

HAYES SCHOOL

Key Stage 4
Options Handbook

Personalised Pathway
Entry Level English, ASDAN

2026-2028



Year 9 Options 2026

Information for Parents/Carers

As Head of Year, this is always one of the most exciting and significant stages of the school journey. The process of choosing GCSE options marks an important milestone for our Year 9 students, as well as a moment of pride for parents and carers who have supported them throughout their time at school so far. It is a time of reflection, discussion and anticipation, as students begin to take greater ownership of their learning and look ahead to the next stage of their education.

For students, this is an opportunity to think carefully about their interests, strengths and ambitions. GCSE study allows them to explore subjects in greater depth, develop important skills and challenge themselves in new ways. These choices help shape not only their academic pathway, but also their confidence, independence and motivation as learners. While this can feel like a big decision, it should also be an exciting one, marking the transition towards greater responsibility and personal growth.

For parents and carers, this period can raise important questions about the right balance of subjects and future opportunities. Please be reassured that students will be fully supported throughout the options process. Staff are on hand to offer guidance, answer questions and help students make informed, realistic choices that suit their individual needs and aspirations. We strongly value the role that families play in these decisions and encourage open conversations at home alongside the guidance provided in school.

This booklet has been designed to support both students and parents through the GCSE options process. It provides key information about each subject and outlines the guidance available. By working together, we can ensure that every student approaches this exciting stage with confidence and enthusiasm. Every effort will be made to enable students to take the subject(s) of their choice. This cannot always be guaranteed due to factors such as teacher availability, number of teaching groups, number of students within groups and clashes between subjects that are in the same option blocks. If it seems impossible to accommodate all of your child's choices, then a member of staff will review this and contact you to discuss the next steps. Once students have indicated their choices, work begins on the draft timetable and therefore it is not possible for them to alter their preferences later in the year.

I very much look forward to supporting our Year 9 students as they take this important next step in their school careers.

Yours sincerely



Mr Redding
Year 9 Achievement Co-ordinator

Key Dates

Options Event	Thursday 5th March
Year 9 Parents' Evening	Wednesday 18th March
Submissions Open	Thursday 19th March
Options Deadline	Friday 27th March

Introduction

Information for Students

What do you need to check?

- ◆ Information on the Options available to you on your designated Pathway.
- ◆ Information on the Options process.
- ◆ Information about GCSE core subjects and how these will develop.
- ◆ How you submit your final choices (instructions will be provided following parents evening).
- ◆ The curriculum videos and further information on our Year 9 Options website.

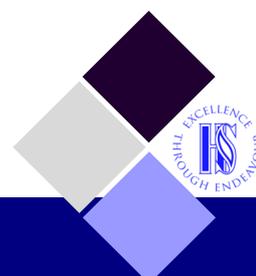
If you need help making your choices, then you should talk to:

- ◆ Your parents/carers.
- ◆ Your form tutor (as in tutor time, or email).
- ◆ Your subject teachers (Parents evening on Wednesday 18th March).

If you want further advice, please ask:

- ◆ [Mr Redding](#), Mr Allred or any member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- ◆ [Mrs Stewart](#) (Careers Leader).
- ◆ Heads of Departments.
- ◆ Your teachers.

**Please make sure that you
think carefully about which
subjects you choose**



The Options Process

Booklet launched March 2026

Please use this booklet to:

- ◆ Look at the details of the option choices.
- ◆ Read the information provided by Heads of Department about each subject.
- ◆ Start to put together your options.

Options Event: Thursday 5th March

An email will be sent sharing the link to our virtual Options Event. We recommend looking through this website carefully alongside your parents, as you will be able to:

- ◆ Access further details about the process, pathways and options.
- ◆ Access presentations by Heads of Departments about what their subjects will involve in Year 10 and Year 11.
- ◆ Access information from Mrs Stewart, our Careers Leader, about possible next steps and options choices implications.

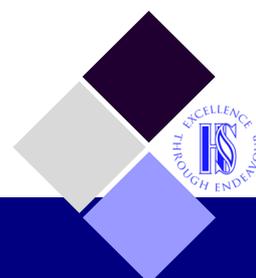
Making Your Mind Up: Thursday 19th March - Friday 27th March

After the Options Event you need to decide which subject/s you want to study next year. You will be sent a separate letter with personalised instructions about how to submit your choices. Guidance advising you as to how you will make your final selection will be included online and as part of our Options Event. Please note that online submissions will not open until Thursday 19th March.

Is that it?

Once the online form is submitted, we will begin timetable planning for next year and so no further changes will be possible. If, however, we are unable to accommodate all of your choices, Mr Redding or Mr Allred will speak to you and your parents/carers in order to review your options. It is important to note that in offering this pathway to you, we have already had the opportunity to speak to your teachers.

When will I know?
Final choices will be confirmed in writing in June.



The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

2026-2028: Pathways to success

During Year 7 and 8 at Hayes you followed a very broad and balanced programme of study based on the compulsory subjects of the National Curriculum.

In Year 9, you start GCSE style study in English, Maths, Science, RE and possibly MFL as well continuing to follow Key Stage 3 courses in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11, the school supports a broad and balanced curriculum of study for all, but you will also have choice over your option subject/s. We hope you will choose (a) subject/s which will lead to success and will prepare you for your future.

Whilst we must ensure that your GCSE curriculum is broad and balanced, we also aim is to offer you the chance to personalise your curriculum, increasing the range of options available to students so that you can choose which options subjects are best for you and your future aspirations.

It is important to note that our Pathways facilitate entry into the Sixth Form and beyond. Further to that, our Pathways have supported students in making excellent progress, regardless of their prior attainment.

At the end of Year 11, we hope all students will gain outstanding examination results and possess transferable skills and the personal characteristics necessary to be successful and contribute to the community.

The Hayes Pathway

The Hayes Pathway has been designed to meet the various interests, needs and abilities of students and supports likely progression routes into work and further education Post-16.

The Hayes Pathway covers the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, RS, PE, and ACTIVE.

In addition, you can choose **four** option subjects to study. These may be subjects that you are particularly interested in and are keen to continue with. To ensure breadth of curriculum and the opportunities this brings, students must select options from **at least two of the following areas:**

Humanities (History and Geography), **Languages** (French, Spanish and German) and **Creative** (Art, Art Textiles, Drama, Dance, DT, Music).

