



CRGS
Year 9
GCSE Options Booklet
2026

Introduction

In September 2026 you will be embarking on your GCSE courses. It is important that you consider your GCSE choices carefully as they will undoubtedly impact on your future academic career. You should also talk to your parents/carers and teachers about the options available.

This booklet contains details of all the courses available to you. The details provided are correct at the time of printing.

We want to ensure that you study a broad and balanced curriculum. You will be studying nine GCSE and the reasons behind this are:

- To improve your outcomes
- You will have more curriculum time for subjects
- You will get further time for consolidation work as well as revision at the end of the GCSE course
- You will get more flexibility in the subjects you choose.

Choosing subjects

When making your choices, consider the following questions:

Do you enjoy the subject?

Students who enjoy their subjects tend to be the most successful. Remember that your decision should not be based on what your friends are choosing or who is currently teaching you – all that could change next year when there will be new teaching groups.

Are you good at the subject?

Achieving the best possible GCSE results is an obvious aim and therefore your ability in a particular subject is an important issue to consider.

Do you need the subject?

Some of you may already have definite career plans. It is therefore essential that you choose your options to suit these paths. However, many of you will not have made decisions about your final choice of career so it is important that you keep your options open.

Have you researched the subject content of your chosen options?

Some subjects may be new to you, and you will not therefore have any experience on which to base your choice. In these cases, it is essential that you familiarise yourself with the subject specification. Even for subjects you have already studied, the content of the GCSE course is sometimes different from topics at Key Stage 3, so you must still research carefully before making any decisions.

You can obtain advice from the following staff:

You should talk to your subject teachers and your form tutor. Miss Renold (Head of Main School) and Mr Carson (Head of Year 9) will also be able to offer advice, as will Mr Keulemans (Headteacher), Mr Alcock (Assistant Headteacher, Main School), Miss Ashton (Senior Assistant Headteacher) and Mr Hoyle (Senior Assistant Headteacher). Mrs Howard (Careers Advisor) will be available with advice on career paths.



You can also make use of your Unifrog account by looking at the Subject Library to find out about different subjects. If you are not sure what subjects would be a good fit for you, then try the Skills Quiz or the Interests, Personality and Work Environments quizzes. If you have any questions, you e-mail the Careers Team via careers@crgs.org.uk.

What are my options?

Core Subjects – all students study these subjects at GCSE:

- English
- English Literature
- Mathematics

The following non-examination courses are followed by all students:

- Personal Development and Citizenship (covering careers guidance, Religious Education, current affairs, health and drug education as well as RSE (Relationships and Sex Education))
- PE (range of activities and students also take part in a leadership programme)

All students must study **at least one humanity subject.**

Geography, History or Religious Studies

All students must make a choice between either following Path A or Path B:

Path A – Science choices

Biology, Chemistry and Physics (3 Separate Sciences)

Path B – Science choices

Combined Science (Trilogy) which is worth 2 GCSEs and where you still study each of the Sciences.

Following on from your choice of Science pathways, all students then must make the following choices staying along Path A or Path B:

Path A – 2 more subject choices

All students are strongly recommended to study **at least one language**. If you do not wish to study a language you must discuss this with Miss Renold.

French, German or Spanish

Finally, **if you choose a Language you will choose to study one further subject from the list below:**

Art and Design – Fine Art
Art and Design – Textiles Design
Classical Civilisation
Computer Science
Design and Technology
Drama
Food Preparation and Nutrition
French
Geography
German
History
Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Spanish

Please note that you may not choose both Art (Fine Art) and Art (Textiles)

Path B – 3 more subject choices

All students are strongly recommended to study **at least one language**. If you do not wish to study a language you must discuss this with Miss Renold.

French, German or Spanish

Finally, **if you choose a Language you will choose to study two further subjects from the list below:**

Art and Design – Fine Art
Art and Design – Textiles Design
Classical Civilisation
Computer Science
Design and Technology
Drama
Food Preparation and Nutrition
French
Geography
German
History
Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Spanish

Please note that you may not choose both Art (Fine Art) and Art (Textiles)

The Options Process

Options Assembly

You will have a **Year 9 Options Assembly on Tuesday 3rd February 2026**. Form Tutors will be with their forms at this assembly. Students will get an electronic copy of the Options Booklet.

Communication to your parents / carers following Options Assembly

On the same day as the Year 9 Options Assembly, parents / carers will receive communication about the process and an electronic copy of the Options Booklet.

Options Meetings Week

Week commencing **9th February 2026** you will have an options meeting with either Mr Carson, Mr Alcock, Miss Renold, Miss Ashton, Mr Hoyle or Mr Keulemans. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your interests and possible choices.

