

Westbrook Hay



GCSE  
OPTIONS





# Introduction

At Westbrook Hay, our dedication to nurturing each child's unique potential spans their formative years and continues into the GCSE years where we take pride in providing an environment where well-rounded individuals can flourish and succeed.

Westbrook offers an excellent pathway through to GCSE and beyond. Strong links with independent and maintained sixth forms ensure that each Westbrook pupil is guided carefully in their educational career.

Throughout our GCSE programme, our goal is to offer a diverse array of options that allow your child to leverage their strengths while enjoying a broad range of experiences. With high-quality specialist teaching within a nurturing environment, we distinguish ourselves as a school committed to providing the sort of individual attention to every child that is just not possible in a bigger environment.

While GCSE results are important, we understand that academic success holds different meanings for different people. In a world where external pressures on young minds are prevalent, Westbrook Hay provides a supportive and nurturing atmosphere in which to take GCSEs. We prioritise building confidence through a robust pastoral foundation, emphasising happiness, and encouraging each pupil without imposing counterproductive and relentless pressure.

At Westbrook Hay, individuality is not merely valued but celebrated. Our close-knit community fosters a supportive environment that enables pupils to embrace their unique strengths while fostering a sense of togetherness.

Education at Westbrook Hay goes beyond textbooks and exams. It is on the stage, in the concert hall and out on the sports fields. We believe in creating an environment where a supportive spirit empowers young people to acquire not only academic knowledge but also the resilience and adaptability needed for future success.

GCSE options are an important step in anyone's future and we hope that you will find this brochure informative and a useful guide in making those choices.

There is no substitute for talking to the experts so please come and speak to us if you have any questions at all.

**Mark Brain, Head**



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# Subject Choice

All pupils will study the core subjects of English Language, English Literature and Mathematics.

All pupils will choose 6 further GCSEs from the optional subjects list.

- At least one must be a science (Biology, Chemistry or Physics)
- At least one must be a Humanity (Geography, History or Religion, Philosophy and Ethics)

All pupils will have weekly lessons in PSHE and PE/Games

## Optional subjects:

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Further Maths
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics
- Spanish



## Gradings

All national GCSE qualifications and all the IGCSE courses on offer are awarded numerical grades on a scale from 1 (the lowest grade) to 9 (the highest grade). Although the new number grades do not map evenly onto the old letter grades, the chart below is designed to give an indication of how the new number grades are awarded. Grade 9 is designed to differentiate even further between A\* candidates under the previous system, with Grade 4 considered to be a standard pass.

New Grading	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
Old Grading	A* to A		B to C			D to G			U	



# Our GCSE Curriculum

Selecting GCSEs is quite possibly the first time pupils will have to make decisions regarding the direction their education will take. It is an exciting opportunity for them to take responsibility for their learning, think about what they enjoy and look ahead to where they might go beyond Year 11.

Pupils should not feel alone in making their choices. Early in Spring Term of Year 9, pupils and their parents will be invited to an Options Evening where they can discuss their choices with our staff. Pupils will complete their options forms by the end of February half term, to allow time for planning in time for the start of the new school year.



Mrs Catherine Busfield  
Assistant Head  
Academic

## Choosing your options

We will be encouraging all pupils to choose GCSE subjects that they both enjoy and have an aptitude for. Ideally, pupils will study a broad and balanced range of GCSE subjects that fit their higher education and career aspirations. However, each child is different and we will support each pupil, and their family, to help them in their choice.

While we aim to offer as many choices of subjects as possible, in our initial GCSE years, pupil demand will determine if all subjects are taught. It is possible that the optional subjects will be placed into teaching blocks, based on timetabling constraints, and pupils will be asked to choose one subject from each block. This means that pupils will need to prioritise which subjects they are most interested in taking.

We will endeavour to timetable all choices; timetable clashes may mean that a certain combination of subjects is not possible. In such cases, pupils and parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity so that a suitable alternative can be chosen.

It is important that pupils pick subjects which they, not their friends, enjoy. Even if they do pick the same subjects as their peers, they may not be in the same classes. It is also important not to pick a subject based on the teacher.

## Keeping options open

Pupils must choose at least one science subject (Biology, Chemistry or Physics), but it is expected that many pupils will choose at least two sciences. Some consideration should be placed on study post-GCSE as some sciences, in particular Chemistry, are important gateway GCSEs for many career paths.

Pupils must choose one humanities subject (Geography, History or Religion, Philosophy and Ethics) and there will be opportunity for pupils to undertake more than one of these subjects should they wish.

It is advantageous to study a subject at GCSE if it is also a potential choice for further study at A Level or beyond.



Westbrook Hay is a very special place where individuality is cherished but togetherness celebrated. We believe that education goes beyond academic knowledge and if our young people are going to be well prepared for their future they need an environment where a supportive spirit enables them to achieve.



# English Language and English Literature



## Why study English?

English has the potential to transport pupils to different worlds, eras and cultures. Studying English broadens our horizons and helps us understand more about the human condition. Studying English also gives pupils the opportunity to be creative, discuss their ideas and debate with others. English is the subject which is the cornerstone to the rest of the curriculum. At Westbrook Hay, pupils will earn two IGCSE qualifications over two years: English Language and English Literature.

## Course content

The IGCSE teaches pupils to write for a range of purposes and across different forms, including creative tasks, writing to persuade, analyse and inform amongst others. Debates and discussions develop pupils' ability to build arguments, empathise and communicate in front of an audience. Pupils will develop their critical thinking skills, which will support study in a host of other subjects.

Success in English strengthens a pupil's academic profile for A Level and university applications. The reading, written and communication skills developed across our GCSE course will give pupils the tools to succeed in any field they choose to pursue. The English Language course includes a separate Certificate in Spoken Language. This Award does not affect the IGCSE score, and is awarded on a Pass, Merit, Distinction basis.

On their journey through the IGCSEs in English Language and English Literature, pupils will explore one of Shakespeare's great tragedies, a 19th century novel, a modern literature text and a range of poetry from different eras and cultures.

## Potential trips

- Theatre trips to The Globe and London's West End

## CORE SUBJECT

EXAM BOARD:  
Edexcel IGCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
English Language 4EA1  
(Specification A)  
English Literature 4ET1  
[www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

## ASSESSMENT:

English Language  
Paper 1: 60%  
2 hours 15 minutes

Coursework 40%

English Literature  
Paper 1: 60%  
2 hours

Unseen poetry, Anthology poetry and Modern Prose

Paper 2: 40%  
1 hour 30 minutes

Modern drama and Literary heritage text.





