

# A guide to GCSE options 2024



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS  
building the future



# A guide to GCSE options

**We hope this options booklet will give you a clear picture of the subjects offered at GCSE as well as other aspects of life in Years 10 and 11 at Dame Allan's Schools.**

It is normal at Dame Allan's for pupils to take nine subjects at GCSE. The demands of GCSE courses are not insignificant and in addition to the end of course examinations there are ongoing controlled assessments in some subjects which are completed as part of the overall examination. Taking more than nine courses at GCSE is not required for higher education or the world of work.

We would expect you to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum at GCSE augmented by a number of additional subjects including careers, PHSE, PE and games. This will provide a sound base from which a wide range of A Levels can be studied.

You will study a core of English language, English literature and mathematics. In addition you will choose either the three separate sciences or dual award science.

- If you choose dual award science, you will need to select four other subjects.
- If you choose separate sciences, you will need to select three other subjects.

It should be noted that either science option provides the necessary knowledge and understanding to study science at Sixth Form level, although if you are considering taking more than one science A Level, then the separate sciences option is recommended.

You are also strongly recommended to study a language, and a humanity subject (history, geography or religious studies). You may wish to study more than one humanity or foreign language but care needs to be taken to ensure you maintain breadth. For example, to study all three humanities could lead to a lack of any arts, technology or language subjects.

Academic work is central to the life of the Schools, however, it is hoped that you will maintain and develop a wide range of interests outside of the classroom either through the Schools' co-curricular programme or within the wider community.

Dame Allan's has achieved excellent results in public examinations over the years. This achievement has been down to the hard work of pupils and the support of parents and teachers. Your results are important, not only for entry to Sixth Form\*, but also for entry to degree courses, where university selectors are likely to look for high grades in all subjects.

When making your choices, try to think of the subjects you enjoy and are good at, and which might be needed for their future career, if you already know what you want to do. Some people might wish to keep their options open.

*\* The minimum requirement for entry into the Sixth Form is 45 points from a pupil's best 8 GCSE grades, counting only those awarded a 4 or above.*

### **Other points to remember**

1. Some subjects are taught in mixed sex groups and timetabled simultaneously in both Boys' and Girls' Schools, e.g. music and Latin.
2. Where only a very few pupils opt for a subject, special arrangements may need to be made or alternatives discussed.
3. Every effort is made to timetable pupils' choices but it is highly unlikely that all combinations of subjects will be possible.



# The Optional Subjects

Three or four subjects (depending on your science option) must be chosen from the following list:

French	History	Design and technology
German	Religious studies	Drama
Spanish	Art	Food preparation and nutrition
Latin	Computer science	Music
Geography	Dance	

## The GCSE Options schedule

### 11 - 19 January

Two talks will take place during form time.

These will give you the information you need to make informed choices. Each talk will end with a Question and Answer session for any queries.

### 30 January

Full reports are sent home with effort and attainment grades and comments from your teachers.

### 6 February

You will be asked for option preferences at this stage. These preferences will help us to finalise the option blocks as we will then know the number of classes to provide for each subject.

### 19 - 23 February

Half term holiday

### 26 February - 1 March (DABS)

### 4 - 8 March (DAGS)

Option blocks will be distributed during the course of this week. Start to plan which subject you are going to choose from each option block. Discuss this with your parents.

### 6 March (DABS)

### 13 March (DAGS)

Parents' Evening. You will be present with your parents as you discuss with your teachers the merits of taking the various subjects.

### 21 March

Deadline for your parents to submit a Google Form listing your final GCSE subject choices.

**Please note: Every effort is made to produce a set of option blocks that is the most suitable for the interests of the year group. However, it is in no way possible to provide for every combination of subjects.**

# Controlled Assessment

Controlled assessment is examined work which takes place entirely within lesson time so that all schools can guarantee that no external help is given to any candidate. It is designed to measure subject specific skills that may not necessarily be tested by a formal examination, for example, testing performing skills within music. Each subject has its own set of conditions for conducting controlled assessments and teachers will ensure that the details will be made clear to you before the task starts.

You will be given a sheet next year detailing the weeks in which controlled assessments are due to take place throughout the year. The weighting of these assessments varies according to the subject. Over the two year course the subjects in which there is an element of controlled assessment are:

Art	60%
Dance	60% (30% Performance, 30% Choreography)
Design and technology	50%
Drama	60% (40% Devising, 20% Texts in practice)
Food preparation and nutrition	50%
Music	60% (30% Performing, 30% Composing)

Clearly, given their relative weighting in your final mark these controlled assessments are very important. Accordingly, whilst arrangements can be made in the event of illness or unforeseen emergencies, it is important that avoidable absence - for example, term time holidays or days off school for other reasons - is avoided.