You should consider:

- ◆ Which subjects you most enjoy.
- ◆ Which subjects you excel at.
- ◆ Possible future careers and research the qualifications these careers need.
- ◆ University courses and possible requirements such as an MFL or EBacc subjects.



The Personalised Pathway

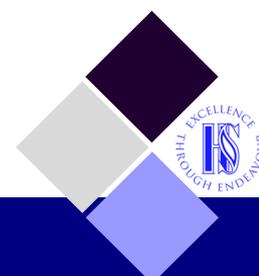
Subject	Lessons per fortnight
GCSE English Language or Entry Level	8
GCSE Maths or Entry Level or Level 1 Award	7
Combined Science (worth 2 GCSEs)	9
Applied Literacy	3
Physical Education (PE)	2
ACTIVE	1
Option Block A: Choose one subject from block A	5
OPTION Block B: ASDAN - Personal Development Programme Award	5
OPTION Block C: BTEC Digital Information Technology*	5
OPTION Block D: Creative iMedia	5

OPTION Blocks (GCSEs unless otherwise shown):

You will see below the four option blocks that make up the Curriculum offer for 2026-28 Courses. Students who follow the Hayes Pathway must select one subject from each block.

Option Block A	Option Block B	Option Block C	Option Block D
French	ASDAN	BTEC Digital Information Technology*	Creative iMedia
Sociology			
Business			
Art			
PE			
DT*			
Drama			

* These subjects may also be referred to as GCSE Product Design and IT BTEC



Reformed GCSEs

Between 2017 and 2020 GCSEs were reformed. Reformed GCSEs entail:

- ◆ new 'challenging' content.
- ◆ an emphasis on final exams.
- ◆ no 'controlled assessment' and reduced coursework in most subjects.
- ◆ number rather than letter grades (1-9).
- ◆ a 'good pass' on the new number scale will be a 5.

A rough guide to how number grades align with previous letter grades:

NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE									
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin: 0 20px;"> 4 = C <small>and above and above</small> </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">=</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin: 0 20px;"> 4 = C <small>and above and above</small> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above. ■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as achieve an A and above. ■ The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G. 									
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> A* A B C D E F G U </div>									
CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE									

All GCSE Subjects have been reformed for the 2024 academic year, meaning that all students will receive 1-9 grades in 2026. Information about the reforms can be found by following this [link](#) to the governments' website.



Options for the Future

There are so many things to consider when selecting your GCSE options. Of course it is important to consider your progress to date in particular subjects, your strengths as a learner and what you enjoy learning about the most. Another factor to consider is your future which might include:

- ◆ Your options post-16: what you hope to study for A-Level/Vocational Level.
- ◆ Your options post-18 will taking certain options benefit / restrict opportunities in the future?

There are no hard and fast rules in relation to this, but we are keen to share some guidance as a result of our experience with students post GCSE and A-Level.

Facilitating Subjects

When it comes to job/university applications, a number of subjects are regarded as 'Facilitating Subjects'. Subjects such as English, Maths, Sciences, Languages, Geography, and History are all deemed as facilitating meaning that a student who studies a combination of these will potentially have a more diverse range of opportunities open to them post-16/18 – it may be worth considering therefore the entry requirements for these subjects at post-16 so you can be certain they are potential options for you following your GCSEs (please visit the Sixth Form area of the school website to learn about entry criteria for KS5 – please note this is subject to change prior to September 2026).

Future Scientists

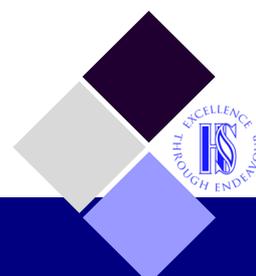
Anyone who wishes to have a future in Medicine/Bio-Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science needs to think seriously about taking Separate Sciences for GCSE. Scientific pathways are incredibly competitive and our experience shows that students who have obtained strong grades in GCSE Separate Sciences and Maths/Further Maths tend to be in the 'best' position to advance to the next stage with these options.

Future Lawyers

To study Law at university it is very common for entry criteria to look for a combination of English and History at A-Level. There are other routes into law but completing a degree is by far the most traditional route. As such it may be worth considering History as an option at GCSE to best prepare you for studying this at A-Level.

Engineering

Maths at A-Level is probably the most significant subject, with the addition of A-Level Further Maths being helpful for the more 'mechanical' engineering areas, e.g. Mechanical, Aeronautical Engineering. A-Level Physics is also very important, so opting to study Separate GCSE sciences is helpful for anyone considering a future in Engineering.



My Options Journey

We asked Sixth Form students to reflect on their options choices and where this has taken them:

“

At GCSE, I knew taking Separate Science would be most beneficial for me as I planned to continue studying at least one of the sciences at A-Level and this would give me the well-rounded knowledge that you require. When choosing my GCSE and A- Level subjects it wasn't just about what I was 'best' at; it was more about what I enjoyed and what I wanted to study further and which subjects I would put the work and commitment into.

Year 12 Student

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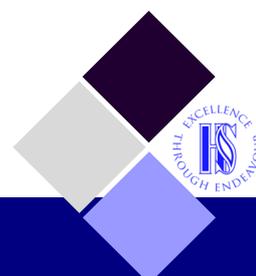
At A-Level, I'm studying Maths, Further Maths and Physics. Although Physics wasn't my best science out of the three, it is the most fascinating to me and interlinked with my choices of maths well. I am now wanting to study Physics (Masters) at university and plan to go into research in the future. My best advice would be to choose subjects that you enjoy and want to study, but always think about how those subjects are going to benefit you in your later life, as GCSEs and A-Levels are the foundations of your future.

