



Birkdale
School

*S4/5 HANDBOOK
2018/2019*



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From the Head Master...

Dear Parents

The two years of preparation for GCSE examinations are the most significant and important to date, and GCSE grades are a key element in admission to university. Indeed, they will be an important component of objective evidence of academic potential available to universities at the normal point of application in the Upper Sixth year.

At Birkdale we always try to answer the question "What is in the best interest of individuals?", not forgetting that the ultimate academic goal is to prepare members of the school for university and beyond.

I hope you will find this handbook helpful as you discuss with your son the choices which he has to make. Staff are very ready to help in this, and the Parents' Evening in March is designed to give any guidance necessary.

For School rules and many other points, please refer to the "General Information for Parents" booklet, a copy of which you should already have.

You will know of the emphasis in the school on the education of the whole person, and I hope you will find details of the General Studies and Outdoor Pursuits programmes of interest. The fourth form camp is part of this wider plan, in which opportunities are given for boys to develop as individuals. This programme of Outdoor Pursuits is an integral part of the curriculum at Birkdale, and all boys are expected to participate.



Paul Owen

BIRKDALE'S FOURTH AND FIFTH YEAR CURRICULUM

We believe in ensuring that all our pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum. To this end, the Fourth and Fifth Year curriculum has two parts to it - a compulsory core and a choice of optional subjects.

COMPULSORY (CORE) SUBJECTS

All pupils study the following subjects to GCSE:

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science (either 2 or 3 GCSEs)

One of the Humanities subjects (Classical Civilisation, Geography, History or Religious Education)

A Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish)

In addition, the following non-examined subjects are taken:

- General Studies, including Careers, Economic Awareness, Health Education, Religious Education, Substance Abuse and Political Systems.
- Physical Education
- Games

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

Pupils may select any **two** of the following subjects to study to GCSE:

Art

Classical Civilisation

Computer Science

Design & Technology (Electronic Products) or Design & Technology (Resistant Materials)

Drama

Geography

History

Latin

Music

Religious Studies

Second Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish)

Additional Support

The option subjects are arranged into blocks to accommodate as many of the wishes of the particular year-group as possible. Nine or ten subjects are thus studied by pupils to GCSE. Additionally, pupils who have studied Greek in S3 may continue this lunchtime study to GCSE.

Boys should take care not to over-reach themselves when choosing their GCSE courses. It is preferable to obtain high grades in eight subjects rather than see grades crumble in stretching for a ninth. Some boys will sail through nine or ten subjects, others will be wiser to devote more time to the study of eight. It may be advisable, therefore, for some boys to choose the Additional Support option. This consists of an extra period each of English and Mathematics and two study periods.

CHOOSING THE OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

During their third year at Birkdale boys must decide which of the optional subjects they will study in the Fourth and Fifth forms. These are very important decisions, which can affect career choice at a later stage, and therefore require some serious thought. There is much advice available through published sources and from subject staff, form tutors and senior members of staff. The following suggestions may be useful as general pointers:

1. Most boys will want to study subjects which they enjoy.
2. Most will opt for subjects which they are good at.
3. Boys should not generally allow themselves to be influenced by:
 - a) whether they like or dislike their present teacher in a particular subject. They might have a different teacher in the subject next year.
 - b) what their friends are deciding, since their interests and plans for the future may be quite different.
4. Boys should think carefully about the effect that the choices they make now will have upon their freedom to choose a career later on. It is often sensible at this stage to keep as many career options open as possible.
5. Boys should strike a sensible balance between the Humanities (subjects especially concerned with human development), Languages and Creative subjects.

TIMETABLE FOR S3 → S4 OPTION CHOICE
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Friday 19 January	Handbook received by parents.
Thursday 25 January	Options Evening
Tuesday 30 January	Straw Poll – for timetabling purposes, pupils are asked to indicate which subjects they are considering studying.
5 – 16 February	Form Tutors conduct preliminary interviews with pupils.
26 February – 2 March	Staff consider pupils' choices.
Tuesday 6 March	Parents' Evening
5 - 16 March	Each pupil has an interview with Mr Kenyon (Senior Master, Middle School) or Mr King (Director of Studies).
w/b 30 April	Letter sent home to parents giving details of their son's proposed option choice.
By Friday 11 May	Parents either agree with choices or arrange an interview with Mr Kenyon or Mr King.
June	School Examinations

ACADEMIC WORK

School work, homework and coursework are all essential elements of the education programme at Birkdale. We monitor progress by assessing homework and class-work and report to parents and boys on grade cards, at Parents' Evenings and in end-of-term reports. There are examinations at the end of each school year.

GRADE CARDS

Grade Cards are issued once or twice per term on the dates indicated in the school calendar. Grades are given for attainment and effort. High effort grades can be achieved by any pupil; attainment grades relate to achievement. As boys move into S4 and S5 the grades begin to reflect the GCSE standard that is being achieved.

A summary of the effort grade criteria is given below:

EFFORT

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Comment</i>
O	He gives of his best all the time.
V	He does all he should and more.
G	Concentrates and works well most of the time.
S	Applies sufficient effort to complete work.
U	He is seriously underachieving.

