

Options Information

Year 8 Students

2016

Which subjects will students study for GCSE?

During Year 8, students make options choices about the subjects that they will study during Years 9, 10 and 11. Students study ten GCSEs (or GCSE equivalents) alongside continuing study in PSHE, PE and fortnightly enrichment time. Some subjects are compulsory at the academy however students make choices on four of their subjects. Curriculum time (lessons per fortnight) has been carefully planned to ensure that students get the right amount of time to prepare for each different subject they study ahead of final examinations.

Maths (7)	Ethics GCSE (2)	Enrich(1)
English Language and Literature (8)	PE (2)	
Double Science (9)		PSHE (1)
Option 1 (5)	Option 2 (5)	
Option 3 (5)	Option 4 (5)	

Making the right choices

As students prepare for their final years of study at the academy, they will need to make some choices about the subjects they wish to study. It is important to think carefully about these decisions and we encourage students to work closely with their parents and teachers while undertaking this process.

The information provided in this booklet is to help students and parents make informed choices about continuing study at the Academy. Please remember to contact the Academy, should you wish to enquire about any aspects of the courses on offer or the options process.

The deadline for submission of subject choices is Tuesday 22nd March. Please use the attached Subject Choices form to indicate selected subjects and make sure this is handed in to your child's form tutor.

How are options choices arranged?

It is important for students to continue to study a range of different subjects during Years 9, 10 and 11. We believe it is important for students to study a combination of academic and creative subjects. To help students achieve a good balance, all students will study one subject from each option block below.

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
History	Spanish	French	Triple Science
Geography	Art	Food and Nutrition	Art
Computer Science	Photography	Design Technology	Media
	Music	PE	Health & Social Care

Why is it important to study a range of different courses?

By making the choices above, students will study the full range of different subjects as laid out by the new performance measures which all secondary schools are now subject to, including the full range of eight different subjects as defined in the three categories below.

Progress 8 Subject Groups							
Maths & English		English Baccalaureate			Others		
Maths (Double weighted)	English Language or Literature (Double weighted)	Science	Science	Option 1 or MFL	Other option or English or Ethics	Other option or English or Ethics	Other option or English or Ethics

English Language and English Literature (Compulsory)

All students are required to complete a GCSE in both English Language and English Literature. Whilst employers and post-16 education courses usually require students to have a pass grade in GCSE English Language, English Literature looks favourable on applications and is often required if you wish to study Literature at A Level.

English Language

The skills assessed as part of GCSE English Language will prepare students for a wide range of future career paths and will compliment and support their study of all subjects across the curriculum. Students studying for a GCSE in English Language can expect to develop and improve their skills in the following areas:

- Comprehension of a range of texts from a variety of genres
- Understanding of implicit and explicit meanings in texts
- Analysis of language and text structure and how writers create effects
- Evaluation and comparison of writers' ideas and viewpoints
- Writing texts for different genres, audiences and purposes
- Understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling

As well as preparing students for future study post-16 and beyond, the skills developed in English Language will enable them to become successful writers and will therefore help them to write more effectively in other essay-based subjects. Reading and writing skills are fundamental to all future career paths and are a vital part of daily life.

English Literature

English Literature is a subject which allows students to explore poetry, plays and prose texts in greater detail. Students of English Literature are critical thinkers and this subject allows students the opportunity to share and discuss ideas and improve their speaking and listening skills.

As a subject, English Literature is valued highly by sixth form colleges and universities. The skills involved with this subject demonstrate to employers and colleges that a student has creativity, maturity of thought, analytical skills and an ability to write articulately about their ideas. As well as preparing students for further study of Literature, this subject is good preparation for a range of careers such as: law, publishing, teaching, marketing and journalism.

Maths (Compulsory)

Whether you plan to go on to work, AS and A levels or other further studies, a good understanding of maths will be useful to you. Number skills are required in all sorts of everyday situations, such as trying to work out phone bills. Thinking like a mathematician will help to improve your problem-solving and decision-making skills.

A pass in GCSE mathematics is often vital for entrance to training for any number of professions or careers. It is also very valuable as a supporting subject to many courses at GCSE, AS and A level and at degree level, especially in the sciences: for example, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and medical courses.