Year 13 Student

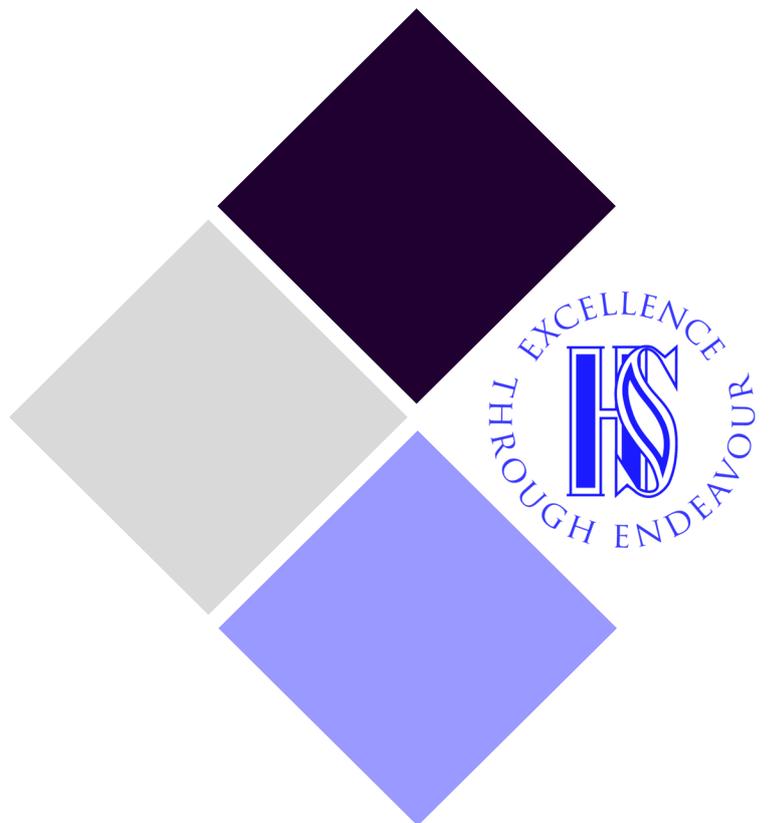
“

Choosing your options in Year 9 is an important time during school. This is because these are the subjects you will go onto study for your GCSEs. You need to think about what subjects you enjoy and also what subjects you are good at in order to help make your decision easier. Personally, I chose Business Studies, PE and Geography because I enjoyed these subjects and I had a good relationship with the teachers in these subjects. These options are also important as they helped me to decide what I would take for A-Level as I currently study BTEC Business and Geography at A-Level so this shows you how important this choice is. I would say that you need to think for yourself and not necessarily chose subjects just because your friends are doing them, but subjects that both interest you and benefit you the most in terms of your future.

Year 13 Student



Core Subjects



Entry Level English

For students following the Personalised Pathway we will be offering the Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in English, starting at Entry Level 1 with the aim to progress to Entry Level 3. They will also complete the AQA English Language GCSE at the end of Year 11.

Each entry level award gives the learner opportunities to develop his or her skills and confidence in speaking and listening, writing and reading as follows:

Speaking and Listening (20%)

- ◆ To speak confidently, audibly and effectively.
- ◆ Use Standard English as appropriate.
- ◆ Select and organise information and ideas effectively.
- ◆ Listen and respond to questions.

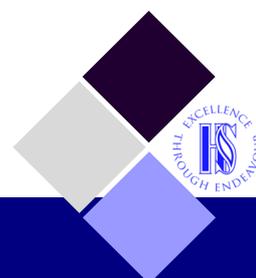
Writing (30%)

- ◆ Adapt their writing for different purposes and audiences.
- ◆ Select and organise ideas, facts and key points select vocabulary, form, and structural and organisational features to reflect audience, purpose and context, and use Standard English where appropriate.
- ◆ Pay attention to the accuracy and effectiveness of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Reading (50%)

- ◆ Read in different ways for different purposes.
- ◆ Identify and interpret ideas and information seek evidence in the text to support a point of view.
- ◆ Identity and comment on a writer's choice of vocabulary.

Careers that are linked to a GCSE qualification in English include Teaching; Journalism; Diplomatic Service; Advertising; Marketing; Politics; Law; Human Resources; PR; Civil Service; TV (presenting, researching, directing, producing); Theatre (acting, directing, producing); Writing (novels, poetry, plays, marketing materials); Editing; Publishing; Information Management; Curating; Secretarial; Sales; Communications; Medicine; Social Work; Charity Sector.



English Language

Course Description

The course is divided into two main skills: reading and writing. To develop their reading skills, students will read high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries including literature, literary non-fiction and other non-fiction writing. All examination texts will be unseen, and be drawn from each of the three centuries. Students will be assessed on their comprehension, critical reading, summary and synthesis, ability to explain writers' choices (including grammatical ones), and ability to compare. To develop their writing, students will learn to create clear and coherent texts for different audiences and purposes including being creative and imaginative. A significant proportion of marks are allocated to accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Success in this subject is an essential component of success in many other subjects at GCSE and A-Level.

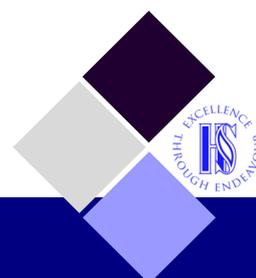
Examinations (AQA)

Coursework: 0%

Written examination at end of Year 11 (all texts unseen): 100%

Spoken Language

Students will learn the skills involved in making presentations, listening effectively and using Standard English when speaking. This qualification is a separate endorsement reported with a student's GCSE results. Each student will have to write and present a speech, along with responding to questions on a given topic.



MATHEMATICS

Students on the personalised pathway will study for a Maths qualification that is in line with their ability and their prior attainment. This will be either a continuation of Entry Level, a Level 1 Award or a GCSE.

GCSE Mathematics

Course Description

All students in the Upper School study Mathematics. Year 9 have started their preparation for GCSE already. The course encourages the students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, including:

- ◆ Number
- ◆ Algebra
- ◆ Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- ◆ Geometry and Measures
- ◆ Probability
- ◆ Statistics

The GCSE Maths syllabus has increased content and will require pupils to master essential concepts to a greater depth. The main goal of the course is to develop confident mathematicians who are able to apply their skills and reasoning to problem solve "real world problems".

A variety of ways of working is encountered. Estimating and calculating mentally in appropriate situations is practised. The clarity and accuracy of written work is of the utmost importance and talking about and using the language of mathematics is encouraged. Students are also encouraged to work independently from a variety of IT resources and websites. Each week students are given at least one written piece of independent study or online homework. In addition, learning and corrections will be expected.

The department recommends students to have a calculator from the Casio fx83 range and they are expected to have a calculator with them every lesson. Mathematical drawing equipment will be requested for some lessons.

Students are taught in sets according to ability and previous performance.

