
YEAR 9 PREFERENCES INFORMATION BOOKLET 2026

Blue Pathway

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Introduction

Dear Year 9 students,

We have reached an exciting time in Year 9 where you have the opportunity to make decisions about your education and future.

Over the last three years at Weston Secondary School you have studied a broad range of subjects, developing your knowledge and skills on a variety of topics. At the end of Year 10 and Year 11, you take public examinations and gain qualifications which help you to progress onto further education, apprenticeships, training, employment, and ultimately your chosen career path.

Examination subjects require more time each week than you spend currently so it is necessary to reduce the number of subjects you study as you will need to concentrate your time, effort and commitment on subjects that are going to support your future.

To support you with making informed preferences there have been assemblies with presentations from curriculum leaders who have explained the content and assessment processes for each subject. I am pleased to hear that many of you have been proactive in seeing staff to discuss the courses that sparked an interest from their assemblies! The next step will be to make those informed preferences and complete the preference form.

This booklet contains information about the pathway we believe you are most suited to based on your aptitude demonstrated throughout Years 7, 8 and 9. Our aim is that this personalised preferences approach will support you to be successful on a pathway towards a rewarding career.

Please use this booklet to understand more about each course, it is your booklet, therefore make notes when discussing with the teachers and start to put ticks next to the subjects you are interested in learning more about. You can then refer to this booklet when completing your preferences form.

We are all here to support you with this exciting stage in your secondary school education and to prepare you for this next phase in your academic life.

Mr Smith
Senior Assistant Headteacher

There are some important points to consider when making your Preferences. One important point to note is that no subject is easy. Every course and qualification will have a rigorous curriculum with an assessment framework designed to test your developing skills and knowledge.

When making your preferences consider the following:

- How do I get a good balance?
- What subjects am I good at?
- What subjects do I enjoy?
- What subjects have I made progress in?
- How is the course assessed, and will this play to my strengths?
- What subjects will help me in my post-16 choices?

Who can help you decide?

There are many sources of help and information available, but you should talk to at least some of the following:

- Your parents/carers
- Your teachers
- Your tutor
- Your Head of Year
- Careers advisor
- Older students who are already studying GCSE subjects

Where can you get information to support you with post-16 plans and future career opportunities?

In school there are many staff that can support you with making links to your Preference options at KS4, to post-16 and beyond. The discussions and choices you make moving forwards will become influential in what that looks like.

For guidance on post-16 study and future career options that link specifically to a subject or area of study, your first port of call should be to speak to the individual teacher or Head of Department who will be able to sign-post you to 'next steps' training and 'career family' related pathways.

In addition, we have our Independent Careers Advisor who can provide generalised guidance about careers information and guidance.

There are many sources of information to support you in making an informed Preference choice as well as help you map what post-16 could look like. Below are a few useful websites including local post-16 providers that will help you explore this.

The National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>
Find an Apprenticeship: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
South Hampshire College Group: <https://shcg.ac.uk>
Barton Peveril Peveril Sixth Form College: <https://barton-peveril.ac.uk>
Itchen College Sixth Form: <https://www.itchen.ac.uk>
University of Southampton: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk>
Southampton Solent University: <https://www.solent.ac.uk>

To support you with your post-16 education or training decisions, you will have access to the following:

- A one-to-one career interview with our Careers Adviser (Year 10 or 11)
- Preferences Information Evening
- Further and Higher Education Assemblies – Pathways and future study options
- Careers Education within subject lessons – Signposting and employability skills focus
- Access to apprenticeship and technical qualification information
- Career Education, Information and Guidance opportunities

Your Preferences subjects will begin your journey at developing subject related knowledge and skills whilst continuing to provide you with personal and employability growth. There are many training and future career opportunities both in Southampton and further afield which will be dictated by both your aspiration and labour market information. Although the opportunities nationwide will be broad and balanced, Southampton has a long and successful global history of careers in the maritime industry such as the cruise industry, the port and marine manufacturing. There are a diverse range of career opportunities in this sector. In addition, as a large expanding city, there are many employment roles in careers within health and social care, construction, engineering and education sectors.

The core curriculum refers to the subjects which all students will study. These are:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science

All students in Year 10 and 11 are also required to have lessons in PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and Core PE.

Below you will find information about your KS4 pathway.

Your progress data along with discussions with staff have placed you onto our [blue](#) pathway.

This pathway means that you have been selected to study Separate Science. This enables you to achieve separate grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. You also have a slightly wider range of subjects to choose from in Column A.

Compulsory	Column A	Column B
English Language	History	Art and Design
English Literature	Geography	Business Studies
Mathematics	Computer Science	Carpentry
Biology	French	Child Development
Chemistry		Citizenship
Physics		Dance
Core PE (Non examined)		Digital Information Technology
PSHE (Non examined)		Drama
		Engineering
		Food and Nutrition
		Geography
		History
		Music
		Photography
		RE
		Sport
		Textiles

In addition to your core curriculum and Separate Science you will also study 1 subject from Column A and 2 subjects from Column B.

