exposes the brutal consequences of ignoring the needs of others (*An Inspector Calls*).

Finally, we explore unseen poetry: a range of exciting and engaging poems with a wide variety of themes and ideas.

Exam Format



AQA English Language GCSE

Component	Description	%
Paper 1 exam: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	1hr 45 min Section A: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one literature fiction text Section B: Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptive or narrative writing 	50%
Paper 2 exam: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	1hr 45min Section A: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text Section B: Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing to present a viewpoint 	50%
Speaking & Listening Endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presenting • responding to questions and feedback • use of Standard English 	Separately endorsed

AQA English Literature GCSE

Component	Description	%
Paper 1 exam	1hr 45 mins - Closed book exam. Shakespeare & the 19th Century Novel 2 sections: one on Shakespeare play studied; the other on the novel studied.	40%
Paper 2 exam	2hr 15mins - Closed book exam. Modern Texts and Poetry 3 sections: 1 essay question on modern prose or drama text; 1 comparative poetry question; 1 unseen poetry question.	60%

Mathematics



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

The GCSE Mathematics syllabus presents an exciting opportunity for students to develop their maths skills. The aims and objectives of the two-year course are to enable students to:

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts;
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems;
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions;
- Comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Students are assessed at the end of the two-year course on the following topic headings:

- Number;
- Algebra;
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change;
- Geometry and measures;
- Probability;
- Statistics.

The most able students in the cohort will go on to complete an additional mathematics qualification that will develop their algebra skills beyond GCSE. This will prepare them for A level Mathematics and also help with GCSE grade 8 and 9 algebra skills.

Exam Format:

Maths GCSE (9 – 1) is assessed through three examinations with each examination being equally weighted. Each exam has a total of 80 marks. All three exams are 1 hour 30 minutes long and are composed of 1 non-calculator paper and 2 calculator papers.



Exam Board:

AQA Biology (8461); AQA Chemistry (8462); AQA Physics (8463); AQA Combined (8464)

Course Content:

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cell biology2. Organisation3. Infection and response4. Bioenergetics5. Homeostasis and response6. Inheritance, variation and evolution7. Ecology	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Atomic structure and the periodic table2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter3. Quantitative chemistry4. Chemical changes5. Energy changes6. The rate and extent of chemical change7. Organic chemistry8. Chemical analysis9. Chemistry of the atmosphere10. Using resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Energy2. Electricity3. Particle model of matter4. Atomic structure5. Forces6. Waves7. Magnetism and electromagnetism8. Space physics

Exam Format:

Students will sit six 100- mark examinations (two for each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics) lasting 1 hour 45 minutes each. Each examination will consist of multiple-choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions. Each paper will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

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Geography



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

If you want to continue to study a subject which is successful, interesting, lively, dynamic and wide-ranging and you are interested in the world around you, then this is the option for you!

Both physical and human geography topics are included in the new AQA specification as well as skills. Physical topics include: the natural hazards, water on the land, the coastal zone and the living world. Human topics include population changes and changing urban environments. Opportunities for fieldwork involve an urban study of Ashford and coastal studies at Camber, Dungeness and Hythe. Geography is a holistic subject, requiring an inquiring mind and the willingness to work independently to take on challenging and relevant topics and areas of study. You will develop a wide range of skills from data collection, written and verbal analysis and interpretation, as well as exploring real world case studies such as volcanic eruptions, coastal management and the growth of towns and cities.

Geography is taught in such a way as to enthuse and encourage you to develop an interest in the subject beyond the classroom. Teaching methods employed include discussion, debates and significant use of ICT to make lessons enjoyable and stimulating.

Geography is a very popular option at The Norton Knatchbull School attracting over three-quarters of the current Year 11 students. It attracts pupils who are interested in the sciences or those in the arts subjects. The department prides itself in its tradition of excellent examination results at GCSE and A level. Many students go on to study the subject at A level where there is a greater opportunity to develop subject specialism and fieldwork skills.

