

Welcome

You're about to begin your journey into the world of GCSE: a brilliantly exciting time, with many possible pathways, and the chance to really narrow down your focus so that your timetable includes your personally chosen subjects. For some of you, this will mean thinking really carefully about your future – there may be GCSE choices which are crucial to your choice of future career – but it is likely many of you will feel that you do not yet know what that future career might be. Some of the greatest people in the world did not start their current careers until years after they had left university, let alone in Year 9!

Gold medal-winning Olympian, Helen Glover, had never rowed a boat before she left university. But what she did have was a love of all things sport-related, including studying sports for her degree. The passion she showed for hockey, tennis and running was a brilliant springboard from which to excel in a different sport, and this leads to the most important rule when choosing your options: pick subjects you enjoy!

Education is the foundation of all we do in life. It shapes who we are and what we aspire to be. 99

Julie Payette, Engineer and Astronaut

GCSEs are tough and get tougher as you move towards the end of Year 11. The pressures of coursework, portfolios, mocks and ever-looming exams come at just the point in your teenage years when you are likely to be thinking about learning to drive, the latest TikTok video or what to binge next on Netflix. The only thing you can do to help yourself stay motivated is to pick subjects you actually enjoy studying!

Of course, if you have a burning desire to work in medicine or zoology, for example, you will need good grades in science, regardless of how much you enjoy them; this does not, however, prevent you from picking an arts-based route for the remaining options. Whatever motivates you on a cold Monday morning is a good place to start – we all do our best when we are happy.

If you are really not sure what you enjoy most (or not), then now is the time to speak to your subject teachers, and form tutors, to get their advice. Do they think that you would be a good candidate for their subject? Can they recommend any strategies to help you decide? Make sure you read this booklet and think about how the courses are put together – is there an element of coursework or is it all a final exam? Does the course sound interesting? Might two particular options link well together?

Thinking about your next steps and where your future path will take you is certainly an exciting time. Remember there are many people to support you, both in making your choices and helping you to achieve your goals.



The Great Ballard Difference

At Great Ballard we believe school should prepare children for life, not just exams. We want to help pupils to shape their studies around their passions and their strengths, but we also think there are some subjects that no student should give up too soon. We find space for a parallel core curriculum that reflects the unique school we are and the values and breadth that contribute to our ethos.

Unlike students elsewhere, our students will stay active and continue to exercise, cook and study technology right through to Year 11; they will be role models, volunteers and leaders. And all this regardless of what GCSEs they take or what pathways they will follow when they leave us. The healthy habits, self-motivation, life skills and independence that we nurture here will set them up well for Sixth Form and for real life beyond the GB bubble.

All students will continue to have opportunities to study:

- Food and Nutrition
- Technology and Communication
- · Careers and future pathways
- Service and Leadership
- Physical Education
- Outdoor Learning

Alongside GCSEs they will also have opportunities to achieve other nationally recognised qualifications including:

- · The Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Microsoft Certifications
- Project Qualification, Level 1 or 2
- LiFE (Lessons in Financial Education) Award, Level 1

educations. One teaches us how to make a living and the other how to

live.



Here to support you

The step up to GCSE can often feel daunting. It marks the beginning of a two-year journey towards examinations that will shape the next stage of your academic career. But remember, you have been preparing for this moment throughout your entire school life. You are not alone, and you can do this.

At Great Ballard, wellbeing sits at the heart of everything we do. Throughout your GCSE journey, you will be supported by an experienced and caring team of staff who understand the structure, the challenges, and the strategies that make a real difference. They know the highs and lows of the process, and they are here to help you navigate the sometimes choppy waters with confidence.

Equally, it is vital to prioritise self-care and mental health during these years. We teach students about the science of learning, provide regular time for health and exercise, and encourage balance between academic ambition and personal wellbeing. This holistic approach helps to reduce stress and anxiety while giving you the best chance to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

We also believe that the right environment is key to success. Great Ballard is a home away from home, with spaces designed to support you: common rooms, the Enhanced Learning Centre, pastoral and academic offices are there when you need them and the natural beauty of the South Downs is right on our doorstep. Equally important though, are the people who make up our community: your Tutor team will check in with you daily, but you can also turn to our heads of Key Stage, subject teachers, SEN specialists and Mental Health Lead. Every member of staff plays a role in supporting you through this exciting, challenging and important journey.

Good luck to you all. We are with you every step of the way.

Dan JosephPastoral Deputy



Tea Club

A weekly gathering around a nice cup of tea (or two!)

Great Outdoors

Fresh air and nature for all students

Form Tutor

All students benefit from a daily catch-up with their tutor team

Wellbeing-focused Curriculum

Health, fitness, social and moral education

Shine Hub

Specialist SEN support where needed

Champion Groups

All students choose their own "champion" staff member to support them

House System

An integral part of our school family history and part of our peer system structure

Mental Health Support

Our dedicated Mental Health Lead supports all students across the school

Achieve your potential

Every student in the senior school is set an aspirational target grade – a 'Beacon Grade' - using cognitive assessment test (CAT) data from GL Assessments, teacher assessments and prior learning. As a smaller school, we take pride in how well we get to know each pupil, from how to help them achieve their very best, to building strategies for those areas in which they might struggle. As such, tutors and subject teachers review Beacon Grades throughout the year to ensure that the challenge we've thrown down has not been thrown too far!