When you receive your emailed link to a Microsoft Form you will be asked to for your first and second preferences from column B and then two back up subjects which will be ranked third and fourth. Please also be aware that you will not be able to study both:

- Art and Textiles / Art and Photography / Textiles and Photography
- Computer Science and Digital Information Technology
- Dance and Drama
- Carpentry and Engineering

Which subjects did staff at Weston Secondary School study?



When choosing my options I followed my passion for sport and selected GCSE PE, which then continued at college by studying Sport Science. Sport played a huge role in my life growing up – developing confidence, resilience, teamwork and a strong work ethic, all of which are important both in school and beyond. Alongside this, I really enjoyed English, particularly the opportunity to be creative through writing. I liked being able to express my ideas, opinions and imagination in different ways, whether that was through stories, descriptive pieces or analysing characters and themes in texts. I also took Food Technology, where I developed my cooking skills – something that has proved to be a valuable life skill. My choices were based on what I enjoyed and where my strengths were, and they helped shape the person I am today.

Mr Byres, Head of Year 9

"As well as loving English at school, I was keen to explore a range of other options for my GCSE's. Therefore, I studied French, Textiles, Travel and Tourism and Music. I really enjoyed the breadth of these subjects as at this time I did not know what my chosen career path would be. The thought of having to perform for my Music GCSE did make me a little anxious but the course was designed in such a way that my confidence grew and grew. I think this is what sparked my love of musical theatre ever since."

Ms Connery, Director of Communications.



"At times I struggled in secondary school and found some subjects a real challenge. I choose my options based on subjects I both loved and was awesome at, having demonstrated excellent progress in KS3. I studied Art, Textiles and Photography. These courses all required a lot of dedication to complete large portfolios of coursework, and I had lots of deadlines to meet. My creative options definitely influenced my first career when I worked in fashion and my GCSE options equipped me with the foundations I needed for this success."

Mrs Kaye, Assistant Headteacher

"During my time at secondary school my favourite subject was Maths. Other subjects I chose included GCSE PE and German. Maths is a bundle of problems and I love to solve problems. My love for Maths continued into my further education and I studied Accountancy. I am currently completing an apprenticeship in School Business Professional."

Mrs Gaffney, Business & Finance Officer



"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a career when I chose my GCSE's, so I went for breadth of subjects. I had to choose between History and Geography, which was my hardest decision but ended up picking Geography because I got better marks in my Year 9 assessments. I also chose French, Business Studies, Food Tech and Performing Arts alongside my core subjects. Even when I picked my A-levels I kept my subjects broad, choosing A-levels in Geography, Biology and English Literature and a GCSE in Geology. I have always believed that if you choose the subjects that you are most interested in, they will open the right doors for you at the next stage of your career."

Mrs Smart, Head of Humanities

I picked Music, Drama, History and Separate Science at GCSE. I chose these subjects because I was interested in and enjoyed each of them and I didn't yet know what I wanted to do after I left school. The variety of subjects I took allowed me to keep my options open and explore different interests which ultimately led me to study Physics and Astronomy at university.

Mr Dyson, Second in Science



"My favourite subjects at school were PE and English, I even did an extracurricular club after school every week to achieve an AS Level in English Literature. I also took French as this is the language my extended family speak so I thought it would be helpful. Alongside these subjects I also took Food Technology as I thought this would be an excellent way to improve the life skill of cooking. In addition, I studied Religious Education as I was interested in other people's culture and beliefs. I made sure I took a variety of subjects as I wanted Key Stage 4 to be interesting, and despite knowing I wanted to be a PE teacher I wanted to have different skills that would help me outside of my career."

Miss Rennison, Head of Physical Education.

Timeline:

13 th – 15 th April:	Subject Assemblies
23 rd April:	Preferences and Parents Evening
Week beginning 27 th April:	Microsoft form emailed to the student's school email address
5 th May:	Deadline for completing your preferences form
May-June	Key staff work behind the scenes on your preferences
July	Preferences communicated to students and parents / carers

Subject Information

GCSE English Language

Subject Leader: Ms R Connery

Specification: AQA 8700

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1 hour 45 minutes)

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1 hour 45 minutes)

All texts in the examination will be unseen.

Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language

Apart from Spoken Language, there is no coursework or controlled assessment; all assessment is through examination in Year 11.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

The two Language papers assess students' ability to read, comprehend, analyse, and interpret texts.

Whereas Paper 1 explored fiction- focusing on methods, structural analysis, and evaluating, Paper 2 explores non-fiction with a focus on analysing language, synthesizing and comparison skills. It is worth noting that the extracts in both exam papers are unseen meaning students need to have secure reading skills in order to access the papers. Therefore, we encourage as much reading of fiction and non-fiction at home through platforms such as Sparx Reader.

In addition to the reading sections, both papers also have writing questions ranging from narrative and descriptive tasks to discursive writing. Technical accuracy is vital as up to 16 marks on each paper assess spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

English Language is a core subject. You must secure a Grade 4 or above in either English language or English Literature to progress onto a course at College. If you do not secure a Grade 4 for either subject, collages have to ensure that you take the subject again- the focus is always on English Language as this is considered to be rooted in functional skills of reading, writing and oracy. This is not down to the College – this is a government initiative.