A qualification in Geography is seen as a valuable asset by employers because of the wide range of skills the subject uses. It requires good levels of numeracy, literacy, the ability to make judgments, interpret, analyse and draw conclusions and have opinions on many current issues. Geography is relevant to many careers. These may be either directly related to geography (e.g. surveyor, meteorologist, urban planner, cartographer and teaching), or in areas such as the media, tourism and the civil service.

Exam Format:

The course is assessed through three written examinations.

Paper 1 and 2 will assess knowledge whilst Paper 3 will assess skills and contain questions based on the fieldwork students have completed.

Entry Requirements:

To study Geography you need an interest in the world around you, an enquiring mind and the ability to use and interpret different types of evidence.

History



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

History is a highly respected academic subject that remains one of the most popular choices at our school. GCSE History builds on the three-year head start the students have made in the subject from Years 7-9, no matter what their standard. Many students find it engaging because it helps them understand the past and how it shapes the world today. More importantly, History develops valuable skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and effective communication—skills that are useful for a wide range of sixth form courses and future careers. At GCSE, you will study two modern history topics and two British history topics. These are assessed through two exam papers at the end of Year 11. **Choosing History GCSE will help to keep students' options open later on, as History A-level at NKS requires a History GCSE.**

Paper 1 Understanding the Modern World – 2-hour exam, worth 50%

- Germany: 1890-1945
- Conflict & Tension 1896-1918 (Causes of, fighting and winning WWI)

Paper 2 Shaping the Nation (Health and The Normans) – 2-hour exam, worth 50%

- Britain: Health & the People
- The Normans 1066-1100

History students at NKS learn knowledge and skills through a lively, investigative approach which offers challenge to all abilities. It requires a curiosity about people in the past and the ability to engage in independent research. History is a subject which uses literacy skills – reading, comprehension and writing. A wide range of methods and techniques is employed, including investigations, presentations, debate, role-play, audio-visual and ICT. Students will learn how to develop their exam technique and study skills. A wide variety of resources will be studied (film, cartoons, photographs, the internet as well as books) and students should be prepared to contribute to class activities. History covers a broad range of topics and includes aspects of political thought, the military, personalities, economics, law, ethics and science.

Many Sixth Form courses and employers value the skills and conceptual understanding that students develop through the study of History. These skills are, moreover, transferable to the other subjects you study at GCSE. Students will learn to research and evaluate historical evidence, compare different interpretations and argue effectively. History is relevant to many careers. These may be either directly related to history (e.g. working in museums, galleries, heritage sites, record offices, archives and teaching), or in areas such as the law, media, journalism, academia and government. However, the ability to weigh up evidence and make supported judgments is relevant to most professional careers. Results in this academically rigorous topic remain excellent in History at both GCSE and A-Level.

Exam Format: Two exams of 2 hours, each worth 50% of the GCSE.

Entry Requirements: To study History you need an interest in the world around you, a curious mind, the ability to weigh up different evidence or arguments, the ability to read and write at length and, above all, the ability to work hard.

French



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

With over 200 million daily fluent speakers, French is not only the language of the arts, but also key in a rapidly ever-changing globalised society. At NKS we believe that by learning the language, our students will have a distinct advantage over many competitors and contribute to play a vital role at key stages of a changing British & European business and cultural landscape.

We endeavour to develop the students' ability to use French effectively for practical communication and to give them a sound base of the skills, language and attitude required for further study, work and leisure.

We encourage positive attitudes to foreign language learning by making lessons enjoyable as well as intellectually stimulating. We stress the importance of building up students' confidence. Grammar is not neglected: it is taught or deduced from practical examples drawn from course materials. In this way it does not become a theoretical academic exercise. We attach a lot of importance to oral work with the help of our native Speaking Assistant.

Ability in languages is always an asset when applying for a job or a place at university; moreover, languages can be studied with virtually any subject at degree level.