## CORE SUBJECT

# Mathematics

EXAM BOARD:

AQA GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

8300

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

ASSESSMENT:

Paper 1: 33%  
Non-calculator paper 90 minutes

Paper 2: 33%  
Calculator paper 90 minutes

Paper 3: 33%  
Calculator paper 90 minutes

### Why study Mathematics?

It is statutory to study Mathematics at GCSE but that does not mean that its benefits are solely in obtaining the GCSE qualification. Some people talk about maths as being like a pyramid – lots of the maths you learn is to enable you to learn some more complicated maths which is higher up the pyramid so to speak. It just isn't possible to pick and choose the topics which you think will be most useful to you – they are too interconnected for that. Mathematics builds up many 'soft skills' – such as problem solving, critical thinking and numerical awareness. Many employers will ask for a good grade in GCSE maths, even if their daily business doesn't involve a lot of maths. This is because employers value these skills. Being able to solve an equation in algebra can help employees think in a certain way and become better at solving other problems in real life.

Mathematics is a prerequisite subject for a huge number of degrees. Sciences such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics use many mathematical techniques, and subjects such as Geography, Psychology and Sociology are also likely to have

components which will be far more easily mastered by those with prior study of Mathematics.

### Course content

In Mathematics there are six overall topics that are covered:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change
- Geometry and Measures
- Probability
- Statistics

Through all of these topics there is a balance of knowledge and skills whilst consistently ensuring that pupils develop mathematical reasoning and fluency.

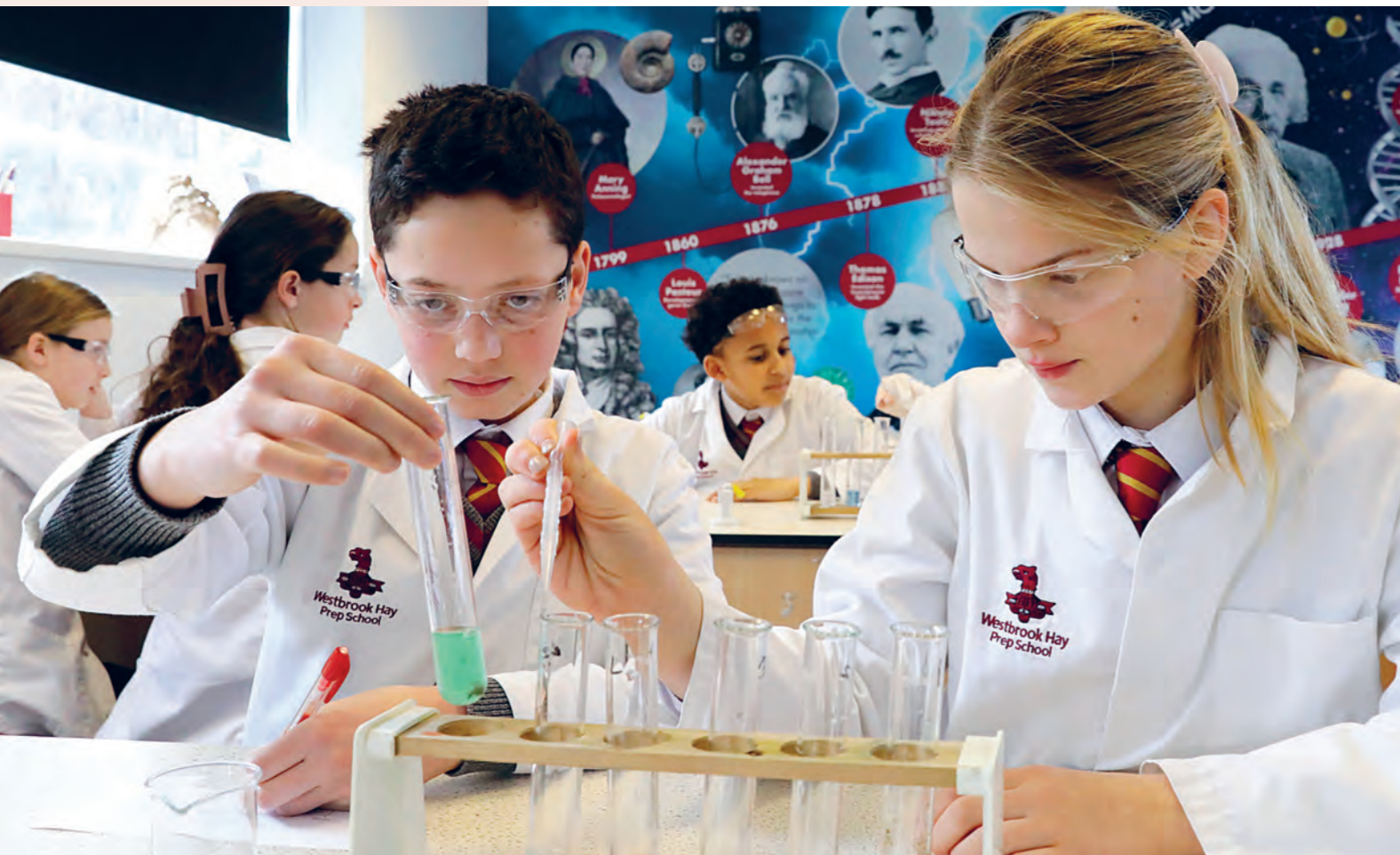
### Potential trips

- Disneyland Paris trip for Y9 and Y10 for the World Maths Day
- National Mathematics competitions
- Problem solving and escape room tasks

Pupils develop and demonstrate the high-level skills and knowledge that enable successful transition to the next stages of their learning.







As a core subject, science is an important part of the Westbrook Hay curriculum. In Year 9 Biology, Chemistry and Physics are all taught equally and the preparation for GCSEs takes greater focus.

Pupils will then choose which of Biology, Chemistry or Physics they wish to continue with into Year 10 and Year 11. Pupils may choose to continue to study all three or opt to study their favourite one or two.

These are rewarding and highly relevant subjects which can lead to a huge variety of choice at A Level and beyond.

All science studies follow the Edexcel GCSE specification. There is no coursework for any of the courses, but each science has core practicals which are required as part of the GCSE assessment.

Scientific degrees often require at least two science subjects at A Level. It is

not just the subject knowledge which you need to build during your time at school, but also a scientific way of thinking, acquiring acumen for problem solving, data analysis and logical communication.

If you are considering a career in medicine, a medicine-related course (such as dentistry or biomedical sciences), pharmacology, forensics or chemical engineering, then A Level Chemistry is usually expected along with another science A Level. This means that taking GCSE Chemistry can be an excellent choice if you would like to keep your options open. We want to ensure that each pupil makes the right choice when considering science and our staff will be on hand to offer guidance throughout Years 7 – 9 in the lead up to options being submitted.

### Why study Biology?

Studying Biology provides an understanding of life at all levels, from the complexities of the smallest cells and organisms to entire ecosystems. Biology is crucial for understanding the mechanisms of living organisms, their interactions and the intricate balance of nature. Biology not only unveils the majestic nature of the natural world, but also addresses issues such as environmental sustainability, human health and biotechnology.