The vast majority of jobs and college courses stipulate a 'good GCSE maths qualification'. Careers include: banking, accountancy, operational research, insurance, medicine, engineering, administration and plumbing. Applied statistics is being used increasingly by companies and the public sector for market research and analysis.

Science (Compulsory)

By studying Science, students develop their competence in the skills and processes of investigation and research and increase their awareness of the relevance of scientific knowledge and method to everyday life.

Studying Science helps you to:

- Develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to find answers to your own questions about the workings of the biological, physical, chemical and technological world and become better informed citizens;
- Attempt to find solutions to problems arising from your own needs and experiences in daily life;
- Take a confident part on public debate and decision making about Science;
- Appreciate the achievements of scientists and their research.



Triple Science (Optional)

By taking Sciences separately at GCSE level you will cover more content and find you're better prepared if you want to take Science A Levels. Students who take separate GCSE Sciences are also more likely to get higher grades in A Level Sciences. If you're already thinking about university and careers and are interested in science-based degrees and jobs then it is definitely worth considering taking separate Science GCSEs. Whatever career you are considering, taking Triple Science will set you up well for later life. Employers are crying out for candidates with science-based skills.

Due to the extra content that has to be taught, students who opt to take the Triple award will need to receive additional lessons. These additional lessons will be offered via an option block and pupils will need to indicate their choice on the option form.

PSHEe (Compulsory)

At Key Stage 4, the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education course includes many elements that help prepare young people for later life. It also includes further education and careers guidance which we believe is crucial in helping our students prepare for life once they leave the Academy.

The personal development of students is considered in every subject and acts to complement the learning undertaken in PSHEe. Some subjects make a considerable contribution such as Geography, History, Ethics, Maths and English.

The programme aims to help students make the most of their education and their future by equipping them with skills, knowledge and information.

Core PE (Compulsory)

Participation in PE develops students advanced skills and techniques in increasingly demanding situations. Students are taught to use advanced strategies including choreographic concepts and develop skills in a variety of roles e.g. performer, coach, official.

Students are taught the importance of exercise in relation to personal, social and mental health well-being and are equipped with sufficient knowledge to develop their own exercise and activity programmes in and out of school.

Ethics (Compulsory)

- *Is there life after death?*
- *Do you believe a country should go to war?*
- *Should there be the death penalty in the UK?*
- *Should people have the right to choose when to die?*

In Ethics we will study and debate these and many other questions linked to life and moral issues and consider the views of different religious people.

Studying Ethics will develop your knowledge and understanding of current affairs and help you to think critically and construct arguments based upon evidence and opinion.

Employers and universities value Ethics very highly. Skills are taught within Ethics are very useful in work, study and life and help to develop extended pieces of written communication. They will develop the skills of investigation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, empathy, communication and debate. These are all skills that are valuable for job and university interviews.

The skills that you learn will also be useful to you in a number of career paths. Ethics is particularly relevant to anyone that wants to work with people for example; teaching, nursing, civil services, youth work, social work, retail, journalism and libraries to name a few.

Geography (Optional)

In an ever-changing world it is important for students to have an understanding of the places they inhabit, the processes that cause change and the impact this has on different groups of people.

At GCSE, Geography aims to cover these issues. By looking at both Human and Physical Geography, the course intends to give students a breadth and depth of understanding of the world they live in.

Students study a range of different themes including:

1. Challenges of living in a built environment. What conflicts happen within our cities? What will the future of urban living look like?
2. Physical Geography and the impact people have on the environment. Why does certain weather occur in certain places? How can we manage extreme weather?
3. Uneven Development and Sustainable Environments. Why are so many companies outsourcing to India and China? What does it mean to be sustainable? Will trade or aid solve the problem of poverty?

Geography teaches highly sought after skills in problem-solving, managing delicate situations and data analysis. Therefore any career in which these are listed as skills or attributes required would be a career for a GCSE Geographer.

History (Optional)

Studying History helps students develop an understanding of the present world, through an awareness of the past. The course covers a range of national and international history and is a great opportunity for young people to gain an insight and confidence in explaining the world around them.

Students are equipped to:

- explain how and why things change or stay the same;
- appreciate how people lived in the past and how this compares with their experience today;
- analyse and evaluate historical evidence.

The skills developed in History complement learning in a range of other subjects, including English Language and English Literature.