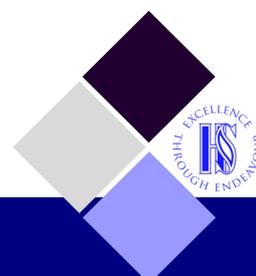
Assessment/Examinations (Edexcel)

There are two tiers of entry for Maths giving every student the opportunity to achieve at least a grade 4. The grade boundaries for each tier are:

Higher Tier Grades 9 - 4

Foundation Tier Grades 5 - 1

There is no coursework involved in the Maths course so the grades are awarded solely on the performance in the exams. This puts extra pressure on the students to ensure that they are fully prepared for them. All students will sit their exams at the end of Year 11 and there are 3 exams involved: 1 non-calculator assessment and 2 calculator assessments. Each paper will cover a variety of topics listed from the content headings previously and will include a range of question types; some questions will be set in both mathematical and non-mathematical contexts.



Useful websites:

<https://sparxmaths.com/>

www.mathsgenie.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/maths

<https://corbettmaths.com/>

Careers that are linked in taking Maths include Accountancy; Astronomy; Banking; Business Studies; Computer Studies; Economics; Engineering; Quantity Surveying; Statistics; Finance Advising; Teaching.

Level 1 Award in Number and Measure

For students following the Personalised Pathway, who are not taking Mathematics at GCSE level, we offer an Edexcel Level 1 Award in number and measure. The students who are typically on the Pathway will have already completed and passed an Entry Level in Mathematics Qualification. The Pearson Edexcel Level 1 Award is for learners who need to develop their confidence and competence in mathematical skills for use in everyday life.

The Level 1 Award gives the learner the opportunity to:

- ◆ Develop their mathematics knowledge and skills in the context of real life situations.
- ◆ Achieve a nationally recognised Level 1 Qualification.
- ◆ Develop their personal growth and engagement in learning.

The course encourages the students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, including:

- ◆ Number
- ◆ Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- ◆ Geometry and Measures
- ◆ Statistics.

Assessment/Examination:

Externally set written exams. One calculator paper and one non-calculator paper.

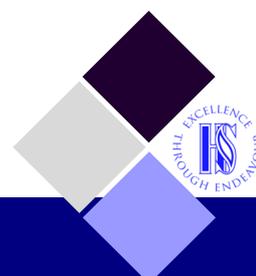
Useful websites:

www.mathsgenie.co.uk

www.pearsonactivelearn.com

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/maths

Careers that are linked in taking Maths include Accountancy; Astronomy; Banking; Business Studies; Computer Studies; Economics; Engineering; Quantity Surveying; Statistics; Finance Advising; Teaching.



BTEC DIT (Digital Information Technology)

Course Description

This is an exciting course that would be a great choice for anyone who wanted to go down the ICT or IT in business routes. You will learn about project planning techniques, data collection and manipulation and creating presentations to enable decision making, which will ultimately end with creating a data dashboard that will allow any organisation to make effective decisions from the data you present. You will also learn how to create an effective user interface and be able to review what makes a good or bad interface.

The main focus is on four areas, which cover:

- ◆ The development of key skills in digital information technology, such as project planning, designing and creating user interfaces, creating dashboards to present and interpret data.
- ◆ The process that underpins effective ways of working in digital information technology, such as project planning, the iterative design process, cyber security, virtual teams, legal and ethical codes of conduct.
- ◆ The attitudes that are considered most important in digital information technology, including personal management and communication.
- ◆ The knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, process and attitudes in the sector such as how different user interfaces meet user needs, how organisations collect and use data to make decisions, virtual workplaces, cyber security and legal and ethical issues.

Assessment/Examination

Unit 1: Exploring User Interface Design Principles & Project Planning Techniques 30%
In this unit, learners will investigate user interface design for individuals and organisations. They will use project-planning techniques to plan and design a user interface and then develop and review a user interface

Unit 2: Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data 30%
In this unit, learners will investigate the role and impact of using data on individuals and organisations. They will create a dashboard using data manipulation tools, draw conclusions, and review data presentation methods.

Unit 3: Effective Digital Working Practices (**1.5 hour Exam**) 40%
In the exam, learners will demonstrate knowledge and apply understanding of facts, terms, processes and issues in relation to digital information technology. They will analyse, evaluate and make reasoned judgements about the use, factors and implications influencing digital information technology and make connections with the concepts, issues, terms and processes in digital information technology.

Who is the qualification for?

Learners who want to acquire knowledge and skills related to data management, data interpretation, data presentation and data protection.

What can the qualification lead to?

- ◆ A Levels as preparation for entry to higher education in a range of subjects.
- ◆ Study of a vocational qualification at Level 3, such as a BTEC National in IT, which prepares learners to enter employment or apprenticeships, or to move on to higher education by studying a degree in the digital sector.



Combined Science

Course Description

The GCSE curriculum for Combined Science is a linear course which will be studied over 2 years. Students will be examined on all 3 subjects in Year 11. This is not an option. This is the default Science course that all Hayes students are required to take unless they choose Separate Sciences.

Combined Science (2 GCSE grades awarded)		
Biology	Chemistry	Physics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Cell Biology◆ Organisation◆ Infection and Response◆ Bioenergetics◆ Homeostasis and Response◆ Inheritance, Variation and Evolution◆ Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Atomic structure and the periodic table◆ Bonding, structure and the 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Forces◆ Energy◆ Waves◆ Electricity◆ Magnetism and Electromagnetism◆ Particle model of matter◆ Atomic structure

Assessment/ Examinations (AQA)

Please note the assessment for GCSE is entirely based upon the written examinations at the end of the course. There will be 6 exams, each 1 hour and 15 minutes in length:

2 x Biology 33.3%
2 x Chemistry 33.3%
2 x Physics 33.3%

Students will be expected to attend all lessons in order to ensure no practical work is missed as this will now be examined with the final exam.

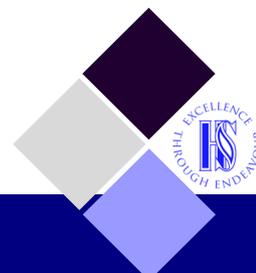
There are 2 tiers of entry for the examinations:

Higher Tier Grades from 9 9 (two grade 9s) - **4 4** (two grade 4s)

Foundation Tier Grades from 5 5 (two grade 5s) - **1 1** (two grade 1s)

The tier of entry in the exams will be appropriate to the ability, potential and performance of the student. Each test is made up of a series of compulsory structured questions.

Please note: If a student knows that they would like to take any of the Science A-levels, we strongly advise they take Separate Science as an option.