# English Language and English Literature

Over two academic years, you will follow IGCSE English language and IGCSE English literature courses. English language is considered a core subject and minimum grades are increasingly stipulated for entry to particular undergraduate courses.

Working closely with your English teacher, you will explore a wide range of texts to develop analytical skills and construct personal responses with confidence. You will also be presented with exciting opportunities to develop your writing talents, (creative and discursive), and improve the effectiveness of your verbal communication in a range of contexts.

## **IGCSE English Language: Cambridge**

Pupils will develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when speaking and writing, using a wide range of vocabulary, and standard spelling, grammar and punctuation. They will develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience for whom they are writing. Creating their own narrative, descriptive and persuasive texts, pupils will learn to present ideas and opinions effectively.

Pupils are encouraged to read widely, in order to enjoy and appreciate a variety of texts and text types, and to further their understanding of the ways in which English can be used. They will demonstrate understanding of explicit and implicit meanings, comment on the ways writers create effects and influence readers, and select and use information for specific purposes. They will also learn to read critically, developing skills of inference, analysis and evaluation.

At the end of Year 11, pupils will sit two 2-hour papers, which are externally marked by the exam board:

Paper 1 - Reading - comprises a range of structured and extended questions based on three texts; two texts are non-fiction and one is fiction.

Paper 2 - Directed Writing and Composition - comprises one extended writing task, in response to a nonfiction text, and a composition task, either descriptive or narrative writing.

This course provides a firm foundation for the demands of A Level study across all subjects as it reinforces the importance of writing and reading fluently and accurately.

## **IGCSE English Literature: Edexcel**

Pupils will have the opportunity to study a range of poetry, prose and drama, including modern and pre-20th century texts. They will learn to analyse and evaluate writers' choices, commenting on the ways that language, form and structure are used to create meanings. In addition, they will consider how the social, historical and literary contexts in which texts were produced have an impact on our understanding of writers' intentions.

During the course, pupils produce two pieces of coursework, which make up 40% of a student's final grade: Assignment A is a response to a modern drama text; Assignment B is a response to a literary heritage text, usually a Shakespeare play.

At the end of Year 11, pupils sit one exam, in which they are assessed in three sections. They will show their ability to analyse a previously unseen poem and to compare poems from a prepared anthology. They will also write an essay on a given theme or character from the modern novel that they have studied in class. This exam makes up 60% of a student's final grade.

This course provides a strong foundation for the study of English literature at A Level.

P McGowan  
January 2024

# Mathematics

**Examination Board** Edexcel IGCSE (4MA1)

All pupils will sit IGCSE mathematics where they will be required to sit two 120 minute papers. These papers are equally weighted and calculators are allowed in both.

An understanding of mathematics is an essential pre-requisite for many courses and careers.

The attainment targets: Number and Algebra; Shape, Space and Measure; Handling Data.

Pupils usually sit the Higher Tier however, the Foundation Tier is available if the need arises.

This syllabus will allow and encourage pupils to develop, amongst other things:

- a positive attitude to mathematics, including confidence, enjoyment and perseverance
- an appreciation of the place of mathematics in society, including historical and cultural influences
- an ability to think mathematically - precisely, logically and creatively
- a willingness to work independently and co-operatively.

The IGCSE provides a firm foundation for progression onto the A Level courses in mathematics by concentrating on number, algebra, ratio, datahandling and geometry skills. There is an increased emphasis on problem-solving especially in real world contexts and this skill will be important for further study.

E D Renshaw  
January 2024

# Science

**Examination Board** AQA (GCSE)

**GCSEs offered:** Biology, Chemistry, Physics (separate science). Combined science (dual award option)

*Specifications and assessment details are available at [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)*

Two courses are possible. Dual Award (counts as 2 GCSEs) or Separate Sciences (separate GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics). Progression to A Level is possible via both courses but we strongly encourage any pupil who is considering studying more than one science subject at A Level to undertake the separate course due to the increased depth to which they study the sciences.

In both cases pupils will study all three sciences separately and will be taught by specialist subject teachers. The courses build upon and extends the material introduced during Years 7 - 8. In Year 9 pupils will have already covered some of the material from the GCSE syllabi.

In the science department we aim to present science as a discipline that explains the natural world through experimentation and observations. We aim to promote critical thinking, independence and an awareness of ethical and environmental issues in science.

In each of the three sciences, we use a wide variety of teaching strategies with an emphasis placed on encouraging learning through investigation and experience. Pupils are given opportunities to develop an understanding of how scientists work, the scientific method and the importance of science in modern society.

## Assessment

All of the marks come from examinations sat by the pupils in the summer when they are in Year 11.

*Combined Dual Award Science is assessed by:*  
Six 1 hour 15 minutes papers in total.  
(Two in each of the three sciences).