History develops skills of enquiry, reflection and communication.

This is an excellent course for anyone with an interest in the subject who wants to work in careers such as law, teaching, administration and management. This course is also suitable for specialist careers such as an archivist, librarian or any career involving analysis and evaluation.

Studying History or Geography and a Modern Foreign Language is highly regarded by universities.



Modern Foreign Languages - Spanish & French (Optional)

Students who are presently studying French as their only foreign language can continue with this to GCSE level or take up Spanish as a new language.

Studying a Modern Foreign Language enables students to become confident in each of the 4 main language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) within a range of different contexts. It also equips students to deal with real-life situations and provide an appreciation of the cultures and civilisations of the communities concerned.

A range of audio-visual and practical methods are used to help students learn. The emphasis throughout is on the use of authentic materials, such as reading signs and hand-written letters, and listening to announcements or conversations. Speaking work is often done in pairs and groups, and students. There are also extensive opportunities to use ICT to support students' learning.

Careers include: journalism, teaching, interpreting, export sales, marketing, European sales, news reading, customs, translating, banking, travel and the tourism industry.

Computer Science (Optional)

You are growing up in a world where technology is evolving rapidly, creating new subject areas to explore and changing the way people work in every area from medicine and fashion to engineering and economics. So whatever your career plans, you know it's vital to develop your grasp of these ideas and concepts that will shape your world.



GCSE Computer Science explores the principles of digital technology and a way of working that's called '*computational thinking*', with coding as a core of the course. You've got to be able to think logically, solve puzzles and be tenacious when the going gets tough. But it is also really creative and you'll get a real buzz out of getting something to work yourself, especially when programming.

So if you enjoyed Scratch in previous years or enjoy game design then you might find computing is for you. Before you can do the complicated stuff you need to master the basics. Making a computer dance to your tune is a really creative thing - but we shouldn't pretend it's easy. Computer Science will make you think. It will stretch you and test your powers of logic and patience. It might even drive you a bit crazy at times. In short, Computer Science is serious fun!

It's no exaggeration to say the world runs on computers. They are everywhere: in homes, schools and offices but not just in the way you think. They are also embedded in all sorts of machines. Computers control airplanes, chemical plants, send rockets to space, control the central heating and make sure your mum/dad's car runs efficiently. As new things are developed, the world needs more and more people to research new ways of using computers to do the things they want.

GCSE Computer Science is a great foundation for going on to do Computing at A level. And Computing at A level is a great foundation for going on to study Computer Science at University. And that can open up a lot of possibilities! But you don't have to want to go on to be a computer scientist to do this course – you might just be curious about learning a bit more.

Art (Optional)

Art provides students with the opportunity to develop their creative and imaginative powers and to give them the practical skills to communicate and express ideas, feelings and meanings in Art, Craft and Design. Students develop personal qualities such as confidence, initiative and resourcefulness and understand the purpose of Art in contemporary society and in other times and cultures.

Students will make personal responses to their own and others' environment and to the work of artists, craftspeople and designers, working in two and three dimensions.

Previous projects include:

- Design and make a screen or decorate a chair in the style of a chosen architect.
- Discover patterns from other cultures and make a mask or body piece.
- Develop their drawing and painting skills through figure drawing.

A sketchbook is vital to students' success at GCSE.

We request as a voluntary contribution, that parents provide students with a sketch-book for homework and coursework. The provision of a set of water colour paints, coloured pencils and other basic art and design equipment would also be helpful.



Photography (Optional)

The Photography course has many similarities with Art GCSE, however students focus specifically on Photography rather than a range of different media. Photography students learn about the development of photography in the past and apply their creativity to a range of different techniques and skills. Photography also helps students improve their communication skills, understanding how others communicate with them and how they can effectively communicate their own ideas with others. As in Art, students develop personal qualities such as confidence, initiative and resourcefulness.

A sketchbook is vital to students' success at GCSE and it is also an advantage for students to have access to their own camera.

Both Art and Photography are excellent courses for anyone who wants to work in the world of design, architecture, interior design, film work and stage set design, fashion, beauty, hairdressing, ceramics, a jeweller, landscape architect, fashion stylist, furniture designer. They also complement greatly any student who is interested media and journalism, including online journalism. The list goes on!

