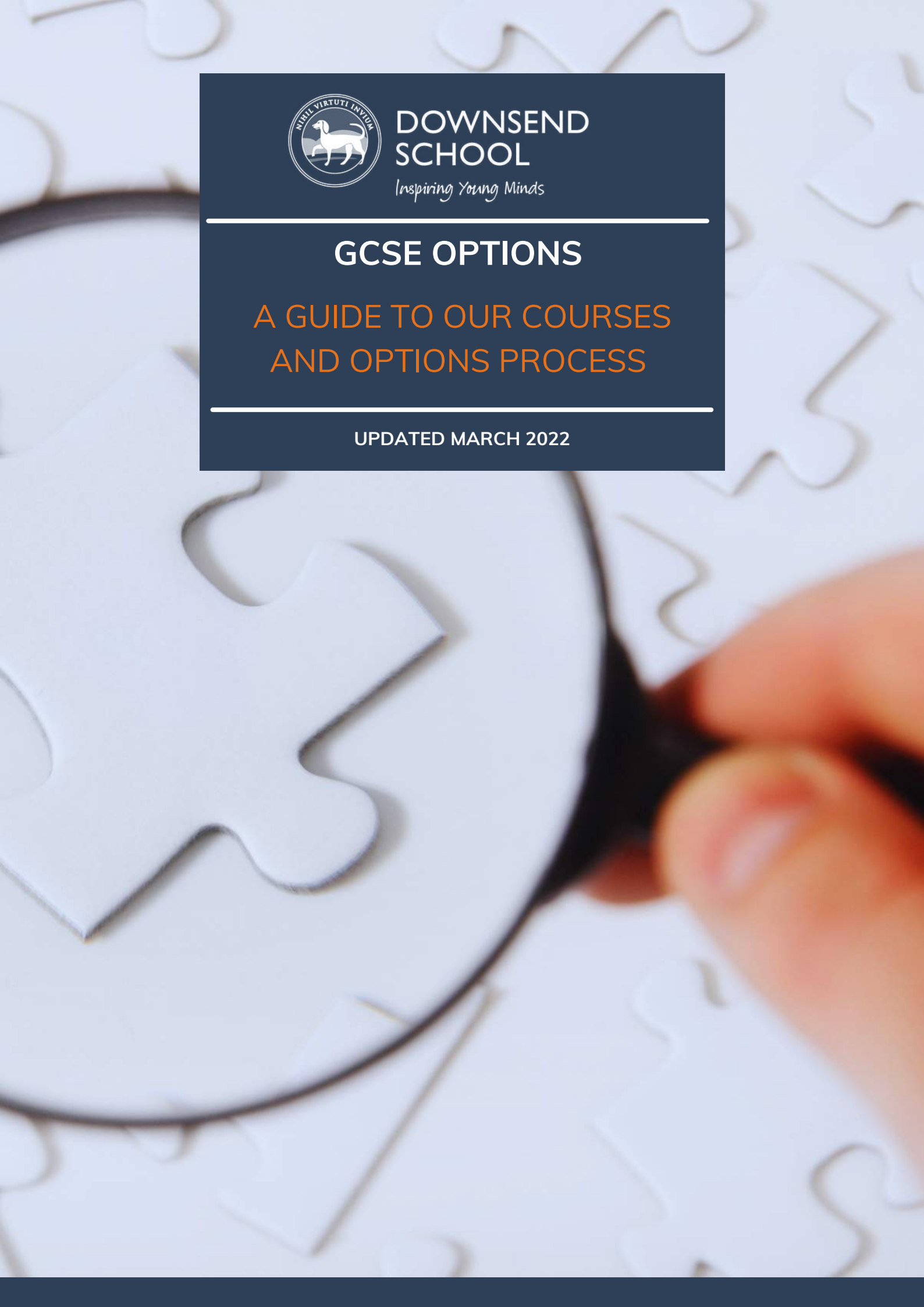

DOWNSEND SCHOOL

Inspiring Young Minds

GCSE OPTIONS

A GUIDE TO OUR COURSES AND OPTIONS PROCESS

UPDATED MARCH 2022

contents

Introduction

Welcome to the Options Process

At Downsend, we aim to provide an outstanding, all round education and our Senior years are the perfect platform for pupils to flourish and grow in self-esteem. We offer a wide range of options for Years 9, 10 and 11.

Our options scheme mirrors our intention to offer an interesting and diverse curriculum. In addition to the core subjects based on literacy, numeracy and scientific understanding, pupils can choose options that will provide them with breadth and opportunity.