*Separate Science is assessed by:*  
Six 1 hour 45 minutes papers in total.  
(Two in each of the sciences, biology, chemistry and physics).

J C Downie  
January 2024

# Modern Foreign Languages

**Examination Board** Edexcel (IGCSE)

**GCSEs offered:** French, Spanish and German

## Languages and the Dame Allan's Curriculum

We strongly recommend that all Dame Allan's pupils choose at least one foreign language, unless they have found languages exceptionally difficult in Year 9. Pupils reluctant to take on a MFL should discuss their position with their language teacher.

## Desirability

Languages are desirable for the importance and personal satisfaction of being able to communicate abroad, for the variety of employment opportunities they offer and for their positive impact on UCAS forms and CVs. Pupils should also be aware of the increasing opportunities to study one or more languages combined with subjects such as law, economics, business studies and the sciences at university.

## French, Spanish and German course details and method of assessment

Four specific skill areas, speaking, writing, reading and listening, are tested at GCSE level. Examinations are linear, meaning all four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are assessed during the examination period at the end of Year 11 and all components have equal weighting and are assessed externally. The speaking exam is usually slightly earlier than the other examinations and is conducted by our teachers and marked by the exam board. The syllabus contains interesting themes relevant to young people's lives which include;

- home and abroad (including customs and festivals in the French, German and Spanish-speaking world, travel and tourism)
- education and employment (school life; Post 16 career; choices and ambitions)
- house, home and daily routine
- the modern world and the environment (environmental protection; new technology; charity work)
- social activities, fitness and health (leisure; maintaining good health).

Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of French, Spanish or German grammar throughout the courses and this is assessed in all four skill areas.

## Visits/activities outside the lesson

Year 10 and Year 11 pupils are encouraged to participate in the MFL programme of visits abroad. This is particularly appropriate for those contemplating studying a modern foreign language at A Level. In Year 11, pupils have a weekly conversation class with a native speaker.

M Pritt, January 2024

# Latin

**Examination Board** Eduqas (GCSE)

The Eduqas GCSE in Latin aims to provide a foundation in linguistic and cultural competence, enabling pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the Roman world through reading and responding to its language and literature.

**There are three components to the qualification**

## Component 1: Latin Language

**50% of qualification**

This paper will be in two sections:

### Section A

A range of short comprehension questions testing understanding of the storyline (55% of the marks for this component).

Translation of a passage from Latin into English, with a gradation of difficulty (35% of the marks for this component).

There is a Defined Vocabulary List for this unit, consisting of approximately 440 words.

### Section B

Either translation from English into Latin or the permitted alternative, i.e. recognise, analyse and explain items of syntax and accidence (10% of the marks for this component).

## Component 2: Latin Literature and Sources (Themes)

**30% of qualification**

A prescription of Latin literature, both prose and verse, on a theme together with prescribed ancient source materials on the same theme. This is an open-book assessment.

## Component 3: Roman Civilisation

**20% of qualification**

A prescribed topic of Roman Civilisation.

## Method of Assessment

The three written examinations are taken at the end of Year 11.

## What skills will I develop?

Latin is a great subject to develop a number of transferable skills for further education, work and life:

- interpreting information
- engaging creatively
- analytical skills
- literacy.

## Careers with Latin

Studying Latin can open the doors to an array of career paths that require use of language. It is an ideal complement to a range of subjects where formal terminology is used, such as law, medicine, teaching and further language study.

## Other Points

- 1 The study of Latin contributes to pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues.
- 2 Though remote in time, the classical world has had a profound influence on the development of western civilisation, through both language and literature.
- 3 Pupils will study Books 1 and 2 of the Latin to GCSE course.
- 4 Pupils will be encouraged to access the Cambridge Latin Course website ([www.clc.cambridgescp.com](http://www.clc.cambridgescp.com)) where there is access to a cornucopia of information on civilisation, grammar, games and vocabulary tests.
- 5 The Cambridge School Classics Project has developed a wide range of print and digital support for the GCSE qualification. These can be accessed on the Cambridge Latin Course website: ([www.exams.cambridgescp.com](http://www.exams.cambridgescp.com))

AJ Lawrenson  
January 2024

# Geography

Examination Board OCR 'B' (GCSE) - 'Geography for Enquiring Minds'

The GCSE geography qualification aims to encourage pupils to study the world in an objective manner through an enquiry-based approach relating to contemporary issues and topics. Pupils are therefore engaged in subject matter relating to their own lives. This helps them to better understand the world they live in, and their interrelationships that exist within it.

## Course Content

### Physical Geography

This provides pupils with the opportunity to explore the natural world, to understand why it looks the way it does and appreciate its value. It includes investigation of global hazards, examination of how the climate is changing and what this means. Pupils study the distinctive landscapes and ecosystems that surround them.