Biology GCSE will be essential if you would like to continue it at A Level. Some A Level courses, such as A Level Psychology, require GCSE Biology and therefore pupils should carry out some research into their next choices, to ensure that no further options are ruled out.

### Course content

Pupils will develop skills in scientific method and research through the study of 9 key topics:

1. Key concepts in biology
2. Cells and control
3. Genetics
4. Natural selection and genetic modification
5. Health, disease and the development of medicines
6. Plant structures and their functions
7. Animal coordination, control and homeostasis
8. Exchange and transport in animals
9. Ecosystems and material cycles

Pupils will be asked to develop and learn to apply observational, practical, enquiry and problem-solving skills in the laboratory. This learning will also take place in other environments and so experience of working in 'the field' will enhance the curriculum. We are fortunate to have Boxmoor Trust on our doorstep and we plan to take our Year 10 pupils further afield for a joint Geography and Biology field trip.

### Potential trips

- Boxmoor Field Trips
- London Zoo
- Joint Biology and Geography Field Trip to Iceland or the Bay of Naples



EXAM BOARD:  
Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
1BIO  
[www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1:** 50%  
Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

**Paper 2:** 50%  
Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

Both papers include a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.



## OPTIONAL SUBJECT

# Chemistry

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1CH0

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

Paper 1: 50%

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper 2: 50%

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

Both papers include a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

## Why study Chemistry?

Studying Chemistry offers a profound exploration of matter and its transformations. Chemistry provides a fundamental understanding of the composition, properties and behaviours of substances, from the molecular level to complex chemical reactions. This knowledge is essential for a range of practical applications, including medicine, materials science and environmental conservation. Chemistry is behind innovations in pharmaceuticals, agriculture and countless other industries, contributing to advancements that shape our daily lives.

Chemistry is an important subject to consider when thinking about your future. It is central to themes in Biology and Physics, Physical Education, Design Technology and Food Preparation and Nutrition. For those wishing to pursue a career in medicine, veterinary medicine, chemical engineering or dentistry, studying Chemistry at GCSE and subsequently A level is essential.

## Course content

GCSE Chemistry is comprised of the following key topics:

- Key concepts in chemistry
- States of matter and mixtures
- Chemical changes
- Extracting metals and equilibria
- Separate chemistry 1
- Groups in the periodic table
- Rates of reaction and energy changes
- Fuels and Earth science
- Separate chemistry 2

Practical work is essential in Chemistry, and these skills are honed through a number of core experiments, eight of which are formally assessed. Pupils will need to use their knowledge and understanding of these practical techniques and procedures in the written assessments.

## Potential trips

- Science museum

# Physics

## OPTIONAL SUBJECT

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1PH0

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

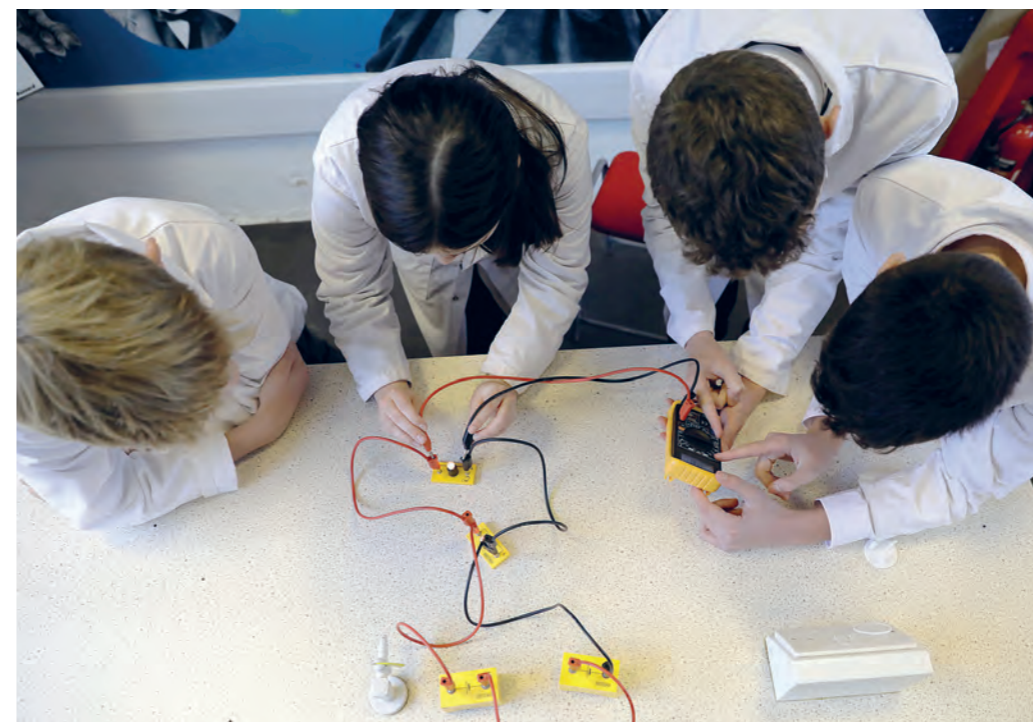
Paper 1: 50%

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper 2: 50%

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

Both papers include a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.



## Why study Physics?

Exploring Physics opens doors to understanding the fundamental principles that govern the universe. From the smallest particles to the vast expanses of space, physics unravels the laws that shape our reality. Studying Physics equips individuals with critical thinking skills and trains the mind to analyse complex problems to find innovative solutions. Physics plays a pivotal role in technological advancements, influencing fields such as engineering and computing. It is essential for addressing contemporary challenges such as renewable energy, climate change, and the development of cutting-edge technologies.

The course is excellent preparation for those wishing to study Physics at a higher level or for those who already know that they wish to go into a physics-related field such as engineering and design.

## Course content

Pupils will study the following topics over their two year course:

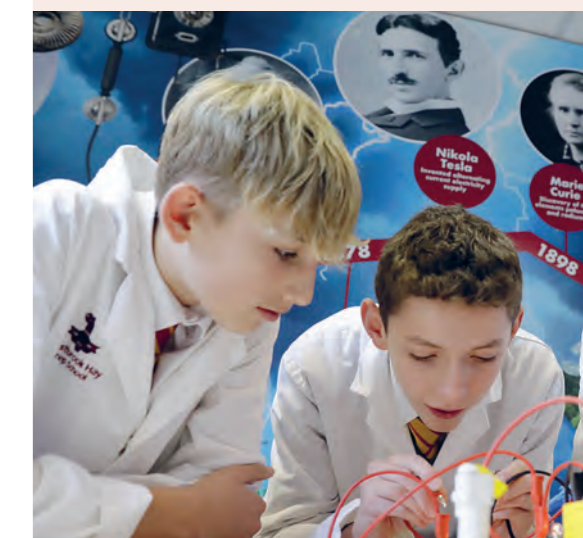
- Key concepts of physics
- Motion and forces

- Conservation of energy
- Waves
- Light and the electromagnetic spectrum
- Radioactivity
- Astronomy
- Energy – Forces doing work
- Forces and their effects
- Electricity and circuits
- Static electricity
- Magnetism and the motor effect
- Electromagnetic induction
- Particle model
- Forces and matter

Physics is a practical subject and pupils will have the opportunity to develop their collaboration skills during experiments which allow them to apply their knowledge of the concepts and ideas covered in the course.

