



GCSE Choices

Courses starting from September 2025



GCSE Choices Process in Form 3

From January to April, Form 3 pupils have the important task of choosing their subjects for GCSE courses starting in September 2025. There will be plenty of time for pupils to discuss, and consider carefully, their GCSE choices with parents, tutors, teachers, and HMs, so that the correct and most appropriate courses are selected for each individual pupil.

Pupils generally study 9 subjects at GCSE, chosen from the subjects below. It is possible to study 10 GCSEs, but this may impact the flexibility of the co-curricular timetable. Of course, this can be discussed with tutors, HMs and the Middle School staff at any point. Pupils and parents should be mindful of commitments to drama, music and sport which may happen at the end of a school day or certain times in the term.

It is also possible to study 8 GCSEs for any pupil that may require such a timetable depending on their academic learning needs or co-curricular commitments.

As part of the Connected Curriculum, all pupils in the Middle School will receive one lesson per week in the pastoral curriculum to complement the pastoral care they receive in House and around the School.

All Pupils study

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- At least one Modern Foreign Language from French, German or Spanish which they study in Form 3
- Pastoral Learning
- Physical Education (non-academic and Form 4 only)
- Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). Pupils may choose from three different Science pathways:
 - Option 1: All the three sciences at the Double Award Level (also known as the ' *rilog* ' course. Each science has **two** taught lessons per week).
 - Option 2: Three Separate Sciences each awarded an individual grade. (Each science has **three** taught lessons per week)
 - Option 3: Any combination of two Separate Sciences each awarded an individual grade. (Each science has **three** taught lessons per week)

Optional

- Geography
- History
- Religion and Philosophy
- Classical Civilisation
- Classical Greek and Latin ("Gratin"; a GCSE is awarded for each)
- Latin
- Citizenship Studies
- Computer Science
- Physical Education (GCSE)
- Art – Painting and Mixed Media
- Art – Textiles
- Art – 3D Design
- Dance
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Music

Beyond academic lessons, pupils build wider skills through:

- Sport
- Activities – Friday afternoons
- On Monday/Friday afternoons pupils enjoy one of the three Service Options, which they follow through to Form 5; this is selected in the Summer Term of Form 3:
 - the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
 - the CCF (Combined Cadet Force)
 - Voluntary Action
- Participation in a range of other options, both group and individual, such as music, theatre, debating, talks, House activities, national competitions, and national/overseas trips.

Below is some information about the support that is available to all pupils throughout Middle School, which is relevant when making decisions about future courses. We build in many opportunities for pupils to discuss options with their tutor, teachers, HM and parents. We encourage them to consider their strengths, preferences, and teacher recommendations in order to make the best possible selection.

Tutoring

Every pupil has a personal Tutor who looks after a group of up to 10 pupils within their House, who will get to know each of their tutees very well. Tutors are responsible for monitoring progress and helping pupils to gain the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in life at School and beyond. They maintain communication with parents and should be the first point of contact for any academic issues parents may have.

Study

For many subjects, pupils are divided into teaching groups called 'sets', where the pace of teaching and learning is most appropriate to their needs.

A termly Personal Organiser diary helps each pupil manage their timetable and prep (between 30 and 75 minutes per week for most subjects). Pupils work towards agreed termly targets which are monitored regularly with Tutors. Supported study is available on either a Tuesday or Thursday in every academic department, for pupils to consolidate learning or improve understanding. For those studying 9 or fewer GCSEs, study periods are a part of the weekly timetable and we guide all pupils towards independent learning skills and habits during the course of Middle School, beginning in Form 3.

Teachers write a Progress Report twice a term to update pupils and parents on effort and achievement. Parents can also meet teachers and discuss their child's progress at the annual parent/teacher meeting or with their child's Tutor who may arrange to discuss a pupil's progress with parents and teachers at a suitable time.

Careers Programme

Our Careers Department helps pupils from Form 3 onwards to start considering career options based on their current interests and strengths. Each summer all Form 4 pupils take the Morrisby aptitude test and interest questionnaire followed by an individual careers guidance interview. Pupils receive a report and interview summary in Form 5 and begin to construct their CV as well as consider work experience.