We will guide pupils to make the right options choices through year group talks, Options Evenings and via one-to-one meetings. Pupils will be encouraged to take the time to talk to the teachers who run each course so they have sufficient information to help make their decision. We encourage pupils to attend Parents' Evening alongside their parents, so feedback can be received collectively and discussions about options can take place.

Which subjects should I choose?

Working together to make the right decisions

When choosing subjects, we advise pupils to think about their strengths and the path they may wish to take in their future career.

Do not base your choices on what your friends are doing or which teachers you like. Ultimately, the decision must rest with the student. You are going to have to work hard at your options for the next three years. If you are unsure about any part of this process, please talk to your Form Tutor, Head of Year or the lead teacher of your subject choice.

Do :

Take your time.
Making hurried choices could mean making the wrong choices.

Think about which subjects you are good at.
Choose a subject that you enjoy.
If you enjoy it, you are more likely to work hard and gain good grades.

Don't :

Worry about your choices.
There is lots of advice on offer from your Form Tutor, Head of Year or subject teachers.

Choose a subject because your friends are choosing it.
They may be more suited to a subject than you.

Choose a subject because you like the teacher.
You may not get that teacher for your class.

A balanced curriculum

It is a good idea to ensure that your choices are broad and balanced – even if you have a specific career in mind. You may change your mind over the next few years. Keeping your curriculum broad ensures that you keep as many doors as possible open. It also shows that you are a well-rounded person. Consider taking a subject that you really enjoy even if it isn't something that you think will be relevant to your career.

Key considerations

Thinking ahead

The choices you make now could affect the choices you can make in the future for 6th Form, University or career. You need to ensure that you keep as many doors open as possible. This means that you need to think ahead: Some A Level choices will require certain GCSE grades. For example, 6th Forms may require a grade 6 or 7 in Maths to study A Level Maths. However, there are many subjects where you do not need to have studied the option at GCSE in order to study it for A Level e.g. Psychology.

It is important that you think carefully about your options, as you are undertaking to study the subjects that you have chosen for 3 years. Every year, some students realise that they have chosen courses for the wrong reasons. Whilst we will try our best to accommodate requests for change, it can be difficult or impossible to change your choices once courses have started. Pupils are not permitted to drop subjects.

Learning Support

All pupils require support with their learning whether it be mainstream in lessons or in group/one-to-one sessions. Our options process has been designed to ensure that when support is needed, access will be there for those pupils. This will be carried out in a subtle and supportive way with the pupil's needs at the centre of everything we do.

Recent changes to GCSEs

What do I need to know?

In 2016, the Government introduced a programme of GCSE reform and all GCSEs offered at Downsend School follow this new format. As part of these reforms, the grades A*-G were replaced with numerical grades (9-1). The following table shows how the new grades relate to the former system.

New Grades	Old Grades
9	A*
8	A
7	
6	B
5 Strong Pass	C
4 Standard Pass	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

All GCSE exams will be studied in a linear format. There will be a greater emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. All GCSE courses are now more rigorous, demanding and challenging. The grade scale for these new GCSEs now range from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest.

Our GCSE offer at Downsend

The full package

6 Core Subjects

Studied by all pupils:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics

Combined or separate sciences:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

4 Options

From a choice of 15:

- Art & Design
- Computing
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- RS
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Statistics

Enrichment

We go further!

- Tailor-made 'Stretch' Programme
- Sport and Creative Arts
- Opportunity for further academic study
- PSHE

compulsory subjects

English Language
English Literature

Mathematics

Combined or Separate Sciences:
Biology
Chemistry
Physics

English Language

AQA

Why study English Language?

A strong command of our language underpins everything we undertake educationally, socially, emotionally and, of course, professionally within our working lives. The study of Language and Literature enriches our lives and leads us to new ideas and avenues of thought.

The English Language course has been designed to inspire and motivate our students, providing fair stretch and challenge whilst ensuring that assessment and the texts studied are accessible to the full range of young people at Downsend. The course enables students of all abilities to develop the skills they need to read, understand and analyse a wide range of different texts covering the 19th, 20th and 21st century time periods as well as to write clearly, coherently and accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Links to future careers include journalism, writing, publishing, teaching, legal work, politics, public relations, advertising, acting, media, theatre, marketing and translating and interpreting work.

Mastery of both English Language and Literature provides a springboard any career possibility.

English Language is fully co-teachable with GCSE English Literature.

What do I need to excel in English?

The study of GCSE English will require students to have a hard-working attitude in order to be successfully engaged with the subjects.