English Language underpins our understanding of the world around us. Not only does it enable you to read into how effects are created in fiction, but it also enables you to read media texts and non-fiction critically. Studying this subject in depth will make you question everything in front of you, engage with wider themes and ideas, and develop as a reader and writer.

Having a good command of the English language is also incredibly important. Whatever job you want to do in the future, you will not be able to achieve your ambitions if you cannot communicate effectively, in the spoken form as well as the written form.

GCSE English Literature

Subject Leader: Ms R Connery

Specification: AQA 8702

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-Century Novel (40%)

Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry (60%)

They are 'closed book exams' meaning students will not be given copies in the actual exams. Therefore, they need to have a fantastic understanding of plot, characters, quotes, methods... all of which will be studied in class. However, students need to spend time revising key knowledge at home, using the copies of texts provided by the school.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

Students will study a total of 3 texts (a Shakespeare play, a modern novel or play, and a 19th Century novel) and 15 poems from the Poetry Anthology, provided by the exam board. This allows students to have a good understanding of the literary landscape.

For Paper 1, students will answer one question on the novel studied in class, and one question on the play studied in class. They will be required to write in detail about an extract and then to write about the text as a whole.

For Paper 2, students will have a choice of two questions for the modern text they have studied and they will have to answer one of their choice. They will have to remember key phrases and words from the modern text to enable them to do this effectively. For the poetry section, students will be given one poem, printed, in the exam paper and they will need to compare this poem to one of their choice, which they will not have access to. This is in addition to unseen poetry analysis and comparison.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

English Literature is a core subject. You must secure a Grade 4 or above in either English Language or English Literature to progress onto a course at College. If you do not secure a Grade 4 for either subject, the College have to ensure that you take the subject again. This is not down to the College – this is a government initiative.

If you have ambition to go to University after College, studying English Literature at A- Level will help you get into one of the top Universities in the country. Reading a variety of literature unlocks many different skills: linking a text to the historical influences of the time it was written, analysing the effect of language and narrative voice, evaluating the meanings and ideas behind great writers of our time and in our literary heritage. It will help you become more culturally aware. And, it's really enjoyable!

GCSE Mathematics

Subject Leader: Mr T Fenner

Specification: Edexcel 1MA0

Three equally weighted written papers:

Paper 1 non-calculator 1hr.30 (33.3%)

Paper 2 calculator 1hr.30 (33.3%)

Paper 3 calculator 1hr.30 (33.3%)

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

Developing knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts in the following areas:

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

Assessment:

Three equally weighted written papers; 1 non-calculator and 2 calculator papers, each are 1 hour 30 minutes in length.

There are 2 tiers; Foundation with grades 1 - 5 and Higher with grades 3 – 9

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Students can go on to study Mathematics at AS and A Level Mathematics. GCSE Mathematics is also specifically required for some technical and engineering courses. Students who achieve Grade 3 in Maths are likely to re-sit their GCSE at college.

GCSE Separate Science

Subject Leader: Mrs L Savage

Specification: AQA

What is Separate Science?

Separate Science is where students study all three sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and achieve three GCSE's. The majority of GCSE students in England follow the combined course, which covers approximately two thirds of the content covered by Separate Award Science students. Therefore, to provide sufficient time for students to cover the full specification they will choose two other options instead of three.

What to expect:

6 x Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. Each exam features Foundation tier and Higher tier papers. Foundation tier is designed for students who are aiming for grades 1-5, and Higher tier is designed for students who are looking for grades 4-9. The exams will consist of a mix of question types including multiple choice questions requiring short answers and questions requiring longer, more complex answers. The questions get progressively more difficult as the student works through the exam.

What is assessed:

- Biology P1: Cell biology; Organisation; Infection and response and Bioenergetics
- Biology P2: Homeostasis and response; Inheritance, variation and evolution and Ecology
- Chemistry P1: Atomic structure and the periodic table; Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; Quantitative chemistry, Chemical changes and Energy changes
- Chemistry P2: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis, Chemistry of the atmosphere and using resources
- Physics P1: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter and Atomic structure
- Physics P2: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism; and Space physics.

How important is Science?

Whether it is chemistry, physics, biology or a mixture of the three, science sparks and develops our natural curiosity to explore and learn about the world around us. As we encounter science in our everyday lives, understanding basic studies develops our awareness of different climates, forces, and a true essence of how things work. As science is a very hands-on subject, it teaches and strengthens research, observation and analysing skills through conducting experiments and forming conclusions, and this encourages the brain to think independently and outside the box.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

A significant career which is suited to the Separate Science route is Medicine and Engineering.