Consultation Evening

The Year 9 Consultation Evening on **Tuesday 3rd March 2026**, is extremely important and we would advise you to attend this evening with your parents/carers. You will then be able to discuss in detail the GCSE specifications.

At the Year 9 Consultation Evening, Miss Ashton will be giving a talk to parents/carers and students about the changes to the Options process. Miss Renold will also be available to advise.

Deadline for Choices

Please complete the **Online Form by Friday 13th March 2026**. It is important that you meet this deadline so that we can start processing all the data and working out the best match possible.

Your final choices will be confirmed at the end of June.

FAQs

Will all of my choices be approved?

We cannot guarantee to meet all your choices. Inevitably, due to timetabling constraints there will be a few students who will have to study their reserve choice. Our aim is to establish the best possible fit for the whole year group. If we must ask you to take up your reserve choice, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will discuss this with you and your parents/carers.

Will I be able to change my options after I have handed in the form?

Once we start to process all the responses it will become more difficult to change your options because the timetable will be under construction.

Will I be able to change subjects in Year 10?

This will only happen in exceptional circumstances after detailed discussion with your teachers, your parents and senior members of staff. After the end of September, no changes will be allowed for any reason.

Will I be able to drop a subject?

We expect all students to complete all the courses they are studying.

Art and Design – Fine Art (AQA 8202C)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Art and Design, (Fine Art endorsement) awarded by AQA.

Why study Fine Art?

It is useful to consider that collectively, the creative industries are the UK's major export. The skills learnt through the course will equip you for future creative careers such as artist, architect, product designer, graphic designer or stage set designer to name but a few, but it also provides a sound educational background for other less obvious careers where the ability to think differently and creatively gives you the edge on the competition. Self-expression is actively encouraged through the artwork, the written word and discussion. These are valuable tools for all aspects of future life. The Art Department is committed to providing a diverse, innovative course which will provide a rewarding and exciting element to your GCSE choices.

What will I study?

The course provides an exciting opportunity to develop your creative abilities using a wide range of different materials and techniques. You will be learning about aesthetics, form, composition and the need to be able to solve problems creatively. You will have the opportunity to produce paintings, sculpture, prints, assemblage, textiles, mixed media, digital art and lens-based media such as photography and video art. You will also be able to explore the emerging field of Virtual Reality design, using newly acquired headsets and to engage in many other creative processes. You will explore the work of established artists and designers which will help you learn from their techniques. You are encouraged to retain ownership of your ideas, express your views and ultimately develop exciting and unique artworks that have personal significance. You will also be provided with information about the wide range of creative careers that an art education can lead to.

What skills will I develop?

- Creativity
- Imagination
- An enjoyment of creating artwork
- A desire to be expressive
- An openness to new ideas

How will I be assessed?

All the work produced over the two years will be considered for your final display, but you will only present the best of your work. Coursework accounts for 60% of the overall mark, with the other 40% coming from an end of course External Assignment. Before producing the External Assignment outcome, you will develop your preparatory work during class time. The External Assignment is completed before any of your other GCSE exams begin. The coursework and External Assignment are both marked internally and then moderated by AQA.

Please note: The end of the course is celebrated with a combined A Level and GCSE exhibition to which you and your family will be invited.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mr Matthews, Head of Learning Art & Design.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize - Art



Art and Design – Textile Design (AQA 8204)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Art and Design, (Textiles endorsement) awarded by AQA.

Why study Textile Design?

This subject provides an opportunity for students to fulfil their practical and creative potential with exciting and innovative end results through a variety of Textiles media. This prepares candidates for taking higher level courses or for entering the world of work.

What will I study?

Students will be introduced to a variety of experiences exploring a range of textile media, techniques and processes including both traditional and emerging technologies. Textile Design is a practical subject which requires the application of knowledge and understanding when developing ideas, planning, producing and evaluating them. The syllabus is concerned with the understanding and use of textiles as a material and the design and construction process.

What skills will I develop?

This is a 2-year course that provides students with opportunities to develop a diverse portfolio of work with clear links to the four Assessment Objectives. Students are encouraged to explore a variety of construction and embellishment techniques and will often refer directly to the work of other artists and designers.

Students will explore a variety of different areas of textiles including fashion and costume, printed and dyed materials, constructed and manipulated fabrics, stitched and embellished textiles. Individuality is actively encouraged and a sense of ownership of work will be nurtured in students.

How will I be assessed?

All the work produced over the two years will be considered for your final display, but you will only present the best of your work. Coursework accounts for 60% of the overall mark, with the other 40% coming from an end of course External Assignment. Before producing the External Assignment outcome, you will develop your preparatory work during class time. The External Assignment is completed before any of your other GCSE exams begin. The coursework and External Assignment are both marked internally and then moderated by AQA.