They should have a strong desire to read literature outside the classroom, preparedness to write at length with support and detail, and to think hard and independently about their response to any given text.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing
Section A: Reading
• one literature fiction text
Section B: Writing
• descriptive or narrative writing
Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
• 50% of GCSE

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives
Section A: Reading
• one non-fiction text
• one literary non-fiction text (auto/biography – elements of fiction)
Section B: Writing
• writing to present a viewpoint
Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
• 50% of GCSE

English Literature

AQA

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The course has been put together to inspire, challenge and motivate every student, no matter what their level of ability, whilst supporting them within creative and engaging lessons.

The structure of assessment supports students' achievement in an accessible, closed book context through the use of extract-based questions in the assessment of a 19th-century novel, modern texts, themed poetry and a Shakespeare play.

Links to future careers include journalism, writing, publishing, teaching, legal work, politics, public relations, advertising, acting, media, theatre, marketing and translating and interpreting work.

Mastery of both English Language and Literature provides a springboard any career possibility.

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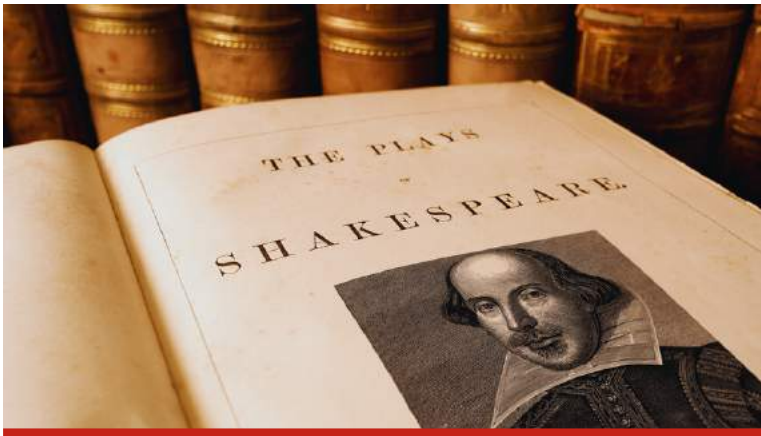

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel
Section A: Shakespeare
• one question on their play of choice
Section B: The 19th-century novel
• one question on their novel of choice
Written exam: 1 hour 40 minutes

Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry
Section A: Modern texts
• one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text
Section B: Seen Poetry
• one comparative question on one named poem and another poem of choice from the studied poetry anthology
Section C: Unseen poetry
• one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem
Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

Maths

EDEXCEL

Why study Maths?

Maths is one of the best subjects to develop your analytical, research and problem-solving skills. Not only will studying maths help give you the knowledge to tackle scientific, mechanical, coding and abstract problems, it will also help you develop logic to tackle everyday issues like planning projects, managing budgets and even debating effectively.

Just as languages provide the building blocks and rules we need to communicate, maths uses its own language, made up of numbers, symbols and formulas. Studying maths helps us find patterns and structure in our lives. Maths helps us put a price on things, create graphics, build websites, and generally understand how things work or predict how they might change over time and under different conditions.

Maths is a rigorous GCSE. The course covers the following areas

1.Number
2.Algebra
3.Ratio, Proportion and rates of Change
4.Geometry and Measures
5.Probability and Statistics

What do I need to excel in Maths?

Students need a resilient nature and an attitude of not giving up. A strong work ethic is required in Maths if you want to excel and achieve top grades. Students need to understand the importance of practice outside of the classroom. Students must practice maths not until they get the answer right but until they are unable to get it wrong.

ASSESSMENT

There will be three written papers, each contributing 33% of the marks towards the final grade, two papers are non-calculator and one is calculator.

Paper 1: Non-calculator
Paper 2 and 3: Calculator allowed

There are two tiers of entry:

Foundation covers Grades 1-5
Higher covers Grades 4-9.

Science (Biology)

AQA

Why study Biology?

Biology is the study of living organisms and the natural world, from the molecular mechanisms that run the cell to the organisation of the complex systems within all organisms. Biology brings together the organisms and the environments in which they live and how they interact. It is a fascinating mix of knowledge, skills, investigations and future developments that will shape the lives of humans around the globe. The frequent innovations in biology help to advance our understanding of topics from infections and disease to the sustainability of our food supplies and farming.

If you study Biology, you are ready to begin careers in biotechnology, research, medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, as well as marine biology, ecology and conservation. The future of the world depends on cutting edge technology and biologists who use it to make the world a better place.

You will either study Science as a combined course and achieve 2 grades at the end of year 11, or as 3 different sciences for 3 grades. The separate science option is more rigorous and includes 30% more content.