Exam Format:

The Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing Examinations, worth 25% each, will cover 6 thematic contexts:

- My personal world
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- My neighbourhood
- Media and Technology
- School and future studies
- Travel and tourism

The examinations, timetabled in the summer of Year 11, will therefore be:

- A Listening and understanding in French (25%) Foundation 45 minutes / Higher 60 minutes.
- A Speaking in French (25%) Foundation 7-9 minutes/ Higher 10-12 minutes.
- A Reading and understanding in French with a short passage to translate from French into English (25%). Foundation 45 minutes / Higher 1 hour
- Writing in French with a short passage to translate from English into French (25%) Foundation 1 hour 15 minutes / Higher 1 hour 20 minutes.
- Each exam is worth 50 marks regardless of tier.

Entry Requirements:

You are required to have studied French at Key Stage 3.

Spanish



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

With over 500 million native speakers, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world. At NKS we believe that by learning the language, our students will have a distinct advantage over many competitors and contribute to play a vital role at key stages of a changing British & European business and cultural landscape.

We endeavour to develop the students' ability to use Spanish effectively for practical communication and to give them a sound base of the skills, language and attitude required for further study, work and leisure.

We encourage positive attitudes to foreign language learning by making lessons enjoyable as well as intellectually stimulating. We stress the importance of building up students' confidence. Grammar is not neglected: it is taught or deduced from practical examples drawn from course materials. In this way it does not become a theoretical academic exercise. We attach a lot of importance to oral work with the help of our native Speaking Assistant.

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- A Reading and understanding in Spanish with a short passage to translate from Spanish into English (25%). Foundation 45 minutes / Higher 1 hour
- Writing in Spanish with a short passage to translate from English into Spanish (25%) Foundation 1 hour 15 minutes / Higher 1 hour 20 minutes.
- Each exam is worth 50 marks regardless of tier.

Entry Requirements:

You are required to have studied Spanish at Key Stage 3.

Art and Design: Fine Art



GCSE Art and Design titles: -

Art, Craft and Design (1AD0) / Fine Art (1FA0) / Graphic Communication (1GC0) / Textile Design (1TE0) / Three-dimensional Design (1TD0) / Photography (1PY0)

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Course Content:

This qualification can be followed through the broad-based title of Art, Craft and Design or through one of five 'endorsed' titles: Fine Art; Graphic Communication; Textile Design; Three-Dimensional Design; Photography. The GCSE course encourages students to develop their creativity with an experimental approach, while also raising an awareness of the creative industries. Across all titles, students must use drawing to support the development process within each chosen area of study. However, students are not required to demonstrate technical mastery of drawing skills unless this is relevant to their area of study.

Year 10, Terms 1-4 will consist of a series of workshops and briefs, focused on developing students' skills across all the Art and Design titles. All students will be introduced to using a camera, developing their understanding of photography as this will provide them with the skills to create their own research images and resources. They will also be able to explore a range of processes, including ceramics, textiles, printmaking, drawing and painting. During Terms 5 and 6, students will be able to specialise more towards their area(s) of interest, responding to a given theme for their project.

Year 11, Terms 1 and 2, Students will be given a second theme to respond to, creating further work towards their coursework portfolios, again in their chosen specialist area. Terms 3 and 4 Students receive the Externally Set Assessment paper (ESA) and spend the following twelve weeks preparing for the 10-hour sustained focus period.

Exam Format:

The ESA represents the culmination of the GCSE course, and the paper consists of one theme and visual prompts to support students' research and line of enquiry. Students are then encouraged to independently develop their ideas during a preparatory period lasting twelve weeks and create a final piece during the 10-hour sustained focus period. The ESA is worth 40% of the final mark and is assessed using an Assessment Matrix of the following four assessment objectives:

- AO1 - Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources;
- AO2 - Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes;
- AO3 - Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses;
- AO4 - Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Entry Requirements: You will need to be prepared to experiment with a wide range of materials and processes and be committed to developing skills in all techniques, including drawing. You should also be prepared to think creatively, develop your ability to work independently and keep up with working at a fast pace.