Progress Reviews

At each reporting stage, whether it be a 'snapshot' or a full written report, students will be part of the same progress review process:

Being confident and believing in your own self-worth is necessary to achieving your potential

99

- Sheryl Sandberg

Parent/ tutor/ student review of grades lead to evaluation of Beacon Grade

Beacon Grade
is set using assessment
data and teacher input

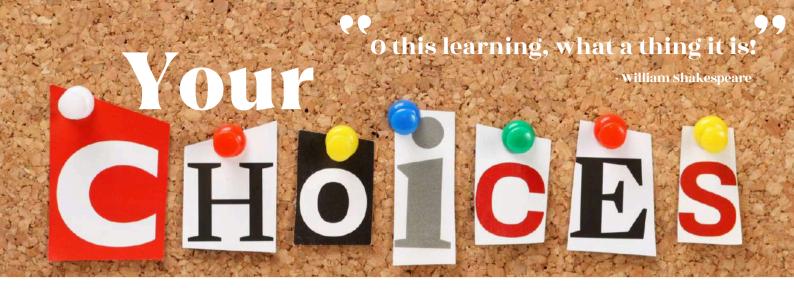
Students are

Progress grades are reviewed with tutors



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Students are awarded a "working at" and "current prediction" grade



We aim to provide a curriculum that is tailored to our students' interests, as we believe that enjoying learning is a great habit to build for lifelong success.

All students at Great Ballard will study the core subjects (English, Maths and Science). Even within these subjects, there is an element of choice: most students will study English Literature, but for some this may not be the

correct path. In Science, students may follow either a Combined (double) Science route, gaining 2 GCSEs (from all 3 science topics) or, if chosen as one of their three options, the Triple Science route gaining 3 GCSEs, 1 from each science topic (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

Students can choose up to three options, and form tutors and subject teachers will work closely with tutees and parents to ensure these are chosen with a clear pathway in mind, whether that be a particular sixth-form provider, or a workplace environment. We will aim to meet first choices where possible.

In addition, all senior students will gain industry-standard qualifications in Computer Science, through Microsoft Certifications, and all will have the opportunity to gain an extra GCSE (or equivalent to half a GCSE) with a project qualification, delivered through their Learning to Learn (L2L) lessons.

SUPPORT

Core:

English Language
English Literature
Maths
Science (2 GCSEs)
Microsoft Certificate
LiFE (Finance Level 1)

OPTIONS Two options + Study Support

STANDARD

Core:

English Language
English Literature
Maths
Science (2 GCSEs)
Microsoft Certificate
LiFE (Finance Level 1)

OPTIONS Three options + Project Qualification

Our current GCSE options choices include:

- History
- Geography
- Spanish
- French
- Sport Science (Cambs Technical)
- PE
- ICT
- Music
- Art & Design (2 options)
 - Fine Art and Photography
 - Textiles
- Drama
- Triple Science

STRETCH

Core:

English Language English Literature Maths Science (3 GCSEs) Microsoft Certificate LiFE (Finance Level 1/2)

OPTIONS

Three options

Project Qualification

Enrichment possibilities

DofE at Great Ballard

We are proud that Great Ballard is now a fully licensed centre for delivering the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. Our students formally start working towards their Bronze award in Year 9. During the course of the year our students will complete a two day hike in the South Downs. Besides their expedition, students also complete Volunteering, Skills and Physical sections.

Why should I complete the DofE award?

These prestigious awards present a brilliant way for you to discover just how much you are capable of. DofE gives young people the chance to follow their passions, learn new skills and make a difference in the community.

The award consists of four key sections:

- Volunteering
- · Physical challenge
- · Development of skills
- Expedition

Perhaps the most widely known part of the award is the expedition, and over the past years students have surprised themselves with how well they can tackle this considerable challenge in their teams. With impressive backpacks and even more impressive determination, last year's teams were dropped in 6 locations across West Sussex, and left to their own devices to put their training into action. Besides their expedition, our students have also been cleaning churches, helping in care homes, becoming 'Young Leaders' at scout groups and so much more to complete their Duke of Edinburgh

Award Volunteering section, not to mention all the hard work towards their Skills and Physical sections. The DofE award can help students to build resilience, confidence and self-motivation. You will learn to solve problems, to collaborate and to live healthier, more purposeful lives. It is a qualification that can give you an edge too when applying for colleges, universities and jobs in the future.

How will this award help me in the future?

You'll be encouraged to try new activities and to help out in your local community. Taking part in the scheme helps build confidence, resilience, skills and friendship groups and you'll (hopefully!) have a brilliant time doing it.

It also gives you the added benefit of gaining a competitive edge as colleges, universities and employers regard a DofE Award highly so it will help open the right doors for you. Many of the skills you gain in pursuit of the award can be applied to your studies as well as your personal and social development.



...when you support your child's pursuit of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, you're investing in their future.



- The DofE Foundation

Project S Qualification



Head of KS4: Joe Follows j.follows@greatballard.co.uk

Why should I complete a Foundation or Higher Project Qualification?

This is a compulsory course. The project supervisor will sign off projects and decide which qualification will be entered, depending on the student's initial project proposal and portfolio work.

What will we study?

The taught element of the course focuses on research skills, methods, ethics, planning and reviewing, referencing and presentation skills.

Students must choose their own area of study and narrow this down to a specific research question. They must plan their own research project and write up their findings, before presenting them, alongside a self-evaluation of their project.

How will this qualification help me in the future?

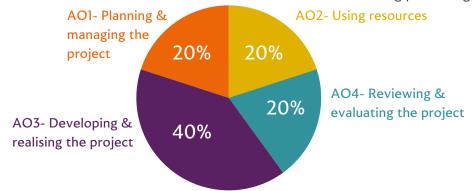
This qualification demonstrates complete independence and perseverance, as well as developing time and resource-management skills. Students must be self-motivated in order to complete this project, and therefore colleges, schools and universities value the qualification highly.

In further education, most centres will offer students the opportunity to gain an extra A-Level – an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) – and as such, this qualification will stand students in good stead for this, and allow them to have experienced the dedication required to complete a self-managed project.

Examination & Assessments

The GCSE requires either 30 or 60 hours work for Foundation and Higher projects respectively. Students must keep a Project Log of all hours completed and must produce a written commentary of their project. Students may produce an 'artefact' (model, artwork, film or audio, for example) alongside commentary, or may choose to produce a written project.