### Human Geography

This explores the connections between people and places, questioning how these may change. It identifies urban trends, how people live in cities and urban futures. It provides the opportunity to study the causes of development inequalities, the UK's significance in the 21st century and one of the biggest threats to human society - our attempts to feed an ever-increasing global population.

### Fieldwork and Skills

Pupils develop and extend their competence in a range of skills including those used in fieldwork, in using maps and Geographical Information Systems. They research secondary evidence, including digital sources and develop their competence in applying enquiry and investigative approaches to questions and hypotheses. Geographical and fieldwork skills are embedded throughout ensuring pupils become adaptable and resilient.

### Wider Skills

Geographers develop an understanding of important environmental issues, and appreciate their responsibilities as global citizens. They acquire

skills in data collection, representation and analysis, and are introduced to the discipline of balanced argument and the recognition of bias and prejudice. A wide range of ICT techniques are used including Geographical Information Systems.

## Assessment

This course is assessed by three written examinations

- **01 Our Natural World** (Physical Geography)

**Content overview:** Global Hazards, Changing Climate, Distinctive Landscapes, Sustaining Ecosystems, Fieldwork, Geographical Skills

**Assessment overview:** 70 marks, 1 hour 15 minute written paper, 35% of total GCSE

- **02 People and Society** (Human Geography)

**Content overview:** Urban Future, Dynamic Development, UK in the 21st Century  
Resource Reliance, Fieldwork, Geographical Skills

**Assessment overview:** 70 marks, 1 hour 15 minute written paper, 35% of total GCSE

- **03 Geographical Exploration** (Synoptic assessment of a range of topics across both Our Natural World (01) and People and Society (02))

**Content overview:** Geographical Skills, Decision Making Exercise

**Assessment overview:** 60 marks, 1 hour 30 minute written paper, 30% of total GCSE

## Future careers

Geography GCSE blends literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. It equips pupils with a broad range of learning and thinking skills such as teamwork, independent enquiry and creative thinking - all highly valued by employers. It combines well with both arts and science subjects and forms a firm foundation for a broad range of careers.

JE Stockwell  
January 2024

# History

**Examination Board** Edexcel (IGCSE)

## Method of Assessment

The course is linear, with pupils sitting two examination papers at the end of the two year course. This gives the pupils the advantage of greater maturity and the benefit of a longer period of time in which to prepare thoroughly before taking the final examination. There is no controlled assessment in IGCSE History.

The examination will test all of the topics that we will study over the two years. The paper is structured in three parts and the pupils will study:

- Germany: Development in Dictatorship 1918 - 45
- Russia and Soviet Union, 1905-24
- Dictatorship and Conflict in USSR 1924 - 53
- Changes in Medicine 1848 - 1948

## Course Details

Pupils will be provided with textbooks which will help to widen their knowledge and deepen their understanding of the topics. The course will allow them to experience a variety of different teaching and learning styles. They will use a wide range of source materials, access historical information through the use of IT and have the opportunity to watch thought provoking documentary films. Pupils will be taught how to answer specific question types so that they are fully prepared for the demands of the examination.

## Beyond IGCSE

The study of history is an excellent preparation for the future. Pupils learn to analyse source material, organise information and present a well-founded argument. History encourages the development of logical thinking, mental flexibility and the coherent communication of ideas. IGCSE history is a well-respected academic qualification amongst university admissions tutors and employers.

The careers in which the study of history is considered to be an advantage are numerous; examples would be the law, journalism, business management, accountancy, library and archive work.

G Wilde  
January 2024

# Religious Studies

**Examination Board** AQA (GCSE)

Do you want to be able to:

- 1) construct and criticise argument,
- 2) express your own view clearly,
- 3) better understand human motivation and action?

If so, GCSE religious studies may be for you. You do NOT need to be religious to study RS.

GCSE religious studies is challenging, stimulating, topical and engaging. You will be provided with opportunities to think for yourself, to study some fascinating, complex issues and to develop invaluable reasoning skills. The goal is to explore a range of beliefs and develop a personal response and the means to explain and defend it.

## Questions considered include:

- Is it ever right to help someone to die?
- Are you irrational if you do not believe in God?
- Can you be a scientist and be religious?
- Is there life after death?
- Does suffering prove that God does not exist?
- Is the death penalty immoral?

One component of the course is a study of the beliefs, teachings, and practices within Christianity and Buddhism. As part of this we will explore key beliefs and practices within these religions, the reasons for them, their influence on individuals, communities and societies and look at diversity within these religions. In this way therefore you will develop a deeper understanding of human behaviour.

The second component consists of the study of four philosophical and ethical studies themes: Religion and life; The existence of God and revelation; Religion, peace and conflict; Religion, crime and punishment.