Business Studies



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Business Studies helps students to understand the world around them and their potential place in it. An important feature of our GCSE course will be a focus on enabling our students to learn about, appreciate and access opportunities in the business community in our local area. We will do this through case studies and resources, research projects and visits into and from the school to actively engage students in their business environment. This is of course in addition to considering national and global business issues and contexts.

Students will consider the practical application of business concepts. The units provide opportunities to explore theories and concepts in the most relevant way, through the context of events in the business and economic world. The subject content is divided into six sections:

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

Themes 3-6 are the main functional areas of business activity, which helps to ensure that the curriculum provides a strong basis for further study. We will encourage students to think in an entrepreneurial way, to investigate businesses which interact with their own interests and in the process to develop vocational interests, employability and transferable skills to enable them to live this important aspect of their future lives with confidence.

Exam Format:

The course is assessed by two examinations of 105 minutes each, at the end of Year 11. Each exam is a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended responses, which are based on two case study extracts. Business in the real world and Influences on Business are synoptic themes and are tested in both exams. Each paper combines two of the functional areas of business activity:

Paper 1:	Influence of operations and HRM on business activity
Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business in the real world• Influences on business• Business operations• Human resource management
Paper 2:	Influence of marketing and finance on business activity
Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business in the real world• Influences on business• Marketing• Finance

Entry Requirements:

There are no specific entry requirements as the subject is accessible to all students, regardless of their prior attainment in other subjects. However, students should start the course knowing that they will be required to immerse themselves fully in Business as an academic subject.

Classical Civilisation



Exam Board: OCR

Course Content:

In all components of the Classical Civilisation GCSE learners will be required to:

- know and understand the surviving literary and material remains of the classical world in their social, historical and cultural contexts;
- understand, interpret and analyse a range of evidence from classical sources;
- evaluate and use this evidence to form their own judgements and responses, and present these in a clear, concise and logical manner.

Students will undertake TWO units of study.

Myth and Religion

Learners will study myths regarding the role of the gods and heroes in the founding of Athens and Rome and the importance of Heracles/Hercules to both the Greek and Roman world. These are well known stories that learners will enjoy engaging with and studying in increased depth. Myth as a symbol of power will also be explored, as will ever popular myths about the underworld. Learners will also look at the role of religion in the everyday lives of ancient Greeks and Romans. The study of temples, sacrifice, festivals, death and beliefs in the afterlife will give a broad overview of religion in the ancient world, and provides opportunity for the study of a wide variety of material remains, including remarkable temples and works of art.

Learners will be required to make informed comparisons between Greek and Roman ideas, including the characteristics of the different societies, and the impact of the different cultural contexts on the theme studied. They will also be expected to use literature and visual/material culture in conjunction with one another in order to inform their judgements, including discussion of why or how the sources may present things differently from each other.

Roman City Life

In this component learners will explore everyday life in Roman cities, with a particular focus on the Imperial period and popular sites and artefacts from Rome, Ostia, Pompeii and Herculaneum. The culture section of this component comprises a study of a variety of aspects of Roman society. Examining typical Roman housing can be an excellent way to make learning tangible and relatable for learners, as can the study of education and the lives of young people in the Roman world. The Roman social system was notorious for its intrigues and politics and this, coupled with the study of the spectacle provided by Roman entertainment, including gladiator fights, chariot racing and public executions, provides an exciting and enjoyable course for learners.

The Literature topics examine poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction texts to provide learners with an introduction to a variety of literature, an insight into different literary styles and techniques, as well as into interesting areas of Roman life and society.

Exam Format:

Two 90-minute exams, each worth 50% of the GCSE.

Entry Requirements:

An interest in the ancient world.

Computer Science



Exam Board: OCR

Course Content:

Computer Science prepares learners for work in all areas of the modern economy in the 21st Century. GCSE Computer Science students will be ready to play a key role in all areas of modern business, communications and technology.

Students learn and develop background knowledge in computer systems which support their programming. In particular, students develop knowledge in:

- Systems Architecture;
- Memory, storage and Data Representation;
- Wired and Wireless Networks;
- Network topologies, protocols and layers;
- System security and system software;
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental issues.