The assessment is 100% coursework and is broken down into the following percentages:



Microsoft certifications are grouped by theme and are modular, allowing students to carve out their own specialism during their Computer Science lessons. Students will work towards the 'Fundamental' certification. Some of the specialisations include:

- Developer
- Data Engineer
- Administrator
- Solution Architect
- Al Engineer
- Microsoft 365 Dynamics
- Microsoft Office

Examination & Assessments

Students will sit a final, online assessment.

How will this qualification help me in the future?

Microsoft believes that technology skills are essential to the prosperity of both individuals and nations. These skills contribute to economic growth through increased productivity, and by creating greater capacity to adopt new technologies, ways of working and new sources of innovation.

Furthermore, companies want to hire skilled employees. They need people with strong IT skills to manage today's IT investments, and with the continued explosion of growth in technology, that trend is not expected to change.

Clearly defined pathways to Microsoft Office Specialist and Office 365 certifications not only help students differentiate themselves in a competitive job market, but can lead to increased compensation in the workplace. Plus, students can receive college course credits for qualifying Microsoft Imagine Academy courses. Students can also learn and get certified on advanced technology skills in Imagine Infrastructure and Software Development.



Mathematics

GCSE Mathematics
Head of Maths: Jamie Duffield
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Exam Board: Edexcel

What will we study?

This compulsory GCSE will cover the six areas below

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change
- Geometry
- Probability
- Statistics

Examination & Assessments

- Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9 1) in Mathematics (1MA1)
- There are three 90 minute exams. One paper is Non-Calculator and two are Calculator papers. Each paper carries 80 marks giving a total of 240.
- This is a two-tier entry exam Foundation and Higher.

The maximum grade on the Foundation paper is 5 (comparable to a strong grade C in the old GCSE system). The maximum grade for the Higher examinations is 9 (A* previously).

Regular assessments will take place throughout the GCSE course to assess individual progress and inform teaching and learning.

Why should I choose Mathematics?

This is a compulsory GCSE. Mathematics is an absolutely essential life skill. Mathematics is excellent for our brains and helps us to develop important neural pathways that we can use in many other areas of life. In other words, it

makes our brain better at learning other things. Mathematics has many real life applications, from buying a house, making a cake, prescribing the right amount of medication or designing the next space shuttle.

Mathematics helps us have better problem solving skills; in our daily lives we encounter many logistical problems and, whether we know it or not, we often solve them using maths skills.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Mathematics is needed in every job and career. Sometimes it is just day to day maths, but you will need GCSE Maths if you want to study it at A level and many universities will expect it if you want to study certain degrees.

Mathematics is a universal language. Maths is understood across cultures, countries and languages.

Statistics

GCSE Statistics is also offered as a stretch option to some students who we feel can cope with the additional challenge. This can be taken in Y10 or Y11. There is a Statistics Club once a week. Students need to be excellent at independent mathematical study to take this GCSE.

English Literature Head of English: Naomy Larkin n.larkin@greatballard.co.uk Exam Board: Edexcel

What will we study?

This IGCSE allows for a range of literary classics, and contemporary fiction, to be explored. We will study a range of poetry, spanning from the Renaissance, the Romantics and through to the modern day, and we will learn how to respond to an unseen poem; a literary heritage text, usually a Shakespeare play; a modern prose text and a modern drama text. During the course, we will study the socio-historical context surrounding these texts, learning how to hone our analytical skills to be able to evaluate a writer's craft. The skills you will work on are:

- Demonstrating a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement.
- Analysing the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects.
- Exploring links and connections between texts.
- Showing an understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

Examination & Assessments

There is one 2-hour exam, comprising poetry, unseen poetry, and a modern prose text. It is worth 60% of the IGCSE.

You will complete two pieces of coursework: one on the literary heritage text and one on the modern prose text. Both pieces are worth 20% each.

Why should I choose English Literature?

This is a compulsory IGCSE, although in a small number of cases, students may have the opportunity to focus only on English Language for Year 11*. The English Literature course has been designed to inspire, challenge and motivate every student, regardless of ability. It will support English Language and as such, we recommend all students sitting two IGCSEs in English. The study of literature encourages a lifelong love of reading and helps to develop increasingly complex ways of understanding and using language.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

This course will help you to make links across all subjects and open up your understanding of the world. The analytical skills you will gain, looking at a wide variety of plays, poems and prose, will be invaluable in your further education. You will practise discussion, debating and presentation skills and build your confidence before an audience. The planning and research required for your written work will help you to become more independent and organised. If you are interested in a career in law, management, analytics or in any humanities field, this is a brilliant subject from which to build.

*Where a student may be struggling with English Language, they may be advised to consider dropping English Literature to focus on English Language. This is not advised unless deemed absolutely necessary, and is at the discretion of the Head of English, parents and pupil.

English Enguage



IGCSE English Language
Head of English: Naomy Larkin
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Exam Board: Edexcel

What will we study?

This IGCSE allows for a range of fiction and non-fiction works to be explored, as well as the learning of skills that support the craft of writing, both imaginatively and formally. We will study a handful of poems and fictional excerpts, which we will explore in parallel to understand how writers have created meaning; we will study a range of non-fiction excerpts, including speeches, articles and autobiographies; and we will also learn how to decode media advertising and articles, in order to explore how messages are conveyed. Finally, we will work on crafting our own writing. The skills we will develop are:

- Reading and understanding a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives.
- Understanding and analysing how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.
- Exploring connections between writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed.
- Communicating effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences.
- Writing clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Examination & Assessments

There is one 2-hour 15 minute exam, comprising two non-fiction texts (one prepared and one

unseen), and a piece of transactional writing. These are worth 60% of the IGCSE. You will complete two pieces of coursework: one on a range of given texts and one a piece of imaginative writing. Both pieces are worth 20% each.