Form 4 – Form 5 Subject Grid September 2025

Only one subject can be selected in a block. Most pupils will take 9 GCSEs. 10 GCSEs should be considered carefully with tutors. 8 GCSEs can be taken after discussion with the Head of Middle School..

All pupils	Mathematics English Literature & English Language Physical Education (practical – non examined) Pastoral Curriculum		
All pupils: There is no need to select Option 1 in a block.	Option 1: Biology, Chemistry and Physics (two combined grades awarded, known as 'Trilogy') Option 2. Three separate Sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics (individual grades awarded for each science), this must be selected in Blocks B or D below. Option 3: At least two separate sciences: <i>Chemistry & Physics, Chemistry & Biology, or Biology & Physics</i> (individual grades awarded for each science chosen), this must be selected in Blocks B or D below. For option 3, pupils must choose a subject in each of the other blocks to have 9 GCSEs.		
Block A	French Spanish German <i>Pupils are welcome to pick a non-native language in this block as long as they have studied it for at least one year. Native speakers of French, Spanish or German can sit the non-native GCSE in their native language: they will not attend lessons in their native language but will receive exam preparation before the GCSE examinations.</i>		
Block B	Geography History Religion & Philosophy Separate Sciences		
Block C	Geography History Religion & Philosophy French Spanish Physical Education (GCSE)		
Block D Pupils may only select one Art course in either D or E.	Art – Painting and Mixed Media Computer Science Design Technology Drama Dance Physical Education (GCSE) Greek and Latin (known as Gratin – 2 GCSEs. A grade is awarded for each subject.) Latin Separate Sciences	Art – Textiles	Art – 3D Design
Block E Pupils may only select one Art course in either D or E.	Art – Painting and Mixed Media Citizenship Classical Civilisation Computer Science Design Technology Drama Geography Music Physical Education (GCSE)	Art – Textiles	

N.B.: If there is a subject combination which does not fit in this grid, please add details below. Whilst we will do our best to accommodate individual choices, we are unable to guarantee changes to this grid.

Possible variations

Where appropriate, and with the agreement of the Head of Middle School, some pupils may benefit from increasing or reducing their timetable to 10 or eight subjects.

Learning support

Pupils requiring Learning Support lessons may need to drop one subject to accommodate these – please discuss this with Dr Emma Stanley Isaac, Head of Learning Support

esi@oakham.rutland.sch.uk 01572 758545.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

It may be necessary for pupils requiring EAL lessons to reduce the number of subjects studied to accommodate these – please discuss this with Mrs Jan Irving, Head of EAL

jmi@oakham.rutland.sch.uk 01572 758631. EAL pupils complete a language assessment in Form 3 to inform this decision.

N.B. while we aim to offer as much choice of subjects as possible, we cannot guarantee to provide a subject if the number who choose it is very small. If pupils change their mind after options have been finalised, we will endeavour to accommodate their request, but it is likely that changes cannot be made.

2025 Dates	Events	People involved
Mon 13 Jan Fri 17 Jan	Form 3 pupil briefing and tutorial for Form 3 Booklets issued to pupils.	Mr Favill / Mr Aiken / Pupils / Form 3 Tutors
Sat 18 Jan	Briefing to Parents	Dr Dudin / Mr Favill /Parents
Week 3	Booklets published for parents in My School Portal	Dr Dudin / Mr Favill
Fri 24 Jan	Parent-Teacher Meeting	Teaching Staff / Pupils / Parents
Fri 28 Feb	Provisional choices made.	Pupils / Tutors
Week 9-11	Discussions as appropriate. Heads of Department and tutors check suitability of pupil choices.	Teachers / Pupils / Tutors
End of Term	Pupil choices able to be viewed on My School Portal for parental corroboration.	Mr Aiken / Mrs Asher-Roche/ Mr Favill
Fri 2 May	Deadline for return of confirmed final choices.	Parents / Pupils / Mr Aiken / Mr Favill

Subject Information (all subjects are graded 9-1)

Compulsory subjects

English Literature and English Language – IGCSEs (Edexcel)

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In English lessons, we explore a diverse range of literary and non-fiction texts, nurturing a lifelong interest in literature, and providing pupils with opportunities to develop their own powerful writing, too. Pupils will qualify for two distinct Edexcel IGCSEs: English Language and English Literature. Teachers will guide pupils through a broad scheme of work which will enable the pupils to engage individually with the subject, to extend the skills they have already developed in previous years, and to perform to the best of their abilities at IGCSE. The course leads naturally towards study in the Upper School, be it as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma or in English Literature A-level.