Please note: The end of the course is celebrated with a combined A Level and GCSE exhibition to which you and your family will be invited.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mrs Smith, Teacher of Art Textiles or Mr Matthews, Head of Learning Art and Design.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Art and Art Textiles



Classical Civilisation (OCR J199B)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Classical Civilisation, awarded by OCR.

Why study Classical Civilisation?

Classical Civilisation is the study of aspects of the civilisations of Greece and Rome. The civilisations of Greece and Rome are at the very root of our own culture, and their influence can still be seen far and wide, especially in the fields of art and architecture, literature, drama and politics. If your studies in Latin so far have led you to become interested in the ancient world, you may well choose to study Classical Civilisation at GCSE.

What will I study?

For one paper we 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. Myth as a symbol of power will also be explored, as will ever-popular myths about the underworld.

We 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. There are various original sources to study – works of art, examples of Greek and Roman architecture, and literary works (all in English translation).

For the second paper we will study Roman city life: houses, food, gladiators, chariot racing, the baths, slavery, Roman political life and Roman education. There are various prescribed buildings and literary sources (all in English translation) to study.

What skills will I develop?

As well as essay writing and research skills, students are taught to evaluate critically sources for the study of the classical world. These include literary and archaeological sources. Students will also develop awareness of the continuing influence of the classical world on later times and of the similarities and differences between the classical world and later times.

How will I be assessed?

There are two papers, each lasting 90 minutes, containing a mixture of short answers and longer essays.

Please note: No previous knowledge of Latin or Classics is required to take this course, and no Latin language work is involved.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mr Westworth, Head of Learning Classics.

Useful Resources

Computer Science (AQA 8525A (C#))

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE in Computer Science, awarded by AQA.

Why study Computer Science?

Learn to code! Computer Science is the study of the principles of computation and computational thinking and their application in the design and development of computer systems. It will encourage you to consider what can be computed and how, and what cannot. Learning computational thinking involves writing algorithms, learning to program (write computer code or software) and testing that programs work correctly.

You will quickly learn to write robust software in C# using Microsoft Visual Studio. The subject also aims to develop students' ability to: understand current and emerging technologies; understand how they work and apply this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts; acquire and apply knowledge, technical skills and an understanding of the use of algorithms in computer programs to solve problems using programming; acquire and apply creative and technical skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT in a range of contexts; create computer programs to solve problems; develop the skills to work collaboratively; evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs/algorithms and the impact of and issues related to the use of computer technology in society.

What will I study?

Students will build upon the programming experiences they have had in KS3 lessons at CRGS. They will cover standard programming constructs such as assignment, selection, iteration, arrays, procedures and functions, together with studying commonly used algorithms such as the 'bubble sort' and 'binary search'. Extension tasks might include covering more advanced programming techniques such as recursion and abstract data structures such as queues, stacks and linked lists. You will also be given the opportunity to develop forms-based applications that run on Windows. The course will also cover computer hardware and networks – identifying the component parts of a computer system and how they inter-relate for example processor, memory, buses, input/output devices, hubs, switches.

What skills will I develop?

Students who enjoy problem-solving and practical work writing software will enjoy Computer Science. The problem-solving skills acquired will be readily transferable across many other subjects and will also help students to become independent thinkers and learners. Future progression in this subject might lead to an A Level in Computer Science in CRGS's Sixth Form, followed by a choice of university degrees in Computer Science and related fields. There is always a shortage of highly skilled computer scientists.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed in programming and theory by two written examination papers.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mr Latty, Head of Learning Computer Science.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Computer Science



Design and Technology (AQA 8552E)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Design and Technology awarded by AQA.

Why GCSE Design and Technology?

The ability to think creatively and to problem solve is an asset in many walks of life. This course will equip you to develop practical solutions to design problems using a range of techniques and processes. You will gain a firm grounding in design principles which could potentially lead you towards further design-based education and ultimately a career in one of the numerous design fields. Careers include product design, architecture, graphic design and advertising design.

What does the course involve?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare you to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. You will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. You will have the opportunity to work creatively when designing, making and applying technical and practical expertise. You will be able to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. You will study in a wide range of materials including polymers, timbers, electronics, textiles, metals, paper and boards and will study specialist technical principles in paper and boards in greater depth.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is through NEA (non-examination assessment - 50%) and a written examination (50%). The examination will focus on core technical principles, specialist technical skills and designing and making processes. The NEA consists of a substantial design and making task which includes identifying and investigating design possibilities, producing a design brief and specification, generating design ideas, developing design ideas, realising design ideas and analysing and evaluating. Work will be presented in the form of a prototype and a portfolio of evidence.