In 'Religion and life' you will consider topics connected to the nature and value of the universe and human life including moral dilemmas such as environmental ethics, animal ethics, abortion, euthanasia, death and the afterlife. In 'The existence of God' you will examine arguments and challenges to those arguments for God's existence so that you can justify your own view on this; you will also explore different ways God has been said to communicate with people. In 'Religions, peace and conflict' you will explore arguments for and against war and violent action, including terrorism, in addition to exploring specific arguments connected to weapons of mass destruction. In, 'Religion, crime and punishment', you will explore different crimes, the causes of crime and the justifications for punishments including the death penalty. As part of the course, we endeavour to visit the Courts, a hospice and a Buddhist monastery.

## Assessment

The two written exams are taken at the end of Year 11 and cover the components outlined above. Each exam is 1¾ hours in length and consists of questions with a set-structure on each unit. Exam preparation and practice are integral parts of the course.

## Beyond GCSE:

Religious Studies is a well-respected academic discipline which is highly valued by all universities. It gives you a firm grounding in forming arguments and critical analysis of these. The subject prepares you for working with people of different cultures and beliefs. It has been useful to those who have gone on to careers in law, medicine, psychology, personnel management, social work, teaching, and many other professions.

K Wilkinson  
January 2024

# Art

Examination Board AQA (GCSE)

## Course details

The art syllabus for GCSE is a two year course of study in fine art, concerned primarily with drawing, painting and printmaking but with the option to extend across experimental media and 3D work.

The course is taught through practical demonstrations and workshops, whole class and small group learning and individual discussion/feedback. During the two year course, pupils will usually have the opportunity to take part in an art trip to soak up the art and culture of a European city such as Paris or Barcelona, as well as more local trips such as London/Edinburgh. Pupils can also enjoy the opportunity to exhibit their work in the fabulous art department gallery space.

Pupils will be encouraged to engage in a variety of individual approaches to explore and develop their own ideas and creativity. They will be expected to show that, in the process of producing their own work, they have studied contextual links via contemporary and historical artists, cultures and social history. Pupils are expected to support their controlled assessment with the development of ideas, and use of different media and techniques.

## Method of assessment

**Unit 1 (60%).** Candidates submit a portfolio of work demonstrating the nature of their experiences and personal engagement in the learning opportunities provided. The portfolio will include two extended collections of work evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions undertaken in Years 10 and 11.

**Unit 2 (40%).** Externally set task (Spring term Year 11). Candidates respond to one starting point or project brief from a paper set by the exam board. There will be an extensive preparation period during which staff can guide pupils in developing and exploring ideas. Candidates will then produce a personal outcome in a timed period of 10 hours.

## Beyond GCSE

The purpose of the course is to stimulate interest and to develop practical skills, analytical ability and knowledge as well as to prepare the ground for further study. Art at A Level is accepted by universities and colleges as an entry qualification for most degree courses. It is of particular value to those interested in architecture, engineering, marketing and business studies, as well as the more specifically art and design related careers in graphic design, product design, industrial design, interior design, environmental design, fine art, fashion and textiles.

Z Allonby  
January 2024

# Computer Science

Examination Board OCR (GCSE)

## Background

A GCSE in computer science will enable you to:

- understand and apply the principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms and data representation
- analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems
- think creatively, analytically, innovatively, logically and critically
- understand the components that make up digital systems and how they communicate with one another and with other systems
- understand the impacts of digital technology on individuals and wider society
- apply mathematical skills that are relevant to computer science
- develop programming skills and learn to code using Python.

The course is designed to give you an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on 'behind the screens'. You will develop a range of skills that can be transferred to other subjects and also applied in day-to-day life.

## Course Content and Assessment

### 100% Written Examinations

#### Programming Project (non-assessed)

The first theoretical unit, Computer Systems will teach you about a wide range of topics, such as: systems architecture; system hardware, including memory and storage; wired and wireless networks; network topologies; protocols and layers; system security; system software and ethical, legal,

cultural and environmental concerns. This written examination is worth 50% of the GCSE and consists of short answer questions and some extended response questions.

The second theoretical unit, Computational Thinking Algorithms and Programming will focus on algorithms and the methods used to develop program code; the production of robust programs; computational logic and data representation. This written examination is worth 50% of the GCSE and again consists of short answer questions and some extended response questions.

The non-assessed programming project consolidates skills and knowledge developed through the theoretical units and provides an opportunity to demonstrate practical skills that have been developed.

An authentic programming experience and the opportunity for creativity is achieved via a task; in which you design, develop, test and refine a computer program, using a specified programming language (usually Python). In addition to the developed program, a report will be produced to outline its development.

## Further information

You can find more information about the computer science course by speaking to Mrs Dunne, Mrs Raines or Mrs Morris.