GCSE Art & Design:

Subject Leader: Mrs B Savage-Black, Miss E Fellerman & Mrs L Bagdone

Specification: AQA Art, Craft & Design

There are two components:

Component 1

Portfolio: two bodies of work exploring two themes provided by the school creating a sustained project and a selection of further work that represents the course of study. This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

Component 2

Externally set assignment: a separate externally set task, selecting a theme from a selection provided by the exam board. The course concludes with ten hours of supervised time to complete a final outcome. This is worth 40% of your total marks.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

Art explores ideas, conveys experiences or responds to a theme. The areas of study are very broad and covers drawing, painting, sculpture and mixed media. You will be assessed on the following:

AO1 - Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources, investigate and research other work, looking at a variety of artists and designers

AO2 - Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes to develop, refine and record ideas, use drawing skills for different needs and purposes

AO3 - Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses, through the effective and safe use of media, materials, techniques and processes

AO4 - Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language, successfully use visual language and the formal elements e.g. colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Progression opportunities include continuing your art and design studies at A-level and level 3 technical qualifications. You'll develop problem solving, creative thinking, investigation, research, communication and teamwork skills, and gain the ability to develop, refine and present ideas. Employers and universities regard these skills highly.

Art and design opens the door to lots of exciting careers that includes:

- Animation
- Illustration
- Architecture
- Product design
- Set and prop design and production
- Concept artist

GCSE Business Studies

Subject Leader: Mrs N Bungay

Specification: Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Business (1BSO)

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- Apply knowledge and understanding to different business contexts. These include businesses ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts, and how these contexts impact on business behaviour
- Use business terminology to identify and explain business activity, then apply business concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- Understanding the interdependent nature of business activity, influences on business, business operations, finance, marketing and human resources; and how these interdependencies underpin business decision making
- Develop problem-solving and decision-making skills relevant to contemporary business issues in local and national contexts

Throughout the course we examine different businesses and the approaches they take in business activities. We critically analyse the world around us and explore the impact of businesses decision making on us as the customer or consumer. Throughout the course we apply theory into real life contexts.

The knowledge and skills gained from GCSE Business support student's entry into employment or other training in specific aspects of business, such as apprenticeships and vocational qualifications which focus on specialised business areas. this course provides a strong foundation for students to continue to explore the subject in greater depth at college or university.

Assessment:

This course consists of two examined papers, each worth 50% of the combined grade. Each paper is divided into three sections. The paper consists of calculations, multiple choice, short-answer, and extended writing questions

- Theme 1: Investigating Small Business (1BS0/01) - 1 hour 45 minutes
- Theme 2: Building a Business (1BS0/02) - 1 hour 45 minutes

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Business Studies can lead into a wide range of careers such as marketing, HR, finance and law. Studied alongside maths it can open doors into careers related to finance or running your own business. This qualification in business will:

- Enable students to understand more about the business world
- Motivate and challenge students, and prepare them to make informed decisions about further study and career pathways

GCSE Business provides a strong foundation for employment, with students progressing with further training to a wide range of careers such as banking, sales, product management, general management, and entrepreneurship

BTEC Carpentry

Subject Leader: Mrs B Savage Black & Mr J Fuccio

Specification: Pearsons Technical Award

Three components:

Component 1: Construction Technology	(30%)
Component 2: Construction in Practice	(30%)
Component 3: Construction and Design	(40%)

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

If you enjoy developing theoretical understanding and practical skills around construction this is a great course for you. You will develop knowledge of tools, equipment and technology being used in the industry as well as how to use them safely. In addition, you will develop an appreciation of client needs and how to respond to design briefs and sketches whilst appreciating the constraints faced too.

Assessment:

This course consists of 2 coursework units each worth 30% (60% of the final grade overall) and one exam sat in Year 11 worth 40%.

Component 2 and Component 3 - the exam board set a brief, you will create ideas, designs and practical outcomes that respond to this brief.

Component 1 – is a written exam paper consisting of a range of question types including, multiple choice, short answer and extended answer questions.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Post-16 progression opportunities include T-levels in building services and construction, design and surveying. City and Guilds or Btec in carpentry and joinery. Alternatively, an apprenticeship with a local employer is an excellent pathway into employment.

This course provides you with the foundation knowledge and skills that can lead into the following careers:

- Carpenter
- Architect
- Builder
- Building Services
- Grounds Worker
- Site Manager
- Project Manager

BTEC Child Development

Subject Leader: Mrs N Kaye

Specification: Pearsons Technical Award

Three components:

Component 1: Children's growth and Development	(30%)
Component 2: Learning through play	(30%)
Component 3: Supporting children to play, learn and develop	(40%)

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

If you enjoy exploring real world case studies focusing on children from birth – 5 years old, learning theories about child development and how children grow, develop and learn then this is a great course for you. You need to be self-motivated, able to work independently and think critically as well as being compassionate about the needs of others.

Assessment:

This course consists of 2 coursework units each worth 30% (60% of the final grade overall) and one exam sat in Year 11 worth 40%.

Component 1 and Component 2 - the exam board set case studies where you will complete research, reflect on theories and present written reports responding to the individual circumstances of each case study.

Component 3 – is a written two-hour exam paper consisting of a range of question types including, multiple choice, short answer and extended answer questions.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Progression opportunities include T-levels in early years, childcare and midwifery, A-levels in subjects such as Psychology.