NEA work is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

What skills do I need?

- Creativity
- Imagination
- An enjoyment of designing and making
- A desire to solve problems practically
- An openness to new ideas
- An interest in graphical communication, or engineering or product design

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mrs Starkie, Head of Learning Design and Technology.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Design and Technology

Studocu – GCSE DT (8552) NEA Exemplar



Drama (AQA 8261E)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This leads to a GCSE qualification in Drama, awarded by AQA.

Why study Drama?

Are you interested in the theatre and how plays are written, produced and acted? Would you like to learn how to act and perform to an audience? Are you creative, enjoy writing scripts and working as part of a team and would you like to develop your self-confidence? If your answers to these questions are yes, then these are all excellent reasons for studying Drama at GCSE.

What will I study?

Component 1 - a written exam worth 40% of the total marks. For this you must answer a question on a scripted play we have studied and a question reviewing a live play production we have seen. There is also a multiple-choice section testing your Theatre knowledge.

Component 2 - is the first of two practical options based on a performance and analysis of a piece of Devised Theatre you have created. This work is marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board. This is worth 40% of the GCSE.

Component 3 - is based on you performing 2 extracts from a scripted play and is marked by an examiner. This is worth 20% of the GCSE.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop skills in vocal and physical acting, stagecraft; interpersonal and communication skills; teamwork; problem solving and written communication.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is through a written exam which is externally set and marked, worth 40% of the total marks and through the practical options: 3 performances and a written analysis which are internally assessed and externally examined and are worth 60% of the total marks.

Is there anything else I should know about?

This course is challenging and academically rigorous; students will learn to write fluent, articulate responses to a range of Classical texts, modern cutting-edge Drama and in response to their own acting. Excellent attendance is crucial as you will often be working in a group.

This course is highly enjoyable and practical, and students gain a real sense of achievement through their performances. You will have the opportunity to visit the Theatre regularly, work with Sixth Form students and with professional Actors and Directors.

Studying Drama enables students to improve self-confidence, poise, public speaking skills, teamwork and refines students' abilities to negotiate and empathise with others, as well as giving students a lifelong appreciation of the Theatre.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like further information?

For further details please contact Mrs Richardson, Head of Learning Drama.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize - Drama



English Language (AQA 8700)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in English Language awarded by AQA.

Why study English Language?

Studying GCSE English Language helps you to develop essential skills you will use for the rest of your life, whatever path you choose. The course focuses on clear communication, confident speaking, and understanding real-world texts such as articles, stories, and speeches, helping you to think critically and express ideas effectively. A pass in English Language is required by most colleges, sixth forms, and employers, making it a key qualification that will help you to keep your future options open. The AQA course is practical, accessible, and designed to help you succeed through exam skills and structured practice, not just natural talent.

What will I study?

During the course, you will study a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including extracts from novels, short stories, articles, speeches, and letters. You will learn how writers use language and structure to create meaning and engage readers and will develop writing skills by producing creative writing and transactional texts such as articles, speeches, and letters.

What skills will I develop?

During the course, you will develop strong reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that are useful across all subjects and in everyday life. You will learn how to analyse and understand a wide range of texts, write clearly and creatively for different purposes and audiences, and structure effective arguments. The course also builds your confidence in spoken communication, helping you to present ideas clearly and respond thoughtfully to others. Alongside this, you will develop critical thinking, allowing you to interpret information, recognise bias, and use language accurately and effectively.

How will I be assessed?

The first examination is called “Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing”. The second is “Writer’s Viewpoints and Perspectives”. Both last for 1 hour 45 minutes and account for 50% of the final mark each.

There will also be a non-examination, formal, filmed assessment of Spoken Language which is marked by the class teacher and is a separate endorsement on the GCSE certificate.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like further information?

For further details please speak to your Year 9 English teacher or Mrs Gardiner, Head of Learning English.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – English Language



English Literature (AQA 8702)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in English Literature awarded by AQA.

Why study English Literature?

Studying English Literature allows you to explore powerful stories, plays, and poems that have shaped culture and ideas over time. Through texts such as Shakespeare, modern drama, novels, and poetry, you will develop a deeper understanding of characters, themes, and the world around them. The course builds strong skills in analysis, critical thinking, and essay writing, which support success across many subjects. English Literature also encourages empathy, creativity, and thoughtful discussion.

What will I study?

During the course, you will study a range of challenging and engaging texts, including a Shakespeare play (*Macbeth*), a 19th-century novel (*Jekyll & Hyde*), a modern prose or drama text (*An Inspector Calls*), and a collection of poems from different time periods (*Anthology: Power & Conflict*).