Boys are interviewed by Form Tutors and/or Senior Staff after each set of grades and targets are set for improvement where necessary. U grades for effort are treated seriously and a range of sanctions, which includes a daily report card, is used to focus attention on a boy's problems.

HOMEWORK

Homework is set as indicated in the homework time-table issued at the start of the school year. Some teachers may set a piece of work to be completed over a period of time.

All homework should be recorded in the pupil planner. These are issued to all pupils.

If homework is incomplete, late or unsatisfactory then the following sanctions may be employed:

1. Repetition of unsatisfactory work.
2. Repetition of unsatisfactory work on **red-lined paper**.
Red-lined paper must be signed by a parent and the form tutor before being affixed to a boy's exercise book.
3. Detention after school on a Tuesday evening.

Staff can also choose to give an academic detention at lunchtime.

The importance of homework cannot be exaggerated; boys are learning the patterns of self-discipline which will serve them well in A levels and at university. Parents can help by:

1. Checking the pupil planner. In S1 and S2 boys are asked to obtain a parent's signature each week. This measure is relaxed in later years but parents are encouraged to maintain an interest in the work set; boys who find organisation difficult may be asked to re-adopt the "sign each week" procedure.
2. Supporting the disciplinary procedures applied to boys who fall below the standards expected.

REPORTS & PARENTS' EVENINGS

There is a written report at the end of each term, unless there has been a Parents' Evening during the course of the term. The current programme of reports and Parents' Evenings is:

	<u>Christmas</u>	<u>Easter</u>	<u>Summer</u>
S1	Evening	Report	Report
S2	Report	Evening	Report
S3	Report	Evening	Report
S4	Evening	Report	Evening
S5	Report	Evening	
L6	Evening	Report	Evening
U6	Report	Evening	

Parents worried about the progress of their son may contact their Form Tutor or the Senior Master responsible for their son at any stage. This especially applies after a report from the School.

ACADEMIC STUDY TRIPS

The following trips are regularly arranged by certain departments to enrich and enhance the work studied at GCSE. All of these trips happen during non-school time, and some form part of a subject's coursework. Details are given here to help you plan ahead.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Description</u>
Languages	To be announced	French, German and Spanish Study Tours These are open to pupils from S3 to U6. As a result of these trips there is usually a significant improvement in a pupil's understanding of and confidence in French, German and Spanish.
Geography	Weekend in Summer Term	Study Trip to Snowdonia This forms part of the Geography coursework, so it is compulsory that all S4 pupils studying Geography attend.

THE WIDER CURRICULUM

GENERAL STUDIES

The General Studies course is a modular course which takes place in S4 and aims to provide information/skills relevant to coping with, and taking part in, school life and contemporary society. There are seven modules in the course with the staff involved providing a balanced programme of units. The subjects studied include Economic Awareness, Health Education, Religious Education, Careers, Substance Abuse and Political Systems.

ECONOMIC AWARENESS

Young people’s experiences of the economic system emerge via many activities such as shopping, working, selling and allocating time and resources. Some experience this more effectively than others. The idea of this course is to give boys the opportunity and knowledge to operate in the economic system with more confidence, competence and understanding.

We investigate the basic roles of economic aspects with the wider economy:

- Consumer
- Product
- Citizen

Economic Awareness		
Young Person as a Consumer	Young Person as a Producer	Young Person as a Citizen

eg Demand
Banking
Budgeting
Credit and Debt

e.g. Supply
Business Organisation
Business Finance

eg Taxes and Public
Spending

We explore these themes via business games and role-play.

HEALTH EDUCATION

All aspects of Health Education are set within a clear, moral framework, rooted in **Biblical teaching**. Therefore, the emphasis that the School gives to the general care and well-being of pupils in fostering their social skills, self-esteem and sense of responsibility is based within the overall Christian ethos of the School.

Our Health Education

- i. presents facts in an objective and balanced manner so as to enable pupils to comprehend the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in present day society.
- ii. teaches about the physical aspects of sexual behaviour, and this teaching is set within a clear moral framework in which pupils are encouraged to consider the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and for others. They are helped to recognise the physical, emotional and moral risk of casual and promiscuous sexual behaviour.
- iii. helps pupils to appreciate the benefits of stable married and family life, and the responsibilities of parenthood.
- iv. recognises that it is required by law that young people are made aware of the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the raising of children.

A closely integrated and cohesive course is taught including the following units:

Lifestyle and health issues. After a revision of earlier work – sex organs, puberty, sexual intercourse, the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and birth – boys are told about sex and its consequences before moving on to the problem of sexually transmitted diseases:

Sex and consequences:	legal aspects of sex high risk sex sex before marriage personal relationships STI's and their spread unwanted pregnancy contraception
An introduction to STI's:	what STI's are what HIV is and how the virus is spread about treatments, cures and vaccines for STI's about body fluids – how they mix
Spread of STI's:	sections of the community at risk avoiding AIDS, Chlamydia, HPV and other common sexually transmitted infections

As part of this course the boys will also be taught about healthy living. The positive ways of achieving this goal – exercise, the right diet, low blood pressure, caring for one's body etc – are contrasted with the abuse of the body – smoking, excess alcohol, drugs and drug abuse – in a programme which involves practical Biology, videos, discussion and contributions from outside speakers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This is an enquiry into certain philosophical themes significant to either the Philosophy of Religion or Religious Ethics.