English Language is assessed via exams only, with each exam worth 50% of the qualification. Paper 1 of English Language will involve responding to two passages (one prepared and one unseen) and producing a piece of transactional writing. Paper 2 of English Language will involve writing about a prepared extract/poem and producing a piece of creative writing. The Literature examination requires pupils to write about poetry (both prepared and unseen) and a novel. For the English Literature coursework, pupils will write one essay on a play by Shakespeare and one essay on a modern drama text.

The coursework and exam weightings are as follows:

English Language

Examinations: Paper 1: 60% – reading tasks (the passages are printed) and one transactional writing task. Paper 2: 40% - written assessment of a prepared extract/poem and a creative writing task.

English Literature

Examination Paper 1: 60% – unseen poetry, anthology poetry (texts provided in the exam), and modern prose (closed book).

Written coursework: 40% – modern drama and literary heritage text.

Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics – GCSE (AQA)

Option 1: Pupils study Physics, Chemistry and Biology, leading to an AQA **Double Award GCSE** certificate (two GCSE grades are awarded), also known as Trilogy Science. Candidates will sit two exam papers for each science subject, each lasting 1 hour 15 minutes. There are two possible tiers of entry – Higher and Foundation. These provide access to grades 9–4 and 5–1 respectively. Pupils have two lessons per week in each of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

GCSE Double Award Science is good preparation for pupils progressing to advanced science courses in the Upper School, whether that be A-level or the IB Diploma.

Option 2: For those who wish to extend and broaden their knowledge, pupils may choose to study Physics, Chemistry and Biology leading to the **AQA Triple Award**. Pupils choosing this option have a third lesson per week in each science, in order to complete the extra content. So, together with the core content of the Double Award pupils attain three separate GCSE grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Candidates will sit two exam papers for each science, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. As with the Double Award, there are two possible tiers of entry for each individual science – Higher and Foundation. These provide access to grades 9–4 and 5–1 respectively.

GCSE Triple Award Science is the best preparation for those progressing to advanced science and/or technology courses in the Upper School, whether that be A-level or the IB Diploma.

Option 3: Pupils may choose any combination of at least two of the three sciences. Pupils choosing this option have, three lessons per week in each of their two chosen sciences. So, together with the core content of the Double Award this leads to two separate GCSEs in their chosen two sciences. But students should think carefully, a decision to drop a science at this stage may limit future career options. Candidates will sit two exam papers for each science, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. There are two possible tiers of entry for each individual science – Higher and Foundation. These provide access to grades 9–4 and 5–1 respectively.

Mathematics – IGCSE (Edexcel)

All pupils study the Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics Specification A (4MA1) course, and the expectation is that most pupils will sit the Higher Level papers at the end of Form 5.

Each set progress through the core examination material at the pace which best suits its learning approach and retention of prior knowledge. Enrichment through discovery, puzzles and open-ended tasks is valued alongside accurate and fluent core mathematical skills. The core IGCSE syllabus prepares pupils for their mathematical study beyond Form 5. The highest sets will also have the opportunity to encounter more varied and advanced concepts beyond this core syllabus, and also to encounter mathematical writing. For the most able students, there is the opportunity to sit further examinations where we offer the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics which extends into some Upper School material and we also offer chances to sit the Edexcel Level 2 and Level 3 Algebra awards which extends the specific knowledge tied in with Form 5 algebra content.

A significant number of the highest sets may be entered for the individual UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge in the Spring Term, with the opportunity to progress to the invitational follow-on rounds.

Modern Languages: French, German, Spanish – GCSE (Edexcel)

Pupils studying 10 or 9 GCSEs select at least one Modern Foreign Language.