What skills will I develop?

During the course, you will develop strong analytical and critical thinking skills by exploring characters, themes, and ideas in a range of literary texts. You will learn how to write clear, well-structured essays, support your ideas with evidence, and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. The course also builds reading comprehension, independent thinking, and the ability to interpret different viewpoints, while encouraging discussion, empathy, and creativity. These skills are highly transferable and support success across many subjects and future pathways.

How will I be assessed?

The first examination paper is called “Shakespeare and the 19th Century novel”. It is 1 hour and 45 minutes long and is worth 40% of the final GCSE. For this we will be studying “Macbeth” and “The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson.

The second examination paper is entitled “Modern Texts and Poetry”. There are three questions: the first on “An Inspector Calls”, a play by J B Priestley; the second uses the AQA poetry Anthology and the third will be on unseen poetry. It is 2 hours and 15 minutes long and is worth 60% of the final mark.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like further information?

For further details please speak to your Year 9 English teacher or Mrs Gardiner, Head of Learning English.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – English Literature



Physics & Maths Tutor (English Resources)



Food Preparation and Nutrition (AQA 8585E)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Food Preparation and Nutrition, awarded by AQA.

Why study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

This is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials.

What will I study?

Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics: Food, Nutrition and Health; Food Science; Food Safety; Food Choice; Food Provenance. The range of food and ingredients studied should reflect the recommended guidelines for a healthy diet based on the main food commodity groups focused around The Eat Well Guide.

Students will gain knowledge of macro and micronutrients; how to carry out nutritional analysis; understand how technological developments can lead to better health. They will learn why food is cooked and how heat is transferred to food; the functional and chemical properties of food; food safety and how to prevent food spoilage and food contamination. They will learn the factors affecting food choice and understand the environmental impact and sustainability of food.

What skill will I develop?

Twelve skills groups have been integrated throughout the specification to show how the content can be taught through practical activities. These include general practical skills; knife skills; preparing fruit and vegetables; use of the cooker; use of equipment; cooking methods; preparing, combining and shaping; sauce making; tenderising and marinating; raising agents; dough and setting mixtures.

How will I be assessed?

Exam Assessment (50% of GCSE) - A written paper of 1 hour 45 minutes assessing all five core topics. This will comprise multiple choice questions (20 marks) and five detailed questions, each with sub-questions (80 marks).

NEA - Non exam assessment (50% of GCSE)

- **Task 1** - A food investigation which tests students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Students will prepare an electronic written report of 1500-2000 words.
- **Task 2** - A food preparation assessment where students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of three hours, with advanced planning to achieve this. Students will prepare an electronic portfolio which includes photographic evidence.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further details please contact Mrs Jones or Miss Taylor, Teachers of Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – DT Food Prep & Nutrition



Geography (AQA 8035)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Geography, awarded by AQA.

Why study Geography?

Geography will help students form a clear view of the world in the 21st century. Geography looks at what is happening to people and our planet and how we interact with our environment. It allows students to fully appreciate and learn from the world around them.

What will I study?

The course covers a wide range of exciting topics in human, physical and environmental Geography and applies these ideas to examples across the globe.

- Issue Evaluation
- The living world
- Geographical Applications
- The changing economic world
- Physical landscapes in the UK
- Urban issues & challenges
- Fieldwork & geographical skills
- The challenge of natural hazards
- The challenge of resource management

These topics consider many of the issues that are the focus of national and global attention today and are therefore in the news on a regular basis. If you want to know more about them and understand their consequences, then you will enjoy your time studying Geography.

What skills will I develop?

Geography is an interesting and relevant subject to study and is well regarded in higher education and industry. Geography offers the opportunity to develop:

Technical skills using ICT and Geographical information systems	Problem-solving skills
Communication and interpersonal skills through debate and discussion	Literacy and numeracy
Entrepreneurial skills and awareness of career possibilities using Geography	Independent Learning

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment	1 hour 30 minutes	35% of GCSE
Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment	1 hour 30 minutes	35% of GCSE
Paper 3: Geographical applications, Issue evaluation, Fieldwork, Geographical skills.	1 hour 30 minutes	30% of GCSE

Further information

Geography fieldwork is a rewarding and welcome break from the classroom. Students undertake two geographical enquiries, and each including the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. You will spend at least one day out of school collecting data that will be used to prepare your fieldwork, about which you will answer questions in the exam. Usually, GCSE students visit urban regeneration and coastal defence sites in Blackpool. We have also run field trips to Iceland and China studying natural hazards, population change and economic development and are currently planning a Sicily trip for GCSE and A Level.

Who should I see if I have any questions?