This course provides you with the foundation knowledge and skills that can lead into the following careers:

- Paediatric nurse
- Midwife
- Early years practitioner
- Child therapist
- Teacher / Special Educational Needs Teacher / Headteacher
- Speech and language therapist

GCSE Citizenship

Subject Leader: Mr T Patten

Specification: AQA

Two exams at the end of Year 11:

Paper 1: Active citizenship, politics and participation – 1 hr 30mins 50%

Paper 2: Life in modern Britain, rights and responsibilities – 1 hr 30mins 50%

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

During this course you will learn about your rights and responsibilities as a young citizen in Britain and in the world. This subject works well for students who are curious about society and what makes a fair and just society. It is well suited to those who are passionate about real life issues; from human rights to social justice and who care about what affects them and the people around them. It encourages you to be a critical thinker, ask good questions and contribute to meaningful debates enabling you to shape the world of tomorrow.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

This subject suits students who wish for a career in:

- Law
- Journalism
- Media
- Education
- International Relations
- Politics
- Civil Service
- Police

It is also beneficial for every student because it gives everyone an understanding of the place we live and enables you to contribute meaningfully to society around us.

It is also good for those who wish to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh Award as you can use your actions as evidence.

GCSE Computer Science

Subject Leader: Mr B Hill

Specification: OCR J277 Computer Science

Component 1:

Computer Systems - paper based exam (1 hour 30 mins) 50% of qualification

Component 2:

Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming - paper based exam (1 hour 30 mins) 50% of qualification

Content overview:

Component 01: Computer systems

Introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.

Component 02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 01. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic, translators and data representation.

Students will also learn how code in Python by creating various applications

Careers opportunities:

Computer Science is used in many jobs ranging from the creative, such as web or game design to technical such as software developer or systems security. Virtually every job in the future will involve the use of computers and technology in some way.

For more information about the course:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/558027-specification-gcse-computer-science-j277.pdf>

BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts (Dance)

Subject Leader: Mr W Cardy

Specification: Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts (Dance) is ideal for you if you would like to develop practical skills and find out more about dance. This course offers a practical introduction to life and work in the dance industry. The qualification, which is 120 Guided Learning Hours (GLH), is the same size and level as a GCSE.

What does the qualification cover?

This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will also develop key skills, such as creating performance or design content for a real vocational scenario.

Students will study three components, covering the following content areas:

- Exploring Dance - developing an understanding of dance including practitioners' work and the processes used to create performance
- Developing Skills and Techniques in Dance - development of dance skills and techniques through the reproduction repertoire as performers or choreographers.
- Responding to a Brief - contributing to a workshop performance as either a performer or choreographer in response to a given brief and stimulus.

Further Study and Career Opportunities

Once you have completed the qualification at WSS, you will have developed a practical understanding of the dance industry, and the roles and responsibilities of the people involved in the dance industry. Because you will be building useful skills, which are not generally covered in GCSE courses, you will have a better understanding of whether the dance industry is for you. This will allow you to decide whether this is an area you want to continue to study. The course will also help you to develop specific skills and knowledge, such as self-evaluation and group work, which will benefit you wherever you progress to next. If you decide to go on to further study of dance, the best option for you will depend on the grades you have achieved in this and the other qualifications you have taken, and what you enjoy doing. You could progress to a Level 2 Technical Certificate or to a Level 3 programme, such as A Levels, or a BTEC National, either on its own or in combination with A levels.

BTEC Digital Information Technology

Subject Leader: Mr B Hill

Specification: Pearson BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Digital Information Technology (603/7050/6)

3 components:

- Exploring user interface design principles and project planning techniques – internal assessment worth 30%
- Collecting, presenting and interpreting data – internal assessment worth 30%
- Effective digital working practices – 90minute exam worth 40%

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

The Tech award gives learners the opportunity to develop subject specific applied knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. The main focus is on four areas of equal importance which cover the:

- Development of key skills that prove your aptitude in digital information technology, such as project planning, designing and creating user interfaces and dashboards as a way to present and interpret data
- 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
- Attitudes that are considered most important in digital information technology, including personal management and communication
- 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

Further study and career opportunities:

The digital sector is a major source of employment in the UK. In 2020 90,000 jobs were advertised in the UK in the digital sector. Almost all jobs now require employees to have a good level of digital literacy. Students may then go onto further education qualifications in subjects such as a BTEC National in IT before studying for a degree in the Digital Sector.

GCSE Drama

Subject Leader: Mr W Cardy

Specification: EDEXCEL GCSE (9-1) 1DRO

There are three components:

Component 1 - Devising Drama - students create a group performance using their own ideas. Technical options for lighting and sound are optional in this unit.

Component 2 - Texts in Practice - students direct and perform scripted plays –technical options for lighting and sound are optional in this unit.

Component 3 - Understanding Drama – students study a set play text for the exam and answer questions as an actor, director and designer.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

GCSE Drama is an exciting and innovative approach to creating theatre and developing an understanding of theatre arts from the perspective of an actor, director and designer. Students will have the opportunity to explore ideas, themes and texts through **practical** drama and will utilise the knowledge and the skills they gain to create and direct their own **performance work** for assessment. This includes planning and organising **sound, costume and lighting**. Students will have the opportunity to present performance work in front of live audiences and will gain experience of some of the most prolific drama practitioners and drama skills which will deepen their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Students will demonstrate their practical knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre arts through a written examination at the end of year 11.