Students develop their programming experience from KS3 using Visual Basic, Scratch and JavaScript, and develop Computational skills focusing on :

- Algorithms and programming techniques;
- Producing robust programs;
- Computational Logic;
- Translators and facilities of languages;
- Data representation.

Lessons are active, practical and encourage students to discover and investigate topics. Course materials are provided and students create their work and keep notes online using Microsoft Teams and OneNote as a virtual classroom.

Students have already studied foundations of about $\frac{1}{4}$ of these topics in their Computer Science lessons in Key Stage 3 and will be familiar with a number of the topics. This provides students with a good idea of the level of challenge and academic rigor needed for study of this course, and a flavour of whether the subject is something they wish to pursue further.

Exam Format: Examinations (100%)

Two written examination papers – 90 minutes (worth 50%) each.

Entry Requirements:

No specific entry requirements.

Design Technology



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Product Design is at the forefront of discussion with worldwide industry; the need for innovative, creative design is paramount for our engineering industries to survive into the rapidly changing world.

Product Design is an exciting way to explore the ever-changing world in which we live and provides students with the opportunity to develop skills and create new products for the future.

Students will design and make products with creativity and originality using a range of materials and techniques, such as card, wood, plastics and metals. They will complete design proposals with good quality finished products and include packaging, labelling, instructions and point of sales displays etc. There is a focus on developing commercially viable solutions to meet a range of needs, whilst focusing on the need to develop a sustainable society. Students will be enthused and challenged by the range of practical activities possible, and the use of our CAM equipment which includes laser cutters and 3D printers. Students will become proficient in 2D and 3D design modelling software, such as Techsoft Design, Google SketchUp and Onshape.

The course develops key transferrable skills which will be a good foundation for all subjects and leads well into A Level Product Design. Further study and career opportunities exist in Product Design, Industrial Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, Architecture, Furniture Design and many others.

Exam Format:

Written Paper (50%):

2 hour written exam. The exam includes 3 sections testing students on their core technical principles, specialist technical principles and designing and making principles.

Non-Examined Assessment, 50%

This is based around a pre-release context from AQA. This is completed in school under the supervision of the teacher in 35 guided learning hours across year 11. The student portfolio should include approximately 25 pages of A3 produced using a high standard and variety of graphical skills and ICT, and each student will manufacture a prototype product.

Entry Requirements:

Students should have a mature and sensible manner, and should enjoy the challenge of problem solving, working proactively and within a team.

Drama



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

If you enjoy acting, directing or stage design then Drama is for you. Many past students have also found that Drama has really developed their self-confidence at communicating with others, which has helped with everything from doing better at interviews to presenting cases in court. It is also a lot of fun as a subject, giving you room to express yourself creatively.

Law, Medicine, Public Relations, Education and Advertising are examples of professions students have gone onto after a Drama qualification, as well as those who choose to work in the Performing Arts industry.

Component 1: Devising - Through practical workshops we will explore how to make meaning from Drama using different forms and techniques. You will use this knowledge to devise a piece of theatre from scratch.

Component 2: Performance from Text - From examining different plays in performance; we will study how to get a play from the page to the stage.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice - For the first part of this written paper, you will learn how to recognise different types of plays and understand a wide range of Drama vocabulary dealing with theatre design and acting. For the second part of this paper, we will visit the theatre to see a number of live productions in the local area and London to help you with the evaluation you have to write.

Exam Format:

Component 1: Devising - 40% of the qualification (60 marks)

- 1) You will create a portfolio covering the how you put your play together and evaluating how successful it was (45 marks).
- 2) You will give a performance/design realisation and this will be filmed (15 marks).

Component 2: Performance from Text - 20% of the qualification (48 marks)
You will perform 2 extracts from a play to an external examiner and they will mark you on your acting or design.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice - Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes 40% of the qualification (60 marks).

Section A: Bringing Texts to Life (45 marks)

This section consists of one question broken into five parts (short and extended responses) based on an unseen extract from a performance text chosen by the teacher.