Physical Education

Year 10

Students are split into PE groups at the start of Year 10. Students will have one PE lesson per week where they will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum across different facilities. Students will have a choice in terms of activity and there is an expectation that they apply themselves in lessons as well as demonstrate an understanding of the importance of physical activity in leading a healthy and active lifestyle. During core PE lessons we have implemented a Sport Education model where pupils are split into teams and compete in a range of sports and conditioned activities to score points for their teams over the course of each half term.

The options consist of:

- ◆ sports such as Football, Rugby, Netball, Hockey, Volleyball, Handball and Basketball and Table Tennis
- ◆ Summer activities such as Cricket, Rounders, Tennis, American Football, Athletics and Softball.

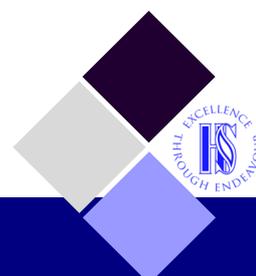
Year 11

In Year 11 students complete a variety of sports to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the rules of the sports as well as tactical and technical skills used within them. Similar to Year 10, students participate in 1 hour of core PE per week. The sports covered are a continuation of those covered in year 10. There is a real emphasis on the accurate replication of both core and advanced skills in a competitive situation.

- * Please note that all lessons are practical and pupils require Hayes PE Kit when participating in lessons.

Extra Curricular Activities

During both Years 10 and 11 there is a comprehensive programme of extracurricular activities. Students have the opportunity to participate and to represent the school, their tutor group and various house competitions as they did in Key Stage 3. Students are actively encouraged to continue to participate within the extracurricular programme.



Year 9 Options *THINK AHEAD*

The subjects that you are about to choose will have a significant impact upon your Sixth Form or College choices.

Over the last two years, nearly every student to have met the entry criteria for our Sixth Form has enrolled with our Sixth Form.

Shouldn't you **THINK AHEAD?**

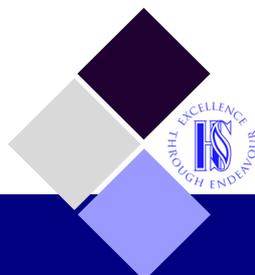
TOP TIPS from Year 13 Students

- ◆ Pick subjects that you know you will enjoy and are willing to work hard in, not just because it may look good on your CV.
- ◆ You must stay focused on all your subjects—would you accept someone who gives up?
- ◆ Pick subjects that will apply to your future career, it's not that far away!
- ◆ Don't pick subjects just to fill the gaps on the form, you will regret it.
- ◆ Pick subjects that you may consider to take at A-Level, or ones that would aid a future A-Level.
- ◆ We aren't saying it's going to be easy, but the best advice we could give you is choosing what is right for you, **don't just take what your friends are taking.**

Hayes Sixth Form Prospectus

The current prospectus is available online [here](#).

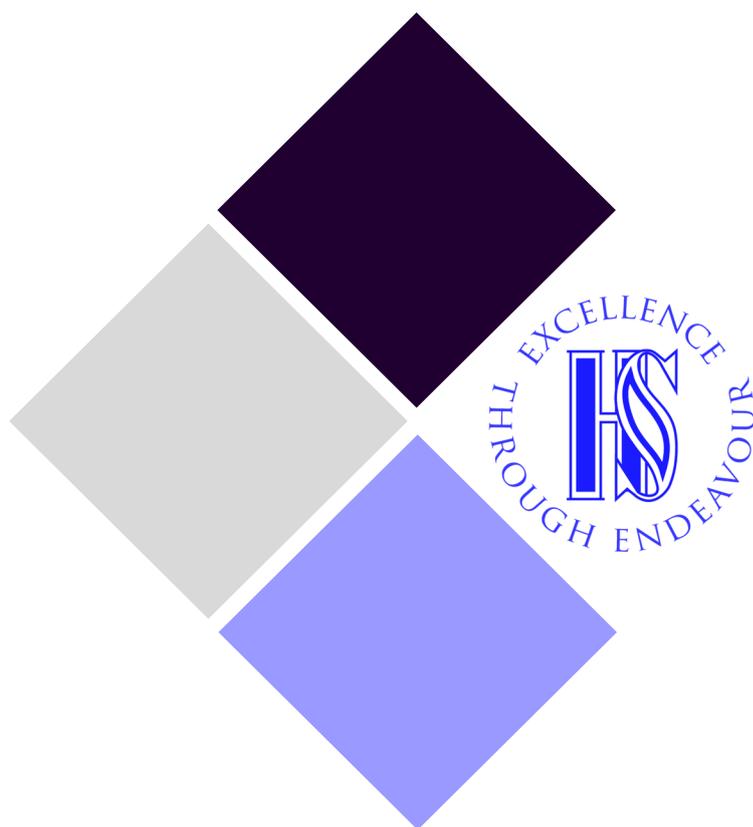
A glance at this will give Year 9 students a great idea as to what post-16 subjects (and entry requirements) are available to study in our Sixth Form and **the subjects that you would currently need to be studying in Key Stage 4 in order to access them.**



Option Subjects

The following pages contain information on all the Option Subjects.

Please read this information and speak to your teachers and tutors for advice on the best options for you.



ASDAN

Bronze Award Personal Development Programme

This is compulsory for all students on the personalised pathway.

ASDAN is an awarding body that specialises in accrediting achievement in the development of personal skills. The Bronze Award will:

- ◆ recognise students' personal achievements, in and out of school.
- ◆ help students manage their own learning.
- ◆ broaden students' experiences.
- ◆ develop students' employability skills and personal effectiveness.

By completing the ASDAN challenges, students will develop the six key skills of:

- ◆ working with others.
- ◆ improving their own learning and performance.
- ◆ problem solving.
- ◆ planning and carrying out research.
- ◆ communication through discussion.
- ◆ planning and giving an oral presentation.

Such skills are in great demand from modern employers so this course will certainly make students more 'employable'. Students will work throughout Key Stage 4 on a range of ASDAN challenges where these skills will be developed. Challenge topics include: Communication, Independent Living, The Wider World and My Environment. They will put together a portfolio of evidence, showing how all six skills have been developed through completing these challenges, and this portfolio will then be externally assessed.



Art and Design

Course Description

Throughout the course students, explore a variety of themes, engaging in composition, experimentation with different media, collecting visual references, examining, and collecting examples of work by relevant artists and drawing from observation. Work from many different cultures and periods is studied and discussed. Students will be encouraged to visit exhibitions and art galleries. Students will be expected to develop the specialized use of language and vocabulary associated with the subject.

