

Year 8

Stage 2: Choosing the best options



Eastbrook School

Together We Learn



May 2016

HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE MY COURSES?

Keep your choices broad and balanced at this stage.

GCSEs offer academically demanding courses which have for many years been the main qualification for entry to Sixth Form, College and University. As all GCSE subjects are as challenging as each other it is important that you choose subjects that you will enjoy and are good at.

All students study the compulsory core curriculum and choose three option subjects. Some students will also study a fourth GCSE option through extended provision - lesson 6 (3.15 – 4.15 Mon & Wed).

It is an expectation that most students who are considering university in the future choose one humanities subject (Geography or History), a Modern Foreign Language e.g. French and consider Triple Science or Computing.

All students **should** take **at least one** of: Triple Science, Computer Science, French, History or Geography

- We **strongly** advise students to take a language option for GCSE if the Languages Department have identified that they are strong linguists
- If you aspire to achieve the English Baccalaureate (EB), success in the sixth form and in higher education, it is **highly recommended** that you choose a French with History or Geography
- You should choose a maximum of one from Art, Drama and Music
- You should only choose **one** Technology option i.e. not Design Technology and Food Preparation and Nutrition
- Students may take two humanities subjects e.g. Geography and History

If you have a particular career in mind, check whether any particular GCSE subjects are required as acceptance for entry to that career. You can ask Mrs Mouser for help with this if you are still uncertain or ask Mrs. Davies, our Head of Sixth Form for advice. Few careers require specific subjects at GCSE level beyond English, Mathematics and a language so keep your choices broad and balanced at this stage.

CURRICULUM CHANGE AND HOW IT WILL AFFECT YOU

All GCSEs and A levels will change over the next three years. At GCSE, English Language, English Literature and Mathematics changed from September 2015. The courses are much more academically demanding and will be assessed by an examination at the end of year 11 only. More information about individual subjects can be found on the pages that follow. Some of the information in this booklet may change over the next few months as specifications are accredited and decisions about courses are confirmed.

The big difference is that all subjects will now be awarded numbers, rather than letters and will be graded from 1- 9, with 9 being the highest number grade that you can achieve. This means that when you get your GCSE results you will have a mixture of letter grades and number grades. Design and Technology: Graphic Products, Resistant Materials and Textiles will still be awarded traditional grades (at this point).

What the new GCSEs will look like

The main features of the new GCSEs are:

1. A new grading scale of 9 to 1 will be used, with 9 being the top grade. This will allow greater differentiation between students and will help distinguish the new GCSEs from previous versions.
2. Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.
3. There will be new, more demanding content, which has been developed by government and the exam boards.
4. Courses will no longer be divided into different modules and students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.
5. Resit opportunities will only be available each November in English language and Mathematics.

The Core Curriculum

The core subjects in KS4 are as follows: -

- English
- Maths
- Science
- PE
- ECS (Ethics and Cultural Studies)*

This booklet contains some additional information on the changes to English, Mathematics and Science. Please refer to the previous Option Booklets or school website for information on the option subjects. A copy is available in the "Curriculum" section of the school website or limited replacement copies are available from the Head of Year room.

You will also be able to study 3 option subjects, where you are able to express your preference for subjects to be studied. For those students extending their curriculum to include the three sciences or Statistics or GCSE PE, these will be taught as lesson 6. Additional subjects may be available as lesson 6 if enough students wish to take them and commit to the 3 year lesson 6 class (3.15 – 4.15 Mon & Wed).

You are now choosing the subjects to be followed from Year 9 onwards from option blocks. The responses you made last term have been used to put the subjects into the different blocks in a way that minimises clashes between subjects according to the choices we received. Therefore the majority of students will be able to have their first choices.

Please note:

*Religious Studies will be offered through ECS (Ethics and Cultural Studies) in Years 10 & 11

GCSE PE is not an option in Year 9. All students have core PE in Year 9 and the GCSE course will be available to Year 10 & 11 through a combination of specialist core PE lessons and period 6 classes for suitable students (3.15 – 4.15 Mon & Wed).



GCSE Science

Students study either combined science (2 GCSE) or Triple Science (3 GCSE).

Pupils are selected to undertake the Triple Science according to their achievement in years 7, 8 and 9.

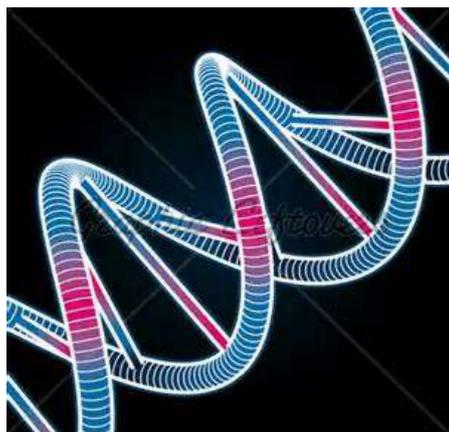
Combined Science B (2 GCSE grade in science)

Learners study biology, chemistry and physics using a narrative-based approach. Ideas are introduced within relevant and interesting settings which help learners to anchor their conceptual knowledge of the range of scientific topics required at GCSE level. Practical skills are embedded within the specification and learners are expected to carry out practical work in preparation for a written examination that will specifically test these skills.

All pupils sit for their GCSE Combined Science examination at the end of year 11. It should be noted that there is no coursework for GCSE Combined Science and assessment is 100% by written examination.