Why should I choose English Language?

This is a compulsory IGCSE. English Language is one of the most important subjects you will study, as it is the gateway to all other subjects. Our ability to decode the messages given to us daily, as well as being able to communicate our ideas, is crucial to any given situation, whether it be in a professional or social context. Your progress in this subject will help support all your other subjects, regardless of what they are.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Most university courses or professional qualifications require a pass (Grade 4) in English Language, as do many post-16 courses. Being a proficient reader and writer will support you in whatever you choose to do after your GCSEs and beyond. As for developing your imagination through creative writing, these skills are vital in nearly all jobs, but especially those of a design-based nature. And who hasn't used their imaginative skills when trying to get out of loading the dishwasher? English Language is the gift that keeps on giving.

2 Combined 2 Science



GCSE Combined Science
Head of Science: Jevan Fletcher
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Exam Board: AQA

What will we study?

AQA GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy is the equivalent of two GCSE grades. It provides an insight into how science works, is strongly linked to science in the world around us and includes new and developing technologies such as stem cell research and nuclear power.

Students are taught key scientific knowledge through classroom-based teaching and practical work. They will use a range of sources of information to consider the benefits and drawbacks of scientific developments and will be practised in data handling and analysis. Independent work is integral to the course and students will carry out practical investigations on a regular basis.

This course covers the key scientific principles required to pursue many science disciplines beyond GCSE. The course components are split equally between Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Examination & Assessments

Assessment is in the form of 6 exams (2 for each science); I hour and 15 minutes per paper.

Exams are taken at the end of Year 11 and there is no coursework. There are a variety of question styles including multiple choice, data analysis, mathematical equations, and structured long answer questions.

There are 21 required practical activities which are completed within lesson time and assessed as questions in the written exams.

This is a two-tier entry exam – Foundation and Higher.

The maximum grade on the Foundation paper is 5 (comparable to a strong grade C in the old GCSE system).

The maximum grade for the Higher examinations is 9 (A* previously).

Regular assessments will take place throughout the GCSE course to assess individual progress and inform teaching and learning.

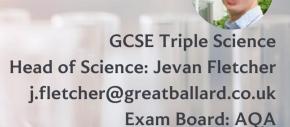
Why should I choose Science?

This is a core subject but probably one of the most important subjects that you will study if you are to successfully live in the 21st Century. Science is about attempting to understand the incredibly complex universe in which we all live, whilst developing curiosity and resilience. Science certainly does not have all the answers, but its study does enable us to start asking interesting questions. Your progress in this subject will help support all your other subjects, regardless of what they are, as you build on your knowledge and expand your inquisitiveness.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Almost all jobs require some understanding of science, for example support staff in laboratories, in chemical production, food, engineering, mechanical, health and beauty, therapeutic and medical industries. Further study could lead to opportunities in medicine, veterinary work, research work, dental work, teaching and many other careers. Higher Tier Combined Science can lead on to A-level in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.





AQA GCSE Triple Science will provide learners with three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The curriculum taught encourages learners to be inspired, motivated and challenged in all areas of science. As with Combined Science, the Triple Science option provides an insight into how science works; stimulating learners' curiosity about the world around them and encouraging them to engage with science in their everyday lives.

Examination & Assessments

To achieve GCSEs in the 3 science subjects of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics the curriculum content taught is greater than in the Combined Science route and more lesson time is required. This is reflected in the increased duration of examinations compared to Combined Science.

Assessment is in the form of 6 exams (2 for each science); I hour and 45 minutes per paper. Exams are taken at the end of Year II and there is no coursework. There are a variety of question styles from multiple choice to structured long answer questions.

There are 28 required practical activities:

- 10 in Biology
- 8 in Chemistry
- 10 in Physics

The required practical activities are taught within lessons and assessed as questions within the written examinations.

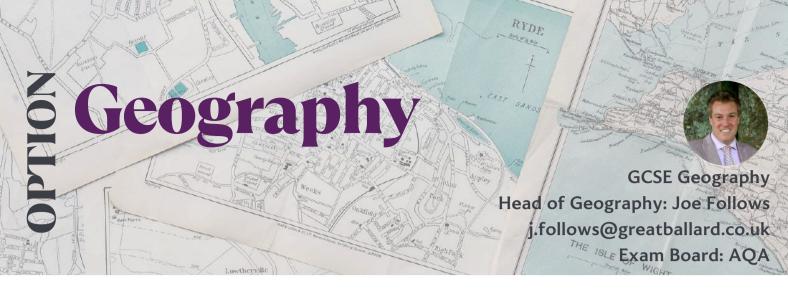
Whilst this is also a two-tier entry exam (Higher and Foundation tiers), we expect students who take Triple Science to be capable and enthusiastic scientists aiming for the top grades, and so (other than in very rare cases), we encourage all towards the Higher Tier.

Why should I choose Triple Science?

Triple Science is for learners with a keen interest in all aspects of science and is an excellent option for those who may be considering a future with a scientific influence. Achieving separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics increases the academic value of college, university and employment applications.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Many jobs require an understanding of science and the triple award course will give you the grounding to access higher level science courses and employment in the field. Triple Science is an ideal stepping stone to science at A level.



"Geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together."

Barack Obama

Geography gives the opportunity to cover many topic areas, appreciate the world beyond our borders and build skills that last a lifetime.

The course covers aspects of physical and human geography, two compulsory fieldwork investigations and a decision-making process through an issue evaluation. Full topics are listed in the table below.

Examinations & Assessments

Why should I choose Geography?

Geography is the broadest subject on the curriculum, it spans both the sciences and the arts and allows these two disciplines to be linked together.