In essence there is little difference in the content and styles of learning between French, German and Spanish – the syllabus is standardised by the board across all three languages and the assessments are the same in each. All teach the language through a range of topics which build practical proficiency in the four linguistic skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. In addition to standard classroom study Modern Foreign Languages pupils also have contact time with a native speaking Language Assistant to help prepare for the speaking tests.

All languages are examined in the same way, with 25% of the marks given to each of the four skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. GCSE has been revised for this year, with the stated aim to make the courses more accessible and to allow students to take the qualification at either Higher or Foundation level. The oral exam consists of a roleplay, picture story and general questions on a range of everyday topics, the Listening and Reading have questions set in English and the Foreign Language and the writing paper is also made more accessible with questions set in English.

The ability to communicate in multiple languages is of increasing value in the modern world and highly prized by potential employers. Most importantly, the study of foreign languages is of great use to individuals living in our global society. GCSE MFL provides an excellent foundation in this essential life skill. On a non-linguistic level, the courses also build academic flexibility, adaptability and resilience.

Option subjects

Art – GCSE (Eduqas)

Pupils work on two components: the Personal Portfolio (60%) and the Externally Set Assignment (40%). The focus is on the Personal Project until January in Form 5 and this involves using sketchbooks to research; through drawing, by taking photographs, through annotation and experimentation with a range of media. The pupils are encouraged to be playful with their ideas and the course encourages self-expression and the development of personal responses. Pupils will learn a range of new practical skills, as well as how to analyse the work of others.

For the Externally Set Assignment, pupils begin this project in Form 5. Pupils develop work in response to a starting point offered by the exam board for around 12 weeks before a timed examination session of 10 hours to bring the project to an exciting conclusion.

There are museum visits to Pitts rivers Museum and Ashmolean Museum in Form 4,

Pupils opt for one of the following areas of specialisation:

Art and Design: Fine Art – Painting and Mixed Media

This involves drawing, painting, digital photography and mixed media, as well as collage work and print making. A wide variety of styles from the figurative tradition to abstract painting are explored.

Art and Design: Three-Dimensional Design

This course explores architectural design, interior design, environmental/landscape design and sculpture and pupils will study how form and space interact in the manmade environment.

Three-dimensional model making will allow pupils to explore the properties of materials and how this determines the formal qualities of the objects and spaces around us.

Art and Design: Textile Design

This is a creative course in the expressive use of constructed textiles, batik, embroidery (hand and machine), creative garment construction, dyeing, painting, silk painting, fabric appliqué and felting.

Citizenship Studies – GCSE (OCR)

How citizens can try to make a difference to the society they live in. This GCSE course is an excellent introduction to current affairs, the UK legal system and UK Government institutions with a local, national and global perspective. Hence pupils are expected to regularly read/watch/listen to news to build up a bank of examples to support their work. Citizenship Studies is a useful precursor to the study of Economics, Business and Politics at A-level or in the IB Diploma. Pupils should be willing to discuss and debate issues in which there is no 'right' answer, but evidence can be presented for both sides before making a personal judgement. The written style required is exactly the same as in other humanities subjects.

The content revolves around three central themes:

Our Rights, Responsibilities and the Law

An opportunity to consider the origins and need for human rights; ways in which human rights have been extended and the difficulties that occur when human rights conflict. For example, our right to privacy versus the right to safety. This leads onto an exploration of the legal system, both civil and criminal. As we explore the way UK law is administered and enforced there is a focus on roles civilians can play e.g. special constable, magistrate etc.

Citizenship in action

Political systems around the world with a particular focus on China and Switzerland. An in-depth examination of how the UK's representative democracy operates at a national, local and regional level including devolved government; elections and systems of voting. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of political decision-making in the UK. How pressure groups and the media influence the political system. The influence a government can exert over the economy through taxation and spending and decisions to provide education, a health service, welfare benefits etc.

Our society and our links with the wider world

The UK's international role as a member of the UN; Commonwealth; NATO, etc. The UK's role in global aid and trade. The effectiveness of the UK interventions in global crises, disagreements and conflicts. This unit also encourages learners to explore their own sense of identity and that of other UK citizens in our increasingly complex society. Consideration is given to the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity, as well as ways of promoting community cohesion.