Philosophy 1: 'Values'

A course examining the different values held by people in our society, contrasting specifically Christian and non-Christian values and attitudes towards others. Areas covered include:

1. The Value of Human Life
2. Materialism
3. Power
4. Gender

Philosophy 2: 'Questioning Belief 1'

1. The Psychology of Perception - how belief is necessary for knowledge.
2. Naturally Good or Naturally Evil – looking at beliefs about human behaviour and their consequences.
3. Sacrifice – the beliefs that lead to self-sacrifice.

Philosophy 3: 'Philosophy of Science'

This course seeks to challenge assumptions about the nature of the Scientific Quest. We deal with:

1. Progress in Science
2. Cosmology
3. Evolution
4. Philosophy of Knowledge

Philosophy 4: 'Questioning Belief 2'

1. Objectification – the consequences of treating humans as objects. War; Human Rights and the 3rd World
2. Free Will or Determinism? – models of human nature and their ethical consequences.
3. Utilitarianism – can we ever sacrifice some for the majority?

CAREERS

At the start of our formal careers programme, many boys still fall into one of two categories. Either they have been set on a specific career from an early age, or they have simply no idea for which occupation to steer. Our aim in S4 is to bring them somewhere between these two extremes. Pupils are helped to identify their strengths and abilities, match these against a wide range of opportunities and draw up a short-list of suitable careers.

Clearly the computer is a powerful tool here and each boy answers detailed interactive questionnaires, which suggest an initial selection of occupations in S4 and also in S5 possible university courses, with several screens of information on each. These and other ideas are further researched in the school Careers Library and on a visit to the main Sheffield Careers Library.

Personal advice and guidance is also crucial. We aim to maintain regular discussion of current career goals between parents, staff and your son. Pupils put together the results of their research each year in an action plan. These form the basis of individual discussions with the Head of Careers, their Form tutor and a copy is taken home to parents. In the Fifth Form, the Head of Careers and Senior Staff also interview each boy to help to ensure the most appropriate A level choices are made. Pupils for whom A levels may not be the best way forward have the opportunity of an interview with a professional careers adviser to consider alternative options.

The school is a member of the Independent Schools Careers Organisation (ISCO). We are also served by Sheffield Futures Connexions. Advisers from each attend our biennial Careers Convention to which parents and boys are invited to talk with representatives of a large number of professions, universities and colleges. Through this and work experience placements in the Lower Sixth form, links have been forged with many local companies and establishments and boys are encouraged to use these contacts or their own to arrange workplace observation in the holidays.

Career choice is a long process. We encourage your son to continue to research. The computer software is always available throughout the school network. Careers library books and DVDs can be borrowed on overnight loan. Parents are welcome to come in to discuss their son's career plans with the Head of Careers.

The Futurewise Scheme

For parents who wish to invest in more extensive careers and Higher Education advice for their sons, ISCO offer this detailed professional service. The Morrisby psychometric aptitude and interest tests are taken in early Fifth Form providing a detailed report, interviews and literature to guide A level, university and employment choices through to age 23.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CAREFUL USE OF THE INTERNET

In this module we look at the use and misuse of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs including “legal highs”. We also think about the dangers of misuse of social media and the internet.

POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The aim of the module is to raise awareness of the democratic system of government operating in the UK today. Each pupil should develop a greater understanding of local government, Westminster, devolved power and the EU through discussion work.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

One of the significant features of S4 is the Fourth Form Residential which takes place in the summer term. The trip is an integral part of the outdoor education programme and seeks to provide opportunities for character-development and leadership-training outside the classroom. It culminates in a small group expedition and all pupils are expected to attend.

The aim is to develop leadership skills to a level at which pupils can help lead a small group on a two day expedition. The activities will include canoeing, raft building, gorge walking, rock climbing and expedition work.

Many pupils in S4 and S5 will be involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, progressing from Bronze, which the majority of S3 pupils have started, through to the more demanding Silver and Gold. The Outdoor Education programme helps pupils with the expedition side of the Award but there are other sections - service, skills and interests - which will require time and personal initiative.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GAMES

In accordance with the National Curriculum, pupils in years 4 and 5 tackle more complex and demanding activities whereby they can apply their knowledge of skills and techniques and work towards effective performance.

Boys in the Fourth Form continue to experience a variety of activities as in previous years, along with the introduction of new areas of sport and recreation. They will participate in the team games of Rugby, Football, Cricket, Hockey, Softball, Basketball and Volleyball. They will also participate in the individual activities of Cross-Country Running, Athletics, Badminton, and Health Related fitness.

In the Fifth Form boys will participate in Basketball, Volleyball, Health Related Fitness, and Badminton during their compulsory Physical Education lessons. In addition the Fifth and Sixth Form Games afternoon affords those boys not selected for Team Squads the opportunity to participate in Hockey, Squash, Golf, Weight-Training, Swimming, Tennis, Skiing, Badminton and Basketball, dependent on staff supervision/parental consent.

The Senior School Physical Education Programme is designed not only to teach more advanced techniques and strategies in the pupil's chosen activity, but to encourage pupils to acquire the necessary skills and enthusiasm to pursue their sport on leaving school.