You will have the opportunity to choose areas of your learning, focusing on places that are interesting and/or unknown to you. At the end of the course, you will have developed a wide range of skills that are transferrable across the wider curriculum.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Geography will open many options for you in your future. Employers and universities see Geography as a robust academic subject, rich in skills, knowledge and understanding. It is highly flexible in terms of what you can combine it with, at GCSE, A Level and beyond.

Career paths are vast, with geography being one of the most employable degree qualifications.

Paper 1 – 1 hour 30 minutes	Paper 2 – 1 hour 30 minutes	Paper 3 – 1 hour 30 minutes
Living with the physical environment	Challenges in the human environment	Geographical application
The challenge of natural hazards (tectonic hazards, atmospheric hazards and climate change) The living world (Ecosystems, tropical rainforests and hot deserts) Physical landscapes in the UK (Coasts and Rivers)	Urban issues and challenges (urban change in the UK, the urban world and sustainable urban development) The changing economic world (development gap, study of a NEE and the UK economy) Challenge of resource management (Food, water and energy)	Issue evaluation (pre-release information issued 12 weeks before the exam) Fieldwork (two investigations based on taught topics from paper 1 and 2) Geographical skills (cartographic, graphical and statistical skills)
35% of GCSE grade	35% of GCSE grade	30% of GCSE

^{*}Please note there will be a cost of approximately £150 to cover the fieldwork element of the course. Previously we have visited Bristol and the Jurassic Coast.

History is many things, but never boring. It tells the story of the world as it was, helping you understand the world as it is today, your place in it, and how you can shape the future. It's also a fantastic subject for developing skills you'll use in every part of life. From analysing evidence to building strong arguments and communicating your ideas clearly, History sets you up for success, whether you're aiming for a career in journalism, law, project management or even working behind the scenes on Horrible Histories!

During this course, you will investigate:

- What happened to Germany after WWI,
 Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s, and how
 everyday life changed under his control, and
 Germany's experience of the Second World
 War.
- How the Vietnam War began, why the USA became involved, and the devastating impact it had on the Vietnamese people.
- How minorities in the USA fought for, and won, their civil rights in the post-war years.
- The fascinating history of medicine, from old beliefs in how disease spread to modern scientific breakthroughs and the founding of the NHS.

Examination & Assessments

Paper 1: Depth studies:

- Germany 1918-45 (25%)
- Civil rights in the USA (25%)

Paper 2: Investigation:

- The Vietnam War 1945–1975 (25%)
- Breadth Study: Changes in Medicine 1848– 1948 (25%)

Why should I choose History?

History is much more than a list of dates and names. It connects directly to the world around us and helps explain the big issues we face today. By studying it, you'll gain insight into racism, power, poverty, politics, and conflict—issues that continue to shape society. It will also sharpen your ability to question information, judge how reliable it is, and spot when facts are being twisted to influence opinions. In our social media-driven world, those skills couldn't be more important.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Colleges, universities, and employers all recognise a GCSE in History as evidence of strong thinking skills and academic ability; it is the foremost facilitating subject. More importantly, it gives you a set of transferable skills that are valuable in almost any career:

- Analysing and evaluating different sources of information.
- Understanding people and what drives their decisions.
- Building and presenting convincing arguments.
- Exploring and debating the big questions of society, from racism and politics to war, discrimination and genocide.

Modern Foreign Languages Head of La



GCSE Languages

Head of Languages: Joanne Sykes j.sykes@greatballard.co.uk

Exam Board: AQA

What will we study?

Students may choose to study French or Spanish, with German available as a Go Beyond option. The Edexcel GCSE is linear, meaning you will sit exams at the end of the course.

The GCSE topic headings are: My personal world; Lifestyle and wellbeing; My neighbourhood; Media and technology; Studying and my future; Travel and tourism. These themes allow us to explore areas of interest such as relationships with family and friends, social media, going out, etc.

See below:

Family	friends	relationships	equality
physical wellbeing	mental wellbeing	food and drink	sports
places in town	shopping	transport	the natural world
environmental issues	social media and gaming	future opportunities	school
music	TV and film	accommodation	tourist attractions

Within this study you will develop your capabilities of the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking, as well as progressively develop your understanding of the grammar.

You will also need to develop communication strategies as part of the teaching and learning process, which will greatly increase your ability to cope successfully with unknown words.

There are two main types of strategy: those that relate to understanding (reading and listening) and those that relate to production (speaking and writing), and include using visual, social and context aides, grammatical markers and language patterns and cognates.

We use a range of materials, including textbooks, authentic texts, target language TV and film, and online resources to explore the associated countries and cultures.

Examination & Assessments

There are four exams, covering the four skills, all worth 25%.

Paper 1: Speaking - Tasks include: reading aloud; transactional role-play; a picture description and follow-on conversation.

Paper 2: Listening - Section A: Listening - multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English. Section B: Dictation

Paper 3: Reading - Section A: Reading - multiplechoice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English. Section B: Translation into English

Paper 4: Writing - Picture description task (foundation only). Two open response writings (Foundation = 40-50 words & 80-90 words. Higher = 80-90 words and 130-150 words) with a choice of two for each so you can pick the one you feel more confident with. Translation into French/Spanish/German – 5 sentences for Foundation, a short paragraph for higher.

A student taking Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 1 to 5. A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9. A student sitting the Higher tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Throughout the course we use practice papers in each tier, so we can make an informed decision about which to sit.

Why should I choose a language subject?