The GCSE course covers the following topics:

1.Cell Biology
2.Organisation
3.Infection and Response
4.Bioenergetics
5.Homeostasis and Response
6.Inheritance, variation and evolution
7.Ecology

What do I need to excel in Biology?

As with all sciences, you need to be inquisitive, require a love of learning and an innate ability to apply knowledge to a wide range of examples and scenarios. The ability to work independently and with others to solve problems and conduct research are important. You will also need to be able to demonstrate essential maths and literacy skills in order to grasp the higher order concepts we study.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Topics 1-4
Cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics

Paper 2: Topics 5-7
Homeostasis and Response, Inheritance, variation and ecology

Exam Papers:
Combined Science – 2 papers - 1 hour 15 minutes each, foundation or higher, 75 marks each

Separate Science - 2 papers - 1 hour 45 minutes each, foundation or higher, 100 marks each

Science (Chemistry)

AQA

Why study Chemistry?

Chemistry is the study of electron transfer and the resulting reactions that occur from them. Chemistry helps in the productions of everything we use, from drugs to cleaning products. The importance of understanding the chemistry of the atmosphere and the resources we use will help to create a more sustainable planet for future generations. As with the other sciences you study, Chemistry is an ever-developing subject, with lots of innovations and discoveries every day that support organisms across the globe.

Chemistry is valuable in many careers including those unrelated to the subject due to the application and problem-solving skills required. If you study chemistry, you can look forward to careers in Medicine, research and analysis, the pharmaceutical industry, product manufacture and toxicology.

Science is a core subject, but you will either study Science as a combined course and achieve 2 grades at the end of year 11, or as 3 different sciences for 3 grades. The separate science option is significantly more rigorous and includes 30% more content.

The GCSE course covers the following topics:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
2. Bonding
3. Qualitative chemistry
4. Chemical changes
5. Energy changes
6. Rate of reaction
7. Organic Chemistry
8. Chemical analysis
9. Atmosphere
10. Using Resources

What do I need to excel in Chemistry?

Chemistry is an applied subject, where it is necessary to use knowledge gained in a variety of circumstances and scenarios. There are significant maths skills required in chemistry, due to the nature of the measurements and calculations that need to occur in practical work. Therefore, the ability to work with others but also to think logically and problem solve independently are vital.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Atomic structure and the periodic table, Bonding, Qualitative chemistry, Chemical changes, Energy changes

Paper 2: Rate of reaction, Organic Chemistry, Chemical analysis, Atmosphere, Using Resources

Exam Papers:
Combined Science – 2 papers - 1 hour 15 minutes each, foundation or higher,
75 marks each

Separate Science - 2 papers - 1 hour 45 minutes each, foundation or higher,
100 marks each

Science (Physics)

AQA

Why study Physics?

Physics seeks to explain the behaviour of particles and phenomena that we observe in our everyday life. From the subatomic particles of atoms to the galaxies that make up our universe, physics can explain the processes that occur across every order of magnitude. Physics encompasses all other disciplines and underpins the core knowledge we require to understand the world we live in.

With qualifications in physics, you can access careers that include a multitude of engineering disciplines, computing, architecture, research and many others that require significant mathematical application skills. Innovations in physics from institutions like the large hadron collider have helped to revolutionise our understanding of and development of physics around the world.

Science is a core subject, but you will either study Science as a combined course and achieve 2 grades at the end of year 11, or as 3 different sciences for 3 grades. The separate science option is significantly more rigorous and includes 30% more content
The GCSE course covers the following topics:

1.Energy
2.Electricity
3.Matter
4.Atomic Structure
5.Forces
6.Waves
7.Magnetism
8.Space

What do I need to excel in Physics?

Physics has a significant mathematical requirement and the ability to apply these skills in a wide variety of examples.The practical skills needed help to collect that data that must be manipulated and analysed. Physics isn't purely mathematics however and does require literacy skills to explain the natural phenomena that we observe in our everyday life.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Topics 1-4
Energy, Electricity, Matter, Atomic Structure

Paper 2: Topics 5-8
Forces, Waves, Magnetism, Space

Exam Papers:
Combined Science – 2 papers - 1 hour 15 minutes each, foundation or higher.
75 marks each

Separate Science - 2 papers - 1 hour 45 minutes each, foundation or higher.
100 marks each

optional subjects

Art & Design
Computer Science
Design & Technology
Drama
Food Preparation and Nutrition
Geography
History
Languages: French/German/Spanish
Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Sociology
Statistics

Art & Design

AQA

Who should study Art & Design?