## Potential trips

- Science museum
- Bayfordbury Observatory
- STEM trip to Berlin or Brussels





Our curriculum is designed to inspire creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving, acknowledging that exams alone cannot measure true talent.



# Art and Design

OPTIONAL SUBJECT

EXAM BOARD:  
Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
1AD0  
[www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

ASSESSMENT:

**Personal Portfolio: 60%**  
Pupils complete two projects in class, building their portfolios on a given theme. Each project is assessed alongside preparatory work which shows the progression from initial idea to the final piece.  
Work is internally set and internally marked.

**Externally Set Assignment: 40%**  
Pupils present a personal response to an externally set broad-based thematic starting point. Pupils have 4 months to develop their ideas before undertaking a 10 hour examination.  
All work is internally marked and internally standardised.  
A sample of work is externally moderated by a visiting moderator.

## Why study Art and Design?

Art and Design equips pupils with the skills to enjoy, produce and engage with the visual arts throughout their lives, and it has immense value as a GCSE subject. At GCSE we do not expect you to be the 'finished article' as a young artist. Rather we wish to build on skills from Year 7 – 9 and develop pupils into being resilient and creative practitioners.

**GCSE Art and Design provides the opportunity for pupils to:**

- explore both contemporary and historical sources of art, craft and design first hand by visiting museums, galleries and art shows
- take an individual approach to their art, craft and design making
- develop the skill of selecting their best and most appropriate work for presentation

## Course content

Over the two year course, pupils will have the opportunity to develop their skills in observational drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture. All of these areas require a creative approach to problem solving and the development of originals from initiation to realisation. Across the course pupils will have the opportunity to critically evaluate their own work and that of others. Art and Design is about risk-taking, experimenting and learning from mistakes.

## Potential trips

- Tate Britain
- Henry Moore Foundation
- Visiting artists and workshops
- Possible overseas trip to Amsterdam, Florence or Barcelona





# Business Studies

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1BS0

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1: 50%**  
Investigating Small Business  
1 hour and 45 minutes

**Paper 2: 50%**  
Building a business  
1 hour and 45 minutes

## Why study Business?

Business is an integral part of our modern society and GCSE Business Studies teaches pupils an understanding of how businesses work, interconnect with our everyday lives and fit into the larger global economy. Business Studies is a subject that gives pupils the opportunity to develop a wide range of transferable skills. Pupils will become skilled in making decisions, being creative, solving problems, understanding finance, analysing data and working as part of a team. Business Studies gives pupils the opportunity to understand the world that we live in and to become more aware of global issues and events.

The analytical skills developed in GCSE Business Studies are a useful springboard for a number of A Level courses, including A Level Business and A Level Economics. It can also give insight for those wanting to go into business-related professions, such as law, accountancy, marketing or the leisure and tourism industry.

## Course content

The courses split into two main areas:

### Investigating Small Business

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting a business idea into practice
- Making the business effective
- Understanding external influences on business

### Building a business

- Growing the business
- Making marketing decisions
- Making operational decisions
- Making financial decisions
- Making human resource decisions

At the start of the two years pupils will explore key business concepts and issues such as developing ideas, spotting opportunities and how to manage money. As the course develops they will move on to investigating how businesses grow by looking at meeting customer needs, making marketing, operational, financial and human resources decisions.

## Potential trips

- Company visits with organisations such as Seedrs and Turo
- Optional participation in the Tycoon Enterprise Competition run by The Peter Jones Foundation

# Computer Science

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1CP2

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1: 50%**  
**Principles of Computer Science**  
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes  
This paper consists of five compulsory questions, each one focused on one of the topic areas. The questions consist of multiple-choice, short-, medium- and extended-open response, tabular and diagrammatic items.

**Paper 2: 50%**  
**Application of Computation Thinking**  
Onscreen examination: 2 hours  
This practical paper requires pupils to design, write, test and refine programs in order to solve problems. Pupils will complete this assessment onscreen using their Integrated Development Environment (IDE) of choice.



## Why study Computer Science?

Computers are an integral part of the modern world. From pharmaceuticals, to entertainment industries, sports science and engineering, the scope and breadth of computer science is vast and ever-growing. A GCSE in Computer Science provides an ideal foundation for those with a passion for computers to develop their problem solving and programming skills and is an ideal stepping stone to A Level Computer Science.

technologies, and the impact of computing on individuals, society and the environment, including ethical, legal and ownership issues.

**Paper 2 is a practical onscreen assessment.** This paper will assess pupils' ability to solve problems with programming. Pupils will be expected to:

- understand what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work in relation to creating programs
- understand how to decompose and analyse problems
- be able to read, write, refine and evaluate programs

## Course content

**Assessment is split into two papers. Paper 1 is a written assessment and follows the following topics:**

- Computational thinking – understanding of what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work; ability to follow, amend and write algorithms; ability to construct truth tables.
- Data – understanding of binary, data representation, data storage and compression.
- Computers – understanding of hardware and software components of computer systems and characteristics of programming languages.
- Networks – understanding of computer networks and network security.
- Issues and impact – awareness of emerging trends in computing

## Potential trips

- National Museum of Computing (Bletchley)
- Centre for Computing History (Cambridge)
- Joint STEM trip to Berlin – Germany is the biggest exporter of technology in Europe, and through a range of visits, this tour will showcase computing and computer science at the cutting edge





# Design and Technology

EXAM BOARD:  
AQA GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
8552  
[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

## ASSESSMENT:

### Unit 1: Written examination

2 hours  
Worth 50% of the total

### Unit 2: Non-Examined Assessment (NEA)

Design and Making Practice  
A substantial client led design project, completed in school, that solves a problem/need as it relates to a contextual challenge.  
Worth 50% of the total



## Why study Design and Technology?

GCSE Design and Technology opens the doors to a wide variety of careers in the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Design and Technology prepares pupils to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Pupils will gain an awareness of and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including, historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Pupils will have the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making, whilst developing and applying technical and practical skills.

A GCSE in Design and Technology is an excellent foundation stage for those wishing to pursue it at A Level. It complements studies in science and mathematics; it is a highly accessible subject which rewards hard work and determination alongside academic prowess. It should also be considered as an option for those considering careers in design, product design, fashion, engineering, architecture, information technology and many more which do not yet exist!