At Great Ballard we strongly believe in languages as a

skill for life and something students will enjoy and find rewarding. Learning a language helps your memory, creativity, listening skills and self-confidence. By taking a language at GCSE, you'll have amazing communication and problem-solving skills and a valuable talent that's applicable to almost everything you do. Learning a foreign language can deepen our understanding of our own language as well as expand memory capacity for other subjects. Studies have found that language learning helps improve people's thinking skills and memory abilities, as well as helping to ignoring distractions. A study by Dr. Thomas Bak of Edinburgh University, showed that young adults proficient in two languages performed better on attention tests and had better concentration than those who spoke only one language. 'As a language learner, you'll not only become a more conscious thinker and listener who can communicate clearly and think creatively, but you'll also gain the most significant benefit of multilingualism: a broader, more global perspective,' according to the Huffington Post. Language-learning empowers students to make intellectual connections between subjects, to be more confident and have a go.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Globalisation means where competitors and supply chains were often just down the road, they are now just as likely to be in a different continent. Where products and services were once tangible, they are now more conceptual, innovative and digital than ever before. This demands a much broader knowledgebase and skillset, as well as greater level of cultural awareness than ever before.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) found that 74% of employers recruit applicants with foreign language conversational ability rather than those who are word perfect. They believe this can 'help break the ice, deepen cultural understanding, and open business access to new markets'. The CBI also has found that for firms that need employees with languages other than English, major European languages continue to be those most in demand; Spanish (35%) and French (32%).

Did you know, only 6% of the world's population speak English as a first language and 75% of the world's population don't speak any English at all? Being able to communicate in more than one language will boost your college applications and increase your employability; employers know that applicants who have studied a language have better listening and communicating skills, are more culturally aware and thrive in diverse situations. And given that only 38% of Brits speak a foreign language, you will really stand out as a global citizen.

GCSE Physical Education
Head of Sport: Ben Purgavie
b.purgavie@greatballard.co.uk
Exam Board: AQA

What will we study?

This qualification provides an engaging and modern approach to the world of Sport and Performance. We will develop understanding of anatomy and physiology and how this relates to biomechanics/ movement analysis and performance in a range of sports. We will also look at how to create safe and appropriate training plans to aid sporting performance as well as the use of data in sport, which will provide skills needed in many sports-related careers. As well as the physiological side of sport, students will also learn about sports psychology, socio-cultural influences and the relationship between health, fitness and wellbeing. All these subject areas will provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to take any level 3 sports qualification post Great Ballard.

Across the two years of the course, you will study:

- · Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- · Physical training
- Use of data
- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- · Health, fitness and wellbeing

Examination & Assessments

Paper 1: The Human body and movement in physical activity and sport

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

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport

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

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport

- Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity).
- Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.
- 100 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Why should I choose GCSE PE?

This qualification will provide you with a broad range of knowledge and skills across a variety of areas in sport, which will provide the perfect foundation for taking any level 3 sports qualification post Great Ballard, including vocational qualifications as well as A levels. This course is suited best for those with a passion for sport and an ability to perform to a good standard in a team sport, an individual sport and then either another individual or team sport (3 sports in total). Due to this, playing outside of school is highly beneficial but not a necessity.

How will this course help me in the future?

Sport is a high-profile and expanding industry and, in the UK, contributes over £20bn to the economy. Sport now ranks within the top 15 sectors in the country and its wider economic benefits mean it plays a huge part in our society. There are a wide range of job roles to progress into such as Activity Leader, Sports Analyst, Sports Coach, Fitness Instructor, Physiotherapist, Teacher or Leisure manager.

It's also widely recognised that regular participation in sport and physical activity is highly beneficial both to individuals and to society as a whole.

Sport Science



Cambridge National Certificate in Sports Science

Head of Sport: Ben Purgavie

b.purgavie@greatballard.co.uk

Exam Board: OCR

What will we study?

This qualification provides an engaging and relevant introduction to the world of Sports Science. By understanding the anatomy and physiology of the body, we can also understand how injuries occur and how they can be treated. Similarly, we can plan, organise and carry out training programmes with the intention of causing specific adaptations to occur in the body's systems, leading to improved performance in sport.

In this course you will study three separate units over Years 10 and 11:

- Unit R180: "Reducing the risk of sports injuries and dealing with common medical conditions". This is a compulsory unit and is assessed externally via a written, on demand test.
- Unit R181: "Applying the principles of training: fitness and how it affects skill performance" is a compulsory unit, and is assessed internally via a number of practical and written assignments over the two years.
- Unit R182: "The body's response to physical activity and how technology informs this". This is internally assessed via written assignments and three practical tasks, each of which needs to be evidenced.

This qualification is the vocational option when wanting to pursue Sport at Key Stage 4.

Examination & Assessments

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Sport Science (GCSE 9-1 Equivalent)

Pupils will complete 3 units across the two years.
In total there are three modules: one exam module and two coursework modules.

 R180 (exam unit) contributes towards 40% of the overall. The exam takes one hour and fifteen minutes.

- R181 is worth 40%
- R182 is worth 20%

All of these assignments are set by the exam board in charge of the course and marked internally. Some of these assignments will then be sent off for external moderation as well. A coursework portfolio is also kept and regularly updated for your two other units. This may include assignments produced by you, which could take the form of a written essay, annotated video clips, PowerPoint presentations, posters, interviews and witness statements.

Why should I choose Sports Science?

The OCR Cambridge National Programmes offer students the solid foundation required for further study or progression into industry. Students will develop a wide range of highly desirable, transferable skills such as communication, problem solving, team working and performing under pressure. They provide an excellent start for vocational study, contribute to a broad curriculum and offer and enable progression to Level 3 vocational qualifications or A Level.

How will this course help me in the future?

Sport is a high-profile and expanding industry and in the UK, contributing over £20bn to the economy, sport now ranks within the top 15 sectors in the country and its wider economic benefits mean it plays a huge part in our society. There is a wide range of job roles to progress into such as Activity Leader, Sports Coach, Fitness Instructor, Physiotherapist and Leisure Assistant. It's also widely recognised that regular participation in sport and physical activity is highly beneficial both to individuals and to society as a whole.