S J Dunne  
January 2024

# Dance

Examination Board AQA (GCSE)

Dance is a powerful and empowering form of non-verbal communication and it is both physical and expressive, which makes it both similar to and different from other art forms

and physical activities. Dance develops creative, imaginative, physical, emotional and intellectual capacities.

## Assessment

Course component	Weighting	Method of assessment
<b>Component 1: Performance and choreography</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solo composition from set phrases</li><li>• Performance in a duet or trio created in collaboration with the subject teacher</li><li>• Solo or group choreography</li></ul>	<b>60% overall</b> 15% 15% 30%	Internally marked and externally moderated
<b>Component 2: Dance appreciation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written examination looking at professional works and understanding choreographic processes and performing skills</li></ul>	<b>40%</b>	Externally assessed: set and marked by AQA

The department is very dynamic and has many workshops by visiting teachers in various dance styles to enable pupils to work in a style that they enjoy. This new specification acknowledges the important role that dance plays in young people's lives today with GCSE pupils studying a range of dance styles. Pupils are actively encouraged to go to see live dance at regional theatres. The department goes on residential trips; previous visits include London and The Hague. Groups are also actively encouraged

to perform in both regional and national platforms. These enable all of the skills required for GCSE dance to be developed in a creative, fun environment.

This course is a must for those of you who have an adventurous, creative spirit. It provides an opportunity to gain a qualification that enables you to 'stand out from the crowd!'

C Turnbull  
January 2024

# Design and Technology

Examination Board AQA (GCSE)

This subject is concerned with creative design principles and problem-solving processes which lead to the making and evaluation of a wide range of products. It is concerned with identifying the changing needs of modern society and the role designers play in meeting these demands. Pupils are encouraged to combine creative problem solving skills with the application of new technology, allowing them to create new and innovative products which meet specific user requirements.

The syllabus content is designed to help develop a wide range of knowledge and skills needed for the assessment of AQA design and technology and includes the following topics:

- Identifying needs
- Design and problem-solving
- Using materials, tools and equipment
- Product making skills
- Evaluating one's own products and the products of others
- Classification and selection of materials based on their properties
- Preparing, processing and finishing materials
- The manufacture of commercial products
- The use of ICT in CAD/ CAM
- Design and market influences.

Y10 begins by developing 2D and 3D graphic skills which feed well into an architecture project that utilises both technical and 3D drawings to create buildings in CAD that can be experienced via VR headsets. Design skills are further developed through 'hands on' 3D card modelling to create origami inspired flat-pack lighting. Specialist metals manufacturing facilities are also utilised to create biomorphic inspired acid etched jewellery. All projects run in parallel with corresponding theory lessons in preparation for

written examinations. Y11 coursework involves a substantial design and manufacturing portfolio which accounts for 50% of the final grade.

## Written examination topics

- Core technical principles
- Specialist technical principles
- Designing and making principles

## Assessment

- Written exam: 2 hours • 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE

### 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.

### Controlled assessment coursework:

- 35 hours approx.
- 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

### Task(s)

- Substantial design and make task

### Assessment criteria:

- Investigating
- Designing
- Making (Pupils will produce a working prototype to accompany their portfolio)
- Analysing and evaluating

S Sweeney  
January 2024

# Drama

Examination Board AQA (GCSE)

## Course content

This course is exciting, creative and challenging. It combines practical controlled assessment tasks with a written examination. The course is taught through practical workshops, whole class and small group learning, and a range of visits and live performances. Pupils keep a logbook of practical work and research.

## Skills and knowledge

Pupils will explore various genres and styles and learn how professionals use drama to communicate to an audience. They will develop improvisation, performance and production skills, working collaboratively to achieve dramatic intentions. They will research, select and synthesise ideas and will acquire reflective, evaluative and analytical skills.

## Assessment

	How is it assessed	What's assessed?
<b>Understanding Drama</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam</li><li>• Open book</li><li>• 40% of GCSE</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge and understanding of drama &amp; theatre</li><li>• Study of one set play from a choice of six</li><li>• Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers</li></ul>
<b>Devising Drama*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devising log</li><li>• Devised performance</li><li>• 40% of GCSE</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process of creating devised drama</li><li>• Performance of devised drama (pupils may contribute as performer or designer)</li><li>• Analysis and evaluation of own work</li></ul>
<b>Text in Practice*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practical Performance (no written element)</li><li>• 20% of GCSE</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performance of two extracts from a play (pupils may contribute as performer or designer)</li></ul>

*\*This component is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA*

## Why study drama?

Drama is a popular GCSE choice. Many pupils opt for drama having enjoyed their experience of the subject, LAMDA lessons, or participation in Drama clubs and want to develop their skills further. Many pupils find that the range of skills honed during the course provides a beneficial accompaniment to their other GCSE subjects. Others take it to increase self-confidence and presentation skills. Whatever the reason, imagination, enthusiasm, a willingness to try new ideas and commitment are key qualities in a successful drama pupil.