Assessment:

Component 1 - Devising Drama (Practical Performance and Written Portfolio)	40%
Component 2 - Texts in Practice (Practical Performance)	20%
Component 3 - Understanding Drama (Written exam)	40%

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

- A Level Drama and Theatre Studies
- BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts
- Level 3 Technical Theatre Production

Drama is an excellent choice for those students who wish to pursue a career in the performing arts industry, and it is also a vital subject for developing confidence and communication skills. Communication skills and confidence are the key to success, which makes drama a viable choice for all students.

CNAT Engineering Design

Subject Leader: Mrs B Savage Black & Miss E Hide

Specification: OCR Cambridge National in Engineering Design (Level 1/2) – J822

The Cambridge National in Engineering Design course will inspire and equip students with the confidence to use skills relevant to the engineering design sector. It covers the engineering design process, design requirements, technical communication, influences on design, and the use of computer-aided design (CAD) in modelling and evaluating products.

Qualification Structure

The qualification has three units that focus on the assessment of knowledge, skills and design practices. These are all essential for developing a strong foundation for progression, and learners must demonstrate attainment across all components to achieve the qualification.

Unit R038: Externally assessed written examination paper.

Unit R039: Communicating design ideas.

Unit R040: Design, evaluation and modelling.

Units **R039** and **R040** are made up of OCR-set, internally assessed assignments which are then externally moderated by OCR.

The course has four Performance Objectives:

- PO1** Recall knowledge and show understanding
- PO2** Apply knowledge and understanding
- PO3** Analyse and evaluate knowledge, understanding and performance
- PO4** Demonstrate and apply skills and processes relevant to the subject area

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Post-16 progression opportunities include:

- T Level courses in:
 - Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing
 - Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing
 - Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control
- A Level Product Design
- Engineering and design-based apprenticeships with local employers

This course provides foundation knowledge and skills that can lead into careers such as:

- Product / Industrial Designer
- CAD Technician
- Aerospace design support
- Marine design pathways
- Automotive design and manufacturing support

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Subject Leader: Mrs B Savage Black

Specification: WJEC 601/8093/6

Assessment 1: Plan and conduct a food science investigation which shows the learner's understanding in the preparation and cooking of food. (15% of final mark)

Assessment 2: Research, prepare, cook and present 3 dishes based on a question from the examination board. (35% of final mark)

Assessment 3: Examination (50% of final mark) assessing understanding of different areas of the Food Preparation and Nutrition syllabus.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

A GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition equips learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.

By studying food preparation and nutrition learners will:

- be able to demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking a variety of food commodities whilst using different cooking techniques and equipment
- develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food as well as a sound knowledge of 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, 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

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Post-16 progression opportunities include T-levels hospitality, caterings and customer service. Alternatively, an apprenticeship with a local employer is an excellent pathway into employment. This course provides you with the foundation knowledge and skills that can lead into the following careers:

- Chef
- Nutritionist
- Food Developer
- Food blogger
- Dietician

GCSE French

Subject Leader: Mrs D Rennie

Specification: AQA French

The course is assessed by four exams, in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Each exam is worth 25% of the overall grade. Students will be entered for the same tier (Foundation or Higher) for all four papers.

Paper 1 Listening exam	25%
Paper 2 Speaking exam	25%
Paper 3 Reading exam	25%
Paper 4 Writing exam	25%

Summary of Course Content:

Over the two years of your GCSE course, students will study the following themes:

Theme 1: Identity and culture

Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest

Theme 3: Current and future study and employment

Knowledge: Students will work independently and collaboratively to demonstrate their understanding; they will create in the target language: role-plays, telephone conversations, film reviews, stories and animations, menus, diaries and much more!

Skills: Students will apply linguistic knowledge and skills to understand and communicate effectively:

- Listening – to practise understanding French in a variety of different contexts
- Speaking – to practise communicating with French speakers
- Reading – to practise understanding a wide range of texts in French
- Writing – to practise producing self-written texts in clear and accurate French

Further study and career opportunities:

Students can continue to study Spanish at AS and A Level where they will further develop their cultural awareness, language and communication skills. Studying Spanish at University is also an option, on its own or combined with other subjects.

Possible career paths:

- Business services
- Tourism
- Tour Guide
- Media
- Translator
- Transport

GCSE Geography

Subject Leader: Mrs J Brown

Specification: EDUQAS Specification B

The course is assessed by 3 examinations:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Investigating geographical issues (1 hour 45 minutes) | 40% |
| • Problem solving geography (1 hour 30 minutes) | 30% |
| • Applied fieldwork enquiry (1 hour 30 minutes) | 30% |

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

You will study the three key themes of this qualification through local, national and international case studies. The themes are: Changing places – Changing economies (urban and rural processes, changing levels of international development) Changing environments (coasts, rivers, weather and climate) Environmental challenges (ecosystems, water supplies, and desertification)

You will attend two fieldtrips to use your geographical skills in a practical setting.