## Course Content

A GCSE in Design and Technology enables pupils to consider and solve problems through creative thinking skills, planning and design. GCSE Design and Technology comprises three key components:

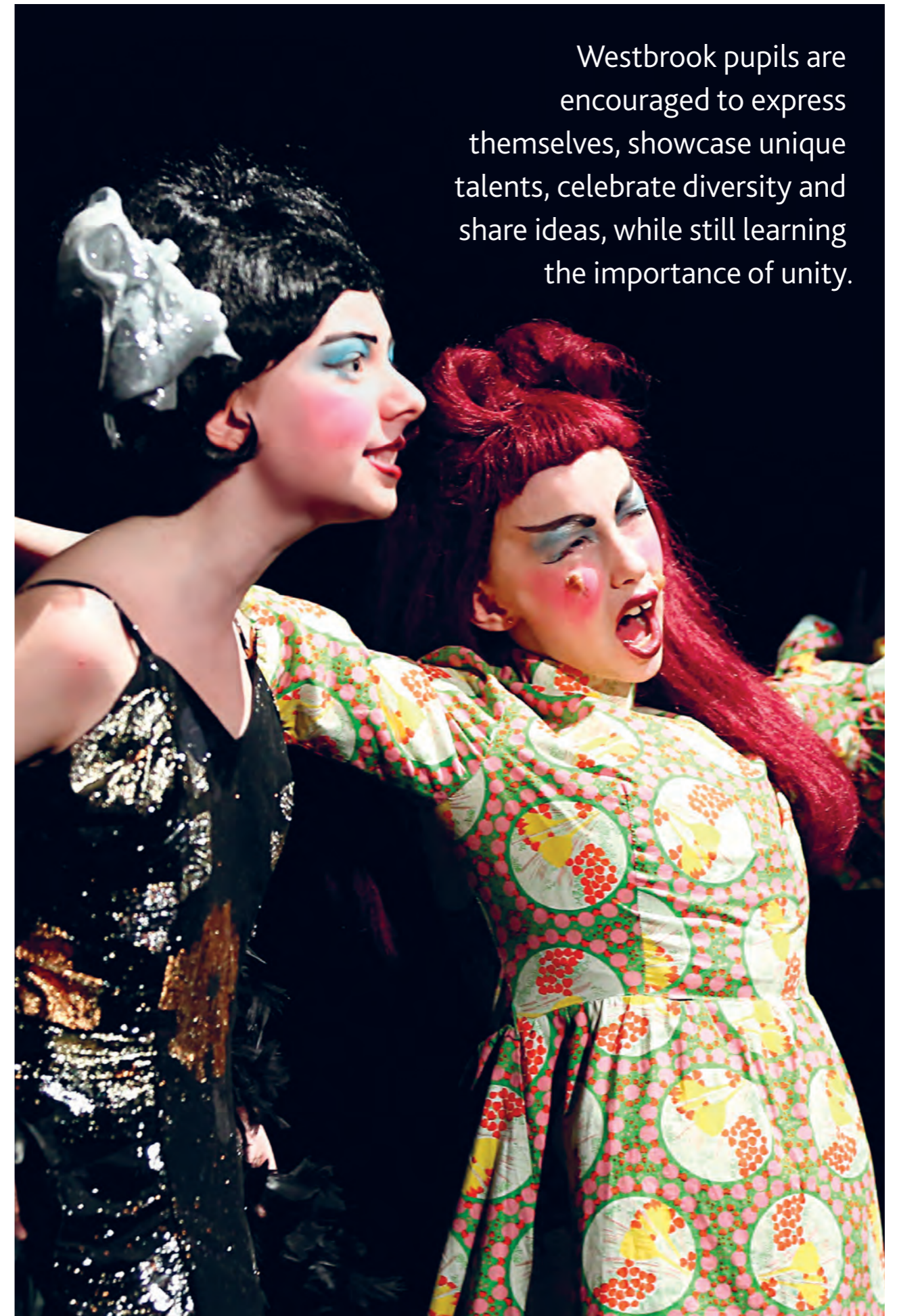
1. Core Technical Principles
2. Specialist Technical Principles
3. Designing and Making Principles

The topics are explored in a combination of theory and practice and are formally assessed both within the written exam and the Non-Examined Assessment (NEA). Throughout the course pupils will have the opportunity to develop their skills in processes such as Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) amongst others. Pupils will be encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of practical skills and materials, electronics and formal drawing techniques. They will also have use of specialist tools like the laser cutter, CNC Router and 3D printer.

## Potential trips

- The Design Museum, London
- The Silverstone Museum

Westbrook pupils are encouraged to express themselves, showcase unique talents, celebrate diversity and share ideas, while still learning the importance of unity.





# Drama

EXAM BOARD:  
OCR GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
J316  
[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

## ASSESSMENT:

**Component 01/02:** 30%

### Devising Drama

Non-exam assessment

Overview: Pupils research and explore a stimulus to create their own devised drama. Assessment is based on research, performance and written evaluation.

**Component 03:** 30%

### Presenting and Performing texts

External visiting examination assessment

Overview: Pupils develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design through a showcase of two extracts from a performance text.

**Component 04:** 40%

### Performance and Response

1 hour 30 minutes

Written examination



## Why study Drama?

Drama GCSE will provide opportunities to understand and create drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through informed artistic choices. The main purpose of this qualification is to allow pupils to study drama in an academic setting. Pupils will be encouraged to interrogate this art form and apply their knowledge and understanding to the process of creating and developing drama. In their own performance work pupils will have the opportunity to enjoy and develop their confidence through this exciting medium.

It will prepare learners for the further study of Drama or Performing Arts courses as well as developing transferable skills desired by further education, higher education and employers in all sectors of industry.

Studying GCSE Drama will help create independent learners, critical thinkers and effective decision makers – all personal attributes that can make pupils stand out as they progress through their education and into employment.

## Course content

The course focuses on three main areas;

- **Devising Drama:** Pupils will research and explore a stimulus, work collaboratively and create their own devised drama
- **Presenting and Performing Texts:** Pupils develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design by presenting a showcase of two extracts from a performance text
- **Drama:** Performance and response: Pupils will explore practically a performance text to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama. In addition they will analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance

## Potential trips

- Theatre trips both to London and local theatres to inspire and broaden pupil understanding



# Food Preparation and Nutrition

## Why study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

From traditional television shows like Masterchef to programmes made for an Instagram generation, such as Is it Cake? food is constantly in the public eye. GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure pupils develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition complements knowledge learnt in Geography, Physical Education, Biology, Religion, Philosophy and Ethics and Art.