This course would suit you if you have an enquiring mind and enjoy being creative. You will be prepared to take risks when exploring and experimenting with ideas, processes, materials and techniques to realise your creative intentions.

The syllabus allows you to develop your practical skills and improve your analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as strengthen your understanding of how images and artefacts relate to their social, historical and cultural context.

Course focus and progression routes

This course promotes learning across a variety of experiences and through various processes, tools, techniques, materials and resources to generate different kinds of evidence, associated with areas of study such as; fine art, sculpture, craft design, photography and textiles. All practical work is underpinned by critical and contextual studies, and you will learn to develop, refine and record ideas as well as how to present a personal response.

This is an exciting and dynamic course which teaches you to innovate, take risks and problem solve, alongside strengthening analytical and critical thinking skills.

This course will equip you with the skills to continue your Art and Design studies with confidence at AS, A Level and beyond, opening the door to a variety of exciting careers. Pupils who may be interested in pursuing careers that require skills in critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, independence and innovation should consider taking Art and Design, alongside those pursuing the more traditional art routes of the fine arts, design, illustration, architecture and planning, curation, advertising, media and communications, film and the performing arts. The transferable skills you will gain from this subject will be invaluable and ones that employers and universities regard highly.

ASSESSMENT

The GCSE comprises of two components:

- Coursework (60%)

You will submit a portfolio of work at the end of the course which contains supporting studies and a variety of personal outcomes.

- Externally Set Assignment (40%)

You will research and develop your ideas in response to a set examination theme during the Spring Term of Year 11, culminating in a 10 hour practical exam.

In both components, you will be required to demonstrate evidence of all four assessment objectives:

- Develop Ideas
- Experiment and Refine
- Record Observations
- Respond

Computer Science

OCR

Who should study Computer Science?

This course is suitable for those who are interested in how a computer works and not how to work a computer. You should have an interest in computer programming as these skills will be developed upon and will underpin the course. If you are a good problem-solver and keen to develop your knowledge of computer systems, this course is for you. You should have a good working knowledge of computers already, be comfortable with at least one programming language and ready to get to grips with the complex terminology used in Computer Science.

Course focus and progression routes

The course centres around important aspects related to already well-established principles of Computing, as well as more recent technological advances. The programme of study is broken down into the following strands:

- Systems architecture
- Memory and storage
- Computer networks, connections and protocols
- Network security
- Systems software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology
- Algorithms
- Programming fundamentals
- Producing robust programs
- Boolean logic
- Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments

This course would be ideal for those students wishing to study Computer Science at A Level and progress to a computing related degree at university. It is also a useful course for careers including software engineering, systems analysis, IT project management and website development.

ASSESSMENT

You will take two exams each counting towards 50% of the course. Each exam will be 1hr 30mins and contain 80 marks.

Paper 1: A mix of multiple choice, short answer, longer answer and extended response questions assessing a student's theoretical knowledge.

Paper 2: A mix of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer questions assessing a student's practical problem solving and computational thinking skills.

Programming skills will be assessed throughout the course and you will complete a separate programming project which will not count toward your grade.

Design & Technology

AQA

Who should study DT?

This course is suited to pupils who are good problem solvers and enjoy thinking creatively, imaginatively, and independently. Pupils need to be prepared to take creative risks and explore a range of traditional and new technologies and materials and processes in order to realise intentions and meet course specifications. Good mathematical and scientific knowledge will also need to be demonstrated.

Course focus and progression routes

This course will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

This GCSE allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. You will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

You will be encouraged to become fully involved in the design process, collaborating with others and being open minded to problem solving, adapting and analysing yours and others work as it progresses.

GCSE Design and Technology is an ideal platform for pupils wishing to pursue Product design at A level, which can lead to a wide variety of design-based courses at University. It is particularly useful for those considering engineering, architecture, furniture and interior design, theatre studies, industrial and product design. There is also a range of practical course and apprenticeships available.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1 : Written exam:
2 hours
100 marks, 50% of GCSE .
What's assessed :

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

At least 15% of the exam will assess maths and at least 10% of the exam will assess science.

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Students have 30–35 hours approx to complete their project (NEA)
100 marks, 50% of GCSE
Students submit a project and Practical application of:

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

The exam board will provide externally set prompts/assignments from which students generate a body of research and development that then inform final outcomes/products

Drama

AQA

Who should study Drama?

In order to succeed in this GCSE subject, you will need to enjoy and be committed to Drama. The practical assessments will require work outside of lessons, such as line-learning, rehearsing, planning etc. Most candidates will be pupils who enjoy performing, but there is the option to focus on technical or practical design skills instead. Having participated in school productions will be an advantage, but not compulsory. Creating effective performances will help you to show the diversity of your skills, enhancing problem-solving skills as well as organisation, leadership and confidence. You will develop insights into all aspects of life and improve your ability to communicate, in person and to large groups. Drama gives you experiences that no other subject can provide."