This is all supported by an **active citizenship campaign** worth 15% of the overall GCSE mark. This is completed in the first half of the summer term of Form 4. The pupils work in teams of 4 – 6 and select their own campaign to reflect their passions and interests. It provides a great opportunity for teamwork, research skills, planning work over a number of weeks, connecting with external organizations and their representatives and public speaking. Previous campaigns include: establishing a lending library in a primary school in a deprived area of Nottingham; campaigning for play equipment for physically disabled children to be included in a new playground; supporting the establishment of a netball league in Eswatini to help rescue girls from difficult situations and give them a basic education and employment skills. Though completed as a team, it is assessed individually on Paper 2.

Assessment: There are three exam papers:-

- **Paper 1** (25% of the final mark) is multiple choice.
- **Paper 2** (50% of the final mark) Questions on this paper have stimulus material to interpret, analyse and evaluate. The questions range from factual recall to building extended answers with a balanced line of argument and a conclusion. This paper includes specific questions on their citizenship action.
- **Paper 3** (25% of the final mark) Stimulus material with a focus on extended writing.

Classical Civilisation – GCSE (OCR)

In Classical Civilisation we study the history, myths, culture and literature of ancient Rome and Greece. There is no Latin or Greek involved.

The course takes in a wide variety of material. We look at the way the ancient Greeks and Romans lived, fought, loved and died. We read extracts from authors such as Homer and Virgil about the destruction of Troy, the judgement of Paris, the duel between Achilles and Hector, and other great myths. We study the way the Romans and Greeks fought battles and won wars, often against overwhelming odds, as well as ordinary life.

In Form 4 pupils study modules called 'War and Warfare', and in Form 5 'Women in the Ancient World'. The assessment consists of two exams, each equally weighted at 50%. There is no coursework.

Computer Science – GCSE (OCR)

Our GCSE in Computer Science is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It encourages pupils to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in Computer Science. Pupils also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs. The breakdown of assessment is as follows:

Component 1: Computer systems (Written exam 1 hour 30 mins, 50%). Introduces pupils to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, 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 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (Written exam 1 hour 30 mins, 50%). Pupils apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 1. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators. Pupils are given the opportunity to undertake programming tasks during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test, and refine programs using a high-level programming language.

Is this course for me? Typically, pupils who thrive in their study of Computer Science are those that possess a strong mathematical ability.

Dance – GCSE (AQA)

GCSE Dance is a two-year course. Dance training is not essential but an interest in dance and a willingness to learn to move in different ways. Performance is required in some components but with teacher support and input. In other sections there is an opportunity to choreograph and get another pupil to perform your work if you feel that performing yourself is not your forte.

GCSE dance consists of 2 components. The first is a performance and choreography section and the second component is dance appreciation.

Performance

Solo performance: Students must learn how to perform as a solo dancer for approximately one minute. You will learn four set routines to perform as a solo. After you have learnt all four, together we will choose the two phrases which showcase your skills and feel the best for you when performing.

Duet/trio performance: Each pupil must perform for a minimum of three minutes in a dance. The duet/trio dance may be choreographed by a teacher, dancer or by collaboration between teacher and dancers. The duet/trio performance must have a clearly identified choreographic intent, which relates to mood, meaning, idea, theme and/or style fusion. You will incorporate actions, dynamics and spatial elements from the solo performance (the two set phrases) and these will be developed in this duet/trio to generate dance content.

Choreography

Dancers will learn how to respond creatively to an externally set stimulus, to choreograph their own dance. The dance created must be either:

- a solo dance of a minimum of two minutes and a maximum of two and a half minutes or
- a group dance of a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of three and a half minutes for two to five dancers.

The pupil is not required to perform in their choreographed dance but may do so if they wish.

Dance Appreciation

The subject content details the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn during study. This is set out in three core areas of dance: performance, choreography, and appreciation. Through written communication and use of appropriate terminology, students must be able to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate their own work in performance and choreography and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of professional practice in the six-set works in the GCSE Dance Anthology. The consists of six short professional works, each between 12- and 30-minutes duration.