## Course Content

The heart of this qualification is nurturing pupils' practical cookery skills; around half the lessons will involve the handling and cooking of food. Pupils will be expected to collaborate with their peers to work on solutions to problems and evaluate work. Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics:

1. Food, nutrition and health
2. Food science
3. Food safety
4. Food choice
5. Food provenance.

During Year 11 pupils will undertake a Non-exam assessment (NEA). Pupils choose from one of three tasks set by the exam board, which test their understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Previous tasks set have included 'Investigate what type of flour is best for bread making' and 'Investigate the use of raising agents in baked products'. Practical tasks are a compulsory element of the food investigation. The second part of the NEA comprises a three-hour practical exam where pupils will be required to prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes and a written portfolio with photographic evidence.



EXAM BOARD:  
AQA GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:  
8585  
[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

## ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1:** 50%

Theoretical knowledge of food preparation and nutrition.

**Non-Examined Assessment (NEA)**  
50%

Task 1: Food investigation & written report.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment and written portfolio including photographic evidence.



# French and Spanish

## Modern Foreign Languages

EXAM BOARD:

AQA GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

8652 (French) 8692 (Spanish)

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1: Listening** 25%

Written examination: 45 minutes

**Paper 2: Speaking** 25%

Written examination: 45 minutes

**Paper 3: Reading** 25%

Written examination: 1 hour

**Paper 4: Writing** 25%

Written examination 1 hour 15 minutes

### Why study Modern Foreign Languages?

A GCSE in a modern foreign language rewards practical communication skills and adds an international dimension to a pupil's studies. Learning another language improves literacy skills and broadens horizons, pushing pupils to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries.

In short, it will better equip pupils for life in the multilingual and multicultural world in which we live.

Whilst studying a language at Westbrook Hay is not compulsory at GCSE, we strongly recommend that pupils think about taking either French or Spanish. Keen linguists will have the opportunity to take both. A language qualification at GCSE will enable you to study French or Spanish at A Level as well as facilitating the learning of other languages such as Italian or Russian. In the multinational nature of modern business and commerce, employers are always looking for employees with language skills and experience.

### Course content

In both French and Spanish, pupils will learn about topics which are split into three core blocks:

- 1. People and lifestyle:** identify and relationships with others; healthy living and lifestyle; education and work
- 2. Popular culture:** free-time activities; customs, festivals and celebrations; celebrity culture
- 3. Communication and the world around us:** travel and tourism, including places of interest; media and technology; the environment and where people live

AQA French and Spanish specifications follow a similar format, with each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing being tested separately and allocated 25% of the total marks.

### Potential trips

- Pupils studying Spanish may have the opportunity to participate in Spanish language immersion trips. Possible destinations include Sevilla and Andalucia
- Those studying French may have the opportunity to enjoy a cultural and linguistic visit to France.
- Immersion in a language outside the classroom is an essential part of learning a language and all pupils are encouraged to visit the countries where the languages are spoken.

# Further Mathematics

EXAM BOARD:

AQA Level 2 qualification

SYLLABUS CODE:

8365

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1:** 50%

Non-calculator paper: 1 hour 45 minutes

**Paper 2:** 50%

Calculator Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes

### Why study Further Mathematics?

AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths is a unique qualification designed to stretch and challenge high achieving mathematicians who

- Either already have, or are expected to achieve the top grades in GCSE Mathematics
- Are likely to progress to A level study in Mathematics and possibly further

Further Maths can somewhat help with the transition to A Level Maths. This is because several of the topics in GCSE Further Maths are simpler forms of A Level Maths topics. In this way, GCSE Further Maths can make A Level Maths a little bit easier as some of the concepts will already be familiar to pupils, whilst challenging them through the course.

For example, in A Level Maths, pupils will generally study topics such as differentiation, integration, logarithms, binomial distribution, kinematics and the use of the  $\Sigma$  (sigma) notation for sequences. Most of these topics are covered in Further Maths qualifications and thus provide sound grounding for ongoing study.

### Course content

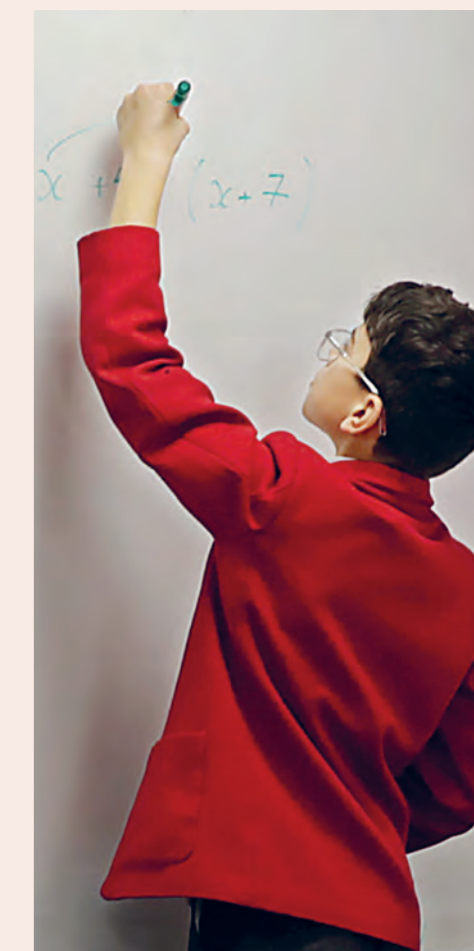
Further Maths complements GCSE Maths by encouraging pupils' higher Mathematical skills, particularly algebraic reasoning. It builds on the Key Stage 4 curriculum and is intended as an additional qualification to GCSE Mathematics, rather than as a replacement. It doesn't infringe upon AS Level Maths but does help pupils prepare for the extra rigour required in further studies.

The course follows the following strands:

1. Number
2. Algebra
3. Coordinate Geometry (2 dimensions only)
4. Calculus
5. Matrix Transformations
6. Geometry

### Potential trips

- Disneyland Paris trip for Y9/10 for the World Maths Day
- National Mathematics competitions
- Problem solving and escape room tasks







Independence is developed through engagement in outdoor adventures, volunteering, real-world challenges and opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities.

# Geography

OPTIONAL SUBJECT

## Why study Geography?

Studying IGCSE Geography provides a comprehensive view of the earth's physical features, climates and human societies enhancing pupils' knowledge of global issues. Geography helps us to understand how the world is changing and gives us the tools for those changes. Issues covered globally by media outlets are often linked with important geographical issues. Over the course of the two-year IGCSE course pupils will have the opportunity to extend their knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes. By obtaining knowledge about the world and subsequently ideas about how to solve problems, pupils are equipped to be 21st century citizens of the world.

Pupils will develop research and data analysis skills. Through day field trips to the local area pupils will have an opportunity to put into practice their skills in collecting, interpreting and presenting data.

Over the two years a wide range of skills are developed including ICT, graphical and statistical skills, as well as map skills and evaluating. Many of the skills learnt in Geography are transferable to other subjects and it is a subject which positively complements other humanities subjects, as well as those which have their foundations in science and mathematics.