Course focus and progression routes

Most lessons will be practical Drama lessons or will have a practical element. Over time, pupils will learn a range of techniques including:

- How to make improvisation and devising more successful and effective
- Skills such as physicality, voice, use of performance space, research and more
- Performing using scripts and understanding how directors and performers interpret texts
- How to talk and write about Drama, including understanding theatre terminology, performance conventions and expected writing structure
- Watching and writing about live theatre performances

Post-16 progression routes include A Level in Drama and Theatre. Post-18 choices include Drama Schools, BA degree courses in Drama and Theatre, and many training courses in different aspects of Drama.

ASSESSMENT

60% practical

• One short devised performance

This will be accompanied by a devising log in which candidates analyse and evaluate their own work

• Two short scripted performances

40% written exam

• One exam which tests candidates on their understanding of Drama, including a play text they have studied and a performance they have watched

Food Preparation & Nutrition

AQA

Who should study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

This GCSE will equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. Therefore students with a genuine passion for food, its production and application are desirable for this course. You will need to think creatively and be prepared to adapt and problem solve. The ability to work well under pressure and work to time restraints is desirable. Being organised and an independent thinker are an essential part of this course.

Course focus and progression routes

The GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition course is an exciting and creative subject which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. This qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition.

It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.

Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study, or embark on an apprenticeship or full time career in the catering or food industries. This subject can be used a stepping stone to many career paths such a food science, nutrition, hospitality, manufacturing and catering.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Food preparation and nutrition
- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment (NEA):
Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks)
Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks)
Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.

Geography

AQA

Who should study Geography?

Geography helps you to make sense of the world around you. Geography is not only current and relevant, it is one of the most exciting, adventurous and valuable subjects to study today. The course will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the social, economic and physical forces and processes which shape and change our world. It is very practical with opportunities to develop transferrable skills such as interpreting photographs, map skills, fieldwork skills, delivering presentations, role play and debating techniques which are transferrable to other subjects and will be of benefit to you in the world of employment.

Course focus and progression routes

There are three main topic areas studied:

Living with the physical environment:
The challenge of natural hazards, The living world (the study of different ecosystems) and Physical landscapes in the UK.

Challenges in the human environment: Urban issues and challenges, The changing economic world, The challenge of resource management.

Geographical applications: Evaluation of a geographical issue, Fieldwork, Geographical skills e.g. map work.

Progression routes include A Level Geography and leading to careers involving agriculture, environmental sciences, urban planning and geoscience.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment
1 hour 30 minute
• 35% of the GCSE course

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment
1 hour 30 minutes
• 35% of the GCSE course

Paper 3: Geographical applications – based on pre-release material which is released 12 weeks before the exam
1 hour 15 minutes
• 30% of the GCSE course

History

EDEXCEL

Who should study History?

To take this qualification it would be advantageous if you have a passion for History and a good general knowledge of Historical events. The ability to analyse sources, explain your opinion and develop your explanations would be beneficial too.

Course focus and progression routes

The following topics will be studied as part of this course:

1. Medicine in Britain, c1250 – present. (assessed in paper 1 – Thematic study)
2. Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88. (assessed in paper 2 – British Depth study)
3. Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-91. (assessed in paper 2 – Period Study)
4. Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39. (assessed in paper 3 – Modern Depth Study)

As a History student, you will have gained skills highly valued by employers, such as analytical and critical reasoning, oral and written communication and research skills. A History GCSE, A Level and degree is a good launch pad for a wide range of careers, including law, the public sector, business management and finance; as well as any role including specialist research, such as work in museums.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment. The first three, questions 1 and 2 a and b assess the learning on the historic environment, then a further 3 questions with a choice between two of the largest essay questions. This is a written examination

- 1 hour 15 minutes

Paper 2: Period study and British depth study & Period Study. Questions in section A will assess knowledge and understanding on the British Depth Study. In section B is on the Period Study. This is a written examination

- 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper 3: Modern depth study. In section A, you answer one question based on a provided source. In section B, you answer a single four-part question based on historians' interpretations. This is a written examination

- 1 hour 20 minutes

Languages (French/German/Spanish)

EDEXCEL

Who should study Languages?

We live in an international society and languages are all around us. Studying a foreign language opens doors to opportunities that would otherwise not exist, whether that is travel, study or work. Learning a foreign language also provides a valuable insight into the way language is constructed and can often help students to improve their English skills!