The extra-curricular programme is viewed as an important extension of the departmental curricular programme. A comprehensive and varied range of activities and team practices are provided and these are intended to develop those skills, attitudes and behavioural patterns necessary for both individual and team success. School teams compete against other schools in Rugby, Football, Cricket, Athletics, Tennis, Cross-Country, Hockey and Swimming. There are also clubs for Badminton, Weight/Fitness-Training and Basketball.

Inter House Competitions are held in all the major and minor school sports and boys are expected to play a full and active part in representing their Houses.

GCSE COURSES IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH FORMS

ART AND DESIGN (AQA)

Pupils will follow a course which has a strong emphasis placed on fine art and will use a variety of media both traditionally and experimentally. The ability to draw and paint objectively is taught and forms an important foundation to the course. The appreciation and understanding of great art, both philosophically and formally is the other element upon which the course is based.

During the two years, each boy will be expected to produce a portfolio of artwork which will account for 60% of the final grade. At the end of the course there is a ten hour controlled test, in which boys have to work unaided on a specific idea. This, together with the supporting studies done as preparation for the examination, is the final 40% required to complete the course. The boys then display their coursework, sketchbooks and terminal exam work for assessment by members of staff and the external assessor.

The course involves a certain amount of self-discipline and the ability to organise and manages at the same time to be a lively and friendly forum for the exchange of views. Pupils also find that they can learn from each other as each has a different talent to bring to the group. Discussion about careers and future prospects arises naturally and, where appropriate, visits will be organised to colleges of art and galleries or exhibitions.

There are four lessons timetabled but candidates are strongly encouraged to use the Art Room during lunchtime.

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION (OCR)

Classical Civilisation is open to all pupils entering S4. It is the study of ancient Greece and Rome. Studying the classical world can give you an extra perspective on how societies work and why the modern world has developed in the way that it has. Classical literature is interesting and exciting to read in its own right. Stories from the Iliad and Odyssey have been used in several epic films like "Troy". You do not need to have studied Latin or Greek at all since the source materials are in English. Classical Civilisation is a humanities subject and is highly respected by both employers and universities alike.

There are two modules at GCSE, each of equal value.

The topics are examined by short factual questions and evaluation of source materials. The source materials are either literature or visual and material evidence such as statues, vase paintings etc.

The components which we study are:

- Myth and Religion
- War and Warfare

The topics are intended to be thematic and therefore cover both the Greek and Roman civilisation.

CLASSICAL GREEK (OCR)

Classical Greek helps you to:

- expand your English vocabulary by looking at Greek roots
- learn vocabulary in other European languages
- develop awareness of how languages work
- understand the influence of Ancient Greek civilisation on modern culture
- understand what the Greeks had to say in their own words.

Boys who have begun learning Classical Greek in S3 may continue through to take GCSE in S5 by attending two lunchtime sessions per week.

Language skills are tested in one exam, by unseen translation and comprehension. There is a defined vocabulary list. This exam paper makes up 50% of the GCSE.

The other 50% is assessed by a civilisation and a literature paper. For the civilisation paper two topics on Greek Civilisation and Culture are studied. For the literature paper a work of either prose or verse is studied.

COMPUTER SCIENCE (CIE)

Rationale

Computer science is an academic and challenging subject concerned with the design, programming and testing of computer software. It studies the foundational principles and practices of computational thinking and their application in the design and development of computer systems. Learning computational thinking involves learning to program (writing computer code) and applies theory related to how data is represented and stored. It considers issues of security, privacy and ethics. In scale it goes from examining the individual 1's and 0's of binary numbers to consideration of how to store and transmit the enormity of the Internet.

Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science enables learners to develop an interest in computing and to gain confidence in computational thinking and programming. You will develop your understanding of the main principles of problem-solving using computers, and to apply your understanding to developing computer-based solutions to problems using algorithms and a number of high-level programming languages (Python and VB.NET). You will also study current and emerging computing technologies, and recognise the ethical issues and potential risks computers pose. The course is an ideal foundation for further study in Computer Science.

Weekly lessons are split between theory and practical (programming). If you are interested in computers, programming and problem solving then this might be the course for you. Prior experience in programming is not essential, although it would be helpful.

Programmes of Study

Section 1, **Theory of Computer Science**, comprises of these topics of study:

Data representation (Binary & Hexadecimal systems, Data storage); Communication and Internet technologies (Data transmission, Security aspects, Internet principles of operation); Hardware and software (Logic gates, Computer architecture and the fetch execute cycle, Input, Output and Storage devices, system memory, storage media, Operating Systems, High- and low-level languages and their translators); Security; Ethics.

Section 2, **Practical Problem-solving and Programming** comprises of these topics of study: Algorithm design and problem-solving (Problem-solving and design, Pseudocode and flowcharts); Programming (Programming concepts, Data structures, arrays); Databases.

Assessment

Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science is externally assessed in June of the summer term in S5, via two written exam papers which correspond to Sections 1 and 2 above. The IGCSE is still using an A* to G grading system:

Paper 1 **Theory of Computer Science** (1 hour 45 minutes, 75 marks) contains short-answer and structured questions. All questions are compulsory and no calculators are permitted. This paper accounts for 60% of the Computer Science IGCSE qualification.