The course offers the opportunity to experiment with a variety of techniques and media, as well as painting and sculpting. Students are expected to maintain an individual A3 folder for each aspect of the course.

To succeed, students need a genuine interest and ability in Art and Design. This is an exciting, enriching course with many opportunities for self-expression and for students to show their individuality.

Leading on from the GCSE, courses are usually offered at A-level including Photography and Art and Design.

Assessment / Examination (AQA)

Coursework: 5 modules, each making up to a total of 60%

Examination: 40%

For Art and Design, students are expected to complete 5 substantial units of work with relevant supporting studies.

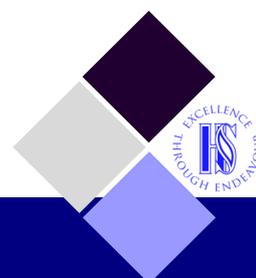
Students sit a 10-hour timed exam at the end of the course. They are given a question paper 16 school weeks in advance of the examination date and must make a piece of work based on one of the areas of study covered on the course.

Assessment is equally balanced between the investigative and experimental lead up work, and the final piece. At the end of two years, students will be expected to present their work for an exhibition where all work is internally marked and externally moderated.

We look at such things as thoroughness of research, breadth and success of experimentation, visual exploration of ideas, conceptual development and growth over the two-year period. We will also look at how students have handled materials and media, developing their final ideas into a finished form. Communication and presentation are very important, especially attention to detail and quality of finish.

Art GCSE is full of opportunity to show learning, problem solving and originality; all aspects of education, which are relevant and needed in today's job market.

Careers that are linked to taking Art and Design include Advertising; Animation; Photography; Architecture; Art; Digital Media Design; Fashion and Textiles; Fine Art; Games Art and Design; Graphic Design; Illustration; Industrial Design; Jewelry, Glassware, Stained Glass; Three Dimensional Design; Teaching (Art).



Business Studies

Course Description

You have been a consumer ever since you first wore a nappy, spluttered your way through 'Cow & Gate' and were treated with 'Calpol'. Unaware though you were then of the big world of commerce, you 'wanted' things whilst shopping in supermarkets, watched adverts on TV and were exposed to a material world. Later, you progressed to being a customer - you learned to buy things - but did you ever think how they had got to the shop and why you had to give people (or machines!) strange metal disks in order to get what you wanted?

"Business Studies is a subject everyone can relate to – we're always drawing on our experiences as consumers and customers. We are all interested in money – whether you have any or not, you still need to understand how it all works! You'll notice real life examples of everything we talk about – it's a subject that makes sense and is an ideal 'general interest' subject to compliment any other GCSE."

Course content:

What is a business? Can you start one yourself? How do they make money? Can they set up just anywhere? Who helps them? Who owns them? How are they managed? What do the employees do? Who keeps track of the money? Who regulates them? How do they make their products? How do products get to the customer? How do they make us buy their products? What things affect businesses? Why do they depend on each other? These and many more issues!

To enjoy Business Studies, you need to be inquisitive. You need to be able to ask questions. You need to have an interest in spending money (not difficult!). You are the sort of person who notices adverts, notices new products, wants to find out what's so special about £19.99. You want to know why people get heated about investments, why we aren't still playing with "Furbies", why we bother to clean chewing gum off pavements, what makes us drink Tango and why the UK spends £6 billion on chocolate every year. You also need to be methodical, able to organise your work, able to express yourself well and able to cope with basic spreadsheets and graphs.

If you are a financial wizard and into fund-raising, we'll welcome your ideas. If you are into motivation and what makes people tick, we'll value your contribution. If you are fascinated by marketing, promotions and advertising, we'll indulge your interests. If you want to understand and know more about the world of work, we'll satisfy your curiosity.

Assessment/Examination (Edexcel)

You will sit two examination papers at the end of year 11, each worth 50% of your overall GCSE grade. The Paper 1 examination will focus on small businesses and how they operate in the real world whilst the Paper 2 examination will look at bigger businesses and the challenges that they face. The areas that you will study across the two papers are:

- ◆ The purpose of business activity, the role of business enterprise and entrepreneurship, and the dynamic nature of business.
- ◆ The importance of external influences on business and how businesses change in response to these influences.
- ◆ What business operations involve, their role within the production of goods and the provision of services, and how they influence business activity.
- ◆ The purpose of the finance function, its role within business and how it influences business activity.
- ◆ The purpose of marketing, its role within business and how it influences business activity.
- ◆ The purpose of human resources, its role within business and how it influences business activity.



Design and Technology (Product Design)

GCSE D&T opens the door to a wide range of careers in the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. It is also excellent preparation for careers in many other fields e.g. medicine, law and computer science. Whatever career you choose, the knowledge and skills you learn, particularly those concerned with rapidly developing technologies, will be extremely valuable. You will also develop skills, such as teamwork and time management which are highly prized by employers.

Course Description

Using creativity and imagination, students design and make products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts, considering your own and others' needs, wants and values. You will acquire a broad range of subject knowledge and draw on disciplines such as mathematics, science, engineering, computing, geography, business studies and art. Students learn how to take risks, becoming resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable citizens. Through the evaluation of past and present design and technology, you develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world. High-quality design and technology education makes an essential contribution to the creativity, culture, wealth and well-being of the nation.

Assessment/Examination

Portfolio and Working Prototype 50%

The exam board will set a range of contextual challenges for students to select from; these projects can have a Graphics focus or a Product Design focus. You will be assessed on how you investigate the challenge, create design ideas, demonstrate making/modelling skills, how you model to test, investigate and communicate your design idea. You will also be assessed on how efficiently you evaluate each stage and use these skills to affect your decision making.

Written Exam Paper 50%

The remaining 50% is assessed in a 2 hour exam.
The exam is broken down into 3 sections.

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)

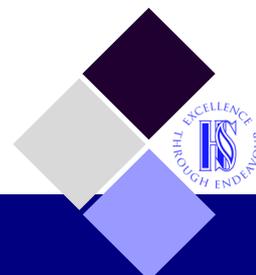
A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)

Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in depth knowledge of technical principles.

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)

A mixture of short answer and extended response questions including a 12 mark design question.