- ICT Fundamentals
- Computer Systems
- Networks and Communication
- Digital Applications
- Security and Ethics
- Social Impacts of ICT
- Emerging Technologies

Examinations & Assessments

Examination Structure:

- Written exam papers typically lasting 60-120 minutes
- Multiple-choice, short-answer, and extendedresponse questions
- Questions on theory, practical application and case studies

Coursework/Controlled Assessments (if applicable):

- Practical assignments completed under controlled conditions
- Tasks may include creating digital products (e.g., websites, presentations, databases)
- Assessment of planning, development, testing, and evaluation of ICT solutions.

Why should I choose ICT?

Develop Essential Digital Skills:

Learn practical ICT skills such as using software, creating digital content, and understanding networks, which are valuable in almost any career.

High Demand for ICT Knowledge:

As technology drives industries, having ICT knowledge is crucial for future jobs in sectors like business, healthcare, and engineering.

Foundation for Advanced Studies:

A great stepping stone for further study in ICT, computer science, or related fields in higher education.

Problem-Solving and Creativity:

ICT encourages critical thinking and creative problemsolving, especially when creating digital solutions or analysing data.

Versatility in Career Options:

ICT skills are applicable across a wide range of careers, from tech-based roles like software development to non-technical jobs that rely on technology, such as marketing and finance.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

Career Opportunities:

ICT skills are in demand, offering diverse career paths such as IT support, web development, digital marketing, and more.

Preparation for Further Education:

GCSE ICT provides a solid foundation for studying advanced subjects like A-Level Computer Science or vocational ICT qualifications.

Essential Life Skills:

You'll develop digital literacy, from personal finance management to communication and research.

Improved Problem-Solving Abilities:

ICT encourages logical thinking, helping you analyse problems and design solutions, which is beneficial in both academic and real-world situations.

Adaptability to Technological Changes:

As technology evolves, the skills you learn will help you stay adaptable and keep up with new digital tools and innovations.

Our focus of study is divided into three areas:

- Listening and Appraising You will learn about a wide range of instrumental and vocal music, fusions, and music for stage and screen, through an in-depth study of eight set works and related wider listening. You will develop theory and aural skills, along with a deep understanding of harmony and the musical elements, as you learn the history and context of the pieces. You will learn how to recognise different musical styles and become expert at writing detailed comparisons.
- Composition You will become fluent with music technology as you learn to compose and record your own music using digital notation and multi-track sequencing software as well as creating compositions on your chosen instrument.
- Performing You will develop performance skills through your own regular practice, regular attendance of music groups and with support from your music teachers. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to perform, both solo and as part of a group.

Examination & Assessments

The GCSE will be assessed by means of the three areas mentioned above:

- Listening and appraising- an exam based on four areas of study: 40% of final grade.
- Composition- two compositions, one free choice and one to a set brief: 30% of final grade.

 Performing- one solo and one ensemble piece, these should be at minimum of a Grade 3 standard, or above: combined total of 30% of final grade.

Why should I choose Music?

Studying GCSE Music is varied, fun and creative but more than this, research has shown that studying for a GCSE in music can increase overall academic performance. Music benefits learning by activating all areas of the brain. It also offers a creative outlet, providing students with a well-rounded education. If you have a passion for discovering different types of music and like a challenge, and if you enjoy making your own music and performing, either solo or in a group, then GCSE Music could be the course for you.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

GCSE Music is a popular choice, not only because of the enjoyment the course brings, but also for the possibilities it can create in the future. It is a natural step for anyone interested in pursuing a career in music, media or the arts, however, it is also highly regarded as an academic subject by leading universities as many of the skills you will develop are transferable to other areas. Studying music can be beneficial whatever career you decide to pursue; there are professionals working in all sorts of fields such as medicine, law, management or analytics who studied music at GCSE and many of these are still playing music professionally or as a hobby.

In this GCSE there are two endorsements that students can choose to study:

- AOA GCSE Art & Design Art, Craft & Design 8201
- AQA GCSE Art & Design Textiles Design 8204

Art, Craft & Design Component 1- Portfolio: This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

You will explore and create work associated with areas of study from either:

- Fine art: for example, drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, lens-/light-based media, photography and the moving image, printmaking, mixed media and land art.
- Photography: for example, portraiture, location photography, studio photography, experimental photography, photo-journalism, moving image- video and animation, film and fashion photography.

Component 2- Externally set assignment: This is worth 40% of your overall marks.

This task paper, set by AQA, will feature 7 tasks and you will complete one of them. You will have preparation time, plus 10 hours of supervised time.

For this component you can work in both areas of fine art and photography or pick one to focus on.

Textile Design

Component 1- Portfolio: This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

You will work in one or more areas of textile design, such as:

- art textiles
- fashion design and illustration
- · costume design
- constructed textiles
- printed and dyed textiles
- surface pattern
- stitched and/or embellished textiles
- soft furnishings and/or textiles for interiors
- digital textiles
- installed textiles

Students may explore overlapping areas and combinations of areas from the above list.

Component 2- Externally set assignment: This is worth 40% of your overall marks.

This task paper, set by AQA, will feature 7 tasks and you will complete one of them. You will have preparation time, plus 10 hours of supervised time.

For this component you can work in any areas that you studied in Component 1.

GCSE Art & Design explores ideas, conveys experiences or responds to a theme or issue of personal significance. The areas of study are broad and cover drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, textile design and mixed media.

Alongside improving your practical expertise, you will learn how to:

- Develop, refine, and record your ideas
- Present a personal response that realises your intentions
- Improve your creative skills through the effective use of media, materials, techniques, processes, and technologies
- Successfully use visual language and the formal elements e.g. colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture
- Use drawing skills for different needs and purposes

Examination & Assessment

Both components will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:

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

Each Assessment Objective carries an equal weighting of 25%.