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation (15 marks)

This section consists of two questions requiring you to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance you have seen. You are allowed to bring in the theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

Entry Requirements: No specific entry requirements.

Music



Exam Board: Eduqas

Course Content:

The Eduqas GCSE Music course contains four main elements, delivered through four broad areas of study.

The aims of this course are to encourage students to:

- Develop their understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music, extending their own interests and increasing their ability to make judgements about musical quality.
- Acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to:
 - Make music individually and in groups.
 - Develop a life-long interest in music.
- Progress to further study e.g. A Level and beyond.
- Develop broader life-skills and attributes, including critical and creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional and cultural development.

Students are encouraged to use music-related ICT and are expected to be involved in the many extra-curricular activities of the School. Individual instrumental teachers provide a valuable input to the performing sections of the course.

Exam Format:

The three elements of the course are:

Listening to and Appraising Music (40% of total marks)

A 1 hour 15-minute listening and writing paper drawing on music from set works from the four Areas of Study.

Composing Music (30% of total marks)

Two individual composition and /or arrangements linked to two of the areas of Study. Both score and recording are assessed.

Performing Music (30% of total marks)

One solo (with accompaniment if appropriate) and one ensemble performance, or two ensemble performers.

Entry Requirements:

It is NOT necessary to take or have taken grade exams; ideally students will have been playing for between a year and eighteen months and be confident playing such pieces as 'Helter Skelter' by the Beatles on guitar, 'Maggie May' by Rod Stewart on Drums or 'The Pink Panther' by Henry Mancini on piano.

All students need to be willing to engage in group performance work and class singing.

Physical Education



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

GCSE PE is an excellent choice for anyone who wishes to further their understanding and skill level in sport. It involves studying how the body works, the application of psychology and socio-cultural issues, all in a sporting context.

As part of the course, students will have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of sports. As a result, it is important that students are able to participate in sporting activity as and when required.

It would also be advisable for students to be regularly participating in competitive sport outside of school as well as representing our school teams. You will be assessed practically in three different physical activities (see non-exam assessment below).

Exam Format:

The assessment is as follows:

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity & sport

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity & sport

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in 3 different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity)

- Assessed by teachers
- Moderated by AQA
- 100 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Entry Requirements:

It would be advisable for students to be regularly participating in competitive sport, at a minimum of school level.

Religious Studies



Exam Board: AQA

Why Study Religious Studies?

Are you interested in the world and people around you? Are you keen on discussions and debates on the big questions in our life and real-life issues that affect our society?

The RS Department offers the opportunity to study an exciting GCSE course that is highly diverse and relevant and, will help you in the future. Religious Studies is an attractive subject as it helps you develop life skills for the real world that are well regarded by universities and employers and will give you a strong base for many careers and sectors.

Course Content:

The Religious Studies course looks at the big questions that define humans' questioning nature. We will look at what happens after death, when life begins, what makes people good and what makes people evil, along with many of the other big life questions. We will be looking at many different religious points of views in answer to these, but will answer questions based specifically on Christian teachings, as well as secular (non-religious) views.

Learners are required to study two major world religions. The focus of study for each religion is on 'Beliefs and teachings' and 'Practices'. In this component, learners have the opportunity to study key concepts in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Buddhism. They will acquire knowledge and understanding of sources of authority and wisdom that underpin and connect teachings, beliefs and practices, and be able to refer to them in responses.

Learners will study different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world from the perspective of one of the religions they have studied. In this, learners will approach the study of religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world through a study of four key themes:

- Relationships and families;
- The existence of God;
- Religion and life;
- Religion, crime and punishment.

Exam Format:

There are two written exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each – both weighted at 50% of the GCSE.

Entry Requirements:

To study Religious Studies, you need an interest in the world around you, an inquiring mind and the ability to weigh up different evidence or arguments. You need to be able to empathise with other views and be able to back up your views with examples and evidence.