For further details please speak to your Year 9 Geography teacher or Miss Taylor, Head of Learning for Geography.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Geography



Royal Geographical Society



History (Pearson Edexcel 1HI0 BR)

What qualifications does this course lead to?



The course leads to a GCSE qualification in History, awarded by Pearson Edexcel.

Why study History?

Studying GCSE History is much more than remembering Kings and Queens and the dates of famous battles and events. The subject covers significant points in the past that have shaped our society today. Studying GCSE History will give you an understanding of the world around you, people and their motives and helps you to analyse different sources of information.

What will I study?

One of the real advantages of studying History is that there is so much variety in the topics and no time to get bored! The course provides the opportunity to study the history of Britain, Europe and the World. These are the topics you would study at GCSE level:

- Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000-present - including a study of Jack the Ripper and Whitechapel from 1870-1900
- Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88
- Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39
- Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-91

What skills will I develop?

The course aims to ensure that you become an effective independent learner and a critical reflective thinker. History develops your ability to ask relevant questions about the subject material and to investigate topics critically using a range of sources. By exploring a variety of historical evidence, you will improve your analytical and evaluative skills, learn to organise and communicate your historical knowledge and understanding in creative and different ways and reach substantial judgements. You will be encouraged to use ICT in History whenever it is appropriate.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE assessment will consist of three written examinations. Two examinations are 1 hour and 15 minutes long, and the other is 1 hour and 45 minutes. All examinations will be undertaken at the end of Year 11.

Is there anything else I should know about History?

GCSE History builds on Key Stage 3 studies and prepares students for the study of A Level History. Please note that our departmental policy is that you must have studied GCSE History and attained a good grade if you wish to study A Level History at the CRGS Sixth Form.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

If you have any questions about History at GCSE Level, you should ask Mr Seed, Mrs Blane or Mr Shooter.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize - History



Languages - French (AQA 8652), German (AQA 8662) & Spanish (AQA 8692)

What qualification does this course lead to?



French



German



Spanish

These courses lead to a GCSE qualification in either French, German or Spanish awarded by AQA.

Why study Modern Languages?

Learning Modern Languages will broaden your horizons and help you become an excellent communicator, a skill which is vital when applying for a job. It will increase your options and enable you to explore a variety of career paths. Most university courses now have links with French, German and Spanish speaking countries and providing the opportunity for a study year or work experience abroad as part of the course, whatever the main subject.

What will I study?

The 3 themes to be covered are: People and Lifestyle, Popular Culture and Communication and the World around us. There is a broad range of topic areas within these themes, some of which you have looked at before.

How will I be assessed?

Students are assessed in four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will be entered at either higher or foundation level. The four skills are tested by examination at the end of the course, and each skill is worth 25% of the overall awarded grade.

Reading and Listening: Questions are in both English and the target language. The reading paper contains a short translation into English, and the listening paper contains a short dictation.

The Speaking Exam: Conducted in the April or May of the final year and students will be examined by their class teacher. The exam consists of a role play, a reading aloud task, and a photocard. Students will answer questions from topic areas studied in the general conversation section. This exam is marked externally.

The Writing Exam: A translation from English into the target language and completion of two writing tasks responding to bullet points given for the task on topic areas studied during the course. There is a choice from two questions per written task.

Other Information

There is also the opportunity in Year 10 to take part in our very successful French, German and Spanish trips or exchanges in the language(s) which you have chosen. An experience that will enable students to practise their language(s) and to immerse themselves in the way of life and culture of the country. Students always really enjoy this experience and feel they have really benefitted from the opportunity to use their foreign language in an authentic environment.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

Mrs Goudard (Head of Learning MFL), Mrs Banks (Second in Department), Mrs Buckley, Miss Cancelliere, Miss Gasser, Mrs Humphreys, Mrs Olek and Mrs Pinedo-Garcia.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – French, German and Spanish



Mathematics (AQA 8300H)

What qualifications does this course lead to?



The course leads to a GCSE qualification in Mathematics, awarded by AQA.

Why study Mathematics?

Students will need Mathematics to study many other subjects, and it makes those subjects easier to understand. Employers rate data-handling ability as one of their top requirements in new recruits: the ability to obtain information from graphs and charts, to manipulate percentages and fractions and to make sensible predictions from data.

What will I study?

The AQA syllabus follows the National Curriculum areas of Number and Algebra, Shape, Space and Measures and Handling Data, which build on the work covered in Year 9. Additionally, there are several new topics, such as Vectors, that students will not have studied before. Where relevant, students will use ICT packages to investigate new ideas, illustrate solutions and present results.

What skills will I develop?