Paper 2 **Problem-solving and Programming** (1 hour 45 minutes, 50 marks) also contains short-answer and structured questions. All questions are compulsory and no calculators are permitted. 20 of the marks for this paper are from questions set on a pre-release material case study that you will cover in lessons before the exam. This paper accounts for 40% of the Computer Science IGCSE qualification.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY (Edexcel)

Design and Technology

Boys opting for Design and Technology may choose one of two specialist routes, Resistant Materials or Electronics. The main focus of both choices is the designing and making of a marketable 3 dimensional prototype device using materials and components. Whichever route they decide upon the assessment is the same and is as follows:

(a) Coursework 60% - This requires the student to produce a quality product or device in the specialist area he has chosen. Approximately half of the marks are awarded to the practical work with the remaining marks being awarded to the written folder which details the design progress of the practical work. Pupils are encouraged to submit their folder work regularly to gain feedback and continual upgrading of their final mark. The practical work is a learning process, where students are taught skills as they are needed to satisfy their design problem.

(b) Terminal examination 40% - This examination aims to assess both the factual content of the course and the design capability of the pupils in the broader sense (i.e. not necessarily related to the specialist area).

Resistant Materials

In this area of specialist study, boys are encouraged to design and make in metal, wood and plastics, with the first part of the course teaching them how to shape and join the various materials and as a result of their experience, to be able to confidently design using these materials. This then leads on to them solving a design problem of their choosing using a combination of materials and techniques. Help is given throughout the duration of their major project, with this being a learning exercise as well as a form of continual assessment.

Electronics

Within this specialist area, boys study the use of electronics to control systems such as alarms and general sensing devices. As well as learning the basics of electronics, they will also experience the cutting edge technology of PICs, where they will program their own 'chips' to perform electronic monitoring and switching actions. Their major project will bring together the skills they have learnt throughout the course, plus the acquisition of appropriate new skills, in the designing and making of a prototype device of their own choosing.

Careers

Typical career and further study options from either of these courses could include:

Electrical Engineering	Electronic Engineering
Information Systems Engineering	Systems Engineering
Aeronautical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering
Computer Science	Product Design
Graphic Design	Architecture
Teaching	Industrial Design
Management	Automotive Design
Mechatronics	Product Design

DRAMA (Edexcel)

The course encourages students to work imaginatively and creatively in a collaborative context. The creation, communication and development of ideas are integral to the course structure. With opportunities to explore written play texts as well as develop their own devised performance work, pupils will find the course challenging and demanding, intellectually and artistically.

Component 1: Devising (40% of the qualification)

Coursework

Content Overview

- Create and develop a devised piece from a stimulus.
- Performance of this devised Piece or design realisation for this performance.
- Analyse and evaluate the devising process and performance.
- Performer or designer routes available.

Assessment Overview

- Internally assessed and externally moderated.
- There are two parts to the assessment:
 1. A portfolio covering the creating and developing process and analysis and evaluation of this process.
 2. A devised performance/design realisation

Component 2: Performance from Text (20% of the qualification)

Coursework

Content Overview

- Students will either perform in and/or design for two key extracts from a performance text.
- Performer or designer routes available.

Assessment Overview

- Externally assessed by visiting examiner

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (40% of the qualification)

Written Examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

Content Overview

- Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.
- Live theatre evaluation.

Assessment Overview

Section A: Bringing Texts to Life

- This section consists of one question broken into six parts (short and extended responses) based on an unseen extract from the chosen performance text.
- Performance texts are not allowed in the examination as the extracts will be provided.

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation

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

ENGLISH AND ENGLISH LITERATURE (AQA)

As you are no doubt aware, the new GCSEs in English Language and English Literature came into effect for the first time in September 2015. We plan to teach both courses concurrently, as we have taught them in the past.

Both courses will be assessed by final examination. There is no coursework element.

Final grades will be 9 to 1 rather than A* to G.

Though the skills assessed will be similar to those in previous years, it may be useful for you to see what the Department for Education announced in November 2013:

The English language GCSE will provide all students with a robust foundation of reading and good written English, and with the language and literary skills which are required for further study and work. It will ensure that students can read fluently and write effectively, and will have 20% of the marks awarded for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The new English literature GCSE will build on this foundation, and encourage students to read, write and think critically. It will involve students studying a range of intellectually challenging and substantial whole texts in detail including Shakespeare, 19th-century novels, Romantic poetry and other high-quality fiction and drama. The new GCSE will also ensure that all students are examined on some 'unseen' texts, encouraging students to read widely and rewarding those that can demonstrate the breadth of their understanding.

The new GCSEs in English ... set higher expectations; they demand more from all students and provide further challenge for those aiming to achieve top grades.

Below are details of the two courses.

English Language AQA 8700

There will be three main areas for study:

- Explorations in creative reading and writing
- Writers' viewpoints and perspectives
- Non-exam assessment

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Writing and Reading

What's assessed

Section A: Reading

- one literature fiction text
There will be four questions on this text, worth 40 marks.

Section B: Writing

- descriptive or narrative writing
There will be one extended writing question. 24 marks can be awarded for content and 16 for technical accuracy.

This will be assessed in a written exam of 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 50% of the GCSE.