Drama

Course Description

Aims

The course aims to give students the opportunities to develop:

- ◆ Creative and imaginative powers, and the practical and written skills for communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings in Drama.
- ◆ Investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative capabilities, aesthetic understanding and critical skills, orally and in written work.
- ◆ Understanding of Drama forms and awareness of the contexts in which they operate.
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of drama within a social, cultural and historical context.

Knowledge and Understanding

The course requires students to develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- ◆ The ways in which ideas, feelings and meanings are conveyed through the language of Drama.
- ◆ A range of forms and conventions by recognising them in the work of others and by applying them in practical Drama exercises.
- ◆ A set play, analysing and exploring through written work the ways in which practitioners use the language of theatre to realise a text in performance.
- ◆ The ways in which ideas in Drama can be recorded and interpreted.
- ◆ How plays and ideas in drama relate to their social, historical and cultural context.

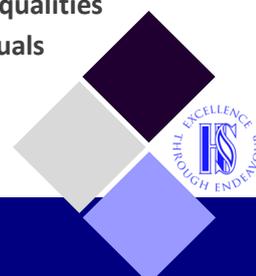
Skills

Students are required to develop the following skills in drama:

- ◆ Acting/Technical skills – lighting, sound and costume.
- ◆ Group working skills.
- ◆ Devising skills.
- ◆ Communication skills.
- ◆ Evaluation and Analysis skills, through spoken feedback and written portfolios.

Commitment

- ◆ **Each project brings new and developing challenges, but whatever the project, students must be prepared to rehearse after school and during lunchtimes, particularly in the build up to the exam performances.**
- ◆ **Students should be confident performers - you will perform your exam pieces to the whole Drama cohort, which is usually at least 50 students.**
- ◆ **Be prepared to work with anyone in the class—your teacher will always choose the groups at GCSE.**
- ◆ **Good attendance is vital to success in Drama.**
- ◆ **Although everyone is marked individually, failure to support your group could affect EVERYONE'S mark. Drama is about co-operation and commitment. Failure to show these qualities will not be tolerated; grades will also suffer, and, in extreme circumstances, individuals might be withdrawn from the course or be required to pay their own entry to the examination. In short, please do NOT think that Drama will be an “easy” option.**



Assessment/Examination (WJEC)

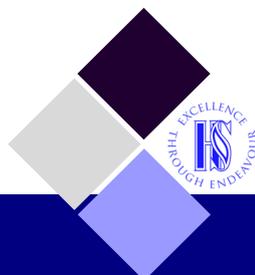
Drama GCSE consists of

Component 1: Devising; 40% internally assessed and externally moderated practical project with written portfolio and written evaluation.

Component 2: Scripted Performance; 20% externally assessed practical project.

Component 3: Written Examination; 40% externally marked examination.

Careers that are linked to taking Drama include Acting; Community Drama; Costume Production; Creative Writing; Writing and Performance; Dance; International Theatre; Performing Arts; Scenic Arts, Scriptwriting; Set Design; Stage Management; Theatre Arts; Musical Theatre; Teaching; Theatre Management.



Creative iMedia (Cambridge Nationals Level 1/2)

Course Description

Digital Media is a key part of many areas of our everyday lives and vital to the UK economy. Production of digital media products is a requirement of almost every business so there is huge demand for a skilled and digitally literate workforce. This qualification will help students develop specific and transferable skills such as research, planning, and review, working with others and communicating creative concepts. The qualification's hands-on approach has strong relevance to the way young people use the technology required in creative media.

Assessment /Examination (OCR)

Coursework: 60% Examination: 40%

Grades: Level 2 is graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*. If a student doesn't reach a Pass they might still have enough points to be awarded a Level 1 grade.

There are two **mandatory units** of pre-production and creating digital graphics that underpin the qualification and reflect key industry skills. There is a further unit that the learners will study.

Exam unit: Creative iMedia in the Media Industry 1 hour 30 minutes *40% of qualification*

In this unit, students will learn about the sectors, products and job roles that form the media industry. They will learn the legal and ethical issues considered and the processes used to plan and create digital media products. They will learn how media codes are used within the creation of media products to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. They will learn to choose the most appropriate format and properties for different media products. Completing this unit will provide students with the basic skills for further study or a range of creative job roles within the media industry

Visual identity and digital graphics (Mandatory Coursework unit) *25% of qualification*

In this unit, students will learn how to develop visual identities for clients. They will also learn to apply the concepts of graphic design to create original digital graphics which incorporate their visual identity to engage a target audience.

Visual imaging (Coursework unit) *35% of qualification*

In this unit, students will learn how to apply the conventions of both static and moving images, which make up the language of visual imaging and communication. They will plan and capture photographs and moving images using a digital camera and learn to edit and process photographs and video sequences to create meaningful products in response to client briefs.

Completing this unit will equip students with a range of skills to use digital camera equipment and editing software and provide a basis for further study or creative and technical job within the media industry

Cambridge Nationals are vocational qualifications at Level 1/2 for students aged 14–16.

They are designed to fit into the curriculum and to offer the same size, rigor and performance points as GCSEs. They will form a key part of any students' Progress 8 and Attainment 8 approved subjects under the Technical Award category.

The qualifications are recognised by Ofqual, DfE and 16–19 providers as progression to A-Level, further education or on to an apprenticeship or work.

Modern Foreign Languages

French

Studying a language is more than learning vocabulary - it's your passport to the wider world. The course offers students the chance to develop real communication skills, discover new cultures, and open doors to future opportunities.

Why choose a GCSE in MFL?

- **Communicate with confidence**
You'll learn to speak, write, understand and respond to language in real-life contexts. It's practical and interactive.
- **Explore global cultures**
From food and festivals to music and tourist destinations, you'll gain a deeper understanding of how people around the globe live, think and express themselves.
- **Stand out for future pathways**
Languages are highly valued by colleges, universities and employers. They show resilience, adaptability and strong communication skills that give you the edge.

What will you study?

Topic areas include my personal world, media & technology, studying & my future, travel & tourism, lifestyle & wellbeing and my neighbourhood.

How will you be assessed? (Pearson Edexcel)

French: GCSE

Speaking (read aloud, role play, describing a picture, conversation) – 25%

Listening (understanding & transcribing spoken language) – 25%

Reading (comprehension & translation into English) – 25%

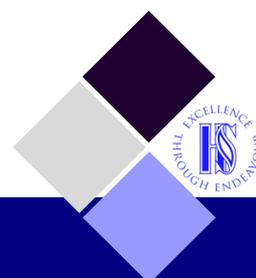
Writing (a variety of tasks & translation into the language) – 25%

All exams are taken at the end of Year 11, with Foundation and Higher tier options to support all learners.