Assessment:

The assessments you have completed at KS3 have helped you to practice the types of questions that will be in the geography exams. These include:

- Short answer questions that assess key words.
- Longer written explanations.
- Extended written answers in the form of balanced arguments and justified decisions.
- Map, graph and numeracy skills.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Further Study – Geography is a bridging subject between the arts and the sciences. At A-level it can be taken alongside biology, chemistry, physics and maths but equally fits with history, religious studies, sociology or English. Geography also links strongly with subjects like business and economics. Universities and employers understand that geography gives you a range of skills and knowledge that can be applied to many different future jobs or areas of study.

Employment – Geography is a challenging GCSE, and employers recognise that a good grade in Geography means good numeracy, literacy and analytical skills. It is therefore well respected and useful on any CV.

Studying geography can lead to a wide range of careers. This can include care for our environment, working for organisations like the Environment Agency, National Parks or Forestry Commission. Town planners, international aid workers and sustainability champions are all jobs which employ high numbers of people who have studied geography. Many geographers in Southampton work in the travel and tourism industry.

GCSE History

Subject Leader: Mr B Brown

Specification: EDUQAS History (9-1)

There are four units of study:

- The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603
- The USA: A Nation of Contrasts, 1910-29
- The Development of Germany, 1919-1991
- Changes in Health and Medicine in Britain, c500 to the present day

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

GCSE History (9-1) allows students to study a World History Study, a European History Study and two British History Studies. They range in different time periods in history from the Middle-Ages to the 21st century. The units will cover a large amount of historical content, which will include two depth studies over a short amount of time and two breadth studies covering a larger amount of time. Students will then be tested on their historical skills and knowledge. Each unit will be focusing on different key skills and knowledge, which includes the analysis and evaluation of historical sources and interpretations. There will also be questions testing historical understanding of change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance, similarity and difference.

Assessment:

The course is divided into two components:

- Component 1: Studies in Depth. Written examinations: 2 hours (split into two papers of 1 hour duration each) 50% of qualification.
 - The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603
 - The USA: A Nation of Contrasts, 1910-29
- Component 2: Studies in Breadth. Written examinations: 2 hours (split into two papers of 45 minutes for the Period Study and 1 hour 15 minutes for the Thematic Study) 50% of qualification.
 - The Development of Germany, 1919-1991
 - Changes in Health and Medicine in Britain, c500 to the present day

Further studies and career opportunities:

History GCSE provides an excellent grounding for most A - Levels, particularly History, Law, Politics, Sociology, Art and English. History is still considered a 'gold standard' GCSE and will look good on any CV. History supports most career choices but notably archival work, heritage and museums, law, policing, journalism, working in the media and even teaching.

BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice

Subject Leader: Mr W Cardy

Specification: Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Music Practice

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge)

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Music Practice is ideal for you if you would like to find out more about the music industry. This course offers a practical introduction to life and work in the music industry. The qualification, which is 120 GLH, is the same size and level as a GCSE. This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will develop key skills, ranging from rehearsing to experimenting with technology, equipment and instruments. You will also develop an understanding of the music industry.

Students taking this qualification will study three components, covering the following content areas:

- Exploring Music Products and Styles - exploration of the techniques used in the creation of different musical products and investigation of the key features of different musical styles and genres.
- Music Skills Development - development of two musical disciplines through engagement in practical tasks, while documenting your progress and planning for further improvement.
- Responding to a Music Brief - developing and presenting music in response to a given music brief.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Once you have completed the qualification at WSS, you will have developed valuable knowledge, practical skills and a wider understanding of the music industry. This qualification will allow you to develop your knowledge and skills through practical and creative application in a vocational context, and by responding creatively to a commercial brief. Since you will be developing skills across a number of disciplines – such as music creation, production and performance – you will have a better understanding of whether the music industry is for you and, if so, which part of it you might want to study further.

If you decide to go on to further study of music, the best option for you will depend on the grades you have achieved in this and the other qualifications you have taken, and what you enjoy doing. You could progress to a Level 2 Technical Certificate or to a Level 3 programme, such as A Levels, a T Level or a BTEC National, either on its own or in combination with A levels.

GCSE Photography

Subject Leader: Mrs B Savage Black & Miss E Fellerman

Specification: AQA Photography

There are two components:

Component 1

Portfolio: two bodies of work exploring two themes provided by the school creating a sustained project and a selection of further work that represents the course of study. This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

Component 2

Externally set assignment: a separate externally set task, selecting a theme from a selection provided by the exam board. The course concludes with ten hours of supervised time to complete a final outcome. This is worth 40% of your total marks.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

Photography explores responding to a brief. For example creating work for a client to promote a product on social media, a fashion shoot for a magazine, or a piece of artwork for gallery display. The areas of study are very broad and covers both digital and physical image manipulation. You will be assessed on the following:

AO1 - Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources, investigate and research other work, looking at a variety of artists and designers

AO2 - Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes to develop, refine and record ideas

AO3 - Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses, through the effective and safe use of techniques and processes

AO4 - Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language, successfully use visual language and the formal elements e.g. colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Progression opportunities include continuing your photography studies at A-level and level 3 technical qualifications. You'll develop problem solving, creative thinking, investigation, research, communication and teamwork skills, and gain the ability to develop, refine and present ideas. Employers and universities regard these skills highly.