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

What's assessed

Section A: Reading

- one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text

Section B: Writing

- writing to present a viewpoint

This examination follows the same format as Paper 1 and is also worth 50% of the GCSE.

There is also a Non-examination Assessment (NEA) on Spoken Language.

Students will be assessed on their presenting skills, the way they respond to questions and feedback and their use of Standard English. We will set these assessments throughout the course and the award will be a separate endorsement. It will not contribute to the overall GCSE result but the skills we will develop are nevertheless valuable.

English Literature AQA 8702

All assessments for this course are closed book. This means students will need to learn key quotations. They will also need to know the whole text thoroughly.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel

What's assessed

- **Shakespeare plays**

We will choose one play from a set list. Possible choices are *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

- **The 19th-century novel**

We will choose one text from a set list. Possible choices are *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Sign of the Cross*.

This will be assessed in a written exam of 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 40% of the GCSE.

Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry

What's assessed

- **Modern prose or drama texts**

There is a long list of texts to choose from. Possible choices include *An Inspector Calls*, *Blood Brothers*, *The History Boys*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Animal Farm*, *Never Let Me Go*, *Pigeon English*. (Though we can only choose one of these texts, it does not mean that they can't all be read and enjoyed for their own sake by students who wish to read more widely).

- **The poetry anthology** – we study a range of poetry and students answer a comparative question on one poem printed on the paper and one other poem from the anthology.

- **Unseen poetry**

This will be assessed in a written exam of 2 hours 15 minutes and is worth 60% of the GCSE.

Our S1-3 Curriculum is structured with the demands of the GCSE courses at its heart, so all the skills needed are already developing well by the time students start the course. The whole two-year course in each subject is intended to lead up to the rigorous and demanding final examinations in which the full range of skills will be assessed. In order to do well, students will need to work very hard from the outset so they can be more confident of fulfilling their potential.

It is our understanding that the top marks will be much harder to achieve than the current GCSE A* grade so ambitious students will have to perform extremely well across the board to get to that level.

GEOGRAPHY Edexcel (A)

The study of Geography develops an understanding of our surroundings and the ways in which people interact with each other and their environment. It provides an awareness of regional and world problems. It also encourages an interest in world affairs and local values which, in themselves, are an important component of this course.

GCSE Geography Edexcel A (1-9 grades) involves a thematic based learning approach and allows pupils to focus on the geographical processes that shape our world through a study of physical and human geography at all scales from local to global in different parts of the world. There are three components:

Component 1: The Physical Environment (1 hour 30 minute examination; 37.5% of GCSE; 94 marks)

The changing landscapes of the UK

- River landscapes
- Glaciated landscapes

Weather hazards and climate change

- Tropical storms
- Drought

Ecosystems, biodiversity and management

- Tropical Rainforests
- Temperate deciduous woodlands

Component 2: The Human Environment (1 hour 30 minute examination; 37.5% of GCSE; 94 marks)

Changing Cities

- Case studies of a major UK city (Sheffield) and a city in a developing or emerging country

Global Development

- Case study of a developing or emerging country

Resources and management

- A study of water or energy resources

Component 3: Geographical Investigations (1 hour 30 minute examination; 25% of GCSE; 64 marks)

Fieldwork (residential course)

- One fieldwork day completing a River investigation
- One field day completing an Urban investigation

UK Challenges

- A study of 4 key challenges facing the UK:
 1. Resource consumption and environmental sustainability
 2. Settlement, population and economics
 3. Landscape
 4. Climate change

Geography is well placed alongside both the Sciences and the Arts. This GCSE course builds on skills and knowledge developed at KS3 and offers good progression onto A level geography. The skills acquired include the use of maps, graphs, statistical tests as well as interpretation of evidence analysis, drawing of conclusions and importantly, communicating findings. A wide variety of careers are available which are linked to the subject and many employees today look favourably on those who have problem solving skills, the ability to evaluate data and to make decisions.

HISTORY (AQA)

The new History GCSE from exam board AQA - featuring a broad range of periods and topics - aims to use the past to give students a better understanding of today's world. It is an extremely interesting course and can provide students with a highly regarded academic qualifications.

This now well established course tracks the events which have shaped Britain and the rest of the world, covering nearly a thousand years of History and exploring major topics and issues.

There is no time consuming coursework and students will be assessed in two exams at the end of the two year course.

The students will study the following topics:

- 1 International Conflict and tension between the World Wars from 1918 to 1939 including the Peace of Versailles, after the World War I and the creation of the organisation designed to keep the peace of the world - the League of Nations. The course also looks at the World Economic Crisis, the policy of Appeasement, which was also meant to keep the peace of the world and Hitler's Foreign Policy, which was not.
- 2 Tsarist and Communist Russia from 1894 to 1945 including the fateful reign of the last Tsar Nicholas II and the famous revolutions that brought the Communists to power under Lenin and turned the Russian Empire into the Soviet Union. This course then looks at the murderous regime of Stalin, until the end of World War II.
- 3 Elizabethan England from 1558 to 1603 including the creation of the Church of England, the problems with Mary Queen of Scots and the Spanish Armada. This course will also involve a specific study of Hardwick Hall which includes a site visit.
- 4 Britain - Power and the people from 1170 to the present day which studies the relationship between those who rule in Britain and those who are ruled including such topics as Magna Carta, the Break from Rome, the English Civil, the American War of Independence, the Right to Vote and the creation of Multi-Racial Britain.