Students certainly do not have to be religious, indeed a variety of backgrounds enhance the dynamics of group debate. It is a great subject for anyone interested in learning more about the beliefs, values and culture of others and reflecting objectively on a wide range of issues.

Sociology



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Sociology encourages students to draw on information and evidence from different sources and demonstrate the ability to understand them. Critical analysis of research methods used in sociological investigations will be employed to consider the appropriateness of their use. We encourage and expect students to analyse and evaluate information and evidence presented in different written, visual and numerical forms and link to the different topic areas then use sociological theories and evidence to compare and contrast social issues, construct reasoned arguments and debates, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions. The ability to make connections between the different topic areas and apply their understanding to explore and debate the current sociological issues outlined in each of the topic areas is a skill which will be developed.

Areas of study include: The Sociological Approach, Social Structures, Processes and Issues, Families, Education Crime & Deviance, Social Stratification and Sociological research methods.

Exam Format:

Paper 1: The Sociology of Families & Education. 1hour 45 minutes, 100 Marks, 50% of GCSE

What's assessed

- The sociology of families
- The sociology of education
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Paper 2: The Sociology of Crime & Deviance and Social Stratification. 1hour 45 minutes, 100 Marks, 50% of GCSE

What's assessed

- The sociology of crime and deviance
- The sociology of social stratification
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Entry Requirements:

To study Sociology you need an interest in the world around you, be able to write at length, a can-do attitude, a curious mind, the ability to holistically consider different evidence or arguments, and a drive to succeed.

Non-examined Core Subjects



Personal Development

Course Content:

Personal Development helps students to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives as individuals and members of society. It aims to:

- Develop self-confidence and a sense of responsibility;
- Enable informed life choices;
- Develop positive relationships in and out of school;
- Develop healthier and safer lifestyles;
- Encourage respect for differences in people.

Students will embark on Citizenship and Careers Education which:

- Gives students knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society;
- Helps students to become more informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities;
- Encourages students to play a helpful part in the life of the school, community and wider world
- Teaches about the economy and democratic institutions and their values;
- Explores local, national and international issues, problems and events of current interest;
- Explores views from different religions to understand their view on big world issues and philosophies.

Core Physical Education

Course Content:

Games in Years 10 and 11 differ from Years 7 – 9 in that a wider choice of activities is offered. Students are given the opportunity to develop their coaching and officiating skills and understanding.

In both PE and Games, we encourage students to use more advanced skills and strategies; they learn how to apply them in increasingly more demanding situations in a variety of sports including football, rugby, cricket, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, fitness and badminton.

Enrichment



Trips and Visits

At NKS, we are proud to offer a diverse range of trips and visits which supplement our Key Stage 4 Curriculum. Some of these trips are more locally based, others involve students embarking on extravagant trips to different continents. Regardless of the destination, the skills, and benefits that our students develop whilst experiencing these visits are truly invaluable. Many of our trips help to improve on confidence, self-esteem, and motivation in and out of school while also giving them opportunities to visit destinations they might not otherwise be able to.

Super Curricular

Students are encouraged to explore their interests in a variety of fields. As their aspirations develop, they are supported to reach their chosen destinations through a varied programme of support. A range of visitors and external speakers offer inspiration to students across a broad spectrum of topics, including working as a paramedic and the ergonomic design of tanks, with the aim to directly inspire and motivate students in their career ambitions. Students have also been able to participate in medicine experience days facilitated by Meducators, and online discussions through 'I'm a Scientist, Get me Out of Here' with scientists from a range of fields such as psychology, genetics and space.

Support for these interests beyond the curriculum increases as students move up through the school with the super-curricular club at Key Stage 4, which builds on the foundations laid by the Knatchbull Baccalaureate: Academic, Extra-Curricular, Community and Excel and Extend. This encourages students to broaden and deepen their interests through personal study and develop their research and presentation skills. This culminates in a celebration of their work, shared with parents. Students may choose to develop their interest further in the Sixth Form by undertaking an Extended Project Qualification.