Component 1 - How it's assessed: no time limit, 96 marks (24 per assessment objective), 60% of GCSE

Component 2 – How it's assessed: Preparatory period followed by 10 hours of supervised time, 96 marks, 40% of GCSE

Why should I choose Art & Design?

If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, Art & Design is a great choice. The skills you gain make a wonderful complement to other subjects, as Art offers a way of seeing things and making sense of the world around you. It can help you with further study and prepare you for the world of work.

Arts subjects encourage self-expression and creativity and can build confidence as well as a sense of individual identity. Creativity can also help with wellbeing and improve health and happiness – research shows that arts lessons act as an outlet for releasing the pressures of studying and everyday life.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

You can continue your Art & Design studies at AS and A-level, where the same titles are available. If you do not want to take your Art & Design studies any further, the transferable skills you gain will still be valuable. You will develop problem solving, creative thinking, investigation, research, communication and teamwork skills, and gain the ability to develop, refine and present ideas. Employers and universities regard all of these highly.

Art & Design opens the door to lots of exciting careers. Try these for starters:

ceramics graphic design advertising textiles design teaching art therapy fashion design photography product design architecture fashion & media journalism theatre design exhibition design visual media textiles design video game design animation

museum curation

illustration

As well as studying a range of plays, you will understand the different roles within a production, and will analyse the work of directors, sets and actors within a set text. You will have the opportunity to watch live theatre and learn how to analyse performances. Finally, you will have the chance to work practically, creating and performing your own piece of theatre as part of a group, as well as performing scenes taken from a well-known play.

Examination & Assessments

The course consists of three components:

- Devising Theatre (40%): practical and written assessment, comprising a piece of devised theatre, and a portfolio of supporting evidence.
- Performing from a Text (20%): practical examination, based on two studied extracts from a published play. This performance or design of practical performance is assessed by an external examiner.
- Interpreting Theatre (40%): written examination, based on a set text and a review of a live piece of theatre.

Why should I choose Performing Arts?

If you enjoy using your imagination, acting and performing, then this is the GCSE for you. You will learn more about the work of professional companies and drama specialists, which will help to develop your skills and open up a new world of

careers for you. If you enjoy other arts and performance subjects, Drama can help you hone your analytical, creative and performance skills, and will support your work in GCSE English Literature.

How will this GCSE help me in the future?

No subject teaches you how to work well in a team quite like Drama. It allows you to develop your patience, ability to compromise, and communication skills. Performing and speaking in front of people will further your ability to present ideas with confidence, assisting with key life skills at interviews and in the work place.

The environment of the drama classroom is unique in that it supports and encourages participants to try new things. Drama will help you develop your resilience by taking risks, stepping outside your own comfort zone and giving it a go!

Analysing Drama productions allows you to develop your critical thinking skills; this is useful for a number of jobs and is great if you are planning on taking English Literature or Media Studies at A Level. It allows you to think more critically about the film, television and theatre that we all consume on a daily basis.

Drama is a fantastic subject for developing so many valuable skills which will support you in your studies and whatever your next step may be – did you know that 70% of Oxbridge undergrads have experience or qualifications in studying Drama, Music or dance?

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens next?

Throughout Year 9, students are supported in beginning to explore potential career paths and in understanding the skills and qualifications that will help them reach their goals.

The Autumn Term is spent reviewing the different options on offer and, towards the end of term, we host an options-based information evening for parents and students to come and meet with their potential teachers and ask questions about their courses. The deadline for options to be made will be immediately after February half term. Students will choose their top three options, and fourth and fifth 'backup' options. Courses will be confirmed before the Summer Term.

What do the numbers mean?

The GCSE numbers correspond to the old GCSE "letters" as per Ofqual's definition:

9		Top A* (around 1% nationally)
8		A/A*
7		Α
6		В
5	"Strong" GCSE Pass	B/C
4	GCSE Pass	С
3		D
2		E
1		F/G
U		U

Are IGCSEs and GCSEs the same?

The qualifications are very similar and accepted as equivalent qualifications by all top universities, schools and sixth form colleges.

Why are there so many different exam boards?

Our Heads of Department choose exam boards that best suit their students and programmes of study. The content and balance of coursework can vary, but the final qualifications are equally valuable. It is entirely normal for schools to present subjects using a variety of different boards.



Will the school be able to accommodate all combinations of options?

All schools have to make concessions with their options process and it is never possible for every single student to study the combination they would like. However, it is our ambition at Great Ballard to allow a more personal approach and to do our very best to meet individual needs and specific requests. It is hoped that the large majority of requests can be met.

How will there be time for each student to maintain their GCSE work with the wider school activities?

Subjects like MAP and L2L allow valuable time for students to develop healthy life skills, to exercise, to grow and to cook, and to embed healthy study habits.

Students will continue to run their own businesses in form and free time, and to receive timetabled Computer Science sessions every week.

The Head of Key Stage 4 works alongside tutors and families to ensure students are staying on track. A programme of revision sessions are run by subject specialists as part of our activities offering for those needing extra support.

What is L2L?

Learning 2 Learn is a bespoke curriculum, unique to Great Ballard, which explores psychology, neurology and pedagogy, as well as developing oracy, self-regulation and interpersonal skills. In this lesson, students will learn strategies for self-organisation, managing emotions, revision techniques and many other empowering habits to help across all their other subjects. They will also have time to work on their Project Qualifications and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

What is MAP?

Mental, Academic & Physical Wellbeing was developed as part of our L2L programme. Students explore nutrition and exercise in these lessons, learning how healthy lifestyles can support academic outcomes, as well as lead to greater life enjoyment. Students will learn about where food comes from and its impact on our bodies, as well as building personal fitness plans.



Find out more

If you or your child have any questions regarding GCSEs, please do get in contact with us.

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GREAT BALLARD GCSE