LATIN (EDUQAS)

There are three components to the GCSE qualification

1 Latin Language 50%

Language skills are developed by continuing with the Cambridge Latin Course during S4 and S5. The city of Rome becomes a backdrop to explore the lives of rich and poor, the spread of Christianity and the political intrigues of the Imperial court.

There is a defined vocabulary list to learn and a list of grammatical structures which are expected.

The GCSE exam will test language skills by a passage for unseen translation and comprehension.

There is also a section examining the recognition and analysis of grammar.

2 Latin Literature 30%

We read and discuss a selection of Latin prose and verse on a particular theme e.g. Schools and Education, The Countryside, A Day at the Races.

Knowledge and appreciation of the literature is tested. In the exam a copy of the literature and its relevant vocabulary is available.

3 Roman Civilisation 20%

A specified topic is studied e.g. Roman Entertainment and Leisure, Religion in the Roman World. We use primary source material for this, much of which has already been seen in the early stages of the Cambridge Latin Course.

The exam assesses knowledge and evaluation of the topic.

Where ever possible we shall take advantage of trips to museums, galleries and archaeological sites to support the learning for the topic.

Latin is valued because it helps to:

- Improve your communication skills
- Expand your English vocabulary by looking at Latin roots
- Learn vocabulary in other European languages
- Develop awareness of how languages work
- Understand the influence of Roman civilisation on modern culture
- Understand what the Romans were saying in their own language.

It is an option which is highly regarded by universities and employers.

MATHEMATICS (Edexcel)

The two year GCSE course begins as pupils enter S4. All pupils will be taught in preparation for Higher tier. We will follow the Edexcel GCSE; final grades will be 9-1 rather than A*-G. This is a harder and more rigorous GCSE than any before but we believe that the work done in S1 through to S3 will enable our boys to complete the course in the two years available.

The teaching in the department remains imaginative and well-focused. We believe strongly that Mathematics needs to be taught in relevant contexts wherever possible and that only by providing differentiated work can every pupil maximise their potential. Furthermore, much of the work we do will have problem solving at its heart as these skills are to be examined more extensively under the new GCSE. We seek to stretch our most able by, for example, entering them for the National Intermediate Maths Challenge, and support those who are finding Maths difficult via weekly clinics and smaller teaching groups.

Our main resources are the SMP Interact textbooks written for GCSE. At the start of S4 each pupil will be issued with a pupil's book and a corresponding practice book (mainly for homework). We continue to buy in suitable calculators and sell them on to our pupils at cost price; it is most important that each pupil becomes completely familiar with their calculator over the two year course. We also make use of the ICT resources via programs such as Excel, Mymaths and Autograph.

Progress is carefully monitored during the two year course by regular setting and marking of homework as well as half termly tests which consist of GCSE questions relevant to the most recent work covered.

During the final weeks before study leave, the pupils work almost exclusively on past papers in order to fine tune their examination technique and ensure they achieve their full potential.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (AQA)

All pupils are currently studying at least one modern foreign language. Those boys studying one language will continue with that language and those boys studying two languages now have to decide whether to continue with both - as happens in many European countries - or whether to concentrate on one language as part of their core curriculum.

These specifications have been designed to enable success at the candidate's own level; to test a range of skills; to improve communication skills; to create international awareness and to encourage further study of languages with easier transition to A Level.

Key features of the specification are:

- Two tiers of entry: a Foundation Tier (grades 1 - 5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4 - 9) although a candidate must enter all four skills at the same level
- Clearly defined topic areas
- Written assessment in listening, reading & writing skills
- Teacher-conducted speaking test with preparation time just before the test of a Role-play and Photo card

There are three themes. The first covers *Me, my family and friends; Technology in everyday life; Free-time activities*. The second covers *Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues* such as voluntary work; *Global issues* such as the environment and poverty; *Travel and tourism*. The final theme deals with *My studies; Life at school; Education post-16; Career choices and ambitions*. Insight into the foreign culture and knowledge of the country thus go hand in hand with systematic mastery of the structure of the language and acquisition of vocabulary.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The qualification comprises four assessments, taken at the end of the course:

- Paper 1: Listening (Foundation - 35 minutes; Higher - 45 minutes): 25%
- Paper 2: Speaking (Foundation - 7-9 minutes; Higher - 10-12 minutes): 25%
- Paper 3: Reading (Foundation - 45 minutes; Higher - 1 hour): 25%
- Paper 4: Writing (Foundation - 1 hour; Higher - 1 hour 15 minutes): 25%

A wide range of enjoyable and stimulating resources are used, with all of the six specialist language-teaching rooms equipped with interactive whiteboards with high quality sound systems. To enhance oral fluency, boys have conversation in small groups with our French, German and Spanish assistants. In addition, the department offers a range of homestays or study visits abroad and boys are strongly recommended to take part in such visits.

Study of a foreign language enhances cultural awareness, develops oral and written communication skills and increases confidence, all skills which can be transferred to other subjects. Moreover, as international travel and business become the norm, more and more employers are recruiting staff who can communicate in more than one language. A GCSE in a modern language or languages could therefore enhance future study and career prospects.