Triple Science: GCSE Biology
GCSE Chemistry
GCSE Physics



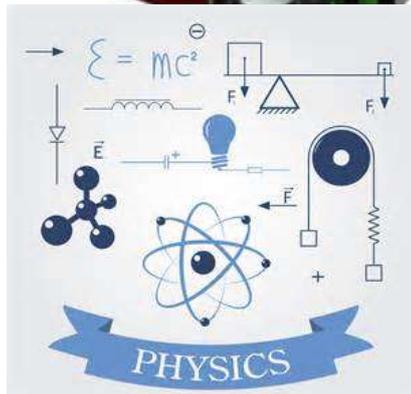
GCSE Biology

Biology is the science of living organisms (including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms) and their interactions with each other and the environment. The study of biology involves collecting and interpreting information about the natural world to identify patterns and relate possible cause and effect. Biological information is used to help humans improve their own lives and strive to create a sustainable world for future generations.



GCSE Chemistry

Chemistry is the science of the composition, structure, properties and reactions of matter, understood in terms of atoms, atomic particles and the way they are arranged and link together. It is concerned with the synthesis, formulation, analysis and characteristic properties of substances and materials of all kinds.



GCSE Physics

Physics is the science of the fundamental concepts of field, force, radiation and particle structures, which are inter-linked to form unified models of the behaviour of the material universe. From such models, a wide range of ideas, from the broadest issue of the development of the universe over time to the numerous and detailed ways in which new technologies may be invented, have emerged. These have enriched both our basic understanding of, and our many adaptations to, our material environment.

All pupils sit for their GCSE Triple Science examinations at the end of year 11. It should be noted that there is no coursework for GCSE Triple Science and assessment is 100% by written examination.

ENGLISH

What does the new course look like?

The English Language GCSE will provide all students with a robust foundation of reading and good written English, with the language and literary skills required for further study and work. It will ensure that students can read fluently and write effectively, with 20% of the marks awarded for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. It will also encourage the study of literature with students reading high-quality texts across a range of genres and periods.

The new English Literature GCSE will build on the English Language content, and encourage students to read, write and think critically; developing a love and understanding of a range of famous authors. Students will study challenging and substantial whole texts in detail, including Shakespeare, 19th-century novels, Romantic poetry and other high-quality fiction and drama. Students will be examined on 'unseen' texts, rewarding those that can demonstrate and apply the breadth of their understanding and skills.

There is now a **new grading structure** from grade 9 to 1, to replace the familiar A* to G (respectively) grading scale.

How will they be assessed?

AQA English Language – taken in Year 11

2 papers:

- Paper 1- 1 hr 45 mins
- Paper 2- 1 hr 45 mins

AQA English Literature - taken in Year 11 or when able to be entered at end of Year10

- 2 papers
- Paper 1- 1 hr 45 mins
- Paper 2- 2hr 15 mins

What are the main changes?

- English is exam-only-this means that students will not have any coursework and will be sitting their exam at the end of the two year course.
- The exam is not tiered- this means that there will be no higher or foundation papers
- Speaking in English language is assessed and reported separately to the main grade

More information about the English language and English literature GCSE can be found using the following links:

- English Language-
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700/specification-at-a-glance>
- English Literature:
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702/specification-at-a-glance>

Mathematics

The New GCSE Mathematics is a more demanding course in line with the new government and industry policies:

- The **volume of subject content** has increased. More time is required to teach the syllabus.
- The **demand of the content** is increasing too, with new topics being introduced to increase pupil understanding and the ability to apply knowledge to analytical and numerical problems.
- The **total time for the examinations** has increased, from 3 x ½ hours to 4½ hours. All examinations will be sat at the end of the GCSE course (Year 11).
- There will still be **two tiers**, Foundation and Higher.
- Each tier will consist of **three examination papers, equally weighted**.
- There will be **one non-calculator (1 ½ hours) and two calculator papers (1 ½ hours each)**.
- There is now a **new grading structure** from grade 9 to 1, to replace the familiar A* to G (respectively) grading scale.
- In the assessments of the examinations there is a greater emphasis on **problem solving** and **mathematical reasoning**.
- There will be more emphasis on **higher-order skills**.
- Students will be required to **memorise formulae**, as fewer formulae will be provided on the examinations paper.

**Option Form
Year 8**

Student Name(Please print)

On your form you will need to identify your 1st and 2nd choice subjects in each option block

Option Block 1	1st & 2nd	Option Block 2	1st & 2nd	Option Block 3	1st & 2nd	Option Block 4 (Lesson 6)	1st & 2nd
Art & Design		Art: Photography		Computing		Art Photography	
Child Development		Business Studies		DT		Business Studies	
Computing		Drama		French		Drama	
ESOL		ESOL		Geography		ESOL	
French		Food Prep/Nutrition		Music		GCSE PE	
History		Geography		Sociology		Media	
Media		History				Statistics	
						Triple Science	

Write 1 next to your first choice in each of the Option Blocks and a 2 for your 2nd choice

Completed forms should be returned to the School Office by 3pm on Friday 10th June 2016 at the latest. After this point, subjects may be filled and unavailable. Where possible we will try to give all students their first choices subject to the advice on page 2.

Student Signature Form 8.... Intended career or area (if known).....

Parent Signature.....

Parent Name..... (Please print)