## Potential trips

- Compulsory day field trips in the local area such as the London Docklands and East London Olympic Village, the Isle of Wight, the Old Harry Rocks in Dorset or one of the National Parks
- Optional Field Trip in Year 10 to a destination such as Iceland, the Azores, the Bay of Naples and Sicily will be undertaken once across the two year course

## Course content

Geography IGCSE is split into two papers.

### 1. Physical Geography

This component explores river, coastal and hazardous environments. A piece of fieldwork is required for one of these areas of study.

### 2. Human Geography

This component explores topics such as Economic Activity and Energy, Urban Environments and Globalisation and Migration.



EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel IGCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

4GE1

[www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

ASSESSMENT:

Paper 1:

**Physical Geography 40%**

Written examination 1 hour 10 minutes

**Section A:** Candidates choose two out of three questions on river environments, coastal environments, hazardous environments.

**Section B:** Candidates choose one out of three fieldwork-related questions on river environments, coastal environments, hazardous environments.

Paper 2:

**Human Geography 60%**

Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes

**Section A:** Candidates choose two out of three questions on economic activity and energy, rural environments, urban environments.

**Section B:** Candidates choose one out of three fieldwork related questions on economic activity and energy, rural environments, urban environments.

**Section C:** Candidates choose one out of three questions on fragile environments and climate change, globalisation and migration, development and human welfare.



# History

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel IGCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

4HI1

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

**Paper 1: Depth Studies**

Paper Code: 4HI1/01

**Written Examination:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Marks and Percentage:** 60 marks, 50% of the qualification

**Overview:** Pupils answer two questions, one on each of the depth studies they have explored.

**Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies**

Paper Code: 4HI1/02

**Written Examination:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Marks and Percentage:** 60 marks, 50% of the qualification

**Overview:** Pupils answer two questions, one question on their historical investigation and one question on their breadth study in change.

## Why Study History?

History IGCSE is designed to further historical understanding and political awareness, as well as continue to develop enjoyment of exploring the past. We want Westbrook Hay historians to be both entertained and engaged by the subject.

The History Department believes that it is important for pupils to gain an understanding of why we are where we are in the modern world. It is helpful for pupils to have an interest in the past, in human nature and in the motivations of individuals or groups. Historians want to tease out truth from fiction and enjoy the power of rhetoric and argument. They have an attention to detail combined with an ability to grasp broader themes, connections and developments.

History lies at the crossroads of the Sciences and the Arts: it deals in facts and values, at the same time as combining elements of creativity and interpretation. History will appeal to those who want to learn to think critically in the context of a body of knowledge.

## Course Content

The course focuses on international affairs in the modern world. This follows on from domestic History studies in Years 7-8 and the Year 9 syllabus dealing with the First World War, impact of the British Empire and wider concepts of power, freedom and civil rights. It covers four topics of 20th Century History, each of which has been selected due to the bearing that it has had on shaping the world we live in today:

- Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905-24
- Germany: development of dictatorship, 1918-45
- China: conflict, crisis and change, 1900-89
- A world divided: superpower relations, 1943-72

The IGCSE helps pupils to build knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of historical periods, develop skills to analyse and evaluate historical interpretations in the context of historical events studied and learn how to use a range of source material to comprehend, interpret and cross-reference sources.

The study of History develops important intellectual and critical skills. These have been recognised by universities as relevant to the study of Law at university, and make it valuable preparation for a range of careers, in addition to further academic study of History and other humanities subjects at A level and beyond.

## Potential Trips

- First World War Battlefields trip to France and Belgium
- Germany 1918 to 1945 trip to Berlin



# Music

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1MU0

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

**Assessment Performance (Solo & Ensemble) 30%**

Pupils perform for at least four minutes combined duration.

- Solo performance
- Ensemble performance, involving at least three performers

**Composing 30%**

Pupils compose two compositions, with a minimum of three minutes combined duration. One to a specified brief and one free form.

**Appraising 40%**

A 1 hour 45 minute examination where pupils answer questions related to set works studied in class, complete listening exercises and answer questions analysing and comparing unfamiliar pieces.



## Why study Music?

GCSE Music is a very practical and creative subject. The course involves listening to music, performing music, creating your own music and extending your understanding of different styles and genres. In the Music GCSE course pupils will learn how to compose in a range of styles. They will explore composition techniques and approaches, as well as being able to work practically by composing in groups, as well as individually. Pupils will also develop their listening skills and will learn how to analyse musical ideas. For those with a love of performance, or for those who want to develop their repertoire and skills, GCSE Music will give the opportunity to build confidence in performing in a range of styles, in a solo situation and in a group.

- Vocal Music (including pieces by Purcell to Queen)
- Music for Stage and Screen (including music from Wicked and Star Wars)
- Fusions pieces influenced by African, Latin American and British folk styles

Music has creativity, communication and imagination at its heart. Creating authentic performances, whether those be of self-composed works or those composed by others, is key to success. Through performance opportunities pupils will not only develop technically on their chosen instrument(s) but they will also gain collaborative skills. Over the course of the GCSE, pupils will need to practise their instrument independently. Finding the discipline and time to do this is an important skill. The GCSE course will also help develop aural skills and perceptions and is an excellent stepping stone for those wishing to pursue A Level Music.

## Course content

GCSE Music caters for musicians of varying abilities and backgrounds, and will support and stretch every member of the class. When performing, how well a piece is played or sung is rewarded more highly than the difficulty of the piece. Pupils who are currently undertaking Grade 3 or above (in Year 9) will be well-suited to this course. There is also no set style in which pieces must be performed, so pupils can play to their strengths.

The syllabus is based around four areas of study:

- Instrumental Music 1700-1820 (including music by Bach and Beethoven)

## Potential trips

- Concert trips to state-of-the-art venues such as The Anvil Basingstoke, Saffron Hall Saffron Walden, City of Birmingham Symphony Hall, and/or historical venues such as The Royal Albert Hall and The Royal Festival Hall
- Short tours in the UK or Europe as part of an ensemble or choir, including concerts, outreach, community and busking performances





# Physical Education

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE

SYLLABUS CODE:

1PE0

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

**Unit 1:**  
Fitness and Body Systems 36%  
1 hour 30 min written examination

**Unit 2:**  
Health and Performance 24%  
1 hour 15 min written examination

**Unit 3:**  
Practical Performance 30%  
Non-examined assessment  
Pupils complete three physical activities from a set list. One must be a team activity, one an individual activity and the third is free choice.

**Unit 4:**  
Personal Exercise Programme 10%  
Non-examined assessment  
Pupils produce a Personal Exercise Programme (PEP), analysing and evaluating their performance.

## Why study Physical Education?

GCSE Physical Education is a dynamic and challenging course which will equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values that they need to maintain performance in their physical activities. The course also gives pupils an understanding of physiology, nutrition and mental wellbeing. With health and sport industries on the rise, a GCSE in Physical Education is considered an important and relevant option.