Where can an MFL GCSE take you?

A language supports careers in:

Business • Law • Medicine • Engineering • Media • Translation & Interpreting • Tourism • Teaching • Finance • Technology • International Relations • Marketing
and many more.



Physical Education (GCSE)

Course Description

This demanding, yet extremely rewarding course has grown in popularity with students since its introduction at the School. It is now one of the most popular courses at the school. It is geared towards those students that have a committed interest in all sport at both the practical and academic level. The weighting of the two subject areas for the course are 60% for theory and 40% for the coursework. Students are assessed in 3 sports which must be a combination of individual and team activities. Students will also complete a personalised fitness development programme. All assessment for this course happens at the end of Year 11.

Please note that this is a heavily based theory course, there is an expectation that students are developing in sport and activities outside of school.

Assessment/Examination (Edexcel)

Theory: 60% - 2 Papers

Paper 1 (1hr 30mins/80 marks)

Physical Training

- ◆ Reasons for Participation.
- ◆ Health, Fitness, Exercise & Performance Skill Related Fitness.
- ◆ Principles of Training and Methods of Training.
- ◆ Diet, Health and Hygiene.
- ◆ Optimise training and avoid injuries.
- ◆ Effective warm up and cool down

Anatomy and Physiology

- ◆ Circulatory System, Respiratory System and Skeletal System.
- ◆ Joints, Tendons, Ligaments, Muscles and Muscle Action.

Movement analysis

- ◆ Lever systems, planes and axes.

Use of data

- ◆ Data collection, present data, analyses and evaluate data.

Paper 2 (1hr 15mins/60marks)

Sports Psychology

- ◆ Classification of Skill, Mental preparation.
- ◆ Goal Setting and SMART targets.
- ◆ Guidance and feedback.



Health, Fitness and Well being

- ◆ Physical, emotional, social health, fitness and wellbeing.
- ◆ Consequences of a sedentary lifestyle.
- ◆ Energy use, diet, nutrition and hydration.

Socio-Cultural influences

- ◆ Engagement patterns of different social groups in physical activity and sport.
- ◆ Commercialisation in sport.
- ◆ Ethical and socio-cultural issues in sport.

Use of data

- ◆ Data collection, present data, analyses and evaluate data.

Two lessons a week over the two-year course shall be devoted to the classroom and the study of the above. This will result in weekly homework being set and regular internal assessment. The final and external assessment in this area shall be in the form of one 1 hour 30 minutes written exam and a second 1 hour 15 minutes written exam. Students will also have access to extensive revision materials to help them prepare for the course.

Coursework 40% – Split into 2 components

Practical Performance (30%)

Students will undertake a wide range of sports which will be complimented by the core PE curriculum. Students will eventually specialise in three sports from a list of individual and team sports.

Written Coursework—Personal Exercise Programme (10%)

Students will design a Personal Exercise Programme to develop their performance in a sport. They will carry out the 6 week training programme then analyse and evaluate it's effectiveness.

Important Notice

A long-term commitment to Extra Curricular Sport (inside and outside school) is essential and indeed demanded of any student seriously considering this subject as an option. The expectation will be for students to attend regular practice in their specialist sports and where possible play at a competitive level.

Careers that are linked to taking PE include Health and Fitness Management; Leisure and Recreation Management; Sports and Recreational Studies; Sport Coaching; Sport Journalism; Sports/Exercise/Fitness Sciences; Teaching, Sports therapy, Sports Psychologist and many more.

Please note: students may only be considered for this course if they complete in one of the practical sports outside of school.



Sociology

Course Description

GCSE Sociology is a popular GCSE course at Hayes School, which students find interesting and relevant. Sociology aims to discover what we mean by society and what the functions are of the various institutions that are part of this society. Students will learn the theories that sociologists have put forward and then evaluate them in comparison with additional evidence.

The course is divided into seven sections, which are examined at the end of Year 11 over two exams.

The sociological approach

Debates within sociology, the work of classical sociologists such as Marx and Durkheim, different perspectives such as feminism, key sociological terms and concepts.

Social structures, social processes and social issues

To be able to critically evaluate, compare, and contrast theories or explanations, including key features of each theory.

Families

Patterns in divorce rates and the consequences of divorce, the role of the family, roles within the family, the decline of the nuclear family and the presence of diverse forms of the family and patterns in life expectancy and fertility.

Education

The role and function of education in society today, changes in education in the last 30 years, Reasons for differing achievement depending on class, gender and ethnicity, significance of the debates surrounding alternative forms of provision, testing and special needs.

Crime and deviance

Understanding of concepts of crime and deviance, explanations why people commit crime, understanding of the effects of crime on society, theories of criminal and deviant behaviour.

Social stratification

Distribution of wealth income and power, concepts of stratification life chance and wealth, income power and status.

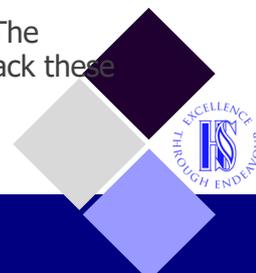
Sociological research methods

To be able to describe and explain various methods that sociologists would use when conducting research, to be able to identify and explain various strengths and weaknesses of each.

Assessment/Examination (AQA)

There is no coursework for Sociology. It is assessed through two examinations which are worth 100% of the final grade. Students will sit two examinations at the end of Year 11; each lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes and focussing on the topics listed above.

The examinations will include source material and some comprehension questions. The course focuses on extended writing and students being able to form opinions and back these up with sociological evidence.



Completing the Options Process

Before completing the online process, make sure you have read all the Pathway information and subject descriptions.

A final piece of advice is that you should try to avoid choosing similar subjects. Having as broad a choice as possible is advisable for keeping as many options open to you as possible in the future.

As a reminder:

Do not choose subjects because your friends are choosing them.

We cannot make any guarantees regarding which teachers you will have so this must not influence your choices.

Instructions on how to complete the Online process will be emailed to students and made available on our Year 9 Options website on **Thursday 19th March 2026**, following parents evening.

Remember to complete the online process **by Friday 27th March 2026**.

Once you have made your choices, you will not be able to change them. Options **will not** be guaranteed on a first come, first served basis.