MUSIC (Edexcel)

Music is something that everyone can enjoy. In S1, S2 and S3 we encourage pupils to get involved in practical music making, both in and out of the classroom, and this is something which any pupil can do at their own level.

There are three inter-related elements of the GCSE course - Performing (worth 30%), Composing (also worth 30%) and Appraising (worth 40%),

Performing: Pupils are encouraged to sing or play regularly in class. The marks for the performance section of the exam are divided equally between solo performing and ensemble performing. Pupils are therefore encouraged to get involved in ensembles within the school. The standard level of difficulty for performances is equivalent to Grade 4 standard and this can be on any instrument – indeed, beatboxing and rapping are given as examples on the specification! As a guide, it would be advisable to be at least Grade 2 standard prior to starting the course. The total performance time must be at least 4 minutes. Pupils are entitled to receive 1 period of free instrumental tuition fortnightly to help support their performing coursework.

Composing: Pupils will produce two pieces of composition coursework, lasting at least one minute each and no less than three minutes in total. One of these will be in response to a brief set by the exam board and the other is a free choice of composition. Study will involve learning about a range of different compositional techniques and pupils will be able to specialise in the style of composing in which they feel the most comfortable.

Appraising: The appraising part of the course is linked in with the study of a range of set works:

Area of study	Set works
Instrumental Music 1700–1820	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bach: 3rd Movement from Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major• Beethoven: 1st Movement from Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor 'Pathétique'
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purcell: Music for a While• Queen: Killer Queen
Music for Stage and Screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schwartz: Defying Gravity (from 'Wicked')• Williams: Main title/rebel blockade runner (from Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope)
Fusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Afro Celt Sound System: Release• Esperanza Spalding: Samba Em Preludio

The exam will mainly test knowledge of these set works and the musical elements from which they are comprised. However, there will also be questions on music that is unfamiliar which means that study will not be limited to these eight pieces and pupils should expect to listen to and study a wide range of other pieces from different styles contained within the areas of study.

The most important reason for taking GCSE Music is because you enjoy the subject and want to continue learning more about it! Please contact Mr Jordan if you have any further questions about the course.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (WJEC) Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World

Christianity and Islam

The Course

Component 1 (50%): Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World

This paper involves learning about and assessing the way Christian belief is applied to certain ethical and philosophical issues: **issues of relationships** - marriage, sex ethics and gender equality; **issues of life and death** - creation, environmental ethics, science and religion, abortion, euthanasia and life after death; **issues of good and evil** - crime and punishment, forgiveness and the problem of evil; **issues of human rights** - social justice, prejudice and wealth and poverty.

Importantly, half of the marks given in this paper are for evaluation: this is a chance to reflect deeply and critically about profound beliefs and complex moral dilemmas.

Component 2 (25%): Christianity – Beliefs and Practices

Here we explore the fundamental beliefs of Christianity: how Christians understand God, how they think about creation and how they answer the problem of evil and suffering. We look at beliefs about Jesus Christ: incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection. We then consider the importance of key Christian practices: worship, prayer, social action and mission.

Component 3 (25%) Islam – Beliefs and Practices

In this paper we explore the central beliefs of Islam: articles of faith, the nature and character of Allah, the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh), sources of wisdom and beliefs about life after death. We also learn about important practices: the creed, prayer, pilgrimage, giving to the poor, fasting and festivals.

Again, half of the marks in these two papers are given for evaluating the significance of key ideas for believers. In other words, our studies will take us into the heart of both a Christian and an Islamic view of the world.

If you've enjoyed RE in S3, studying philosophical questions and ethical dilemmas, then consider GCSE RS.

The Assessment

There is no coursework in RS. Assessment is by two exams, each two hours long.

The Value of RS

Religious Studies is a respected academic subject that requires students to understand some challenging material and then to argue their viewpoint clearly. It is valuable for developing critical thinking skills and learning how to express ideas clearly and persuasively.

The Students

Students need to be ready to consider new ideas and to argue their case. They do not need to have any particular religious conviction or, indeed, any religious faith at all. In the past, students with a variety of views, Muslims, atheists, Christians and agnostics have completed the course with great success.

What some past students have said:

“RS makes you think. You suddenly see the other side of things...”

“ - Exciting debates and drama.”

“ - Great for learning how to argue your point of view.”

SCIENCE (AQA)

The GCSE course starts in S3/Y9, where pupils are taught Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately for two periods a week. The pupils study some concepts from KS3 and make a start on some GCSE topics.

In S4-5/Y10-11, pupils continue to be taught Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately for three periods per week each. There are two possible routes at this level, leading to the award of either two GCSEs (Combined Science Trilogy) or three separate GCSEs (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

Practical work is now assessed through a series of required practical experiments in each subject which will take place throughout the course and as part of the programme of study.

The content of each science GCSE is listed below. Most topics are covered in greater depth than specified by AQA. This additional information is very helpful to students going on to study at Advanced Level.

Sciences at GCSE

- **Biology**

- Cell Biology
- Organisation
- Infection and Response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and Response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

- **Chemistry**

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

- **Physics**

- Forces
- Energy
- Waves
- Electricity
- Magnetism and Electromagnetism
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure
- Space physics (physics only)