Mathematics provides opportunities to promote

- thinking skills, through developing students' problem-solving skills and deductive reasoning
- financial capability, through applying Mathematics to problems set in financial contexts
- enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, through developing students' abilities to apply Mathematics in Science and Technology, in Economics and in risk assessment
- work-related learning, through developing students' abilities to use and apply Mathematics in workplace situations and in solving real-life problems

How will I be assessed?

The AQA Mathematics GCSE is examined at the end of Year 11 via three papers, two calculator and one non calculator.

Is there anything else I should know about?

Students must have their own scientific calculator, and an opportunity will be available, at the beginning of Year 10, to purchase a suitable model through school.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further information please contact Mrs Mann, Head of Learning Mathematics.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize - Mathematics



Music (Pearson Edexcel 1MU0)

What qualification does this course lead to?



The course leads to a GCSE qualification in Music, awarded by Pearson Edexcel.

Why Study Music?

If you love Music, then you should be studying it! The Music GCSE is a broad and challenging course that welcomes, values and encourages all forms of musicianship. Whether you are a budding performer, song writer or composer - or perhaps more interested in Music theory and history - you will find something in the course that interests you.

What skills will I develop?

Musicians develop a unique set of skills that all employers value – leadership, creativity and perseverance (to name just a few). Musicianship is valued around the world as a sign of intellect and studying Music gives students a unique insight into art and culture.

What will I study & how will I be assessed?

Performance (30%) - For this unit we will develop your performance skills (either as an instrumentalist or vocalist) to produce two recordings in the spring term of Year 11. One recording will be a solo piece (with accompaniment, if applicable) and the other will be an ensemble piece. We will regularly review your progress throughout the course against the marking criteria, and you can re-record your pieces if necessary. You do not need to perform in front of an examiner for GCSE music.

Composition (30%) - Two compositions are submitted by the end of Year 11. We will guide you through the requirements of this component and develop your composition skills throughout the course. A range of styles and techniques will be explored, and you will make use of Music technology to produce musical scores and recordings of your work.

Written Exam (40%) - Unlike many subjects, the final exam for Music is only 40% of your grade. This means that by the time you sit the exam you will have already completed most of the course. The final exam assesses three key strands: Music theory, listening skills and knowledge of set musical works. The eight-set works include modern works such as 'Defying Gravity' from the musical Wicked, the theme music from Star Wars and 'Killer Queen' by Queen as well as key historical works by composers like Bach, Beethoven, and Purcell. We will listen to each set work, analyse the score and the recording and study the context of the piece's composition.

Is there anything else I need to know about?

GCSE Music is suitable for you whatever type of music you play. You do not need to have passed any graded music exams to take music, but you must be able to play an instrument or sing confidently.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

For further information please contact Mr Wheeler, Head of Learning Music.

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Music



Physical Education (OCR J587)

What qualifications does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Physical Education, awarded by OCR

What will I study?

GCSE PE lessons are very different to Core PE lessons, as the majority of the learning takes place in a classroom to enable students to understand how the physiological and psychological state affects performance in physical activity and sport, to understand the contribution which physical activity and sport make to health, fitness and well-being and to understand key socio-cultural influences which can affect people's involvement in physical activity and sport.

A broad range of theory content, from anatomy and physiology and sports psychology to contemporary and social issues are studied. GCSE PE further develops students' understanding of human anatomy, the body systems, training principles and methods as well social and psychological issues that affect healthy lifestyles.

Some GCSE PE lessons are practical, so learners will become increasingly physically competent and effective in their performance through being actively engaged in a range of physical activities.

What skills will I develop?

Students will develop their ability to engage independently and successfully in different types of physical activity and to develop and maintain their involvement in physical activity as part of a healthy, active lifestyle. Students will have the opportunity to help officiate and lead sports activities at school and in the local community.

Learners will also develop the transferable skills that are in demand by Further Education, Higher Education and employers, by becoming increasingly confident, independent, critical thinkers and effective decision makers who can operate effectively as individuals or as part of a team.

How will I be assessed?

- Unit 1: This unit is assessed through 2 externally set **written examinations**: 2 x 1hour papers. It will comprise 60% of the total mark.
- Unit 2: **Practical Performance** and **Analysis of Performance**. This is assessed under controlled conditions over the course and externally moderated at the end. Students are assessed practically in 3 activities (30%): team activity, individual activity and 1 other from either category. Students may have the chance to be assessed in activities they perform at a high standard outside of school. The Analysis of Performance, worth the remaining 10%, is a written piece of work over 14 hours focussing on a chosen sport.

Students **must be competing** in their Practical Performance activities both in and out of school where possible. They are assessed in a competitive environment, so must be committed to competing and attending lunch time practices over two years.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like further information?