Course focus and progression routes

The focus of the GCSE is on providing you with the ability to construct the Foreign Language for yourself, and therefore you will learn both the grammatical structures and the vocabulary to enable you to produce language either in writing or speaking and to understand the language that you read or hear. The contexts within which we will do this will be:

- Identity and Culture: Relationships and Interests; Everyday life and Cultural life
- Local area, holiday and travel
- School
- Future aspirations, study and work
- International and global dimension – talking about events, good causes and the environment

Through the course you will also learn about the culture of the target language country and come across short extracts of literature e.g. poems and songs. You will also develop skills in translation.

Study of a language at GCSE could lead to AS/A2 level qualifications, as well as more vocational language courses. In an increasingly global market, the ability to communicate in a foreign language is a highly-prized skill in the world of work. Many university courses now offer the opportunity to combine a language with another discipline, which could include the change to study or work abroad as part of the course.

ASSESSMENT

You will take four exams at the end of Year 11, all at either Foundation or Higher level, and each worth 25% of the course:

- Listening
- Speaking (conducted by your teacher)
- Reading
- Writing

Music

EDUQAS

Who should study Music?

To take GCSE Music you should be prepared to have lessons on an instrument (voice is considered to be an instrument) for the duration of the course. You should have an awareness of music theory and be ready to work on reading music if you can't do that already. You need to be having lessons on at least one instrument and be able to play at least two instruments if your instrument is voice. You need to enjoy making music with others and be excited about having the opportunity to compose pieces in different styles. You should be interested in learning about and listening to lots of different styles of music. You will need to participate in at least two music groups in school.

Course focus and progression routes

The four areas of study:

- Form and structure
- Film music
- Pop music
- Music for ensemble

Two performances as an instrumentalist or vocalist

- Performance 1: Solo
- Performance 2: Ensemble

Two compositions

- Composition 1: Composing to a stimulus set by the exam board
- Composition 2: Free composition

On completion of this course you will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to progress onto an A Level Music course or Level 3 equivalent. You may choose to continue with Music by studying A Level BTEC music or Performing Arts.

GCSE Music provides transferable skills which are relevant to many careers such as becoming a sound technician, community musician, music therapist, teacher, or private tutor, working in the music industry, in a concert hall or music venue, the arts/creative industries which might include work in film, TV, theatre, radio, arts administration, or creative education.

ASSESSMENT

Listening exam: Based on the four areas of study worth 40% of the mark

Coursework: Compositions and performances each worth 30% of the total mark

Physical Education

AQA

Who should study PE?

To take this qualification you will need to enjoy your sport and PE and you will need to be motivated and organised. It is of vital importance when selecting GCSE PE that you have a genuine interest in playing sport and that you are engaged in sport both in and out of school. Attendance at the school sport practices is compulsory. Selecting GCSE PE would be a really good choice if you are interested in a career working in the sporting industry and/or you would like to take PE and sport further.

Course focus and progression routes

Theory

- Applied anatomy and physiology.
- Movement analysis.
- Physical training.
- Sport psychology.
- Socio-cultural influences.
- Health fitness and wellbeing.
- Use of data. Practical

•Individual sports – athletics, badminton, dance, gymnastics, horse-riding, skiing, rock-climbing, swimming, table tennis, tennis, trampolining.

•Team sports – basketball, cricket, football, handball, hockey, netball, rugby, volleyball.

Please note: if you select a sport that cannot be assessed in school it is essential that you are taking part regularly in this sport outside of school (extensive filmed footage will be required).

Progression routes: A Level in Physical Education/Sports Science, BTEC National Diploma in Sport and Exercise Science, JSLA/CSLA, access to any sporting qualification.

ASSESSMENT

- 70% of the course is theory based.
- 2 x exams – each worth 30% of the final mark.
- 1 x written analysis – worth 10% of the final mark.
- 3 x practical sports – (1 individual sport, 1 team sport and 1 additional sport from either list) each worth 10% of the final mark.

Religious Studies

AQA

Who should study RS?

To take this qualification it would be beneficial to have an interest in current affairs, locally, nationally and globally. Many contemporary issues are addressed, both in debating and written format. As such, this GCSE would be a good choice if Ethics and Philosophy are of interest to the prospective candidate.

Course focus and progression routes

This will be a comparative study in Christianity and Islam within the following areas:
Paper 1:

- Beliefs
- Practices

Paper 2 (Themes):

- Relationships and families
- Religion and life
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment

Progression routes: A Level Religious Studies. From here you could go on to explore Philosophy or Theology at degree level.