## Course content

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

- develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge and understanding to improve performance
- understand how the physiological and psychological state affects performance in physical activity and sport
- perform effectively in different physical activities by developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas
- develop their ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance in physical activity and sport
- understand the contribution that physical activity and sport make to health, fitness and wellbeing

- understand the key socio-cultural influences that can affect people's involvement in physical activity and sport

When choosing GCSE Physical Education, pupils should consider the sports they will offer for assessment. The list to choose from is extensive and staff will help guide pupils to choose sports which not only they enjoy, but those which are most likely to yield the best results at assessment. Pupils who undertake sport outside school to a high level are welcome to use this as one of their options, as long as it is on the set list. The following lists do not cover the full range, but give an idea of the type of activities allowed.

### Permitted team activities:

Association football, badminton, basketball, cricket, dance (ballet, ballroom, contemporary/modern, cultural – includes hip-hop, Irish, Indian – jazz, Latin), figure skating, futsal, handball, lacrosse, netball, rugby, sailing, table tennis, tennis, volleyball.

### Permitted individual activities:

Amateur boxing, athletics, cross country, badminton, canoeing, figure skating, golf, gymnastics, equestrian, kayaking, rock climbing, sailing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis.

## Potential trips

Potential trips could include football and netball tours to Spain, cricket coaching excursions to Lord's and rugby coaching sessions at Saracens.

Outdoor activities, sports and adventures foster character development, resilience, teamwork, discipline and grace in both victories and defeats.





# Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

EXAM BOARD:

Edexcel GCSE Specification B

SYLLABUS CODE:

1RBO

www.edexcel.com

ASSESSMENT:

Paper 1: 50%

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Paper 2: 50%

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Each examination paper consists of four questions. The paper may include:

- short open
- open response
- extended writing questions.

## Why study Religion, Philosophy and Ethics?

Studying GCSE Religion, Philosophy and Ethics provides a fascinating opportunity to explore many moral issues that are important in today's world. Whether religious, spiritual or an atheist, the course will allow pupils to develop their thinking and apply their ideas to a wide range of concepts such as: crime and punishment; equality within religions; relationships and the family, and peace and conflict.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics rewards curious and open minds. Pupils learn to debate and express balanced arguments with clarity and sensitivity, taking into account all perspectives on an issue. This GCSE is an excellent foundation for studying Philosophy and Ethics at A Level.

## Course content

The course consists of three Areas of Study of which pupils study two. Each Area of Study focuses on a different religion from a choice of seven: Catholic Christianity, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. The religions being studied will be decided by the teaching staff. Each Area of Study is assessed by an examination at the end of Year 11.

### Area of Study 1: Religion and Ethics

- Beliefs
- Marriage and the Family
- Living the Religious Life
- Matters of Life and Death

### Area of Study 2: Religion, Peace and Conflict

- Beliefs
- Crime and Punishment
- Living the Religious Life
- Peace and Conflict

### Area of Study 3: Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice

- Beliefs
- Philosophy of Religion
- Living the Religious Life
- Equality

## Potential trips

- Visits to religious sites which complement their learning such as The London Central Mosque and The Jewish Museum, London
- Combined History, Art and Religion, Philosophy and Ethics trip to Rome

# FAQs

## What's the difference between a GCSE and an IGCSE?

An IGCSE is an International General Certificate of Secondary Education, as opposed to a General Certificate of Secondary Education. IGCSEs are often offered by the same examination boards as GCSEs but, in certain subjects, they are considered to be slightly more rigorous in content and structure, hence better preparation for further studies. In terms of qualification for university entry both GCSE and IGCSE are treated equally.

## Why are some subjects compulsory?

We consider certain subjects to be core subjects in the curriculum. This is in line with the National Curriculum and good practice at other independent schools. Compulsory subjects at (I)GCSE at Westbrook Hay include English, Mathematics, at least one science, along with at least one of History, Geography or Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.

## Why do pupils take nine (I)GCSEs?

Across the independent sector pupils tend to take between 8 and 11 GCSEs. At Westbrook Hay we feel that by allowing 9 to be chosen pupils have the opportunity to create a broad and balanced curriculum but within that, have the time to properly invest their chosen subjects, studying them at the requisite depth. By studying 9 GCSEs, pupils also have time to develop their other interests in their week, such as sport, Duke of Edinburgh and community outreach.

## Will I get my first choices?

We hope that each pupil will be able to undertake GCSEs in their first choice of subjects. However, timetable clashes may mean that a certain combination of subjects is not possible and some pupils will be notified and asked to choose a suitable alternative.

## When do pupils take their exams?

The majority of the examinations for our pupils will happen in the summer of Year 11. Pupils taking subjects with a coursework focus or a Non-Examined Assessment, such as English Language, Art and Design, Food Preparation and Nutrition and Design and Technology will start some of these assessments earlier.

## Can pupils take a GCSE or IGCSE early?

We tend to discourage pupils from taking examinations early. Instead, we aim to stretch and extend pupils beyond the syllabus.

## Will learning support be available?

As our school grows, so too will the Learning Support Department. Pupils with specific learning needs will continue to be monitored and supported by the Head of Learning Support. As pupils move through Seniors, emphasis will be placed on examination techniques and revision skills

## Can a pupil take a subject at A Level if they haven't done it at (I)GCSE?

It is a great advantage to study a subject at (I)GCSE if you also want to study it at A Level. When picking their options, pupils will receive guidance on the impact of their choices. If pupils wish to study a language at A Level then it should be picked as a GCSE option. Similarly, for those seeking a career in medicine, a GCSE in Chemistry and at least one other science is essential. The entrance requirements for A Level courses differ from school to school and so pupils are advised to seek guidance from their Head of Subject before selecting their final options.

## Where do I go after Westbrook Hay?

There are many excellent local options for our pupils after Year 11. With both state and independent options on our doorstep, boarding options further afield and the possibility of studying either for A Levels or vocational courses, our pupils will have a wide choice. During Spring Term 2027 we are planning on hosting our first Sixth Form Roadshow, where we will invite local schools and sixth form centres to come and meet our pupils and parents. We hope that during this evening pupils will get a chance to talk to staff and gain an understanding of the types of courses on offer and entry requirements which need to be met.

## How many points will I need to get onto an A Level course?

Each sixth form centre has differing requirements for pupils wishing to study A Levels so it is not possible to generalise. More selective schools will require pupils to have gained at least a minimum of Grade 6 at GCSE in their chosen A Level subjects. The most academic institutions will ask for a Grade 7 or 8 in a pupil's chosen A Level subjects. Some schools are broader in their approach and ask for a minimum of six GCSE Level 6s or equivalent, whilst others ask for a minimum of 32 points across their best six subjects at GCSE. For most courses, a minimum of Grade 4 in English and Mathematics is a standard requirement.







# Westbrook Hay



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