Non-exam assessment (NEA) 60%. Written Exam 40%

Design and Technology: Product Design (AQA)

The GCSE Design and Technology course places an emphasis on understanding and applying an iterative design process to solve real and relevant problems. Pupils use creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes that consider their own and others' needs, wants and values. The course prepares pupils to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world, as well as to consider wider influences on design, including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors.

This course gives pupils opportunities to explore their own design interests and will provide a substantial foundation to A-level or IBDP Design and Technology. Pupils who wish to pursue a career in Engineering, Industrial Design, Product Design or Architecture can apply for an [Arkwright Scholarship](#) on successful completion of the course. Pupils will learn how to communicate and present ideas using a wide range of techniques, to include sketching, rendering, formal drawings and CAD. Pupils will also have the opportunity to develop practical and ICT skills using a wide range of materials, processes and applications before starting the NEA project.

Educational visits include a trip to the Morgan Motor Factory.

The core technical principles include: new and emerging technologies; energy storage and generation; modern and smart materials; systems approach to designing; mechanical devices; materials and their working properties (to include papers, boards, textiles, composites, polymers, timber and metal).

Written exam (50%)

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): pupils can either choose to focus technical principles on **Polymers/Electronics/Textiles**. 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.

Non-Examined Assessment Project (50%)

Coursework is a single, controlled design-and-make activity selected from a choice of set tasks, consisting of the development of a made outcome and a concise design folder which includes ICT, to design and make a solution using a range of appropriate materials. Previous projects include: iPod docking stations, lamps, radios, alarm systems, disability aids, storage systems, products for developing countries and electronic games. Textile outcomes could include bags, sportswear and fashion garments, storage, soft furnishings, and toys.

Drama – GCSE (Eduqas)

The Drama GCSE course is a two-year study of live performance and the processes of creating theatre. It is practical in its approach and pupils are expected to work physically and in workshop conditions for many of their lessons. Pupils are expected to have a lively interest in and commitment to theatre. We visit professional productions at least once a term and pupils should attend all productions and examination work in the QET.

The breakdown of the modules is as follows:

Unit 1: Devised Performance and accompanying written report (40% Internally Assessed / Externally Moderated)

Candidates will be given a stimulus and a genre and must create their own practical performance and can be assessed as either an actor or designer. Alongside this, candidates will write a portfolio documenting their devising process and evaluating the final performance.

Unit 2: Performance from a Text (20% Externally Assessed)

Candidates will perform two sections from a published play and be assessed as either an actor or designer. The design choices on offer are lighting, sound, costume and set design.

Unit 3: Written Examination (40% Externally Assessed)

Candidates will sit a 90-minute written exam at the end of the course. The majority of the paper will be based on their ability to analyse one set text as an actor, designer and director. One question will ask candidates to evaluate a live theatre performance.

Geography – IGCSE (Edexcel)

The Geography course encourages pupils to develop lifelong geographical knowledge and skills. Throughout the course they will actively engage in the process of geographical enquiry to develop as effective and independent learners as well as critical and reflective thinkers. Pupils will develop their knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and appreciate the relevance of these concepts to our ever-changing world. They will learn to appreciate that people have different views and attitudes to the world, its environments and geographical issues. By the end of the course, they will have an awareness of global issues and recognise the challenges of moving towards a sustainable future.

Most of the course is spent studying three main themes. Physical Geography (Rivers and coastal environments), Human Geography (Urban environments, energy and economic change) and Global issues (Fragile environments and climate change). Pupils will also encounter a variety of practical skills including graphical skills, map skills, photo-interpretation skills and spatial awareness. Cognitive enquiry skills including analysis of findings, use of statistical skills, conflict resolution skills and evaluation of findings will also be developed.

Field work is a key part of the Geography course. Pupils will undertake geographical investigations that include both primary and secondary data collection visiting a river or coast and Cambridge or Lincoln. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend a Middle School international field trip. Past trips have included Sicily, Iceland, Switzerland and the Azores.