Photography opens the door to lots of exciting careers that includes:

- Advertising and marketing
- Fashion photography
- Travel blogger
- Movie location researcher
- Media and journalism

GCSE Religious Studies

Subject Leader: Mrs S Smart

Specification: EDUQAS Specification A

There are three units of study:

- Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World
- Christianity
- Islam

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

The three units cover a range of ethical issues and the religious, non-religious and philosophical approaches to these issues. Students are also expected to develop and articulate their own beliefs in response to the different topics. In the first year of the course, you will study religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world. There are four themes which will explore a range of topics, examining religious and non-religious approaches to each:

- Relationships
- Life and death
- Good and evil
- Human rights

Assessment:

The course is assessed by three written examinations:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World: 2 hours | 50% |
| • Christianity: 1 hour | 25% |
| • Islam: 1 hour | 25% |

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

During the two years of the course students should develop skills in research, gathering and collating information, evaluating opinions and arguments, and expressing views clearly and confidently in oral and written form. Discussion is an important part of lessons and students learnt to form their own opinions after careful consideration of the various viewpoints. The skills developed during the Religious Studies GCSE equip students for a range of A Levels, in particular History, English, Psychology and Geography. Religious Studies is a useful GCSE for those considering careers which involve working with people, being able to make decisions and express views about significant issues, including law, journalism, medicine, teaching and social services.

CNAT Sports Studies

Subject Leader: Miss R Rennison

Specification: OCR Cambridge National: Sport Studies Level 1 / Level 2 J829

Sport Studies will develop knowledge, understanding and practical skills that can be used in the exercise, physical activity, sport and health sectors.

Qualification Structure

The course is 70% theoretical and 30% practical. The qualification has three components that focus on the assessment of knowledge, skills and practices. These are all essential to developing a basis for progression and therefore learners need to demonstrate attainment across all components to achieve the qualification.

Summary of Course Content:

Unit R185: Performance and leadership in sports activities Coursework - externally verified	40%
Unit R187: Increasing awareness of outdoor & adventurous activities Coursework - externally verified	20%
Unit R184: Contemporary Issues in Sport Externally assessed exam - 1hr 15 minutes	40%

Students will be expected to commit to helping lead extra-curricular activities and Inter-School competitions as part of their qualification.

Knowledge:

- Understanding contemporary issues in sport and how they impact on different sporting activities
- Applying your skills as both a performer in two different sporting activities and as a leader in one sporting activity
- How to be a sports leader, through using your initiative to solve problems and making decisions when dealing with rapidly changing conditions and situations
- Understanding the relationship between sport and the media and applying this to real life examples
- How to evaluate and interpret the different ways in which sport is represented by the media
- Applying your skills to participate in an outdoor and adventurous activity in a natural setting and environment.

Skills:

Completing research, working with others, planning training programmes, evaluating and making recommendations to help improve performance, creating and delivering presentations, writing reports, leadership skills, healthy living and lifestyle skills.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

These skills will help you progress onto further study in the exercise, physical activity, sport and health sector. This may be Level 3 vocational qualifications, such as the Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical Activity, AS or A-Levels, such as Physical Education, Psychology, Sociology, Sport or Media or an apprenticeship in Community activator coach, Leisure team members, Personal trainer or Outdoor activity instructor.

GCSE Textiles

Subject Leader: Mrs N Kaye

There are two components:

Component 1

Portfolio: two bodies of work exploring two themes provided by the school creating a sustained project and a selection of further work that represents the course of study. This is worth 60% of your overall marks.

Component 2

Externally set assignment: a separate externally set task, selecting a theme from a selection provided by the exam board. The course concludes with ten hours of supervised time to complete a final outcome. This is worth 40% of your total marks.

Summary of Course Content (Skills and Knowledge):

Textiles explores working with fabrics and fibres. The areas of study are very broad and covers working with fabrics, fibres, printmaking, embroidery with a strong focus on colour and pattern. You will be assessed on the following:

AO1 - Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources, investigate and research other work, looking at a variety of artists and designers

AO2 - Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes to develop, refine and record ideas

AO3 - Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses, through the effective and safe use of techniques and processes

AO4 - Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language and the formal elements e.g. colour, line, form, shape, tone, texture.

Further Study and Career Opportunities:

Progression opportunities include continuing your fashion and textiles studies at A-level and level 3 technical qualifications. You'll develop problem solving, creative thinking, investigation, research, communication and teamwork skills, and gain the ability to develop, refine and present ideas. Employers and universities regard these skills highly.

Textiles opens the door to lots of exciting careers that includes:

- Fashion and textiles designer
- Visual merchandiser
- Interior designer
- Fashion illustrator
- Costume designer
- Theatrical media make-up artist