## Beyond GCSE

The course enables a smooth transition to AQA A Level Drama and Theatre Studies. The A Level course complements a range of academic subjects such as English literature or language, politics, history and psychology, as well as other creative and performing arts such as art, music and dance. Previous drama students have continued along the performing arts route at prestigious drama schools while others have used the skills developed in drama to secure degrees in Law, English, Business, Psychology, politics and many other subjects.

K Clark, January 2024

# Food Preparation and Nutrition

Examination Board AQA (GCSE)

Food preparation and nutrition aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating.

## Aims and learning outcomes

The course will encourage pupils to:

- demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking using a variety of food commodities, cooking techniques and equipment
- develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical processes as well as the nutritional content of food and drinks
- understand the relationship between diet, nutrition and health, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health
- understand the economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes and diet and health choices
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of functional and nutritional properties, sensory qualities and microbiological food safety considerations when preparing, processing, storing, cooking and serving food
- understand and explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international), to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

## Summary of subject content

**Section 1** - Nutrition and health

**Section 2** - Food science

**Section 3** - Food safety

**Section 4** - Food choice

**Section 5** - Food provenance

## Assessment

This is made up of three units

### Written Examination

**1. Food Preparation and Nutrition** The examination will be one hour and 45 minutes and is worth **50% of the overall qualification**. Pupils will be expected to answer questions based on content studied across sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

### Controlled Assessment

Pupils complete **two** tasks

**2. Food Investigation Task** - This task assesses the scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food. This component is worth **15% of the qualification**.

**3. Food Preparation Task** - This task assesses the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food. This component is worth **35% of the qualification**.

Pupils are required to prepare, cook and present three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours and plan, in advance, how this will be achieved.

D Crawley  
January 2024

# Music

## Examination Board Edexcel (GCSE)

This course is perfect for any pupil with a keen interest in listening to, analysing, creating and performing music. Pupils will develop knowledge on a wide range of repertoire, whilst increasing their performance skills and

using theoretical concepts to create their own compositions. This course is essential for those hoping to carry on studying music but is also ideal for pupils looking to continue a diverse range of subjects in the future.

## Course content

<b>Unit 1: Performing Music (30%)</b> Internally assessed; moderated by Edexcel.	Candidates perform a solo and ensemble piece, totalling a minimum of four minutes in length. Candidates should have reached a minimum of grade four standard by Year 11. Pupils can perform across a wide range of genres, and on any instrument or voice.
<b>Unit 2: Composing Music (30%)</b> Internally assessed and moderated by Edexcel.	Pupils produce one composition in response to a brief set by Edexcel and one free composition set by the pupil. Combined, both compositions need to be at least three minutes in duration. These need to be either notated or described in a detailed annotation. Compositions can be in any style or genre.
<b>Unit 3: Music - Listening and Appraising (40%)</b> 1 hr 45 minutes examination	This written paper assesses listening and appraising skills and essay writing on the set works and other pieces from the four areas of studies (see below). Pupils will also complete a short dictation exercise and answer questions on an unfamiliar piece of music.

They will analyse the musical elements, contexts and language in the following set works:

### Instrumental Music 1700 - 1820

- J S Bach: 3rd Movement from Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major
- L van Beethoven: 1st Movement from Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor 'Pathétique'

### Vocal Music

- H Purcell: Music for a While
- Queen: Killer Queen, from the album 'Sheer Heart Attack'

### Music for Stage and Screen

- Stephen Schwartz: Defying Gravity, from the album of the cast recording of 'Wicked'
- John Williams: Main Title/Rebel Blockade Runner, from 'Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope'

### Fusions

- Afro Celt Sound System: Release, from the album 'Volume 2: Release'
- Esperanza Spalding: Samba Em Preludio, from the album 'Esperanza'

Successful candidates will be:

- receiving tuition on a musical instrument or voice
- performing at a minimum of grade 3 standard on their instrument or voice, at the start of the course
- familiar with treble and bass clef notation
- members of at least one musical ensemble.

January 2024

# Higher Education & Careers

We use the acronym of **IDEAS** for Careers to help pupils believe in and be motivated by their own ideas. What matters is what **I**nspires them, **D**evelops, **E**ncourages them, what their **A**spirations are and what they **S**ucceed in! The Ideas Programme ensures **I**ndividual **D**evelopment of the skills linked with **E**mployment, **A**dventures and **S**tudy.

Years 7 to 9 enjoy investigating the world of work via JED (Job Explorer Database). They become more self-aware via The Buzz personality testing which helps them to understand their strengths and interests better. In Year 9 plenty of advice and information is given to assist pupils' GCSE choices.