Classical Greek – GCSE (OCR)

From the start of Form 4, Classical Greek may be studied as part of the Gratin course. This is recommended to strong Latinists at the end of Form 3 and enables the hard-working and able pupil to achieve two full GCSEs in both Latin and Greek, which is taught from scratch. This combined course is taught in a single subject timetable slot, known as Gratin.

We follow the OCR course, which comprises three written papers. There is no coursework. The aim of the course is to enable pupils to translate unseen passages and to acquaint them with the work of Greek prose and verse authors, thereby opening up to them the ancient world generally, its history and culture. In Form 4 they will complete almost all the GCSE language requirements and start their prose literature.

In Form 5 pupils will complete the prose literature and read unadapted Homer. This is both a challenge and immensely rewarding as they get to grips with real Greek authors.

It is hard work but stretches the brains of the pupils admirably. Almost all Gratinists report a high level of personal satisfaction once they have managed to master the course's requirements.

History – IGCSE (Edexcel)

The History specification focuses on Modern World History and features a selection of fascinating topics for study:

Paper 1 (50%) Pupils will undertake two 'depth studies'. The first will be on Nazi Germany: how Hitler rose to prominence and then took power in 1933; how the Nazis consolidated their grip on power, establishing a police state, and how Hitler then led the German people into war and genocide. The second 'depth study' will be on a topic which has caught the imagination of Oakhamians over the last four years (as part of the old GCSE course): Civil Rights in the USA, 1945–1974. This involves the extraordinary struggle undertaken by African-American campaigners to achieve full civil rights after the Second World War in the face of violent racism, and led, most notably, by Martin Luther King. The topic is brought to life in the most extraordinary fashion by extensive documentary news footage and also through some powerful movie portrayals – the most famous and recent example being *Selma*, which we scrutinise and evaluate in class.

Paper 2 (50%) consists of two examined 'outline' topics, where pupils are required to study the key theme of change and progress in a political and social context. In a new departure, we have decided to study the 'Changes in Medicine' option, believing that this will build upon some of the foundation research work completed as part of the First World War project, and provide interesting context and understanding for our scientists and aspirant medics. The course covers the development of modern medicine from 1848 to 1948, with particular focus on the turning points that provided the key agencies

of change. Therefore, as well as studying the development of scientific and medical research, and the role of government in promoting improved public health through law and policy-making, pupils will also see how two world wars acted as a catalyst for extraordinary scientific advances. Our second topic for study for Paper 2 provides a sharp contrast as we study the Russian Revolution: how this vast nation underwent the most remarkable trauma and upheaval in making the transition from the three-hundred-year-old, imperial, Romanov dynasty, to a communist system of dictatorship in just three short years. We will look at how individuals shaped the course of Russian history, most notably Lenin and Trotsky - the Bolshevik revolutionary leaders, and how Russia was subsequently plunged into the most bloody and appalling civil war.

There is no coursework.

The History IGCSE provides a strong grounding in modern political, social and economic history. It also raises important issues relating to constitutional law, civil rights and the right of protest in modern societies. It therefore provides a strong grounding for advanced study, not only in History but also in Economics and Politics. In addition, pupils will have the opportunity to visit Berlin, Krakow and Auschwitz on a five-day tour in the early spring (a trip which has now run for over ten years). The next trip is scheduled to go ahead in February 2027.

Latin – GCSE (OCR)

In Latin GCSE we continue our studies of the language and, for the first time, engage with real Latin composed by some of the finest authors in the world.

Form 4 sees the completion of the GCSE language requirements, and pupils will start their reading of a prose text. Form 5 is spent honing language skills, completing the prose text, and reading unadapted Virgil (the verse author).

Latin's logical structure and its influence on English enables pupils to deepen their analytical skills and their vocabulary; engaging with the set texts enables them to extend their analytical skills and develop flexibility of thought and cultural knowledge, breadth and sensitivity.

The exam consists of three separate written papers; there is no coursework, oral or listening exam.

Music – GCSE (AQA)

This is a diverse course and with an open mind pupils will learn to enjoy and engage with all kinds of music, from Western classical music to popular music and traditional music from around the world.