ASSESSMENT

2 x examinations – each worth 50% of the course.

Duration of each examination is 1 hour 45 minutes.

Paper 1: Beliefs and practices

Paper 2: Themes

Sociology

AQA

Who should study Sociology?

To take this subject it would be advantageous to have a healthy interest in people! If you enjoy understanding about others then Sociology can guarantee to develop that interest. It provides excellent contextual understanding to complement studies in the other Humanities subjects, along with both English and Science. You will be encouraged to really think about your own ideas and values but to also respect and recognise the wider variety of perspectives that exist in modern Britain.

The skills developed are highly sought after by employers and higher education institutions as you will enhance your ability to analyse and synthesise, with good written and oral communication.

Course focus and progression routes

Sociology is the study of groups of people and their behaviours. You will learn about modern British society and we will keep a keen eye on events that are happening in the news in the present day. You will learn about how society is structured, how control is maintained and the consequences when that control breaks down. Your learning will include an understanding of how the education system is used to create tomorrow's citizens and the impact of this based on gender, ethnicity and wealth.

Sociology compliments the other Humanities subjects. Students will develop an excellent understanding of modern society and it is a great starting point for those hoping to study subjects such as Psychology or Politics at A Level. It is a recognised academic subject by both Oxbridge and Russell Group universities as it provides students with many useful academic study skills.

You will learn what the concept of family means in modern Britain and how different family types have evolved. In the Crime and Deviance unit you will look at law making and law breaking and how it can be used to control citizens. There is a more practical element to this subject as you will learn how to conduct social research, collect qualitative and quantitative data and also the moral issues around certain types of research.

ASSESSMENT

Paper One: The sociology of families and education

The sociology of families
The sociology of education
Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Written exam of 100 marks, 50% of the GCSE result.

Paper Two: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification

The sociology of crime and deviance
The sociology of social stratification
Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Written exam of 100 marks worth 50% of the GCSE result.

Statistics

EDEXCEL

Who should study Statistics?

If you enjoy subjects that have a clear relevance to the working world you will find GCSE statistics very rewarding. The subject focuses on how statistics are used in the 'real world' and you may be surprised how widely useful they actually are. You will learn about the strengths and limitations of statistics in realistic scenarios that won't have you begging the question "When will I ever use this knowledge again?"

Students who choose statistics need to be competent in Mathematics. Statistics involves lots of multi-step problems that require students to be methodical with their workings. and be comfortable using charts and graphs to represent data. Analytical and critical thinking skills are essential.

Course focus and progression routes

There is a lot of overlap between GCSE Maths and GCSE Statistics. Students who study statistics state the course helps boost their GCSE maths as lots of content is repeated.

The GCSE course covers the following topics:

1.Collection of Data
2.Processing and Representing Data
3.Summarising Data
4.Scatter Diagrams and Correlation
5.Time Series
6.Probability
7.Index Numbers
8.Probability Distribution

Statistics gives students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge in a key component of maths that is relevant to everyday life. You will develop a core statistical grounding, as well as transferable skills and understanding that are applicable to a range of subjects and careers. Statistics is suitable for students who have a love of mathematics and can be a stepping stone to A level Mathematics.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates will take two papers in June lasting 1 hour each.

A calculator will be allowed for both papers.


DOWNSEND
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Where to find help or ask a question

English	Mr Duffield	matthew.duffield@downsend.co.uk
Maths	Mrs Stallard	sarah.stallard@downsend.co.uk
Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	Mr Gibbons	charlie.gibbons@downsend.co.uk
Languages (French, Spanish, German)	Mr Skitt	martin.skitt@downsend.co.uk
Geography	Mrs Skitt	sarah.skitt@downsend.co.uk
History	Mrs Skitt	sarah.skitt@downsend.co.uk
Religious Studies	Mrs Skitt	sarah.skitt@downsend.co.uk
Sociology	Mrs Skitt	sarah.skitt@downsend.co.uk
Physical Education	Mr Lawrence	grant.lawrence@downsend.co.uk
Music	Mrs Allison	nicole.allison@downsend.co.uk
Drama	Mr Bryant	christopher.bryant@downsend.co.uk
Art & Design	Miss Hambleton	maggie.hambleton@downsend.co.uk
Design & Technology	Miss Hambleton	maggie.hambleton@downsend.co.uk
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Miss Hambleton	maggie.hambleton@downsend.co.uk
Computing	Mr Underwood	mike.underwood@downsend.co.uk
Statistics	Mrs Stallard	sarah.stallard@downsend.co.uk

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