This course can prepare learners for the further study of PE or Sports Science courses as well as other related subject areas such as Psychology, Sociology and Biology. For further information please contact Miss Sutcliffe (Head of Learning Physical Education) or Mr Cole (Second in Department).

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – PE



DFE Activities List



Religious Studies (AQA 8062BA)

What qualification does this course lead to?



This course leads to a GCSE qualification in Religious Studies awarded by AQA.

Why study Religious Studies?

If you are interested in the big questions in life and have an open and enquiring mind, then this is the course for you. It requires you to look at things differently and think for yourself. Examples of this include:

- Does God exist?
- If God is all loving, why does God allow innocent people to suffer?
- Can you call a practice a religion if they don't believe in a God? (Buddhism)
- What is happiness and can it be found in religion?
- Is it ever right to go to war?
- Is it wrong to end a pregnancy prematurely?
- Is it realistic to expect marriage to last for life?
- Are religion and science really in opposition?

In essence, the GCSE course encourages students to reflect upon ultimate questions about the meaning and purpose of life and to develop their own reasoned responses to these questions.

What will I study?

2 Key Elements		Involving four themes
1.	Beliefs, Teachings and Practices of two religions: Buddhism and Christianity	(1) Relationships and Families (2) Religion and Life (3) Religion, Peace and Conflict
2.	Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies	(4) Religion, Human Rights and Justice

What skills will I develop?

This course will develop your knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and sources of wisdom. You will explore how these beliefs influence individuals, communities and societies. We will encourage you to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced arguments in order to respond to the big questions raised in the course. You will also be encouraged to reflect and develop your own values, beliefs and attitudes considering what you have learnt, whilst also evaluating the strengths of other people's arguments and worldviews.

How will I be assessed?

There are two written examinations each lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes at the end of Year 11.

Is there anything else that I need to know about?

Many of the topics studied dominate the media and are of major contemporary relevance. Consequently, this course will encourage you to follow current affairs and will make use of recent case studies from newspapers and documentaries in lessons. There will be an opportunity to participate in a visit to a Church and Buddhist Centre.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like further information?

For further information please contact Mrs Hartley, Head of Learning for Religion, Moral and Philosophical Studies (RMPS)

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize – Religious Studies



Science – Separate Sciences (Path A) OR Combined (Trilogy) Science (Path B)

Path A Separate Sciences (AQA Biology 8461, Chemistry 8462 & Physics 8463)

This will mean that you will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as three separate GCSEs.

Path B – Combined (Trilogy) Science (AQA 8464)

You will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as a reduced science curriculum compared with separate sciences. This qualification is weighted as 2 GCSEs and will be taught in the same time as two GCSEs.



Separate Sciences – Biology, Chemistry & Physics

Combined Trilogy

What should you consider when deciding upon Separate Sciences or Combined (Trilogy) Science?

If you are considering a career in a Science-related field, then GCSE Separate Science may be the better choice. However, if you are interested in Science but have other academic interests or career aspirations, then GCSE Combined (Trilogy) Science may be a more suitable option. Separate Science forms the best preparation for A Level study and you'll also know how well you did in each Science subject. Combined (Trilogy) Science will not preclude you from studying A Level Science at CRGS Sixth Form, you'll just be at a slight disadvantage compared to Separate Science students (who will have covered more content and experienced more practical work). There are students who join our Sixth Form with Combined (Trilogy) Science and study Science A Levels; however, they are a minority.

What qualification does this course lead to?

Separate Science will result in three GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (all graded individually). Combined (Trilogy) Science will result in two GCSEs in Science (grades can be for example 7-7 or 9-8 etc.). You should see this as an average of three Science subjects that you study.

How will I be assessed?

There is no coursework in either GCSE Science qualification. This means that all the assessment takes place in external exams at the end of Year 11. It is expected that all students will undertake key practical work and understanding of this is tested in the final exams. The exams in Separate Science are 1 hour 45 minutes long, while they are 1 hour 15 minutes for Combined (Trilogy) Science. All students take two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics GCSE papers in Year 11.

What will I study?

Students will follow the AQA specifications. You will be taught by specialist Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers regardless of the GCSE qualification you receive.

What skills will I develop?

A range of numeracy skills involved in the process of scientific study. Manipulative skills, as well as handling a wide range of apparatus and measuring devices. Processing data and appreciating the role of Science in the wider world (How Science Works). The aim is to help produce learners who have skills to make informed judgements on all aspects of Science.

Who should I see if I have any questions or would like more information?

Your current Science teachers, any member of the Science Department or Dr Ellis (Head of Learning Science).

Useful Resources

BBC Bitesize:

Biology

Chemistry

Physics

Combined (Trilogy) Science