Understanding music encourages you to explore and engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts. As well as the detailed study of two very contrasting pieces, you will develop your wider knowledge and understanding within four distinct areas of study:

Popular music (including rock, pop, musical theatre, film and computer gaming music) from 1950 to the present, traditional/folk music from around the world, and the Western classical tradition from 1650 to the present day. You will develop your aural perception skills, as well as your ability to describe the music you hear using appropriate musical language. Pupils are assessed with one listening exam (40%) at the end of Form 5.

Composing is an area that will be new to many but isn't anything to worry about! A lot of time will be spent in Form 4 developing composition skills and there is plenty of time to experiment and work on exercises in different styles. This will be the preparation for writing two assessed compositions (a minimum of 3 minutes' music), one of which responds to a brief set by the exam board, and one of which offers pupils a free choice. These are completed in Form 5 for assessment as coursework (30%).

Performing is the area in which pupils can use their experience of practical music-making; there is no set standard so this is accessible to all levels of performers. All pupils are assessed on one solo piece and one performed with another musician (e.g. an accompanied solo, or a duet). These performances are recorded by your classroom teacher and you will have the opportunity to re-record as necessary to capture you at your very best. Pupils will work with their instrumental/vocal teacher through the course to prepare a minimum of 4 minutes of suitable pieces for assessment (30%) during the second year of the course.

Physical Education – OCR GCSE (9-1)

Pupils follow a course that has both examined aspects (60%) and non-examined aspects (40%).

Examined Components

Physical factors affecting performance (30%). 1 hour paper of 60 marks.

- Anatomy and physiology, and physical training

Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology (30%). 1 hour paper of 60 marks.

- Socio-cultural influences, sports psychology, and health, fitness and well-being

These papers consist of a mixture of objective response questions, multiple-choice questions, short answers and extended response items.

Non-examined Components

Written coursework (10%). 14 hours of controlled conditions, out of 20 marks.

- The coursework requires pupils to demonstrate their ability to analyse and evaluate their own or a peers performance in a given practical activity. This includes a needs analysis of the sport, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the performer, and then the creation of an action plan addressing the performer's priority weakness.

Practical performance in three sports (30%). Each sport is out of 20 marks.

- The 30% is equally weighted between the three sports (10% each). Of these three sports at least one must be an individual sport, and one must be a team sport. They must also all be performed and assessed in a competitive environment.

Both of the non-examined elements are internally marked and externally moderated.

Pupils should have a broad interest in sport and physical activity, be motivated to examine the science behind performance and participation in sport and physical activity, or both. Although no minimum grade requirement, there is a strong crossover with Biology at GCSE, and the course is predominantly theoretical, so pupils should be aware of this.

Religion and Philosophy – GCSE (AQA)

Religion and Philosophy is an opportunity to explore the fundamental questions of human existence through contrasting religious and philosophical perspectives. In a globalised world, it is increasingly important to understand and reflect on the different moral and theological positions held by those with strong religious beliefs and those with none. To do so, it is necessary to subject both our own beliefs and those of others to critical scrutiny – not with the aim of agreeing with the latter, but of understanding the basis for them.

The course is split into two equal parts: **Philosophy of Religion and Ethics** and **Religious Beliefs and Practices**; both parts are assessed by examination alone – there is no coursework.

Philosophy of Religion and Ethics is taught and assessed in lesson time, whereas **Religious Beliefs and Practices** is studied as an independent project through directed prep activities.

Philosophy of Religion and Ethics explores questions such as 'What is God?' 'Why does God allow suffering?' 'What is the soul?' 'Do I have a duty to help the poor?' 'What is the relation between science and religion?' 'Is war ever justified? If so, what is a just war?' 'Should capital punishment be reintroduced?' 'Is religion sexist?' 'Is forgiveness a moral duty?' 'What is a human being?' and 'Should euthanasia be legalised?' We aim to discuss these questions from personal, philosophical and religious perspectives.

Religious Beliefs and Practices provides an opportunity to examine Buddhism and Christianity in depth and to explore their similarities and differences. Buddhism is a fascinating Eastern religion which has no deity and followers are encouraged to forgo material pleasures for greater spiritual gain. Whilst Christianity is the largest religion in the West, it is much more complex and challenging than many people realise and thus, is perfect for advanced study at GCSE.

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