Self-awareness and self-development are encouraged and this will be recorded in pupils' reports and Morrisby profiles. The Morrisby interests questionnaires offer individual guidance reports online from Year 9 upwards and in Year 10 psychometric assessments reveal aptitude strengths. Pupils can access their Morrisby support and information for life all in one place. In one to one consultations with the Head of Careers in Key Stages 4 & 5, each student can map the journey ahead and make decisions about their future.

The careers consultation and HE and careers ambitions pack ensure that pupils are aware of the importance of all the opportunities ahead.

In KS4 pupils plan their work experience via modules: The World of Work (WoW), Self-Awareness and Dame Allan's Employability workshops.

Work experience is recommended after GCSE's in (Year 11), following their exams and in the holidays for Year 12/13.

**Summary of higher education and careers education, information, advice, guidance and opportunities at Dame Allan's Schools.**

- Access to bespoke DAS HE and Careers websites - 'My Great Future' and Futures Fair
- National Careers Week events (March)
- Biennial Futures Fair (October 2022/24)
- Years 7-9 self-awareness and career workshops
- PSHE Education Unit - 'Living in the Wider World'
- Year 9 onwards: Morrisby aspirations, interests questionnaire, psychometric assessments, report and follow up guidance consultations
- Year 11 Dame Allan's Employability Skills Workshops and world of work mock interviews
- Year 11-13 work experience and shadowing, extended weekly placements, eg Inspire Programme at the Junior School
- Year 12-13 Enrichment Programme: online self-profiling, volunteering, transitions to student life, finance, accommodation, UCAS training, personal statement writing, and preparation for interviews and recruitment into apprenticeships / employability.

## Further Support and research:

- Careers Consultations
- Careers Clinics
- World of Work Insights
- My Great Future Websites
- FutureReady Bulletin
- World of Work email - [wow@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:wow@dameallans.co.uk)
- Year 11/Sixth Form Careers Ambassadors assist with events and mentoring younger pupils, supporting GCSE/ A Level choices.

B J Whitehouse, January 2024

# Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

This course covers a wide variety of topics. Part of the Dame Allan's ethos is to equip pupils not only with information they will need but also the skills to assess sources of information, potential bias and alternative views. It is Dame Allan's policy that we attempt to address issues before they become a potential problem for pupils, but of course all issues are approached in an age-appropriate manner.

PSHE covers issues such as: current affairs and citizenship, financial awareness, health issues including alcohol, drugs and safe sex, diversity and anti-discrimination, relationships, self-esteem, mental health, peer group and media pressures. (Note: parents will be given the option each year to remove their son/daughter from the particular lessons regarding sex education by writing to the school.)

Pupils are encouraged to develop skills of assertiveness to enable them to withstand the pressures of 'modern life' and to make sensible decisions to keep themselves safe, healthy and happy. The length of study and discussion of each topic will vary depending on its complexity and on the needs of the particular group.

In the PSHE lessons pupils are encouraged to explore their own knowledge and opinions regarding controversial topics and to listen carefully to the views of others and the wider society. They are encouraged to think about the kind of person they want to be, the morality of their actions and potential impact upon themselves and others.

There is a rota for Careers and PSHE in Year 10 and 11 ensuring pupils receive an equal spread of topics.

J Downie  
January 2024

# Physical Education and Games

At this stage of your Dame Allan's career, we believe in giving you a wide range of options in our Physical Education lessons and you can see many of the options below. In Year 10, pupils have a single Physical Education lesson every fortnight.

DAGS Activities		DABS Activities	
Health Related Fitness	Rounders	Badminton	Health Related Fitness
Touch Rugby	Striking and Fielding	American Football	Softball
Volleyball	Lacrosse	Basketball	Striking and Fielding
Table Tennis	Badminton	Table Tennis	Volleyball
Athletics	Football	Athletics	Hockey

These sports all compliment our games programme which for Year 10 is a double lesson every week.

Year 10 DAGS options	Year 10 DABS options
Hockey	Rugby
Netball	Football
Cricket	Cricket
Tennis	Tennis
Rowing	Rowing
	Basketball

Year 11's join the Senior Games Programme (Years 11-13) for a double lesson on a Wednesday afternoon every week. At this stage, the Games programme allows for complete choice regarding the pathway pupils take. Our major competitive sports are complemented with a variety of options both on and off site including:

Rugby

Football

Hockey

Cricket

Netball

Surfing (Tynemouth Surf Co.)

Spin Class (Newcastle University)

X-Fit (Kingston Park)

Strength and Conditioning (School Fitness Suite)

Rowing (Tyne United Rowing Club)

Badminton (Tyneside Badminton Centre)

Basketball (Newcastle Eagles)

Golf (Parklands Driving Range)

Multi-Games

Dance

Pilates

A Barlow  
January 2024



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