Music (Optional)

Music provides students with the opportunity to develop all-round musical skills and understanding in a way that suits them best, and to give a solid foundation for 'A' and 'AS' level or for a music-related career.

Students learn by listening and appraising many different styles of music. They develop their own practical instrumental/singing skills through solo and group performance and explore ideas to enable individual music composition.

This course is suited to those who have experience of performing on an instrument or singing and have some understanding of musical notation. Students should have a basic working knowledge of music theory (normally encountered in KS3 music lessons or through individual tuition) or at least be willing to learn the basics of music theory.

Students should be prepared to undertake a wide range of listening activities.



Media Studies (Optional)

Media Studies offers a broad, coherent and rigorous course of study, which will prepare students to make informed decisions about further study and progression to AS and A level or employment.

Media Studies enables students to:

- demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis;
- acquire knowledge and understanding of a range of important media issues;
- develop appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture and politics;
- understand and apply specialist subject-specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed in order to make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues;
- appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding;
- develop practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production.

Media studies is ideal for any student who wishes to pursue a career where critical thinking is important.

Food & Nutrition (Optional)

The course is designed to provide opportunities for investigation, designing, making and evaluation, which focus on the use of food as a material.

In order to apply the appropriate designing and making skills, candidates will need to acquire an appropriate knowledge of the complex nature of food as a material, its various properties, the effects of processing and the appropriate selection of tools and equipment which enable it to be cut, formed, shaped and finished.

Students acquire this knowledge and experience through focused tasks and assignments, which enable a range of skills and processes to be developed.

The emphasis is on practical activities based on a design and problem-solving approach. There will, however, also be a considerable amount of theoretical work on food science and nutrition. It is essential that all students take part in the practical sessions.

Careers include: catering, food manufacture, hotel management, food science degree, health and safety, restaurant, advertising, teaching, nursing and as a dietician.

Design Technology Resistant Materials (Optional)

This course aims to enable students to combine their designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding, in order to produce quality products. It also aims to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of design and manufacturing methods, processes and procedures.

Students learn through active involvement in design and manufacturing projects, tasks and activities which integrate the areas of:

- Mechanisms;
- Construction processes and manufacture;
- Construction materials – wood, metal, plastic;
- Computer aided design (CAD/CAM);
- Social, cultural, moral, health and safety and environmental issues;
- Product analysis.

The emphasis is on practical activities, based on a design and problem-solving approach. However, there is also a considerable amount of academic, theoretical work involving: research, written analysis and evaluation.

Careers include carpentry, joinery, cabinet making, engineering, furniture design, architecture, product development, product and industrial design and most semi-skilled and skilled practical trades.

PE (Optional)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge and understanding to improve performance;
- understand how the physiological and psychological state affects performance in physical activity and sport;
- perform effectively in different physical activities by developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas;
- develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance in physical activity and sport;
- understand the contribution that physical activity and sport make to health, fitness and well-being;
- understand the key socio-cultural influences that can affect people's involvement in physical activity and sport.

Students can progress from this qualification to further study of physical education at Sixth Form, college and university, as well as apprenticeships and other training, employment in a related sector.

Career opportunities include sports coaching, teaching, uniformed public services, physiotherapy, leisure management, professional sport and health and fitness.

Health and Social Care (Optional)

The Health and Social Care industry is one of the largest employers in Suffolk. People within this area are caring, compassionate, and trained to a very high standard to ensure that the quality of care that service users gain is the best.

Studying Health and Social Care can be used as a way into this career path. This is a vocational subject which means a lot of emphasis is put on independent study and enquiry.

Health and Social Care is a natural choice for people who wish to enter the health and social care industry. It also allows skills of independence, enquiry and critical thinking to be developed.

Options Choices

Please return this form by Tuesday 22nd March to your form tutor.

Option 1	First choice (✓)	Reserve (✓)
Geography		
History		
Computer Science		

Option 2	First choice (✓)	Reserve (✓)
Spanish		
Art		
Photography		
Music		

Option 3	First choice (✓)	Reserve (✓)
French		
Food and Nutrition		
Design Technology		
PE		

Option 4	First choice (✓)	Reserve (✓)
Triple Science		
Art		
Media		
Health and Social Care		

Student name

Form group

Parent signature

Date